BULLS
TOWN CENTRE
PLAN

JUNE 2014 v1

CONTENTS

creative
communities
INTERNATIONAL

CLIENT: Rangitikei District Council
Version 1: 16/5/2014

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Five strategies

1. Create people places
2. Enhance travellers experiences
3. Provide a safe and engaging pedestrian experience
4. Reinforce Bulls as a destination
5. Slow traffic and create a safe environment

Purpose

The purpose of the Bulls Town Centre Plan (TCP) is to establish an agreed framework and guide for:

1. The future management and development of the public areas (including roads/footpaths), and Council facilities and properties in central Bulls;
2. The nature and timing of the development and associated funding decisions of the public and private sector.

Place based approach

The Bulls Town Centre Plan uses a "place-based approach" to planning. It focuses on how the town will best work as a "people place" for both locals and visitors. This is especially important for Bulls because the local economy is highly reliant on attracting visitors and getting passing traffic to stop.

Place-based planning is very different to the rational approach to planning which tends to deliver spaces that lack "heart and soul".

Making it happen

The Town Centre Plan will require a coordinated approach to translate the strategies and tactics into results on the ground. The four work streams are:

1. Collaboration and negotiation with stakeholders.
2. Design briefing, design, and cost estimation.
3. Funding and prioritising through the Long Term Plan and aligning Asset Management.
4. Community Action Plan

Two high priority projects were identified during community engagement:

- A safe crossing point across State Highway One on Bridge Street.
- The Multipurpose Facility and public space.

2. INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2002/03 a major redevelopment was proposed in Bulls, being centred around the corner of High, Bridge and Criterion Streets, the site of the existing Information Centre/Bus Depot and included an upgrade to the road environment along Bridge Street. This proposal was supported by the Bulls & District Enterprise, Bulls & District Coordinating Group and the Bulls Community Committee, and a 1000+ signature petition. The proposal, which was advanced by a developer seeking a partnership with the Rangitikei District Council, was considered by the Council in early 2003, and a detailed assessment of the costs was commissioned. The redevelopment proposal was costed at more than $5 million, but was not progressed by the developer. Despite this decision the Council believed there was still significant benefit in upgrading Bridge Street, including under-grounding power.

In 2006 the Council investigated a concept for a new community centre, incorporating library, information centre, cultural, social and sporting amenities, and retail activities. The Council initiated consultation on the proposal with key stakeholders. This idea was not progressed.

The Council's 2006 long term plan (LTP) signalled funding for the upgrade of pedestrian facilities on Bridge Street, including widening footpaths/creation of on street parking and under-grounding power. This upgrade was undertaken in 2007/08.

Council's 2012-22 LTP signalled the co-location of the Bulls Library and Information Centre activities, and the development of a long term plan for Bulls CBD. In

2013 Council considered a proposal to co-locate these services, evaluated a range of options and consulted with the community. Based on community feedback Council decided to develop a Bulls CBD Plan (hereafter referred to as the Bulls Town Centre Plan) and address the co-location of services as part of that process.

Vision

Over the past 10 years, there have been various attempts and approaches within the Bulls community to bring the community together behind a common focus/purpose in order to guide the future development of the Town. By 2009 a Bulls and District strategic plan was in place, facilitated from within the Bulls community. The vision developed was:

"Bulls and District is a prosperous, attractive and safe place to live. We value our people, our history and character, and embrace sustainable development and new ideas."

There have been subsequent strategic review workshops within the community, and multiple attempts to create a development plan for Bulls. However, the work undertaken on these plans has not been carried through to action.

Purpose

The purpose of the Bulls Town Centre Plan (TCP) is to establish an agreed framework and guide for:

1. The future management and development of the public areas (including roads/footpaths), and Council facilities and properties in central Bulls;

2. The nature and timing of the development and associated funding decisions of the public and private sector.

Scope

The Bulls TCP will focus on the area of the town zoned Commercial in the Rangitikei District Plan. In general terms, this area encompasses High Street (extending from Criterion Street to Hammond Street), Bridge Street (extending from Holland Crescent to south of Gorton Street), and includes Criterion, Dalziel and Funnel Streets.

The Bulls TCP may also have regard to the town's main entrances on State Highways 1 and 3.

Council is currently reviewing the Bulls Domain Reserve Management Plan (RMP), and the future activities/development signalled for the Domain will have some impact on the Bulls CBD and vice versa. On this basis it makes sense that the timing of the Bulls RMP process aligns with that proposed for the Bulls TCP so that both plans are developed concurrently to ensure issues/opportunities are considered and addressed in a coordinated manner.

Strategic Drivers

Council has considered demographic change predicted for the District and has agreed to align its activities and services to promote the District as a place to retire to (or to stay for retirement) and as a place to raise a family. Council has recognised the role of its community and leisure assets in achieving these goals. The management of community and leisure assets in the District must also contribute to Council's strategic priority to address ageing (and surplus) infrastructure, including rationalising provision in line with the community's ability to afford these facilities.

Council wants to take a district-wide strategic approach to the management of its community and leisure assets over the lifetime of the LTP; building on the historical investment the community has made in these assets, but not being restricted by it in terms of developing assets that are fit-for-future purpose. (There is an historical community expectation these assets will be available in perpetuity – this has impacted upon rationalisation of these assets, but the whole portfolio is increasingly unaffordable.) In future, Council will not undertake major programmes until a review of the potential to partner/collaborate with other stakeholders has been undertaken. It is open to the full range of ownership, maintenance and management models (including contributing towards facilities owned by other organisations that meet community needs) in order to give communities more options.

Process

A subgroup of the Bulls Community Committee, the Bulls Town Centre Plan Steering Group was appointed in December 2013 to guide the Bulls Town Centre Plan process on behalf of the community. The Steering Group's mandate was to have a draft Town Centre Plan for Bulls to present to Council in May 2014 for inclusion and implementation through the 2014/15 Annual Plan and the 2015-25 LTP.

The Steering Group has been supported by an independent urban design consultancy, Creative Communities, since January 2014. Creative Communities takes a place-based approach to urban design using a process of community engagement and "prototyping" to ensure buy-in from all stakeholders.

Objectives

Council wanted to achieve a number of key objectives during the TCP process.
- Identification of issues, opportunities and options, including costs.
- Foster community and stakeholder engagement and consensus building in developing and finalising the Bulls TCP.
- RDC adoption of the Bulls TCP and implementation through the Annual Plan/LTP process as appropriate.
- A community-centric action plan, which can be implemented 'as of right'.
- Identification of the preferred option for the co-location of the Bulls Library and Information Centre.

Project Assumptions

A number of assumptions were made when undertaking this process:
- The community and stakeholders will willingly engage in the project.
- Bulls groups will work positively and productively.
- The staff resourcing levels will be sufficient.
- Missing key milestones will delay the project.
- The project plan may change as new information/ issues are identified.
- Council elected members, management and staff will positively promote and support the project.

Result

A recent report prepared for Council on Smart Decline by Burgoyne (2013), suggested that by taking a future focused planning approach to demographic change through planning for decline, communities "can enhance the long term sustainability of their community and leisure assets and improve the existing situation by focusing on the quality of the (assets) rather than quantity". The Bulls Draft Town Centre Plan brings this strategy one step closer to fruition.

The approach taken in developing this Bulls Draft Town Centre Plan is a milestone for the Council and the community in achieving better management of ageing and surplus community and leisure assets. This draft plan will provide the Bulls community with a quality multipurpose facility that improves the level of service to the community. Opportunities exist within this proposal to partner with other organisations or stakeholders to achieve this goal.

Prototyping – an innovative part of the community engagement process

3. CONTEXT

3.1 PLACE-BASED APPROACH

The Bulls Town Centre Plan uses a "place-based approach" to planning. It focuses on how the town will best work as a "people place" for both locals and visitors. This is especially important for Bulls because the local economy is highly reliant on attracting visitors and getting passing traffic to stop.

Place-based planning is very different to the rational approach to planning. The rational approach became popular in the late 1950s and 1960s and was dominant until recently. Many experts are now arguing that the rational approach to planning tends to deliver spaces that lack "heart and soul".

Here is a comparison of the two approaches.

RATIONAL PLANNING	PLACE-BASED PLANNING
Optimise the parts	Total system
Utilitarian	Quality of experience
Object focus	Nurture focus
Movement focus	Exchange and movement focus
Ordered and static	Dynamic and evolving
Master planned	Agile and incremental

Creating spaces that feel more like a room than a corridor

Chairs placed so people can people-watch

Focused on facilitating exchanges that nurture people

Memorable experiences create an emotional attachment to a place

Furnishings left loose so space can evolve

Focused on how the total system works together to deliver a quality experience

1. Optimise the Parts vs Total System

The rational approach viewed towns and cities as a giant machine that could be improved by optimising its parts. Specialists looked after different parts of the machine: traffic engineers looked after roads; landscape architects looked after parks; economic development officers looked after business. Place-based planning views towns and cities as a complex system that can only be improved by understanding the relationships between the parts. Optimising one part, without considering its impact on the total system, can create a chain reaction that degrades the entire town or city. Conversely, working on a leverage point with multiple impacts can create virtuous cycles.

2. Utilitarian vs Quality of Experience

The rational approach focused on meeting people's needs (such as the need for a toilet, drinking water, seat, road, footpath, shade) in a utilitarian fashion. To improve efficiency, the method of meeting these needs was standardized, resulting in sterile and mechanized environments. The place-based approach focuses on the quality of experience people have in a space. It is focused on facilitating social interaction and stimulating sense experiences that are enriching. Its goal is to build an emotional attachment to that space by creating memories for those who visit or dwell in a space.

3. Object Focus vs Nurture Focus

The rational approach focused almost exclusively on the objects in a space and how those objects were arranged. The result was nicely designed spaces, but they felt more like an over-ordered display house than a homely home. Place-based planning also has a great emphasis on design, but design that creates spaces that nurtures people, and helps them reach their fullest potential. Take public seating as an example. Rational planning is more focused on how they look, and how easy they are to maintain while place-based planning is more concerned about whether they facilitate social interaction or whether they provide for people-watching.

Spontaneous exchanges are the life-blood of public places

4. Movement vs Exchange

Because rational planning views towns and cities as a giant machine, it is movement focused (an idle machine is an unproductive machine). This results is environments that are totally dominated by the movement function. Even footpaths become primarily spaces for pedestrian movement. Place-based planning believes that the core mission of towns and cities is "facilitating diverse exchanges": social exchanges, economic exchanges, information exchanges, exchanges of friendship. Rational planning sees most public spaces as a corridor for movement, while place-based planning sees the same spaces as a series of rooms for exchange (but rooms people can move through) .

