

Urban Design Strategy



November 2009

“Places that are beautifully detailed to stimulate and delight have one thing in common: buildings and open spaces go hand in glove...”

Viewed from this perspective the success of a building is determined by its ability to make a positive contribution to the public realm – to face it, animate it and make sure that all adjacent open space is positively used. It is the interaction between buildings and the public domain – this edge – that determines the relationship between inside and outside, built and open, public and private, individual and community.”

Urban Design Compendium
(English Partnerships 2004)



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1 Introduction

1.1 What is urban design?

Urban Design is about making sure that public places work and function well for the people who use them. It is not based on subjective decisions around taste and style alone.

It involves the multi-disciplinary skills of designing and arranging all the physical elements that make up the public realm; the part of the urban environment that people generally have common access to.

Urban Design focuses on understanding:

- the spaces and connections between neighbourhoods and buildings.
- the relationship between buildings and spaces in terms of scale, appearance and uses.
- how the various parts of a town or neighbourhood work together, with a focus on the public realm.
- how people interact and move through an area or place.
- what makes a place distinctive and how it contributes to local character and identity.



Places that thrive

1.2 Why an urban design strategy?

This strategy describes how urban design can contribute towards creating urban environments that entice people to want to live, work, play, visit and invest here.

It includes a range of actions designed to achieve the district's aspirations for its urban places.

Urban design influences all of the seven community outcomes. The outcomes represent the things that are important to our communities and help guide Council decision making:



Sustainable growth management.



Quality landscapes and natural environment and enhanced public access.



A safe and healthy community that is strong, diverse and inclusive for people of all age groups and incomes.



Effective and efficient infrastructure that meets the needs of growth.



High quality urban environments respectful of the character of individual communities.



A strong and diverse economy.



Preservation and celebration of the district's local cultural heritage.

1 Introduction

An Urban Design Strategy will:

- Guide Council staff and elected representatives on how urban design can influence future projects, plans and policies.
- Provide clarity around the Council's policy on urban design.
- Help the community understand how urban design can contribute towards the experience of living and working in the district.

There are a number of existing documents that influence the urban environment. This strategy is intended to be a link between these documents:

- District Plan
- Growth Management Strategy
- Queenstown and Wanaka's 2020 projects and Arrowtown Plan.
- Queenstown Town Centre Character Guidelines and The Arrowtown Design Guidelines
- Transport Strategies and Asset Management Plan
- Heritage Strategy
- Queenstown and Wanaka Town Centre Strategies
- Parks and Reserves Strategy
- Southern Lights Strategy
- NZ Urban Design Protocol

1.3 The value of urban design

Well designed urban centres have a strong competitive edge. They attract businesses, investors, visitors and consumers, who contribute to the vitality of the district.

Research undertaken by Ministry for the Environment concluded that good urban design can offer significant social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits. Equally, poor design can have significant adverse effects.

Other conclusions drawn from the research include:

- **Cost:** Implementing good urban design sometimes costs more up front, but this often means long term costs can be avoided.
- **Better quality of life:** Communities value the better quality of life that good urban design can deliver. In a similar manner to how:
 - well designed schools have been shown to assist in the educational achievements of pupils
 - well designed hospitals assist in patient recovery
 - well designed homes reduce the risk of ill health
 - well designed work places reduce absenteeism, promote staff retention and increase productivity.

Well designed urban spaces increase the appeal of a place. This, in turn, boosts vitality and vibrancy, with positive commercial spin-offs for surrounding local businesses

- **Healthy communities:** urban design encourages physical exercise by facilitating walking and cycling.
- **Security:** urban design elements can help make towns and neighbourhoods more secure using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design techniques (CPTED).
- **Big picture approach:** urban design elements work best when they are considered together, for example mixed use, density and connectivity.

1 Introduction

1.4 The national perspective

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (2005) reflects the growing importance given to urban design at a national level.

As a signatory to the protocol, the Council is committed to raising the standard of urban design across the District.

