

# New Plymouth Central Area Site Survey

DM 1352465



Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Ngāmotu  
NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL  
[newplymouthnz.com](http://newplymouthnz.com)



## The Significance of the Central Area

New Plymouth's Central Area is and has always been the district and region's most vibrant and active urban place since it was surveyed and the township was established in 1863. It's important the Central Area maintains vitality because its strength is closely tied to the strength of the district and region as a whole. Its key role is providing the commercial, cultural and social centre for the large district it serves. Over time these uses and activities shape the Central Area so that it reflects in a condensed space the shared identity of the diverse Taranaki people.

The Central Area is the district's primary commercial hub, and a focal point for business, tourism, retail and entertainment. Recreational features, facilities and event venues are linked to the Central Area by the foreshore walkway, Pukekura Park and off street pedestrian and cyclist routes in addition to the transport network.

There is a residential population that wraps around the core and some recent CBD residential developments that expand the life and hours of operation for the Central Area. The Central Area is still approximately the geographic centre of the New Plymouth urban area, situating it as a shared meeting point for New Plymouth District residents. The historic grid pattern of the Central Area streets and blocks provides a comprehensive system that is well linked to the wider transport network. The Coastal Walkway, Puke Ariki Landing and Huatoki Plaza are key offstreet public spaces. In addition, the streets comprise a significant supply of public space.

The Central Area's urban environment is unique because of the richness present in the cultural history of the place, heritage buildings, public spaces and underlying natural environment.

## Structure of the Survey

This New Plymouth Central Area Site Survey has been prepared to take stock of the existing condition in the Central Area; to assist discussion and to support community feedback on urban design issues in the Central Area.

### *The site survey includes:*

An abbreviated history of the Central Area with past achievements highlighted through a 30 year timeline of relevant major events. The strategic context is provided with an overview of relevant statutory documents. Site analysis is provided through a site survey of the area and its people to provide a basis for the vision and principles, and a bench mark for future monitoring.

### *Based on the information received during consultation a document will be produced that:*

Contains the vision, objectives and goals for the future design and functioning of the Central Area. It will be the result of community consultation and across Council collaboration. It will respond to the information gathered and current best practice guidelines with Council endorsement and community buy-in.

### *The final document will include:*

An action plan- The scope of the 30 year action plan is set around co-ordinating and prioritising Council strategy, policy and capital projects along with minor improvement projects in the short term and investigations into viability of strategic projects for implementation in the long term. Formal reviews for the vision and plan will be scheduled.

# Tangata Whenua

## Colonial Design Model

New Zealand cities display, cherish, nurture and even reproduce unmistakable signs of their colonial past, not only in architecture and monuments, but urban design modelled on British examples, public parks modelled on English landscape design, gardens, imported trees and vegetation and imperial urban landscapes. The stories about our cities and even their identities are constructed in such a way as to reinforce their colonial past while at the same time negating their precolonial Māori origins. The perception is that our cities began with colonisation (Matunga, H. 2000).

Indigenous Māori stories, histories, important landscape, names of places, sites of importance, settlements have, in the process been silenced, removed, destroyed, re-routed or paved over during the colonial encounter. Tangata whenua have been pushed out to the margins of the city, relocated elsewhere, emigrated or been assimilated and engulfed by the city. In other words, a superimposition of colonial aesthetics, design, vegetation, monuments, parks and gardens on the tangata whenua of the city and their space has occurred. Consequently a reimagining, representing and retrofitting of the city needs to be processed and linked to the restoration of indigenous communities and the social, cultural and environmental values of these communities (Matunga, H. 2000).

## Central Urban Area

There are many layers of history for the area that is currently known as the New Plymouth Central Area. From the time of Awanui-a-Rangi, the eponymous ancestor of Ngāti Awa/Te Atiawa iwi, or the inhabitants known as Te Kahui Maunga who it is claimed lived on a spur overlooking coastal and northern Taranaki before the arrival of the mountain Taranaki, or the arrival of the moa hunters, there has been continual occupation of this and surrounding areas from time immemorial.

## Ngāti Te Whiti

The Ngāti Te Whiti rohe (tribal area) extends from the Herekawe Stream to the Waiwhakaiho river, inland to its headwaters on Maunga Taranaki and back to Herekawe. Ngāti Te Whiti traces descent from its eponymous ancestor Te Whiti O Rongomai who lived in the late 1700s and today are the embodiment of the many former hapū and whanau groupings who lived within the present day area of New Plymouth. Ngāti Te Whiti mana whenua is founded on customary precepts of discover, descent, kinship and ahi kaa roa (long term occupation) (Mana Whenua Reference Group, 2006).

Ngāti Te Whiti have a very long and unified history of at least a thousand years which incorporated descent and discovery; of occupation and extensive settlement; of activity, growth, nurturing and mana, of war fare, retreat and reoccupation. Their rohe was at critical times, extensively populated, although there were considerable fluctuations. At the time of the first European arrival, some land had been cleared of bush for settlement and cultivation. There were numerous Māori settlements situated along the coastline and the inland watercourses. E.A. Carrington, Chief Surveyor for the Plymouth Company in giving evidence to the select committee in 1844 stated that there were more pā in the New Plymouth District than in any other place in New Zealand. Carrington also estimated that 10 000 fighting men ... not 20 years since ... inhabited the territory between the sugar loaves and Waitara. Evidence today points to almost 70 pā sites within the Ngāti Te Whiti rohe (Ngāti Te Whiti, 1991).

Many of these pā sites and kainga (villages) were located close to food gathering sources such as the rivers, sea and forests. The numerous fortified pā site locations had been strategically chosen for the geographical features which also allowed good visibility for approaching enemies, or boundaries which provided difficult access due to cliffs, rock faces and/or sea and also providing escape routes. It is unfortunate that many of these sites have long since been developed upon, left to regenerating bush, or turned into farmland where cattle and horses have trampled and stomped all over the remaining features of the pā.

It is hardly surprising the current Central Area was also once the thriving centre for Ngāti Te Whiti settlement, commerce and trade. However, perhaps the most striking feature today is the almost complete absence of any trace of a once local, indigenous people who resided, over time, in significant numbers off the resources of the forest, the coastline, the sea, and the land over which New Plymouth now stands (Ngāti Te Whiti, 1991).



## Original Landscape

One of the most prominent features in the pre-european landscape of the Central Area was that of Puke Ariki Pā site, an imposing feature of the Central Area which commandeered the mouth of the Huatoki Stream and extended as far as the present day cenotaph and Richmond Estate building. It comprised extensive earthworks, portions of which were named as Kai Ngutu, E Rangi and on the marae atea below, Parahuka. Another section of Puke Ariki was Pukerangi, to the south and beneath the Devon Port

Flats. Pukerangi served as another marae atea for Puke Ariki. Many of the generations of Ngāti Tawhirikura, Ngāti Tuparikino and Ngāti Te Whiti rangatira were buried within these earthworks (refer to map above).

Puke Ariki, meaning 'hill of chiefs' was, according to Ngāti Te Whiti traditions, founded by the chief Te Rangi-apiti-rua and was a prosperous and important political hub. Te Rangi-apiti-rua was related to both Ngāti Te Whiti hapū of Te Ati Awa iwi and Ngā Potiki-taua section of the Taranaki iwi but it is reported that he was disliked by both groups and considered deceitful.

His governance however is said to have extended into the Te Henui and Huatoki valleys, incorporating other major pā sites such as a Wharepapa, Purakau, Pukewharangi and Puketotara. Geographical features of these last 2 pā sites can still be clearly seen today behind the main campus of Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki.

There are many stories associated with Puke Ariki, one of the most well known relates to the naming of part of the pā site known as Parahuka. Two half brothers, Aniwaniwa and Ruaroa, both sons of Te Whiti, were opposed

in disposition. Aniwaniwa was known as a talker who was boastful, but also somewhat lazy, who spent most of his time travelling around the countryside visiting relatives and people. He would often brag about the fertile soil of Puke Ariki and extend invitations to his hosts to visit his home and partake in the abundance of food on offer. Of course a number of these invitations were acted upon resulting in the continual arrival of visitors to the pā. As is traditional under tikanga Māori, hospitality was always extended to these visitors who were fully and abundantly fed even though as often was the case, the people of the pā went without or had limited rations of food. Aniwaniwa however showed little concern for his people and instead welcomed all and sundry. The brunt of such actions fell on Ruaroa, the stay-at-home worker and provider. So in derision, he renamed the marae atea of the pā Parahuka, meaning spital, frothing of the mouth as it was here that his brother Aniwaniwa used to speak empty frothy words.

The name of Parahuka remained right up until the time that Puke Ariki was vacated in 1830s following incursions by musket bearing Waikato iwi. Ngāti Te Whiti moved to Otaka Pā at Ngāmotu, and this pā site is now located underneath the port cool stores. Not far from the cool stores is the grave of one of the well known Ngāti Te Whiti chiefs Pohorama Ngāti Te Whiti who governed the hapū at the time of European arrival and the subsequent land issues that arose. In 1844 Pohorama Te Whiti stated to the Commissioner Spain: 'I do not wish them (settlers) to extend their cultivations, our cultivations on the sea side are not to be trespassed, our pā at Huatoki is to be left in our possession and Puke Ariki is an old favourite pā of our forefathers and we wish to have it back. In the 1850s and 1860s Puke Ariki was the scene of much protest from Ngāti Te Whiti due to continued land selling. From the 1880s the pā earthworks were progressively demolished and the hill was levelled for the Huatoki estuary reclamation.

Just a short distance away from Puke Ariki Pā, across the Huatoki was Te Kawau Pā whose original name was Kai Arohi and was located where Centre City complex now stands. Te Kawau was a kainga or village where the residence from the overflow of people from Puke Ariki lived. It held extensive cultivations which probably served to feed the vast numbers of inhabitants both from Te Kawau and Puke Ariki.

Another prominent pā site on the edge of the Central Area was that of Pukaka, or Marsland Hill as it is now known, and in its original state stood approximately 220ft above sea level. This imposing pā was partly constructed by the Potiki-taua people of the Taranaki iwi, but was completed

by Te Ati Awa iwi after driving the former people out. It is said to have been a splendid specimen of an old Māori stronghold prior to the military occupation of the pā in 1856. It must have also been quite impenetrable as there is little historical evidence of it being attacked or overrun. Pukaka was still well occupied along with Puke Ariki at the time that Waikato invaded Taranaki in 1832 but the inhabitants abandoned both these pā and the large cultivations on the northern side of Huatoki which were sown with kumara, taro and small patches of potato. The chiefs of these pā at this time, Te Whetuki, Te Whatarauhe, Roriki and Te Teira-Kiaho moved their people to the Otaka pā at Ngāmotu. By 1841 when the survey of New Plymouth was starting, Pukaka was covered with beautiful growth of karaka, rewarewa, rangiora, kohekohe and similar native trees. It is stated that at its northern base flourished one of the most beautiful karaka groves it was possible to imagine.

The smaller pā of Mawhera was located further inland along the Huatoki Stream, approximately where Radio Taranaki is situated. Mawhera Pā was tauranga waka or canoe landing site and provided a place where produce could be moved by waka to Mawhera and carried to the nearby pā site of Pukaka mentioned above, and then further into the interior along trails that linked to the pā of Pukewharangi, Parihamore and Puketotara. After Pukaka was abandoned, Mawhera continued to operate as an entrance to inland trails.