5. Ordered and Static vs Dynamic and Evolving

Because rational planning views the city as a large machine, it sees its core mission as creating order and preventing disorder: order makes the machine more efficient, and disorder makes the machine less efficient. Place-based planning believes that towns and cities are a "living organism", dynamic and evolving. In nature, chaos and disorder are essential to the evolutionary process – nothing new can ever emerge in a totally ordered universe. Spontaneous, unplanned exchanges are the life-blood of public places. They feed the creative and economic life of the town or city. Imposing too much order can strangle the life out of public places.

6. Master Planned vs Agile and Incremental

For rational planning, the key to creating and maintaining order has been master planning. However, master planning only manages to create an illusion of control. Because towns and cities are constantly evolving, it is actually impossible to forecast how they will evolve or to control their evolution. Place-based planning attempts to be much more agile by making small "tactical interventions". It is nimble in how it responds to emerging trends, unforeseeable events, and unexpected opportunities. It sees the beginning of every intervention as a "trial", not as a final solution. It focuses on making places rather than making plans.

As with all cities and towns there are a multitude of social and economic forces outside of its control. It is useful to be strategically aware of these issues in order to take opportunities when they arise. The major issue in Bulls and Rangitikei is population loss and the major opportunity is the flow of people and goods which pass through the town daily.

Demographic changes[1]

According to Rangitikei District Council's position paper on Demographics the picture that emerges of our District is of a declining and ageing population. The District is bi-cultural, with higher proportions of those of either European or Maori descent. The multi-culturalism that is defining demographic change in New Zealand nationally, is not yet evident in Rangitikei.

The loss of population from the District appears to be predominantly from amongst the "European or other" ethnic group and from the 15-39 age group. The median age for "European or other" ethnicities is set to rise to 47.2 years in 2021 (compared with 41.6 years nationally) and for the "Maori" ethnic group to 27.3 years in 2021 (compared with 24.8 years nationally). This reflects the aging of the population profile: in 1996, 1 in 8 of the population was aged 65+, by 2031 the proportion is expected to rise to 1 in 3.

The population tends to have low income and high levels of residents with no formal qualifications. This trend is exacerbated amongst the Maori population.

The profile and trend within Rangitikei is very similar to the peer group of local authorities of Central Hawke's Bay, Tararua, Grey and Clutha. Manawatu with a slightly larger population and closer proximity to Palmerston North more closely mirrors the national profile and trends.

In Bulls the latest census info reveals that this trend is continuing and

1   http://www.rangitikei.govt.nz/index.php/statistics

fairly dramatic changes are occurring, Bulls population has decreased by 14% since 2001 to approximately 1500 people, and the number of vacant dwellings has increased from 93 to 159 dwellings which represents 20% of the total housing stock. The diagram below illustrates the trends.
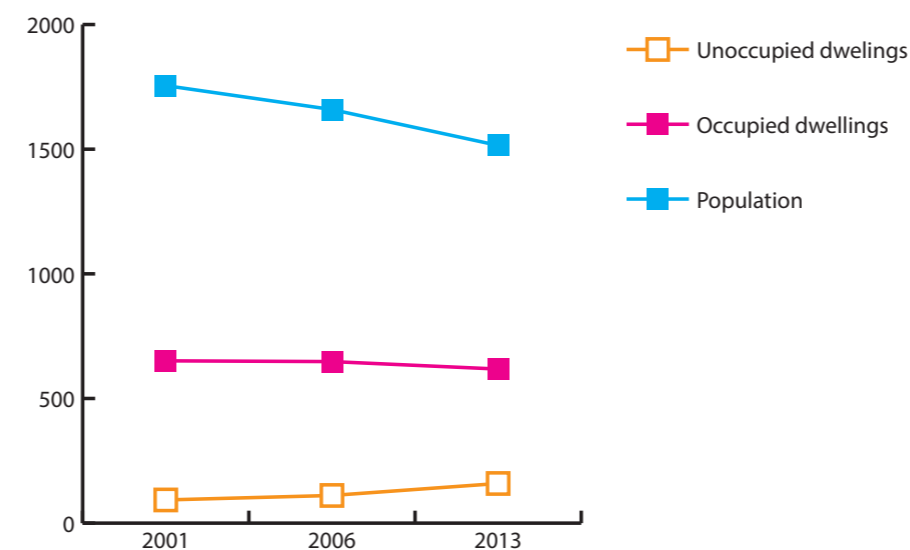

The Town Centre Plan can do little to alter the powerful demographic and economic forces at play, but it can significantly improve the quality of life, civic pride, and the economic potential for those who continue to do business and reside in Bulls by focusing on what is within Bulls and Rangitikei's sphere of influence.

Opportunities

The most obvious opportunity for Bulls' town centre's economic future is to maximise the economic potential of the flow of people and resources that pass through the town in vehicles. NZ Transport Agency figures show that this resource, while lower than in 2005, is fairly consistent. The major question is how to take advantage of the flow, and to determine what type of services are needed to meet the needs of travellers. A similar question arises as to what type of experience they currently have, and what needs to happen to create an experience that supports the services and competes with other

towns on the State Highway network. Currently, 11% of the traffic that passes through Bulls is heavy vehicles. This has impacts on local air quality, noise, and the general ambience of the town, which means that authorities, business and residents need to work harder to adapt to and moderate these effects and increase attractiveness.

The Average Annual Daily Traffic data (2011) for Bulls is visualised below:
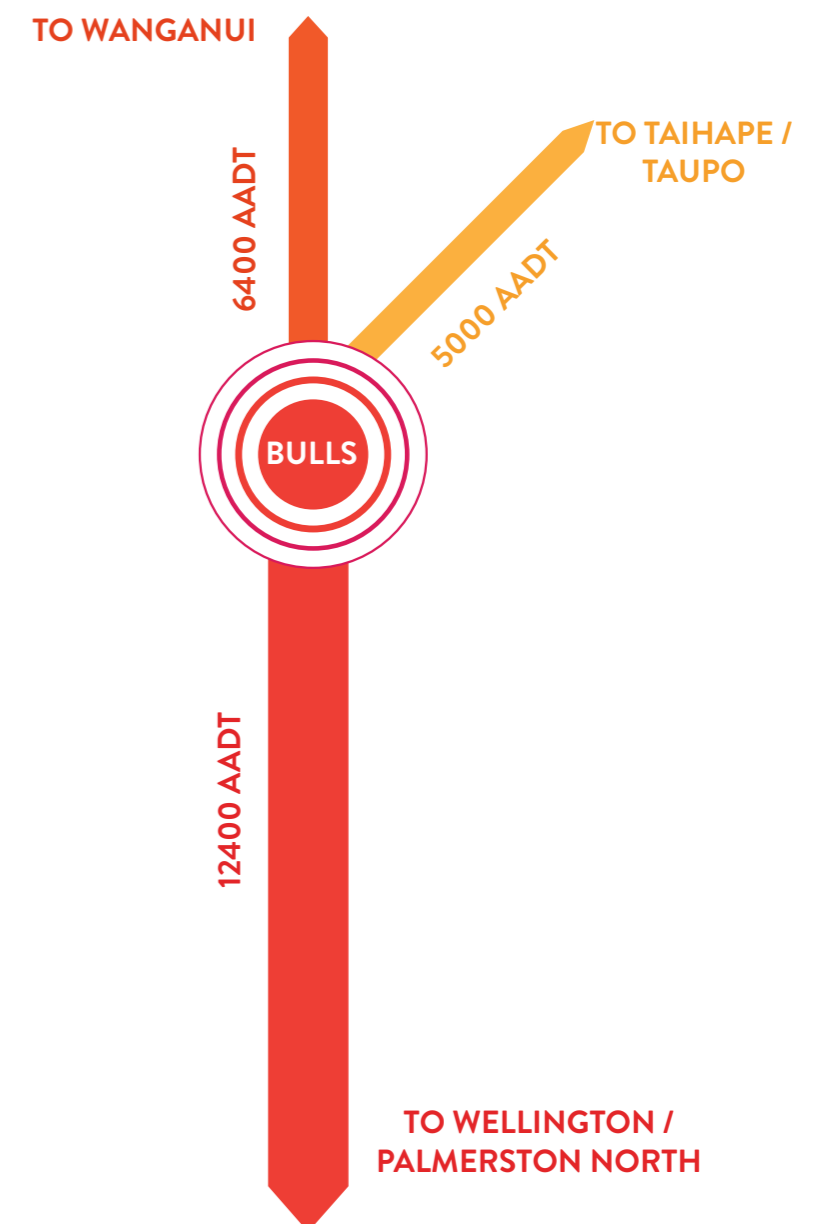
Bulls has some catching up to do if it is to become a traveller destination, especially in light of the offering in other towns on State Highway One. These key observations form a backdrop to the approach of the Town Centre Plan.

The Gateway

Bulls is the gateway to the district. However, the Bulls Information Centre is dwarfed by an industrial-style bus shelter and is not up to standard inside. It does not provide a warm welcome to Bulls and the District.

The entire town centre should be viewed as a canvas to promote the uniqueness of Rangitkei – for example putting pictures of the river and back country on the sides of the planters.

The Destination Shops

Bulls has had substantial investment in destination shops that rely on the visitor for their survival.

