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Central City Transformation Plan Refresh
Hamilton City Council
Hamilton 3240

By email: Geoff.Taylor@council.hcc.govt.nz; Paul.Bowman@hcc.govt.nz; hendry@landlab.co.nz;
Shelley.Monrad@hcc.govt.nz; Jen.Baird@hcc.govt.nz

Re. Central City Transformation Plan (CCTP) Refresh

1. Recommendations

Property Council New Zealand recommends the following:

- 1.1 Incorporate the eight draft design principles into the City Centre Transformation Plan (CCTP) vision. For example, “A compact, sustainable and design-led city that connects Hamilton’s precincts and attracts people to its vibrant centre.”
- 1.2 Prioritise plan changes and policy updates that achieve the CCTP proposed (or refreshed) vision, many of the design principles and the proposed great built form. This includes working with developers to ensure plan changes that enable intensification are in areas that are feasible and likely to be taken up.
- 1.3 Coordinate plans with funding and delivery of key transport nodes. This should occur when development to intensify occurs as it will ensure a coordinated approach with greater connectivity between neighbouring precincts and the city centre.
- 1.4 Empower the Urban Design Panel to provide independent design reviews of significant private and public projects across Hamilton and achieve the CCTP outcome of delivering design excellence in Hamilton.
- 1.5 Remove the subjective word “appropriate” within the compact design principle.
- 1.6 Include residential and mixed use within the City Centre Precinct classification to align with intensification outcomes and better allows planning and development of residential apartments near educational institutions.
- 1.7 Extend the ‘river + city stitch’ principle beyond the tourism outcome to support a range of development (commercial offices, hotels, cafes, residential, laneways, open spaces) that will better create a vibrant atmosphere and stimulate economic growth and recovery.
- 1.8 Work with key stakeholders to improve the current and future public transport system and linkages to ensure that the seven precincts are interconnected and not typology silos.
- 1.9 Greater collaboration between Hamilton City Council and those who pay the city centre targeted rate. This could occur by establishing a CBD Board to make recommendations to Hamilton City Council on where to spend and how best to upgrade the centre city and to support the CCTP vision and outcomes.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Property Council's purpose is; "Together, shaping cities where communities thrive". We believe in the creation and retention of well-designed, functional and sustainable built environments which contribute to New Zealand's overall prosperity. We support legislation that provides a framework to enhance economic growth, development, liveability and growing communities.
- 2.2 Property Council's Waikato Branch ("Property Council") has 114 businesses as members. The property sector contributes \$2.6b or 13 per cent of GDP in the Waikato area and employs 13,980 people. That makes it the region's second largest economic sector.
- 2.3 This submission responds to the [Central City Transformation Plan \(CTTP\) Refresh Phase 1 – Stakeholder Engagement](#) and general questions that arose from our discussion with Hamilton City Council's CCTP team. In preparing our submission we sought and received feedback from a selection of our Waikato-based members.

3. Vision

- 3.1 A clear vision is important, as our members will take the lead on many CBD developments. Therefore, buy-in to the vision is key to its success. The current CCTPs vision is "a prosperous commercial centre with a vibrant metropolitan lifestyle." As it currently stands, the vision lacks incorporation of the eight draft design principles such as; connecting people through movement both within and outside of the CBD, a design-led strategy for transformational change, a sustainable and biodiverse city and a compact city with intensification and density.
- 3.2 We propose a vision that is overarching and incorporates the eight draft design principles that will help shape the overall strategic direction for the centre city. For example:

"A compact, sustainable and design-led city that connects Hamilton's precincts and attracts people to its vibrant centre."
- 3.3 We support planning for a compact centre city with clearly identified precincts. As the city centre is developed, upgraded and rejuvenated, more people will come into the city centre to work, live, play and shop. However, for this to occur, plan changes and policy updates are required to allow for intensification and good urban development. We are happy to assist in any way we can to support a framework that enhances rejuvenation, development, liveability and economic growth for Hamilton.

4. Design principles

- 4.1 We support the eight draft design principles as below and have some specific comments in relation to some of the principles in the following paragraphs:
 - For people
 - Liveable
 - Vibrant
 - Memorable
 - Connected
 - Design led
 - Sustainable
 - Compact.

- 4.2 The ‘**liveable**’ design principles states that built form should maintain a low-mid rise scale. It is important to note that this cannot occur without the necessary plan changes in the centre city. Furthermore, when plan changes occur to allow for intensification, it does not mean it occurs overnight. It can take many years for development to occur, or may never eventuate due to the difficulty or expense in developing current buildings and structures in Hamilton.
- 4.3 We support the design principle of ‘**connected**’ and recommend new regional and local connections are not only planned but also funded in order to be delivered. Ensuring the planning, funding and delivery for key transport nodes at the same time as development and intensification occurs will enable a coordinated approach with greater connectivity between the neighbouring precincts and the centre city.
- 4.4 Although we support the ‘**design led**’ principle that aims to deliver design excellence, the principle itself is vague on how to achieve this outcome. We recommend Hamilton City Council review the role of its Urban Design Panel by way of enhancing the Panel’s influence in providing independent design reviews of significant projects across Hamilton. The Urban Design Panel would provide pre-application recommendations to developers and Hamilton City Council representatives on private and public developments. This would be a step towards strengthening the process for achieving CCTPs outcome of delivering design excellence in Hamilton.
- 4.5 We support the ‘**compact**’ principle of a centre city that is “consolidated and intensified with clear precinct expectations, clustering of complimentary activities and appropriate densities.” However, the definition of appropriate densities will likely vary between Hamilton City Council, developers and residents. We recommend removing the word “appropriate” within the principle as this is something that will likely be heavily debated within the necessary council plans (i.e. District Plan).
- 4.6 One of the consultation questions asks stakeholders to provide wording or principles to create a design principle for the central city.

