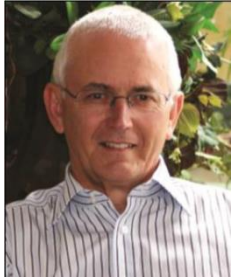


Oxford Town Centre Strategy

AUGUST 2014



foreword from the mayor



The Waimakariri District Council is pleased to present the Oxford Town Centre Strategy. This document provides a decision-making framework for the future of the Oxford town centre.

Oxford has experienced solid growth in recent years. The town centre is seeing rapid change with new commercial developments, and plans are shaping up for community facilities and open spaces in the heart of Oxford. It is important to think about the future direction for the town centre holistically, and take advantage of opportunities in a planned way. That's why we have developed this Strategy.

Thank you to all who have contributed to shaping this document, particularly the Oxford Eyre Ward Advisory Board which formed the Steering Group for this project, and members of the community who took the time to comment on the draft Strategy. We were overwhelmed by the number of people who attended our community event in February, at which we discussed challenges facing the town centre and shared ideas and priorities for the future.

The adoption of this Strategy is a critical step in setting Oxford town centre's future. We look forward to making it happen.

David Ayers
Mayor, Waimakariri District

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strategy at a glance

VISION

The Oxford town centre is vibrant, inviting, accessible and safe, with attractive buildings and spaces that reflect the unique character of Oxford, and facilities and open spaces that are well integrated into the heart of the town and strengthen the community.

KEY THEME 1

Business and built environment

Strategic Directions:

- Protecting character: design guidance for Oxford town centre*
- Providing for growth: town centre business land*
- Increasing business stock*

KEY THEME 2

Access to and within

Strategic Directions:

- Enhancing Main Street environment*
- Providing parking opportunities*
- Maintaining a safe and effective transport network*

KEY THEME 3

Facilities and open spaces

Strategic Directions:

- Developing Pearson Park*
- Linking Main Street: a continuous frontage*
- Providing community facilities*

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introduction

What is the Oxford Town Centre Strategy?

The Oxford Town Centre Strategy is a document that provides a decision-making framework which the Waimakariri District Council (the Council) will be able to use to make positive changes to the Oxford town centre now and into the future. The focus of this Strategy is on the Oxford town centre in recognition of its role as the focal point of the town and its role as the local service centre for the residents of urban and rural Oxford.

In light of current issues and growing demands, the Strategy sets out a vision of where we want the Oxford town centre to be in the future, identifies themes that contribute towards achieving the vision, and sets out more specific directions that will help shape the future of the area.

This Strategy is a working document that assists the Council in setting directions for the future and provides a vision for key stakeholders. It is not intended to be a sole approach to developing the Oxford town centre; it is dependent on the support and commitment of investment by the users, businesses, developers, the Council and the wider community.

Why do we need a Strategy?

The need for a comprehensive approach to the management and growth of the Oxford town centre area was identified by the Oxford Eyre Ward Advisory Board in 2013 and by the Council, when it made a commitment to prepare a town centre strategy for Oxford as part of its 2013/14 District Development Strategy work programme.

Oxford is experiencing reasonable growth, in line with an increasing population across the whole Waimakariri District. The population of the

Oxford area has risen by over 20% since 2006, and a number of commercial developments are recently completed or are significantly underway in Oxford's Main Street - the town's commercial and retail centre. Business numbers in the wider area are also growing and plans for the future of key town centre green spaces facilities are progressing.

There is now an opportunity to holistically consider the future of Oxford town centre to ensure that changes occur within a strategic framework in a way that complement each other and take into account future trends and developments. This is particularly important considering the Oxford town centre will be the nearest local service centre for a projected Oxford area population of over 4,000 by 2031.

How has the Strategy been developed?

The development of this Strategy has been overseen by a Steering Group, comprised of members of the Oxford Eyre Ward Advisory Board. This group has delegation to oversee the development of an Oxford Town Centre Strategy with reference to the area currently zoned for Business 1 activity and the road reserve immediately east and west of this area, as pictured and discussed under "Setting the scene". The Steering Group is tasked with the preparation of a Strategy report and recommend its adoption to the Waimakariri District Council.

The Council held an Oxford community public meeting to launch the beginning of Strategy development on 26 February 2014. Over 80 people attended this event and members of the community provided feedback relating to short and longer term opportunities for the Oxford town centre. Ideas and aspirations relating to transport and parking, community facilities and open spaces and urban design and the built environment were raised. These were considered and integrated where

appropriate in the draft Strategy document prepared for community discussion purposes.

A dedicated Council project webpage was developed (www.waimakariri.govt.nz/your_council/district-development/oxford-town-centre) to ensure the wider community had every opportunity to read latest research and information used to input into Strategy development.

This Strategy is not developed from scratch. Rather it draws on a wide range of information relating to Oxford already available or prepared specifically to assist the development of a Strategy.



In 2013, the Waimakariri District Council administered an Oxford Area Community Survey, distributing questionnaires to all of the households in the Oxford Eyre Ward, located within the boundary of the old Oxford County. Of the 1301 questionnaires distributed, 490 were returned for analysis providing a response rate of 38%. The objective of the survey was to obtain feedback from residents concerning their views about various aspects of their life in Oxford and to contribute to the

Oxford Town Centre Strategy process and Council's service provision. The survey provides a good understanding of current issues facing the town centre and are highlighted throughout this document.

A Business Survey was administered by the Council in 2010. This saw questionnaires distributed to every business with a physical address in Oxford. Findings from this survey, as well as other available internal and external data including 2013 New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings data, business demographic information and building consent statistics, also contributed to the development of the Oxford Town Centre Strategy.

In late 2008 / early 2009, the Council undertook significant physical works to upgrade and beautify the Oxford town centre's Main Street between Mill Road and High Street. This was done in accordance with the Oxford Main Street Beautification Plans, which were prepared at the time by the Oxford Promotions Action Committee (OPAC), involving significant public input and buy-in. While this Strategy addresses opportunities relating to access into and within the Oxford town centre, it does not propose a redesign of the streetscape of Oxford's Main Street on a comprehensive basis, given the relatively recent energy and resources that were invested into this space in 2008/09.

This Strategy acknowledges and integrates existing proposals, plans and processes for town centre community facilities and open spaces, including the extension and upgrade of the Oxford Town Hall and the process and timeframes for developing a Reserve Management Plan and Master Plan for Pearson Park.

Expert advice was also sought and incorporated from urban design specialist, Context Urban Design. An Oxford Parking Survey was undertaken by Abley Transportation Consultants to inform the Strategy.

A draft Strategy was produced over March and April 2014 to gauge the views of the wider community about the directions signalled for the Oxford town centre. The draft Oxford Town Centre Strategy was released for public comment in accordance with the Special Consultative Procedure outlined in the Local Government Act 2002 on 10 May; submissions closed on 10 June 2014. A drop-in session was held on 28 May 2014 allowing members of the public an opportunity to view information summarising the draft Strategy and seek any clarification from staff and Steering Group members present.



Figure 1. Public drop-in session held 28 May 2014

A total of 16 submissions were received. Four submitters took the opportunity to speak to their submission at a hearing held on 25 June 2014. Changes were made to the Oxford Town Centre Strategy based on the decisions made on submissions by the hearing panel. The Council adopted this Strategy in August 2014.

Figure 2 shows the key milestones of the Strategy development.

