RANGIORA’S NORTH OF HIGH STREET
COMPREHENSIVE PRECINCT-BASED REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Introduction

1.1 What is a precinct plan?
A comprehensive precinct-based redevelopment plan (precinct plan) is a proactive blueprint plan for the physical development of a tangible block of land within a wider centre. A precinct plan provides a planning framework tool to achieve desired outcomes. It sets out locations of buildings, uses of spaces, parameters of any public realm, location of car parking, avenues for vehicular movement, pedestrian connectivity and other location-based outcomes.

For Waimakariri District, there are broadly three levels of spatial planning. District wide planning, largely set out in the Waimakariri District Plan, provides a spatial and regulatory framework that protects long term development patterns and environmental outcomes across the District. The District Plan is required to give effect to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement which sets out growth locations for the eastern part of the District.

The next layer is a local plan or strategy, such as the Strategy developed for Rangiora town centre in 2010, which identifies key issues and demands facing a town centre as well as opportunities for improvement and provides a framework for projects addressing local transport, amenity, character and public spaces.

A precinct plan is similar to a town centre strategy or plan but applies to a part of a centre with a distinct role and function to other parts of the same centre. A precinct plan is specific to a confined area and sets out to achieve tangible spatial outcomes.

The block of land located in the Rangiora town centre commonly referred to as ‘North of High Street’ encompasses the properties bounded by High Street (being Rangiora’s Main Street), Durham Street, Blackett Street and Good Street. A precinct plan for the North of High Street block of land is developed in recognition of the location’s role and importance in intensifying and strengthening the Rangiora town centre. The precinct plan identifies opportunities for comprehensive redevelopment across a variety of public and privately owned properties, some of which were significantly affected by the Canterbury 2010/11 earthquakes.
1.2 Why do we need a precinct plan?

The Canterbury Earthquakes
The Rangiora town centre was significantly affected by the Canterbury 2010/11 earthquakes. A number of key commercial buildings within the Business 1 Zone have been demolished in recent times. Some adjoining sites within the North of High block of land south of Blake Street require redevelopment following the Canterbury earthquakes. These sites, together with adjoining public land owned by the Council and currently utilised as the Blake Street car park area, provide significant opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment and hence intensification of land use for commercial and public realm purposes.

Developing a precinct plan for North of High Street puts into place a plan for how individual sites must be developed, in order to achieve holistic urban design, transport and other outcomes.

The Land Use Recovery Plan
Following the Canterbury earthquakes, a Land Use Recovery Plan (LURP) was prepared by Environment Canterbury, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Christchurch City Council, Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu, Selwyn District Council, NZ Transport Agency and Waimakariri District Council at the request of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery.

The LURP was gazetted in December 2013 and identifies 50 actions that local and central government agencies are to undertake to ensure earthquake recovery needs relating to residential and business land use are met.

Action 28 of the LURP states: “Waimakariri District Council to prepare comprehensive precinct-based redevelopment plans, based on the adopted Town Centre Strategies for Kaiapoi and Rangiora and, following engagement with affected property owners, businesses and the community, to enable the recovery and rebuilding of the centres. A request by Waimakariri District Council may be made to the Minister to use interventions under the Act to overcome barriers to addressing recovery and rebuilding issues that cannot be resolved through usual processes.”

In addition, Action 26 states that “Waimakariri District Council is directed, pursuant to section 24(1)(c) of the CER Act, to change or vary the objectives, policies and methods of its district plan to the extent necessary to provide for: Rebuilding of centres: i. zoning that defines the extent of each key activity centre; ii. implementation of comprehensive redevelopment plans for Rangiora and Kaiapoi town centres.”

Actions 28 and 26(ii) relate to the situation where a comprehensive approach to redevelopment across adjoining private sites and public space is desirable. This has been most evident in the North of High Street area for some time and now particularly following redevelopment opportunities as a
result of the Canterbury earthquakes. This document was prepared in response to Action 28 of the LURP, which informs Action 26(ii).

The Rangiora Town Centre Strategy
The Waimakariri District Council adopted the Rangiora Town Centre Strategy in 2010. This document provides a decision-making framework which the Council uses to make positive changes to the Rangiora town centre. The focus of this Strategy is on the Rangiora town centre in recognition of its role as a focal point of the town and its role in the Waimakariri District as a whole.

