

# Johnsonville Town Centre Plan

## Issues and Context Report

September 2006



Aerial photograph of Johnsonville and walking approximate distances from the town centre

2

Disclaimer - this report has been prepared for Wellington City Council by Boffa Miskell Ltd as a discussion document in order to highlight key issues for consideration in the development of a centre plan for Johnsonville Town Centre. As such the comments in this report should not be considered Wellington City Council policy or necessarily reflect the views of Wellington City Council.

# introduction

Johnsonville Town Centre (JTC) is the largest and most significant town centre in Wellington outside the CBD. JTC plays an important part in the Wellington City Council's (WCC) two key urban development strategies – Urban Development Strategy (UDS 2006)<sup>1</sup> and the Northern Growth Management Framework (NGMF 2003)<sup>2</sup>.

The importance of JTC will increase with the implementation of the NGMF and population expansion in the north. JTC is also identified by the UDS as a town centre for intensification as part of the "growth spine" concept.

In order for JTC to mature from a suburban shopping centre to a quality town centre, a number of issues will need to be addressed. These include its transformation to provide a mix of uses, employment opportunities, public amenity, appropriate services, and a clear sense of place.

The purpose of this report is to document essential information about the JTC and identify issues and opportunities to provide a basis for the development of a "Centre Plan" for JTC's future.

For the purposes of this report, JTC is defined as the area approximately encompassed by an 800m radius/10mins walking distance of the Johnsonville Railway Station.

The report presents the information in a combination of graphic and written content. Most pages follow a consistent format, which describes the current situation, issues and opportunities and key design principles. If further information is required, the reports noted here (see references) can be consulted.

## BACKGROUND AND REASONS FOR THE PROJECT

As noted in the introduction above, JTC is a key part of WCC's two key urban development strategies – the UDS and NGMF (see page 5 for more details).

### Strategic approach

The NGMF provides a "strategy for achievement of the future development of the northern part of Wellington City. It provides the communities, landowners, developers and WCC a set of goals and an agreed process for planning urban expansion together".

The NGMF assumes growth of 9000 people over the next 20 years. The current District Plan zones land enough for 4000 more people in the northern area. The NGMF provides that the northern area will be the primary location for "greenfields" and residential development in Wellington and so more land will be needed, and more people required to live within a smaller area.

Density should be higher near transport centres. The NGMF promotes the development of attractive, diverse, liveable neighbourhoods that offer local housing choices, promote walkability and providing people with local choice for shopping, work, services and access to a public transport link.

WCC is also in the process of developing its long-term vision for urban development and this is embodied in the Urban Development Strategy (UDS). The concept of a "growth spine" has evolved from the UDS as being the best way to accommodate future growth in the city (see page 2).

Intensification of housing, employment and transport connections at Johnsonville, as the northernmost centre on the spine, has been identified as being consistent with the philosophy and approach of the UDS<sup>3</sup>.

### Existing issues and opportunities

Existing issues in Johnsonville Town Centre concern poor amenity, poorly configured open space and lack of high quality public space and buildings, poor integration between commercial uses and open space, and problematic volumes of through traffic. Opportunities for development relate to redevelopment of the mall, raising the building height and more bulk on street frontage, increased office role, encouraging and intensifying residential activities in the town centre and the residential area to the west, and improvements to the traffic network.

Use of Johnsonville Road as a motorway on/off ramp also results in significant traffic pressures and loss of amenity during peak periods. Passenger transport provision is also under review through the North Wellington Public Transport study (due for completion end 2006). Town centre streetscapes work has also been undertaken recently which has resulted in some improvement to amenity. It is not proposed to review this work or undertake any significant streetscape works in the short term as these works are considered relatively robust.

The owners of the Johnsonville Mall, have been in discussions with WCC in relation to the redevelopment of the mall since early 2005. The mall redevelopment involves large-scale changes and the owners intend that by early 2007 they would have lodged resource consent applications to enable them to make the changes. Although there are significant challenges in the mall's redevelopment proposals, it presents opportunities for WCC to work with owners to enable a positive change to JTC that addresses issues identified above and throughout this report.

A parallel strand of this project is therefore to provide guidance to the mall's redevelopment in order that it supports the wider emerging vision for JTC.



Figure 1 from NGMF: light blue refers to new residential growth areas.



Figure 2: illustrates a concept design for residential development from the NGMF.

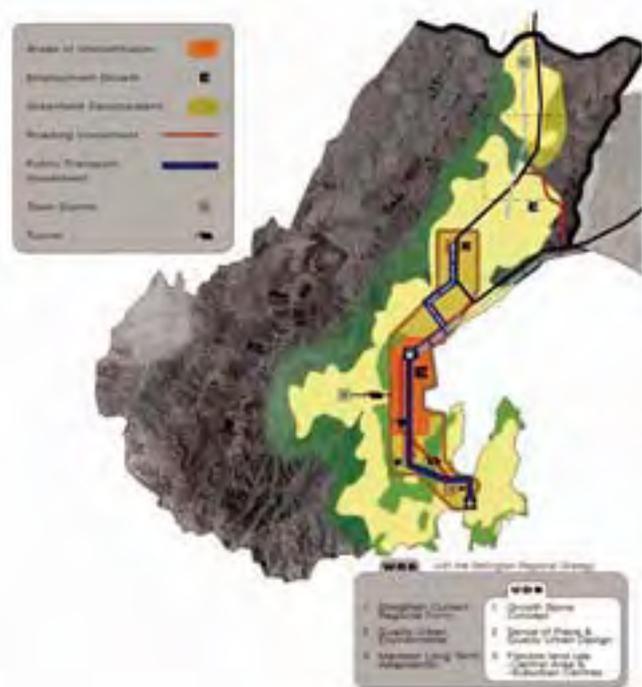


Figure 3 from UDS: demonstrates the growth spine concept.



Figure 4 from Wellington City District Plan: the brown colour denotes the suburban centre.

# planning context

## LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Two specific long-range growth planning studies initiated by WCC (UDS and NGMF) confirm Johnsonville as a primary location and centre for employment, commercial services, retail functions and as the social heart of the northern suburbs. See Figures 1, 2 and 3.

### Other planning studies of relevance to Johnsonville are:

- Regional Land Transport Strategy<sup>4</sup> which examines options for transport regionally.
- Northern Public Transport Study<sup>5</sup> which addresses options for the future of the Wellington-Johnsonville rail link.
- Wellington Regional Strategy<sup>6</sup> which identifies key actions areas for the strategy to build on – the UDS “bolts” into this regional strategy. The WRS identifies JTC as an important sub-regional centre with the strategy seeking to group and mature such centres.

### Planning principles

Key underlying and stated principles and other relevant directions for the JTC from these studies are to:

- Reinforce and improve the compact corridor form
- Mature the sub-regional centres
- Develop a highly liveable and attractive urban environment for communities
- Build on heritage, culture and identity or sense of place
- Value and protect the landscape and ecology of the area
- Improve the range and location of housing stock
- Use land and infrastructure efficiently
- Encourage a thriving local economy
- Design major roads to support centres.

## DISTRICT and REGIONAL PLANS

- The Wellington City District Plan identifies JTC as having a Suburban Centre zone (refer Figure 4). This is a permissive zone type that allows a range of activities to occur – retail, residential, office etc. There are no provisions that relate to building design or that could be used to require quality urban design outcomes. The allowed height limit is 12m and site coverage is not restricted.  
Parking is not required to be provided. Servicing is required to meet simple standards.
- Aside from the regional growth work, the regional plans are less relevant for JTC. A review of the Regional Policy Statement<sup>7</sup> is under way – it embodies principles from the likes of the Long Term Council Community Plans and the draft outcomes from Wellington LTCCP, which are in tune with the principles identified above.