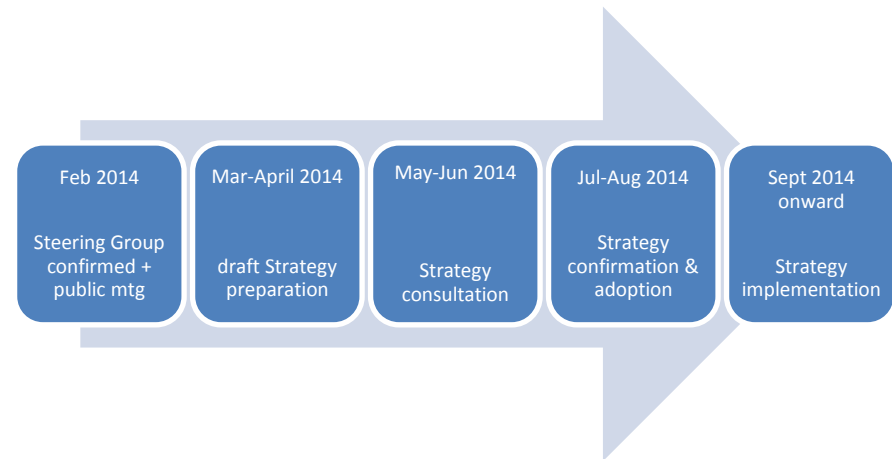


Figure 2. Project Timeline

setting the scene

What is the Oxford town centre?

The town of Oxford began as a sawmilling town in Colonial times and originally comprised two adjacent settlements of East Oxford and West Oxford. The town is centred around Main Street (State Highway 72) which runs in an east-west direction. Secondary streets lead off the Main Street both to the north and to the south.

The town centre is located on Main Street – Oxford’s commercial retail and service centre. Zoned for Business 1 activities are approximately 4.4 hectares of land along Main Street extending from just west of Dalley Lane to the west to just east of Burnett Street to the east. The extent of the Business 1 Zone is depicted in figure 3.

However, the core of non-residential activity stretches east and west of the land zoned for Business 1 activity – loosely to Bay Road to the west, the location of the town’s Seagar’s Café and Art Gallery, and to High Street to the east, the location of one of Oxford’s service stations.

Hence, the spatial scope of the Oxford Town Centre Strategy focuses on the extent and management of the land zoned for Business 1 activity, as well as the management of the road reserve through and immediately east and west of the town centre as depicted in yellow in figure 3.



Figure 3. Spatial scope of the Oxford Town Centre Strategy

The Oxford town centre services largely the immediately surrounding urban and rural Oxford area. The population of Oxford town as at the 2013 Statistics New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings is 1,905, which represents an 11% increase since the previous Census in 2006. Taking together Oxford urban and rural area, including Ashley Gorge, the population stands at 3,612, an increase of 21% since 2006.

Figure 4 illustrates the growth of the Oxford area (urban and rural) since 1991.

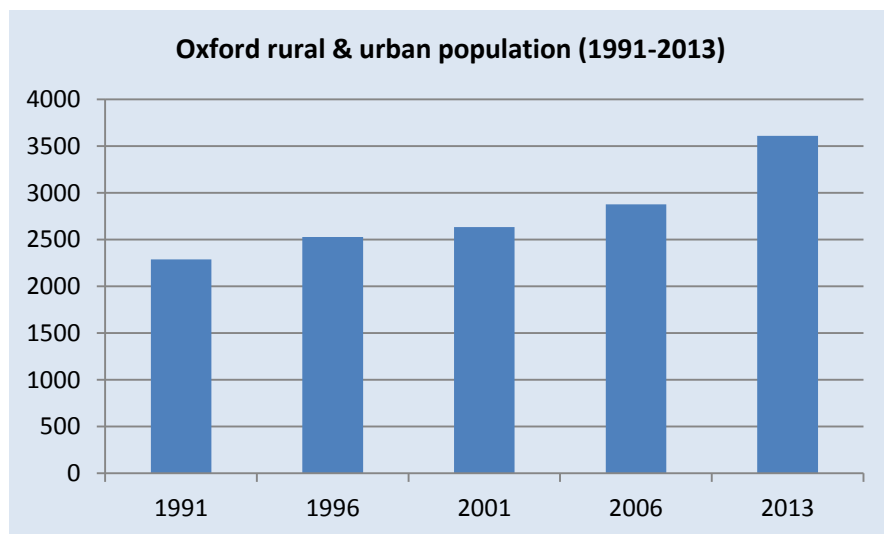


Figure 4. Source: Statistics New Zealand 1991-2013 Censuses of Population and Dwellings

Statistics New Zealand projects that the population of the Oxford area will reach 3,870 by 2021 and 4,220 by 2031, though this prediction could be conservative.

Residential building consents across the Waimakariri District reached a historic peak in 2013, with 1278 approved, compared to a previous historic average of 400-500 per annum. For Oxford town (urban), residential building consents have risen in hand, with 36 issued in 2013, up from 23 in 2012 and 8 in 2011.

Major non-residential investment in the Oxford urban and rural area is significant, with more than \$22 million invested over the past decade (almost half of which since the beginning of 2012). It is acknowledged that more than half this figure represents investment in the agricultural

industry. More than \$3.6 million of major non-residential investment over the last decade represents public sector resources, including community facilities owned and managed by the Waimakariri District Council, school facilities owned and managed by the Ministry of Education, and resources invested by the New Zealand Fire Service.

The Oxford town centre has seen some new developments and commercial investment in recent times, with the local supermarket on Main Street redeveloping, the introduction of new cafes, a planned new motel, a new commercial development containing a chemist and other shops, and a further new retail development on corner Main Street and Meyer Place.

The key goods and services that are available in Oxford town are heavily utilised by the local catchment community. The recent Oxford Area Community Survey identified that 84% of local residents who responded to the survey purchase some or all of their fuel in Oxford, 77% some or all of their chemist supplies and motor vehicle servicing in Oxford and 65% some or all of their groceries in Oxford. More than half of all survey respondents also source some or all of their veterinary services locally, frequent restaurants, cafes and takeaways in Oxford, and seek some or all their medical services locally.

The number of business units in the Oxford area (urban and rural) have also increased steadily, with a 23% rise between 2003 and 2013 and a 37% increase in the number of employees over the same time. Agriculture remains the largest sector and employer in the area. Almost 60% of people who live in Oxford work in the District, demonstrating a relatively high self-sufficiency ratio, compared to the wider Waimakariri District.

In 2010, the Waimakariri District Council conducted a Business Survey, which saw questionnaires directed to all businesses with a physical address in the District. Findings were reported by geographic locality. When businesses based in Oxford town centre were asked why they chose their current location for their business, in general respondents felt Oxford demonstrates a demand for their particular goods and services, promises real potential for growth in the wider area, offers an attractive setting along Inland Route 72, has good proximity to Christchurch, and is friendly and attractive.

Alongside historic and new commercial buildings, the centre of Oxford is also home to a number of community facilities and open spaces. A major feature of the town centre is the extensive Pearson Park on the north side of the town with extensive cricket, rugby and soccer facilities, swimming pool and gymnasium, tennis courts and playgrounds. Facilities also include the Oxford Town Hall, the Oxford Library and Service Centre, the Museum and meeting space at the Oxford Jaycee Rooms, and the Oxford Art Gallery.

