

Kilbirnie Town Centre Plan

*Report back on consultation
November 2009*

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ME HEKE KI PŌNEKE
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Wellington

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to report back on progress on the Kilbirnie town centre plan and outline the key ideas and opportunities that emerged from the community planning and design workshops.

2. Background

Wellington City Council has been working with the community, landowners, businesses, developers, residents and others to explore opportunities to revitalise Kilbirnie town centre. The overall aim is to develop a town centre plan for Kilbirnie that shows how the town centre and its surrounds can be revitalised and enhanced, creating an attractive, vibrant, people friendly and prosperous part of Wellington City.

There are two primary drivers behind the town centre plan:

The city is growing and changing

Wellington is a dynamic and growing city. Forecasts show by 2031 there will be around 44,000 more people living in Wellington City. Kilbirnie is also growing. The town centre and surrounding areas are sought after places to live, recreate and do business.

As a key node on the growth spine and an 'area of change', Kilbirnie town centre has been identified by the Council as an area that will experience considerable residential growth over the next 20 to 30 years. It is estimated that the study area will need to support an additional 1000 residents and 600 dwellings by 2031. Additionally, redevelopment and new development is proposed for key sites such as the bus barns, the Indoor Community Sports Centre and the Airport.

A town centre plan will help ensure the expected growth in employment and residential living in and around the centre will be coordinated in a way that benefits the entire community. It will also ensure the town centre maintains its role as a key social, community and business hub for the southern and eastern suburbs.

Re-vitalising Kilbirnie town centre

While the Kilbirnie area has always been a 'mixed use' community with homes alongside industrial and commercial development, the town centre has not delivered on its potential as a key destination. This is partly due to its limited retail options (other than convenience goods), traffic issues, and lack of connectivity between the key activities, poor streetscape amenity and poor building quality.

The process to develop a town centre plan provides an opportunity to address these concerns and revitalise the town centre. It will help guide how the Council maximises the benefits of its investment in infrastructure, how future development can link into and add value to the town centre, and will help to shape opportunities for other parties to invest in the revitalisation of Kilbirnie town centre.

3. Study Area

The focus of the town centre plan is primarily on the core town centre shaded in blue on the following map. The study area for the project includes a small area surrounding the centre so that the implications of adjacent residential and recreational uses can be considered and form part of the long-term vision for the centre.

The project also considers how the town centre fits in with the wider context for issues such as transport, utilities and climate change.

Kilbirnie Town Centre Plan **Study Area**

- Commercial Centre
- Study Area boundary



4. The process

The process to date has involved four key phases:

Information gathering and research (from May 2009)

Existing information was reviewed and specific research undertaken on technical areas (e.g. economy, parking, traffic and transport, urban design, infrastructure capacity, climate change, demographics and community facilities).

Engagement on issues and opportunities (May-June 2009)

Consultation was undertaken with the community through a public consultation brochure and drop in sessions at the Kilbirnie Community Centre. The consultation provided a good starting point for understanding the issues that need to be addressed in order to re-vitalise the town centre, including:

- improving the look and feel of the centre
- addressing traffic management and parking issues
- improving the mix of uses and quality of retail offer
- improving the public transport hub.

The consultation also provided feedback on the aspects of the town centre that are highly valued, including:

- the village atmosphere of the centre
- proximity to a wide range of community facilities such as the Regional Aquatic Centre, the Ruth Gotlieb Library, the Recreation Centre and Community Centre
- levels of accessibility, including access to public transport
- quality of supermarket shopping.

Stakeholder interviews (July 2009)

Targeted interviews were held with key groups including, WCC facilities managers, Living Streets, Disability Reference Group, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Housing NZ, Pacific Advisory Group, School Principals in the Kilbirnie area, Churches and cultural groups.

Community-based planning and design workshops

(August/September 2009)

A series of community-based planning and design workshops were held at the Kilbirnie Park Bowling Club to develop the key ideas to inform the draft town centre plan.

