



The Resource Management Act 1991

Selwyn District Council

Selwyn District Plan Volume 1: Townships

Proposed Plan Change 29

Design of Development in the Business 1 zone

**A Proposed Plan Change to improve the design and form of
development in the Business 1 zones**

1 Introduction

This report provides a summary of the evaluation undertaken by Selwyn District Council (the Council) of proposed Plan Change 29 (PC29) in relation to Section 32 of the Resource Management Act (RMA).

It should be read in conjunction with the proposed amendments to the District Plan, attached as Appendix 1 and with Appendix 2: Background Report, which contains more detailed evidence.

2 Statutory Requirements of Section 32 of the Resource Management Act

Under Section 32 of the Resource Management Act, before the Council publicly notifies a plan change, it must carry out an evaluation to examine:

- the extent to which each objective is the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act; and
- whether, having regard to their efficiency and effectiveness, the policies, rules, or other methods are the most appropriate for achieving the objectives.

The evaluation must take into account:

- The benefits and costs of policies, rules, or other methods; and
- The risk of acting or not acting if there is uncertain or insufficient information about the subject matter of the policies, rules, or other methods.

A Section 32 report is part of an on-going process of understanding the costs and benefits associated with a proposed plan change. The Council is required to undertake a further evaluation of costs and benefits prior to making a decision on a Plan Change, taking into account further matters raised in submissions and any hearing.

Efficiency

An evaluation of 'efficiency' takes into account and balances the benefits and costs of the proposed policies, rules and other methods.

Effectiveness

'Effectiveness' measures how successful a particular option is in addressing the issues and achieving the desired environmental outcomes described in the District Plan. Effectiveness is also relevant when considering how successful the proposed policies, rules and other methods would be in achieving district plan objectives. Only provisions that are effective in achieving objectives should be adopted.

3 Methodology

This Section 32 Assessment is set out as follows:

- 4 Background
- 5 Outline of the issues
- 6 Description of the scope of the proposed Plan Change
- 7 Existing Relevant District Plan Objectives and Policies
- 8 Other Strategies and Plans Adopted by Council
- 9 Discussion of Proposed Plan Change
- 10 Conclusions.

Appendix 1 Plan Change Amendments

Appendix 2 Background Report

4 Background

The Council expects that the District's town centres will have a high quality built environment and that they will provide good facilities for pedestrians and cyclists .

The Council is concerned about the way in which the District's business 1 zones have developed in recent years. The built form which has occurred has not met these expectations, or the aspirations of District Plan policy for high amenity zones which are attractive to people.

The Council's aspirations are expressed in a number of strategies which it has adopted under the Local Government Act which are aimed at improving the quality of town centres and the connections within them.

This Proposed Plan Change is aimed at implementing this Council policy.

Business 1 zones are town centres and as such they form a venue for public life as well as a place for commercial transactions. Recent business developments in the district have often failed to create places which are well integrated with their surroundings and which have a sense of place.

These concerns particularly apply in Rolleston, due to the volume of commercial development that has occurred since 1998. But the same issues are evident in developments that have taken place in Lincoln and Leeston.

This report considers the social, economic and environmental costs of a poorly designed urban environment. It concludes that there are significant costs which will be borne by both the residents of the townships and the future occupiers and owners of property in the business zone.

It also reviews the evidence for the value added by good design and finds that there is considerable economic and social value created and that this can accrue both to the site owner and to the wider public.

The Plan Change is intended to result in two outcomes. It aims to ensure that development in the business 1 zone contributes to attractive town centres which are pleasant places for people to be. It also aims to ensure that business 1 areas are walkable in that they are easy to get to and around, with logical, direct pedestrian routes which are pleasant for people to use.

A quality public realm is created by a combination of private development which has a good interface with public space, and partly by quality public space itself. Council can (and does) carry out work to create good quality public space, but it cannot create a good interface from private sites, except by regulating the way those sites are developed.

5 Outline of the Issues

The Council is concerned about the quality of the public realm which has been created by a number of recent developments, particularly in Rolleston which has been the subject of the most intense development in recent years.

The Council considers that new business development is not creating public areas with the expected level of amenity and that connections between developments are not adequate (direct and attractive to use).

This is resulting in sub-optimal social, economic and environmental outcomes.

The following issues have been identified as being the cause of this:

- Poor relationship between commercial buildings and public space
- Lack of high quality public space in places where people are present
- Lack of vitality and activity
- Lack of accessibility (poor linkages and loss of opportunity for walking and cycling)
- Car dependancy
- Loss of economic opportunity
- Reduced opportunity for mixed use development
- Effectiveness of Council Investment in Facilities
- Health Issues
- Lack of Design Controls on Medium Density Housing

These issues are described in detail below.

5.1 Poor relationship between commercial buildings and public space

High quality public space in a town centre is created by a combination of good quality space, framed and defined by good quality building frontage.

Recent developments in business 1 zones have often not been designed to respect their context, being designed functionally around car-parking. Developments of this nature include Rolleston Square, New World in

Rolleston, the newly consented Countdown supermarket on Rolleston Drive, and Lincoln Vale.

These are larger developments which are set back on their sites behind car parking. These are typical of recent commercial developments in New Zealand.

A traditional street scene is created by buildings fronting a road. Shopfronts have display windows directly adjacent to the footpath and the street scene contains variety and visual richness which makes walking through the centre an interesting experience.

Where this pattern prevails, council can create a high quality street environment through public works such as street improvements, which is complemented by the building frontages.

However, where buildings are set back behind car parks, this is no longer possible. The car parks themselves are unattractive expanses of asphalt and the visual variety and liveliness provided by commercial premises and people entering and leaving those premises is no longer present on the street front.

This is particularly apparent on Rolleston Drive where the existing District Plan provisions have failed to create an interesting street scene.

The trend to locate shops around the periphery of car parks is the most significant driver of poor design. The visual effects are not limited to the adverse effects of the car park itself. The decision to arrange buildings around car parking in the first place can mean the opportunity to create a main street environment or other people orientated space, is not taken advantage of. The result is a series of unrelated developments designed for one-dimensional retail activity that do not collectively add up to a high quality town centre.

5.2 Lack of high quality public space in places where people are present

Another aspect of the development types described above is that people spend more time on “de-facto” public space (such as the car park areas). This space is not in public ownership but it is carrying out the functions of public space as the place where people experience the public life of a town. It is therefore as important that this space is attractive as it is for street space. This issue is especially apparent in Rolleston due to the lack of integration between public space and privately owned space.

The quality of de-facto space is variable. Except for the Warehouse site, Rolleston Square has wide (3m) footpaths with high quality surfacing which are adjacent to shops with large display windows. But the Warehouse has narrower paths and harsh, blank frontages which are not attractive to pedestrians. This type building is common for large format retail which is designed around the internal needs of the activity, with little regard for its external appearance.

Although developers have sometimes tried to respond to the need to create good space, a fundamental issue is that developments are arranged around a car park. This creates a single-sided environment which lacks visual richness, and street enclosure.

There are also a lack of spaces for people to linger and spend time in the centre. Whilst the Council has provided reserves, these are not in places where people are carrying out their day to day business (this is not possible,

because of the layout of the developments). The only opportunity to provide space to linger is for it to be provided within the developments themselves.

Whilst there are some areas, they are limited and mostly in “leftover” space such as the corner of car parks.