The Strategy identifies and addresses key issues facing the town centre, one of which is a growing local population and catchment area, creating a considerable demand for additional retail and office floorspace.

At the time of writing the Strategy, it had been estimated that the amount of retail floorspace in the Rangiora town centre will need to double from the then present 26,000m² by 2031. Estimates of the future need for office space in the town centre suggest that there is also a need for a similar growth of 20,000m² of office space in the area over the same period.

The Rangiora Town Centre Strategy identifies the preferred direction for growth of the core of the town centre to the north and south of High Street. This, it is considered, will ensure that the town centre retains its compact form, and encourages the concentration of activities to ensure the vibrancy, vitality and prosperity of the centre is enhanced.

Furthermore, the Rangiora Town Centre Strategy identifies the land bounded by High Street, Durham Street, Blake Street and Good Street as a priority area for redevelopment and enhancement of areas away from High Street. The upgrading of this area was considered closely linked with the opportunity for the Council to work with landowners on the north side of High Street to develop a public/private partnership to realise potential for their areas for parking and for new retail and commercial development with active ground floor frontages as a longer term goal for intensification.

Enhancing character and quality of the town centre by way of improving the pedestrian environment of the informal laneway linkages that lead from High Street north to connect to the Council owned Blake Street carpark within the North of High Street block of land is also identified by the Strategy.

1.3 How was the precinct plan developed?
This precinct plan follows significant community engagement and expert advice input to date.

Community engagement took place during the development of the Rangiora Town Centre Strategy in 2010, which among other things signalled the intention to see the north of High Street block of land developed and intensified. Consultation was undertaken seeking the views on an Issues and Concepts document. The final Strategy confirmed projects to redevelop the North of High block of land, enhance laneways and intensify the town centre to north/south.

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A number of one-on-one meetings have been held with all owners of properties in the block of land bounded by High Street, Durham Street, Blake Street and Good Street in early 2012 to discuss redevelopment options and ascertain property owners’ intentions for their sites. Five meetings were held over 2012 to discuss options and opportunities, ranging from individual redevelopment in accordance with an overall vision for the block through to comprehensive redevelopment of multiple sites. Expert economic and property advice was sought and presented to the group.

Council staff held a number of ongoing individual meetings with property owners and developers of properties requiring rebuild due to effects of earthquakes. In May 2013, an urban design concept plan was produced with the assistance of town centre and urban design expert advice Urbacity and Design Urban for discussion with key stakeholders. It is on this concept plan, which has since been peer-reviewed by Context Urban Design, that this draft North of High precinct plan is based.

Transport and parking advice has been sought and provided by Abley Transportation Consultants and their recommendations are incorporated into the concept plan (figure 3) or will be used to inform more specific detailed designs for particular developments in due course. An assessment of the plan addressing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles (CPTED) has been undertaken and recommendations have been reflected in the precinct plan or will be used to inform more detailed designs for developments in due course. An infrastructure services provision assessment has also been undertaken to consider possible effects of intensification of the sites in response to development initiatives. This considered existing capacity, future demand, and improvement opportunities that can be made at time of implementation.

A draft precinct plan was discussed with immediately affected property owners over some time and in particular leading up to the wider public notification period. It was also shared with owners of properties neighbouring immediately affected sites ahead of the notification process.

Notification of a draft precinct plan took place between 20 September and 17 October 2014. Twelve comments were received and six people attended a comments session on 7 November 2014 which provided the opportunity to speak to their comments in front of a comments panel of elected members. The panel made a number of recommendations based on all comments received and these are reflected in this final document.

This now amended final precinct plan draws on a wide range of information relating to the town centre already available and directions signalled within wider frameworks already adopted by the Council and gaining community momentum and significant stakeholder buy-in.

Furthermore, the precinct plan addresses issues raised by the business community and resident community reflected in numerous Council initiated surveys, which identify the community’s desire to improve linkages, provide better parking opportunities, enhance pedestrian walkability, increase the range and number of shops available in Rangiora town centre and deepen / concentrate the town centre.