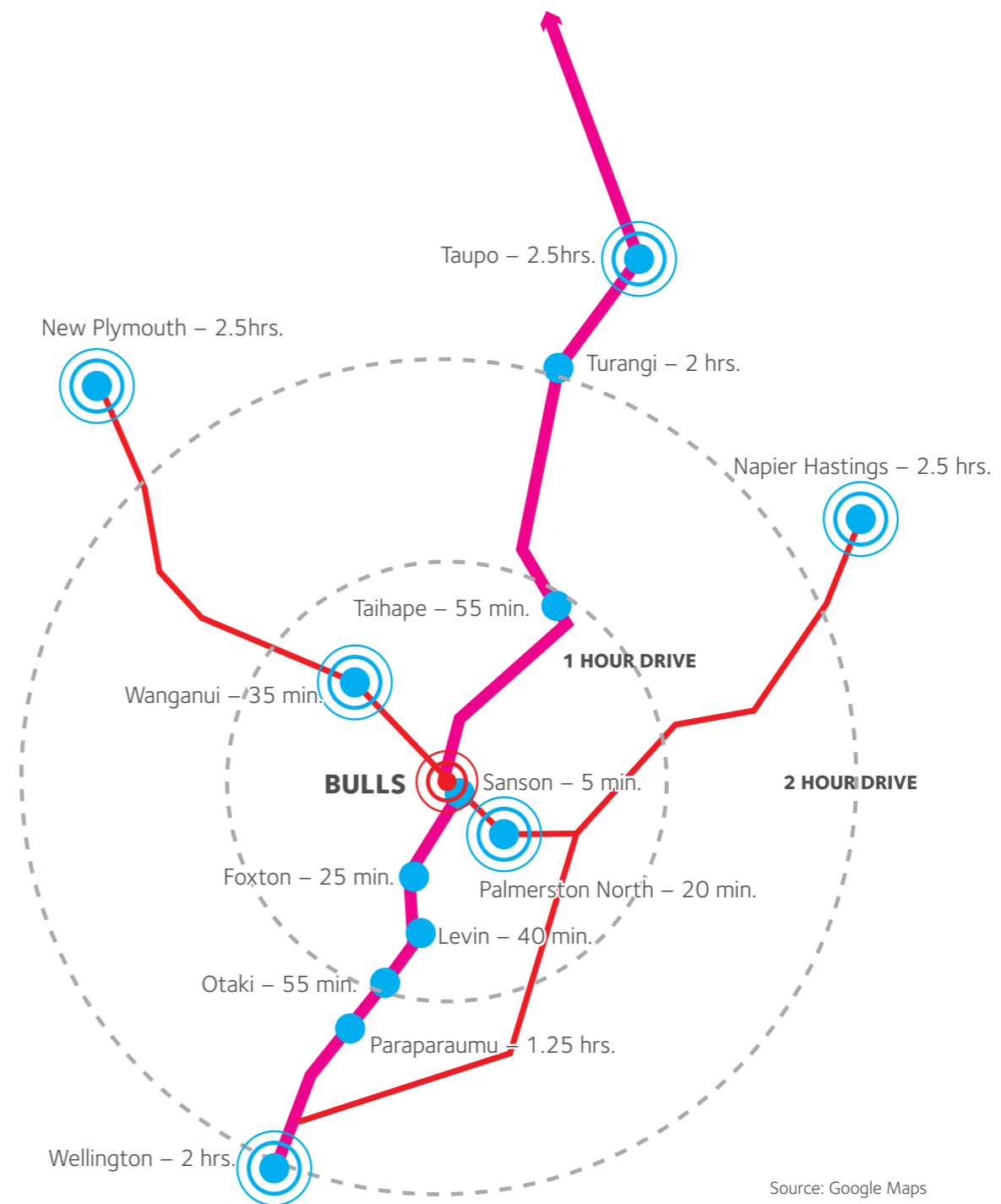However, the quality of the public space does not reflect or support the quality of these businesses.

In addition, these destination shops are currently spread too thin, and need to work together in creating a *total experience* for visitors – or rather a series of experiences as people move from one "quarter" to another.

The Joke

Bulls has tried to make a point-of-difference by creating a series of jokes around its name.

However, the joke could backfire if the substance does not match the joke. You cannot claim to be a "Town Like No Udder" unless you *are* a town like no other.

To create some substance, Bulls needs to focus on creating a series of unique experiences for travellers.

New Plymouth – 2.5hrs.

Taupo – 2.5hrs.

Turangi – 2 hrs.

Napier Hastings – 2.5 hrs.

Taihape – 55 min.

1 HOUR DRIVE

Wanganui – 35 min.

BULLS

Sanson – 5 min.

2 HOUR DRIVE

Foxton – 25 min.

Palmerston North – 20 min.

Levin – 40 min.

Otaki – 55 min.

Paraparaumu – 1.25 hrs.

Wellington – 2 hrs.

Source: Google Maps

The Traffic

Traffic is going too fast for motorists to take in what Bulls has to offer.

Even if the driver sees something of interest, there is no obvious place to park – so they drive on. Speeds need to be slowed and parking options made much more obvious.

In addition, the town has psychologically retreated from the highway. The *entire* street must be embraced as an important part of the town centre.

4. TOWN CENTRE PLAN SUMMARY

CREATE PEOPLE PLACES
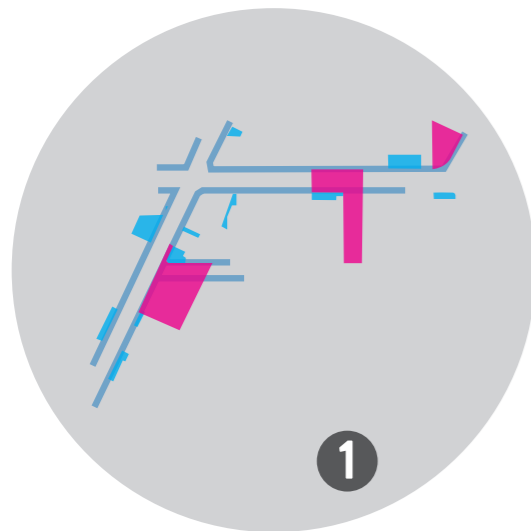
1. Create a multipurpose facility on the Criterion Hotel site that includes auditorium, meeting rooms, library, Information centre, cafe, public toilets and other possible facilities.
2. Integrate a primary outdoor civic space with the new multipurpose facility to create a civic heart for Bulls.
3. Create a network of secondary public spaces including the memorial park and the library site. Demolish existing library, leaving memorial arch, and create a public park.
4. Integrate privately owned open space into the street environment.
5. Promote "emotional attachment" and "civic pride" by having the residents and business community co-create the civic spaces with council.

## ENHANCE TRAVELLERS' EXPERIENCE
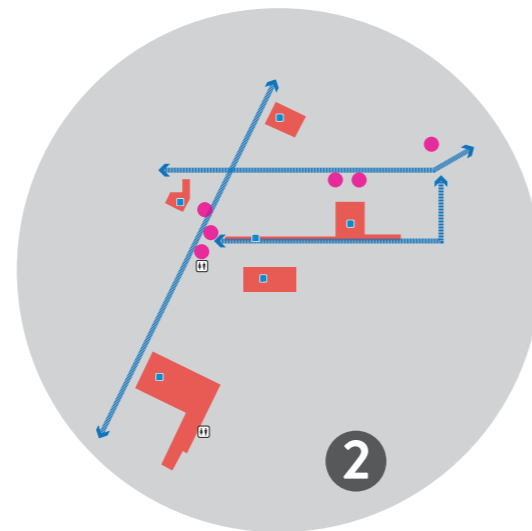
1. Celebrate Bulls as the entrance to the Rangitikei District.
2. Make information centre traveller-centric rather than bus-centric. Improve visitors access to information throughout entire town.
3. Provide 24/7 toilets with a "point of difference".
4. Provide a space where travellers can stretch their legs and children can let off steam at the multipurpose facility. Connect the primary and secondary public places with a playable trail.
5. Activate core retail so it is more enticing. Ensure that the quality of the street environment matches the quality of the destination stores. Ensure prominent building frontages are active and engaging.
6. Create photo opportunities.

## PROVIDE A SAFE AND ENGAGING PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE
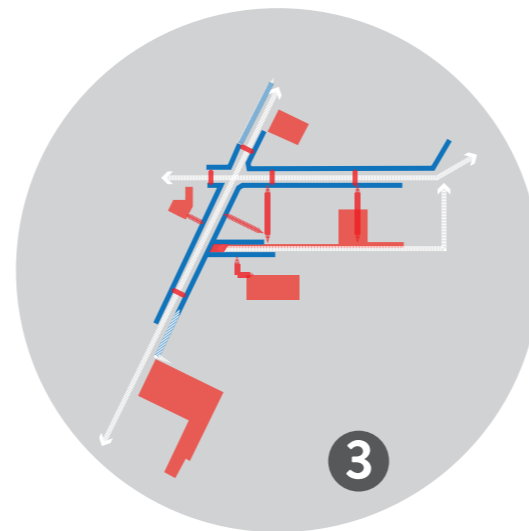
1. Improve the overall quality of the pedestrian experience by creating a coherent walking environment and increasing levels of comfort.
2. Create a flexible, adaptable street environment by using movable landscape elements and movable furniture.
3. Create a series of 'linger nodes' in the primary and secondary social spaces, and on the routes connecting these spaces
4. Connect destinations, including parking, with laneways and safe road crossings.
5. Integrate new supermarket into walkable town experience.
6. Reclaim the state highways and make them facilitate town life through context sensitive street design.

REINFORCE BULLS AS A DESTINATION
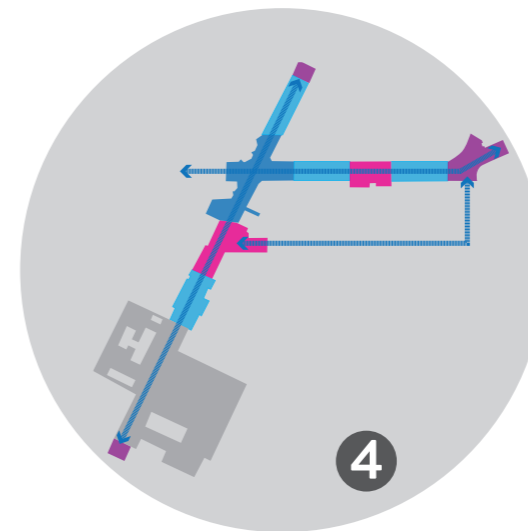
1. Treat the various "quarters" of the town centre like the rooms of a house and provide furnishings that support the functions of that room.
2. Differentiate the "rooms" by using street trees, vegetation, art, sculpture, lighting and other landscape elements to furnish and visually connect each individual space.
3. Encourage traders to engage with the street, thereby making it transparent what is on offer in each quarter.
4. Add branding to a quarter to reinforce its core functions.
5. Encourage the co-location of businesses which offer complementary services.

SLOW TRAFFIC AND CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT
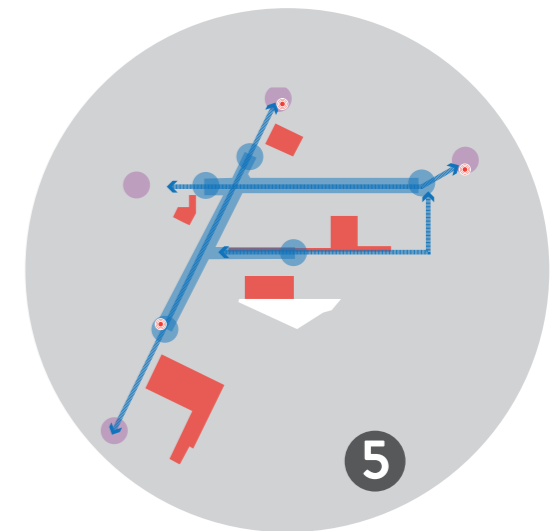
1. Design the heart of the town centre as a 30 km/h slow zone.
2. Create a series of thresholds on the four approaches to the slow zone to help reduce traffic speed before entering the slow zone.
3. Make Criterion Street the preferred place to park by increasing convenient parking and making it visible.
4. Reduce dominance of highway signage in the slow zone and create consolidated town centre signage that shows parking locations.
5. Make primary and secondary public spaces "jump the road" so they incorporate both sides of the street.