There is a wealth of evidence on the importance of good quality public space in centres (described in detail in appendix 2). It encourages people to stay longer and spend more money. It encourages a wider variety of activities such as cafes to establish. It allows non-business activities to take place (such as casual conversations or people watching). It creates civic pride as people enjoy using their town centres.

5.3 Lack of Vitality and Activity

The term “vitality” essentially refers to the amount of energy and excitement in a town centre. A beautiful place which is empty of people will always seem sleepy and dull. A centre that is full of people going about their business has an inherent excitement. An important component of a town centre, for the sake of its public life, is that there are people in it, whether walking around, sitting or whatever. This sense of excitement and busy-ness is as much a part of a town centre character as attractive street frontage. Vitality is created by concentrating people into a smaller area and encouraging them to stay as long as possible.

Jan Gehl uses the concept of activity which he defines as the number of people in an area multiplied by the length of stay. This is a similar concept.

A development which is laid out around a car park with poor walking connections is more dispersed than a traditional town centre and fails to concentrate pedestrians into a smaller area. This type of development detracts from the vitality of the town.

Similarly, a functional retail development that is not designed to encourage people to stay will reduce the amount of activity and vitality.

There is also “conclusive” evidence (MfE, 2005, described in appendix 2) that people are attracted to a well designed environment; that good design creates activity and vitality.

5.4 Lack of Accessibility (Poor linkages and loss of opportunity for walking and cycling)

There is strong support for the contention that the propensity to walk is affected by the availability and attractiveness of routes.

A walk through a desolate streetscape, for instance next to a blank wall or a car park, will seem much longer than a walk along a busy main street. A failure to create a vibrant street scene deters people from walking to or through a town centre.

A car-park is a barrier to pedestrian movement as it is an unattractive space. Not only is it visually unattractive, but it contains an element of risk as pedestrians must be wary of moving cars.

If pedestrians are forced to divert around the edge of a car park then this loss of directness can be a significant dis-incentive to walking, especially if it occurs a number of times through adjacent developments. There is a need to

ensure that the layout of business development creates logical and direct walking routes through a centre and past areas of activity. The needs of pedestrians must be prioritised in the design of development in order to create a centre which is functional overall.

Particular issues with development in the District include the poor pedestrian linkages that are evident between separate developments in Rolleston and the poor public environment created by the lack of active street frontage on Rolleston Drive. Whilst it is possible to walk between the different areas, the links are not attractive to pedestrians.

An MfE report (The Value of Urban Design) found “strong” evidence that connectivity encourages walking and cycling (refer to section 2.2 in Appendix 2 to Appendix 2 for detailed summary of evidence) There is also strong evidence that the amount of walking and cycling can be increased by providing good facilities.

Studies also show that facilities need to be provided comprehensively. For instance, providing linkages will not increase walking and cycling in itself unless those linkages are attractive, safe and direct. This is significant because the plan change is aimed at providing a comprehensive package of measures.

5.5 Car Dependency

Centres which are designed primarily for the convenience of car users have substantial hidden costs, both for those car users and also for all other users of the centre. Where designing for cars takes priority over other users, people are discouraged from using alternative transport and rates of car use increase. This means that designing for cars will lead to increased dependence on private transportation.

Issues related to car dependence include the cost of running a car as well as the cost of fuel, and the impact on the design and amenity of business 1 zones from large areas of parking.

There are other hidden costs associated with car use. The cost of car parking is higher than is generally realised (comprising the cost of B1 zoned land and the cost of hardstanding) and this cost is passed on to all users of business activities, not just car users. The cost of running a second car is in excess of \$5,000 per year.

It is proposed that where development can show a reduced demand for parking, through a travel demand strategy, then Council is able to reduce the required rates of parking (Proposed Plan Change 12). This will not be possible for development designed around car use.

5.6 Loss of economic opportunity

The economic costs of poor design and the benefits of good design have been well documented (see section 4.3 in appendix 2, and 2.4 in appendix 2 to that report). Benefits include:

- higher capital and income returns for landowners,

- more sales for tenants,
- more jobs
- a greater diversity of activities.

Good design has been shown to benefit both landowners and the wider community. By contrast, poor design limits the spread of social benefits and may impose social and economic costs on the community.

Some of the evidence of the benefits of good design is summarised as follows:

- The case of Melbourne which has been regenerated from a “doughnut” city with a dead civic heart to a vibrant and economically successful centre with a thriving public life, principally through improvements to create attractive public space and regulation of buildings.
- A UK study by CABI which showed an increase in shop rents in London of 15% between well designed and maintained streets and poorly designed and maintained ones. The same research found that residents were willing to pay higher rents and taxes to achieve better centres.

One way in which good design encourages economic activity is by increasing the range of activity from necessary activities to optional ones that will only take place in higher quality environments. This particularly applies to activities such as outdoor dining.

The evidence provided by Tracy Allat in Appendix 3 of the Background Report is also significant. She has found that around a third of the users of town centres in New Zealand access those centres on foot, that they spend the same amount of money than people who arrive by car, and that this is not generally realised by retailers (who do not understand the needs of their customers). The needs of this significant group have been neglected by designers and developers due to an incorrect pre-conception about the prevalence of car-use.

Within the district, examples of poorly designed development include Rolleston Town centre where poor linkages between the Community Centre, Rolleston Square and New World are likely to deter people from using the full range of commercial and civic facilities in a single visit. This will reduce the amount of cross shopping that takes place and the economic performance of the centre. Links between the two separate retail developments on either side of Tennyson Street were identified as problematic by the Rolleston in Motion Research.

The reasons found for the continued building of poorly designed developments included that development decisions were made for short term gains by people who are remote from the effects; whose principle interest is in minimising short term costs and risks. Whilst the benefits of good design are substantial and highly valued, they accrue in the long term, by which time the original developer (and decision-maker) may no longer hold an interest in the property.

Furthermore, many of the benefits accrue to the town centre in general rather than specifically to the site. This means there is less incentive for each individual investment to provide good design, particularly without certainty that other developments will do the same.

What this shows is that economic benefits of good design are not reflected by the market for individual new properties.

5.7 Reduced opportunity for mixed use development

Mixed Use refers to a number of different uses occurring within a single site or building. For instance, it may be offices and shops. Higher density residential use within a business zone is also thought of as mixed use.

Mixed use is desirable because it increases the variety of use in a centre. There are more reasons to visit the centre, bringing more people in, and the different uses can support each other. An example of this is that way that office uses can support cafes and shops in a town centre.

Residential use within a business zone is highly desirable because it extends the active life of the centre into the evenings (there are people around at all times) and can provide critical mass for business and public transport in the centre. It also offers a different (less car dependent) lifestyle option which can suit some people, especially those who enjoy the buzz of a town centre.

To date there is limited mixed use in the districts centres (there are some flats in Lincoln), but it is something which would be desirable as the centres mature.

It is likely that residential mixed use would only establish in areas with high amenity, as it requires an attractive and lively town centre to substitute for the lower ambient amenity (for instance more noise and less space). Successful mixed use areas are those which have an attraction, a reason to live there, such as apartments in Sumner. The creation of vibrant town centres is fundamental to the success of mixed use.

5.8 Effectiveness of Council Investment in Facilities

The Council builds facilities such as reserves and community facilities (libraries, community parks, etc) in centres. This approach increases the number of people using the centre as a whole and provides economic and social benefits such as cross shopping opportunities and convenience for residents.

