
Project title: Delivering High Quality Urban Design
Strategy area: Urban Development

1. The Proposal

To propose a programme of work to deliver high quality urban design.

2. Executive Summary

The Council has decided that High Quality Urban Design is its second highest strategic priority. This initiative addresses this priority through the planning and implementation of a number of new urban design initiatives:

- Incorporation of sense of place principles into standards and guidelines for asset management.
- Further development of Capital Precinct initiatives.
- Implementation of a revised Public Space and Centre Development Program with more emphasis on the growth spine.
- Development and implementation of an advocacy program.
- Completion of a Central City Public Space Framework.
- Development of designs for street furniture and detail
- Implementation of a heritage incentive program

The initiative also delivers on the Action Plan for the Urban Design Protocol. Council is required to report on progress on implementing the Action Plan in August 2006.

3. Strategic Fit

This initiative delivers on the second highest strategic priority - high quality urban design. It also contributes to the delivery of other strategic priorities:

- Improved residential infill management
- Growth Spine
- Protection of sense of place

The initiative contributes to the following Council outcomes:

Outcome 1: More liveable – by developing and maintaining a high quality public environment

Outcome 2: Stronger sense of place – by integrating sense of place into asset management, by enhancing the role of the city as Capital, by ensuring high quality of built design and by conserving the city's heritage.

Outcome 3: More Compact - by strengthening and enhancing the vitality of the central city and suburban centres, particularly those on the growth spine.

Outcome 7: Better connected – by developing and maintaining streets and routes that are pedestrian friendly, accessible and safe.

Outcome 9: Safer – by influencing the design of buildings, public spaces and the connections between them to ensure that Wellington is a safe place.

4. Relationship to Existing Activities

High quality urban design underpins all programmes and projects of the Urban Design Unit. The Public Space and Centre Development Program was developed in 2001 and is a key programme for the Urban Design Unit. It has now been reviewed in the light of Council's new strategic direction and outcomes. Its focus is primarily on public space on the growth spine including investment in public space and streets in the central city.

Heritage conservation is an important component of urban design. The Council's strong commitment to this is reflected in the Built Heritage Policy, adopted by Council in 2005. It has three key initiatives:

1. Improving the statutory protection for built heritage.
2. Creating more heritage areas in the city and suburbs.
3. Establishing a new heritage incentive fund.

The first two initiatives are being addressed through the District Plan process. The Building Act 2004 is expected to have a major effect on heritage buildings in the city as an increased number of listed heritage buildings will be affected by the new code. The new heritage incentive fund will enable Council to assist heritage building owners with grants for strengthening.

In addition, the proposed District Plan Change which proposes greater protection for heritage buildings by strengthened regulation needs to be balanced by incentives.

In 2005 the Council became a signatory to the NZ Urban Design Protocol. As one of its responsibilities as a signatory, the Council approved an Action Plan which identified four key areas for improvement:

1. Integration of the Wellington Regional Strategy and the Urban Development Strategy into Council priorities and better integration across Council's activities and business units. This will be addressed by aligning public space planning and the centre development program with Priority 3 Growth Spine.
2. Adoption of the Central City Public Space Framework which provides direction for planning central city public space and a work programme for its delivery.

3. Identification of sense of place values in the suburbs and the establishment of standards to guide the development, renewal and maintenance of infrastructure assets to reflect sense of place.
4. Development and implementation of the Capital Precinct Framework that strengthens and enhances the role of the city as capital.

5. Proposal Costs

| <i>Outline project costs per year</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Project Component | Operating expenses \$000 | | | | | | | | | |
| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
| <i>Heritage Incentive Fund - \$2m over six years</i> | 250 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | | | | |
| <i>Promotion of urban design protocol and principles</i> | 50 | 50 | 50 | | | | | | | |
| <i>Capital Precinct Framework Development - technical studies and promotion</i> | 80 | 50 | 30 | | | | | | | |
| Total | 390 | 450 | 430 | 350 | 350 | 350 | | | | |

| Heritage Incentive Fund in accordance with Built Heritage Policy 2005 | Opex breakdown | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
| <i>Available for large grants</i> | 130 | 180 | 180 | 180 | 180 | 180 | | | | |
| <i>Available for minor grants</i> | 100 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | | | | |
| <i>Legal fees</i> | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | | | | |
| Total | 250 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | | | | |

| <i>Promotion of urban design protocol and principles</i> | Opex breakdown | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
| <i>Marketing and promotional advice</i> | 15 | 15 | 15 | | | | | | | |
| <i>Seminars and speakers for public lectures</i> | 15 | 15 | 15 | | | | | | | |
| <i>Printing and Publishing</i> | 20 | 20 | 20 | | | | | | | |
| Total | 50 | 50 | 50 | | | | | | | |

| Capital Precinct | Opex breakdown | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
| <i>Traffic Study</i> | 20 | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Ideas competition for expressing New Zealand Nationhood</i> | 10 | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Open Space Plan</i> | 20 | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Public Art and Monument Plan</i> | | 20 | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Visitor and Tourism Enhancement</i> | 20 | 20 | 20 | | | | | | | |
| <i>Government liaison</i> | 10 | 10 | 10 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Total</i> | 80 | 50 | 30 | | | | | | | |

6. Project Outline

This initiative delivers on the Council's second highest strategic priority - high quality urban design. The range of programmes and projects are derived from the urban development strategy:

- Incorporation of sense of place principles into standards and guidelines for asset management. The Sense of Place: Physical Characteristics initiative will inform the development of the urban design standards and guidelines.
- Further development of Capital Precinct initiatives.
- Implementation of a revised Public Space and Centre Development Program with more emphasis on the growth spine.
- Development and implementation of an advocacy program. New marketing resources are required to promote the benefits of urban design by way of increased advocacy of urban design principles and practices to external interests. A high quality urban environment requires a shared understanding of the value and opportunity inherent in good urban design between investors, developers, residents, businesses and regulators.
- Completion of a Central City Public Space Framework.
- Development of designs for street furniture and detail
- Implementation of a heritage incentive program

Some of these programmes and projects will be delivered with current staff resources. However, additional resources are required to implement a new Heritage Fund, Advocacy activities and development of the Capital Precinct.

The potential benefits of these initiatives are that high quality urban design will be an integral part of public and private development in the city. The economic, social and environmental benefits of good urban design have been well documented in recent work carried out by the Ministry for the Environment.

The risk of not undertaking these activities is that there will be a lack of planning and integration of urban design in the city and within Council.

7. Conclusion

Additional planning, coordination and integration of activities are required to deliver high quality urban design. In addition Council has a commitment as a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol to implement its approved Action Plan. It is therefore recommended that additional resources be allocated to this priority as outlined.