The Seven Cs

The protocol identifies seven essential elements that create quality urban places, known as the “seven Cs”.

The District’s Urban Design Panels use the “seven Cs” as the format for their reports when reviewing both private and public development projects:

- **Context:** Making sure that buildings, places and spaces are part of the whole town or city.
- **Character:** Reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of the district’s urban environment.
- **Choice:** Ensuring diversity and choice for all people.
- **Connections:** Enhancing how different networks link together for people.
- **Creativity:** Encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions.
- **Custodianship:** Ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy.
- **Collaboration:** Communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities.



2 Urban Design Goals for the District

The six goals represent the community's aspirations for its urban environments.



1 **DISTINCTIVE BUILT FORM**
creating neighbourhoods that reflect their people, culture and history.



2 **HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC PLACES**
that complement the appeal of the natural setting and foster economic vitality and community wellbeing.



3 **CONSOLIDATED GROWTH**
within urban boundaries with walkable, mixed use neighbourhoods that help reduce travel time and urban sprawl.



4 **CONNECTED URBAN FORM**
ensuring people have clear options of transport mode that are convenient, efficient and affordable.



5 **SUSTAINABLE URBAN ENVIRONMENTS**
where the natural environment, land uses and transport network combine towards a healthier environment for everyone.



6 **COHESIVE COMMUNITIES**
where the urban environment promotes a stronger sense of local community by encouraging participation in public life.

3 Issues for the District

There are six key issues that have been identified and will be addressed in this strategy:

- How built form and public space contribute to local identity
- The quality and amenity of the public realm
- Growth
- Connections - transport and land use
- Sustainability
- Community, collaboration and custodianship

3.1 How built form and public space contribute to local identity

Tourism is crucial to the economy in this district. We must also compete globally to attract visitors, investment and a broadly skilled workforce.

Urban design has a key role to play in shaping the identity and amenity of the district to maximise its appeal as a place to live, visit or invest in.

3.1.1 Public space

The District Plan and the Queenstown and Arrowtown Design Guidelines provide guidance on how new buildings should be integrated into the urban environment. But there is no such guidance for the development of the space between the buildings, other than for transport.

The District Plan transport section focuses on vehicle parking, manoeuvring and vehicle crossings as opposed to pedestrians and overall street amenity. However, it is from the streetscape that people appreciate the character and identity of a place.

Streets make up approximately 80% of the public domain, and typically occupy about a third of a town centre's total area. Yet nearly all of our town centre streets tend to prioritise traffic movement above pedestrian amenity.

Often our streets feature obstacles, signs and barriers that create visual clutter and impede the free flow of pedestrians.



In some cases unused space is given over to wide areas of tarmac.

3 Issues for the District

3.1.1 Public space (continued)

There is no coordinated strategy for the provision of new open spaces in urban centres (for example squares or village greens). Or for smaller types of public space that are desirable around higher density residential areas, to offset the lack of private outdoor amenity available for higher density residential buildings.



3.1.2 Built form and identity

The identity of a neighbourhood or town is derived from the qualities that make it distinctive and memorable. These qualities include:

- the natural setting and backdrop
- the layout and legibility of the place
- the clarity and definition given by its edges
- clear entrances that contribute to a sense of arrival or departure

A major contribution to identity and character of a place comes from the buildings that form its edges, creating a sense of containment and opportunities for active frontages.

Queenstown and Arrowtown currently have guidelines aimed at ensuring new buildings are consistent with the prevailing built character.

There is a case for other centres to have similar guidelines. Systems need also be put in place to ensure existing guidelines are monitored, reviewed and updated where necessary, to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.



3 Issues for the District

3.1.3 Built form and scale

The District's established neighbourhoods and town centres are characterised by a relatively fine grain or scale of individual buildings. Introducing large new developments into established neighbourhoods can visually undermine this key component of what makes our settlements distinctive.

In the commercial sphere, there is a current global trend towards greater consistency of built form and retail experience. This results in major brands and large format retail outlets dominating local townscapes.