The Ngāti Tuparikino kinship group of Ngāti Te Whiti were kaitiaki of the Waimanu or Pukepupuru Pā which was located about where the current New Plymouth Working Mens Club is now sited on Gill Street. This was another important pā within the Central Area, and at the time of Te Rangi-apiti-rua, the Waimanu people were governed by brothers Weromanu and Manukino. It is not surprising that the people of Puke Ariki and Waimanu were often at odds with each other given the history of conflict that had occurred between Taranaki and Te Ati Awa iwi.

A cause of great disagreement sprung up between Te Rangi-apiti-rua and the Waimanu chiefs regarding a particularly precious resource and food of great mana, namely the piharau eel. Weromanu and Manukino were kaitiaki of a toka or boulder situated in the Huatoki Stream (under the Mill) and where the pā tuna were set to catch the piharau. Over a season or two, the men noticed that the pā tuna was not providing any piharau and decided to stake out the site as they were obviously suspicious at the reasons for the lack of eels. They soon discovered that the people of Puke Ariki were raiding the Pā tuna, and this was a great insult to the mana of the Waimanu people. This insult soon started a war that went on for a long period with each pā besieging each other and causing a great loss of life. Eventually the major dispute was only settled after the intervention of Te Potaka, a chief from Ngāpuketuru. His reasoned argument and recitation of whakapapa that connected the two peoples was able to secure peace, and end the war.

The water sources of the central urban area have been substantially altered or drained since the arrival of Europeans. Freshwater and sea water were not only the source of sustenance for the body in terms of fish, shellfish, seaweed and other foods but also sustenance for the spirit in that it was the source of tribal identity and pride, mana and rangatiratanga. The extensive natural swamplands within the Ngāti Te Whiti rohe were the source of raupo leaf which was used for thatching and the harakeke or flax which was used for clothing, matting, binding, and a raft of other uses. The extensive surrounding forests had long been the communal source of bird life, of nikau, mamaku, tī, karaka and hinau berries. While some berries were part of the daily diet of the local people, other berries, particularly titoki, were used to make sweet smelling oil which was rubbed on the body and was particularly suited for the thick black hair of the Māori, making it shiny and glossy.

### *Ngā Hau e Whā (Right)*

*This stone sculpture in Puke Ariki represents 'Ngā Hau e Whā' the four winds of Tāwhirimātea (God of Winds). The figures are based on Taranaki carvings held in the Puke Ariki collection. Ngā Hau e Whā symbolically carries the message of Puke Ariki to the people of Taranaki, New Zealand and the World. It was gifted to the New Plymouth District Council for Puke Ariki by Te Kupenga Stone Sculpture Symposium Society.*

## Māori Principles for the Urban Design Framework

The Ngāti Te Whiti and Te Atiawa landscape is difficult to identify in the current design of New Plymouth's Central Area despite the lengthy occupation of the area. Only a few names such as Puke Ariki, and the Huatoki Stream remain to remind us of an earlier people. It is therefore important for the traditional icons of Ngāti Te Whiti and other Ngāmotu hapū to be reinstated and placed alongside existing ones. Māori concepts, place names, identifying natural features, landscapes, sites of significance and prominent tupuna need to be celebrated through the urban spaces that are created. For example, during the development of the New Plymouth Heritage Strategy, the Tangata Whenua Heritage Reference Group noted a strong desire for Council to consider recognising view shafts which provide sightlines directly to their ancestral mountain, Maunga Taranaki. Maunga Taranaki is the source of cultural identity and mana for all iwi in the region and as such, providing places within the Central Area where this icon can be viewed would be of value to tangata whenua.



# Urban Development

*The most ordinary looking landscape can be filled with values.*

*European Landscape Convention*

## Frederic A. Carrington

*-The Father of New Plymouth (epitaph at St Mary's cemetery)*

Frederic A. Carrington a *conscientious, skillful and dedicated* surveyor and draughtsman selected the site to survey for the New Plymouth settlement in 1841 based on the proximity to the Sugar Loaf Islands and the Huatoki Stream. The undulating topography, dense vegetation, wet, cold weather, and primitive accommodation made surveying a formidable task. European's criticised the location because of the lack of a natural port while Māori disputed possession of the land. The depression of the early 1840's strained resources further. Settlement of New Plymouth was an extreme challenge involving many contributors who made their mark; the achievements of that time laid solid foundations that the Central Area benefits from even today.

In 1857, Carrington, as the regional Engineer, was responsible for establishing the transport network. In the 1870's Carrington worked on advancing the construction of a port near the Sugar Loaf Islands. In 1876 Superintendent Carrington officially opened Pukekura Park which would become the jewel of the city's recreation facilities (Tullet, 2010).



*Carrington's survey of New Plymouth*

## The City Grid

The classical rectangular grid layout that Carrington applied to the New Plymouth area is characteristic of urban design concepts at the time. New Plymouth is one of the more dynamic landscapes in New Zealand the formal grid lines have harnessed. The 20m wide streets are laid out in blocks typically 100m wide by 150-250m in length. The long blocks are often divided with smaller scale service lanes that become informal pedestrian short cuts to make the area easier to travel by foot. The slightly smaller block size at the centre of the Central Area is a focus for pedestrian activity and public life.

The grid layout emphasises several landmarks of New Plymouth:

- The 20° angle from true north of the street grid that aligns with the Central Area coast line
- The breaks in the grid formed by the Huatoki Stream that runs through the Central Area
- The protected views of the Tasman Sea that are obtained from along the north south streets visually contributes to a distinct sense of place and are used as an orientating device.
- The straight lines of the street occurring over the topography of the Central Area leads to shared orientation cues e.g. the location of businesses along Devon Street referred to as 'on the hill,' or 'on the flat' accentuating the local topography



*New Plymouth street grid*



## Other Central Areas

*The New Plymouth Central Area is comparatively a long and large area.*

The way the Central Area has developed can be described as linear; Devon Street the primary retail street boasts the longest and straightest main street in New Zealand. This is a valid form of development but presents a characteristic set of challenges for creating a vibrant public environment e.g. disconnection between distant destinations are often found.

The images below show a comparison of the site surveys Central Area with other business areas. Rotorua has a similar population but a more condensed business area.



Rotorua Central Area overlaid on the New Plymouth base map



Wellington Central Area overlaid on the New Plymouth base map



Taupo Central Area overlaid on the New Plymouth base map



Melbourne Central Area overlaid on the New Plymouth base map

The Taupo business area is much smaller and serves a smaller population, but it's compact form creates a more distinct centre. The Wellington and Melbourne Central Areas are larger but still comparable to the New Plymouth Central Area in size yet they are significantly greater in building density and resident and worker population.

The Central Area may benefit from a more tightly defined area for certain initiatives such as the recent 30kph zone inside Queen, Gover, Molesworth and Powderham/ Courtenay Streets. A compact centre offers many overlapping transport, economic and activity based benefits that contribute to an efficient and vibrant place.

# Statutory Framework

The two primary documents that provide strategic direction and interpret community values and desired environmental outcomes for development in the Central Area are the Long Term Plan and the District Plan.

## Long Term Plan 2012-2022

The Long Term Plan is produced under the Local Government Act; it is a forward planning document created with community consultation that outlines the Council's operational and capital programme for the district over the next 10 years.

The community has identified through the 2012 Long Term Plan consultation process the need to address urban design considerations in the Central Area.

There are a number of major projects itemised in the Plan that are either located within or near or influence activities within the Central Area e.g. The Len Lye Centre and other capital projects.

## New Plymouth District Plan

The New Plymouth District Plan is produced under the Resource Management Act and manages effects of development and other activities; it is not a directive plan. The New Plymouth District Plan was made fully operative in 2005 and is due for review in 2015.

Although the Urban Design Framework will sit outside of the District Plan it may interact with it through the vision and objectives for the Central Area and the actions identified.

The Council's District Plan identifies the significant resource management issues of the district and the methods that will be used to manage those issues. In relation to the Central Area, it deals with issues such as character, amenity, safe and efficient transport and other network utilities and the adverse effects of activities on the pleasant and coherent nature of the urban environment. It mainly does this through the implementation of rules specifying permitted standards necessary for development e.g. building height limits, boundary setbacks, signage controls. The District Plan uses the resource consent process to manage activities outside of the permitted standards.

Some of the provisions in the District Plan relating to development are outlined in more detail later in this document.

## The Council's Supporting Strategy and Policy

Management of the Central Area interfaces with other Council documents, projects and policies which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Alcohol Strategy
- Art in Public Places Strategy and Trust
- Coastal Strategy
- Disability Strategy
- District Plan
- District Tree Policy
- Draft Open Space Strategy
- Earthquake Prone Buildings Policy
- Heritage Strategy
- Infrastructure and Development Construction Standards
- Lets Go Project – Walking and Cycling Model  
Community initiatives: CBD 30km per hour speed zone; Brougham Street upgrade; Commuting initiative providing facilities to cater for active transport modes; CBD travel planning
- Long Term Plan/Annual Plan
- Major Event Strategy
- New Plymouth District Cycling Strategy
- New Plymouth Parking Strategy 2007–2017 and the CBD Parking Review
- Positive Ageing Strategy
- Public Toilet Strategy
- Stormwater, Roading, Property and Parks Asset Management Plans
- Reserves Management Plans
- Strategic Transport Study

The Regional Policy Statement is relevant, particularly regarding the landscape, historic features, amenity and built environment issues. The regional based Walkways and Cycleways Strategy for Taranaki and the public transport aspects of the Regional Land Transport Strategy for Taranaki are also relevant to this project.

## An Urban Design Framework

The Ministry for the Environment Urban Design Toolkit defines an Urban Design Framework as:

*'A document that describes an overarching vision and the intended outcome for an entire urban area and gives direction to subsequent policies and site specific initiatives within that area.'*

The Urban Design Framework will strategically sit beneath the Long Term Plan and District Plan and alongside other New Plymouth District Council strategies and policies though it may identify directions for further investigation within the scope of these other documents.

It has a proactive encouraging approach for new development rather than being restrictive. This document supports and adds detail to the strategic intent for the New Plymouth District Council: *'New Plymouth will offer an attractive living environment that compares favourably nationally and internationally. It will do this in order to attract and retain the skilled labour force our community needs to grow and prosper...'* (New Plymouth District Council, website).

## Central Area Urban Design

In December 2011, the New Plymouth District Council passed a resolution to become a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol. The design of people's homes, business places and recreational areas influences their quality of life. In 2005, based on the need for guidance regarding urban environment management the Ministry for the Environment, in collaboration with a range of local government and industry experts, developed the Urban Design Protocol to assist development to consider best practice design in the urban environment.

Urban design is the art of making a great place to live, work and play. It involves the appearance of the public realm and also the function and feel of urban spaces and buildings. Urban design focuses on the interactions between buildings and public spaces including streets. It considers elements such as sustainable design, 'active' edges, accessibility, streetscapes and the mix of building uses.

As part of becoming a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol, the Council will implement an action plan outlining urban design initiatives the organisation will undertake. Key approaches for the action plan include collaboration with stakeholders and Council buy-in. Good urban design outcomes are often a result of collaboration or at least agreement on desirable outcomes between the public and private sectors. As part of becoming a signatory the Council has appointed an Urban Design Champion, Councillor Maurice Betts, and is actively working on the action plan to formally embed urban design principles in the Council practice and processes. Formulating a Central Area Urban Design Framework is one of the key actions identified for the Council.

As part of the development of the Urban Design Framework, we are seeking input from residents, property owners, businesses, workers and visitors of the central area, asking for their vision for this area to assist in establishing an overarching vision and the intended outcome for the Central Area.

