

## Topic 15: Commercial Zones

### Introduction

As part of the District Plan Review, Timaru District Council has commissioned a Discussion Document on commercial zones to stimulate discussion and form a basis for public consultation. This can be found at [www.timaru.govt.nz/dpr](http://www.timaru.govt.nz/dpr).

It identifies four main issues with how the current District Plan manages commercial zones, establishes potential options to address these issues and discusses the associated strengths and weaknesses. We seek your feedback on the issues and options.

### Issues and Options

#### Issue 1

Should the District Plan provide a clearer distinction between town centres, and supporting commercial zones (the commercial centre hierarchy), and be more directive in terms of where commercial activity should be located?

The current District Plan seeks to provide for commercial activities (shops, services and offices) within the main town centre areas of Geraldine, Pleasant Point, Temuka and Timaru, along with smaller supermarket-anchored suburban centres, local dairies and take-aways, and large format retailing at the A&P Showgrounds site.

One issue with this approach has been ensuring that the provisions appropriately consolidate commercial activity in the appropriate areas. The clear primacy of the Timaru Town Centre in terms of its retail, civic and social role and outcomes is not well stated in the current District Plan.

A further issue is that there is likely to be sufficient opportunities for commercial activity to be accommodated in the existing town centres over the next 20 years. Any significant dispersal of commercial investment away from the District town centres will reduce reinvestment and certainty into the District main streets. This is especially important for retaining the heritage character of Timaru and Temuka town centres.

The new District Plan could adopt clearer policies and rules relating to restricting certain types of commercial activities in urban areas, so that commercial reinvestment and growth is directed primarily into the District's town centres. There may also be a need to reconsider the zoning framework applied to the Timaru commercial centre, further consolidating the commercial core so that the Commercial 1A Zone does not extend the full 1.3km length of Stafford Street.

This summary outlines the issues our district faces in relation to commercial zones.

We welcome your feedback on this topic.

**Peter Burt**  
Timaru Ward Councillor





The options for addressing this issue are to (i) retain the current District Plan approach that does not express the primacy of the Timaru town centre; or (ii) amend the District Plan to introduce a clear commercial hierarchy, recognising the role and function of rural town centres (Temuka, Geraldine, and Pleasant Point) and the broader role fulfilled by the Timaru town centre; and explicitly discouraging core retail outside of town centre boundaries.

## Issue 2

Do the Commercial Zones enable a diverse range and mix of activities to promote vitality and viability?

Within the town centre zones for Geraldine, Pleasant Point, Temuka (Commercial 1) and Timaru (Commercial 1A) Zones there is a range of retail activities, commercial services and residential accommodation types that are provided. There are issues in terms of ensuring that more sensitive activities locating in the town centres are appropriately managed and remain compatible with the noise, amenity and character of the District town centres (reverse sensitivity), and that commercial activities that do create nuisance or objectionable impacts (noise, glare, late night activity) on adjoining Residential Zones are appropriately managed, or preferably buffered.

Options for addressing this issue are to (i) retain the current District Plan provisions, which limit the diversity of activities located in the District town centres; or (ii) amend the District Plan to encourage a broad range of commercial and supporting activities (such as residential) promoting reinvestment and agglomeration of sites, and ensuring environmental effects (such as noise, glare and traffic) are well managed.

## Issue 3

Balancing consenting requirements with encouraging reinvestment

There are areas of the town centres where reinvestment would have benefits. However, complex or uncertain requirements in the District Plan may be hindering reinvestment and an increase in activities. Urban design requirements, or rules requiring provision of off-street car parks can have a big impact on the viability of commercial developments. Conversely too little management of development may result in those town centre character qualities that the District communities love being slowly eroded.

Options for addressing this issue are to (i) retain the current District Plan provisions, which particularly for new buildings and redevelopments duplicate provisions associated with built form; or (ii) amend the District Plan in an effort to streamline regulation and increase investment certainty, acknowledging that there is increased risk in terms of amenity and transport impacts.

## Issue 4

Should the District Plan provide for heritage character recognition for part of the Timaru town centre main street?

The extent and character of heritage buildings in the District town centres greatly enhances the identity and character of the District's town centres.

There are particular clusters of heritage buildings located within the Timaru town centre that are a significant asset and contribute to the unique identity for Timaru. In particular, there are recognisable areas in Strathallan Street, Stafford Street and Cains Terrace, and Stafford Street from George Street to Woollcombe Street.

Options for addressing this issue are to (i) retain the current District Plan provisions, which require consent and design considerations for any demolition or new building in the Timaru town centre to ensure compatible facades and urban design; or (ii) amend the District Plan to focus character and design requirements to areas in the Timaru town centre that exhibit a higher level of design amenity and identified as 'heritage character areas'.