In other instances, a single unit type, whether it be residential, visitor accommodation or commercial, has been repeated excessively. Particularly when located in exposed and dramatic landforms, such developments can often be seen from wide areas. If not handled sensitively, the cumulative effect of this repetition can become visually dominant, over the more varied forms that have traditionally characterised this District's neighbourhoods.



Repetition of single unit types

3.1.4 Built form and height

The District Plan's height restrictions act as a constraint on built form owing chiefly to the prime value given to the District's outstanding natural setting. They also ensure new development respects the scale of traditional built form.

However, there is a strong case for allowing a degree of variation to enliven our townscape rooflines and add to the distinctiveness of buildings.

It would also be valuable to investigate where it is possible to accommodate higher buildings, without detracting from landscape and heritage values. This complements the goal of consolidating growth within current urban areas.

3.1.5 Land use

There can be a fine line between residential and visitor accommodation status for a number of multi-unit developments.

They are generally intended for the short term rental 'managed apartment market'. But they often become long term housing stock as demand for the former drops off.

When this occurs the following issues arise:

- lack of variety of unit types and sizes
- a low level of residential amenity
- poor contribution towards the public neighbourhood amenity

3 Issues for the District

3.1.6 Role and function of the town centres

The rise of large format retail centres at Remarkables Park in Queenstown and Three Parks in Wanaka impacts on the traditional role and function of the town centres.

These new shopping centres offer more competitive pricing of everyday goods and abundant free parking. This can result in the town centres becoming less relevant to the local community, placing more emphasis on their roles as tourism destinations.

3.1.7 Large format retail (LFR)

Large Format Retail outlets tend to be built together forming large retail centres aimed at servicing wide areas.

Generally, customers need to drive to these centres, leading to their public amenity and contribution to local identity being overwhelmed by surrounding carparking areas.

The large buildings are usually simple sheds which can offer only façade depth relief.

However LFR offers affordability and, where absent, creates a demand incentive to travel beyond the District to find it elsewhere.

An international trend is to establish LFR outlets as anchors to street-based town centre environments. The challenge for the District is working out:

- to what extent can LFR be accommodated into existing town or neighbourhood centres in a manner that compliments established character?
- how can new town centres incorporate LFR as part of strong, mixed use environments?
- how can LFR developments have good public space amenity that adds to the identity and appeal of the district?

3.1.8 The impact of trees and landscaping on urban character

Urban trees and forested areas on urban edges play an important role in the character and identity of our towns. This influence is reflected in an event such as the Arrowtown Autumn Festival.

Protection is in place for our most significant trees. However, it is important to consider the significant role of urban trees at the beginning of major urban projects, from streetscape upgrades to new urban subdivisions.



3 Issues for the District

3.1.9 Signage and traffic barriers

Parking and traffic signage has, in some instances, become excessive and can detract from the amenity of our streetscapes.

The implementation of national standards has led to repetitive signs on dedicated poles contributing to visual clutter.

Physical barriers between the road and footpath can similarly add to visual clutter. They often create hazards by obstructing the natural flow of pedestrian movement. This can leave people stranded in traffic when they follow their natural inclination to take the shortest route.



3.2 The quality and amenity of public places

Every public space or street amenity upgrade within the District, and all private development that fronts on to a street or public place, offers an opportunity to enhance the appeal of our urban areas.

3.2.1 Quality and sustainability

Every building or public work project represents a significant investment in materials and energy. The longevity of the development and its ability to adapt to changes in use over time impacts significantly on the return on that investment.

Quality of design and construction has a direct influence on the appeal and acceptability of a development to the community. It also influences the durability and ongoing costs over its lifespan.

Low energy consumption throughout the life of a building and durable low maintenance materials can offset higher costs in construction at the outset.

In contrast, poor design can scar the urban fabric of a neighbourhood over the lifespan of a building.

It is therefore necessary that the Council has appropriate systems in place to assess the quality of development proposals and respond appropriately where quality is lacking.