The workshops provided opportunity for Council and local input through a series of public sessions and interactive forums:

- Tuesday 11 August
 - 1.30-3pm – Introduction and briefing
 - 7.30-9pm – Community Forum ‘possible directions for Kilbirnie town centre’

- Monday 24 August ,10-11am – Introduction and briefing
- Tuesday 25 August, 7.30-9pm – Community Forum ‘confirming a vision for Kilbirnie town centre’

With the exception of the first community forum (which had a low turnout), the public sessions were well attended and received. The use of techniques such as dot polling and 3D block models proved to be useful methods for engaging with the community on the future issues and opportunities for Kilbirnie.

The workshops were facilitated by a multi-disciplinary consultant team led by Graeme McIndoe (McIndoeURBAN) and included a Council appointed Leadership Group of 12 individuals representing community and local retail and commercial interests. The Leadership Group idea proved to be a successful model for obtaining stakeholder input into the process. Along with Council officers and the consultant team, the Leadership Group played a key role in the development and critique of ideas to revitalise Kilbirnie town centre.

Results of the workshops are described in the following section.

5. Results of community planning and design workshops

5.1. Workshop 1 – Vision exploration

The aim of workshop 1 was to identify a preferable land use vision (role and function) for Kilbirnie town centre and develop key principles to inform the town centre plan and guide future development.

The key findings were as follows:

Role and function

The Kilbirnie area in its wider context is set out as a sub-regional centre in the Council's centres policy, due to its offering of regional facilities such as the Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre, the Indoor Community Sports Centre, Wellington International Airport and large format retail locations in Rongotai.

Analysis before and during the workshops revealed that a potential role and function of the commercial centre could be more typical of a large 'town centre' – anchored by a traditional main street with significant retail offer and supported with a wide range of non-retail uses such as office, entertainment, accommodation, community uses and residential living. Public feedback supported more retail diversity, but also, retention of a compact village atmosphere at a walkable scale.

A market assessment of the Kilbirnie town centre¹ identified that the centre has considerable potential to improve its overall performance. While Kilbirnie town centre scores highly with regard to supermarket retail and community facilities - the department store/comparison goods offering is considered below what should be expected. The main street retail buildings in particular were identified of a scale and quality commensurate with a neighbourhood centre or smaller town centre in decline. Both of these factors were identified in the economic assessment and workshops as contributing factors behind the current soft market for both office and retail space.

In terms of the future demand, the economic assessment identified a significant opportunity for Kilbirnie town centre to capture some of the expected increases in retail (25-30,000 sqms) and office (9,000 sqms) demand in the wider Kilbirnie area over the next 20 years. This is likely only to occur, however, with a significant improvement to the quality of the retail environment (including public space) and built form. Maintaining good access to car parking was also identified as a key factor in achieving these gains.

Based on the above, the following 'high level' strategic recommendations were recorded through Workshop 1:

- **Facilitate improvements to the main street built form.** This could include commercially feasible redevelopment of existing buildings. An important aspect of this will be providing for additional