### Issues and opportunities

- Existing suburban centre zoning is permissive, meaning there is limited control on development in JTC and poor quality urban conditions could be expected to continue. There is currently limited leverage for WCC to influence developments in JTC.
- District plan changes may be urgently needed to keep pace with proposed development.
- The limit on height is generic and may prevent an urban form which is appropriate to the importance of the centre and toenable future growth opportunities.
- The process of changing the District Plan will take time and will likely require a new set of plan provisions to apply to encourage appropriate development.
- Anticipated District Plan changes may include more specific development controls, which includes some direction for the spatial arrangement of the centre such as building footprints, height ranges, carparking locations, public open space (urban and green), movement network hierarchies, building design aims etc and some encouragement towards changes to JTC to a more mixed use format.



[UF1] Northern corridor basin



[UF2] Broderick Road - tallest building



[UF3] Clock tower landmark



[UF4] Johnsonville Road 'main street' strip

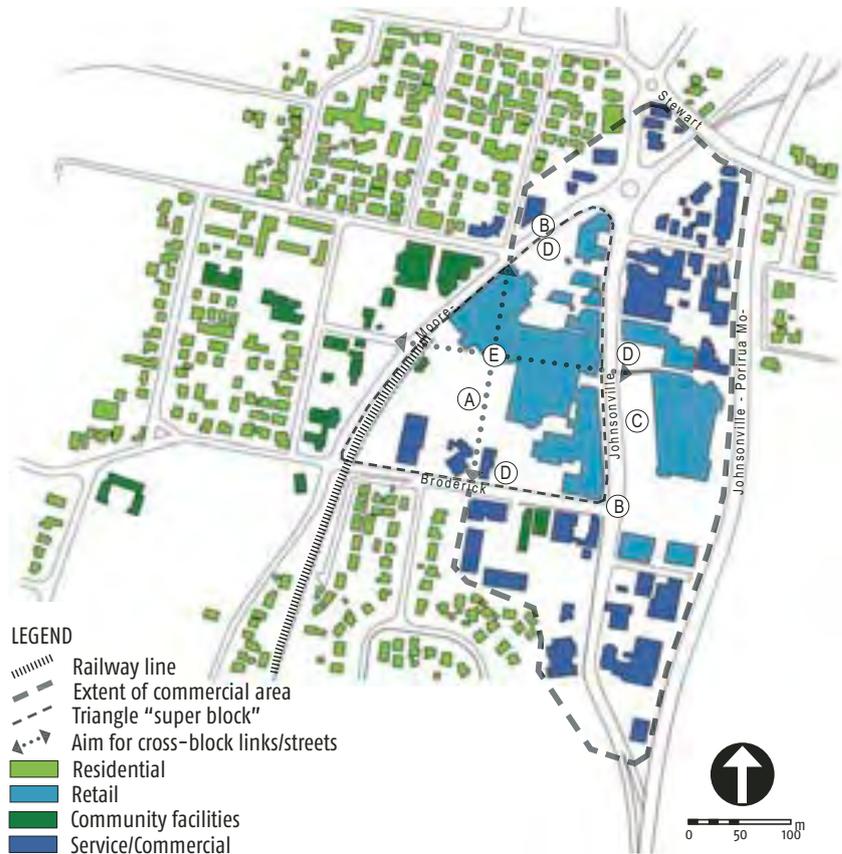
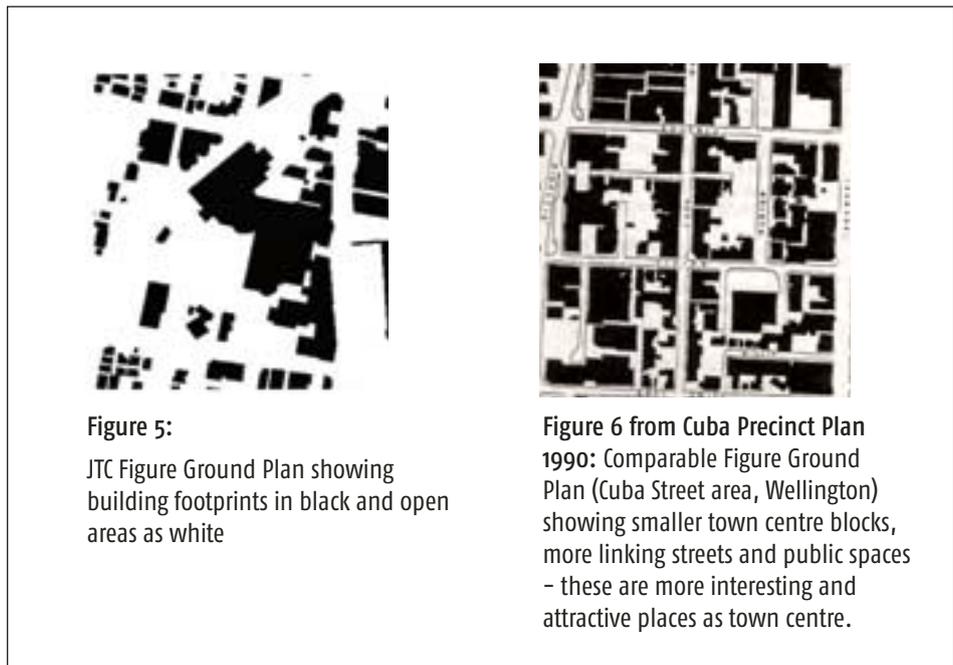


Figure 4



# urban form and landuse

## Current situation

- JTC sits in the floor of the natural basin formed by the hills extending north that define the Northern Corridor [refer UF1]. The hills to the west rise gradually to provide an open aspect in that direction [refer UF1] with steeper hills to the east. The flanks of the hills support residential suburbs which overlook JTC.
- JTC's focused around a triangle shaped "super block" – bounded by Johnsonville, Broderick, Moorefield roads (refer Figure 4). The opposite sides of these 3 roads also have commercial or community uses.
- The blocks are dominated by large footprint buildings with large areas of open space in the form of surface car parking – the site built coverage is some 29% (refer Figure 5).
- There are no public open spaces – aside from streets – where any day-to-day public gatherings or events can occur within JTC. There is a 'green' public park to the west of the JTC across Moorefield Road [refer UF3], but this is dislocated from the central block.
- Buildings are predominantly 1-2 storeys with a mix of ages, but generally they are "functional" structures designed for retail or commercial services activities. The tallest building is offices on Broderick Road (4 storeys – some 12-15m height) [refer UF2].
- Johnsonville Road acts (on the west side) as a 'main street' with a relatively continuous shop frontage between Broderick Rd and McDonald's/service station at the north end [refer UF4].
- Within the main block triangle some activities have opened into the block to face the large areas of car parking (generally west facing).
- The gateways to JTC are the motorway overbridge in the north (Stewart Drive) and although less clear, from the motorway off ramp to the south via the commercial service area on Johnsonville Road.
- There are a few built landmarks – 2 churches. A clock 'tower' sits at the north end of the JTC as part of a commercial development [refer UF3]. Mt Kaukau transmitter is a marker to the south.

## Issues and opportunities

- Ⓐ Large blocks and large areas of surface parking limit the interest which can be found in town centres with a finer grained street pattern (refer Figures 5 and 6).
- Ⓑ Existing streets are generally functional for vehicle traffic with more of an arterial scale as opposed to slower traffic, walking priority streets – the mall has internalised a street system. The opportunity to address street hierarchy and priority relate to traffic issues too (refer to figure 4).
- Ⓒ Johnsonville Road, although improved recently, suffers from the apparently greater street width generated by a lack of built edge definition to the east.