3.2.2 Assessment of design quality

Quality of design is difficult to quantify.

District Plan rules can regulate measurable design outcomes such as height, bulk, and location. However, assessment criteria that address quality of design, require a high level of subjective evaluation.

To assist in this, the Council set up Urban Design Panels in Queenstown and Wanaka in 2004. The panels are made up of independent design consultants, development and community representatives.

The panels review Council capital projects and private development proposals that would have significant impact on the public realm of our urban areas.

The panels role is to provide independent urban advice to applicants and Council. Their objective is to improve the standard of the built environment. This role is advisory, not statutory.

3 Issues for the District

3.2.2 Assessment of design quality (continued)

The advice of the Urban Design Panel can, however, be considered as expert opinion when applications are considered under the Resource Management Act.

The influence of the panels could be enhanced further by:

- increasing urban design related criteria in the District Plan
- enabling an easier pathway through the consenting process where a project is supported by a panel

3.2.3 Community resistance to higher density and affordable housing

Adapting existing neighbourhoods to higher density living, and/or the introduction of more affordable accommodation is often poorly received by local residents. The fear is higher densities lead to lowered property values and reduced amenity.

Quality of design of both built form and the public amenity provided is therefore critical to community acceptance of these types of development.



3.3 Growth

In the five year period between 2001 and 2006 the Queenstown Lakes resident population grew by 34.7%, the highest territorial growth rate in New Zealand.

While this period was the up cycle to a boom, it clearly reflects the District's appeal as a place to live, work in and visit.

However, the level of development arising from such growth places increasing stress on the character of our settlements and their landscapes. This can pose a threat to the appeal and attraction that stimulates the growth.

As our settlements come under pressure to sprawl out and/or consolidate at greater density within their boundaries, the following issues arise:

3.3.1 Consolidation

The Growth Strategy (2007), identifies urban consolidation as a way of managing growth in the District.

This implies a trend towards more intensive forms of urban settlement including higher densities of housing than we have become accustomed to. The high density residential zones created in Queenstown and Wanaka reflect this trend.

For higher density housing to gain wide acceptance a high standard of building quality is required. To achieve this requires:

- a high level of design expertise
- a solid understanding of the urban design principles that contribute to creating good higher density urban neighbourhoods

An increasing number of residents living within and around the town centres offers benefits such as:

- more vibrant town centres
- a strong local client base for business
- added security by 24 hour passive surveillance from residents

3 Issues for the District

3.3.1 Consolidation (continued)

However, it does require an understanding of how best this can be achieved to mitigate mix of use issues, such as reverse sensitivity to noise and light spill.

For both higher density residential and mixed use zones to succeed, the provision of adequate open space is needed. This includes public squares, pocket parks and shared courtyard spaces within private residential developments, to offset the loss of the traditional back yard. This helps counter any implication that urban consolidation means lower amenity or cramming.

3.3.2 Where to consolidate (and where not to)

Consolidation does not mean that all areas within existing urban boundaries are suitable for high density development.

There are many examples where the threat of higher densities within established neighbourhoods has drawn a very negative response from local residents. Often they are fearful of perceived cramming and loss of valued neighbourhood character, resulting in reduced property values.

Where it occurs, urban consolidation does mean significant change to the character of a neighbourhood. However, where existing neighbourhood character is strongest it needs to be maintained and complimented by any new development.

It is also wise to carefully select appropriate locations for high density residential development based on where the most benefit would occur. Suitable selection criteria include:

- proximity to town and neighbourhood centres
- proximity to public transport
- proximity to neighbourhood open space and schools
- the ability to free up enough space to enable a layout where most, if not all, residential units have good frontage to public areas

Higher densities in the format of comprehensive residential developments in low density zones can also be inappropriate where they are not close to established (or establishing) amenities. They can force more people to travel further for those amenities, increasing car use and congestion.

Such developments if handled insensitively also undermine established neighbourhood character.