What are the key issues facing the Oxford town centre?

While respondents to the Oxford Area Community Survey identify the range of shops, services and cafes on offer, the layout, accessibility and convenience of the town centre, and the landscaping, facilities and recreation opportunities centrally located as aspects most liked about Oxford town centre, they noted a number of aspects disliked. Some aspects were also reflected in feedback gained at the February 2014 project launch event.

Availability of town centre car parking is considered an issue among residents, particularly in the weekends when Oxford's population swells

with visitors. The volume of traffic along Main Street is considered high by many, with associated traffic congestion and road safety concerns. Pedestrian crossing opportunities over the Main Street are thought lacking. There are mixed views within the community about the practicality, safety and visibility of the streetscape treatments such as islands in the centre of Main Street introduced in 2008/09 in order to beautify the town centre and encourage a slower vehicle environment than previously.

Oxford residents greatly value the town centre's character and the quality of the traditional buildings along Main Street. In fact, 77% of Oxford Area Community Survey respondents are satisfied with its overall look and feel, and 82% state it is important to retain this. However, currently the Waimakariri District Plan provides little protection over the style of new buildings in Oxford town centre, other than enforcing a maximum building height of 15 metres and regulating for on-site car parking. There is no constraint on the style or design of buildings. With relatively abundant recent commercial development occurring in the town centre, the design of some new buildings have triggered mixed views among the community.

Commercial activities are somewhat sporadic along Main Street. While a commercial cluster exists in the core of the town centre within the Business 1 Zone, there is a lack of visual connectivity and cohesion between this and additional activities west of the Business 1 Zone, including Seagar's Café and the town's Art Gallery.

A number of residential dwellings located in the Business 1 Zone have been converted for commercial use. There are only a few remaining residential properties in this zone and these in their current state provide

limited opportunities to intensify the town centre for business activities. While residential buildings in the Business 1 Zone may be used commercially, this is not ideal in terms of making best use of the zoned land available and developing the town centre character, form and function.

Both the Oxford Town Hall and the Library and Service Centre complex require seismic strengthening. At the same time, the Oxford Town Hall is being significantly improved. A growing local community is likely to put pressure on the supply and appropriateness of community facilities which play an important role in maintaining and/or enhancing community cohesion. Similarly, open spaces and provision of playgrounds, sports and recreation spaces for varying activities are important to a growing local community, with Pearson Park anticipating development. The demographics of a growing local community are key to informing green space and facilities choices.

Considering these challenges, three strategic themes emerge, upon which the Oxford Town Centre Strategy is based:

- Business and built environment
- Access to and within
- Facilities and open spaces

the strategy

Vision

In planning for the future of the Oxford town centre, it is important to have a clear vision. Drawing on the key issues and challenges facing the town centre, the Council's vision for the Oxford town centre for the future is:

The Oxford town centre is vibrant, inviting, accessible and safe, with attractive buildings and spaces that reflect the unique character of Oxford, and facilities and open spaces that are well integrated into the heart of the town and strengthen the community.

The three key themes – business and built environment, access to and within, and community facilities and open spaces – and associated more detailed directions explored throughout this Strategy help contribute towards achieving this vision.



Key Theme 1: Business and built environment

The Oxford town centre's overall look and feel is greatly valued by the local community. Protecting and enhancing the character and quality of the town centre is vital as the catchment population grows and new business activity and commercial developments emerge. At the same time, the town centre's form and function needs to be carefully considered and planned for a growing commercial centre.

Protecting character: design guidance for Oxford town centre



A sense of place and rural character are valued aspects of living in a township such as Oxford. With the growth of Oxford, there is concern that these aspects could be lost or diminished. While some new commercial developments have been welcomed in style by the local community, others appear to present some challenges with integrating well into the existing built environment and look and feel that distinguishes the town centre character.

Main Street between Bay Road and High Street contains an eclectic mix of buildings dating from the late 19th Century to the present day. Non-residential buildings are nearly all single storey, although they vary in height. Despite the difference in style, the commercial buildings sit comfortably

together.

Oxford has a country feel and it is quite different to other town centres in the Waimakariri District. The identity of the town centre is due to a number of factors including the small scale of buildings, the mix of age and style of buildings including some attractive historic properties, the good relationship buildings have to the street, the lack of large expanses of the same building design or colour, and the open views to the north.

Through the Waimakariri District Plan, control is exercised over some aspects of development such as use, building height (currently a maximum of 15 metres) and amount of car parking provided. However, these controls can be perceived as insufficient to ensure good urban design outcomes and to safeguard village character.

Design guidance for commercial sites will be developed, and further District Plan provisions are likely to be introduced. The content of any design guidance needs to be fully explored but could cover the following matters:

- Site layout including where to place a building on a site, how to accommodate



parking, pedestrian and vehicle access

- Building size and design, including scale, relationship with the street (such as doors and windows) and materials to strengthen a theme
- Landscaping including potential setback between the street and the front of a building

Respondents to the Oxford Area Community Survey identified the importance of design controls for new developments within Oxford town centre and voiced concern over a potential ‘piecemeal’ approach to development in absence of a common vision or objectives for a consistent look and feel. Considered particularly important to control through planning tools were landscaping standards, the location and number of car parks, a reduced height limit for new buildings, and building style. The importance of strengthening Oxford’s village character and identity through the built environment was reiterated by members of the community who attended the Oxford Community public meeting in February.

However, striking the right balance between regulation and diversity will be important. Because part of Oxford’s charm lies in its variety of buildings it would be important to avoid imposing too much regularity.

Providing for growth: town centre business land

Zoned for Business 1 activities in Oxford are approximately 4.4 hectares of land along Main Street extending from just west of Dalley Lane to the west to just east of Burnett Street to the east. The extent of the Business 1 Zone is shown in figure 5.

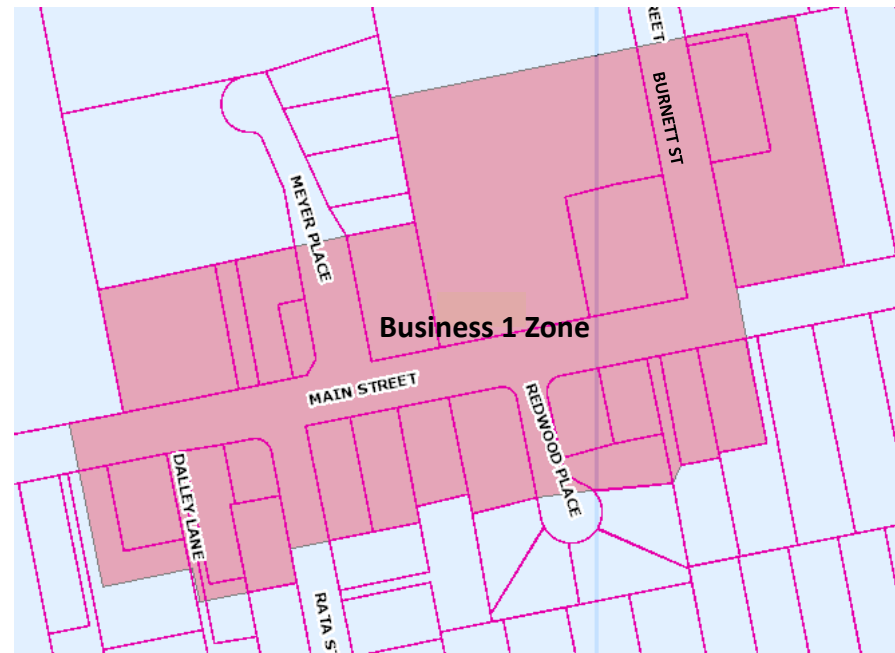


Figure 5. Oxford town centre land zoned for Business 1 activity

The Waimakariri District Plan anticipates that Business 1 Zones are “intended to be the dominant location of, and to be dominated by business, administrative, and cultural activities so as to:

- Help ensure an effective and efficient business sector by concentrating activity;
- Maintaining and enhancing the centres’ roles as the dominant community focal points;
- Retain nominated areas as more appropriate to pedestrian-related activity; and

- *Retain business activity that can support public services, facilities and amenities that will provide for the needs of workers, residents and visitors, in a quality, safe environment.*

Prior to the current Waimakariri District Plan which was made operative in 2005, the Oxford County Plan provided for commercially zoned land across three pockets in Oxford town centre, totalling approximately 3.075 hectares. Approximately 1,300m² were zoned to the north of the junction of Harewood Road and Main Street, just over 2,000m² at the north east corner of the intersection of Bay Road and Main Street, and a 27,400m² area largely to the north of Main Street in the location of the Business 1 Zone today.

The 2005 Waimakariri District Plan consolidated the land zoned for Business 1 purposes and increased provision by approximately 1.325 hectares. Demand for business zoned land has meant that most of the sites zoned for Business 1 activity are now occupied by commercial or community uses with the exception of a few remaining residential houses.

With the recent rise in commercial (re)development at Oxford town centre and a historic and projected growing catchment community, it is important to ensure sufficient opportunity is available and enabled for further appropriate business development, particularly given the community's desire for more and a wider range of local shops, as indicated in the 2013 Oxford Area Community Survey. This aligns with the Waimakariri Community Outcome *Businesses in the District are diverse, adaptable and growing*, to which *There are sufficient and appropriate places where new businesses are able to set up in our District* contributes.

In the short to medium term, there are opportunities to make better use of the land within the existing Business 1 Zone. Some intensification through additional development of sites, redevelopment of key sites and alteration and expansion of existing buildings within the current business zoned land is encouraged, to focus future development around shops and businesses already established in the Business 1 Zone and create a vibrant hub of commercial activities that is accessible and walking friendly. This would rely in part on redevelopment of residential properties. It is important that any plans for redeveloping sites in the Business 1 Zone are in keeping with the amenity and character that underpins Oxford town centre now. This option in the short term will involve commercial development and tenancy uptake monitoring.

The Waimakariri District Plan is currently undergoing a rolling review. As part of this, opportunities exist to consider the long term appropriateness of the spatial extent of the Business 1 Zone. As part of this, a demand and supply assessment for business activity in the current Business 1 Zone will be undertaken to identify the appropriateness of future business land options. Such assessment would take into consideration historic and projected growth of commercial activity, employment and population.

If concluded necessary, consideration could be given to expanding the existing Business 1 Zone at a time when a necessary level of demand is reached, to provide more land that is enabled for commercial activity. Expansion could be considered in an east/west direction, a north/south direction or in a combination.

Minor changes may also be made to 'tidy up' the existing Business 1 Zone by reviewing the boundaries across individual properties.

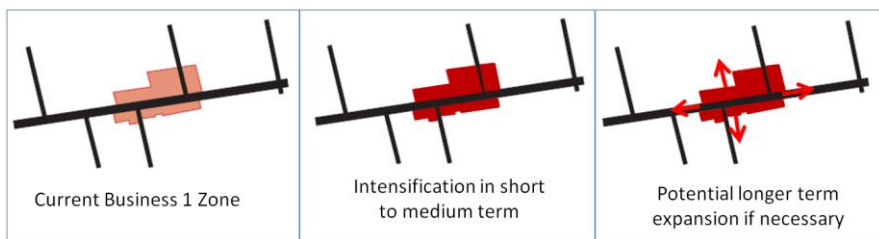


Figure 6. Current Business 1 Zone and short to long term options for Business 1 land

In any review of the Business 1 land it will be important to take into account the future of commercial and community buildings in High Street.

Increasing business stock

With historic and projected growth in population, a base of existing businesses, a scenic location relatively close to Christchurch and capturing the Canterbury weekend visitor market, together with opportunities to intensify business land, Oxford town centre presents opportunities for investors, developers and new businesses.

The Council and Enterprise North Canterbury (ENC), Council’s economic development agency, have a role in monitoring the supply, needs and demands of goods and services available to local communities. This is reflected in the Waimakariri Community Outcome *Businesses in the District are diverse, adaptable and growing*, meaning there are growing numbers of business and employment opportunities in the District and sufficient and appropriate places where new businesses can set up.

In April 2012, the Council adopted the Waimakariri Local Economic Development Strategy. This document provides a decision-making framework for economic development and clarifies the Council’s roles

and responsibilities in enabling and providing for a prosperous local economy. Among the Strategy’s priorities is *Attract and assist new businesses to set up in the District*. This means identifying and assisting significant businesses looking to relocate or establish in the District and those temporarily based locally to become permanent business residents.

ENC together with the Council developed a Waimakariri Business Attraction Brochure under the tagline “Where Business Belongs”. This is distributed widely and used as a key marketing tool to promote the District. It outlines that the District has space to grow, both commercially and residentially, a skilled labour force, a growing business sector, an exceptional lifestyle that draws new residents to the District, and a shared vision between Council and ENC for local economic success.

To provide more in-depth information about the Oxford area as a place to do business, the Council developed an Oxford and the Wider District Economic and Business Profile. This profile provides an overview of statistical information relevant to the business and the economic environment to inform business and investment decisions.

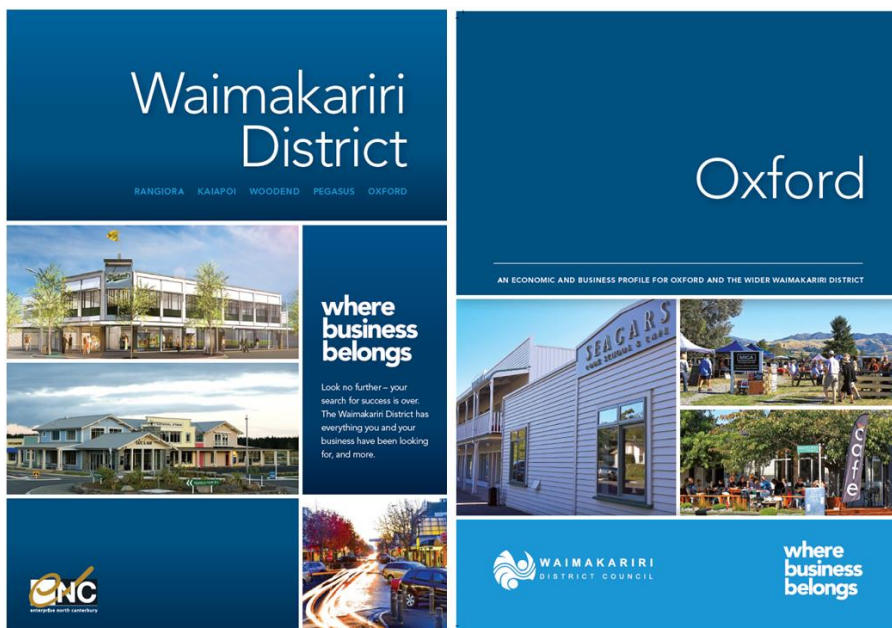


Figure 7. Waimakariri Business Attraction brochure & Oxford and the Wider Waimakariri District Economic and Business Profile

The Council and ENC will continue to use these documents to promote Oxford as a place to do business and to monitor trends in business activity in the Oxford area, as well as survey the community's needs for businesses and services.

