3. Design Concepts

Design Concepts

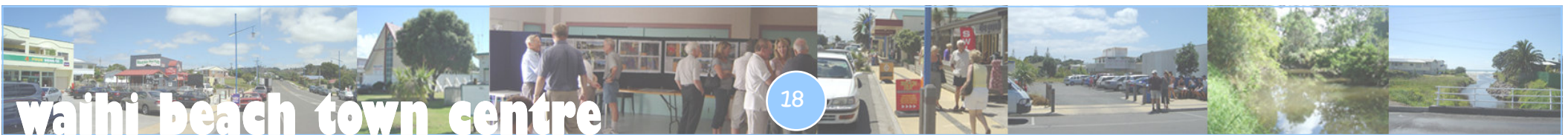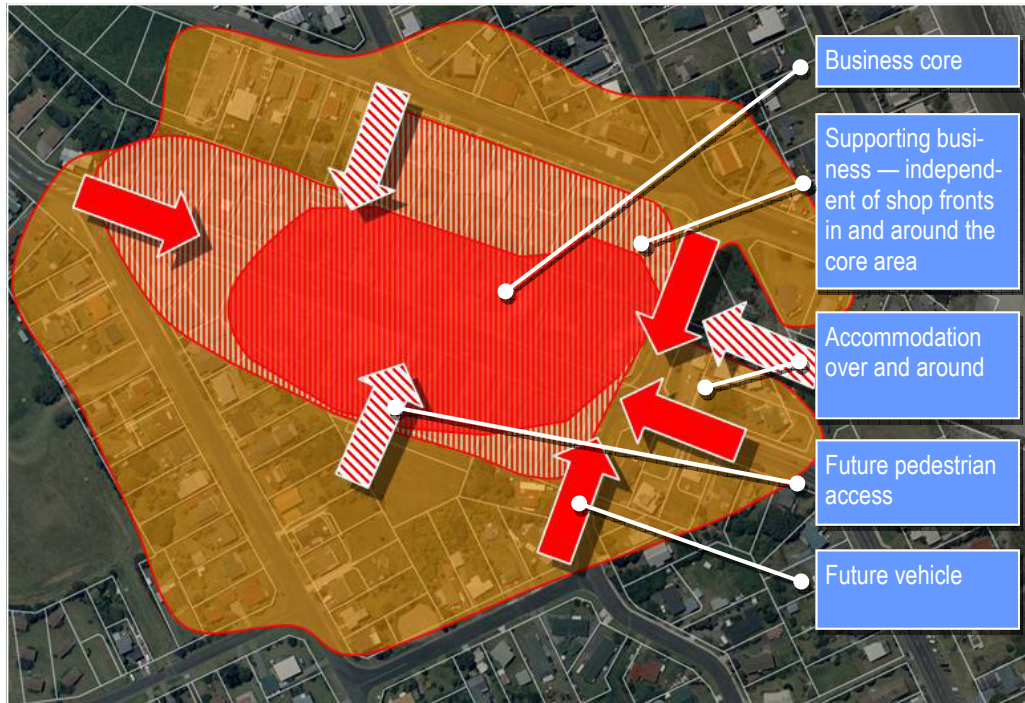|	
Business core	
Supporting business — independent of shop fronts in and around the core area	
Accommodation over and around	
Future pedestrian access	
Future vehicle	

3.1 Decreasing levels of intensity around the town centre core, with car-based access (red arrows) and pedestrian and cyclist access (hatched arrows)

3.2 Possible locations for the key focal points

Design elements for consideration

Following on from the results of the analysis and assessment of the present situation, this section suggests some key design elements to consider for the town centre plan. These elements are proposed as separate items initially — not unlike layers. The integration achieved by combining the different layers, and the resulting synergies are leading to an integrated plan which is fully explained in the next section. That includes the practical implementation consequences from a urban design and town planning point of view.

Define the core activity area

As shown earlier, dispersing activities at this early stage of development will lead to the demise of retail in the main street as the off-season is not lucrative enough to spread retail and pedestrian traffic too much. The aim is to preserve and foster a business area with a well-defined intense core, with good shop fronts and cafes to fit the holiday atmosphere. An overarching theme in terms of signage, planting, meeting places etc. should be established to keep containing retail in this area.

To assist with this key aim it would be good to a promote the development of more accommodation such as apartments and motels in and around the town centre, catering for diverse leisure and visitors destinations and assisting to intensify the activities on the main street. This overall effort will not only bring about more and diverse activity in and around Wilson Road, but will also extend the liveliness of the area over a longer period of the day and of the season. In addition, the presence of people at all hours will have a positive impact on the actual and perceived security.