3.3.3 Dispersal

Growth by dispersal outward at low density has in some instances led to scattered and uncoordinated developments or subdivisions. In some instances this has led to new single use subdivisions that are poorly connected to existing town and neighbourhood centres.

They can lack the cross section of uses and amenities that lead to social cohesion within neighbourhoods. They can also blur the definition of the natural urban boundaries that have been well established.

This type of development may also fail to be adequately serviced by public transport. In turn, this fails to contribute towards the viability of the District's public transport system.

In addition, continued dispersal at low density, outward from established areas, can increase daily travel distances. It also requires a high cost in infrastructure, including roading, storm and waste water reticulation.

3.3.4 Growth Control

Addressing the issues that arise from growth ultimately leads to the question, how much growth can be sustained beyond which:

- the environmental capacity to service the community may be exceeded
- valued neighbourhood character is undermined
- natural and/or established urban boundaries are overrun
- the distinction between urban and rural gets lost
- the district loses its appeal as a visitor destination
- natural landscapes are threatened

3 Issues for the District

3.3.4 Growth Control (continued)

Conversely constraining growth also has adverse consequences:

- land and house prices may rise to a point that few can afford. This forces workers to commute from elsewhere and can price long standing residents out of the community
- a large sector of the districts community is reliant on ongoing development and its associated activities for their livelihood



3 Issues for the District

3.4 Connections - transport and landuse

The urban form of a town or neighbourhood has a direct impact on its residents' lifestyle options.

That urban form is largely determined by its layout and the transport network that services it. This makes it worthwhile to consider the community's aspirations for their neighbourhood, before committing to a street pattern and roading layout.

3.4.1 Roads

There are a limited number of roads going in and out of Queenstown. As the area grows, so does the congestion on these roads.

From the perspective of land transport efficiency the solution would be to upgrade road capacity and create alternative routes. However, increased capacity leads to more congestion and additional parking being required in town centres. Also new routes enable new development often at ever increasing distance from town centres.

Eventually such development leads to congestion on the new routes and runs into conflict with the natural landscape values of the District that underpin the local economy.

A more strategic approach is to look at transport in conjunction with landuse. If greater concentrations of residential and business land use activities are encouraged in selected locations along the key roads; public transport, cycling, and walking options become more viable. A mix of residential, work and educational opportunities in or close to areas of more intensive activity, combine to reduce dependence on travel by private vehicles.

3.4.2 Streets

Within town and neighbourhood centres, streets become less about getting people from place to place and more about being the setting for what people do when they get there. The streets become destinations as opposed to through routes.

Yet the design of our town centre streets often still places high priority on the efficiency of traffic movement. This approach prioritises vehicles above pedestrians or cyclists and gives little thought to the creation or definition of public space.

3.4.3 Delivering safe, integrated streets

Road safety measures have often focused on providing wide sweeping carriageways with long sight lines to reduce distraction and confusion for drivers.

Studies indicate that this encourages driver automation where the lack of stimulus dulls the senses of motorists.

Contemporary research shows that one of the more effective ways to ensure safe and more considerate driver behaviour is to place other users and activities (safely) in their view. This forces drivers to acknowledge potential hazards and respond accordingly.

3.4.3 Pedestrian amenity and commercial viability

A key area of Council's influence in improving urban design outcomes is the street network. If our street and roading projects are to focus on providing the best value and benefit to all users, inclusive of the activities that front them, high levels of pedestrian amenity are paramount.

Where town centre streetscapes have been upgraded to provide appropriate pedestrian amenity corresponding uptakes in pedestrian activity and commercial vitality have followed. In many cases this encourages shop and office refits and/or new development that reflects the higher values. This in turn encourages further vitality.

Major re-configurations of our roads, such as the Inner Links project in Queenstown and the Ardmore Brownston project in Wanaka have very significant implications on the urban form and landuse opportunities for those two centres.

3 Issues for the District

3.4.3 Contribution to amenity (continued)

It is therefore critical that they are comprehensively designed by integrated teams of specialists, together with their communities, to ensure the best possible benefits.