A new library is being planned within the Lincoln town centre. Part of the brief is that it should support the existing civic heart of the township. A greenspace is also planned for the site which would provide a site for the weekly market. Another aim is that the building should respect its setting and contribute to the attractiveness of the town.

If private landowners in Lincoln were to redevelop their sites with poor street frontage, then the (ratepayers) money the council is investing to help create an attractive centre for Lincoln would be less effective in contributing to a civic heart for the town. The same applies if an attractive walking environment is not created in general; Council's efforts to create walkable towns to foster convenient multi-purpose trips would be at risk.

In many ways this is the same dilemma described under 5.7. Individual landowners may wish to carry out a good quality development, but the economic benefits only accrue if all landowners do the same. The only way to ensure this is via regulation.

5.9 Health Issues

The link between poor urban form which discourages active transport and health (especially obesity) is well documented. A recent report from the Public Health Advisory Committee (Healthy Places Healthy Lives: Urban Environments and Wellbeing) notes the importance of the urban environment in shaping health outcomes, and the link between poor health and poorly designed urban environments. The report noted that appropriate planning has the potential to help New Zealanders live healthier lives, for instance by providing opportunities for physical activity and social interaction by ensuring that communities are walkable. This guidance is in line with that from other countries, including Australia and the UK

5.10 Overly Dominant Colours and Signage

Some retail chains use strong corporate colours to identify their buildings. Examples of these are the bright orange of Mitre 10 Mega and the red of The Warehouse. Such colours are instantly recognizable and can identify the buildings to people over a considerable distance. They have a high degree of colour saturation and for this reason they stand out from the usual building materials (such as brick or concrete) or more usual recessive colours. In effect, the strong colour turns the building into a sign.

Whilst this may be beneficial to the shop, it can become an overwhelming feature in the townscape. It is worsened by the design of “big box” stores which are large, with few features and therefore a larger expanse of unrelieved bright colour. The colour is visually dominant and can also draw attention to a poor quality building.

Overly large signs aimed at motorists can detract from the pedestrian environment as they are out of scale with a varied and pleasant street scene. Similarly, a proliferation of signs can overwhelm the pedestrian experience of the street.

The District Plan currently restricts freestanding signs to 3m² but does not specify a maximum number of signs per site. It also restricts the size of signs attached to buildings, but not those that are painted on.

These are anomalies that make the district plan less effective than is optimal.

5.11 Lack of Design Controls on Medium Density Housing (MDH)

MDH is currently a permitted activity in the business 1 zone, however there are no design controls that apply to such housing in this zone. This approach contrasts with the new medium density provisions which have been introduced as part of proposed plan change 7 for the new Living Z zone, which aim to maintain a minimum standard of residential environment compatible with that found in other Living environments.

The standards which are being proposed for living zones recognise that MDH can have significant adverse effects above and beyond those anticipated from traditional development. These effects include: lack of privacy for residents of the new housing; the effects on the privacy of established houses which may

be overlooked by the new housing; shading; and an impression of cramped development which is out of context in Selwyn's townships.

Business 1 zones are expected to have a good standard of amenity. It is also the case that if medium density housing is built in these locations it will be used as a living environment and should have a similar standard of amenity to any other living environment. The District Plan does not intend to allow for lower quality in the business 1 zone; rather it aims to make provision for higher density to an appropriate level of amenity.

In view of this it is not considered appropriate that MDH development should take place in business 1 zones without appropriate controls. The end result should be an environment which is of an equivalent standard to medium density housing in the living zone

6 Description of the Scope of the Proposed Plan Change

Proposed plan change 29 is concerned with the provisions in the District Plan relating to new development in the business 1 zone. It is proposed to introduce three new policies. The first of these details how the Council expects new commercial development to be integrated with its surroundings. The second introduces design controls for medium density housing in the Business 1 zone. The third seeks to manage the shape of land to be rezoned to B1 to ensure it has appropriate characteristics for that use.

The Plan Change also proposes to introduce new rules to implement each of these policies. These include:

- A requirement for development to provide a minimum amount of active commercial frontage.
- Restrictions on the placement of parking and fencing for business development.
- Minimum standards for landscaping of car parks and blank walls.
- Controls on site layout for larger development.
- Limits on the use of bright colours on building facades.
- Amendments to the rules for signage in the Business 1 zone.
- The introduction of new rules and assessment matters for medium density housing in the Business 1 zone.

The plan change would not affect recession planes, building heights or setbacks (these terms are described in the district plan).

7 Existing Objectives and Policies in the Selwyn District Plan

The following are the key District Plan Objectives and Policies relevant to the Plan Change:

Objective B3.4.1

The District's townships are pleasant places to live and work in

Objective B3.4.2

A variety of activities are provided for in townships, while maintaining the character and amenity values of each zone.

Policy B3.4.4

To provide Business 1 Zones which enable a range of business activities to operate while maintaining environmental quality and aesthetic and amenity values which make the zones attractive to people

The purpose of the plan change is to ensure that development in business 1 zones contributes to places which people find attractive and have high amenity. This reflects the above objectives and policy.

Policy B3.4.22

Allow people freedom in their choice of the design of buildings or structures except where building design needs to be managed to:

- *Avoid adverse effects on adjoining sites; or*
- *Maintain the character of areas with outstanding natural features or landscapes values or special heritage or amenity values.*

This policy generally indicates that Council will not regulate the appearance of buildings, except where it considers it necessary. A number of circumstances where this may be the case are listed, including “amenity values”. The plan change, aimed at preserving these amenity values, is consistent with this policy.

8 Other relevant strategies and plans

The Council has adopted a number of policies which are aimed at improving the public realm through improved urban design; and improving the facilities for active modes of transport.

These are described in detail in section 5 of the Background Report and summarised below.

8.1 Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy

The Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (the UDS) has been produced by a partnership of District Councils (Selwyn, Waimakariri and Christchurch City), Environment Canterbury and the New Zealand Transport Agency. Its purpose is to manage future urban development in the Greater Christchurch area until 2041. The UDS applies in the Eastern Selwyn area (Rolleston, Prebbleton, Lincoln and West Melton).

It aims to achieve compact, sustainable urban form and high quality development. Specific policies include:

- *Inclusion of urban design considerations in district plans to help prevent poor quality development*
- *Improved quality of urban design in town centres, particularly provision of adaptable built form and attractive public spaces and street frontages including space between buildings, footpaths, lanes and alleyways*
- *New buildings have a good relationship to the street and surrounding neighbourhoods.*

These are the issues that the plan change is designed to address

8.2 Plan Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement

Plan Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement is designed to implement the UDS by setting out a policy framework for how urban growth is to be accommodated over the next 35 years in the Greater Christchurch area. The plan change has been upheld by Commissioners but is currently under appeal to the Environment Court.

Of particular relevance is policy 7 (development form and design) which requires that development in key activity centres should give effect to urban design best practice. This policy identifies that the principles of the Urban Design Protocol should be observed by new development. It also specifically identifies a list of matters to consider. These include connectivity by a variety of transport modes including walking and cycling, by means of efficient and attractive routes

8.3 Selwyn District Council Walking and Cycling Strategy

In December 2008 the Council adopted the Selwyn District Council Walking and Cycling Strategy. This aims to enable opportunities for walking and cycling (including the provision of improved facilities and environments). It also aims to reduce the use of cars for short trips.