Create key focal points

Due to its linear character with a lack of lateral connections of any significance, the town centre is currently lacking real focal points. In order to create interesting and characteristic places in the town centre many different options were considered. Because of the current development pattern it is actually difficult to fit a focal point (or points) into the retail strip without disrupting the good continuity. However, two locations offer themselves for the development into something special.

- The first one could be located just east of the police station where there the current car park is. This would be the place where the connections between the main street, the stream edge, the pedestrian link across and along the stream all come together. This could culminate in a meet-

waihi beach town centre

ing place like a plaza. This location will have good visual connections in all directions and good accessibility for pedestrians. For car users this will be a focal point as well, with the current public car park next to it in a revamped layout. To make it successful it will need to have a future development overlooking the site and well connected to it through a range of activities. (There is currently a resource consent application pending on the adjacent site, nr. 22 Wilson Road). If this development could be opened up with activities like a café and restaurants on the ground floor facing it and the stream it could turn into a key attraction at this end of the town centre. However, to make it into an attraction will need the improvement and enhancement of the stream bed qualities, where it meets with this focal point. It would be necessary for such a plaza to be designed with excellent planting and water features, establishing an attractive physical connection with Two Mile Creek.
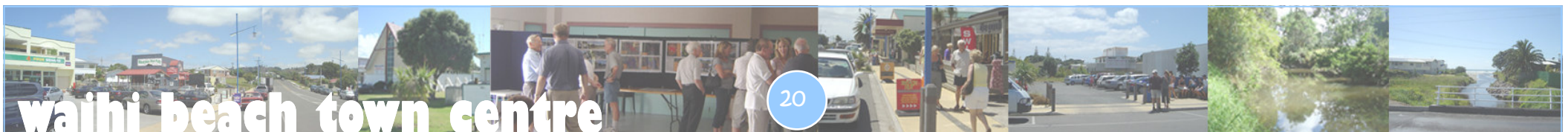
- The beach atmosphere or 'sense of place' needs more exposure. The second key focal point should therefore be located where it will result in an improved connection between the town centre and the beach, whilst also "framing" the business core. In concept, the two focal points will work in tandem to contain or focus business between them as visual anchors.

The area around the Dillon Street bridge will particularly benefit from such a connection. Again, this is a location where several defining elements of the town centre are coming together. The special vantage point with excellent sea views should be capitalised upon. The corner of Edinburgh Street and Dillon Street is the ideal place for the development of a restaurant- of café-type facility with an attractive, large al fresco space overlooking the stream and the beach as well as cosy indoor spaces with "framed" views. A direct pedestrian connection through the open space to the beach and a link with the proposed pedestrian network along the stream are important. Along with this design concept the enhancement of the stream bed qualities are crucial.

Pedestrian access

To improve accessibility on foot a new network of walking connections is proposed (figure 3.3), allowing for a strong physical and visual link between the town centre and the beach. In addition a route across Two Mile Creek to Edinburgh Street is proposed to provide pedestrians to and from the areas around Hillview Road, Dillon Street, Shaw Road and beyond. With a shortcut to the town centre this would, reducie their travel times considerably. Providing pedestrian access through the open space behind nrs. 19-29 (southern side of Wilson Road) is aimed at doing the same for people from the areas around Citrus Avenue and The Crescent and further afield.

3.3. Possible additions and improvements to the pedestrian network

Design Concepts

3.4 Possible option to improve issues around loading

3.5 Three potential overflow parking options

*** **Note:** See amendment in Paragraph Five of the Preamble of the Plan.

In addition to purely providing access, these pedestrian connections should provide key visual connections, which are important. The routes also allow for open space elements, play lots, resting spots and just tranquil features (along the stream) to add to the attractiveness of the town centre. This will build character and a sense of place.

Loading

Particularly in the peak season loading from delivery vehicles creates a lot of disturbance in the town centre. Especially larger trucks parked on the flush median tend to visually obscure shops and create unsafe situations. To remedy this situation it is proposed to limit on-street loading, pushing them to special off-street facilities.

To achieve this the main street layout will need to be adjusted, with a narrower flush median, and in places no median at all. The envisaged alternative for loading will be located on a lane at the back of no. 19-21 as shown in figure 3.4. It will be necessary to design this as a one-way system with the entrance between no. 17 and 19 and the egress between no. 23 and 27. The loading space should be approximately 6 metres wide with a surface suitable for handcarts and trolleys. ***

Smaller delivery vehicles will still be allowed to park in an available parking slot while restocking the shops. However, in the busier periods parking demand will push them out to the special facility as well.

Overflow parking provision

In order to cater for the increased parking demand in the peak season, the proposal is to provide for overflow parking options. These areas should be designed very carefully as they are part of the experience of the town centre. First of all, they need to have good casual surveillance to make them safe to use at all hours. To achieve this, they should be located on and served by the pedestrian network, and where possible be integrated with open space elements. This will also make them more pleasant and attractive to use. The distance to the town centre might be a little longer, compared to parking in the main street right in front of the shops, but at least they will be well connected and offer the users a pleasant and different experience of the town centre. Three areas have been identified as strategic locations for these facilities.