- Ⓓ Aside from some of the Johnsonville Road shops, most of the shops are larger footprint and discontinuous frontage creating a disjointed street experience outside the internal mall. There are opportunities to "repair" these street edges by using new buildings.
- Ⓔ There are opportunities to create a new internal block walking street system with the mall redevelopment (refer Figure 4). This will make the centre more accessible and could create a more attractive place for people on foot.
- There are opportunities to increase the current District Plan height limit (12m), especially to the north and east where residential and amenity values (such as sunlight access) would be affected less. The potential uses for additional floor levels will need to be explored. Residential and office uses are options.
- The buildings in JTC are of limited quality architecturally – few would be expected to have a permanent place in, say, 50 years. There are opportunities to set new standards for building design in new development.

## Principles

- Large block forms should be connected through by creating new (preferably public) connections as walking (not vehicle) streets to generate a finer grained block pattern and link with the existing street pattern.
- Priorities need to be defined for key traffic movement streets and streets for public life and then treated accordingly in terms of speeds, surface types, widths, lighting, etc.
- Streets with a priority for public life should be formed by continuous built edges and urban open spaces with good sunlight access.
- Carparking should be limited to parallel parks on street or within parking structures in strategic locations.
- Surface level open carparking should be replaced with parking structures that enables a new built environment to develop.
- New buildings should be designed to provide quality street edges and a more distinctive urban form representative of its town centre status.



[H1] St John's Church (1921)



[H2] Johnsonville Methodist Cemetery



[H2] Johnsonville Methodist Cemetery



[H3] Strong natural landform

LEGEND

-  Railway line
-  Heritage places

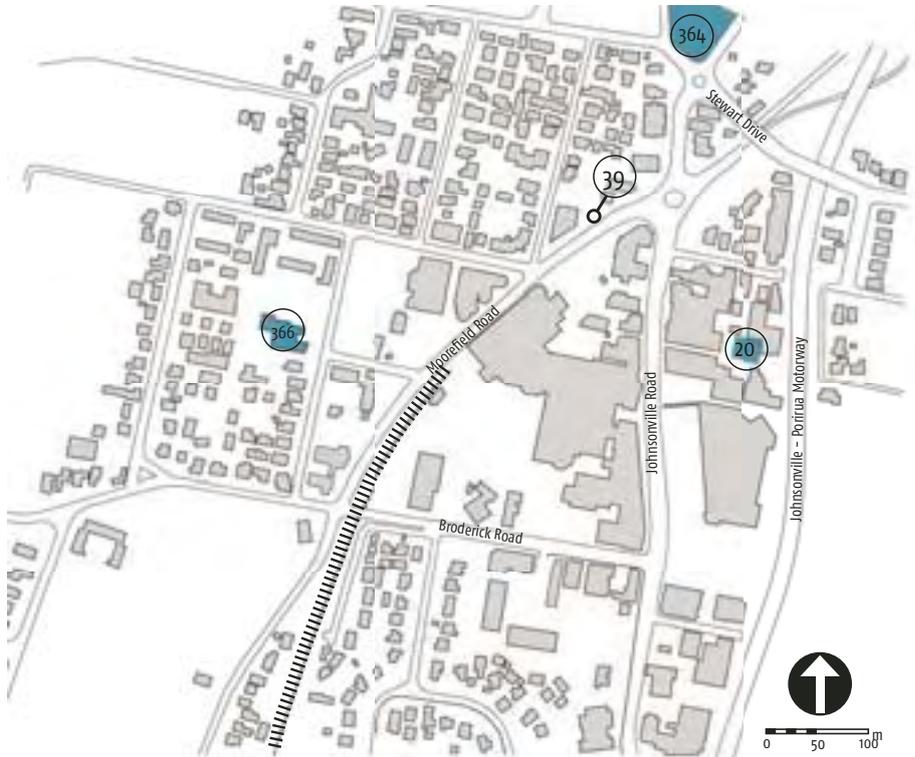


Figure 7

**Notes from Heritage Board**

Johnsonville gets its name from the first European settler, sawmillier Frank Johnson. Johnson's Clearing, literally a clearing in the thick bush, was on the western side of the present day Johnsonville Road, bounded (roughly) by today's Ironside, Moorefield and Broderick roads and the sealed section of Old Coach Road. Johnson's sawmill was the focus of the early settlement, which grew relatively quickly. The first church was built in 1842.

During the tensions between Porirua Maori and settlers in 1846 a stockade (Clifford's Stockade) was built near the north end of the village. The clearance of timber, in Johnsonville and nearby valleys, was followed by pastoral farming and Johnsonville became a service centre for farms in the district.

After the completion of Ngauranga Road in 1858, Johnsonville became an important refreshment stop. It was on the route for the Cobb and Co. stagecoach and hotels and eating houses offered services to the traveller. By 1885 the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Co. line was opened.

About 1894 Freeman R. Jackson and Co. established the saleyards next to the railway station (in the area now occupied by the shopping mall and carparks), making it the chief stock station on the Wellington-Manawatu Railway line. Cattle, sheep and pigs were unloaded at Johnsonville for sale and those stock destined for the Wellington Meat Export and Freezing Works were then driven down the gorge to Ngauranga.

Interestingly, by 1912, the Town Board was able to provide a high pressure water supply, a sewerage system and gas supply, for a population of less than 1000 people.

The opening of the Tawa Deviation on the Main Trunk Line in 1937 reduced Johnsonville to a terminus on the suburban railway and it lost stock traffic from the north. This, coupled with rapid population growth, which steadily reduced available farm land, saw Johnsonville's role as a farming service centre diminish. The stockyards were finally removed in 1961. Johnsonville has gone on to become one of Wellington's largest suburbs and it is still growing.

# sense of place

## Current situation

- Heritage board at community centre frontage on Moorefield Road describes heritage of area (refer Figure 7) and notes below.
- Maori village – unknown location at this time.
- District Plan<sup>8</sup> heritage sites, objects and buildings in JTC include:
  - No. 364 St John's Church 1921, Bassett Road, cnr Ironside Road [refer H2].
  - No. 366 Johnsonville Masonic Hall 1908, 25 – 29 Phillip Street.
  - Object No. 39 Trooper Retter Memorial 1902, Moorefield Road.
- Area No.20 Johnsonville Cemetery, Norman Lane [refer H3].
- Built, cultural, natural heritage is not strong; and the 'sense of place' that comes from a strongly represented heritage is not present – JTC feels like it could be anywhere.
- The current range of retail activities at JTC is reasonably generic and repeat those commonly found in other centres.

## Issues and opportunities

- Identity of JTC for residents needs to be understood – what do people using it like, or relate to?
- Layers of heritage from use and occupation over time are unreadable and more investigation is required to address natural, cultural and built heritage values.
- Items that do exist, like cemetery, are 'buried' in urban context and not respected/recognised.
- Built environment has decommissioned natural values – hills are still relatively strong references [refer H3], but streams, forest and habitat are no longer in evidence.
- Tangata whenua values unknown at this time and require consultation.
- There are opportunities to represent the heritage of JTC in the future development of the area with a clear understanding of its elements. For example the place of JTC as an assembly point for stock movement, its place on walking/transport routes over centuries can be explored. Also the natural values, vegetation types, streams and other characteristics may be able to be re-presented in future development in a controlled manner, i.e. not completely restored.