In addition, ENC will continue to support and retain existing businesses in Oxford by providing immediate business support including training, coaching, mentoring and celebrating businesses, as well as seek opportunities for further engagement.

Key Theme 2: Access to and within

Access to and within the Oxford town centre is important to ensuring the town centre is functional, accessible, safe and vibrant. The provision of effective and efficient transportation systems is a key component of the Council's goals to pursue within the community a high quality physical and social environment as well as safe communities. Oxford's Main Street forms part of Route 72 which is also known as the inland scenic route that connects Amberley through to Geraldine and Winchester. This is a popular tourist route as well as a strategic road in the Council roading hierarchy. Any discussion of transport networks in Oxford town centre must acknowledge that the role of the Main Street is one of providing access to the town's business activity, amenity and connectivity to other centres but is also one of providing a thoroughfare for passing vehicles travelling between the eastern part of the Waimakariri District and inland Canterbury and beyond.

Enhancing Main Street environment

In 2007, the Oxford community initiated a project to improve the streetscape, safety and attractiveness of Oxford's Main Street. This was led by OPAC. The Council was presented with the Main Street Beautification Plans as a result and carried out street improvements in late 2008 / early 2009 to implement the these plans. The Main Street Beautification Plans sought to enhance Oxford's identify and sense of place through design that responds to and highlights the town's natural and cultural heritage and the features that combine to make it unique.

Implementation of the Oxford Main Street Beautification Plans followed significant community engagement undertaken by OPAC at the time. The works included threshold treatment on the eastern and western

approach by way of traffic calming effects through visual constriction of the roadway and the introduction of Oxford entrance signage.

Through the length of the town centre from just east of the Police Station to Bay Road are roadside planting beds, street narrowing points and central islands that were installed by way of implementing the beautification plans and to improve pedestrian connectivity and create a lower speed environment. These works help to define the town centre.

These treatments have resulted in an appropriately slow vehicle speed environment – the latest traffic counts taken between Meyer Place and Redwood Place in March 2014 show a mean speed of 42.6km per hour and an equivalent seven day average daily traffic count of 4,300 vehicle movements. This represents an increase in traffic of approximately 10% since 2010, which is typical of a road of Main Street's role and function.

However, despite these streetscape improvements, the view along the street is dominated by parked cars during busy



Figure 8. Main Street improvements

times. Attention could be paid to the streetside planting, planting within property boundaries and the frontage of Pearson Park (see Key Theme 3) to establish a more cohesive landscape setting for the town centre. More substantial planting in the roadside planting beds could off-set large expanses of road surface. Planting could be added in the vicinity of the High Street and Bay Road junction to the west and close to the Town Hall in the east to further strengthen the town centre entrances.

The safety and visibility of the traffic islands that were installed to define the town centre and provide safe pedestrian crossing points and a slow speed environment are a concern to the local community, particularly during low light or fog. Appropriate safety measures such as additional lighting and/or improved reflectors will be considered to alleviate such concerns. To address some community concern, the safety and manoeuvrability at pinch points adjacent to the centre islands will be reviewed.

Main Street's footpaths are wide and accessible, with generally good pedestrian crossing points at intersections including tactile pavers for pedestrians with visual impairments. However, with an increase in commercial activity in the town centre and a growing catchment community, as well as the desire to make the town centre accessible and attractive to pedestrians, the introduction of a formal pedestrian crossing point near the new supermarket will be installed. This will complement to some degree the existing formal pedestrian crossing points near Bay Road and Burnett Street, and will provide good pedestrian connectivity to the redeveloped supermarket.

The ongoing efforts of community groups such as "Keep Oxford Beautiful" and OPAC are acknowledged for improving public spaces in Oxford and

promoting Oxford to businesses and visitors. There could be an important role for community involvement through such groups to introduce further Main Street beautification initiatives.

Further opportunities to improve the amenity of the road reserve and of Main Street could be in the form of the Council, community groups and the Oxford resident community advocating to power company Mainpower for the removal of the currently overhead power lines. However this decision lies with Mainpower.

Providing parking opportunities

Provision of appropriate car parking spaces is important for a functioning and prosperous business community and town centre. The Oxford community identifies availability of car parking spaces in the town centre as an issue as gleaned from the 2013 Oxford Area Community Survey and from feedback provided during the February 2014 Strategy project launch event, particularly in the weekends when Oxford's population swells with visitors.

Car parking is currently available on the street and in public and private car parking areas within the town centre. The streetscape improvement works in 2008/09 included formalising parking spaces along Main Street and around adjacent street corners by way of marking spaces in order to make parking more efficient and effective.



Figure 9. Marked on-street car parking on Main Street

Currently supplied in Oxford town centre along Main Street between High Street and Bay Road, and immediately around the corners on side streets of Bay Road, Park Avenue, Rata Street, Meyer Place, Redwood Place and Burnett Street are 271 on-street parking spaces. Of these, 164 are on Main Street and 107 are on side streets. There are 14 time restricted car parks - 8 P30 and 6 P60 spaces.

Publically provided off-street parking is available at a number of community facilities including the Oxford Art Gallery, the Oxford Museum and Jaycee Rooms, and the Pearson Park frontage on Main Street functioning as the market car park. These total 47 spaces. A small number of parks are also provided behind the Oxford Service Centre and Library complex. The Oxford Town Hall which is currently being seismically strengthened and extended (see Key Theme 3) will provide another 24 off-street parking spaces when works are completed. Further off-street parking is provided by private businesses, including the supermarket

currently being redeveloped, which will cater for 26 car parks for its patrons.

A parking survey was undertaken in late March 2014 to investigate the occupancy rate and demand of existing parking spaces as well as duration of utilisation, in order to help appropriately scope any required parking improvements. Figure 10 illustrates on-street parking occupancy at peak hour of a week day (Thursday) surveyed and a Sunday surveyed.

Parking	Capacity	Thursday		Sunday	
		Peak Hour Occupancy (no. of vehicles)	Peak Hour Occupancy	Peak Hour Occupancy (no. of vehicles)	Peak Hour Occupancy
On Street	271	76	28%	111	41%

Figure 10. On-street parking occupancy and duration

Figure 11 demonstrates on-street parking occupancy of both surveyed days across the timeframe measured – 10am to 2pm.