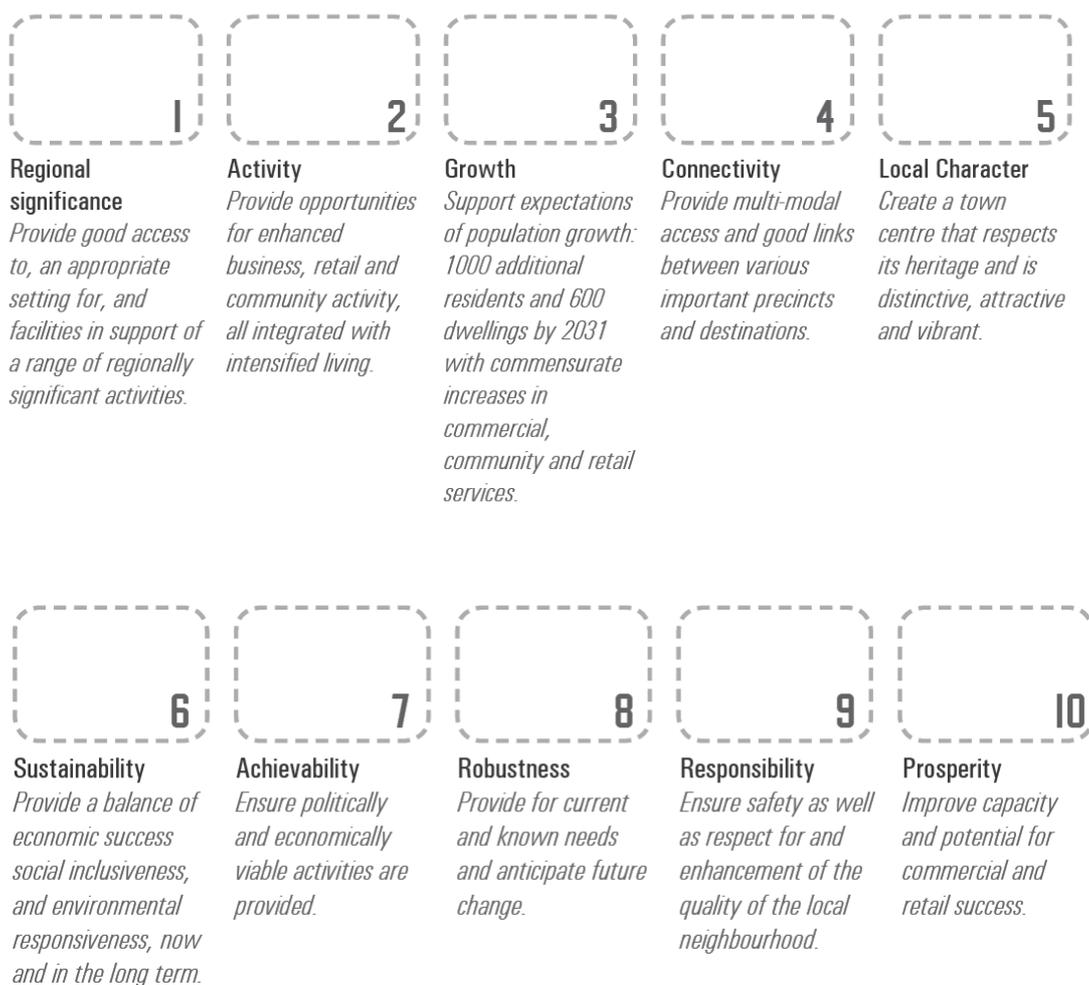
¹ Property Economics, August 2009. Kilbirnie Town Centre Market Assessment

traffic and parking, better quality public spaces, redeveloping key sites within the centre.

- **Support existing and new retail anchor tenants.** Supermarket and department stores perform a key role in the economic function of successful centres. Supermarkets often trade at well over \$30m annually (and some cases up to \$100m) and can account for more than a quarter of a centres turnover and shopper trip generation. The Council could actively work with all existing and potential new anchor tenants to ensure that their business requirements can be achieved in the town centre plan.
- **Support a wider range of non-retail activities.** Retail demand is forecast to be modest, and other non-retail activities will therefore be important to the overall economic performance of the centre. Potential non-retail activities could include hotels, apartments, small scale offices and restaurants.

Principles to guide the town centre plan

The following principles were generated from public consultation and the community workshop discussion. The principles helped to inform discussion and guide the ideas and initiatives identified in workshop 2.



5.2. Workshop 2 – Scenario development

The aim of workshop 2 was to develop and test ideas for achieving the preferred long term vision for Kilbirnie town centre. As with workshop 1, the process was engaging and interactive. Held over a two day period, the workshop sought involvement from Councillors, WCC staff, the Leadership Group, Greater Wellington Regional Council and the public via a series of briefing sessions and community forum.