## Principles

- Recognise heritage references from past uses and occupation of the area in the organisation of visual and physical connections and in approach to design elements and urban form.
- Engage with tangata whenua and heritage interests in understanding opportunities to weave heritage into future planning.
- Make a distinctive place that has a clear and positive identity that is meaningful to residents of the area.
- Encourage activities and uses which are special, not generic, and so establish a point of difference for the centre.



[CP1] Parking fronting streets on Johnsonville Road in front of Warehouse



[CP2] Large surface of open carparking area



[CP3] Broderick Road unrestricted parking

Area	No. of Carparks
Johnsonville Road	60
Broderick Road	30
Moorefield Road	50
Wanaka Road	20
Trafalgar Street	40
1	390
2	330
3	160
4	190
5	70
6	30
7	30
Total	1400

LEGEND

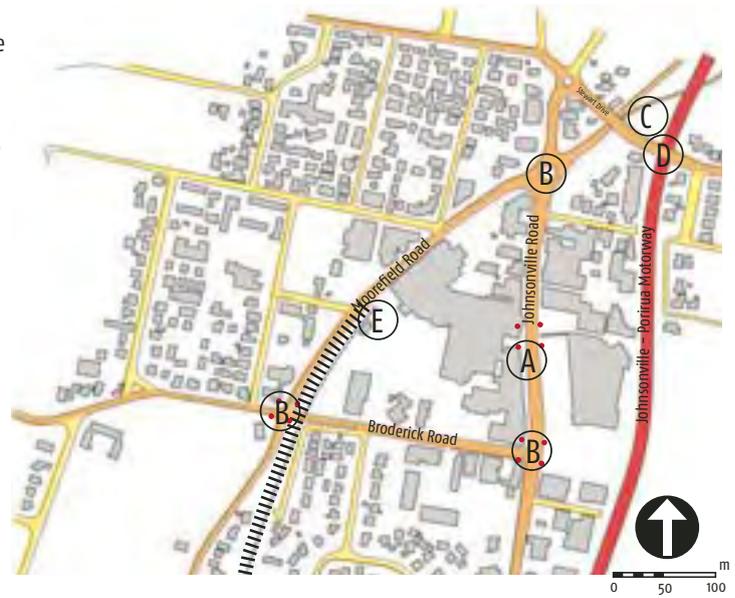


Figure 8

LEGEND

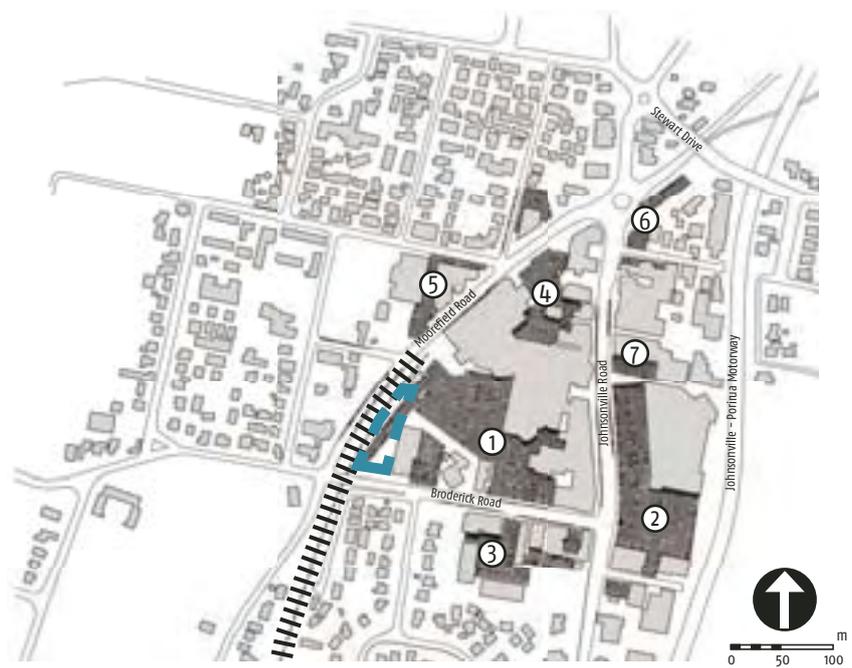


Figure 9

# cars and parking

## Current situation

- Vehicular traffic volumes in JTC are high. Johnsonville Road has up to 25,000 vehicles per day, Moorefield Road up to 19,000, Broderick Road up to 15,000 (refer Figure 7).
- Mix of traffic signals (south end) and roundabouts (north end) for control at intersections.
- Links to motorway at both ends of JTC; cycling and walking in evidence from residential areas by scale of intervening roads.
- Some 500 parking spaces in the mall carpark and 50 park and ride spaces. Total of 1400 parks in the vicinity of JTC (refer Figure 9).
- Large on-site parking associated with Woolworths and The Warehouse (refer Figure 9).
- Unrestricted on-street parking at present [refer CP3].
- On-site parking abuts and fronts to street edges in many places [refer CP1].
- Future off ramps north of JTC have been considered as part of the Northern Growth Management Framework process.

## Issues and opportunities

- Ⓐ Johnsonville Road has the dual function of being the “main street”, and route to a motorway on and off-ramp. Significant traffic volumes cause loss of amenity during peak periods.
  - Ⓑ Functionality of the main intersections and streets around core block – and off-ramps being affected by traffic volumes.
  - Ⓒ Limited opportunity to provide new motorway off-ramps for traffic from south going to north Johnsonville, although there are possible options north of JTC. The combined effect on JTC of northern suburbs 10% growth, JTC growth and future on/off-ramps needs further investigation.
  - Ⓓ Limited connections across motorway between JTC and eastern residential area pushing traffic through JTC.
- Projected redevelopment of the mall expected to increase floor area from 12,000m<sup>2</sup> to 28,000m<sup>2</sup>. Large traffic volume increase will require current capacity to be addressed.
  - While there is good parking for shoppers, there is a perceived shortage for workers and commuters and there are parking pressures on surrounding residential streets.
  - Increasing parking from 500 to 1620 spaces (predominately in a building) is projected from mall redevelopment with likely provision by parking structure – needs careful design so as not to affect street amenity and safety.
  - Provision of park and ride facilities and extent of parking numbers given catchment will need consideration about capacity for the future.
  - Large volumes of vehicle traffic from parking structures have implications for entry/exit points in surrounding streets.

## Principles

- Vehicle traffic movement in and through JTC is investigated and managed to reduce conflicts between streets and places with good amenity, and streets with high volume traffic capacity.
- Carparking is to be provided on the street and in parking structures in conjunction with development – not on surface sites within centre.
- Parking structures are to be integrated with development and in places which do not detract from street edges.
- Parking for commuters should be provided in conjunction with rail head/transit public transport stop.



Figure 10: Potential locations for intersection upgrades to address increased traffic associated with mall redevelopment



[T1] JTC served by rail connection to city



[T2] Bus on Moorefield Road



[T3] Bus and train near train station



Figure 11: Bus route within JTC

# public transport

## Current situation

- JTC serviced by train to the Wellington Rail Station [refer T1].
- Bus services extend to the northern suburbs and also into Wellington from JTC [refer T2] and (refer Figure 11).
- Limited station facilities and amenity at JTC [refer T3].