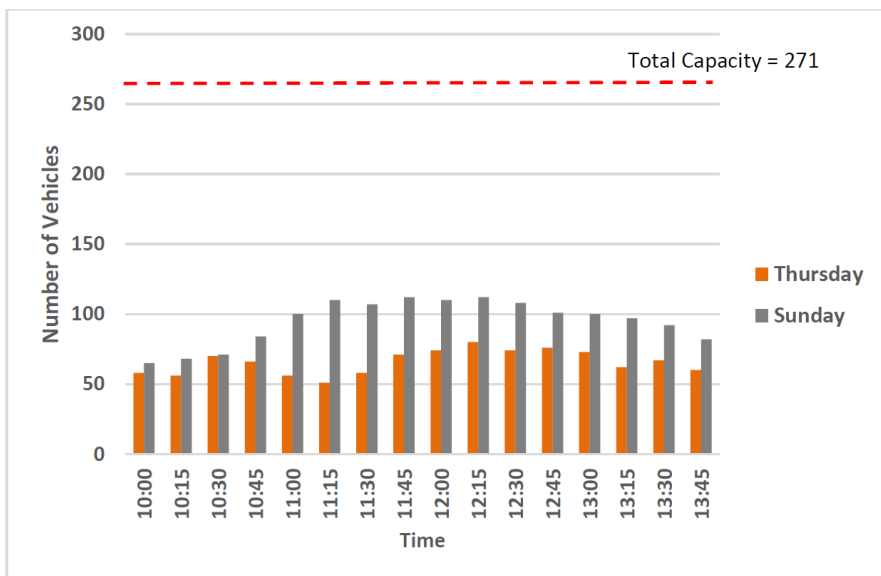


Figure 11. On-street parking occupancy between 10am and 2pm

Results show that generally speaking, there is ample supply of on-street car parking at peak occupancy times, with overall low occupancy rates. The survey shows that peak hour parking demand is 12 to 1pm mid-week and 11:45am to 12:45pm on Sunday; the occupancy of on-street parking spaces at these times are 28% and 41% respectively. The overall average occupancy during the survey period of 10am to 2pm was 24% on a Thursday and 35% on a Sunday. The Parking Survey Report identifies that 80% to 85% occupancy is considered the optimum range. It states that typically, occupancy between 20% to 39% results in inefficient use of space and measures should be taken to encourage better utilisation of parking spaces only being occupied between 40% to 59% of the time.

Mid-week, occupancy is relatively high at the junction of Main Street and in the vicinity of Café 51 and Under the Oaks. On a Sunday, occupancy

appears to be particularly high at the junction of High Street and Bay Road, in the vicinity of Under the Oaks and Café 51 and on Main Street opposite Burnett Street. However, even on a Sunday, there is ample on-street parking opportunity within 100 metres of the most highly occupied spots. The occupancy level of on-street parking spaces in a 100 metre radius from the market on a Sunday reaches a peak of 53% at 11:30am. Occupancy drops dramatically east of Burnett Street.

Furthermore, the parking survey identifies a high turnover of town centre parking, with the majority of vehicles parked for a maximum of 15 minutes in any one space, as depicted in figure 12.

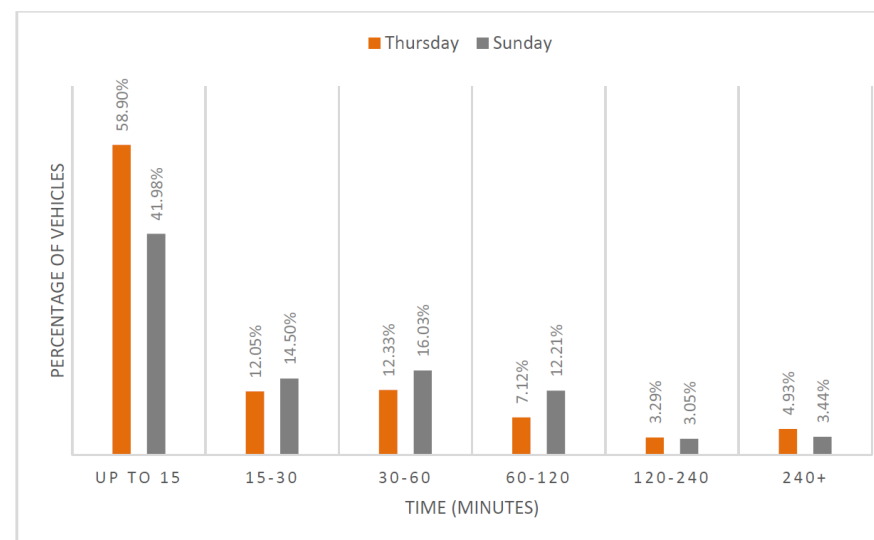


Figure 12. On-street parking duration of stay between 10am and 2pm

On a Thursday, 59% of vehicles parked for or less than 15 minutes, whilst 5% of vehicles parked for 240 minutes or more. The latter are thought to be those of employees or residents in the area.

The average occupancy levels for restricted parking areas on Thursday and Sunday were 48% and 58% respectively. The data also shows that the majority of vehicles were parked for half the allocated time for both restrictions – P30 and P60. Non-compliance occurs more frequently on a Sunday.

The occupancy of off-street parking areas surveyed was relatively low except for the market car park on a Sunday. On a Sunday, occupancy here was approximately 45% during the 4 hours survey period with a peak occupancy of 80% between 10:30am and 11:30am. Approximately 84% of vehicles were parked for a duration of less than 1 hour.

The current supply of car parks are located within close proximity to the core town centre area, though a good search route for finding parks could be aided by better signage, particularly to the Council supplied off-street parking areas, which are under-utilised at present. The community identified a desire to widen the vehicle entry/exit way at the off-street Jaycee Room carpark to enable larger vehicle including buses to utilise this space. This request will be investigated in the short term.

The Council will continue to monitor the occupancy and duration of its on and off-street parking supply to ensure supply continues to keep up with demand. The Council will also review the practicality of some spaces in locations identified by the community as enabling limited visibility such as at the Main Street and Rata Street junction.

Maintaining a safe and effective transport network

The Council seeks to “plan, provide, maintain, develop and improve the road and transport network so that it is affordable, integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable and it contributes to the attainment of high

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quality natural, living and productive environments within the District and assists development of a strong sense of community”. Its Rooding Activity Management Plan sets out how this will be achieved, through maintaining and operating the existing network, business continuity and emergency management, renewals and depreciation, and planning for future demand through new capital expenditure.

The Council will continue to maintain and enhance Oxford’s transport network, including planning for and responding to traffic increases, urban development, town centre access, connections between Oxford and other towns and rural areas, improvement of key intersections, car parking demands and signage reviews, cycleways, pedestrian safety and walkability.



Figure 13. Oxford Main Street

Key Theme 3: Facilities and open spaces

The Oxford town centre is rich in facilities and open spaces. The Oxford community greatly values the recreational and community facilities on offer right in the town centre. When asked what aspects are most liked about the Oxford town centre in the Council's 2013 Oxford Area Community Survey, the open green spaces, parks and the children's playgrounds were consistently identified by respondents, along with the array of facilities including the Art Gallery, Library and Service Centre, Museum and old jail, swimming pool and Town Hall.

Developing Pearson Park

Pearson Park is the key open space for Oxford. Covering approximately ten hectares the park extends from Burnett Street in the east to the Art Gallery in the west. To the north the park meets the Oxford A&P show grounds. Pearson Park intersects with Main Street at the space adjacent to the Oxford Service Centre and between the cenotaph and Art Gallery.

Pearson Park's central location provides good visibility into the park from Main Street and a green view penetrates the town centre and permits extensive views to the north.

The park contains a variety of different activities including a swimming pool, skate park, gymnasium, sports fields, oval, pavilion, tennis courts, two playgrounds, a cenotaph, the Oxford Museum, Jaycee Rooms and Art Gallery.