## Strategic Documents

*The Urban Design Framework will build on the work of previous strategic documents to plan and provide for an attractive, safe, vibrant and viable Central Area for the community.*

These documents and the key recommendations are summarised in the following tables.

A timeline of significant developments in the Central Area over the past 30 years highlights the degree of change that can be experienced in just 30 years.

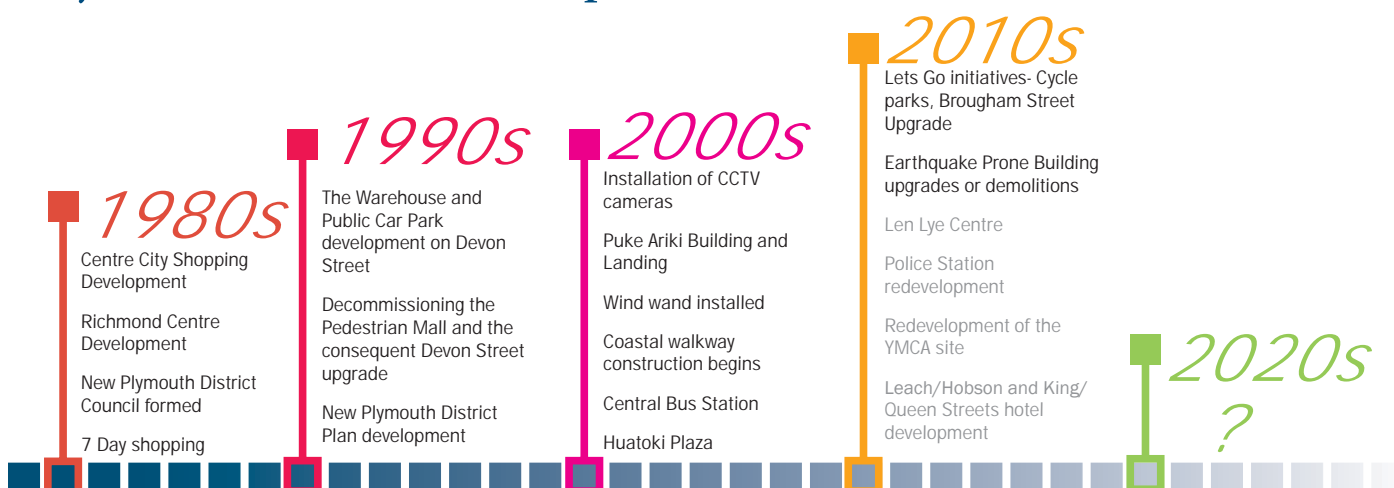
## Summary of New Plymouth CBD Review 1994

Topic	Recommendation	Achievement
Vehicle Traffic	Two-way traffic Devon Mall Improve pedestrian priority at key intersections Threshold treatment at entrance to CBD	Achieved Achieved Not implemented
Pedestrians	Pedestrian Network Plan Elevated pedestrian crossings in pedestrian precinct to raise pedestrian priority Provide for pedestrian desire lines Provide a crossing point between Puke Ariki Landing and the foreshore Create a pedestrian Mall along Currie Street between Devon and Gill Streets Create pedestrian spaces within pedestrian precinct along Devon Street Improve lighting in unsafe areas Encourage private development of publicly accessible toilets Pave Huatoki and James Lane to raise pedestrian priority	Achieved Improving pedestrian priority is on-going as traffic devices are adapted for local needs Achieved where work has been undertaken Achieved- then removed  Partial- street closures as required Not implemented  Achieved Not implemented Achieved
Parking	Produce a detailed parking study Investigate opportunities to increase use of Downtown Carpark building Review District Plan on-site parking requirements Develop and implement a parking strategy	This was achieved and an updated review of the Parking Strategy is currently underway.
Public Transport	Review accessibility of bus stop and taxi stand locations Consider increased utilisation of bus stops at: Molesworth Street by Centre City Courtenay Street by the Warehouse Identify opportunities of locating a passenger transit centre in the Central Area	On-going  No Yes Yes, On Ariki St
Theme	Adopt a process for implementing a design theme for public works  Prioritise the use of locally sourced resources- design, materials and manufacture	Materials and Details from the mid 90's Devon Street Upgrade and Coastal Walkway projects have been used in recent street design work e.g. Brougham Street Some evidence located e.g. Coastal Walkway.
Landscape	Conduct a landscape study of the Central Area	Study completed but implemented on an ad hoc basis only

# Strategic Plan for New Plymouth Central Area 1998

Recommendation (in order of priority)	Achievement
1. The opening of the Huatoki Waterway from Powderham to Ariki Streets.	Partial: Construction of Huatoki Plaza between Devon Street to Ariki Street
2. Improve strategically significant sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Arcade Building</li> <li>• Deka Building</li> <li>• Puke Ariki Landing</li> </ul>	No action Achieved: Huatoki Plaza Achieved: 2005c landing refurbishment and construction of Puke Ariki (museum/ information centre)
3. Library/Museum development to contribute to the Huatoki development axis.	Ongoing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puke Ariki museum/ information centre construction</li> <li>• Library development yet to be programmed</li> <li>• Brougham Street upgrade 2012</li> </ul>
4. Increase rate of street planting programme	Not implemented, focus has been on maintenance of existing assets
5. Additional viewshafts to the District Plan	Not implemented
6. Link Central Area and Foreshore	Achieved: Upgraded pedestrian underpass, trialled on street crossing but has been removed
7. Adopt a planting programme to delineate the Central Area	Not implemented
8. Develop Central Area residential dwelling guidelines	Not implemented
9. Install Gas flares in the Central Area to highlight key features Festival lighting for events	Trialled at Centre City pedestrian entrance and not progressed Ongoing
10. Develop an Urban Landscaping Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bluestone paving on Queen Street</li> </ul>	Not implemented
11. Heritage protection	Ongoing with implementation of Heritage Strategy 2012
12. Install pedestrian signage	Not implemented
13. Foreshore development well lit	Achieved

## Major Central Area Developments



# Commerce

## Overview

One of the core functions of the Central Area is to facilitate business activities. Provision of a good quality commercial environment in the Central Area is critical to support trade, provide jobs and attract a skilled work force. The commercial activity in the Central Area contributes to the high quality of life that we enjoy in New Plymouth district.

The economy in New Plymouth as with New Zealand continues to be affected by a protracted recovery from the 2008 recession. The debt-laden situation is slowing recovery. Growth is subdued. New Zealand households are focussed on reducing debt which is good long term but a challenge for retail and service sectors in the short term. Moderate growth for New Zealand is predicted and this is

### Commercial Uses in the Central Area

MIXED USE	CULTURAL
OFFICE	CINEMA/ HALL
RETAIL	RELIGIOUS
ACCOMMODATION	ASSEMBLY/ HALL
PARKING	APARTMENT
CAR SALES	DWELLING
EDUCATION	INDUSTRIAL SERVICE
ELDERLY	INDUSTRIAL WAREHOUSE
LIQUOR	UTILITY/ SERVICE
	HEALTH/ MEDICAL

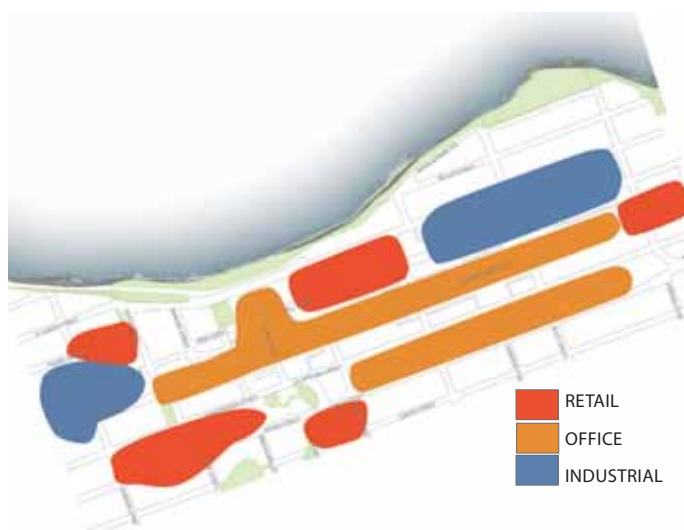


Based on the Rating Categories data, 2010

largely due to the Canterbury earthquake damage rebuild (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2012). New Plymouth follows New Zealand's general trends but through regional variation has often been slightly buffered from the more extreme effects. Until recently Taranaki's economic activity was below the national average. The October 2012 edition of Venture Taranaki's *Taranaki Trends* shows Taranaki rebounded in the last quarter to reach above the national average. It is in this context that the following survey information is presented.

Though the Central Area has a diverse mix of uses the key employment sectors in the Central Area are retail and professional services such as Finance, Insurance, Auditing, Legal, Real Estate, Information Media and Administration. It is the largest centre for retail and office development in the Taranaki region. The Central Area is a relatively stable business environment with only minor changes observed in terms of building stock and property value in the past 5 years.

Other commercial centres in the New Plymouth district provide a different type of service and are not currently in competition with the Central Area e.g. 'big box' retail at the Valley or local centre service conveniences at Fitzroy Village. However, there are commercial development trends to be mindful of, where the balance tips and too much retail or office development occurs outside of the centre resulting in the decline of the Central Area. There is a vast amount of investment and infrastructure in the Central Area to support its key commercial function which requires a district wide perspective for management and development strategies. Continuing to retain/attract businesses to locate in the Central Area is an on going challenge for the New Plymouth District.



### *Location of Commercial Uses in the Central Area*

Devon Street has a particularly dominant retail function and the small lot sizes help to maintain a vibrant retail environment. The north south streets such as Liardet are much more mixed in use. Centre City and the Richmond Centre are hubs of retail activity. The long blocks of retail based activity that are between the one ways are predominantly occupied by supermarkets.

There are a number of office building clusters in the Central Area. Interestingly, there is not a premium charge for commercial property near the foreshore such as around the end of Liardet Street compared to further inland such as around the Devon Street and Hobson Street intersection or along the one ways. The general trend of higher valued commercial compared with residential land is applicable to the Central Area i.e. the office conversions from residential dwellings along the one ways increase the value of that property. The economic climate has recently seen a change around in office vacancies and a decrease in value of premium office space.

A fringe of residential dwellings wraps around the commercial uses. It is more consistent on local streets compared to the one way streets Leach/ Vivian and Powderham/ Courtenay which are less consistent as

#### *Captions (Below from left)*

- Distinctive clusters of retail, office and warehouse uses can be identified.
- Landmark office building, Transfield House, viewed from the Coastal Walkway.



commercial offices and large lot retail spreads into previously residential based areas. There are a few relatively recent residential apartment developments through out the study area. Residential apartments are typically a volatile market. While in New Plymouth they have recently experienced a decline in value the market will pick up quickly again due to external forces such as the oil exploration programme set for this summer.

A light industrial area can be identified along Gill and Molesworth Street towards the east where lot sizes are larger and the building stock is predominantly warehouse style. There is another small pocket of industrial activities around King and Dawson Street. These areas often represent lower levels of development and investment e.g. large warehouse structures vs. high end apartments. Given the proximity to the Central Area and the large lot sizes can often be viewed as having good potential for redevelopment when vacant space is at a premium and there is a demand for growth.

The range of ancillary activities such as cinemas, cultural and religious centres, education institutions and assembly halls that locate in the Central Area contribute significantly to the sense of place and public life that can be experienced.