3.4.4 Funding

Funding street network improvements have been focused on Central Government funding criteria that assess projects based on transport efficiency and road safety targets. Project objectives beyond these criteria relies on ratepayer funding.

The result is that improved urban design outcomes through transport projects have not been as far reaching as they could be.

Arguments for the inclusion of urban design principles align closely with Council's transport strategies. These strategies (*the Wakatipu Transport Strategy, the Wanaka Transportation and Parking Strategy, the By Foot, On Cycle Strategy*) are all seeking a transport system that relies less on the private car for getting around.

The Wanaka and Wakatipu Strategies, in particular, are driven by the need to provide transport systems that can meet the needs of forecast growth, while keeping in mind the visitor based economy where the protection and enhancement of amenity values are paramount.

The Council recognises that efforts through transport projects to deliver economic benefit must have a close alignment with the wider economic benefits being sought through this Urban Design Strategy.

The funding criteria used to assess transport projects can work against the growth in the District's economy. This has a wider disadvantage to the regional and national economies.

A key issue for the immediate future is whether the current funding system is flexible enough for transport-led projects, with strong urban design drivers, to qualify for Central Government funding.

3.5 Sustainability

Sustainable growth management is the over-arching community outcome.

It incorporates resilient communities, environmental stewardship, social cohesion and economic prosperity, now and into the future.

Urban design cannot attempt to tackle all of these issues. However it can be a major contributor by creating more sustainable urban environments.

Its major contribution to sustainable growth management is the delivery of more sustainable urban form and layout for our communities featuring:

- high quality, consolidated neighbourhoods
- well interconnected transport networks with a variety of travel options
- sustainable building practices resulting in reduces energy costs over lifespan of buildings, and reduced embedded energy in the construction process
- low impact design techniques for storm and wastewater systems

3.5.1 Sustainability and growth

All proposals for urban growth, whether new subdivisions or consolidating existing neighbourhoods, need to be assessed in terms of the contribution to a more sustainable urban environment.

Although the sustainable management of resources is the underlying premise of the RMA, no specific parameters are set out in the District Plan about what kinds of urban form produce more sustainable outcomes. This has resulted in a wide and often unproven level of interpretation as to what kinds of urban growth are sustainable.

3 Issues for the District

3.5.2 Supply of industrial land

Land available for industrial uses is in short supply. Options for zoning further land for this purpose need to carefully weigh up local residential and landscape values.

Consideration should be given to how the needs of construction and service industries can be adequately catered for, in a region with consistently high scenic landscape values.

For example, how can industrial yards and buildings be reconciled with the landscape values (and land values) and where can they go?

3.5.3 Vehicular dependency and rising energy costs

Our car oriented culture is heavily reliant on fossil fuels. The price of oil can also impact on visitor numbers, particularly from more distant countries.

Relatively low oil prices have, in the past, resulted in low density urban areas that spread out from our town centres. This increases travel distances for everyday activities.

It has also led to environments where pedestrians are given much less priority than cars. This has public health implications, with rising obesity and cardiovascular disease linked to car-based suburban living.

When cars are relied on to get to town or retail centres, it creates a demand for a large amount of parking/manoeuvring space. This is often at the expense of town centre vitality and pedestrian orientated amenity.

Urban design has a key role to play in developing environments that better support pedestrian activity and public transport.

Resilience to future oil price increases will be influenced by how we adapt towards more compact urban areas, creating greater efficiencies in energy consumption.



public area dominated by parking

3.5.4 Greening our townscapes

Good practise urban design seeks to better integrate the urban and natural ecologies. Techniques to achieve this are collectively referred to as Low Impact Design (LID) and include:

- interlinking the green space network
- encouraging street trees, green walls and green roofs
- requiring more permeable surfaces in landuse development
- protecting natural waterways
- optimising street and site layouts for solar orientation of buildings

Benefits include moderation of urban climate extremes, sustainable stormwater management and increased biodiversity. All contribute towards a healthier environment for people to live in.