The strategy identifies that land-use planning tools can implement these goals. It aims to ensure that sustainable transport solutions are supported by the District Plan. The principles it identifies include:

- *Designing for walking and cycling is not to be secondary to designing for motor vehicles. The environment should be designed for all modes of transport.*
- *Land use planning should facilitate ease of travelling by bicycle or on foot.*
- *Appropriate planning for walking and cycling including provision of improved connectivity.*
- *Council provision of safe and efficient road, footpath and cycle networks.*

The plan change would be an effective way to implement these parts of the strategy by influencing the built form of development.

8.4 Rolleston In Motion Action Plan

The Rolleston in Motion Action Plan is a Neighbourhood Accessibility Plan and identifies a number of operational actions that Council intended to take to improve the accessibility of Rolleston for walking and cycling. Amongst the actions are:

- Advocating to New World to improve the separation of cars and walkers on their site.
- A safe crossing point across Tennyson Street (now installed).

The research for this plan identified that the layout of the New World site was a concern to residents, and that there was a desire for a pedestrian boulevard along the length of facilities. The research was carried out prior to the construction of Rolleston Square.

8.5 Selwyn Community Outcomes

The Selwyn Community Outcomes contain two outcomes are relevant to the Plan Change:

- *A living Environment where the rural theme of Selwyn is maintained*
- *A Safe Place in which to Live, Work and Play*

The plan change would support the first of these by limiting the degree to which inappropriately designed urban commercial development might occur in rural townships.

One of the sub-aims of the second outcome is detailed as: *“Pedestrians, cyclists and motor-vehicle users can safely move around the District”*. Safe and attractive pedestrian routes in town centres would be an important component of this.

8.6 Urban Design Protocol

In September 2008, the Council signed the Urban Design Protocol. Produced by the Ministry for the Environment, the protocol aims to make New Zealand's towns and cities more successful through quality urban design. It identifies 7 principles of well designed places (the “7Cs”). Of particular relevance are:

- *Context: seeing buildings, places and spaces as part of whole towns and cities*
- *Character: reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment*
- *Choice: ensuring diversity and choice for the users of an urban environment, including building types and transport options*
- *Connections: supporting social cohesion, making places lively and safe and facilitating contact among people.*

9 Discussion of Proposed Plan Change

9.1 Introduction

The Council has considered whether the District Plan as it currently stands represents the most efficient and effective means of achieving appropriate development in the Business 1 zones. Overall, it was considered that the provisions have not resulted in optimum social, environmental or economic outcomes.

9.2.1 Policies

The proposed policy framework reflects the two objectives listed in section 6, above. These are:

- 3.4.1: *The District's townships are pleasant places to live and work in*

- 3.4.2: A variety of activities are provided for in townships, while maintaining the character and amenity values of each zone.

This section reviews the relevant existing policies and proposes changes to one policy and the introduction of three new policies.

1 Policy 3.4.4

Policy B3.4.4

To provide Business 1 Zones which enable a range of business activities to operate while maintaining environmental quality and aesthetic and amenity values which make the zones attractive to people

Policy 3.4.4 anticipates that business 1 zones will have high amenity and be attractive to people. This is a statement of the expected outcome from the application of District Plan rules and policies. However, it is not specific about how these outcomes will be obtained and what a well designed and pleasant business 1 zone might look like.

For this reason, it is not regarded as an effective policy within its own right. Whilst no changes are proposed, it is recommended that additional policies are put in place to augment it and describe the outcomes desired.

2 Policy 3.4.22

Policy B3.4.22 is as follows:

Policy B3.4.22

Allow people freedom in their choice of the design of buildings or structures except where building design needs to be managed to:

- *Avoid adverse effects on adjoining sites; or*
- *Maintain the character of areas with outstanding natural features or landscapes values or special heritage or amenity values.*

The explanatory text indicates that such areas will be specifically identified in the plan and that otherwise the Plan does not include rules that control design or materials. This policy is therefore an expression of a hands-off approach to development management which is somewhat at odds with the Plans objectives, and policy 3.4.4 as this approach will not provide (and has not provided) for a good quality built environment.

The Plan Change therefore proposes to modify this policy to make it consistent with others in the plan and to support the proposed amendments:

Allow people freedom in their choice of the design of buildings or structures except where building design needs to be managed to:

- *Avoid adverse effects on adjoining sites; ~~or~~ **and***
- *Maintain the character of areas with **identified**: outstanding natural features or landscape values; or special heritage; or amenity values; **and***
- ***Maintain and establish pleasant and attractive streets and public areas***

Some new explanatory text is also proposed to clarify when the more onerous requirements described in the policy may be appropriate:

Explanation and Reasons

~~For most places in general~~, the District Plan does not have provisions that tell people what colour, shape or materials to use when building structures. ~~The Council thinks this is a matter of personal choice.~~ The Plan does, however have rules for the height, bulk of buildings and recession planes, to avoid adverse effects of shading and loss of privacy or outlook, on adjoining sites **and some controls to manage the effect of buildings on public spaces, particularly in town centres (the Business 1 zone).**

This means that there are relatively few rules for traditional low density residential development. However for higher density and infill housing or commercial development, more active management is needed to address the effects on neighbours and public spaces because the use of setback controls is inefficient and may have unintended consequences. These rules protect the privacy of neighbours and the quality of the street scene.

3 Policy B3.4.23a

The Proposed Plan Change includes the following new policy, which is aimed at providing more specific direction than the existing policy 3.4.4:

Ensure that town centres are walkable and well integrated, and that development in town centres contributes to the economic and social vibrancy of the District's towns by:

- **complimenting public spaces (both those in public ownership and on-site public space) with high quality active frontage**
- **ensuring the provision of high quality public space**
- **bringing activity to street frontages by means of the positioning of buildings and active frontage along the street boundary and by internalising car parking with a site or development block**
- **providing for a high quality pedestrian experience in places the public may be present**
- **ensuring that development supports the urban structure by providing for direct and logical pedestrian routes within and through larger sites and to entranceways along pedestrian desire lines.**
- **ensuring entranceways are positioned in logical places for pedestrian access**
- **ensuring that design and layout prioritises the needs of pedestrians over the parking of cars**

These matters are intended to address the issues raised in sections 5.1-5.10. The policy is specific that development must compliment public space such as streets and that on-site public space must create a high quality pedestrian experience. The policy also specifies that the layout supports pedestrian movement along direct routes and the needs of pedestrians should have a higher priority than those of vehicles.

The policy is intended to summarise the relevant issues in creating a high quality, walkable town centre environment. It will allow the consideration of these relevant matters in the assessment of applications for consent.

The considerations listed above are reflected in the Council's *Commercial Design Guide*, which provides explanations and illustrations of ways developments may comply with the policy.

4 Policy B3.4.27

This new policy is designed to ensure that medium density housing is of a standard which meets the aspirations of the existing policy framework.

Allow for Medium Density and Comprehensive housing in Business 1 zones provided it has the same standard of design and site layout as in residential areas

Explanation and Reasons

- ***The plan encourages medium density housing in town centres to make efficient use of land and support walkability. But it is expected that such areas will have a similar amenity to any other residential area, for the benefit of both the residents and the people who use the town centre.***

The plan presently allows the construction of Medium Density Housing (MDH) in the B1 zones as a permitted activity with no management of the adverse effects discussed in 5.11.