- On the corner of Edinburgh and Dillon Streets: Combined with the development of an open space element on Council owned land, refer to the paragraph on focal points below, space could be created for between 10 and 20 cars. This could be designed in the form of right angle parking off Dil-

waihi beach town centre

lon and Edinburgh Streets and parallel parking on the western side of Dillon Street. Its surface should be carefully designed, since this car park will not be used frequently outside the peak season. With a proposed upgrade of the adjacent area that links to the beach as well as the proposed new walkway on the southern side of Two-mile Creek, this will become a strategic and highly accessible location connecting the town and the beach.

- On the existing overflow car park at the back of shops no. 19-27: Currently the area behind the shops on the southern side of Wilson Road is used for overflow parking in the peak season. However, it appears to be currently under utilised with obscured , poorly designed and located signage. In addition it is currently not easily accessible for pedestrians either. With a better accessibility for both pedestrians and vehicles as well as improved signage, this area should be made more useful. The proposed new pedestrian link from this site through to Citrus Avenue (see above) will add to better surveillance and accessibility and with proper marking of parking spaces the use is likely to increase too.

- On Wilson Road, around the intersection with Dillon Street and Snell Crescent: Parking capacity could be gained in the eastern part of Wilson Road by continuing the general cross section used in the town centre further to the east up to the intersection. At the stage when Wilson Road will be realigned, this additional parking capacity should be incorporated into it. This addition of car parks will also link in with the existing parallel parking capacity on the side of the road further east of the intersection with Dillon Street.

Enhancing the stream environment

Apart from providing access the aim is to heal the connection between the town centre and Two Mile Creek. This could be done not only by providing access to the stream, but also to combine the stream with the activity of pedestrians on its southern bank. To this end the concepts design incorporate adjacent land to provide continuous access along the stream from the area around the police station all the way to Dillon Street by the beach.

The stream sides need to be opened up with improved planting and stream-edge landscaping. There is also the potential to create a separate, but integrated water features with flowing water, combined with visual effects, tol attract attention to the water in the stream in the town centre, linking, for instance the proposed plaza with the stream.
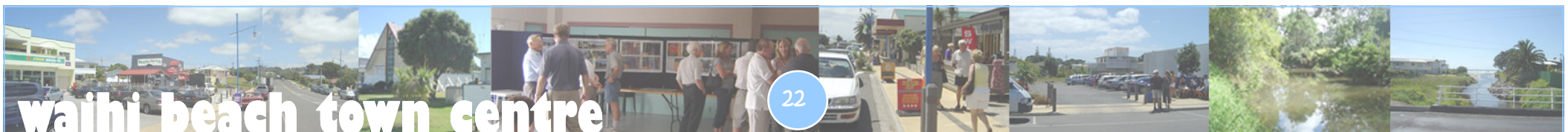
3.6 Potential (below) corner of Dillon and Edinburgh St

3.7   Room for more parking on Wilson Road by extending parking slots towards the Dillon Street corner
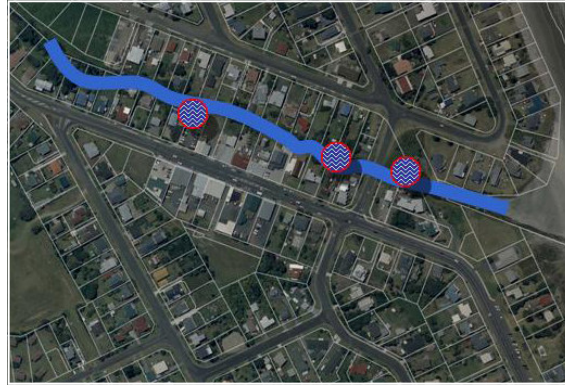
3.8 Potential park with loading and parking development behind the shops with overlooking accommodation and apartments

Design Concepts

3.9 Possible locations for stream key enhancements or water features

Creating a green network

Currently the town centre has a very hard image due to the lack of planting of any significance in the main street. The proposal is therefore to build a continuous open space framework over time to create a softer character to a more intense town centre.

Green open space is most commonly enjoyed by pedestrians and cyclists. The footpath network should be enhanced by special landscape elements and waterscapes to characterise the area. Water features with flowing water and visual effects are aimed at absorbing the noises of the town centre and enhancing the physical and visual connections with Two Mile Creek and the nearby Pacific Ocean.

All users of the town centre should be able to enjoy a greener environment through a more attractive main street. More and consistent planting will provide shade from the sun and shelter for the rain as well as a recognisable sense of place. This aspect will also be addressed further in the next section.

3.10 Possible green network for pedestrians and cyclists

waihi beach town centre