3D Modelling technique

A key technique used was scenario development and testing through 3-dimensional block modelling over an aerial photograph. This proved to be a successful technique for thinking about the implications (e.g land use and economy, transport, urban design and residential intensification) of different development options for the town centre.

As a starting point, three scenarios were investigated:

Scenario 1 Core - examined a focus of commercial and residential growth in the designated town centre.

Scenario 2 Core and periphery - examined commercial growth in the designated town centre with a focus on residential growth in proposed 'areas of change'.

Scenario 3 Distributed – examined commercial growth in the designated town centre with expected residential growth distributed throughout the study area.



Scenario discussion with Leadership Group

Outcomes

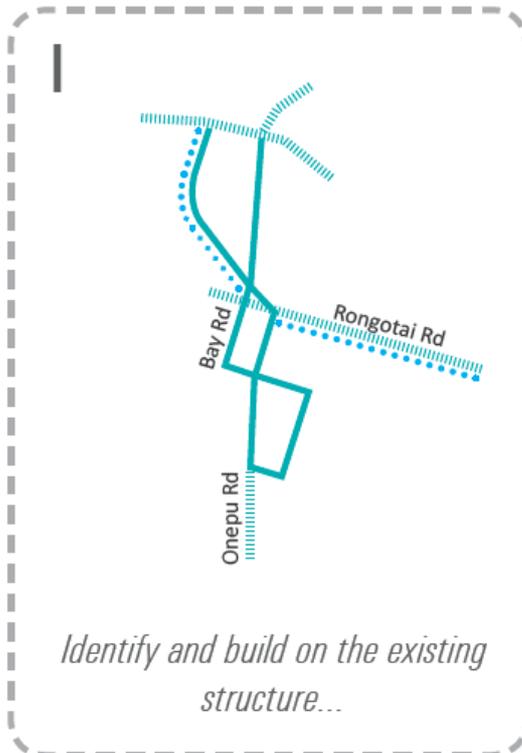
The general conclusion reached was that an outcome based on Scenario 3 was the most pragmatic and applicable to the study area as it:

- provided a greater degree of flexibility to accommodate residential growth within the study area
- was more in-line with the Council's expectations (and associated District Plan provisions) for Kilbirnie as an 'area of change'
- had a better fit with the existing topography and urban form.

A 3-dimensional model (based on a preferred development scenario) was prepared and discussed at the interactive community forum at the end of Workshop 2.

Town Centre Strategy

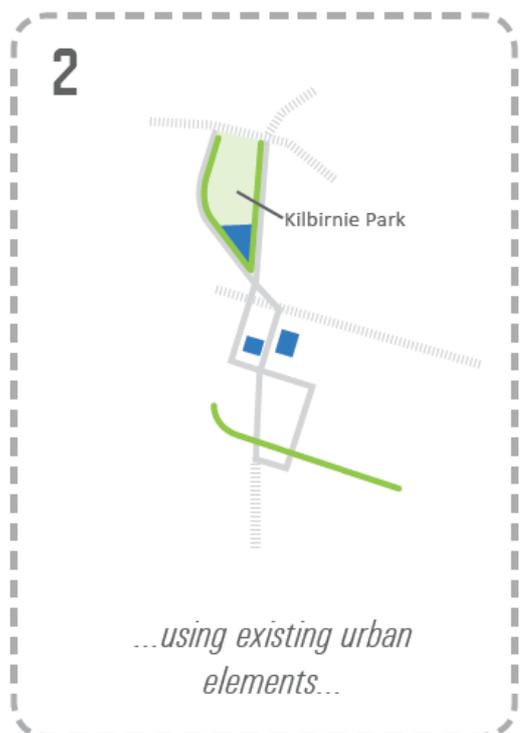
The following sequence of diagrams and explanations sets out a possible town centre strategy (or spatial plan) for Kilbirnie. The strategy builds on the analysis and recommendations from Workshop 1, and the scenario analysis and working sessions from Workshop 2.