However, the Council's *Medium Density Housing Guide* identifies that higher density developments need more careful management, which is to be provided in the District Plan by proposed Plan Change 7 which includes a comprehensive framework for the assessment of such applications.

It is anomalous that MDH would be permitted in B1 zones without an equivalent amount of management when these zones still anticipate a high quality environment. Moreover, the Council is still concerned that residential buildings should provide a good standard of accommodation, regardless of which zone they are located in.

For this reason, the policy requires that MDH in business zones should have an equivalent standard of design to MDH located elsewhere.

5 New Policy 4.3.6

Policy B4.3.6

Only rezone land for business if it has an appropriate shape to allow for the creation of a high quality town or smaller centre environment

Explanation and Reasons

The usability of business land is highly dependent on its shape. If land is rezoned without regard to how it can be used, the result can be a town centre or neighbourhood centre where a high quality built environment is difficult to achieve.

Examples of the type of development which the Council is seeking to avoid are:

- **Shops which sit behind large areas of car parking**
- **Shops which turn their backs on the road or other public areas**
- **Shops on one side of a road only in town centres**

Often, due to the shape of the land rezoned, it is difficult to achieve an improved urban form, for instance because the shape of the zone is not deep enough for two rows of shops to face each other across a street. It is therefore important that an application for rezoning demonstrates how the land can be used a way that will result in a high quality built environment, as described in Policy 3.4.23a.

In instances where a high quality built environment is not possible or would depend to a great extent on the form of development chosen, then site specific rules may be required, either to restrict what can be done on the site, or the form of development which occurs.

The Council's Commercial Design Guide is a useful reference on how the shape of land may constrain development options.

The shape of land is an important driver of its suitability for B1 use. For instance, it has been identified in the *Commercial Design Guide* that B1 land will work best if it is sited either side of a road, or if a new road can be built through the site, to allow the establishment of a main street environment with business use on both sides of the road. This policy is aimed at requiring the consideration of the likely future development form in applications for rezoning.

Whilst Council is entitled to consider such matters now in new applications, the existence of the policy will give increased clarity to applicants of the Council's intentions. The *Commercial Design Guide* contains explanations and examples of how parcels may be developed.

In response to this policy, it is expected that applicants will need to demonstrate that the land to be rezoned can accommodate high quality development. This is part of a holistic approach to zoning and land-use and should minimise situations where applicants are unable to maximise the development of a difficult parcel without compromising on design.

9.2.2 Rules

The plan change proposes a number of changes to rules which are discussed below, along with alternative measures.

1 Smaller Business Developments - Rule 16.9

The proposed approach would differentiate between small and large scale development. Rule 16.9 manages small scale development (with a gross floor area of less than 450m²). It requires that these should not have parking at the front; that they should have at least 60% (by length) active frontage; and that no fences above 1m are erected between building frontages and the road. These rules are designed to ensure a high quality interface between

buildings and public space without imposing consenting requirements on smaller development which is likely to have a relatively minor scale of effects.

16.9 SMALL SCALE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS (LESS THAN 450m²)

Permitted Activities

16.9.1 Buildings or developments with a total gross floor area of less than 450m² and up to 20 on-site car parking spaces shall be a permitted activity in the Business 1 zone provided that:

16.9.1.1 No car parking or vehicular access is provided between the frontage of any building and a legal road (or any accessway from which the public will access the site if it does not have access to a legal road); and

16.9.1.2 At least 60% (by length) of each building frontage which fronts or directly faces on-site public space, or a road or other area where the public have a legal right of access, shall be installed and maintained as active commercial frontage.

16.9.1.3 The maximum height of any fence between any building façade and the street or a private Right of Way or shared access over which the allotment has legal access, shall be 1m.

16.9.1.4 Every building adjoining or within 3m of a road boundary shall be provided with a verandah to the following standards:

- a) Verandahs shall be set at least 0.5m behind the kerb face**
- b) Minimum depth 3m except where this would entail a breach of rule a, above.**
- c) Verandahs shall extend along the entire frontage of the building facing the road boundary, and shall adjoin verandahs on adjacent buildings**

Discretionary Activities

16.9.2 Any building or structure which does not comply with rule 16.9.1 shall be a discretionary activity

The rule is also activated by car-parks with 20 or more spaces as these would have many of the same effects as a large development. Many of the concerns about B1 developments are actually concerned about the effects of the car-parks that accompany the development. This is designed to fit in with Proposed Plan Change 12 which makes all car parks with 20 or more spaces a controlled activity so that pedestrian circulation can be considered.

Proposals which fail to comply with the rules are a discretionary activity. This is considered appropriate because there is a need to assess these proposal in the context of their surroundings.

This situation is quite different from large developments, where a balancing act of beneficial and adverse effects is needed. In cases where the rules are broken for smaller developments it is probable that there are adverse effects created and less likely that there are beneficial effects to take into account. A discretionary consent will in any case allow the due consideration of all effects, but it is not considered useful to include a prescriptive list for restriction of discretion.

2 Larger Business Developments - Rule 16.10

Rule 16.10 manages larger developments. For these more complex developments a more flexible site specific (discretionary) approach is regarded as being more appropriate than a rules based approach.

The reasons for this are:

- That a rules based approach can become difficult to comply with for complex development. An example is the requirement for active frontage on all boundaries, which may not be possible for shops which are also providing frontage to on-site space.
- Rules can have unexpected outcomes which are more difficult to predict for complex development, as designers attempt to comply with the rules rather than trying to produce the most suitable building for the site.
- That good urban design outcomes may involve trading-off different desired outcomes according to the individual circumstances. A rules based approach does not allow this.

The proposed rule is as follows:

16.10 LARGE DEVELOPMENTS

Restricted Discretionary Activities

16.10.1 Any development in the Business 1 zone (other than Comprehensive Residential Development) with a gross floor area of 450m² or more shall be a restricted discretionary activity

16.10.2 Under rule 16.10.1, Council has restricted the exercise of its discretion to:

16.10.3.1 The extent to which the development:

- Is visually integrated with the surrounding buildings by means of its scale, including the transition in size between it and adjacent buildings and any architectural measures to mitigate this; and**
- Contributes to a varied and visually appealing streetscene through:**
 - the subdivision of ground floor facades into traditional scale modules with a width of 5-10m;**
 - the continuation of existing building lines;**

- the use of regularity of detailing (such as windows and architectural detailing) on upper floors and that such detailing is consistent with neighbours where appropriate; and

c) Avoids or disguises roof mounted equipment such as airconditioning units

16.10.3.2 The design and location of active frontage and entranceways to buildings to:

- a) create on-site public space which is attractive and convenient for pedestrians; and
- b) address other public space such as roads with active frontage

16.10.3.3 The extent to which the design and layout of the site provides and addresses (for instance through active frontage) well located people oriented space appropriate to the scale and nature of activities on site; and

16.10.3.4 The extent to which the site layout provides direct, logical and attractive pedestrian routes within and through the site as part of a comprehensive walking network for the wider area, providing access to and from:

- a) Main attractions on the site such as community facilities, the main entrances to shops, or public space; and
- b) Main attractions on adjoining sites; and
- c) Points of access to surrounding areas including roads, reserves and walkways; and
- d) Public transport facilities

16.10.3.5 The extent to which the development would maintain and provide continuous building lines, active frontage and verandahs along street boundaries and main pedestrian routes, particularly where adjacent to established retail activities; and

16.10.3.6 The design and layout of the site in relation to the location of car parking areas so that these are

- a) Located at the rear or side of developments; and
- b) Not located between buildings and a road; and
- c) Generally located where they are internalised within the development block; and
- d) For large greenfield sites being developed progressively, that car-parking is not generally located at or within 20m of the boundaries of sites where it may compromise the establishment of buildings adjacent to the road; and

16.10.3.7 The design and location of landscaping to mitigate the visual effect of development and to define the edges of streets and other space accessible to the public; and

16.10.3.8 The provision of appropriate servicing for the proposed activities; and

16.10.3.9 The degree of compliance with the matters listed under 16.9.1

The assessment matters are aimed at ensuring that the development has a good interface with public space (as for the rules under 16.9)

They are also aimed at managing the quality of on-site public space, as this space is where much of the public life of the town will take place.