Figure 14. Playground at Pearson Park

The Council is currently preparing a Sport and Recreation Reserves Management Plan which includes Pearson Park. The management plan sets out how Pearson Park will be used, maintained and developed. The policies in the plan will help the Council make decisions on the day-to-day management of the park. A draft of the Sport and Recreation Reserves Management Plan was notified for public consultation between April and June 2014.

The draft Sport and Recreation Reserves Management Plan includes policies on the management of reserves; use of reserves; buildings, facilities and furniture; natural values and cultural values. These policies seek to encourage maximum legitimate use of reserves, including Pearson Park, for sport and recreation. The draft plan also seeks to prevent undesirable uses and to control uses that potentially affect the reserve, users and neighbours. The policies are flexible enough to realise

opportunities in the park (e.g. the old bowling club area), and to cater for changing communities and recreation trends.

The reserve management plan does not include development proposals or site layouts for Pearson Park. This detailed, site specific planning is undertaken through the preparation of a master or concept plan. Master or concept plans follow on from the reserve management plans and give effect to the policies in the management plans.

A master plan for Pearson Park will be prepared in late 2014. Council staff will work with the Pearson Park Advisory Group and the wider community to develop an overall plan that shows how the park can be developed. The master plan will look at:

- Paths for walking and cycling
- Vehicle entry and car parking
- Seating, rubbish bins, lighting and signs
- Layout of the sports fields
- Play equipment and other park facilities
- Any buildings on the park
- Trees and gardens

The master plan will also look at what could happen with the old bowling club area, including opportunities to create a better visual relationship with Main Street. The master plan will include the whole of Pearson Park area from the Art Gallery through to Burnett Street, as shown in figure 15.

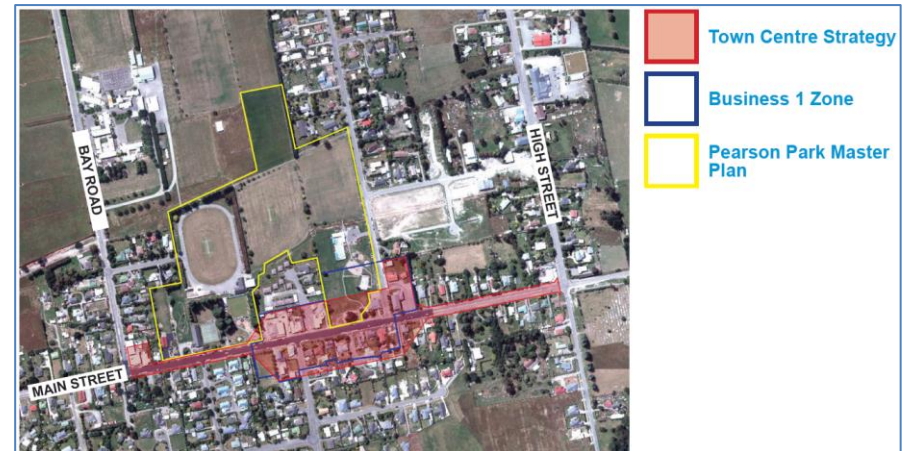


Figure 15. Pearson Park master plan area in relation to Strategy focal area

While the 2013 Oxford Area Community Survey confirmed the local community's satisfaction with the community and recreational facilities on offer, feedback gained at the Oxford community event held in February, and during the first round of consultation for the reserve management plans held in September 2013, identified opportunities for improvement. Ideas include more or better playground equipment, walking and cycling tracks through the park, BBQ and picnic areas, to name a few.

The master plan exercise for Pearson Park will take into account the wider strategic framework provided for the development of the Oxford town centre within this Strategy document, as well as issues and ideas raised through the Strategy development process. Specifically, opportunities should be sought to build on the existing cycle paths in Pearson Park and to provide good connectivity and lines of sight between different parts of the park.

Once the master plan for Pearson Park is in place, funding to implement the plan will be sought through the Council's Long Term and Annual Plan processes.

Linking Main Street: a continuous frontage

Much of the northern side of Oxford's Main Street is taken up by Pearson Park. While this allows expansive views to the north, access to the park and is greatly valued by the community, Pearson Park creates a disjointed town centre by breaking it up into three separate parts.

The 'core' of the town centre business activity (typically identified as the area surrounding the supermarket), the western town centre towards Seagar's Café and the Art Gallery, and the eastern town centre towards the Council Service Centre, Library and Town Hall, are disjointed by the junctions of the Main Street with Pearson Park frontage.

The western frontage of Pearson Park to Main Street extends across a distance of 127 metres and has a low frontage wall which provides a defined edge to the park. But beyond this the street frontage breaks down into an assortment of plantings in front of the museum, its car park and the Art Gallery car park.

On the eastern side of the town centre adjacent to the Council Library and Service Centre, the frontage of Pearson Park to Main Street creates another break, albeit across a smaller distance of 60 metres.



Figure 16. Pearson Park frontage to Main Street

The lack of a continuous built frontage creates poor linkages between the three distinct town centre areas. The fact the town centre appears 'disjointed' has been noted as an issue among the community.

Something which provides continuity across the whole frontage of Pearson Park could help to knit the western and eastern end of the town centre to the core centre. This could be achieved by planting uniform gardens in the park where it meets the street. A consistent frontage would make the northern side of Main Street appear more continuous than presently, linking Burnett Street through to Bay Road and would contribute to drawing pedestrians and visitors across all three sections of Main Street centre. A low wall in a similar style to that across the western

frontage pictured above could be introduced along the eastern Pearson Park frontage to provide consistency and a unified look and feel.

The provision of garden planting along the Pearson Park frontage and additional low wall fencing could be planned and implemented through the master plan for Pearson Park.

The Council will continue to work with groups / organisations such as OPAC, Keep Oxford Beautiful and ENC to provide good promotions material and consider enhanced directional signage to alert visitors of the range of town centre attractions available.

Providing community facilities

Community facilities located in the heart of the Oxford town centre include the Oxford Art Gallery, Library and Service Centre complex, the Oxford Museum and old jail, swimming pool and Town Hall. These facilities add great value to the amenity and character of the town centre.

The Oxford Town Hall, opened in 1931, is a significant presence in the centre of Oxford. The facility was closed to the community in late 2011 as it requires seismic strengthening work. In addition to regular movie showings and a craft market, the hall, prior to closure, played host to local community groups, service organisations and schools. The hall could also be hired for a range of functions or events.

The Oxford Town Hall is currently undergoing strengthening, improvement and extension works, which are scheduled to be completed by October 2014. It is expected the facility should be open for full community use in late 2014.



Figure 17. Oxford Town Hall prior to works, view from Main Street

The strengthening and extension works of the Oxford Town Hall include the retention of the existing auditorium and demolition of the current A & P Room and associated kitchen and store room. The auditorium is being strengthened and is undergoing heating, ventilation and lighting upgrades. The addition includes a new A & P Room which will seat approximately 90 people, ablution facilities, a kitchen and back-of-house storage and changing facilities. The addition also provides for a fully accessible entrance to both the new A & P Room and the existing auditorium – the linking space will be wide enough to use as a breakout area for tea and coffee. A significant advantage is that the A & P Rooms and auditorium will be able to be utilised separately. The finished project will be strengthened to 67% of New Building Standard (NBS).