The underlying theme for the Kilbirnie town centre plan is to build on the existing strengths of the town centre.

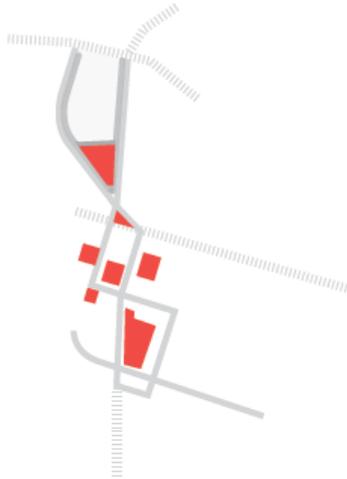
These include:

- The existing road hierarchy and urban structure of the town centre
- Bay Road/Coutts Street as Kilbirnie's main street
- The retail anchors particularly supermarket and department store offering
- The community and recreational precinct to the north
- The bus barns precinct
- The drainage corridor to the south.



These elements provide a good basis for re-vitalising the town centre.

3

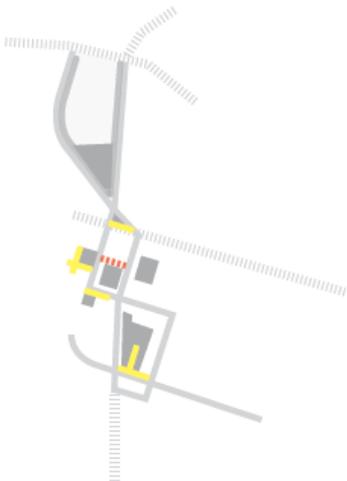


...strengthen existing and establish new "anchor" uses to reinforce the centre...

New and strengthened anchor uses are encouraged to support the town centre economic base, including:

- Strengthened retail offer on the main street (particularly comparison/department store retail)
- Activated retail frontage on the northern end of the main street. Key opportunity sites include community centre/Farmers site, Woolworths site, Coutts Street south
- Mixed use redevelopment of the bus barns
- Re-organisation and opportunity for mixed use development of the public transport interchange area.

4



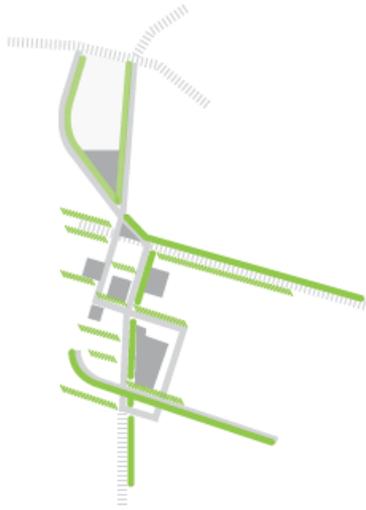
...each anchor associated with quality public spaces, including a new east west link street...

High quality public spaces to provide a much needed attractive setting for people who spend time in the centre and to help re-invigorate the retail environment.

A potential opportunity exists through the creation of a new public street at the centre of the block linking Bay Road and Onepu Road.

This sheltered street could provide an opportunity for food and beverage retail to occupy the sunny southern edge and to create a new link between the existing Pak n Save store and the main street.

5



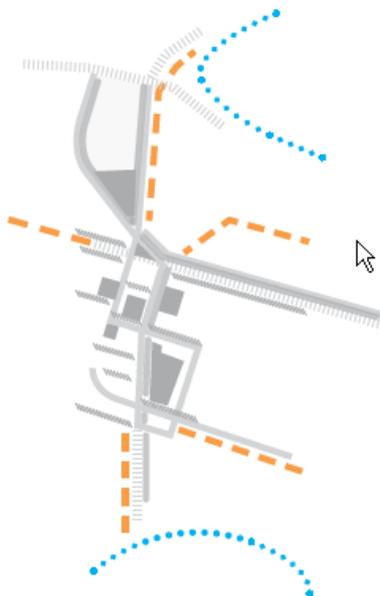
...green infrastructure contributes legibility and quality...