They also seek to ensure that the development provides for direct and pleasant walking and cycling routes within and through the site.

The Design Principles described in the *Commercial Design Guide* have been designed to tie in with the assessment matters above. The role of that guide is to illustrate ways to comply with the plan change and provide ideas and advice to developers. It is not intended to be comprehensive or prescriptive. It does not form part of the plan change, but has been designed to be a helpful technical resource for planners and developers.

The management of the second and third issues identified above is not usually necessary on smaller sites which will not usually create on-site public space or affect the pattern of movement through the town (because they will not create new pedestrian routes, or block existing ones).

3 On-Site Public Space - Rule 16.11

This rule seeks to ensure that on-site public spaces have a similar amenity to streets and other public spaces. It is equivalent to rule 16.9.

Areas in front of retail premises are the place where people are most concentrated in a town. They are the place where people spend most time and it is therefore particularly important that they provide a good quality pedestrian environment, with adequate space for circulation, passing, window shopping and other activities which people undertake in retail areas.

The NZTA recommends that in commercial or industrial areas, a footpath width of 3.6m is provided, consisting of 1.8m for pedestrian flow, 1.2m for street furniture, 0.45m for frontage and 0.15m for kerbing (refer to section 14 of the NZTA Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide).

Frontage is defined as “the area that pedestrians tend not to enter, as it may contain retaining walls, fences, pedestrians emerging from buildings, ‘window shoppers’ or overhanging vegetation”

Existing development in Rolleston has tended to provide 3m footpaths, which is the reason for specifying this width as the minimum standard.

16.11 RETAIL FRONTING ON-SITE PUBLIC SPACE/S

16.11.1 In the Business 1 zone, where retail activities front on-site public space other than public space, they are a permitted activity if the site layout complies with the following:

16.11.1.1 shop frontages must be separated from car parking by a footpath and landscaping area with a minimum combined width of 3m.

16.11.1.2 The area specified in 16.11.1.1 above must include an unobstructed sealed footpath of no less than 1.8m in width.

4 **Colour of Buildings - Rule 16.12**

This rule is aimed at the issue of overly dominant colour within the B1 zone. It restricts the amount of such colour on each elevation of a building, as measured by the greyness content of the colour. This allows occupiers to use a certain amount of bright colour on a façade, but ensures that this will be balanced by neutral or recessive colours on the remainder, so that very bold colours with high colour saturation will be a minority element in the built environment.

The rule also makes the installation of external security shutters a non-complying activity. These serve to undermine active frontage by covering it up and can create a place which has a significant amount of dead frontage after hours. They have low aesthetic appeal and give the impression of a place which suffers from high rates of crime. Alternatives exist to their use, such as internal lattice grilles or laminated glass, which do not affect the external appearance of the building.

16.12 BUILDINGS AND EXTERNAL FINISH

Permitted Activities

16.12.1 In the Business 1 zone, buildings and structures shall be a permitted activity if the exterior cladding of any wall or elevation (excluding glazing) complies with the following:

16.12.1.1 It is made from or clad in natural stone or with natural or stained timber; or

16.12.1.2 When graded using the British Standard BS5252:1976 Framework for Colour Co-ordination for Building Purposes, the exterior finish of at least 75% of any elevation (including any signage, whether attached to the elevation, painted on it, or otherwise provided, meets the following standards:

a) Is within greyness groups A and B.

b) Is greyness group C, with reflectance value (RV) rating of no more than 40%.

16.12.2 In the Business 1 zone, buildings shall be a permitted activity if the external finish of the roof complies with the following:

16.12.2.1 All roof areas shall be finished in colours with a reflectance value (RV) rating of no more than 40% and fall within the greyness groups A, B and C.

Non Complying Activities

16.12.3 Any building or structure which does not comply with rule 16.13.1 shall be a non-complying activity

16.12.4 The installation of exterior security shutters in the business 1 zone shall be a non-complying activity

Alternatives

The rules in 16.9 to 16.12 are intended to be a comprehensive response to the issues raised in sections 5.1-5.10. There follows a discussion of some of the alternatives to this comprehensive regulatory response. The “status quo” option is not assessed as this is covered in section 10.1 (Costs and Benefits).

It should be noted that the plan change does not take place in isolation and does not preclude other action by Council.

Council Investment

In seeking to improve the environment in the Business 1 zone, Council could carry out physical works in the public environment or other forms of public investment such as libraries.

In practice, Council does carry out such works. For instance, the Council is building a library in Lincoln and has recently installed new footpaths on Robert Street and William Street. The proposed plan change is not intended as an alternative to street upgrades.

However, as explained in section 5, the street environment is created by a combination of the public investment and the way buildings interact with the street. An effective way to ensure that buildings compliment the street is to introduce regulations.

Furthermore, where larger developments take place, Council will not own land in all the places people will be present. Council action will therefore not create pleasant public space in the areas where people will use it. To create a quality centre, some quality space will need to be provided by the developer, and this will need to have a good interface with buildings on the site.

This way, on-site public space is provided, of an equivalent quality to public streets and the community is not disadvantaged by a developers decision to employ a non-traditional layout, where buildings do not front roads directly.

Masterplanning and Structure Planning

Council has produced structure plans for Rolleston, Lincoln and Prebbleton to manage urban growth. In 2010 it commenced a masterplanning exercise for Rolleston to manage the form that development takes. A study has also been started for Lincoln to look at opportunities for encouraging high quality development.

This kind of exercise may be a valuable way to manage development in town centres, but is not effective at managing land which is already in private ownership. A more general policy approach is needed for these areas.

Use of Reserves Contributions

The imposition of reserve contributions was considered as an alternative to the provision of on-site public space by the developer. The provision of reserves outside the site is unlikely to be effective. The reserves would not be in the places where people are present, which would not achieve the aim of providing people oriented space in commercial zones.

These could be taken in the form of land for the formation of public space, or cash to buy land. Where necessary, land (or connections) could be designated and purchased using the Public Works Act, but this is expensive.

This is also an imposition on developers who may be constrained in the future use of their site. For instance, it may be fragmented by pocket reserves owned by Council.

