
CONSULTATION ON TAWA TOWN CENTRE

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks to highlight issues that currently face the Tawa town centre and seeks feedback from the community about possible improvements in the future.

The report proposes that the Tawa Community Board engages with the Tawa community to elicit comments and ideas about the future shaping of the Tawa town centre and, in particular, to help identify current issues around car parking and transport, safety, amenity, attractiveness, public space, public art, heritage and streetscape. It is anticipated that an action plan will be drafted based on the feedback received.

To stimulate discussion the report also outlines a range of possible initiatives that could be undertaken if there is sufficient community support and available funding.

2. Executive Summary

Tawa town centre is the heart of Tawa suburb and an important retail centre in North Wellington. The town centre has a long and interesting history, a pleasant village atmosphere and is soon to experience a revitalisation due to the addition of a newly built New World supermarket.

Tawa town centre also faces some challenges. It is flanked by larger retail complexes in the form of Dressmart, Porirua Centre and the proposed Takapu Island complex, which both complement and compete with Tawa town centre for the shopping public. It is therefore essential that Tawa Centre retains and accentuates its village charm to help secure its future for retailers and customers.

This report seeks to stimulate discussion from the Tawa community to help identify current issues around car parking and transport, safety, amenity, attractiveness, public space, public art, heritage and streetscape improvements.

It also investigates the methods used by other towns and cities to revitalise their own centres and highlights

The report also outlines potential issues that could form part of the survey to be undertaken

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Tawa Community Board

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Agree that the Tawa Community Board engage with the wider Tawa community, including residents, retailers, commercial land owners, community groups and schools, to help identify issues in the Tawa town centre around car parking and transport, safety, amenity, attractiveness, public space, heritage and streetscape.*
- 3. Note that the next steps, including any possible action, are to be determined following the results of the community engagement.*

4. Background

4.1 Tawa Town Centre Plan

The Tawa Community Board approved a series of projects as part of the Tawa Town Centre plan. These included the following upgrades:

- **White Light Project:** the existing street lights were improved using white, metal halide lighting along Main Road and Cambridge Terrace.
- **Heritage Trail & Library:** The Board approved the upgrade of the area adjacent to the Mervyn Kemp Library to include paving, planting, seating and historical information, which tied in with the Tawa Historical Society's historical trail around Tawa.
- **175 - 185 Main Road:** A footpath upgrade was undertaken using paving and street furniture.
- **Linden Street Footpath:** A footpath upgrade was undertaken using the same paving and street furniture as the Tawa retail area to link the two.

There is no current plan by WCC to further upgrade the Tawa town centre. New initiatives, should they be supported, would need to be undertaken by the Tawa Community Board and funded from a range of sources including its own budget, WCC general and or grants funding, assistance from retailers, local businesses or community grants.

5. Discussion

5.1 Tawa Village: The Village Concept

Tawa town centre's uniqueness stems from its ability to blend with the local environment, the friendly and personal service of local retailers and the ambience of a village square. The precinct already has a unique, low profile building environment, is largely a tree-lined and pedestrian friendly. With the addition of further specialty and boutique stores, the village concept could further enhance the current offering in Tawa.

To further distinguish the town centre from bulk retail or mall developments, Tawa may benefit from accentuating its village aspects. This might include additional plantings by the local community, hanging baskets, street benches, public art and targeting boutique service businesses and retailers to complement the existing operations.

5.2 Funding Improvements

Aside from traditional Council funding, there is a range of possibilities to help fund town centre improvements. These might include a traditional rejuvenation programme funded by WCC or the Tawa community, the formation of a Business Improvement District (see Manukau example) or the adoption of a targeted levy (e.g. Marsden Village or Wellington CBD levy).

Community Rejuvenation Programme: Petone

Up until the 1980s Petone was a thriving, largely working-class town, and the location of large industrial sites. The majority of these, including car assembly and meat processing factories, closed in the 1980s, resulting in gradual economic decline.

The Jackson Street Programme was commenced under the Hutt City Council in 1991 and was aimed at promoting and rejuvenating Jackson Street and the local Petone businesses.

Initiatives included the installation of decorative lights, public art and proactively encouraging retailers into the area.

The suburb has since been revitalised and is now home to its own cinema complex, delicatessens and many cafes, restaurants and shops. It has become a destination for Wellingtonians as an entertainment and food precinct.

Business Improvement Districts: Manukau

Business improvement districts (BIDs) are areas where local businesses have formed an association and combined with the local council to promote investment and operating activity in the area where the BID operates. The aim is to encourage retail and business growth. Through a series of initiatives driven by the BID, for example:

- Security and maintenance
- Graffiti control
- Beautification projects
- Events or tourism initiatives
- Marketing and promotional activity
- Business recruiting
- Signage
- Retail improvements
- Employment of a coordinator.

In Manukau, for example, there are 13 business improvement districts covering town centres, industrial areas and neighbourhood shopping areas. They range in size from 30 to more than 1500 businesses.

BIDs are funded by BID members paying an additional targeted rate to enhance their area (minimum of \$250 per annum). Council contributes additional funds on top of the targeted levy as a 'top up', which provides a further benefit to the BID members and supports programmes and activities to promote economic development in the BID area. The BID payments are ring-fenced so that the funding is spent directly in the area it is collected from.

Business Levy: Marsden Village

The Marsden Village Levy is collected on behalf of the Marsden Village Association on all commercial properties in the Marsden Village. Levy funds are applied to the ongoing maintenance of the village and include hanging baskets etc.

5.3 Scope of consultation

Potential issues for consultation are wide and varied and should be discussed in more detail by the Tawa Community Board before further work is undertaken. There is also the option to undertake separate consultation with the business community, for example on potential funding models, and residents.

Issues to consult on may include, but shall not be limited to:

- making the town centre more pedestrian-friendly, and providing cycle lanes and bike racks
- enhancing public a civic space for outdoor seating, markets and fairs
- ensuring good access to car parking spaces
- possible beautification projects
- additional plantings
- whether Tawa should adopt a brand such as Tawa Village
- marketing to help promote Tawa as a destination
- signage marking the town centre
- enhancing safety
- making public space more usable
- how to tell the story of Tawa's history
- possible streetscape improvements.

5.4 Formation of a steering group

Following the community engagement, an informal steering group could be established to progress further initiatives. It could be made up of Tawa Community Board members or extended to include commercial landowners, retailers and community groups.

6. Conclusion

This report seeks to stimulate discussion about the Tawa town centre and whether possible improvements can be made.

It canvasses a number of areas for discussion, such as car parking and transport, safety, amenity, attractiveness, public space, public art, heritage and streetscape, and proposes that the Tawa Community Board engage with the community on these issues.

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