The precinct plan was developed to signal directions for the North of High block of land and specifically to respond to Actions 28 of the LURP and inform Action 26(ii). Proposed changes to the Waimakariri District Plan including an Outline Development Plan are being submitted to the Minister for Earthquake Recovery in response to Action 26(ii) of the LURP by 6 December 2014.
Figure 1 shows the key milestones of the precinct plan development.

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**Figure 1. Project timeline**

- **2010**: Rangiora Town Centre Strategy
- **2012 - 2013**: Discussed development opportunities with property owners and developed Concept Plan
- **December 2014**: Gazetted Land Use Recovery Plan - direction to produce precinct plan
- **Jan - Aug 2014**: Refined precinct plan & proposed District Plan changes and consulted property owners
- **Sept-Oct 2014**: Notify wider public of precinct plan and proposed District Plan changes
- **Nov 2014**: Confirm and endorse precinct plan and proposed changes to District Plan
- **by 6 Dec 2014**: Submit proposed changes to District Plan to Minister for Earthquake Recovery
2. Setting the Scene

The block of land known as ‘North of High Street’, which is bounded by High Street, Durham Street, Blackett Street and Good Street is zoned for Business 1 activity and pictured in figure 2.

The Waimakariri District Plan anticipates that Business 1 Zones are “intended to be 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.

Currently, the North of High Street block is characterised by a previously continuous building / shop frontage along the north side of High Street at the south (now with gaps of demolished building sites), some office activity along Durham Street on the west, largely vehicle access and expansive views into the southern block along Blake Street, and some mixed commercial / office activity and access into the Service Lane along Good Street on the east.

In the centre of the Blake Street / High Street block is a Council-owned car parking area with some informal pedestrian linkages from High Street, underutilised privately owned rear sites of High Street businesses used for loading, car parking and some storage, and a Service Lane from Good Street.

The land between Blake Street and Blackett Street is largely characterised by a mix of residential and office activity, the latter mainly operating out of converted residential dwellings.

Figure 2 illustrates the predominant use of the North of High block in its current form.
The North of High Street block has a number of key attributes:

- Centrally located, which complements existing buildings and shops; reinforces the town centre as the ‘focal point’
- Responds to demand for additional floorspace
- Council owns a significant portion, creating an opportunity to influence or act as a catalyst for redevelopment
- Provides opportunities for good connectivity, road access, parking, pedestrian connectivity to High Street via laneways and the Good Street pedestrian laneway
- Zoned for Business 1, with consequent expectations of land use for retail, office and professional services
- Supports the function of the Key Activity Centre (KAC) - see proposed District Plan amendments in response to LURP Action 26(i)

Rangiora’s population as at the 2013 Census of Population and Dwellings was 15,021 people. This local population is expected to grow significantly over the coming years, in line with District wide growth. Rangiora town centre is seen as the local service centre by more than 60% of the District’s population, which, as at the 2013 Census, stood at 50,000. The District could be seeing a population of approximately 63,000 by 2025. Hence, the Rangiora town centre could be the local service centre by some 38,000 by 2025.
3. The Precinct Plan

The precinct to which this precinct plan applies is the block of land bounded by High Street, Durham Street, Blackett Street and Good Street, as shown in Figure 2.

Aims

The aim of the precinct plan is to strengthen the Rangiora town centre by creating an attractive, thriving and functional new precinct in the heart of Rangiora that takes advantage of opportunities for redevelopment created by the impacts of the Canterbury 2010 and 2011 earthquakes in a planned and comprehensive way, in order to create an urban environment that complements the character of the town centre and attracts businesses, investment and shoppers.