## Business

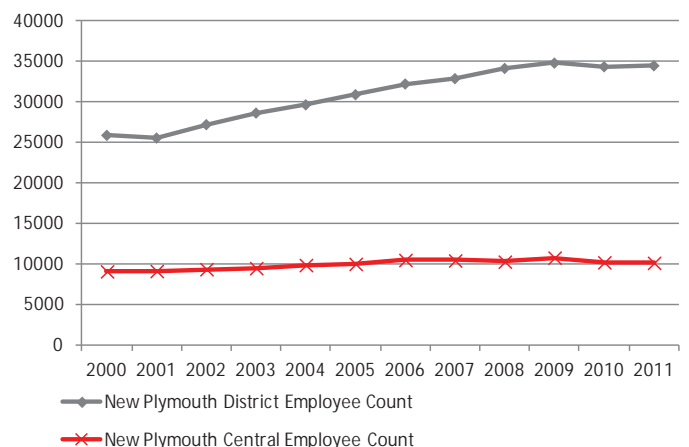
In 2011 there were 8 777 businesses in the wider New Plymouth district; a slight decrease from the previous year but within expectations given the economic climate. These businesses employed 34 460 people which is slightly up from the year before. Of these the New Plymouth Central Area Unit (defined below by Statistics NZ) has 1



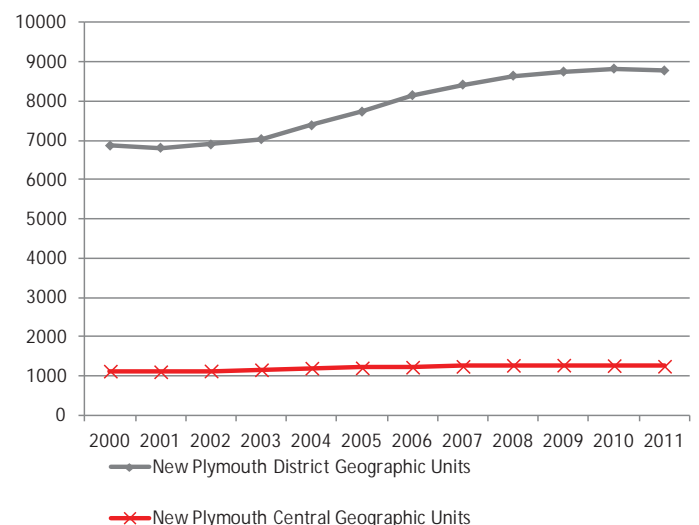
New Plymouth Central Area Unit, Statistics NZ

253 businesses and employs 10 150, this means almost a third of all the district's employees are located in the Central Area Unit. The graph below shows the trend of businesses and employee numbers for the New Plymouth and the Central Area Unit over 12 years.

This information shows a relatively stable environment for commercial growth in the Central Area Unit though in comparison to the New Plymouth District growth in business and employee areas is slowing. More information is required to determine if this is attributable to factors that fall within the Council's purview or control e.g. District Plan provisions, an economic development programme, the quality of public space.



New Plymouth District and Central Employee Numbers, Statistics NZ



New Plymouth District and Central Businesses Units, Statistics NZ



## Retail

The Central Area is the key retail hub for the Taranaki region. Over 3 500 employees in the New Plymouth district work within the retail industry, 2 070 of these are located in the Central Area Unit.

Retail sales for the June 2012 quarter in the New Plymouth urban area were estimated at \$269.3 million, this is up from the previous quarter which was \$228.6m and \$214m for the same period in 2011 (Retail Trade Survey, SNZ).

Small retail lots such as the blocks around Currie Street and along Devon Street are often used to predict high pedestrian traffic centres; they often provide an indication of vibrant public life. This remains true to the Central Area scenario and the area has remained a consistent centre since New Plymouth's establishment. The smaller lot sizes and lack of large available sites leads to a diverse range of retail outlets as opposed to 'big box' retail centres such as the Valley which are characterised by fewer yet larger tenants. The Central Areas retail sector has a point of difference.

As identified previously there is a challenge ahead for growth to the retail sector in a debt laden economy. In addition the influence and demand for smarter and more sustainable services is increasing all the time.

The growth of online retail also affects the retail economy, Providing customers with a desirable experience is important, including both the private retail space and the public environment it is located in.

There is an opportunity to strengthen the influence of this important sector through organisation and strategic planning of the individual players into an association with a representative to carry forward retail issues.

## Hospitality and Tourism

The image of New Plymouth that visitors take with them is influenced strongly by their experience in the Central Area. This includes views along the Coastal Walkway, from the retail area towards the sea and Mount Taranaki, of Huatoki Stream running through the CBD and along Devon Street premium retail frontage. These are iconic images that help to form a lasting impression of a place people identify with and form an attachment to. It's important to present a vibrant well maintained central area to support the tourism industry.

The New Plymouth District accommodation market sold a total of 154 991 room nights during the last 6 months to June 2012. This is an increase on previous records (9.6 percent), the average number of nights stayed increased 3.7 percent. Many of New Plymouth's accommodation premises and visitor attractions are located within the Central Area so it is a significant contributor to commercial activities. The New Zealand Tourism statistics show the industry remains relatively stable across New Zealand despite the economic climate. Growth is anticipated in the international visitor market.

# Open Space

*Provision of open space, and in particular space that can be used for a variety of different functions, is a key measure of a vibrant Central Area.*

The Central Area has a diversity of open space types. This includes hard and soft civic spaces in the centre of the Central Area, some passive spaces around the Huatoki Stream and in strategically important areas. There is an even spread of open space that is within 200m walking distance from the majority of the western half of the Central Area. This close access is important to provide for workers the opportunity to get outside in their lunch time when time is restricted.

The award winning Coastal Walkway and developing Huatoki Walkway provide a unique experience for visitors or a convenient accessible off-road commuter route for residents and workers. These are very important assets for the quality and comfort of Central Area and the promotion of active transport. Attention should be paid to providing continuous paths along these walkways.

The supply of public space in the Central Area is bolstered by the proximity of Pukekura Park (only 200m up Liardet Street) which is a premium open space that serves a regional catchment and provides for many different types of uses.

However, there is a potential deficiency in open space provision for the workers and residents in the eastern half of the Central Area. The requirements of this type of open space use is modest: a green breathing space, a small area with seating, sun and some attractive vegetation or other landscape detailing to cater for lunch time or evening use.



## Open Spaces

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <span style="color: red;">■</span> CIVIC SPACE                          | <span style="color: pink;">■</span> CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA |
| <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> CULTURAL HERITAGE                 | ⋯ LEASED OPEN SPACE                                      |
| <span style="color: green;">■</span> RECREATION AND ECOLOGICAL LINKAGES | ■ PUBLIC TOILETS   |



*Open Space (from left)*

- Cenotaph Rock Garden- Cultural Heritage
- Huatoki Plaza- Civic Space

# Microclimates

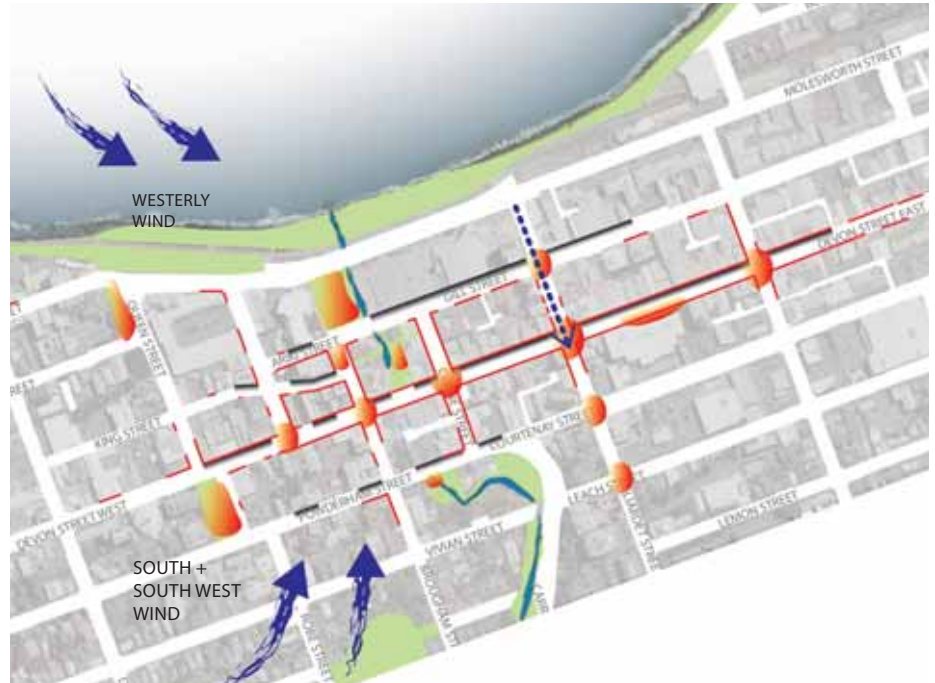
*The low rise built environment in the Central Area means there is lots of access to sunlight.*

This is a valuable condition to protect in places where people are likely to congregate to enjoy the sun. Many cities with taller buildings struggle to provide a sunny area for people to sit which diminishes the attractiveness of the urban environment.

The access to sun light needs to be balanced with the need for protection from the weather in this temperate climate. Verandahs are required to be attached to buildings in the core of the Central Area. There is relatively good coverage though a few gaps are apparent.

Shading is experienced on the north side of the east west orientated streets. This is more pronounced in the shade of the 3-4 storey buildings.

Wind tunnelling in the Central Area is generally not an issue. The north south orientation on Liardet Street in combination with the taller buildings create a channelling effect where wind can tend to be stronger and more gusty than in open environments.



## Microclimate conditions



## Microclimate Conditions

(Clockwise from top left)

- TSB Centre sun trap with public seating and Nikau Palm street tree
- The north side of the east-west streets is more shady especially near taller buildings.
- Verandahs provide important weather protection in this temperate climate where down pours can strike suddenly.