Increased Requirement to provide roads

Council may consider the imposition of a grid standard into the district plan as an alternative to the use of discretionary consents (under rule 16.11). This would require that developers build roads through their site, to create blocks with a defined maximum perimeter. This would ensure the creation of a traditional style town centre with lots of road frontage and public space. A similar approach is included for greenfield residential areas in Plan Change 7, which uses an 800m walkable perimeter over public land (not necessarily roads).

For commercial areas, a smaller, finer grain is appropriate due to the number of people present and the need to easily access as many sites as possible.

This policy would be quite onerous as it would require that developers vest a large amount of land in Council. But it would be effective as a way to ensure that adequate public space was provided.

The intention of the proposed policy is to change the form of development to one which is more “people-friendly”, rather than to acquire land for roads or reserves. With this in mind, the best outcome will be achieved by measures to change the shape of developments rather than the acquisition of land.

Allowing developers to mitigate the effects of car-parking with landscaping

One way to improve the appearance of car parking is to require landscaping to mitigate its effects. There are many examples of retail development in Christchurch which are landscaped to a very high standard, such that the car park is barely visible from the street.

This would certainly be an improvement on the current situation which has allowed unlandscaped car-parking to be established at the road boundary. It would provide some amenity to pedestrians adjacent to the site. However, it would not provide for activity on the street and would not provide for a vibrant street scene. It may still mean that pedestrians have to divert through and around car parking to reach the shop entrance.

It may be appropriate to allow some landscaped car park frontage as part of a large development which is well designed. This can be assessed as part of a comprehensive site analysis under proposed rule 16.11.

Size Threshold

Large buildings will usually involve the creation of significant public space on site, if only for car parking. A 450m² building will require 20 car parks (under PC12) which equates to at least a further 500m². This is a significant amount of asphalt to accommodate successfully (and this is discussed below).

Many of the small sites in Selwyn are 1000m² and using this size threshold would allow these small single site developments to go ahead without the need for a discretionary consent. These small developments can use simple solutions for site layout (such as parking behind the buildings) and enough work has been done in the design guide to ensure that acceptable solutions are available which fit a simple rules package. For larger developments this may not be possible (for instance blank walls may have to face a street) and a holistic assessment will ensure that the development as a whole is of good quality.

This threshold also ties in with rule 17.7.2, introduced by proposed plan change 12, which makes car parks with more than 20 spaces a controlled activity.

Other Activity Statuses

The following alternative approaches to the management of large development are available. A more detailed discussion is provided in the *Background Report*.

Permitted

This the current approach. The Council could introduce stricter standards without changing the activity status.

It is suggested that this is appropriate for smaller developments. But for large sites, which have a greater scale of effect on their surroundings, the approach is not sophisticated enough to be successful.

Controlled

It is not the intention of this project to make it difficult to develop in the Business 1 zone. Rather, development must be of a suitable quality. There is still a presumption in favour of development.

Council staff do not consider that controlled status would be appropriate. In theory this would allow Council to require amendments to designs. In practice controlled activity status for applications leads to situations where Council cannot decline consent for development that is clearly inappropriate and either has to grant consent for the development or impose conditions that in effect mean that the consent is for a different development to that applied for.

In particular, where changes may be made to site layout, it is not appropriate for this to be done via condition of consent. A new layout will be required, designed from the start around the constraints. A resource consent hearing where Council, which has limited knowledge of development, redesigns an applicants proposal in a limited timeframe is not a good process for this.

Discretionary

The Council could make the establishment of larger development fully discretionary so that it could consider any matter. The disadvantage with this is that it reduces the certainty for applicants and may make the plan less clear, because there are no assessment matters.

If the assessment matters, which are to be backed up by a design guide, are clear then there is no need to move to a fully discretionary status. The Council wishes to encourage development and to be up-front with developers about what is required. Restricted discretionary activity achieves these aims.

Non-Complying

This is not generally appropriate because the Council is trying to facilitate good quality development in B1 zones, not prevent it.

There are some non-complying activities proposed with the plan change, but these relate to particular design elements that the Council is concerned about rather than the principle of development itself.

Non-Statutory Measures: Design Guide

Council has introduced a design guide for business 1 development to illustrate the kind of development it wishes to encourage. An alternative approach may be to rely on this alone in the hope that developers would adopt the suggested approaches.

In practice, this is unlikely to achieve the desired results. Whilst some developers may be influenced, others would not. This fits with Council's experiences in attempting to influence the form of recent development by negotiation; some developers are willing to consider amendments but most will offer limited or no concessions.

To create a successful centre, it is important that all (or a large majority) of sites participate, otherwise the result will be a sub optimal built environment overall. Poorly designed and positioned developments can undermine the quality of a centre, even if there are some well designed buildings.

This option would not on its own provide the community with certainty over the design of business development and would be unlikely to be successful.

Non-Statutory Measures: Advocacy

As discussed above, Council has in recent years attempted to influence the design of commercial developments, notably in Rolleston and Lincoln. It has had some successes (on Robert Street in Lincoln) where it has worked with developers to help unlock difficult parcels of land, for instance by compromising on car parking requirements. However, it has been less successful elsewhere.

For this reason, advocacy is not likely to provide a solution on its own. Rather, it is part of a package of measures which includes a tightening of regulation.

5 Medium Density Housing - Rules 16.14 - 16.16

These rules are currently proposed for the living zone in Proposed Plan Change 7. The intention of including them in the Commercial area is to ensure that dwellings have an equivalent standard of amenity in what is intended to be a high quality environment.

The proposed business zone rules include a minimum lot size of 500m². In practice this is large for medium density housing and reduced lot sizes are a discretionary activity. Policy guidance indicates that houses should have an equivalent standard to residential areas and this should allow assessment of smaller lots.

The reason for relying on this mechanism is to avoid the need to include relatively complex subdivision rules in the business 1 zone, which currently has no minimum lot size and subdivision rules which are not appropriate for residential use. In practice, the plan change will introduce minimum standards for the use of land for residential purposes whilst still allowing flexible subdivision standards appropriate for business use.

6 Landscaping - Rules 17.6 and 17.7

Rule 17.6 is introduced by Proposed Plan Change 12. Some modifications are proposed. These would delete the landscaping requirement so that rule 17.7 could be introduced with specific standards for landscaping. It would also state that walking routes should be pleasant and attractive, so that the assessment matters match the thrust of the policy proposed in Plan Change 29.

Rule 17.7 provides standards for mitigation of car parking. For boundaries with public space it provides for either a minimum height or a minimum depth:

17.7.1 Except as provided in 17.7.2, Car-parks shall be a permitted activity if they comply with the following:

17.7.1.1 A continuous landscaping strip is provided between any legal road and the parking area which complies with the following :

- **A depth of at least 3m with plants that will grow to a height of 60cm within 3 years over the entire area or**
- **A depth of at least 1.5m, planted with visually impermeable hedging that will reach a continuous height of 1m within 3 years.**

17.7.1.2 A minimum of 1 tree is provided for each ten metres of road frontage, set in a planting bed with minimum dimensions 1.5mx1.5m.

A taller 1m hedge (combined with trees) disguises much of the car park and provides separation (whilst allowing for views into the site). A greater depth (with a lower height) is less successful at screening the car park but provides more separation. This approach allows a degree of flexibility whilst protecting the appearance of the town centre.

