

Commercial and Mixed Use Zones

Issues

The Operative Plan includes a range of Commercial Zones but does not clearly articulate the role and function of each commercial zone, nor the importance of the Timaru central business area as the main centre for the South Canterbury area.

The rules controlling activities permitted in each zone are overly specific and may restrict appropriate activities that would promote the vitality and viability of these commercial areas.

Poorly targeted urban design provisions can affect the viability of reinvestment or redevelopment in commercial areas, but conversely, if design is not managed appropriately, the qualities of commercial areas that make them attractive to the community can be eroded and make them less functional.

An economic assessment has identified that the scale and timing of retail development currently enabled in the Commercial 2A Zone has the potential to create significant adverse effects on the Timaru City Centre.

The National Planning Standards require particular zones to be used within district plans.

Operative District Plan Approach

The Operative District Plan contains a range of commercial zones – Commercial 1A, Commercial 1B, Commercial 1C, Commercial 1 (Temuka), Commercial 1 (Geraldine), Commercial 1 (Pleasant Point), Commercial 2, Commercial 2A and Commercial 3. The provisions generally seek to maintain the amenity and quality of retail areas and minimise conflict between commercial activities and other land uses and mitigate adverse effects of activities within commercial zones on adjoining residential zones.

There is a separate rule framework applying to each zone, which lists a range of commercial, community and other activities that are permitted in each zone. The permitted activities are highly specific and list out specific activities that would be captured under broader definitions of 'commercial activities' or 'community facilities'.

Activities within all commercial zones are subject to performance standards that manage matters such as height, access to sunlight, setbacks from road and internal boundaries and screening of outdoor storage areas.

In central Timaru and Temuka, there are particular consent requirements for demolition and new buildings that seek to recognise and protect the heritage values in these commercial areas. The controls apply to all buildings within the identified areas, rather than to specifically identified heritage buildings. Within the main street areas in Timaru, there are also design controls that seek to provide active frontage, consistent provisions of verandahs and buildings built up to the road. In the main street areas in Geraldine and Temuka there are also requirements for the consistent provisions of verandahs.

Proposed Plan Approach

To align with the National Planning Standards and rationalise the number of commercial zones, the zones set out in the following table are proposed for the District's commercial areas.

Operative District Plan Zone	Proposed Plan Zone
Commercial 1A Zone	City Centre Zone and Mixed Use Zone
Commercial 1B Zone	Mixed Use Zone
Commercial 1C Zone	Town Centre Zone
Commercial 1 (Temuka) Zone	Town Centre Zone
Commercial 1 (Geraldine) Zone	Town Centre Zone
Commercial 1 (Pleasant Point) Zone	Town Centre Zone
Commercial 2 Zone	Local Centre Zone
Commercial 2A Zone	Large format retail zone
Commercial 3 Zone	Neighbourhood Centre Zone

The framework proposed would clearly articulate the role and function of each zone, and include a hierarchy emphasising the City Centre Zone.

The approach taken will also target urban design controls to where these controls are considered to be most appropriate. This includes resource consent requirements for buildings within the Large Format Centre Zone and larger developments in the Local Centre Zone. The demolition of buildings and design of replacement buildings still requires consent in the City Centre zone and is supplemented through targeted provisions in the Historic Heritage Chapter.

Other main street controls in central Timaru, Temuka and Geraldine will be continued. However, in central Timaru, these will be targeted to a reduced area, identified as the Southern Centre precinct provides more of a transition into the Mixed Use Zone.

Within the Large Format Retail Zone it is proposed to reduce the thresholds for staging of retail activities on the site and limit the type of other commercial activities provided for within this area, in line with economic advice regarding how development of this site could impact on the City centre zone.

Performance standards that manage built form would largely be retained, except where rationalised as a result of the rationalisation of zones.

Changes

Key changes include:

A specific set of objectives and policies for each zone are provided that set out the purpose, character and qualities of each zone

For each zone, the range and mix of activities that are enabled or controlled reflect the purpose of the zone and are expected to promote the vitality and viability of these centres

The importance of the City Centre Zone as the main centre for the South Canterbury area is emphasised. This includes provisions that restrict the staging and type of commercial development enabled in the Large Format Retail Zone.

Urban design controls are targeted to areas where they are considered necessary to maintain the character of areas that are valued by the community, or to ensure that developments integrate with the public realm, and result in attractive and inviting commercial spaces.

Reasons

The provisions are intended to provide clear direction on the purpose of each zone, and the character, amenity and design outcomes anticipated for each zone. This will ensure that the District's commercial areas are attractive and functional to residents, business and visitors, as relevant to the function and purpose of each zone. In particular, the approach taken will provide opportunities for a range of business activities to establish, in appropriate locations. It will also ensure that a greater emphasis is placed on the importance of the City Centre and ensure that development in other zones does not compromise its purpose, function and amenity values.

What it Means in Practice

- It will be clearer what the purpose of each commercial zone is and the range of activities expected within it.
- The importance of the City Centre Zone for the whole District will be emphasised and development outside controlled, as necessary, to maintain its purpose, function and amenity values.
- In the Local Centre and Large Format Retail Zones, there will be additional, targeted urban design controls. Conversely, urban design controls will be targeted to a reduced area (the Retail Core Precinct) in central Timaru. Existing verandah controls in the main street areas in Geraldine and Temuka will remain.