THE PLAN

TO WANGANUI

TO TAIHAPE AND TAUPO

Slow 30kph zone through the core area

A pleasant, high quality pedestrian experience

Public and private spaces both contribute to the Bulls experience

Maximising the economic potential of Bulls' location

Accessible and connected places for people to park

A new and engaging civic heart for Bulls

Welcoming and memorable experiences

Connecting the new part of Bulls with the existing main street.

TO WELLINGTON AND PALMERSTON NORTH

TOWN CENTRE ELEMENTS*

- Primary and Secondary public places
- Public and private parking
- Slow traffic zone – 30kph
- Entrance experiences
- State Highway routes
- Street trees and vegetation
- Pedestrian connections

*see individual strategies for detail

5. PLACE MAKING STRATEGIES

5.1 CREATE PEOPLE PLACES

Create one primary "civic heart" space and a number of secondary social places.

Summary of Tactics

1. Create a multipurpose facility on the Criterion Hotel site that includes auditorium, meeting rooms, library, Information centre, cafe, public toilets and other possible facilities.

2. Integrate a primary outdoor civic space with the new multipurpose facility to create a civic heart for Bulls.

3. Create a network of secondary public spaces including the memorial park and the library site. Demolish existing library, leaving memorial arch, and create a public park.

4. Integrate privately owned open space into the street environment.

5. Promote "emotional attachment" and "civic pride" by having the residents and business community co-create the civic spaces with council.

HIGH STREET

BRIDGE STREET

CRITERION STREET

Primary and Secondary public places

Privately owned spaces to integrate with public realm

Preferred site for Multipurpose facility and primary public space
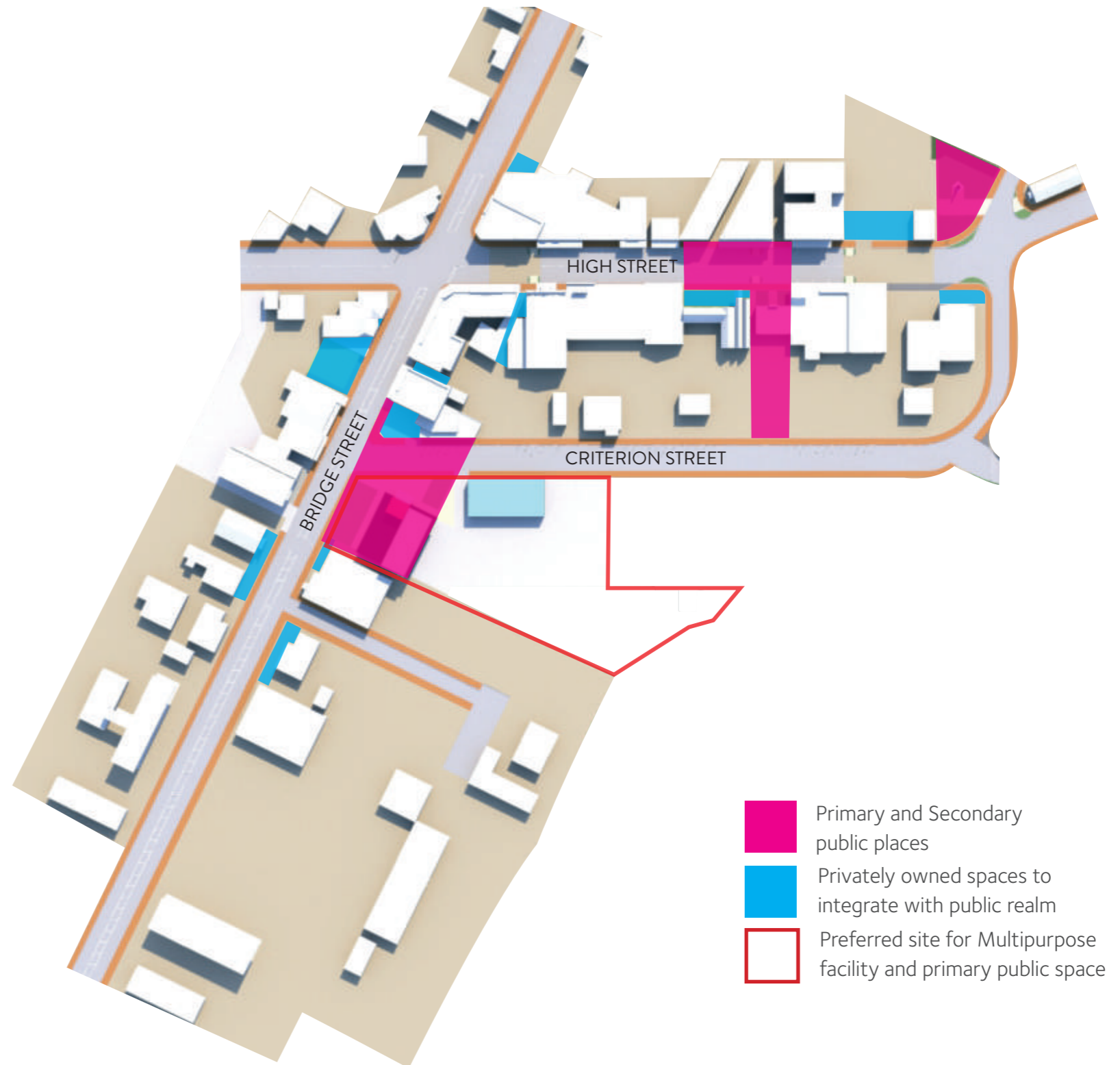
Rationale

Currently Bulls lacks a space that acts as the civic heart of the town – a space that reflects the personality and character of the town. The more soul there is in this place (and the entire town centre), the more attractive Bulls becomes as a place to stop, visit or live.

1. Multipurpose facility

At the moment, community facilities – such as library, information centre, and town hall – are in separate spaces, spread throughout the town centre. Bringing these facilities into one multifunction building will help create a strong, unified civic heart. The greater the number of functions that can be co-located into the same site, the greater the overall efficiencies, and the greater the level of service that can be offered for each function.

Because spaces, such as a performance space, are only used a small percentage of the time, these spaces become available for other uses, such as a reading area for the library. By sharing spaces, the building is far more flexible and every service wins.

In order to reduce the costs to the community, a joint venture with the private sector should be considered. If done as a joint venture, the range of services may be increased even further.

2. Integrate a primary outdoor civic public space

Attaching an outdoor civic public space to the multifunction centre will further strengthen its role as the civic heart of Bulls. This space should serve a range of civic functions – a place for people to mingle, farmers' markets, outdoor ceremonies and concerts. After investigation and community engagement, the Criterion Hotel Site (corner of Criterion Street and Bridge Street) has been identified as the most logical location for this multifunction centre and outdoor civic space. It is the most central and provides the most flexibility. See the 'TCP Implementation' section for Council's next steps.

Multipurpose facility includes a generous outdoor civic space.

Facility to become the civic heart of the town

Facility integrated into fabric of town with safe crossing points.

CRITERION ST

BRIDGE ST

Concept drawings of the new multipurpose facility and adjoining civic public space that was presented to the community and chosen as the preferred option.

3. Network of secondary public places

The primary civic public space should be supplemented with a network of secondary spaces including the current memorial park (corner of High and Daniell Street) and the existing library site. These will provide a balance to the civic space on Bridge and Criterion.

The existing library cannot be sold, and because of its status as an earthquake prone building it needs significant remedial work. Therefore, it should be demolished when the new facility is operational, keeping the existing memorial arch as a central feature of a new park. This will provide a pleasant connection to the increased parking in Criterion Street. (See strategy 5.5 for details.)

4. Integrate privately owned open spaces

Privately owned open space contributes to the overall attractiveness of a town. A number of properties provide opportunities for integration with the overall network of open space. For example, the space in front of the Medical Centre, the space beside Mothered Goose and the building setbacks along Bridge Street. The space outside the medical centre can be integrated into the new memorial arch park (ex library) increasing the perceived size of this park.

This does not mean subsuming these spaces into public ownership, but rather working with the owners to produce a win for them, plus a win for the vibrancy of the public realm. For example, if the space behind Mothered Goose were to become a popular outdoor dinning area visible from Bridge and High Street, it would increase the overall perception of Bulls as a place with a range of great public places.

Privately owned spaces can be integrated into the network of civic spaces

The space behind Mothered Goose

5. Community to co-create places with council

Building civic pride in a space is not just about providing the space and filling it landscape items. The more involved the community is in creating these civic spaces the greater the sense of "emotional attachment" and civic pride.

It is therefore imperative that Council provide mechanisms for the community to build aspects of these civic spaces themselves. A great example of this is Paihia, in the Bay of Islands, where the community has built a series of highly successful public places, some of which have become major tourist attractions. Key to the success in Paihia has been a gradual increase in the capacity of the community to deliver complex projects, plus a growing bank of trust between Far North District Council and the community.

Building civic spaces together builds high levels of civic pride

Paihia, NZ

5.2 ENHANCE TRAVELLERS' EXPERIENCE

Invite travellers to stop by creating a series of rich, multi-layered experiences.

Summary of Tactics

1. Celebrate Bulls as the entrance to the Rangitikei District.

2. Make information centre traveller-centric rather than bus-centric. Improve visitors access to information throughout entire town.

3. Provide 24/7 toilets with a "point of difference".

4. Provide a space where travellers can stretch their legs and children can let off steam at the multipurpose facility. Connect the primary and secondary public places with a playable trail.

5. Activate core retail so it is more enticing. Ensure that the quality of the street environment matches the quality of the destination stores. Ensure prominent building frontages are active and engaging.

6. Create photo opportunities throughout town.

HIGH STREET

CRITERION STREET

BRIDGE STREET

24 / 7 accessible public toilets

Visitor information trail

Potential photo opportunity locations

Parking - on-street and off-street

Prominent buildings frontages to activate with retail or creative uses

Preferred site for Multipurpose facility and primary public space

Rationale

Travellers are the backbone of the Bulls' economy. The number of travellers stopping in Bulls, and the amount of money they leave in the local economy, will be directly proportionate to the quality of the experiences on offer. Anchors give the traveller a reason to stop.