Figure 18. Artist impression of the A&P Rooms. Source: Warren & Mahoney

The Town Hall's edge is currently defined by trees which provide a transition between the existing Business 1 Zone and the residential zone. The Town Hall is situated on a key strategic site, providing a bookmark to the town centre and key activity in the surrounding community facility cluster, which includes the Library, Service Centre and police station. A landscaping plan for the Town Hall has been approved. Opportunities exist to investigate pruning the western edge trees in order to ensure this statement building is appropriately defined within the wider strategic framework for the town centre.

The Oxford Service Centre and Library also requires seismic strengthening. Currently, it is being temporarily strengthened to greater than 67% NBS. The Council's 2014/15 Annual Plan identifies a key issue for the Council in the coming financial year will be determining a

permanent solution for this key facility. The Council has committed a study to investigate the future needs and demand for the complex.

Pending the outcomes of this study, if the Oxford Service Centre and Library is repaired or redeveloped, opportunities could be sought to better integrate the public civic space fronting the Main Street, the public toilets at this site and the garden with the adjacent Pearson Park frontage.



Figure 19. Oxford Library and Service Centre complex

There are opportunities to improve the entrances to the Jaycee Rooms and museum, particularly following the car park's recent sealing. An entrance to the museum directly from the adjacent carpark could be considered. This precinct forms part of Pearson Park and opportunities will be addressed and considered as part of the Pearson Park master plan.

To tie all of Oxford's green and community spaces together, a green space design guide will be developed. This will guide landscape elements in the town centre and influence landscaping for Council owned and managed community facilities and public spaces so that they are consistent and cohesive. The colour, materials, plants and features all then combine to create a place that celebrates the local community, and tells the local story.



Figure 20. Oxford Jaycee Rooms and Museum

As the number of people living in the Oxford area increases, the demand for spaces appropriate for community and recreational use will be monitored to ensure the availability keeps up with demand. The Council has an ongoing role in liaising with owners of non-Council owned facilities available for community use, in order to identify the opportunities available and any future intentions concerning facilities' use and development.

The Council will continue to provide and maintain safe and attractive facilities and open spaces in the heart of Oxford that the local community value. At the same time the Council will continue to monitor the community's needs for such spaces and places to ensure provision and the level of service is appropriate and meets local demands.



Figure 21. Arts in Oxford – Oxford Art Gallery

making it happen

Implementation framework

Council actions contribute towards achieving the Community Outcomes, which are the aspirations for the District as indicated by the Waimakariri community, and outlined in the 2012-22 Long Term Plan. The Oxford Town Centre Strategy contributes towards achieving a number of Community Outcomes, but particularly:

- Public spaces and facilities are plentiful, accessible and high quality
- The distinctive character of our towns, villages and rural areas is maintained
- Businesses in the District are diverse, adaptable, and growing
- There is a safe environment for all
- Transport is accessible, convenient, reliable, affordable and sustainable
- The community's needs for health and social services are met
- The community's cultures, arts and heritage are conserved and celebrated
- People are friendly and caring, creating a strong sense of community in our District

The Waimakariri District Council planned for budget provision for progressing Oxford Town Centre Strategy implementation in the 2014/15 year. Significant work involving Council expenditure over and above planned budgets to assist in realising this Strategy will be sought through future Long Term Plans and/or Annual Plans, on which the community will have the opportunity to comment.

High-level implementation table

The following is a high level implementation table which identifies key implementation actions and projects with indicative timeframes. Funding is subject to Council's Annual Plan and Long Term Plan (LTP) processes.

The indicative timing of key actions are depicted as short, medium, long term or ongoing. Short term means the action will be undertaken within the next 12 months. Medium term actions will be undertaken within the first three detailed years of the Council's 2015-25 LTP, being 2015/16 to 2017/18. Long term aligns with the latter seven years of the 2015-25 LTP and beyond. Ongoing actions are generally underway and already within Council's usual role and practices. Actions are grouped in line with the key themes that structure this Strategy.

Action	Timing
Key Theme 1: Business and built environment	
Develop urban design guidance to encourage good urban built outcomes when future development occurs in Oxford town centre, and introduce further District Plan provisions	Short
Monitor commercial development and tenancy uptake in the current Business 1 Zone	Ongoing
As part of the District Plan rolling review, undertake a demand / supply analysis for future Business 1 Zoned land	Long
Complete the District Plan car parking provisions review and Plan Change which impacts on the number and location of off-street car parking provided in business areas	Short
Continue to implement the Council's Local Economic Development Strategy and further distributing the Oxford Economic and Business Profile and Business Attraction Brochure to attract businesses.	Ongoing

Key Theme 2: Access to and within	
Design and provide more substantial roadside planting on Main Street to soften the landscape and to strengthen the identity of and entrances to the town centre	Medium
Review the safety and manoeuvrability of centre islands	Short
Investigate enhancing the visibility of centre islands through lighting and/or improved reflectors	Short
Install a new pedestrian crossing point on Main Street	Short
Together with groups / organisations and the wider community, advocate to Mainpower the amenity benefits gained from undergrounding the currently overhead power lines at Main Street	Ongoing
Investigate widening the entry/exit way at Jaycee Rooms and museum car park	Short
Review the signage to off-street parking in the town centre to promote a good search route	Medium
Continue to monitor the occupancy and duration of Council provided on and off-street parking supply to ensure supply continues to keep up with demand	Ongoing
Review the practicality of some on-street parking spaces identified by the community as difficult or offering limited visibility	Short
Continue to maintain and enhance Oxford's transport network	Ongoing
Key Theme 3: Facilities and open spaces	
Finalise and adopt the Sport and Recreation Management Plan which includes Pearson Park	Short
Develop a Pearson Park master plan and ensure this aligns with the vision and intended strategic outcomes of the Oxford Town Centre Strategy	Short

Investigate through the Pearson Park master plan planting uniform gardens and a continuation of the low wall in the park where it meets the street to provide a continuous frontage	Short
Investigate through the Pearson Park master plan opportunities to improve the entrances to the Jaycee Rooms and museum	Short
Investigate through the Pearson Park master plan opportunities to build on / improve existing cycling provision and lines of sight between different areas of the park	Short
Seek any additional funding required to implement the Pearson Park master plan through the 2015-25 Long Term Plan	Short
Continue to work with groups / organisations to provide good promotions material and consider enhanced directional signage to direct to town centre attractions	Ongoing
Complete the strengthening and improvement works including landscaping to the Town Hall complex	Short
Undertake a study to investigate the future needs of the Service Centre / Library complex	Medium
As part of any future works to the Service Centre / Library complex, seek opportunities to better integrate the landscaping, civic space and public toilets with Pearson Park frontage	Medium
Develop green space design guidance for Oxford's green and community spaces	Medium
Continue to monitor the demand for community and recreation spaces to ensure availability keeps up with demand	Ongoing
Continue to liaise with owners of non-Council owned facilities available for community use	Ongoing
Continue to provide / maintain safe and attractive facilities and open spaces	Ongoing

Monitoring and review

This is a new Strategy and issues and priorities may change, however, it is important that the Waimakariri District Council is accountable and committed to the directions, actions and desired outcomes signalled in this document.

This Strategy will be subject to ongoing review in light of the pace and development of the Oxford town centre. Progress towards actions identified in this document will be reported annually. An implementation table will be developed alongside the final Strategy document, both of which will be 'living documents' subject to review and adjustment on an ongoing basis.



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Context Urban Design: Janet Reeves.

Abley Transportation Consultants.

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