We wish to see a compact, sustainable and quality design-led centre city that embraces and plans for growth by delivering the necessary intensification plan changes and supporting infrastructure.

5. Proposed Key Design Moves

- 5.1 We support the 10 key design moves as below to stitch together the aspirations of the CCTP and the River Plan and have comments in relation to some of the principles in the following paragraphs.
- Seven city precincts
 - The Green Loop
 - A vibrant civic heart
 - The river + city stitch
 - A connected city
 - Victoria Street Garden Boulevard
 - North / South Streets
 - East / West Streets
 - Lanes plus fine grain space network
 - Great built form.
- 5.2 The City Centre Precinct accommodates for office, commercial and retail spaces. We recommend also including residential and mixed use as this is what has been discussed through intensification. We recommend planning for residential apartments near educational institutions such as the

University of Waikato and Wintec. This aligns with ensuring Hamilton has a ‘**vibrant civic heart**’ which establishes clusters of community and cultural activities. As education should be a part of this mix.

- 5.3 We support reconnecting the city centre to the river. However, the design intent of reconnecting the city centre “through its transformation into the city’s premier recreational destination” is limiting. We recommend this design intent is extended beyond the tourism aspect. This means a range of development from commercial office spaces, hotels and cafes through to residential apartments be incorporated in the design plan. This will promote the liveability aspect of connecting the river to the city stitch through a range of buildings attracting not just tourists, but local businesses, employees and residents. A mix of tourists, employees and residents in the city centre will better create a vibrant atmosphere in the CBD and stimulate economic growth and recovery, especially post Covid-19.
- 5.4 The ‘great built form’ proposal is to have low rise near the river edge (2-4 levels), mid-rise in the city centre zone (5-10 levels) and low-rise mixed use (3-5 levels) in the west city zone. This means the height steps away from the river and west town belt. We support encouraging built form that incorporates a mix of use and activities. Plan changes will need to occur to reflect the proposed built form. We are happy to provide support on the plan changes.

6. Property Council’s top three priorities for the central city

Intensified

- 6.1 Intensification is extremely important to achieve the outcomes and vision set out in the CCTP. For this to occur, Hamilton City Council needs to become an enabler of development through passing the necessary plan changes. We encourage Hamilton City Council work with developers to ensure that future plan changes which enable intensification in areas that are feasible and likely to be taken up. This aligns with the National Policy Statement that encourages closer relationships between councils and developers.

Connected

- 6.2 A city that is well thought out and connects people through walking, cycling, and public transport is important. Transport options need to be reliable and frequent for users to switch from their private vehicles to public transport. Public transport options need to better connect individuals from their home to their work or desired destination. This would see Hamilton City Council working closely with key stakeholders to improve the current and future public transport system and to ensure that the seven precincts are interconnected.

Vibrant

- 6.3 A city that is a vibrant and safe destination for all is important. This means a range of development from commercial offices, hotels, cafes, laneways, residential apartments, and open spaces. A range of development, typologies and access to laneways, rivers and open spaces will help add to the vibrancy of the centre city through tourism, local businesses, employees, and residents. This is crucial post Covid-19 in order to stimulate economic growth and recovery.

7. Property Council’s projects or ideas for the central city

- 7.1 Centre City projects that will help lift Hamilton out of the Covid-19 recession will more likely be kick starting a number of small projects that are waiting for consents. These small projects will get people into jobs now – compared to larger projects which may take years to get up and running.

We urge Hamilton City Council to work hard to turn around consents as quickly as possible and within their statutory timeframe.

Urban Design Panel

- 7.2 Earlier in our submission we recommended strengthening the role of the Urban Design Panel to help achieve the outcomes of the CCTP. We support good urban development, rather than restricting or constraining it. We recommend an empowered Urban Design Panel to promote bold and innovative design outcomes for Hamilton.

CBD Board

- 7.3 For years Property Council has recommended Hamilton City Council establish a CBD Board. The purpose of the CBD Board is to form ideas to rejuvenate the city centre. The CBD Board should be an apolitical advisory group to Hamilton City Council, which supports the CCTP vision and outcomes. The members would be a mixture of city centre business and residential groups. A councillor representative would sit on the CBD Board as a conjoint between the CBD Board and Council. The BID would also have a seat. This would ensure that Hamilton City Council work alongside the private sector to achieve positive outcomes for Hamilton.
- 7.4 Similar to Auckland Council's model, the CBD Board would recommend to Hamilton City Council where to spend the city centre targeted rate and how best to upgrade and develop the city centre. We have long supported targeted rates as a way to spread out development costs over longer periods of time. Targeted rates should be optimised following COVID-19, as spreading the costs over a longer period of time better supports feasibility and affordability of development – which in turn supports jobs.
- 7.5 In terms of projects our members support the following:

Short term:

- Review of Garden Place/Civic Square to enable better user-experience
- Pedestrian Boulevard development along River edge
- Review HCC/Private opportunities to convert redundant office buildings to mixed-use, residential.

Medium term:

- Destination development at Ferrybank precinct
- Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge
- Upgrade transport linkages East-West to better connect with the strong North-South.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 We support the overall intent of the CCTP Refresh.
- 8.2 Property Council members invest, own and develop property in Hamilton's central city. We wish to thank Hamilton City Council for the opportunity to provide early engagement on the CCTP as this gives our members a chance to have their say in how Hamilton's centre city develops today and into the future.

- 8.3 Any further queries do not hesitate to contact Katherine Wilson, Senior Advocacy Advisor, via email: katherine@propertynz.co.nz or cell: 027 8708 150.

Kind regards,



Brian Squair
Waikato Branch Executive President
Property Council New Zealand