# Trees

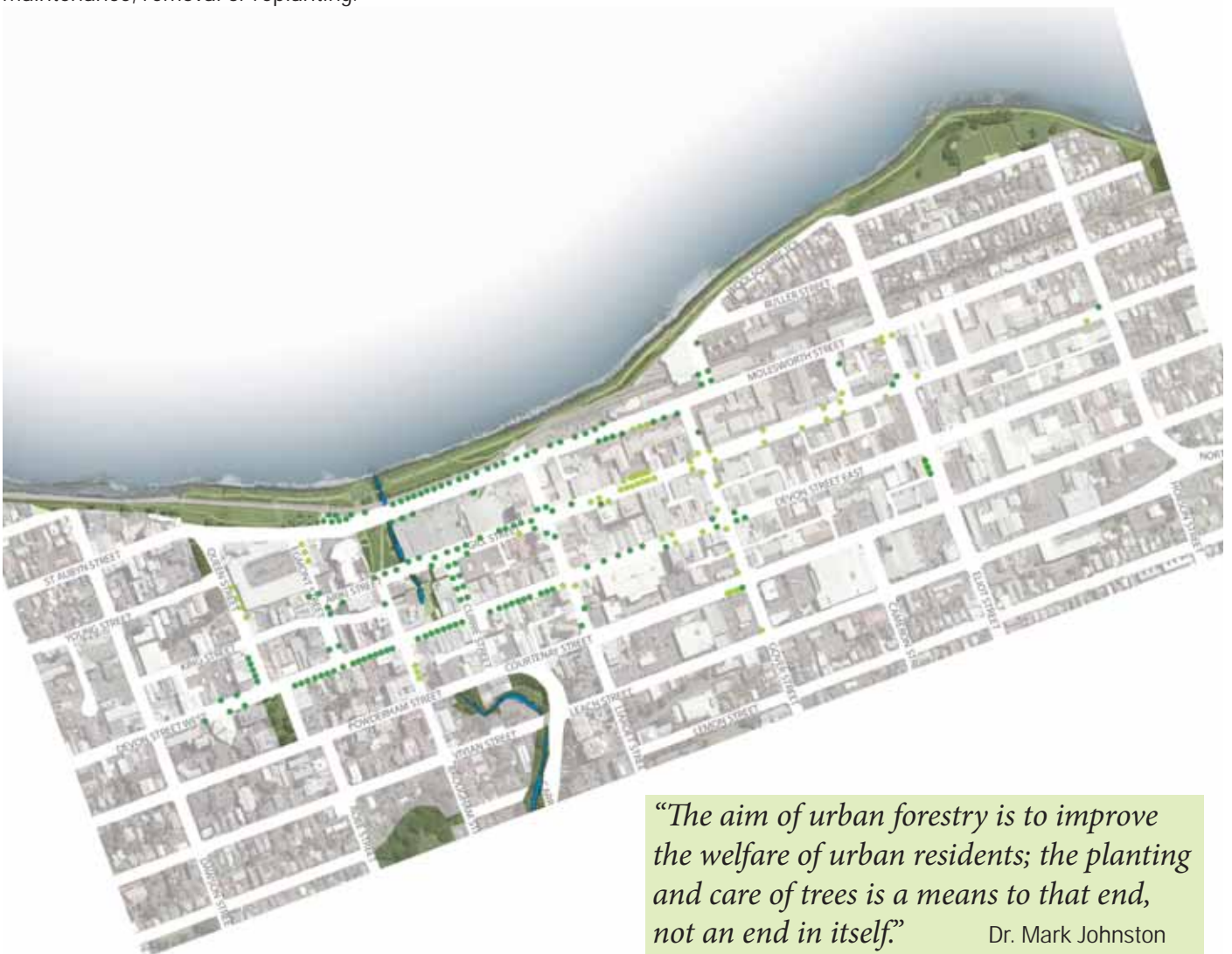
The Central Area pedestrian centre is relatively well planted with street trees. There are some streets in the Central Area, such as Devon and Currie Streets, that have a consistent street tree pattern with established species that create a strong character. There are also some striking examples of accent planting that emphasise a particular feature within the Central Area e.g. the Cordylines outside the Art Gallery. However, there are examples of streets that have inconsistent planting where a general theme is not recognisable. A large area in the eastern half of the Central Area is devoid of public and private trees.

While there are identified issues with some street trees in the Central Area, such as verandah maintenance, that require addressing it is important to consider all aspects of street trees prior to making any decisions regarding maintenance, removal or replanting.

Amenity trees are referred to in the District Plan. They are trees that are either of six metres or more in height or replacement trees installed as a requirement of rules, and located within the parts of the Central Area that are predominantly business in character. Public awareness of amenity trees and the associated rules is relatively good.

## Street Trees

- STREET TREES- 2.5M+ HEIGHT AND A SUBSTANTIAL FORM WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE STREETScape
- JUVENILE STREET TREES- LESS THAN 2.5M EITHER STILL ESTABLISHING OR INSUFFICIENT SPACE TO GROW AND DO NOT YET MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE STREETScape



*“The aim of urban forestry is to improve the welfare of urban residents; the planting and care of trees is a means to that end, not an end in itself.”*

Dr. Mark Johnston

## Street Tree Objectives

The main objective of street trees is to improve the appearance and amenity of the Central Area environment. There are a number of benefits of street trees including:

- Reinforce the rugged west coast environment of the Central Area.
- Emphasise the grid layout of the streets.
- Improve the effect of the exposed coastal climate by filtering direct sunlight in summer time.
- Frame important views.
- Create a consistent street character.
- Assist with differentiation of Central Area streets.
- Contribute to a healthier environment.

- Celebrate the Central Area heritage and past land uses and the built environment.
- Enhance key entrances and special areas such as precincts.
- Mitigate some of the negative effects of the built environment e.g. blank facades.

### *Captions* (Clockwise from top left)

- Distinctive Ti Kouka (*Cordyline australis*) planted on Queen Street outside the Govett Brewster Art Gallery.
- Nikau Palms (*Rhopalostylis sapida*) and Pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*) are accent species along Devon Street.
- Some streets such as Powderham Street rely on the private realm to provide relief to the grey street environment.
- The details of the standard ornamental street grill usefully record a planting date.



# Biodiversity

*The Central Area is a highly modified built environment, with almost no previous land cover retained, a high degree of impermeable surfaces and many changes to the landform.*

Given the high degree of built development this is an expected element in any central area but there is a growing level of awareness in the biodiversity of cities. The competitive nature of cities means many places are rapidly realising the benefits of providing attractive and ecologically healthy green and blue networks in the urban area e.g.:

- Healthier catchments that provide for all stages of fish life cycles
- Culturally sensitive treatment of water and natural resources.
- Stormwater attenuation
- A good quality environment that residents and staff wish to spend time in and companies invest in.

The Central Area's most significant assets in terms of biodiversity is the Huatoki Stream and the dynamic, high energy coastal environment.

The catchment of Huatoki Stream runs up to 12km inland towards the mountain and through the rural environment. It is recognised as an important waterway by the community and therefore identified as a feature of note in statutory planning documents. It is also recognised for its significant cultural heritage value. Because of life cycle habits of the fish life the treatment of the Huatoki in the Central Area affects the ultimate health of the whole stream. Monitoring of the fish life is undertaken in the Huatoki Stream.

Currently in the Central Area a section of the stream is built over. The opportunity to uncover the stream has been consistently identified in strategic documents for the Central Area.



## Green Layer

■ PERMEABLE GROUND SURFACE AND LARGER STANDS OF TREES



### *Huatoki* (from left)

- The fish pass at the weir in Huatoki Plaza.
- Ducklings at Puke Ariki Landing.

In Puke Ariki Landing and Huatoki Plaza (where it has recently been uncovered) the stream margins are modified concrete retaining structures. This reduces the opportunity for aquatic life to find shelter from sun light or fast moving water that is usually found in naturalised stream margins that have planting or green engineering structures in place.

The Huatoki Stream receives much of the Central Area's stormwater- this is untreated water amassed from hard surface areas during rain showers that is directly discharged into the stream. There is potential water degradation through additional contaminants such as sediment in erosion or vehicle emissions collected from road runoff. The extra water also accelerates the flow of the water in the stream bed which can displace aquatic life interrupting fragile lifecycles.

Management of the Huatoki Stream is necessary to protect private investment in the Central Area e.g. there are flood protection measures that manage flows and prevent the Central Area from flooding. Yet there may be potential to improve the modifications based on current practice and knowledge of low impact engineering solutions.

The potential benefit of addressing Huatoki Stream biodiversity is amplified through the widely recognised value of the stream. There is an opportunity for educational, cultural and social benefits to be recognised.

More information is required to assess the actual condition and potential benefits of alternative management techniques.

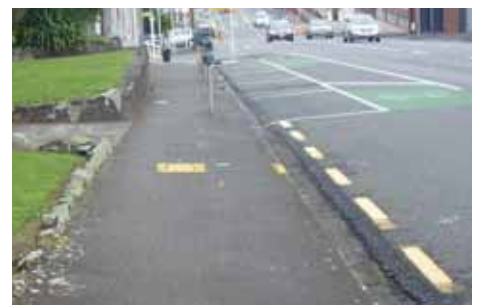
Other biodiversity hotspots include:

- The Mangaotuku Stream- uncovering portions, cleaning up the drained section and reinstating the course.
- The Coastal Environment- protecting vulnerable ecosystems.



### Blue Layer

- STREAM
- BUILT OVER STREAM
- DRAINED + BUILT OVER STREAM
- DIVERSION CHANNEL
- NATURAL AREA WITH POTENTIAL BIODIVERSITY VALUE



### Stream Conditions

(Clockwise from top left)

- The Huatoki Stream emerges from the end of the Kings Building in Huatoki Plaza.
- The kerb and channel infrastructure in the road directs stormwater into the Huatoki.
- There is potential to improve the margins of the Huatoki stream in the built environment.

# Public Art

*Art in public places are important civic features that contribute to a vibrant public environment. They represent community identities and reinforce the sense of place.*

Public art can become a focus point of discussion and evoke community debate about key issues in New Plymouth.

The collection of public art in the Central Area is growing and covers a range of different themes. There is room for much more. It is encouraging to see the talented contribution of local artists breathing life and interest into some of New Plymouth's greyer areas.

There is a New Plymouth District Art in Public Places Trust that is tasked with implementing the district art in public places strategy which includes administers a fund and provides advice to support public art projects.



## Public Art

- EYE LEVEL PUBLIC ART
- LARGE SCALE STAND ALONE SCULPTURE
- PRIVATE ART WORK IN VIEW FROM PUBLIC REALM



### Public Art (Clockwise from top left)

- Halamoana by Filipe Tohi.
- Street Art by Mikaere Gardiner aka Eno
- F.A. Carrington by Fridtjof Hanson sponsored by NZ Institute of Surveyors
- Odic Time Piece on the New Plymouth Clock Tower by Shannon Novak



# Cafe Seating

*The benefit of cafe seating in public space is the contribution of activity and interest for people in the Central Area.*

There are many locations in the Central Area where good quality cafe seating is provided. The seating makes the most of the available sunlight and sheltered conditions and brings life into the streets.

It is encouraging to see the seating locations align with the streets where amenity upgrades have occurred which are also the same locations as where there is access to sunlight and more pedestrian traffic.

There are some examples of on street dining that are designed to protect customers from prevailing winds, however they are designed in such a way that the benefit to street life is compromised. Some arrangements can be dominant in the streetscape and interrupt the free flow of pedestrians.

To manage the risks of poorly designed on street cafe seating arrangements there is a cafe seating design guideline. The guideline advises on appropriate parameters for cafe seating.



## Restaurants and Cafes with On Street Dining Licences

● SEATING LOCATION



### Cafe Seating (Clockwise from top left)

- This simple arrangement allows for maximum street views, provides for safety
- This arrangement restricts the benefits of locating outdoors.
- Good comfortable furniture in an attractive sunny position on Devon Street.



# Outdoor Events

*The Central Area has several good quality outdoor spaces suitable for events of all sizes and durations.*

The key event spaces include:

- Parts of the Coastal Walkway known as the Foreshore, Puke Ariki Land and the Tasman Prospect, these are suitable spaces for events with a longer duration such as the Biennial Stone Carving Symposium and the Wood Chopping Competition.
- Puke Ariki Landing where large community events are held such as Waitangi Day celebrations.
- Huatoki Plaza which hosts a range of smaller topical events such as Wild West Bike Fest, Walk to Work days and current event promotions.

There are a range of regular events that are held throughout the year. However, there is capacity for even more events to be held, especially during the winter months where there is a lack of life in the Central Area events programme.

There are very few barriers to holding on street events in the Central Area provided the necessary traffic management is undertaken. This culture for embracing the spirit of events is encouraging for growth of the Central Area.

The proximity of the world class event venue at Pukekura and the Bowl of Brooklands influences the Central Area event programme. There is potential to make the most of New Plymouth's larger events like Womad, the Garden Spectacular and the Festival of Lights and extend the events presence into the Central Area.