1. Celebrate Bulls as entrance to district

Rangitikei.com describes Bulls as follows:

Rangitikei, it roars, it whispers, it beckons - this river that defines North Island back country. Feel its power, experience the enchantment...

Nestled in the south of the Rangitikei, Bulls is the gateway to the District.

Bulls lacks a sense of entry to the town. It certainly does not feel like the entry to an "enchanting district".

By celebrating itself as an entry to the district, Bulls would become a more enticing place to stop. It would borrow a little magic from all corners of the district, and offer this as a taster.

This sense of entry to the district needs to permeate all aspects of the town, from the actual entry to the town, to the iconic multipurpose facility, to the art on walls and rubbish bins.

2. Traveller-centric information

The Information centre, which is currently very bus-centric, needs to become much more traveller-centric, with a good supply of easy parking adjoining. However, Council should do all within it powers to keep buses stoping in Bulls by creating bus interchange facilities at the multifuction facility. The information centre should feature both local attractions and regional attractions in a way that is easy to differentiate. For example, it may feature the ten top things to do in Bulls and the top ten things to do in the region.

Bulls should be celebrated as the gateway to the District

Photo: Talorc at en.wikipedia

Visitor information needs to be extended throughout the town. For example, depictions of regional attractions may be featured as art on street furniture or the sides of buildings.

Visitors to Bulls are going to have a core question, "What does this town have to offer?" A simple map at the Information centre, with what each precinct offers, would promote the unique offerings of each area.

3. Provide 24/7 toilets with a point of difference

Toilets with a point of difference give travellers an added reason to stop in a particular town.

The toilets being leased by Council at the BP station need a low-cost intervention to make them special for the remainder of the current lease. The lease should not be extended.

The toilets in the multipurpose facility need to be available 24/7 and have their own point of difference. These will become the central public toilets for the town centre long-term.

4. Space to stretch legs and let off steam

Travellers need a space to stretch their legs and for children to get out of the car and let off steam. Bulls currently lacks a centrally located space to provide this function. In future, the main space for this in Bulls will be the primary civic space which adjoins the multipurpose facility.

It will be important to have some part of this area as a "safe zone" for younger children, a space where parents can relax or socialise while their children play.

"Playable trails" should connect this primary space to all other public spaces in the town centre. In fact the whole town centre should be treated as a playable space.

Activities help travellers to relax and let off steam

Fremantle, Western Australia

5. Activate core retail and match street to stores

Bulls already has a number of destination stores, that is shops that cater primarily for travellers or destination shoppers. However, these are spread a little thin at the moment so Council should do all in its powers to encourage other destination stores to fill in the gaps.

At the moment the street environment does not reflect the quality of these destination shops. The tone of the street environment can be lifted by:

• Encouraging stores to activate the footpath with imaginative display of goods and by creating their own linger nodes.

• Matching street furnishings to the surrounding businesses. For example, furnishings in the area dominated by antique shops may be more sophisticated than those in the area dominated by cafés.

• Encouraging building owners with blank or unfriendly building frontages to activate their street frontages.

6. Create photo opportunities and landmarks

Photo opportunities need to be accessible and visible to get travellers to stop, get out of their car and engage with the town. They also promote the town when the traveller shares their picture with their friends or on social media. Photo opportunities become the living icons of the town.

People also love to have their photo taken sitting in funky or unusual street furniture. Ensure that the town name is incorporated into the design of the most prominent photo opportunities.

The multipurpose facility needs to be designed as a landmark, and iconic building. Signage for the Information centre and multipurpose facility provides an opportunity for a creative approach, that not only marks the space as a tourist destination, but is a photo opportunity (e.g. a major sculpture).

Photo opportunities promote the town when people share them

Paihia, NZ

5.3 PROVIDE A SAFE AND ENGAGING PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Encourage more people to spend more time in the town centre by making the streets more engaging, humanised and safe.

Summary of Tactics

1. Improve the overall quality of the pedestrian experience by creating a coherent walking environment and increasing levels of comfort.

2. Create a flexible, adaptable street environment by using movable landscape elements and movable furniture.

3. Create a series of 'linger nodes' in the primary and secondary social spaces, and on the routes connecting these spaces

4. Connect destinations, including parking, with laneways and safe road crossings.

5. Integrate new supermarket into walkable town experience.

6. Reclaim the state highways and make them facilitate town life through context sensitive street design.

HIGH STREET

CRITERION STREET

BRIDGE STREET

Primary focus of high quality pedestrian experience

Future extension of high quality pedestrian experience

General locations of safe crossing points

Raised shared space crossing area

Through block connections

Parking - on-street and off-street

Preferred site for Multipurpose facility and primary public space

Rationale

Travellers who stay in their car do not contribute to the Bulls economy. The further visitors (and locals) walk, the more they are likely to contribute to the economy and to the feeling of vitality in the town centre. People attract more people, a positive reinforcing cycle, so strong invitations to walk are needed.

1. Improve the overall quality of the experience

If someone has a negative experience (such as passing an empty shop, or finding it hard to cross the road) then it takes several positive experiences to restore their mood to what it was before the negative experience. Bulls currently has a fair footpath quality and adequate space but lacks greenery and places to stop.

The following will reduce negative experiences and contribute to the overall quality of the experience:

- Coherent and consistent footpath quality
- Increased comfort such as shade, shelter and windbreaks around dining areas
- Greenery – street trees, vegetation
- Linger nodes (see Tactic 3 below).

2. Flexible, ever-changing streetscape

Humans get bored very easily, which is why we do not bolt our lounge room furniture to the floor. When we get bored, we add a new element or rearrange the room. As much as is humanly possible, the streetscape elements should be movable. In Fremantle, Western Australia, they use giant pots that can be moved with a pallet jack. In Auckland, lawn chairs are tethered to the pavement with a cable but can be arranged as people see fit.

Loose furnishing gives people permission to "make themselves at home" which results in a much stronger sense of emotional attachment to the place.

Green the streetscape to reduce impacts of traffic

Movable pots provide pedestrian refuge

Use movable furnishings to create an ever-changing streetscape

Fremantle, Western Australia

STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENT TRIAL

3. Create Linger nodes

Linger nodes are small spaces along the footpath that encourage people to engage with each other and with their environment. They can be furnishings or installations that encourage people of all ages to play, socialise, people-watch, reflect, or just relax and enjoy the ambience. They encourage people to say longer in the town centre. If people stay twice as long, then the town centre is twice as full of people, making it twice as attractive as a place to stop.

The primary and secondary outdoor civic spaces need a variety of these linger nodes. Equally important will be the creation of linger nodes on the routes connecting these spaces. Council should encourage businesses and residents to create some of these linger nodes to help build civic ownership.

4. Connect destinations and create safe crossings

In a house there must be safe and logical connections between the rooms. In Bulls, the state highways tend to fracture this flow between spaces. There must be safe crossings across the highway, and these must be on logical desire lines, rather than in places that suits the vehicle traffic. Within the town centre, the through-traffic function must be balanced with the needs of the pedestrian.

"Safe crossing points" does not automatically mean zebra crossings or traffic lights. These traffic-oriented artefacts can actually reinforce the perception that a space is owned by the traffic and further reinforce the dominance of the highway over town life. The preferred approach is to reduce traffic artefacts to a minimum, and through design, create places where the environment tells the motorist, "This is a spot where I can reasonably assume a human is going to cross at any moment". Bulb outs and mid-block crossing refuges with interesting landscape elements, and paved, raised tables are preferable to traditional crossings. In balanced street environments, pedestrians and drivers share a responsibility to connect with each other to negotiate right-of-way.

Linger nodes encourage people to spend longer in the town

Wodonga, Australia

5. Integrate new supermarket into town

The new supermarket in the Wallace development is heavily car-oriented and will feel disconnected from the walking environment of Bridge Street. This is due to the change in quality of the footpath and that the supermarket has a long blank wall facing onto Bridge Street. It will be important to visually connect the footpath in front of the supermarket to the rest of the town and to mitigate the negative effects of the blank wall. Discussion should be had with the owners to see how the wall can be activated – for example, installation of a horizontal climbing wall along the bottom half.

6. Reclaim the state highway

Towns like Bulls, that are on a state highway, often find themselves locked in a vicious cycle. The traffic is intimidating. The street feels dirty and dangerous. So the residents and retailers withdraw psychologically. People spend less time socialising in the street, and the retailers stop putting their goods outside. Ironically, this encourages the traffic to go faster as there are not as many people to look out for and there is nothing interesting to look at. So the residents and retailers retreat even further, which encourages the traffic to go even faster. Soon a town story grows up that the traffic is like a cancer eating away at their heart. In their minds, the highway divides the town.

This psychological retreat has to be addressed in Bulls, firstly by what happens on the footpaths. Retailers need to be encouraged to engage with the footpath and view it as a key part of their retail space. Linger nodes need to be brought right to the edge of the curb and even into the street. The street environment needs to be humanised with street trees, landscaping and even lights and flags across the street. Social spaces need to feel like they jump the road.

A quality pedestrian environment will help reclaim the highway

Boulder, Colorado – Photo Dan Burden

5.4 REINFORCE BULLS AS A DESTINATION

Create distinctive and memorable experiences in each precinct and make it easy to read what is on offer in each part of town.

Summary of Tactics

1. Treat the various "quarters" of the town centre like the rooms of a house and provide furnishings that support the functions of that room.

2. Differentiate the "rooms" by using street trees, vegetation, art, sculpture, lighting and other landscape elements to furnish and visually connect each individual space.

3. Encourage traders to engage with the street, thereby making it transparent what is on offer in each quarter.

4. Add branding to a quarter to reinforce its core functions.

5. Encourage the co-location of businesses which offer complementary services.

HIGH STREET

CRITERION STREET

BRIDGE STREET

Experience 1 – Cross-roads

Experience 2 – Public space

Experience 3 – Street sections

Experience 4 – Vehicle oriented area

Experience 5 – State highway entrances

Preferred site for Multipurpose facility and primary public space

Rationale

A strong identity for a "quarter" in a town centre makes a town more legible, which makes it easier for visitors to find products and services. People should be able to read the dominant functions of each area, and feel immersed in a particular kind of experience.

1. Furnish according to function of the quarters

When you walk through a house, it is easy to see what the core functions of each room are by the furnishings in that space – the lounge room has different furniture than the kitchen. The furniture is appropriate to that room. So a food quarters in Bulls would have a variety of places to sit and eat, while an antiques quarters may feel more like a lounge room with comfortable seating and maybe some board games.

As noted earlier, it is important to make these furnishings as mobile as possible. The functions of quarters can evolve rather quickly and the borders are constantly moving. If the furnishings have been cemented in place, then a place can become disconnected from its uses.