3 Issues for the District

3.5 Community, collaboration and custodianship

Urban design is related to a number of other disciplines such as planning, traffic design, architecture, development economics, surveying, landscape architecture and engineering. It seeks to draw on these strands collectively to achieve the best outcomes with the emphasis on place as opposed to individual developments. The key to where the best outcomes lie is in the needs and aspirations of the local community.

3.6.1 Collaboration

A large number of diverse interests impact on the design and layout of urban areas. The greater the variety of uses that eventuate in an area has a significant impact on how successful a place will be.

When too heavily skewed by any one particular interest, the vitality is likely to suffer.

Good practise urban design sets out to be at the heart of the collaborative process. It aims to champion wider public interest through stewardship of public place design.



3.6.2 Local area frameworks and strategies

Each urban area has its own defining characteristics with specific urban design related issues to be addressed. These need to be examined thoroughly in order to develop a framework of actions to enable an area to fulfil its potential.

Town centre strategies have been prepared for Wanaka and Queenstown. These include detailed action plans to progress and integrate a number of urban projects.

The strategies reflect the aspirations of those communities and enable both Council funded and private initiatives to be coordinated and prioritised.

The Urban Design Strategy aims to identify where local framework plans and strategies are needed and to prioritise when they should occur.

3.6.3 Public safety

Part of the attraction of our larger town centres is the vitality and mix of activities on offer, both by day and night.

A negative consequence of this is unruly and sometimes violent behaviour, particularly late at night. This compromises what is otherwise perceived to be a generally high level of personal safety in our District.

In part this is a behavioural issue. However there are a number of techniques related to the design of the physical environment collectively referred to as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

CPTED seeks to reduce the likelihood of bad behaviour occurring as well as people's perception of the threat to their personal safety.

It is increasingly important that public safety is given a high priority from the outset of both public and private development initiatives in our urban areas

3 Issues for the District

3.6.4 Affordability

The District's housing supply has, in the main, responded to a high demand in the premium end of the market.

As a result, there has been a longstanding short fall in houses that are affordable to people who fill the jobs required to service our growing resident and visitor numbers.

This in turn contributes to a high turnover of people in the service sector and lowers retention levels for employers. Council has set up the Queenstown Lakes Community Housing Trust to address this issue by increasing the supply of affordable housing and through its shared ownership scheme.

However when designed poorly, low cost housing can rapidly become regarded as 'cheap' and an affront to neighbours. A major focus of urban design is how to achieve robust and attractive neighbourhoods that help foster a strong sense of local community. This can play a key role in delivering affordable housing that the wider community embraces.



4 Urban Design goals and objectives

The following tables describe how the urban design goals and objectives will address the issues outlined in the previous section.

GOAL 4.1 DISTINCTIVE BUILT FORM

creating neighbourhoods that reflect their people, culture and history

Objectives to achieve this goal:

- **Ensure that new development respects and complements the natural setting.** This includes distinctive mountain backdrops, waterways, key views from public places and any valued and/or indigenous vegetation and ecosystems.
- **Ensure that all development is sympathetic to its urban context.** In terms of scale, form, and how it fits with existing character and built heritage, while also encouraging diversity.
- **Avoid visually dominant built form.** Either as a single large form out of scale with historic development, or a series of the same or similar smaller forms, that adjoin or occur in close proximity without mitigation.
- **Develop creative, distinct and vibrant urban neighbourhoods.** To add to the attraction of the district as a place to live, work and visit.
- **Ensure new buildings contribute towards defining positive public places in town and neighbourhood centres.** To clearly define edges and positively interact with public space. This includes higher density residential zones and comprehensive development in low density zones.
- **Support large format retail development where it can be integrated into street based, pedestrian friendly urban environments.** To create people orientated places that reflect the scale, intimacy and vitality of the District's traditional commercial streetscapes.
- **Ensure that the parts of buildings that people experience at close range or low speed relate to the human scale.** To help provide a sense of visual richness avoiding bland or overly dominant built form.