## Issues and opportunities

- Public transport services, in particular the Johnsonville rail line, are under review as part of the North Wellington Public Transport Study<sup>4</sup>. Four scenarios for the rail service have been identified. These scenarios are:
  - Upgrade rail services
  - Replace rail line with bus lane
  - Light rail system
  - Remove public transport from rail line and make a cycleway with buses to run on road
- These scenarios were consulted on in mid-June 2006. If the rail service changes, then implications for transport and rail/public transport hub at JTC.
- Public transport interchange with corresponding park and ride provisions is desirable to serve Northern Corridor growth and mall expansion.
- Opportunities to redevelop rail hub/bus interchange in conjunction with mall redevelopment and public space improvements.
- Cycling transport mode options and walking accessibility to JTC can be improved if considered as part of road changes required to enable JTC expansion.
- There are opportunities, based on residential intensification, within 800m radius of JTC and by drawing on wider residential catchment to establish JTC as a significant point in Northern Corridor network based around its public transport facilities.

## Principles

- A public transport hub for rail and bus be provided in conjunction with park and ride facility at centre.
- All potential traffic associated with town centre growth and residential growth in Northern Corridor is planned for as part of JTC Centre Plan and to include public transport options.



[RC1] Existing medium density housing in close proximity to JTC



[RC2] New mixed use residential/retail on Johnsonville Road



[RC3] Medium density housing opposite JTC on Broderick Road

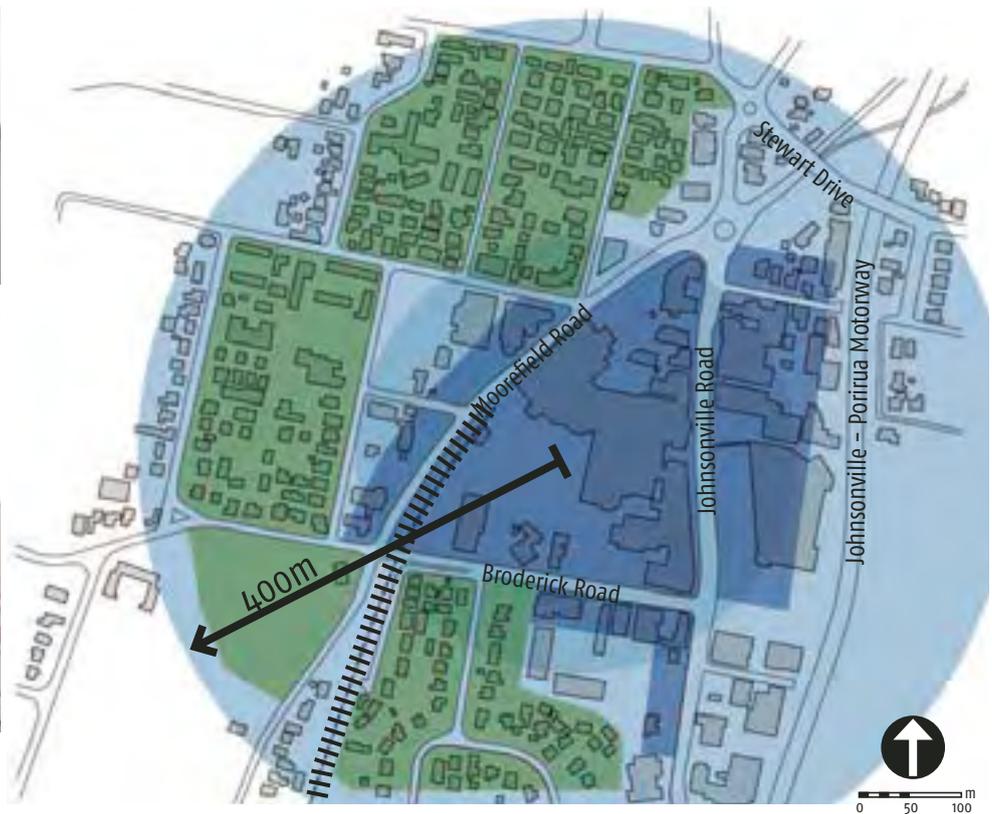


Figure 12

LEGEND

- Railway line
- 5 minute walk from centre
- Areas potential residential intensification
- Area for potential apartment type residential



Figure 13  
Examples of 'joined up' housing types in other New Zealand settings



Figure 14

# residential capacity

## Current situation

- Currently residential density in JTC peripheral area is medium to low (close in – about 20 dwellings per hectare net) (refer Figure 12) [refer RC1].
- Limited residential activity in the centre area. New mixed use on Johnsonville Road has poor residential amenity [refer RC2].
- Some residential above and close to centre at Broderick Road [refer RC3].
- Johnsonville as a whole has seen a 9% increase in population in 10 years from 1991 – 2001.
- Between 2000 – 2004, 100 new townhouses or apartments in Johnsonville.
- Expected citywide housing demand: at 2006 – 24% apartments and 53% detached; changes in 2051 – 35% apartments and 30% detached.
- The wider Johnsonville area has a population of 25,000 people in 9199 households (2.7 people per household),
- The largest ethnic group (72%) is European.
- Over 35% of Johnsonville population is 40+ years old.

## Issues and opportunities

- Currently limited (although changing) choice in housing type – expectations for a decreasing household size (nationally) and similarly in Johnsonville when consider over 40 population currently.
- Opportunities for 'renewal' and attached housing types (refer Figures 13 and 14) in western areas – assisted by grid street pattern, close (walking distance to town centre), relatively flat, existing open spaces, existing services.
- Implementing changes to currently developed urban areas into 'joined-up' housing formats will be challenging to existing residents, and a further examination of locally acceptable densities will be required.
- Higher density development within the town centre is an opportunity also, but market appreciation of 'apartment' style would require further understanding as to market and types.
- In-centre development will require careful consideration of integration of scale of built development and open spaces to create desirable amenity as well as functional titling issues for main landowner.
- Increased residential activity presents opportunity for more active town centre public life and reduced vehicle traffic demand at peak time.
- Very limited control of residential quality in suburban centre District Plan provisions currently.
- There are opportunities to identify affordable housing options within JTC through incentives, public investment and other partnerships.

## Principles

- Increase the diversity of housing types within a walkable distance from the town centre.
- Encourage residential activity within town centre in conjunction with mixed use activities with careful consideration of residential amenity value.
- Guide urban renewal in the western area of the JTC by a structured design and planning implementation and management package.