## Event Spaces

- OFF STREET EVENT SPACE
- ON STREET EVENT SPACE



## Popular New Plymouth Events

(from left)

- Devon Street during Americarna New Zealand a biennial festival celebrating American cars.
- Internationally renowned WOMAD at nearby Pukekura Park

# Public Facilities

*Puke Ariki and the TSB Showplace are good quality key public facilities in the Central Area.*

Supplementary facilities that add diversity and value to the Central Area include the Top Town Cinema complex and the Govett Brewster Art Gallery.

The Council's Civic Centre and the YMCA also function as a venue for public meetings and events.

The distribution of public facilities is an important component to supporting the establishment of a vibrant public environment throughout the wider Central Area.

The connections between the Central Area and TSB and Yarrows Stadiums along with the new Marae at Ngāmotu should be made more obvious. This could involve elaborating on the blue line painted to guide visitors between the Central Area and the Yarrow Stadium during 2011 Rugby World Cup.



## Public Facilities



# Markets

There are a range of markets held in the Central Area. Awareness and success of these is gradually building.

- Currie Street Farmers Market
- Brougham Street Arts Market
- Mill Car Park Market
- New World Car Park Market



# Built Identity

Essential to a sustainable and experientially rich living environment is the individual's association with a place and key landmarks to assist with orientation through a place (Norberg-Schulz, 1980).

The Central Area built environment provides cues to help people find their way around. People use key features in their environment to decipher where they are and where they are heading. They can locate a shop by being at the 'bottom of the hill' on Devon Street or if it's further east it's 'top of the hill' or 'on the flat'. Meeting people at the wind wand is part of the experience of living or visiting New Plymouth. The features below show there are some shared landmarks that are commonly referred to such as old church buildings and Centre City Shopping Centre. There are also parts of the area that can be hard to distinguish from other parts. This can be due to similar building styles

and uses such as along the one way streets between Eliot and Liardet Street or around Gill and Molesworth Streets. The large signs and smooth building surfaces are designed for people moving in cars where less detail is taken in. This type of environment doesn't encourage people to walk. There are no 'green star' rated buildings in the Central Area.

Traditional views also become iconic images of a place. Views to the sea are widely valued in the Central Area. Key view points are located on the map below. Some of these view points are identified in the District Plan where there are rules that manage the effect of new development on the view e.g. Marsland Hill, Liardet, Brougham and Eliot Street and Cameron Street (the view point is slightly off the scope of the map below).



*Landmarks and Views in the Central Area*

*Devon Street North Facing Elevation*



# Building Height

*The Central Area is a low rise built environment.*

The District Plan maximum height limits of 14 and 10m cover relatively large areas. 14m is equivalent to a 3-4 storey building depending on the intended use. It is possible to achieve relatively high development densities within a 14m built environment. The maximum 14m height limit has a number of benefits:

- Maintain a human scale city scape.
- Protect key public views.
- Maintain sunlight access and pleasant public environments.
- Avoid conflict between tall buildings and vibrant public life.

There are a number of taller buildings in the Central Area built prior to the current District Plan. These are islands within a generally consistent 1-3 storey building stock. The effects on provision of attractive public environments (e.g. shading, wind channelling) of stand alone taller buildings can be more pronounced than a consistent area of taller buildings. They can also create a disproportionate density of use, leaving underdeveloped property in other areas. A small number of past resource consent applications indicate that the 14m limit may challenge viable development.

The potential constraints to growth that are experienced through the location of the State Highways to the north and south of the core area along with the physical limitations on the length of a viable centre and a low level of vacant spaces in the Central Area mean building height limits will be an important issue to deal with to cater for future growth.



*Maximum Building Heights in the Central Area*

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span> 14m HEIGHT	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span> 8m HEIGHT	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:black; border:1px solid black;"></span> NOTABLE TALL BUILDINGS
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span> 10m HEIGHT	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span> 9m HEIGHT	



*Tall Buildings (From right)*

- Education House on the corner Courtenay and Eliot Street, approximately 30m height
- Richmond Estate on Saint Aubyn Street, approximately 30m height.



# Active Frontages

*The Central Area ground floor building facades provide a mixed environment for people walking. Creating streets people are comfortable to spend time in is critical to a vibrant, viable and safe living and working environment.*

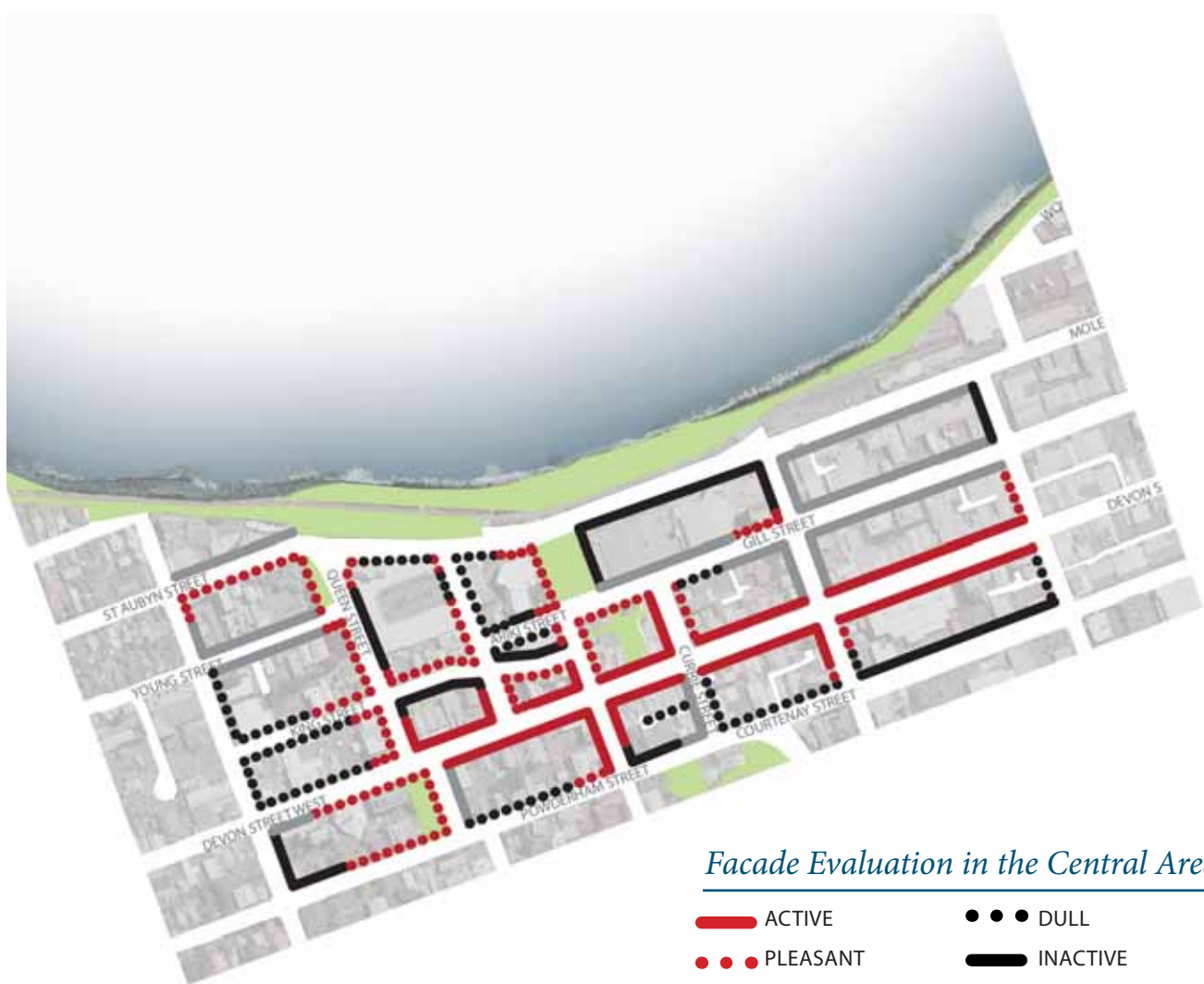
There is a strong link between the ground floor facade of a building and the number and behaviour of people near the building (Gehl, 2006). People hurry past dull and inactive frontages while active and pleasant frontages make people slow down and engage in a wider range of activities. The best building fronts are those with lots of doors, windows at eye level, interesting details and

materials and a depth or relief in the facade with many vertical features in the facade.

Pedestrian activity has a compounding nature: activity attracts more activity and the reverse is true also. There are many reasons for creating a pedestrian friendly core in the Central Area:

- New Plymouth is committed to encouraging active transport.
- Residents are attracted to lively, friendly places.
- Retailers rely on pedestrian traffic.
- More eyes on the street reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

Research shows that even if a building does not need to be entered but has a good quality frontage there is a higher level of pedestrian activity in front of it.



## *Facade Evaluation in the Central Area*

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| ACTIVE               | DULL  |
| PLEASANT             | INACTIVE  |
| SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN | THE 30KPH ZONE IS USED AS THE PARAMETER FOR THE STUDY |



## Assessment Criteria

(Gehl, 2006)

### *Active*

Small Units with many doors (15-20 per 100m)  
 Large variation in function  
 Lots of character in facade relief  
 Primarily vertical facade articulation  
 Good details and materials



### *Pleasant*

Relatively small units (10-14 doors per 100m)  
 Some variation in function  
 Few screened or passive units  
 Facade relief  
 Many details



### *Somewhere in between*

Mix of large and small units (6-8 doors per 100m)  
 Modest variation in function  
 Some screened and passive units  
 Modest facade relief  
 Few details



### *Dull*

Large units (2-5 doors per 100m)  
 Almost no variation  
 Many screened uninteresting units  
 No facade relief  
 Few or no details



### *In Active*

Large units few or no doors (0-2 doors per 100m)  
 No visible variation in function  
 Screened and passive units  
 Uniform facades with no relief  
 No details, nothing to look at

The survey of ground floor frontages was undertaken in August 2012 using site visits, technical experience and the assessment criteria provided. It has also been peer reviewed.

The resulting map shows that Devon Street provides a consistently active edge for people. This sort of design leads people to spend more time standing, sitting or engaged in activities in public space creating a vibrant and friendly feeling to the street. The engaging experience on Devon Street only rarely extends away from the main street.

This may be due to historic land uses and building functions, for example Gill Street warehouses. However there are cases of newer development such as hotels or retail complexes in prime locations where the ground floor frontage is considered dull and inactive.

The Warehouse and Public Car Park development on Devon Street is a good case study for successful pedestrian orientated development where the large floor area required for the Warehouse is elevated above the Public Car Parking and the Devon Street frontage is 'sleeved' with small retail units.

A key to creating an active pedestrian environment is to build up to the property road boundary. Interest and engagement is very difficult to retain for properties setback from the street edge especially with parking located on the street front.

There are many examples of cities that have successfully made it a priority to cater for people within their central areas and restricted the construction of dull inactive frontages. This is a key result of more prescriptive design controls such as number of doors/100m or minimum percentages of windows for ground floor frontages.



# Heritage

## Built, Natural and Cultural Heritage

Many of the older buildings and objects in the Central Area provide a sense of identity, consistency and continuity for the commercial and cultural function of the Central Area. The most representative examples of building styles, construction methodologies, designers work and significant sites are listed in the District Plan where rules are in place to protect the recognised heritage values. In addition much of the Central Area was inhabited prior to 1900 and may be considered to have archaeological values.

The Central Area has potential to celebrate and make accessible more of this long history so the people of today can grow to appreciate these historic values and contribute good quality and sensitive future development.