Objectives

The objectives of the precinct plan are:

- To intensify the land use by enabling much greater utilisation of individual sites than previously, therefore creating additional retail and office floorspace and providing a visually strong and attractive streetscape and continuous built urban space that results in a clustering and concentration of commercial activities, drawing and retaining people to the heart of the town centre
- To comprehensively provide public car parking in a purpose built retail and car parking building, as opposed to on individual sites, thereby increasing the usability and utilisation of sites for commercial activity and creating a more attractive built form overall
- To ensure good urban design principles are followed to create a strong and attractive built form that takes cues from the existing historic character of Rangiora’s High Street reflected in the architecture of appropriate building modulation, articulation, scale and style that celebrates Rangiora’s history and future form
- To provide new public realm and green spaces to soften the landscape, enliven spaces and draw people to the town centre
- To enhance pedestrian connectivity and encourage new movement corridors linking key spaces within the town centre and creating a continuous urban extension from High Street to improve the pedestrian experience
- To enable effective traffic movement including vehicular access to key new commercial activities within the precinct, comprehensive car parking areas, and rears of existing and new properties for efficient loading and manoeuvring
- To ensure sufficient services capacity and identify any opportunities for upgrading existing infrastructure

This precinct plan specifically proposes that a number of sites within the block of land south of Blake Street are redeveloped, this being the sites offering substantial opportunity for redevelopment and intensification following the effects of the Canterbury earthquakes and proposals signalled in the Rangiora Town Centre Strategy. Figure 3 is the concept plan for the North of High Street area south of Blake Street proposed for redevelopment, which depicts the envisaged development outcomes that address the objectives and contribute towards achieving the aims of this precinct plan. Following this are 3D conceptual images and a description of the key spaces shown in figure 3.
Figure 3. Concept plan for North of High Street, south of Blake Street
Figure 4. 3D conceptual image - looking north from High Street

Figure 5. 3D conceptual image - looking south towards High Street
The concept plan can be divided into the following sections or key spatial components:

**Buildings depicted in yellow and new laneway (A)**
The concept plan envisages the redevelopment of the sites comprising 188, 184, 182 and 172 High Street, which have been significantly affected by the earthquakes and have largely necessitated clearing. Redevelopment will involve subdivision and boundary adjustments of existing sites (pictured in figure 2) into four primary land parcels, three of which will coincide with the footprint of new commercial buildings (pictured in yellow), and one of which will form a new public pedestrian laneway connecting High Street to the existing Service Lane. Build out of near 100% of the new commercial buildings will be enabled. The design of commercial buildings will be such that they appropriately address the new laneway by way of providing active frontages, building modulation and articulation both onto High Street and onto the new laneway.

The new pedestrian laneway, depicted in blue in figure 3, will be developed as an urban extension of High Street, with good level of pedestrian and public amenity including street furniture, landscaping and high quality paving consistent with the finish of the new High Street areas of interest and a repaved Good Street, the works of which will be implemented as part of the Council’s High Street project from 2015 (in stages). A green space will be created at the north end of the laneway where it meets the existing Service Lane.

**Buildings depicted in purple (B)**
The concept plan envisages new commercial developments on the northern portion of existing sites at 156 to 168 High Street. These, along with a new high quality footpath along “New Street” (discussed below), will provide an attractive pedestrian route and walking-friendly loop between High Street, the new laneway, “New Street” and Good Street. The design and height will address the urban design rules detailed in the Waimakariri District Plan and meet new requirements to be inserted into the Waimakariri District Plan specifically addressing the precinct.

The remaining ‘bare’ (at grade) land between the new ‘purple’ development and the existing High Street commercial buildings at 156 to 168 High Street will provide access for loading, manoeuvring, and other ‘back of house’ activities, such as storage for waste for activities at 156 to 168 High Street. Access to the back of the new purple development and to the existing commercial buildings at 156 to 168 High Street will be granted over 156 High Street.

**“New Street”**
The concept plan envisages the construction of a new road corridor, labelled currently as “New Street” in figure 3. This will allow vehicular access into the precinct in a one-way direction between Blake Street and Good Street (subject to detailed engineering design). On-street parallel parking and short term stops will be available. Landscaping including street trees will enhance the street and complement the new green space at the north of the new laneway. Pedestrian footpaths will be installed on both sides of the street, which will be finished in a style consistent with the new High Street footpaths due to be installed (in stages) from 2015.