[CF1] Pool



[CF2] Community centre



[CF3] Library



[CF4] Park

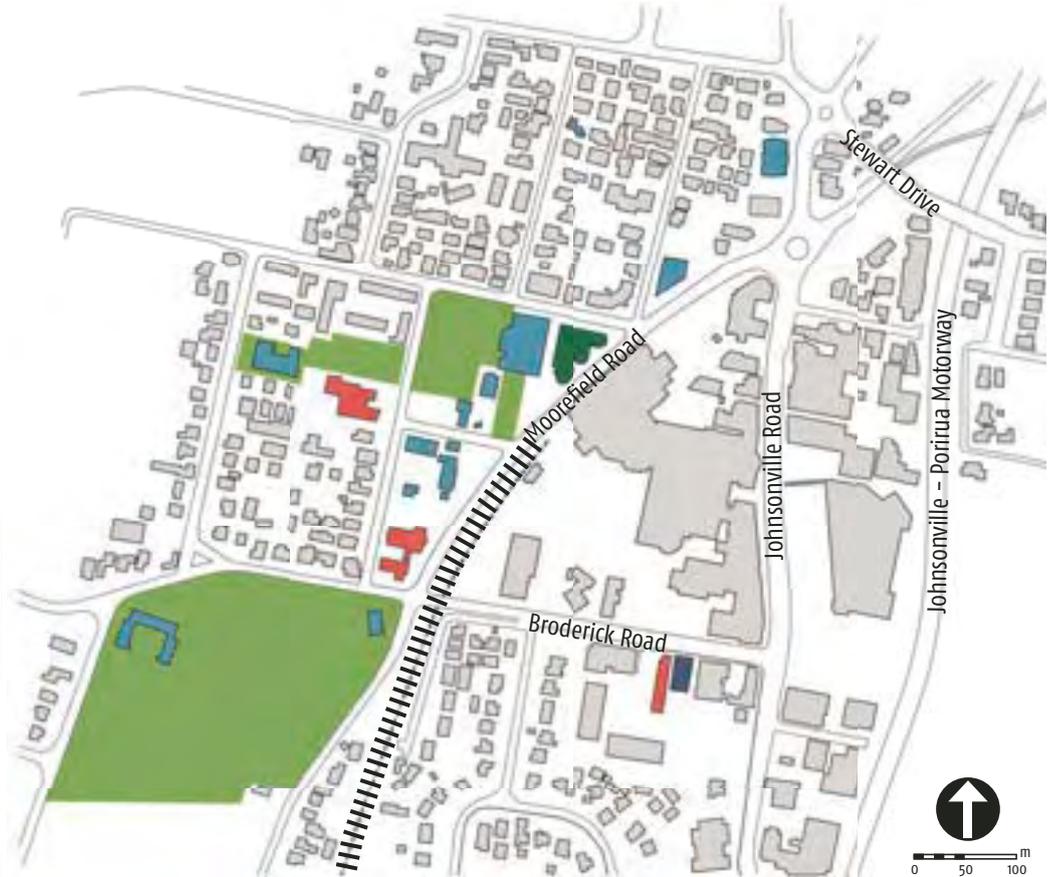


Figure 15

LEGEND

-  Railway line
-  Public open space
-  Community facilities
-  Library
-  Community centre
-  Churches

# community facilities

## Current situation

Facilities within 800m walking circle radius include (refer Figure 15):

- Rail head/station and bus link (and local routes)
- Keith Spry Pool [refer CF1]
- Community centre [refer CF2]
- Kohanga reo and crèche
- Community library [refer CF3]
- Council housing – 60 housing units
- Childcare centres – nine within the study area boundary
- Four playgrounds [refer CF4]
- Five churches
- Fire station
- WINZ office
- General medical practitioners
- Police station
- two playing fields
- nine or so Open Space A areas comprising playgrounds, fields and green areas.

These are a collection of community facilities at Moorefield Road. Generally community facilities are peripheral to the centre.

## Issues and opportunities

- Lack of integration between facilities.
- Disconnection between facilities and main activity area in super block.
- No civic type functional activity in the heart of the town to recognise community role of centre (as well as retail).
- The need for new schools/educational institutions will require further investigation.
- Potential opportunities for improved integration of some facilities (e.g. library) with mall redevelopment, although the need for facilities to be public and accessible are potential issues.
- The future of the rail facility and its relationship to new or redeveloped centre is of high interest to the future of JTC and uncertainties exist currently.
- Potential for improved linkages and frontages to facilities such as the community centre and pool.
- The adequacy of community facilities currently or for future is unknown and further investigation is required.

## Principles

- Ensure JTC has a suite of public facilities commensurate with its size and function as a second tier centre (after central city).
- Work with community facilities providers to explore (and realise as appropriate) opportunities to provide for their long term needs in an effective way.
- Work with the mall redevelopment to explore (and realise as appropriate) the interrelationship of community facilities, including library and rail hub, with new mall configuration.
- Recognise and provide for the role of JTC as a community (and retail) focal point within the development of a concept plan.



[PS1] Wide footways on Johnsonville Road



[PS2] Meeting space in the mall



[PS3] Local park next to community centre



[PS4] Johnsonville Library

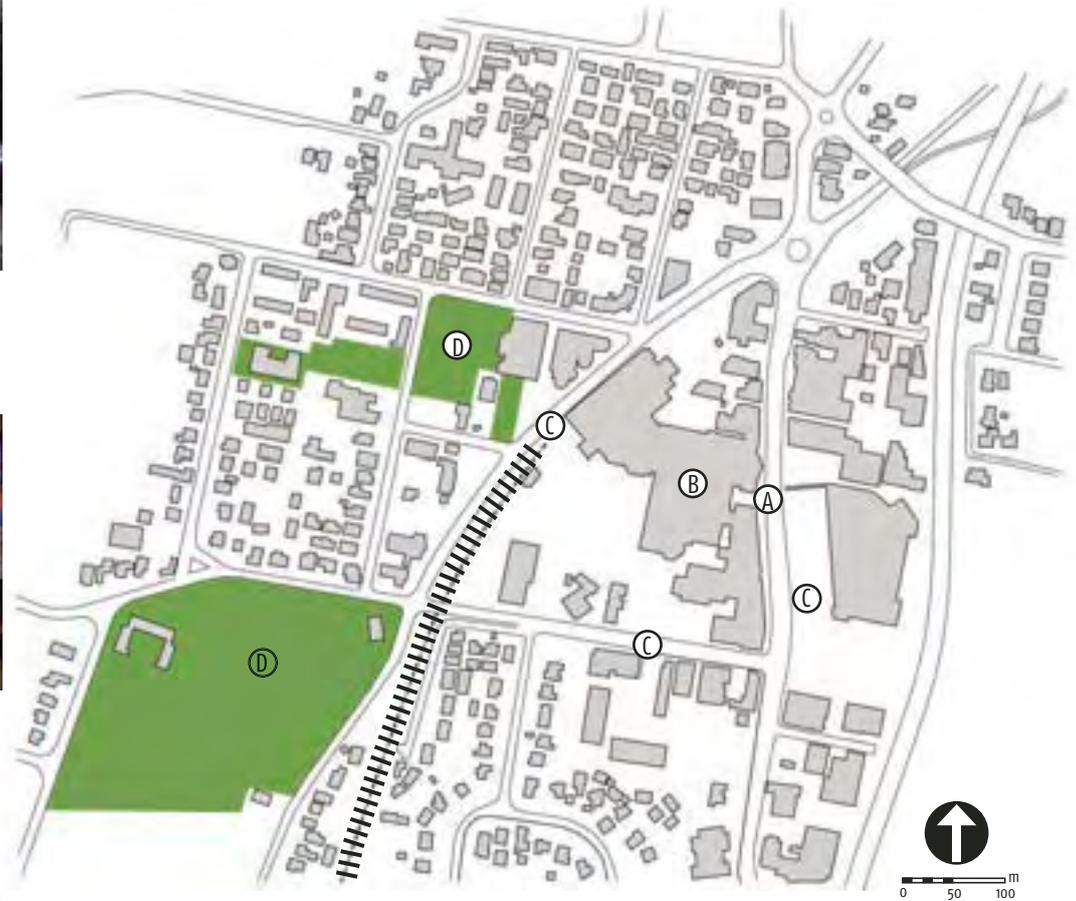


Figure 16

LEGEND

-  Railway line
-  Public green space



Figure 17: Example of public life urban open space



Figure 18: Example of public life urban walking street space

# public space

## Current situation

- Johnsonville Road [west side] has been improved – wider footpath, trees and seats [refer PS1].
- Mall has internal circulation corridors and central food court which acts as a meeting place [refer PS2].
- No other places within JTC provide quality public space.
- Surrounding streets have various cross-sections, all have footpaths and some have building edges in part.
- Green park with playground to the west of the JTC [refer PS3].
- Environment can be challenging – Wellington generally – wind and rain at times.
- Limited evening and night-time use.
- Civic functions (e.g. library, refer PS4) that might be associated with a central or main public space peripheral to main block.