Rule 17.7 also imposes landscaping standards for larger car parks (which are proposed to be controlled activities under Plan Change 12). These apply within the car park and are additional to perimeter controls. These are intended to ensure that landscaping is effective in breaking up the appearance of an expanse of asphalt:

17.7.2 Any development or redevelopment of a parking area resulting in more than 20 parking spaces in the Business 1 zone, which complies with the permitted activity standards in 17.7.1, shall be a controlled activity.

17.6.1.1 The exercise of Councils discretion shall be limited to the following:

- a) The provision of low level landscaping to break up the appearance of hardsurfacing, particularly between the car park and pedestrian areas**
- b) The provision and location of trees in the parking area. All tree shall be set in planting beds with a minimum dimension of 1.5m x 1.5m at a rate at least of 1 tree per 10 spaces.**

7 Signs - Rule 19.1

At present, for freestanding signs, the plan imposes a maximum size of 3m² per sign but does not restrict the amount of signs per site. Some developers have requested larger signs and have been willing to restrict the total amount of signage in return. It would be sensible to control the number of signs per site as a proliferation of small signs can have adverse visual effects.

The plan change proposes that 3m² should be the maximum amount of signage per site unless the frontage exceeds 50m, in which case 6m² would be acceptable. This prevents a proliferation of smaller signs but allows for larger sites to have a larger sign (or an increased number of smaller ones). The maximum size is set at 6m² because very large signs can be very dominant in the street scene, regardless of the amount of frontage. It is appropriate that these are managed through a consent process.

The plan change also proposes restricting the amount of signage painted on or fixed to buildings to 25% of an elevation, in line with the restriction in bright colours. This allows a high proportion of a wall to be used as signage (higher than any existing building in the district), but provides some certainty about limiting the dominance of signage.

10 Conclusions

10.1 Costs and Benefits

The following tables provides a summary of the overall costs and benefits of the proposed plan change. In this analysis, the medium density provisions have been considered separately to the general provisions.

The analysis compares the proposed plan change to the status quo situation. Where alternatives exist they have been discussed in section 9.

Provisions for business development:

| | Benefits/ Advantages | Costs / Disadvantages |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Social | More attractive built development creates more attractive town centres which people enjoy spending time in. | No identified social costs |
| | More attractive town centres create a sense of civic pride. | |
| | Direct and attractive walking routes encourage walking, providing vitality and activity in town centres. More people are attracted to the centre which also increases activity. | |
| | Increased vitality encourages wider range of activities in town centres | |
| | Better connections through the centre make it more convenient and attractive | |
| | Increased ability to walk through the centre means it is more inclusive and easily used by a wide variety of social groups. | |
| | Increased walking opportunities lead to health benefits for residents | |
| | Increased opportunity for mixed use development | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Environmental | Reduced vehicle emissions due to reduced car use to reach and move around centres | |
| | Higher quality aesthetic environment | |
| Economic | More people walking around town centres promotes business opportunities. | Increased cost of compliance |
| | Potential reduced costs for residents due to less car dependency and use; leads to higher disposable incomes. | Potential for increased short term costs for developer. |
| | Better integration between | May not meet current market |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | developments spreads benefits from key attractors such as anchor tenants. | preference from tenants for car based development |
| | Potential to reduce the amount of parking required leads to reduced costs for development. | |
| | Higher long term profit for landowners in the business zone (higher rents and occupancy). | |
| | Wider range of business activities encouraged may create jobs. | |
| | Adaptable and re-usable built form more efficient in long term. | |

Provisions for Medium Density Housing

| | Benefits/ Advantages | Costs / Disadvantages |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Social | Increased certainty for community that housing in town centres will create attractive streets and space | |
| | Ensures that houses in town centres will provide a good standard of accommodation (eg privacy and outdoor living space) | |
| | More attractive and better connected streets encourage walking to and through the town centre | |
| | More attractive streets promote sense of civic pride. | |
| Environmental | More attractive aesthetic environment in line with other areas of towns | |
| Economic | Increased property value from well designed streets | Reduced flexibility and increased cost for developers |

10.2 Efficiency and Effectiveness

Council officers consider that the proposed plan change provides an efficient and effective method of addressing the issues described in section 5.

The new rules and assessment matters will be an effective way to maintain the established town centre character of areas such as the Lincoln and Leeston town. For areas such as Rolleston, where new development is expected next to non-traditional built form, they will make sure that the new development is well integrated and that these newer areas have an improved built environment compared to what has been built already. The amenity of such centres will improve as a result.

There are a number of other benefits identified. These include improved economic performance and social and environmental benefits.

A holistic approach is important because regulation (or other action) which only addresses some of the issues will not create the improved overall

amenity which is necessary to realise a high quality centre. In particular, the use of single measures is not effective in increasing the propensity to walk. The plan change will be effective because it addresses the issues in an integrated manner.

The existing market approach has failed to create attractive centres. Whilst newer developments may be suitable for the requirements of individual landowners, they have not added up to an attractive and well-connected place. Moreover, these developments have adverse effects such as the creation of environments that discourage walking. These effects fall on the community in general, whilst any advantages are mostly accrued by the landowner.

Furthermore, the disadvantages are long-term and may require action by Council to fix them (if this is possible). The existing approach has not created places which function efficiently and has imposed costs on the community.

There are costs with the proposed approach, including a possibility of increased building costs for developers. However, these are considered to be outweighed by the considerable advantages to the community, which include economic advantages. The research reviewed in the Background Report suggests that the costs imposed are short term, whilst the advantages, both economic and social, are long term. The proposed approach is aimed at making sure that the effects of development are adequately mitigated.

The Council's *Commercial Design Guide* identifies ways in which sites can be developed in accordance with the rules and assessment matters in the plan change. It demonstrates that land can continue to be used efficiently under the proposals.

In view of the above, it is considered that the proposed plan change will be effective in achieving the objectives of the plan and the objective of the plan change. Development will relate well to its surroundings, creating civic spaces throughout the business 1 zones and bring substantial economic benefits in the form of reduced costs and increased competitiveness. New development will be better integrated with its surroundings and will provide pedestrian routes ensuring that people are able to easily walk around centres and between developments.

10.3 Risk

Whilst there is always some level of uncertainty over the level of impact that a new set of rules may have on development, it is considered that in this case there is sufficient information available on the issues of concern and the methods available to address them. There has been substantial consideration of the effects of the new rules on built form and almost all of the provisions are in use in New Zealand already (refer to Appendix 1 of the Background Report).

A key risk of not acting is that development continues to provide a poor outcome which has adverse social, economic and environmental effects. This risk is strong as existing development continues to provide poor design outcomes and it is unlikely that this will change in the absence of stronger regulation. Attempts at negotiation and advocacy have not generally been successful.

Furthermore, existing car-dependent development patterns do not respond to long term uncertainty, such as the price of fossil fuels, and may become increasingly unsustainable.

10.4 Conclusions

Based on the above analysis, it is concluded that the existing provisions do not effectively implement the objectives in the District Plan. They are likely to contribute to declining quality of town centres and have significant environmental, social and economic effects.

The measures in the proposed Plan Change would provide some certainty that new development would relate well to the surrounding area and maintain a good standard of amenity. They would also ensure that direct and attractive connections are provided and that new commercial buildings are well connected to the surrounding built environment. The plan change has considered a number of alternatives and it is concluded that the proposals are the best and most appropriate way to meet the objectives of the District Plan.

Appendix 1: Changes to the District Plan

Appendix 2: Background Report