2. Differentiate the rooms

Clever use of streetscape items can help differentiate the "rooms" of the town centre. A different design aesthetic can be used in each of the quarters – which may be as simple as having a different colour palette for each quarter. Even just having distinctive coloured pots for each area begins to differentiate the spaces.

Furnishing can be used to help reinforce the function of a quarter

Adaptations, like blankets, can extend the season for outdoor dining

Graz, Austria

3. Encourage businesses to engage with street

Perhaps the greatest contributor to showing what each quarters has to offer is for retailers to maximise their engagement with the street. This should happen at three levels:

1. Long-view. Ensure the presentation of the entire shop front conveys what it is they sell when viewed from down the street or across the road. For example, market umbrellas (even if they are closed) outside a premises may be an early indicator that this is a cafe offering food and outdoor dining.

2. Passing view. When driving past, does the merchandise on the footpath, or hanging on the wall give the next level of detail of what the retailer sells? Services can also contribute to the street scene as well. For example, if an accountant places a giant abacus on the footpath outside his business, this is more effective in conveying the nature of his service than a sandwich board.

3. Intimate view. When walking past, does the window display and what is placed on the footpath engage the person passing? In addition, interactive experiences such as food tastings can provide a memorable experience.

4. Brand quarters to reinforce key functions

Many cities and towns have made the mistake of branding areas before there is any substance to what is being branded. Visitors may be attracted to visit an area once because of its branding, but they will not return or recommend it to their friends if there is no substance.

There is enough substance in the food area and antiques area of Bulls to begin branding. This needs to be clear and simple for drivers, for example, a common approach is banners on street lights.

Goods on display helps define what a quarters has to offer
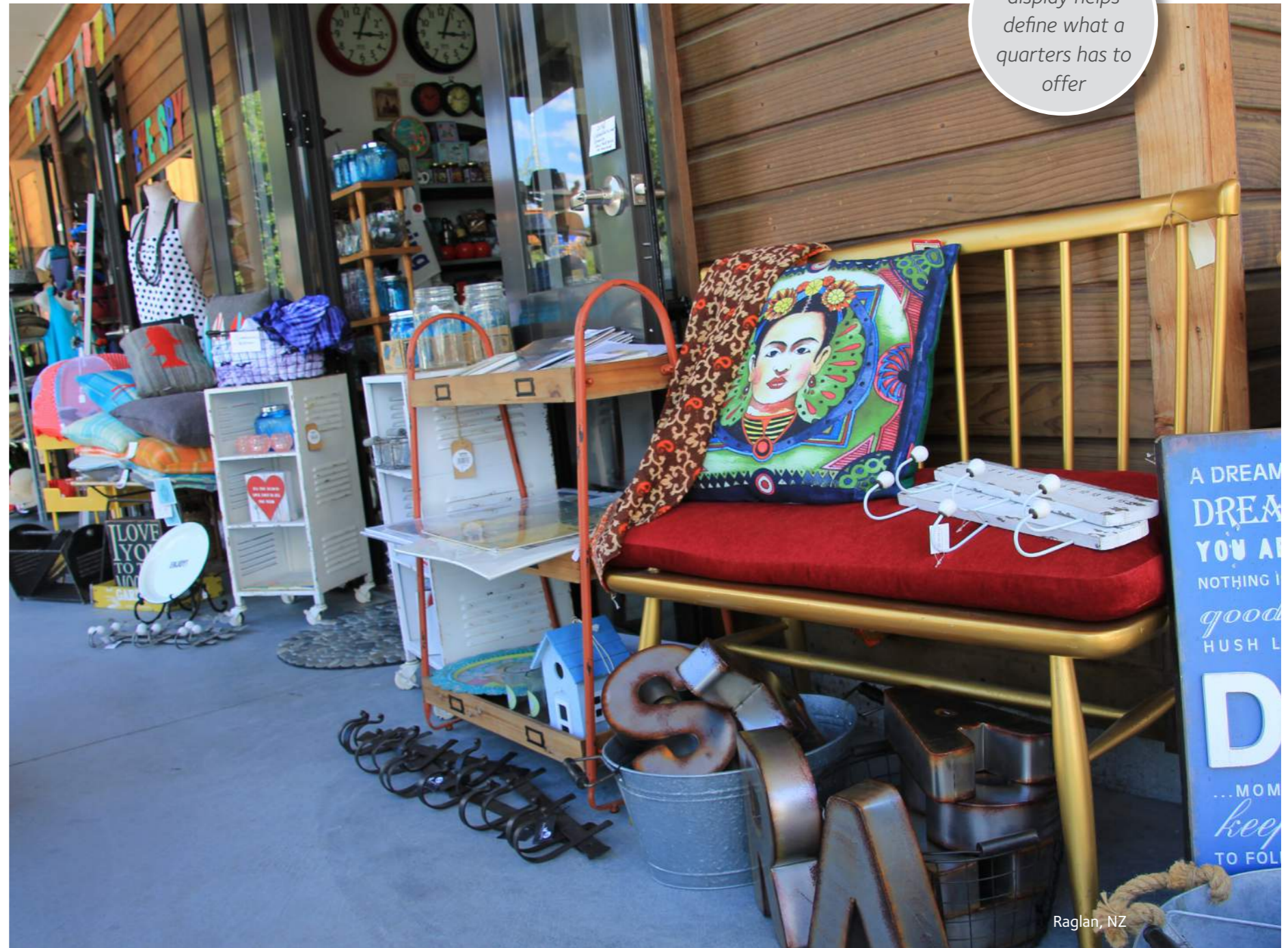
Raglan, NZ

5. Encourage co-location of businesses

Co-location of similar businesses helps reinforce the core business of a precinct and makes an area more attractive for destination shoppers. In a small town with a flow of passing traffic, a critical mass of well-operated stores can result in major changes in patterns of use. A regional example is Shannon.

All of the above tactics will contribute to attracting the right businesses to each precinct. Council can make a further contribution by:

- Training of retailers and Information centre staff to spot opportunities when potential retailers stop in town. The Information centre may even carry a brochure for potential businesses or offer a guided tour.

- When Council sells or leases assets, it can state upfront that it will give preference to those who reinforce or complement the core functions of that part of the town centre.

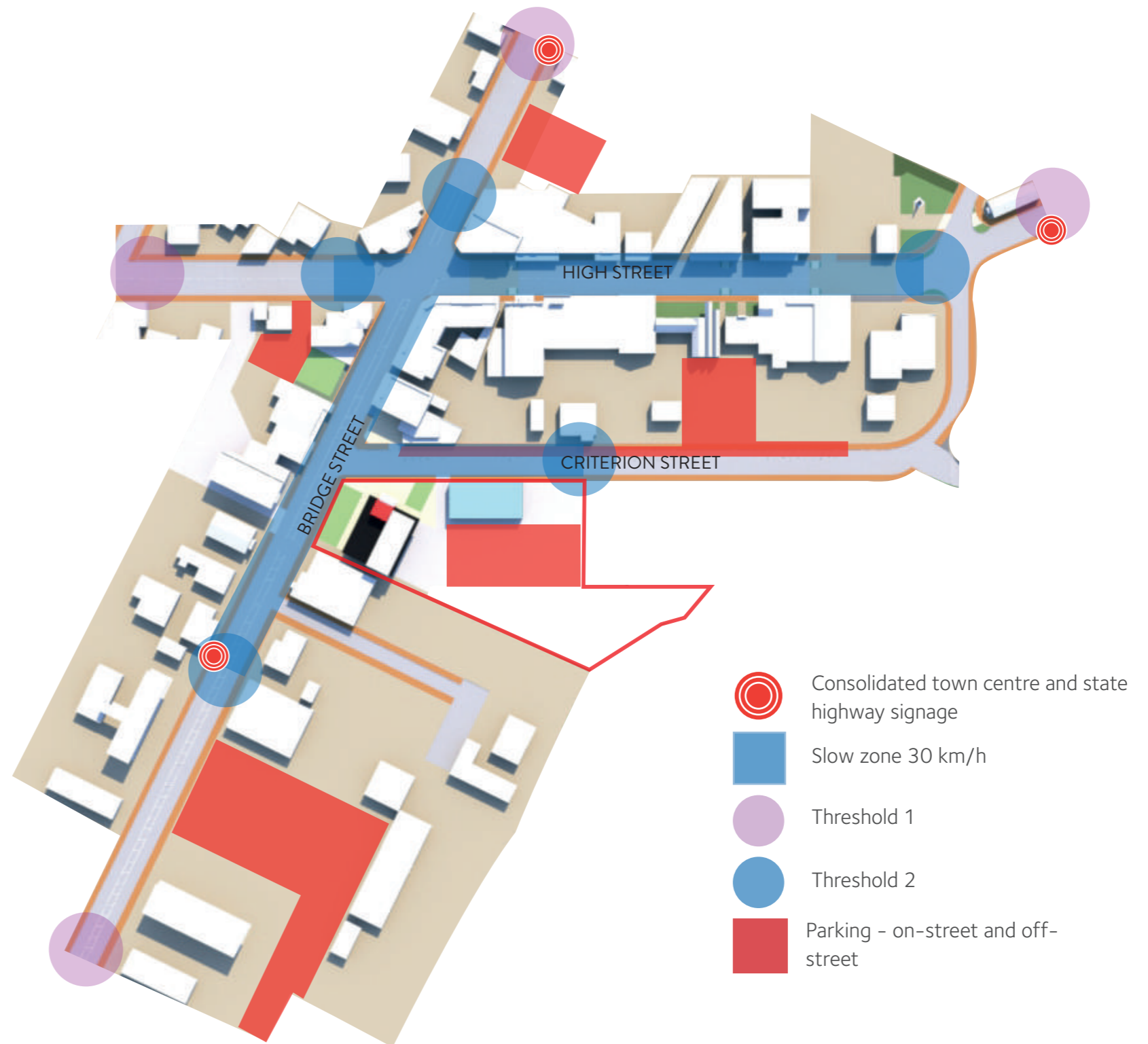*Destination shoppers are more attracted to a cluster of similar businesses*

Bulls, NZ

5.5 SLOW TRAFFIC AND CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Create an environment where those driving through Bulls act as a guest in someone else's house.

Summary of Tactics

1. Design the heart of the town centre as a 30 km/h slow zone.

2. Create a series of thresholds on the four approaches to the slow zone to help reduce traffic speed before entering the slow zone.

3. Make Criterion Street the preferred place to park by increasing convenient parking and making it visible.

4. Reduce dominance of highway signage in the slow zone and create consolidated town centre signage that shows parking locations.