## Issues and opportunities

- Ⓐ The quality of Johnsonville Road is limited to key areas. The busy nature of the street provides little opportunity for people to pause and meet others.
- Ⓑ Mall's internal circulation and food court have limited value as public spaces of quality – no access at night and limited publicness, environment (music, air conditioning, light) controlled by mall entity, internal space has no natural light, air, smells, views, no local relevance – could be anywhere. However, it is good to have shelter at times.
- Ⓒ Mall redevelopment may wish to recreate internal public space for town centre within the block – needs careful consideration to address issues of publicness, local relevance and other matters raised above.
- Ⓓ There is disconnected green open park-like space adjacent to the JTC but no more intimate focal urban spaces.
- There is no quality public space within JTC – need to address whether inside mall super block or other place independent of mall and recognise the conditions that make successful public spaces (refer Figure 17).
- Surrounding streets are of limited public space value – blank walls on footpath, no activity from buildings contributing to experience of street, busy and noisy vehicle traffic beside footpath, narrow and up-and-down kerbs and crossings make accessibility difficult for some people, and limited places to cross to surrounding residential areas.
- Homogeneity of activities limits opportunities for evening and night-time use.
- Limited opportunity with the current distribution of civic functions (library, community centre, rail link) to develop a central public open space adjacency.
- The opportunities for public space lie in the careful design of JTC to integrate particularly urban and street open space within the built form to make distinctive and well-used public amenity.

## Principles

- Create a new public space (or spaces) which can provide a centralised, active, safe, comfortable, appropriately sized place that is valued locally for people to conduct public life (refer Figure 17).
- Work with the mall to explore opportunities for public space provision in combination with the redevelopment.
- Develop JTC streets and connections to improve public space quality by considering edge conditions, road traffic adjacencies, environmental conditions and safety.
- Recognise the function of a quality public space within town centre as a civic heart (refer Figure 18).



[E1] Retail trade industry



[E2] Newlands centre



[E3] Khandallah centre



[E4] Tawa centre

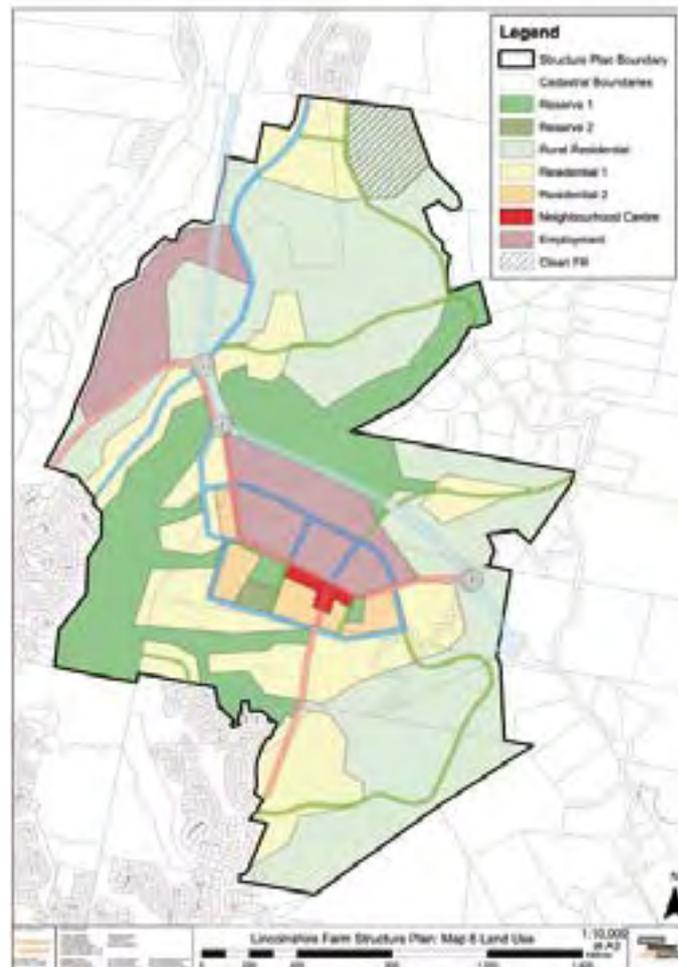


Figure 18: Lincolnshire Farm proposed employment area

# economic influences

## Current situation

- The biggest employers in northern Wellington are industry (manufacturing and storage), retail trade [refer E1] and real estate related businesses<sup>10</sup>.
- There are 2306 businesses in the northern corridor area (as at 2003).
- Other retail centres in the area are Tawa [refer E4], Khandallah [refer E3] and Dressmart, with Newlands [refer E2] and Linden providing smaller local retail services.
- Population growth of 9000 people over 20 years is anticipated to generate between \$50 and \$250 million increase in retail spending in the area.
- Many residents commute from the area to other employment centres (especially Wellington), which demonstrates a lack of opportunities for local employment.
- Recent development in JTC has tended towards retail type.

## Issues and opportunities

- The Northern Corridor accommodates a higher level of residential development than the city generally and this fuels economic growth. There is some potential for this to fluctuate in tune with interest rates and property values (residential construction activity is cooling<sup>9</sup>).
- JTC has limited capacity to accommodate larger scale industry given land values and commercial town centre footprint.
- The regional economic promotion of tourism and creative industries is unlikely to herald new opportunities at JTC with the expectation that visitors and creative activities will want to remain in cultural hub of the CBD.
- Opportunities exist to diversify the business provided for within the northern suburbs within JTC to complement the industry currently located in the corridor and the new industry and business proposed to be located at Lincolnshire Farm (refer Figure 18).
- The business growth from population increases will be expected to generate further retail demand in JTC.
- Large format retail in JTC will compete with Porirua's Mega Centre and will need to identify a point of difference such as concentrating on smaller speciality retail activities.
- The proposed JTC Mall redevelopment is anticipated to add 16,000m<sup>2</sup> (to current 12,000m<sup>2</sup>) which presents opportunities to expand local business in JTC.
- Quality office and other smaller business premises in JTC should be considered as part of redevelopment to assist with reducing commuting between the northern suburbs and other centres by enabling residents to be employed in larger numbers locally (the existing larger office block appears fully tenanted).

- Encouraging greater populations close to JTC will increase the opportunities for business and its diversification.
- The current lack of business 'mass' in JTC, aside from generally retail and some commercial services, will require deliberate strategies to provide for and encourage it.
- The nature of the business opportunities at JTC will require further analysis to understand the specific business types and environment required to encourage them.

## Principles

- Economic diversity and growth should be encouraged in JTC through improving opportunities for business.
- New and existing business activities within JTC must recognise and provide for the quality of the place in respect of its identity, accessibility and built quality.

# summary

The following is a summary of the opportunities for Johnsonville Town Centre's concept planning from the preceding sheets. These correspond to the principles in many instances.

## **Urban form and landuse opportunities**

To create a new internal block street system in conjunction with mall redevelopment and intensify the level of activity within it by a combination of contained open urban street spaces formed by building edges.

To 'repair' the street building edges in the centre to make a more continuous and complete town street type where people are moving around on foot.

To increase the height of buildings within the town centre to both increase the level of activity supported there (commercial and other such as residential) and use building form to identify the centre.

To increase the quality of building (and public open space) to provide places that are valued and that contribute to the quality of the town centre for people using it.

## **Sense of place opportunities**

To recognise, uncover and re-present aspects of the heritage of JTC in its future development, including the place's history of being on main routes linking north and south, farming and its natural values such as streams and vegetation.

