

TIMARU CIVIC TRUST - SUBMISSION ON DRAFT GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (GMS)

In general, we would like to comment that we feel there has not been sufficient pro-active engagement with key stakeholders, such as the Timaru Civic Trust.

We also think that the information provided by the council relating to the Draft GMS process needs to be presented in a very much simpler and clearer manner, that is easily digestible by lay-people. The current documents are too large and difficult to digest. A simple website survey (with all of the relevant information provided on the website), would ensure a much better and broader response from the public.

Additionally, we also feel that the Council should also be looking at a strategy to deal with both significantly higher than expected (forecast) growth within the district and also how to manage a potential future where there is declining population growth.

District Character

Timaru's heritage buildings should be highlighted as a key element in the definition of our district identity and character and priority should be given to promoting and enhancing these existing assets within the district, as they are a critical element in maintaining the districts unique identity and character.

Retention and protection of important heritage buildings should also be identified as a priority and the rules protecting heritage buildings need to be strengthened, as it is a critical element to retaining and enhancing the districts unique identity and character.

Landscape and Amenity

Timaru's CBD should be highlighted as a key urban amenity element, which provides a central focus for shopping, entertainment and other civic activity and this should be reinforced and enhanced as a priority for future growth over and above other, more dispersed areas around the city.

Settlement Patterns & Urban Form

Timaru's CBD should be highlighted as a key location for residential intensification, in addition to its current role as a commercial centre. Much of the districts forecast growth in population could be accommodated in existing empty building space within the CBD, where there is existing infrastructure and ample amenity to support a higher residential density. Higher residential density within a 'mixed use' and 'walkable' town centre will increase the area's vitality, activity and attractiveness, without the need for the same level of new infrastructure investment which will be required by new communities on the periphery of the town.

Additionally we should be working towards introducing into the District Plan, development rules and guidelines which promote quality urban design and environmentally sustainable development practices.

Building resilient communities

No consideration has been given to the issue of funding for Earthquake Strengthening of Earthquake Prone Buildings. This will become a major issue in the next 15 years, and many building owners will be 'left out of pocket' because they are forced by Council/Government to Earthquake Strengthen their buildings, at their own cost, due entirely to a change in legislation forcing them to do so. Where is the compensation for these building owners? This will also likely mean that many heritage buildings will need to be demolished, destroying much of our districts existing built heritage, which will negatively impact on our established character, unique identity and its attractiveness to visitors.

Sustainable Economy

Timaru's CBD should be highlighted and reinforced as the priority location for retail and commercial activity and urban entertainment. Any new commercial development should not detrimentally effect the CBD's status as the primary focus for commercial activity.

Transport

Should also consider a strategy to deal with greater than expected/forecast growth of transport network capacity, should the forecasts be wrong (eg future growth of tourism). Draft GMS should also consider future public transport initiatives and promoting greater use of public transport. Look at improving and promoting other existing transport links, including the airport, rail and the harbour (cruise ships?). Look at promoting and enhancing other under utilised transport modes, such as walking and cycling, in order to improve health and wellbeing and reduce pollution.

Infrastructure

Should also consider a strategy to deal with greater than expected/forecast growth of transport network capacity, should the population forecasts be wrong or other related issues increase transport network capacity, such as future growth of the tourism industry or transportation industry.

Nigel Gilkison

on behalf of the Timaru Civic Trust