5. Make primary and secondary public spaces "jump the road" so they incorporate both sides of the street.

HIGH STREET

BRIDGE STREET

CRITERION STREET

◉ Consolidated town centre and state highway signage

■ Slow zone 30 km/h

● Threshold 1

● Threshold 2

■ Parking - on-street and off-street

Rationale

While Bulls is reliant on passing traffic, that traffic can seriously erode the ambience of the town, reducing the attractiveness of Bulls as a place to stop. Slowing traffic will help to increase the overall vitality of the town.

1. Slow zone in heart of town centre

Calming the traffic through Bulls is first and foremost a psychological challenge. If the highway through town *feels* like a highway, then motorists will *feel* like they own the space and have right-of-way over people visiting the space. Motorists will only act like a guest and be civil if they *feel* like they are intruding into someone's home territory.

Previous tactics have been aimed at changing the psychological feel of the town centre. This can be reinforced by designating the core area of the town centre as a slow zone. While simply erecting 30 km/h signs will do little to bring traffic speed down, designating this space as a slow zone will allow for engineering standards that are more consistent with this space as a civic space.

2. Series of thresholds to reduce traffic speed

Thresholds signal to drivers that their relationship to their environment is about to change. In the traditional walled city, a person was transformed from *traveller* to *guest of the city* as they walked through the city gate. There are two thresholds in the lead-up to the slow zone in Bulls. These might be likened to the front gate of a house and the front door. The front gate signals that you are transitioning from a public space to a more private space. The front door is where you make a further transition into the heart of someone else's place.

Use street trees, landscaping and thresholds to create a slow zone

Lake Oswego, Oregon – Photo Dan Burden

3. Increase convenient parking in Criterion Street

At the moment the traffic function dominates High Street and Bridge Street because they are both a traffic corridor, and the primary parking places. By maximising use of parking in Criterion Street and highlighting access and availability of off-street parking, pressure can be taken off High and Bridge Streets as places to park. This will free up some space to humanise and connect these streets.

4. Reduce highway signage in the slow zone

The large, overhead highway sign outside the medical centre reinforces the perception that the streets through town are primarily a highway, owned by the motorists.

The amount of highway signage in the core area can be reduced by consolidating all highway related signage into the outer threshold area. These signs should include directions for parking, Information centre, toilets, as well as destinations beyond Bulls.

5. Make civic spaces "jump the road"

Making a space "jump the road" means putting some of the same design elements on both sides of the road, and then connecting both sides with a distinctive surface treatment. This increases the perceived size of the civic spaces in town. It also plays a role in calming the traffic.

Putting the same design elements on both sides of the road helps calm traffic

Paihia, NZ

7. IMPLEMENTATION—MAKING IT HAPPEN

Summary

The Town Centre Plan will require a coordinated approach to translate the strategies and tactics into results on the ground. The four work streams are:

1. Collaboration and negotiation with stakeholders.

2. Design briefing, designing, and cost estimation.

3. Funding and prioritising through the Long Term Plan and aligning Asset Management.

4. Community Action Plan

1. Collaboration and Negotiation

The major stakeholders in Bulls are:

- Tangata whenua
- Business community, property owners and potential investors
- NZ Transport Agency,
- Established community groups.

The Council will need to work with these stakeholders to establish priorities and appropriate local solutions. The Town Centre Plan is the vehicle for these stakeholders to have a better dialogue about the future of the Bulls' town centre. It provides a base to discuss and resolve competing interests before bringing projects to the wider community. Inevitably, new ideas and proposals for Bulls will arise. The Town Centre Plan is a lens through which to contextualize and discuss proposals that have not been anticipated.

The multipurpose facility and outdoor civic space is a special case amongst the strategies and tactics in The Town Centre Plan. As a major investment and priority to catalyse change in the Town Centre, innovative funding arrangements will be considered (e.g. a joint venture). Negotiations, detailed investigation and due diligence, and agreements with landowners will be required to achieve an successful long-term outcome for Council, and any potential investors. The key driver for the project, from Councils perspective, is to achieve asset management efficiencies while improving the level of service, which must not be lost in negotiation with investors or developers.

2. Design Briefing, Design and Cost Estimation

The Town Centre Plan sets out strategies and tactics for Bulls transformation to meet the Vision in the Long Term Plan. This will require investment. To be able to create realistic budgets and give the community certainty, the next level of detail needs to be created, which is a specific task outside the scope of the Town Centre Plan.

The descriptions of tactics outlined in this document provide a base for creating design briefs for individual projects. Designs will determine how the town centre will look, and the experience that visitors have in the town. Prototype actions should be considered as part of the design briefing and/or design phase to test out ideas in an affordable way and to support negotiation and collaboration through shared real-world experience.

LTP VISION

STRATEGY & TACTICS

DESIGN BRIEFS

FUNDING   STAKEHOLDER NEGOTIATIONS

DESIGN & COST

DELIVER
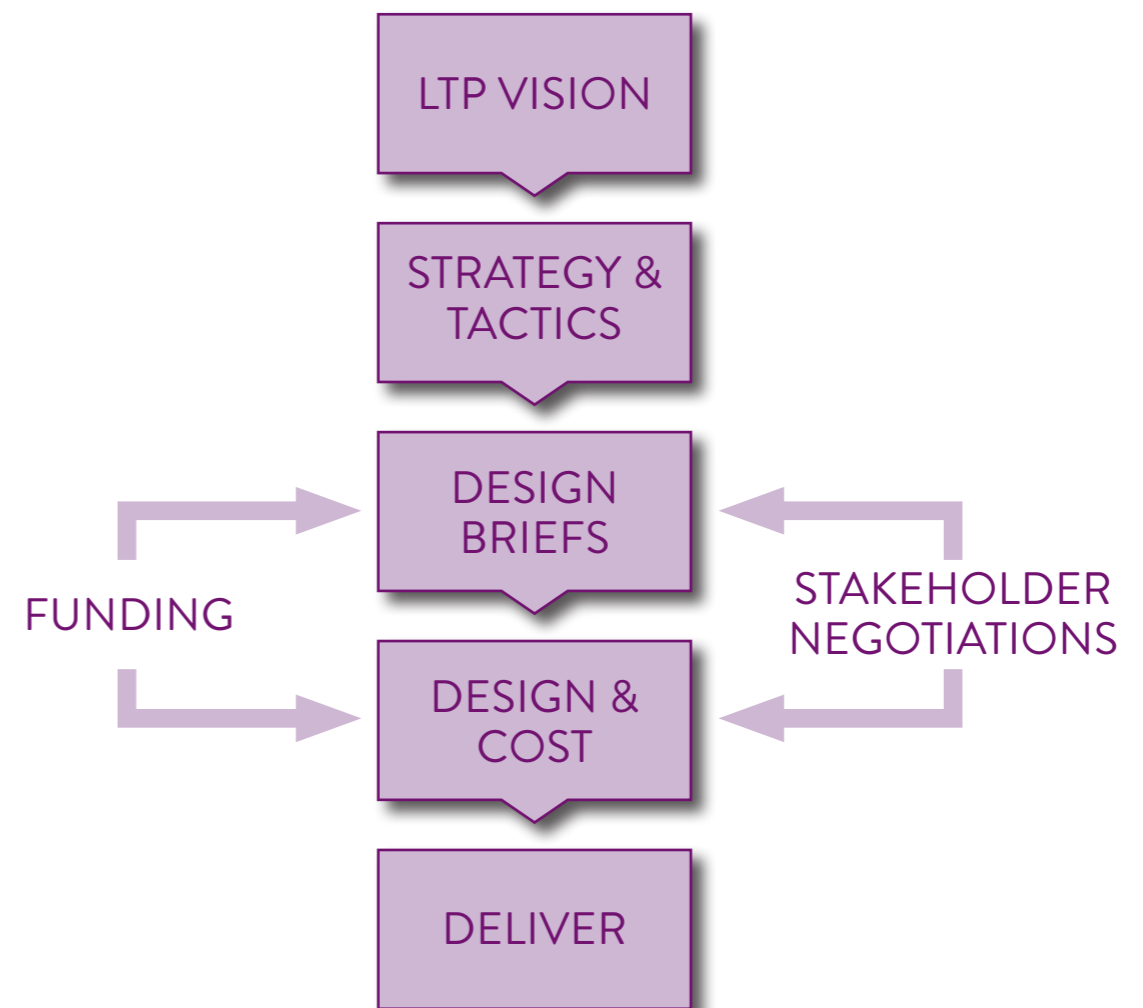
Cost estimates can then be prepared to feed into Council's and NZTA's asset management and funding processes.

Three sets of design briefs need to be created:

1. The Civic Heart

    a. Multipurpose facility

    b. Civic space

2. Town Centre projects

    a. Safe street crossings

    b. Thresholds

    c. Streetscape

    d. Parking and signage

3. High St public space (existing Library site)

3. Funding and prioritising through the Long Term Plan, and aligning Asset Management.

In today's constrained budget environment any investment needs to compete with other priorities in the Rangitikei District. The vehicle for funding projects is the Long Term Plan process. The schedule of projects in the table opposite provide a preliminary list and location of projects. The prioritization of projects will be informed by public feedback and by asset management priorities.

Through consultation to develop the Town Centre Plan two high priority projects emerged:

• a safe crossing point across State Highway 1 on Bridge Street.

• the multipurpose facility and public space.

Action	Location
Multipurpose facility & civic space	Corner Bridge and Criterion Street
Creative landmark icon / sculpture	At Information centre, for integration with multipurpose facility
Streetscape – colour, materials, street elements, street trees, and furnishing – experience differentiation	• Central intersection – dark blue (p24) • Street sections – light blue (p24) • Public space integration – extend public space design elements across street – pink (p24) • Thresholds – type 1 – entrance to town centre (p28) • Threshold – type 2 – entrance to 30kph area (p28)
Safe Crossings	• Cnr of Bridge & Criterion St – raised table • Bridge St (between Dalziel and Criterion St) • Bridge St –North of High St • High St West of Bridge St • High St – east of Bridge St • High St – near medical centre / future public space.
Consolidated signage	At the three threshold sites (p28)
30 kph zone treatments	Core of town centre (p28)
Library site – public space & retention of memorial arch	High Street
Criterion St parking and landscape	Criterion Street
High quality pedestrian experience – extensions	• To new supermarket incl. Dalziel St corner treatments for safety related to truck movements • Along Bridge St North of High Street to parking and commercial sites

4. Community Action Plan

A number of actions in the Town Centre Plan can be implemented by the community. Some of these will be 'as of right' while others may require collaboration with Council and/or businesses. Actions need to be low-cost and easy to implement with a focus on doing rather than talking about doing. The following list is a starting point and not exhaustive.