To make a place which is distinctive and characteristic of locally valued elements with a clearer identity.

## **Cars and parking opportunities**

To address the capacity needs for traffic movement associated with the Northern Corridor and JTC growth in a way which resolves conflicts in the JTC between vehicles and pedestrians.

To provide for car parking in buildings so that current surface parking areas can be developed as positive space-and-buildings combination.

## **Public transport opportunities**

To establish JTC as a core place based around the public transport opportunities generated by the residential intensification of areas within 800 metres of the centre and the wider catchment of the Northern Corridor.

To develop and improve combined facilities for park and ride with new station amenities in conjunction with JTC development (such as mall expansion).

## **Residential capacity opportunities**

To intensify and so increase the residential activity close to JTC as this will generate greater diversity of housing choice as well as increase the level of activity in the centre and the variety and quality of services provided there.

To provide for affordable housing within new residential development in a way which continues to contribute positively to the quality of JTC.

## **Community facilities opportunities**

To incorporate improved community facilities and so linkages within the redevelopment of JTC – for example a new library within the mall – provided that where there is private land ownership public use and accessibility is maintained.

## **Public space opportunities**

To develop new public urban open space within the main block of JTC as part of the redevelopment of the area over time.

## **Economic influences opportunities**

To recognise the Mall upgrade presents a large scale growth in business activity that will influence the local economy and the employment provided for at JTC.

To diversify the business types and so employment opportunities at JTC in conjunction with residential catchment and town centre growth.

## **Further investigation required**

The preceding sheets describe issues and opportunities. For the benefit of better understanding some elements of the Johnsonville Town Centre, there will need to be more investigation before future concept planning can proceed with confidence. The further investigations required are noted below.

- The types of activities that will be viable (economically) in the town centre are not well known outside of the retail proposals for the mall. To add diversity to the centre and so sustain its growth into the future and provide opportunities for people living there, more investigation is required of the mix of land uses that will be supportable in JTC.
- The heritage values of JTC are not well known and the layers of use and occupation over time need to be investigated further to not only inform the future of JTC, but to ensure that the values are understood and managed as appropriate.
- The Maori use and occupation of JTC is not well known and requires consultation with tangata whenua (and possibly other iwi) to understand and so incorporate appropriately.
- The vehicle traffic movements associated with the Northern Corridor growth, potential Mall redevelopment growth in combination with planning for motorway off-ramps, provision of public transport via JTC (including the capacity of park and ride facilities) are all factors that need an integrated assessment to contribute to JTC's future planning.
- The range of housing types that will be relevant in the future both within the JTC main blocks and peripherally will require further investigation. The affordable housing opportunities should also be explored.
- The adequacy of community facilities and what the future needs will be based on a projected population increase for the Northern Corridor is not known and needs to be further investigated, including schools, library, disability services, medical needs and so on.

# summary of principles

The following is a summary of the principles from each of the preceding pages. The principles are intended to provide key guidance to the next stages of the Johnsonville Town Centre Futures Project and the preparation of a Centre Plan.

## Planning context

Key underlying and stated principles and other relevant directions for JTC from these studies are:

- Reinforce and improve the compact corridor form
- Mature the sub-regional centres
- Develop a highly liveable and attractive urban environment for communities
- Build on heritage, culture and identity or localness of place
- Value and protect the landscape and ecology of the area
- Improve the range and location of housing stock
- Use land and infrastructure efficiently
- Encourage a thriving local economy
- Design major roads to support centres.

## Urban form and landuse

- Large block forms should be linked by creating new (preferably public) connections or streets between existing streets to generate a finer grained block pattern and link with existing street pattern.
- Priorities need to be defined for key traffic movement streets and streets for public life and then treated accordingly.
- Streets with a priority for public life should be formed by continuous built edges and urban open spaces with good sunlight access.
- Carparking should be limited to parallel parks on street or within parking structures in strategic locations.
- Surface level open carparking should be replaced with parking structure that enables a new built environment to develop.
- New buildings should be designed to provide quality street edges and a more distinctive urban form representative of its town centre status.

## Sense of place

- Explore opportunities to recognise heritage values from past uses and occupation of the area in the organisation of visual and physical connections and built form.
- Engage with tangata whenua and heritage interests in understanding opportunities to weave heritage into future planning.
- Make a distinctive place that has a clear and positive identity.
- Encourage activities and uses which are special, not generic, and so establishing a point of difference for JTC.

## Cars and parking

- Vehicular traffic through JTC is directed and managed to reduce conflicts between streets and places with good amenity, and streets with high volume traffic carrying capacity.
- Parks are to be provided on the street and in parking structures in conjunction with development – not on surface of sites within centre.
- Parking structures are to be integrated with development where they affect “street” edges including any internal block public spaces.
- Parking for commuters should be provided in conjunction with rail head/transit public transport stop.

## Public transport

- A public transport hub for rail and bus be provided in conjunction with park and ride facility at centre.
- All potential traffic associated with town centre growth and residential growth in Northern Corridor is planned for as part of JTC Centre Plan, which is to include public transport options.

# summary of principles

## Residential capacity

- Increase the diversity of housing types within the walkable distance of the town centre.
- Encourage residential activity within town centre in conjunction with mixed use activities with careful consideration of residential amenity.
- Guide urban renewal in the western area of JTC by a structured design and planning implementation and management package.

## Community facilities

- Ensure JTC has a suite of public facilities commensurate with its size and function as a second tier centre.
- Work with community facilities providers to explore (and realise as appropriate) opportunities to provide for their long term needs in an effective way.
- Work with the mall redevelopment to explore (and realise as appropriate) the interrelationship of community facilities, including library and rail hub, with new mall configuration.
- Recognise and provide for the role of JTC as a community (and retail) focal point within the development of a concept plan.

## Public space

- Create a new public space (or spaces) which can provide a centralised, active, safe, comfortable, appropriately sized place that is valued locally for people to conduct public life.
- Work with the mall to explore opportunities for public space provision in combination with the redevelopment.
- Develop JTC streets and connections to improve public space quality by considering edge conditions, road traffic adjacencies, environmental conditions and safety.
- Recognise the function of a quality public space within town centre as a civic heart.

## Economic influences

- Economic diversity and growth should be encouraged in JTC through improving opportunities for business from concept design.
- New and existing business activities within JTC must recognise and provide for the quality of the place in respect of its identity, accessibility and built quality.

# references

1. Wellington City Council (2005) Urban Development Working Paper 1, Wellington City Profile and Policy Stocktake
2. Wellington City Council (2003) Northern Growth Management Framework, Implementation Programme
3. Wellington City Council (2006) Urban Development Strategy
4. Greater Wellington (Regional Council) (2005) Regional Land Transport Strategy, Strategic Options – Consultation Document
5. Greater Wellington (Regional Council) (2006) North Wellington Public Transport Study, Scenarios Report
6. Wellington Regional Strategy Various Strategy Updates, [www.wrs.govt.nz](http://www.wrs.govt.nz)
7. Greater Wellington (Regional Council) (2006) Our Region – their Future, a discussion document on the review of the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region
8. Wellington City Council (2000) Wellington City District Plan
9. Positively Wellington Business (2005) Regional Outlook Update.

Disclaimer – this report has been prepared for Wellington City Council by Boffa Miskell Ltd as a discussion document in order to highlight key issues for consideration in the development of a centre plan for Johnsonville Town Centre. As such the comments in this report should not be considered Wellington City Council policy or necessarily reflect the views of Wellington City Council.