**Retail and car parking building depicted in red (C)**
The concept plan envisages the redevelopment of the sites comprising 15 Blake Street, 13 Blake Street, 11 Blake Street and a portion of 5 Blake Street. Sites will be amalgamated for the development of a new retail and car parking building in the location shown in red in figure 3. The
ground floor will be retail premise(s) and multiple levels of public car parking will be provided above. The design of the building will appropriately address the “New Street” and Blake Street, will address the urban design rules detailed in the Waimakariri District Plan and meet any new requirements to be inserted into the District Plan addressing the precinct. The angled frontage at the southeast corner will be the primary entrance to a retail activity. The bulk of the current 15 Blake Street site will provide access to both the car parking building and the rear of a number of properties fronting Durham Street and High Street.

Buildings depicted in green (D)
The concept plan envisages the amalgamation of sites comprising 3 Blake Street and a portion of 5 Blake Street for the development of new commercial buildings in the location shown as green in figure 3. New buildings will front the “New Street” both in a north-south direction and east-west direction, along the current Service Lane. These, along with a new high quality footpath along “New Street”, will provide an attractive pedestrian route and walking-friendly loop between High Street, the new laneway, “New Street”, Blake Street and the Good Street laneway.

Generally the design and height will address the urban design rules detailed in the Waimakariri District Plan and meet new requirements to be inserted into the Waimakariri District Plan specifically addressing the precinct. Some loading and manoeuvring is envisaged behind the buildings.

Loading, manoeuvring and access
The use of land behind existing commercial buildings is envisaged to continue to provide space for loading, manoeuvring and limited off-street car parking where practical. Providing access to some new developments will require right of way access across some existing sites.

Sites north of Blake Street
In addition to developments detailed above and depicted in figure 3, this precinct plan proposes that any future development of sites along the north side of Blake Street are built up to the road, with active frontages onto Blake Street, in order to provide a good interface with proposed development within the Blake Street to High Street block of land and protect the pattern and intensification of development into the future.
4. Implementing the precinct plan

Implementation of the precinct plan relies on a number of key interrelated factors.

Development of the necessary sites depicted in figure 2 and 3 requires site amalgamation. The Council owns a significant portion of land, being 5 Blake Street. However the precinct plan envisages redevelopment of privately owned properties (some partial) for built development. These sites are marked by a star in figure 6 below. In addition, for the precinct plan to be effective, access is required over some partial property for (service) vehicles at 210, 206 and 202 High Street.

In some cases, the Council will be the primary vehicle in attaining and amalgamating the private sites required for built redevelopment in question, where necessary (i.e. where the current owners have no interest in redeveloping their sites themselves). Discussions have been held and are ongoing with all immediately affected property owners. In instances where the Council cannot reach agreement for amalgamation of necessary sites, it may choose to make a request to the Minister for Earthquake Recovery to use interventions under the CER Act to overcome barriers to addressing recovery and rebuilding issues that cannot be resolved through usual processes, in accordance with Action 28 of the LURP. The Council will also continue to have discussions with property owners where access is required.

The Council is not envisaging being the primary developer of areas depicted in figure 3; rather it would sell the necessary land to the development sector for implementation, working closely to assure the outcomes detailed in this precinct plan are met. In the case of the retail and car parking...
building shown in red in figure 3, it is envisaged that the Council would retain unit title(s) for the portion of the total development for public above-grade car parking purposes, making this component a public/private collaboration.

The Council will own and manage the public spaces depicted in figure 3, being the new laneway and “New Street”.

The Waimakariri District Plan is the key regulatory mechanism for ensuring developments that occur in this precinct do so in accordance with this precinct plan and meet the objectives outlined within it. Action 26(ii) of the LURP directs the Waimakariri District Council, pursuant to section 24(1)(c) of the CER Act, to change or vary the objectives, policies and methods of its district plan to the extent necessary to provide for implementation of the precinct plan. This District Plan change with the accompanying Rangiora Central Outline Development Plan is a separate document and is being submitted to the Minister for Earthquake Recovery by 6 December 2014. Action 26(ii) is a statutory direction, which enables Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 powers to direct changes to Resource Management Act documents and other statutory instruments. Action 28 supports these changes and helps to achieve the desired outcomes.

The implementation of the precinct plan, particularly the development of the retail and car parking building pictured in red in figure 3 has financial implications. It is intended that full costs related to the implementation of the precinct plan will be further determined and tested with both the Council and the wider community through the 2015-25 Long Term Plan process.