- Create linger nodes.
- Activate primary and secondary public spaces.
- Activate privately owned spaces in cooperation with the property owner.
- Low cost intervention at the leased public toilets.
- Create photo opportunities.
- Showcase of Rangitikei District attractions throughout the town centre.
- Create a welcoming vibe.

8. APPENDIX

8.1 HISTORY OF TOWN CENTRE PLAN

Creative Communities International (CCI) was engaged by Rangitikei District Council to produce a Town Centre Plan for Bulls.

The purpose of the Town Centre Plan is to guide decisions the Council has to make about co-location of the Library, Tourist Information Centre, and Bus Terminal.
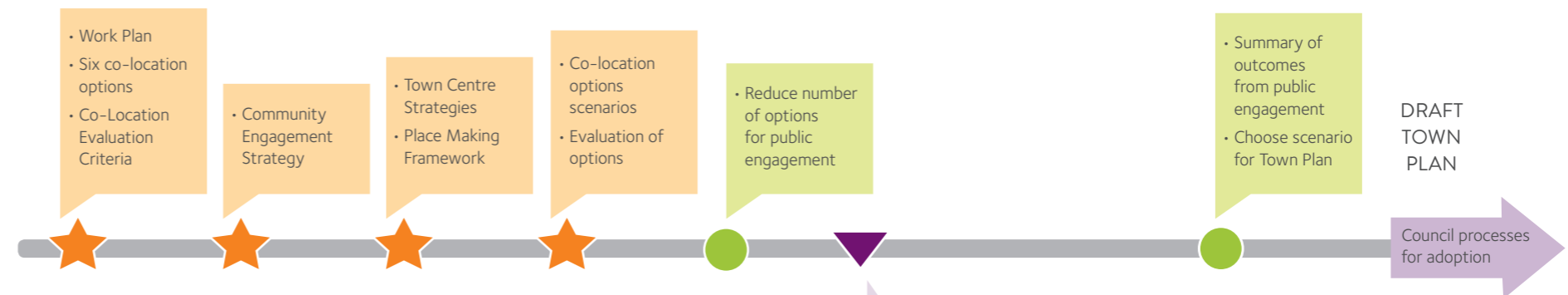
The first step in developing the Town Centre Plan was to establish a Place Making Framework, which focused on how the town would best work as a "people place" for both locals and visitors.

Once the Place Making Framework was established, CCI tested which of six co-location options would enhance the framework the best. This was then reduced to three by the Steering Group.

These three options were then further developed and presented to the public for comment in a Festival of Possibilities. Elements of the TCP were also prototyped.

Time-line

- Work Plan
- Six co-location options
- Co-Location Evaluation Criteria

- Community Engagement Strategy

- Town Centre Strategies
- Place Making Framework

- Co-location options scenarios
- Evaluation of options

- Reduce number of options for public engagement

- Summary of outcomes from public engagement
- Choose scenario for Town Plan

DRAFT TOWN PLAN

Council processes for adoption

★ The Steering Group - as a representative sample of the broader community views- gives their feedback on this stage of the process.

● A critical decision point. A meeting between the Steering Group and the Council facilitated by Creative Communities.

▼ Engagement of the broadest cross section of the community — including children, youth, senior citizens and travellers — in re-imagining the future of Bulls.

Deliverable number. (See *Work Plan Timetable* Paper 1.)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

| WEEK 1 | WEEK 2 | WEEK 3 | WEEK 4 |

PUBLIC LAUNCH

PROTOTYPING

FESTIVAL OF POSSIBILITIES
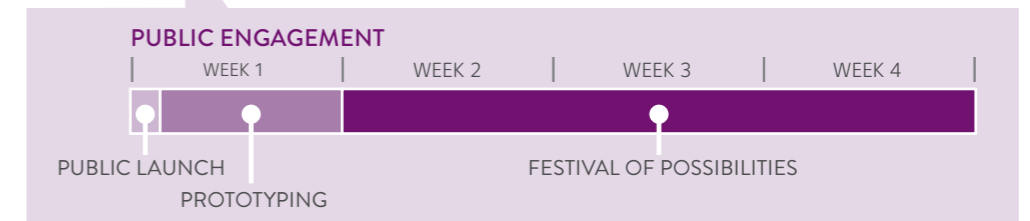
PROCESS

Workplan timetable

The Steering Group and Council were presented with a detailed workplan and time-table which they both signed off on. This was so everyone was very clear about how the TCP would be developed and how the decision about a colocation site would be made.

Six potential colocation sites

After discussions with Council and the Steering Group, six sites were identified as possible sites for a multipurpose facility. The sites identified were:

- Wallace development
- Information centre and bus depot
- Criterion hotel site
- Town Hall
- Library
- Toy library/memorial park

Evaluation criteria established

The Council and Steering Group were asked to sign off on the evaluation criteria for the six colocation sites. It was important that the criteria be established before any exploration of the potential fro each site.

There were two broad areas of evaluation:

- How well that colocation supports the town centre strategies for the renaissance of the Bulls Town Centre
- The life-cycle costs over 25 years.

Support for Town Centre Strategies

1. How well does it meet the traveller's needs (food, toilet, stretch legs, recharge)?

2. Is the site highly visible and does 100% of traffic pass the site?

The footpath sticker that ecouraged people to explore their town centre

BULLS TOWN CENTRE PLAN

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

DO THE WALK!

HAVE YOUR SAY!

BRIDGE

HIGH

CRITERION

3

1

2

VISIT THE WINDMILL, 117 BRIDGE STREET, TO LEAVE YOUR COMMENTS

Rangitikei

3. Is car parking visible and easily accessible?

4. Does it complement traffic options planned for the future?

5. To what degree does it create a new anchor for the town?

6. To what degree does this scenario repair deficits in the current site?

7. To what degree does it create an outdoor civic space which helps increase visible public life?

8. To what degree does it help knit the town centre together? (Does it improve connectivity and access for pedestrians, cyclists, prams and people with disabilities?)

9. To what degree does this scenario provide an opportunity to create a landmark with photo opportunities?

10. To what degree is the site large enough to provide flexibility in site and building design?

Life Cycle Costs

• Capital costs + operational costs for length of life-cycle Minus income from rent or sale of properties.

Town Centre Plan + Placemaking Framework

Based on observations, Creative Communities developed a Placemaking Framework for Bulls, which was signed off on by Council and the Steering Group. It was vitally important that this framework be agreed before the evaluation of the six potential colocation sites as they needed to be evaluated in how well they supported the overall strategies for the the town centre.

Preliminary Evaluation

The six sites were given a score for how well they supported each of the evaluation criterion. Scores were:

• Wallace   11

• Information Centre   23

• Criterion   26

• Town Hall   16

• Library   14

• Toy Library   26

Life-cycle costs were also calculated for each site.

Reduction

The Steering Group and Coucil were presented with the findings of the evaluation at a Reduction Workshop. Creative Communities presented the reasoning behind the scoring and life-cycle costs. Participants agreed that the three options that received the lowest scores should be dropped from further evaluation.

Development of remaining options

Creative Communities developed the remaining three options, showing the same sized facility on all three locations.

Public meeting

The concept drawings for the three locations were presented at a public meeting and the public were invited to ask questions. They were informed about the prototyping and opportunities to provide feedback.

Prototyping

Over the course of a weekend, the community participated in prototyping some of the strategies and tactics foreshadowed for the TCP. This allowed the community to experience how some of these tactics may look if adopted.

Festival of Possibilities

The community was invited to walk a circuit, experience the prototyped spaces, look at the three options for a multipurpose facility and then leave a comment on a wall.

Over 80 people left a comment or made a more formal submission.

Production of Draft TCP

Taking into account feedback from the Festival of Possibilities, Creative Communities produced a draft of the Town Centre Plan.

Background

As part of the development of the Bulls Town Centre Plan, the Bulls TCP Steering Group identified the following transport issues as being central to the long term development of the Town Centre Plan.

I. Pedestrian safety crossing SH1/3

II. Traffic volumes and movements in and around the town centre and at the new retail development site.

III. Heavy vehicle trailers entering the footpath when turning from High Street into Bridge Street and crossing the centreline when leaving Dalzell Street.

IV. Likelihood of potential State highway by-pass of the town.

In 2004, in an attempt to address these transport issues in Bulls, a preliminary set of six alternative transport options had been drawn up by Transit New Zealand (now New Zealand Transport Agency or NZTA). Those options were:

a. No change

b. Truck by-pass south using Criterion Street

c. Total traffic by-pass leaving High Street as a walking mall

d. One-way system north bound on High Street, south bound on Criterion Street

e. Rotary system that allows north bound traffic using High Street to return via Criterion Street

f. Roundabout or traffic signals on the state highway junction at High Street/Bridge Street

These options were revisited during the development of the Bulls Town Centre Plan. NZTA confirmed that traffic through Bulls had not increased at the rate anticipated in 2004 and that NZTA no longer considered any development of the state highway network through (or past) Bulls in its future plans. However, NZTA was concerned to accommodate community aspirations to improve amenity values from the state highway network where this could be achieved at little or no cost.

Three options for traffic management were included in the documentation put out for consultation during April 2014. These were:

High Street Reconfiguration

This proposal would essentially create a "winding path" through High Street (SH1). It would aim to reduce traffic speeds and allow greater pedestrian crossing opportunities. All parallel parking would be removed and replaced with intermittent angle parking on opposite sides of the street allowing the two-way traffic to weave through the street. Street-scaping, including highlighting pedestrian crossing areas, could be included.

Replacing High Street with Criterion Street as SH1

All SH1 traffic would be diverted off High Street and along Criterion Street. This would require significant upgrade of Criterion Street to meet State Highway specifications and also put restrictions on, for example, the street parking and vehicle access directly onto the SH.

A one-way system north on High Street and south on Criterion Street

This option would be best considered as a single lane option with roading upgrades to Criterion Street to fall in line with NZTA state highway specifications. These road upgrades should be considered to meet only that required for a single lane road, leaving excess space to be developed for pedestrian and street enhancement.

Feedback received during the public engagement process signalled that local retailers and residents were resistant to any traffic management which diverted traffic from the main shopping area of High Street. However, feedback from the community was strongly in favour of the addition of a safe crossing point across Bridge Street. This feedback was presented to NZTA in a meeting with the Steering Group, 16 May 2014. NZTA has subsequently committed to establishing an island refuge crossing point during the upgrade of Bridge Street in the summer of 2015. NZTA would also look into moving the overhead directional sign in the middle of High Street back towards the Daniell Street entrance to town.