New planting and integrated stormwater management along Rongotai Road reinforce the street as a high quality boulevard and reference the historic shoreline.

Street trees extended along Onepu Road will improve legibility of Onepu Road as the primary vehicle route and will provide streetscape amenity and protection for pedestrians.

The east west drainage easement south of the bus barns could potentially be converted to a landscaped community walkway/cycleway – providing improved access to the town centre to Rongotai College, the Airport Retail Park and the Airport underpass.

6



...& contribute to a cohesive regional infrastructure.

The town centre builds on and is connected into future developments within the immediate area and broader region.

A vibrant and active centre provides:

- services for future visitors to the regional facilities such as the Regional Aquatic Centre and Indoor Community Sports Centre
- facilities for an increasing local population
- a unique destination for visitors arriving from the airport and the broader Wellington area.

Town centre strategy

These elements form the basis of an overarching strategy for the future of Kilbirnie town centre.



- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|----------------------|
|  | key local streets |  | quality public space |
|  | key connections |  | green infrastructure |
|  | existing urban elements |  | regional connections |
|  | new anchor developments |  | Evans and Lyall Bays |

6. Further work being undertaken

Achieving the Kilbirnie town centre strategy could be assisted by opportunities and initiatives such as:

- Strengthening the retail offer on the main street and investigating opportunities for redevelopment at the community centre/Farmers site, the Woolworths site, and the area at the end of the main street on Coutts Street south.
- Public space improvements, including:
 - a potential mid block link between Bay Road and Onepu Road
 - planting and landscaping improvements along Onepu Road and Rongotai Road
 - developing a public space and parking precinct in the section of Childers Terrace immediately north of Rongotai Road
 - converting the existing drainage easement south of the centre (that links Kilbirnie town centre to Rongotai College and the Airport underpass) into a community walkway/cycle way.
- Redevelopment of the bus barns into a mixed use precinct, including residential, office and a small retail use.
- Integrating the community and recreation facilities and service delivery.
- Developing a viable public transport and development solution for the gateway area on the corner of Rongotai Road and Bay Road.

While these ideas were considered briefly during the workshops, further analysis and testing work is required to ensure they can be implemented and are feasible.

7. Timing and next steps

The proposed timing to complete the draft Kilbirnie town centre plan is as follows:

Task	Timing
1. Complete further analysis and testing of opportunities and initiatives	February 2010
2. Prepare draft Town Centre Plan	March 2010
3. Draft town centre plan reported to Strategy and Policy Committee	May 2010
4. Consult on draft town centre plan	June 2010

8. Supporting information

A significant amount supporting information has been prepared throughout the process to date. The key reports are described below and are available on request.

Kilbirnie Town Centre Market Assessment – Property Economics August 2009. This report provides an assessment of the key economic fundamentals driving economic growth in the Kilbirnie town centre area and makes recommendations regarding the potential redevelopment of the centre.

Kilbirnie Town Centre Urban Design Assessment - McIndoe Urban, Athfield Architects, Wraight & Associates, August 2009. This report provides urban design analysis of the town centre, including information on landforms, history, ecology, urban structure, clusters and connectivity, frontages and parking, intensity and vitality, diversity and character.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) – Stoks Ltd, August 2009. This presentation examines the relationship between the physical built environment and crime.

Assessing the implications of sea level rise – Wellington City Council, September 2009. This paper reports the findings of a multi-disciplinary working group that considered the implications of three sea level rise scenarios in the Kilbirnie area.

Kilbirnie Town Centre Summary of Transport Issues – Wellington City Council, August 2009. This report examines the transport related issues, opportunities and constraints facing the Kilbirnie town centre area.

Planning Area Profile – Wellington City Council, August 2009. This report examines the community profile of the Kilbirnie area, providing information about the population and community facilities in the area.

Contact Officer: *Paul Kos, Principal Advisor Urban Strategy and Centres*