### District Plan Listed Heritage Items

-  NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT PLAN LISTED CATEGORY A HERITAGE ITEMS AND BUILDINGS SUBJECT TO DISTRICT PLAN RULES
-  NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT PLAN LISTED CATEGORY B + C HERITAGE ITEMS AND BUILDINGS NOT SUBJECT TO DISTRICT PLAN RULES





## Heritage Strategy

The New Plymouth District has a heritage strategy in place to guide heritage decisions over time. It is particularly relevant to the Central Area due to the high number of heritage items and character areas. The heritage strategy has a focus on updating records and proactively providing advice to support sensitive development of and around heritage items.

Strengthening of earthquake prone buildings is at the forefront of heritage activities due to the recent experience of the Christchurch earthquakes. This issue is likely to prompt some change over the next few years e.g. property values, the need for strengthening work or demolition.

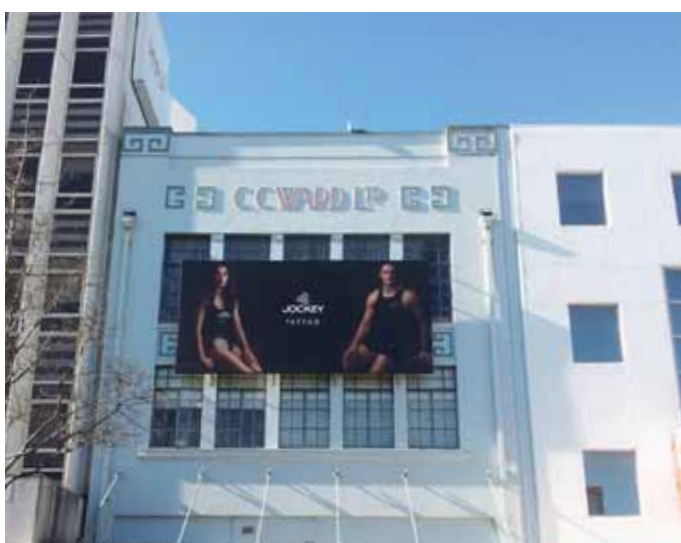
Promoting public art and protection of the District Plan view shafts are also identified in the heritage strategy.

The strategy also has a focus on natural heritage e.g. protection of District Plan listed notable trees, and significant natural areas.

It reinforces the importance of cultural heritage and identifies opportunities to promote protection and awareness of the district's cultural heritage features.

### *Captions* (Clockwise from top right)

- New Plymouth Clock Tower- District Plan Category A
- Recently renovated White Hart Hotel - District Plan Category A
- The Mill - District Plan Category A
- The CC Wards building - District Plan Category A, is not able to be fully appreciated due to the billboard.







## Medium Density and Mixed Use Housing

(From the top)

- Attractive inner city living in St Kilda, Melbourne
- A successful medium density housing arrangement on Chester Street in Christchurch
- A mixed use building arrangement for the Central Area that protects privacy and limits noise nuisance for residents at the same time as maximising on the potential to support ground floor activity.

When it comes to housing, one size does not fit all. There are a number of national trends that influence the demand on housing types:

- The aging population and the associated housing preferences of older people e.g. easy accessibility, close proximity to essential services.
- The growing demand for 'greener' more sustainable housing choices.
- The cost of living including heating and fossil fuel prices driving down the demand for traditionally large stand alone dwellings.
- Increased awareness of the value of the rural environment through the Rural Character Plan Change in the New Plymouth District.
- Signals emerging from central government for heightened protection of productive soils thereby discouraging residential use in these rural areas.

These trends have led to growth in smaller houses and attached medium density housing market in New Zealand. In New Plymouth the location with the greatest growth in residential development is the periphery of urban areas. The New Plymouth District Council provides for this demand through current planning processes to provide for increased residential 'zones' on the outskirts of existing settlements.

There are potential benefits in locating residential development in the Central Area:

- Increased convenience for Central Area residents due to easy access to a large range of services and facilities.
- Increased housing choices for people.
- Improved sustainability practices.
- Enhanced living environment in the Central Area.
- Increase the hours of the day the Central Area is active
- Protect valuable productive soils from residential development in existing rural environments.
- Maximise on the investment into the Central Area infrastructure, facilities and good quality amenities.

There is opportunity to develop the Central Area in a way that can maximise development potential and work within the provisions of the District Plan e.g. by building to the maximum building height limits. Appropriate mixed use developments are easily achieved within the provisions of the New Plymouth District Plan.

# Movement Networks

*The Central Area is the result of an interchange of human values over time mediated through market concepts and town planning. This has resulted in the Central Area's unique make up of commerce, recreation, dwellings and other land uses, the corresponding built environment, public art and ornamentation of physical elements. The transportation network is a critical feature that structures movement in the Central Area and contributes strongly to economic viability as well as the sense of identity.*

Molesworth Street and the one ways Leach/ Vivian and Powderham/ Courtenay Streets along with Eliot Street are the key movement corridors, being designated as State Highways. Accordingly they receive the highest volumes of traffic of 12000 - 20000 vehicles per day. This affects the character of the street e.g. unpleasant noise levels, setback or screened development and solid walls and fences front on to the road, there is a reduced number of entrances and windows orientated towards the road frontage. New Zealand Transport Agency manage the State Highways and there are guidelines regarding streetscape design e.g. the number of vehicle entrances and establishment of new mid block crossings.

The State Highways experience the highest vehicle speeds and number of crashes over time. This is partly as a result of the shear traffic volume compared to other streets but there are improvements that could be made. Note the number of crashes near the uncontrolled Currie Street crossing or the cluster of dots near the pedestrian desire line between New World and the Warehouse.

Perhaps most significantly is the limitation to growth of a traffic calmed pedestrian related centre through the allocation of the State Highways on the north and south of the Central Area. Future development needs to take into account these potential limitations. When the next growth phase in New Plymouth occurs these limitations and an appropriate response will be important considerations.



*Street Hierarchy*

— STATE HIGHWAY — ARTERIAL/COLLECTOR



*Traffic Volumes*

— RELATIVE TRAFFIC VOLUME



*Recorded Traffic Crashes*

● RELATIVE NUMBER OF CRASHES

# Typical Street Sections



## *Devon Street*

*Generous 4-6m wide footpaths provide for high pedestrian flows, on street dining and retail. Street furniture and trees provide high quality amenity.*



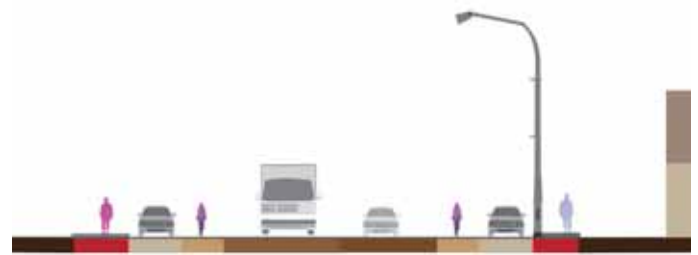
## *Courtenay Street*

*Wide 3.5m traffic lanes for heavy vehicle volumes. 1.6m cycle lanes between traffic lanes and on street parking. Narrow footpaths occasionally less than 2m.*



## *Liardet Street*

*2.5m footpaths that can become congested through on street retail, bus stops. Taller buildings create a more enclosed feel. There are occasional street trees.*



## *Molesworth Street*

*Similar dimensions to Courtenay Street but a more open feel as many properties are set back from the road side boundary with parking located in the front.*



## *Gill Street*

*A parking precinct was created on Gill Street. While a wider 24m road reserve allows for two lanes of diagonal parking there is a corresponding effect on the amenity of the street.*

# Pedestrians

*It is possible to walk to many Central Area locations within 5- 10 minutes.*

A large area around Huatoki Plaza is relatively walkable using distance as a measure for accessibility. This means it is not distance that limits the number of people choosing to walk around the western half of the central area. The major car parking facilities at the Downtown Centre City, the Warehouse are considered to be within an accessible distance for parking and walking to many key destinations.

It is less likely people would choose to walk from Huatoki Plaza up to a destination on Eliot or Hobson Streets based on the distance. Highlighting the issue of a linear shaped Central Area; even though retail extends right along Devon Street the distance between some areas means that there is a disconnect in pedestrian traffic.

There is a strong relationship between the number of people walking in the area around the Plaza, the slow speed zone, the location of the CCTV cameras, the established pedestrian network and the location of many key destinations. All of these factors contribute to a safe, inviting and good quality pedestrian environment.

*30kph zone: 'The aim is to create an environment where vehicle speeds are consistently lower and it is safer for people to walk, cycle, drive, push prams and use mobility scooters in the CBD.'*

Max Aves, Manager Roading Assets



*Walkability*



*Pedestrian Volumes*

↔ RELATIVE NUMBER OF PEDESTRIANS



*30kph Slow Zone*

— RELATIVE TRAFFIC VOLUME



### *Pedestrian Network*

— TRAFFIC TAMED PEDESTRIAN SPACE

*The pedestrian network is well connected and reveals a strong centre of focus for pedestrian activity.*

The new Brougham Street redevelopment extends the pedestrian centre to Puke Ariki and the adjacent shops. Building upon the existing core is important to contribute to the recognisable pedestrian network rather than instigating disjointed areas of focus.

The alignment of the pedestrian environment and amenity improvements with key destinations, pedestrian volumes, and safety benefits is key to creating a vibrant, distinctive and efficient pedestrian network in the Central Area.



### *Key Destinations*

- |                             |                  |                |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| SHOPPING                    | LIVE MUSIC VENUE | MEDICAL CENTRE |
| GALLERY                     | WEEKEND MARKET   | POLICE         |
| CINEMA                      | INFO CENTRE      | BANK           |
| LIBRARY                     | SUPERMARKET      | CIVIC CENTRE   |
| MULTI USE PERFORMANCE VENUE | ACCOMMODATION    | PUBLIC TOILET  |
|                             | RELIGIOUS        |                |

# Footpaths

*Footpaths are generally wide and accessible in the Central Area.*

The survey of Central Area footpaths was undertaken in August 2012; it involved a field assessment of the footpaths, in addition to a desk top analysis of Council data. The following elements of the footpath were considered in order to determine where good footpaths exist:

- Continuous and unobstructed footpaths of 1.5m minimum width
- Absence of driveways that disrupt the continuous flow
- Absence of level changes that are too steep for small wheeled mobility vehicles
- A uniform smooth surface

- Good quality materials and detailing
- Cleanliness

Devon Street's wide, continuous, bluestone footpath with limited driveway access and high level of maintenance is the highest rating footpath in the Central Area. There is room for improvement on some of the secondary footpaths such as Gover and Gill Streets where there are many footpath obstructions and limited room for pedestrians to comfortably pass each other in places.

Good quality footpaths that are nonslip, wide enough for wheelchairs and have accessible dropped curb ramps are an essential requirement for the aging population and those with higher accessibility needs.





# Street Furniture



## *A Range of Quality in the Central Area*

Devon Street portrays overall a high quality street environment. The ornamental planting brings colour and life to the streetscape. The bluestone paving laid over 16 years ago still looks like new and reflects a good investment in long lasting, low maintenance materials that will continue to be attractive and fit for purpose for many more years. The less permanent features of Devon Street e.g. rubbish bins are beginning to look worn and the street may benefit from a superficial makeover to reinvigorate the premium civic and retail street.

This cast iron and timber seat at the Cenotaph Rock Garden is an example of the pockets of high quality detailing public space. There is a high level of amenity and maintenance at this small open space. Many instances of good quality detailing, especially seating, can be found in the Central Area.

There is a range of furniture styles installed around the Central Area without an identifiable theme or relationship. There are potential efficiencies to be gained in implementing a streetscape plan where standard furniture is specified for renewals e.g. in the procurement and maintenance of just one rather than several styles. This can also create a stronger sense of place and identity and reduce a cluttered appearance. It also allows for the opportunity to create a point of difference for special areas that require particular attention and design. When there is a variety of furniture found without a recognisable purpose this opportunity is lost.

There may be areas in the Central Area that are over supplied with street furniture e.g. a rationalisation process of safety barriers may reduce the perceived clutter of some corners. Especially, within the calmed traffic in the 30kph zone. There are also areas that would benefit from the addition of furniture e.g. a bench seat in reasonable spaced distances to provide for those that cannot walk long distances without a rest.

At present there is a range of styles for interpretation or pedestrian signs. There is an opportunity to rationalise the placement and format or design of these. A comprehensive interpretation plan of the Central Area would provide the opportunity to represent the important stories relating to this historic cultural and social hot spot. This would also align with the objective of Puke Ariki and Govett Brewster Art Gallery to extend beyond the walls of their respective buildings. Providing signage at pedestrian scale that includes orientation maps or popular attraction information is another opportunity for the Central Area to assist infrequent local visitors and visitors to move around the Central Area.

# Cycling

*Over the past 3 years a cycle network has gained massive traction in the Central Area. Cyclist numbers are growing.*





There are three main ways to travel by bicycle within the Central Area. The off road options on the Coastal Walkway and the Huatoki Walkway provide a unique pleasurable cycling experience for young or learner cyclists.

The tamed traffic in the 30kph speed zone provides a safe zone for cyclists with a fair degree of road user knowledge to travel in the carriageway with the motorists. This area is well connected to the Coastal Walkway with the Molesworth Street underpass. There is an opportunity to better connect it with Huatoki Walkway with provision for a crossing over Powderham Street.

The delineated cycle lanes provide for confident cyclists to commute next to traffic that is travelling at a general speed of around 50kph.

There is opportunity to improve the facilities of private businesses and offices for cyclists to park their cycles and change their clothes.

## Street Hierarchy

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | OFF ROAD SHARED PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE TRACKS                             |  | ON STREET DELINEATED CYCLE LANES PAINTED ON THE CARRIAGEWAY |
|  | 30KPH SPEED ZONE ON STREET SHARED CARRIAGEWAY WITH SLOW MOVING VEHICLES |  | CYCLE PARKS   |





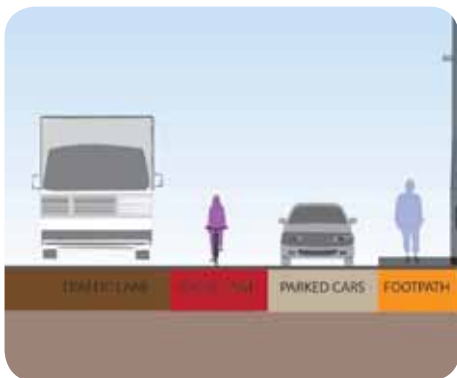
### Cycle Parks

A sheltered cycle pod is provided to lock cycles in outside the Centre City Car Park on Ariki Street. Cycle stands on Devon Street.

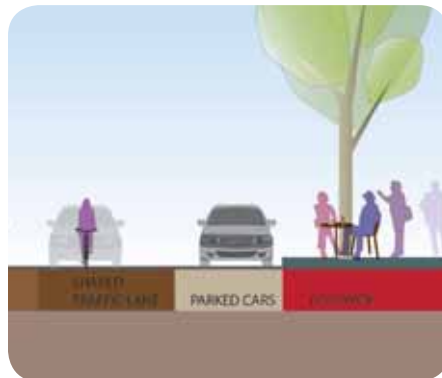


### Cycle Signage

Information on the cycle links and network could be provided at high cycle traffic points. At key intersection in the Central Area pedestrian priority is signalled with a green man light, this could include cyclists.



ON STREET DELINEATED CYCLE LANES PAINTED ON THE CARRIAGEWAY



30KPH SPEED ZONE- ON STREET SHARED CARRIAGEWAY WITH SLOW MOVING VEHICLES



OFF ROAD SHARED PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE TRACKS

# Public Transport

*The new bus station in the centre of town reestablishes the importance of providing accessible transport choice. Public transport reduces emissions, traffic volumes and the total area required for car parking. It leaves more space available for pedestrian and amenity uses.*

The bus system and taxis are the current methods of public transport in New Plymouth. The bus system was privatised in the 1980's, over time the service became less accessible, it is now managed by the Regional Council and the recent redevelopment has not yet reached its full potential in terms of passengers that regularly use the buses.

Nevertheless, there are a number of positive features. The new station is well situated and is a safe, attractive and clean facility for use. The bus network covers a wide area of the Central Area so that many locations are within less than 200m of a bus stop and no one street receives too many buses.

Successful public transport relies on providing a pleasant experience for travellers so they are tempted to get out of their cars and into the bus.

There are opportunities to gradually improve the network through bus stop upgrades and changes to the network to improve the permeability of the bus stops e.g. more stops on the one ways and to increase the frequency and hours of operation.

There is a close relationship between public transport provision, parking and private transport. And change in any of these areas has effects on the wider network.



## Public Transport Network

- RELATIVE NUMBER OF BUSES
- BUS SHELTER
- ⬠ BUS STATION
- BUS STOP



## Public Transport facilities

- (Clockwise from top left)
- One of the buses en route
  - New Plymouth Central Bus Station
  - Liardet Street bus stop

# Parking

*Parking is a critical element in a vibrant city centre. However it requires careful management and design to balance the needs of motorists and businesses with the need to create an attractive and vibrant place that people want to spend time in.*

The District Council is currently reviewing the Parking Strategy that guides decision making. The review is taking a performance based approach to parking. It will address District Plan requirements for parking, along with paid parking charges and provision of information on available parks. Guidelines for good quality car park design may be implemented.

There are approximately 9 200 parking spaces in the Central Area. The investigation stage of the review reveals that there is currently a sufficient supply of car parks to serve public and private demands in the Central Area. However, there is evidence of a perception of fewer available car parks in the Central Area than is the case. The availability of good quality information on car parks may contribute to alleviating this perception.



## Parking Spaces

- ON STREET PARKING
- OFF STREET PARKING
- 50-100 OFF STREET PARKS
- MULTI STOREY PARKING BUILDING



### Centre City

1987's Centre City Shopping Centre car park overlooking the Puke Ariki Landing and Huatoki Stream. It is preferable to stack large amounts of car parking and have a smaller footprint than have a large area of ground surface car parking. Though care is required on the vehicle entrances over the footpath that are prone to becoming a barrier to easy pedestrian movement.



### Vacant lot car parks

There are areas of the Central Area where parking is provided at the expense of an environment that people wish to spend time in such as this vacant site on Devon Street which is currently a gravel surface car park.

# Questions for the Central Area

Please complete this survey and return to NPDC by 9 November 2012 by:

- |                     |                          |  |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Mailing the form    | <input type="checkbox"/> | To: New Plymouth District Council, P. Bag 2025, New Plymouth, 4342 |
| Faxing the form     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fax to 06-759 6072   |
| Delivering the form | <input type="checkbox"/> | Civil Centre, Liardet Street, New Plymouth                         |
| Scan and email      | <input type="checkbox"/> | enquiries@npdc.govt.nz   |

Or visit our website and provide your feedback electronically at:

[www.newplymouthnz.com/Have\\_Your\\_Say](http://www.newplymouthnz.com/Have_Your_Say)

Thank you for your feedback

1. What is the Central Area of New Plymouth known for?

2. What shouldn't be located/ catered for in the Central Area?

3. Within the Central Area what should be recognised and celebrated?

4. What is your main purpose for visiting the Central Area?

- |   |  |                                  |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating        | <input type="checkbox"/> Working |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting or meeting people | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Living  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) ..... |  |                                  |

5. Are you any of the following in the central area? (please tick all that apply)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resident      | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Owner | <input type="checkbox"/> Property Owner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant/Lessee | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these  |   |

6. How often do you visit?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every day           | <input type="checkbox"/> Once or twice a week           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 times per month | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't visit the Central Area |

7. How do you most often travel to the Central Area?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Vehicle- Driver or Passenger   | <input type="checkbox"/> On foot               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cycle or other non-motorised vehicle | <input type="checkbox"/> Ride in a Bus or Taxi |

8. Please rank the following urban design matters in regard to the Central Area

Matter	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not a matter of concern	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Current building height limits are the appropriate tools to manage future development.					
The number of large, hard surface, grey places are appropriate.					
There are an appropriate number of street trees and open spaces.					
The quality of design and materials used for building are interesting and engaging.					
The Central Area is a safe place to be.					
There is no problem with the amount of graffiti in the Central Area.					
The number of dull ground floor frontages with too few windows or doors is about right.					
The level of investment in green buildings and sustainable technology in the built environment is appropriate.					
New developments- are distinctive and reflect the quality of the environment they are located in; there is no lack of identity.					
The amount of signage and corporate colour on buildings is about right.					
Pedestrian access is easy and safe.					
Cyclist access is easy and safe					
More people living in the Central Area would make it a safer and more vibrant place.					
Activities can too easily occur in places that have a negative effect on the existing environment.					
Vacant lots are acceptable in prime retail areas.					

9. What area or space within the Central Area do you like the most? Why?

10. What area or space within the Central Area do you like the least? Why?

11. What building do you like the most? Why?

12. What building do you like the least? Why?

13. What types of design guidance do you think is appropriate for development within the Central Area?

- No action is necessary, the present controls, policies and incentives are sufficient.
- Design Advice and Education e.g. non regulatory guidelines, external design review panel, design speakers and events programme
- Financial Incentives through a subsidy or grant to follow non regulatory design advice and rates relief for earthquake strengthening or heritage protection
- District Plan Regulations- rules in the District Plan that require consideration of elements such as context based design, active ground floor frontages, safety, pedestrian access, cycle facilities through the assessment criteria
- District Plan design rules with a supporting regulatory design guide.

14. Any other comments?

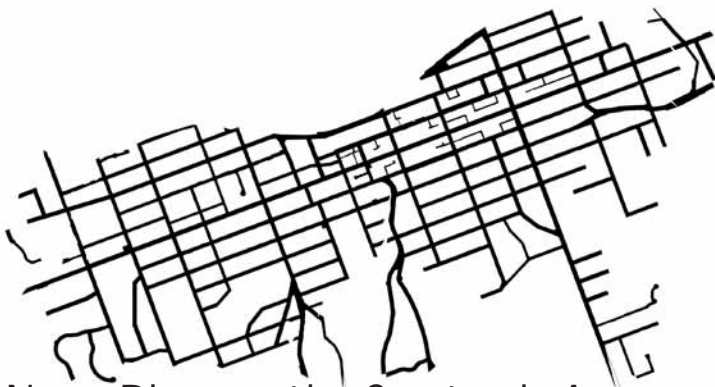


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## Image References

- P 26 AmeriCARna on Devon Street <http://www.americarna.com/Events/Americarna-Taranaki-2012/>
- P 27 Currie Street Farmers Market photo [http://www.marketground.co.nz/files/Site/117/22/110609135300VPAVXMS\\_w.jpg](http://www.marketground.co.nz/files/Site/117/22/110609135300VPAVXMS_w.jpg)



New Plymouth Central Area  
Site Survey