4 Urban Design goals and objectives

GOAL 4.2 HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM AMENITY

that complements the appeal of the natural setting and fosters both commercial vitality and community wellbeing

Objectives to achieve this goal:

- **Ensure all public space and infrastructure works are designed to create and/or contribute to consistently outstanding public space environments.** By prioritising the delivery of the highest standard of public space amenity for roads, parks, streets, footpaths, through site links and arcades.
- **Control the quality of design of all new buildings fronting public space.** To ensure active edges that positively address, interact with and define the boundaries of public space.
- **Integrate street and landuse initiatives.** To achieve an appropriate balance between streets as character destinations and streets as thoroughfares.
- **Prioritise amenity upgrades to streets where pedestrian movement is to be the main mode of travel within town centres, while keeping vehicle access at low speeds only.** To discourage through traffic other than on designated routes, encouraging a sense of place while minimising risk to pedestrians.
- **Minimise excessive visual clutter and impediments to pedestrian movement.** Including parking and directional signs and barriers or other obstacles separating pedestrians and vehicles.
- **Ensure Council has the ability to decline any development that detracts from the quality of public amenity.**



4 Urban Design goals and objectives

GOAL 4.3 CONSOLIDATED GROWTH

within existing urban boundaries, with vital and walkable mixed use environments that help reduce travel time and alleviate sprawl

Objectives to achieve this goal:

- **Consolidate growth within the agreed natural boundaries of our existing settlements.** To make the best and most sustainable use of the valuable land resource, protect visual landscape amenity beyond urban boundaries, reduce time and cost in travel, improve health and make public transport more viable.
- **Ensure all proposals to expand urban areas, including subdivisions and roading infrastructure, are fully assessed in terms of the sustainability of the urban form they create.** This applies both to the new urban areas and to their impact on existing urban areas.
- **Determine which parts of our urban environment are most suitable for consolidation.** Including extra height and density.
- **Encourage higher residential densities around town and neighbourhood centres and public transport routes.** To increase neighbourhood and commercial vitality and promote the viability of public transport.
- **Raise the standards of design and construction quality of multi unit residential buildings.** To ensure higher density developments are favourably regarded by the public and contribute positively to the District's attraction to visitors.
- **Deliver high quality streetscape amenity and provide communal open space in the form of small pocket parks and reserves in higher density areas.** To provide the recreational opportunities that offset the reduced amount of private open space for each unit.
- **Protect and enhance the established character of low density neighbourhoods that do not meet the criteria for an increase in density.**



4 Urban Design goals and objectives

GOAL 4.4 INTERCONNECTED URBAN FORM

in which people have clear choices of transport options that are convenient, efficient and affordable

Objectives to achieve this goal:

- **Integrate roading and landuse initiatives.** To reduce travel distances and costs, encourage health and fitness by making walking and cycling more viable and promote public transport options.
- **Provide or encourage new connections and green linkages through existing larger blocks.** To improve accessibility in our built up areas and to encourage walking and cycling.
- **Ensure that all new developments, streets and buildings, are designed with universal accessibility as a key factor.** Including gentle transitions in grade along footpaths, between footpaths and private development, and on street crossings.
- **Improve pedestrian amenity around town and neighbourhood centres, community facilities and schools.** To create safer and more attractive pedestrian routes to and from these places.
- **Provide convenient and safe crossing points across major roads.** So that pedestrians can get to their desired destinations conveniently and safely.
- **Advocate for cycle provision on all major routes.** This includes dedicated cycle routes and trails, where feasible, on main commuter routes, ensuring cycle storage and stands are provided for at town and neighbourhood centres, and at public transport terminals.
- **Minimise the amount of directional and parking signs in the District's urban areas.** Integrate signs, where possible with other street furniture, to avoid excessive clutter in public areas.



4 Urban Design goals and objectives

GOAL 4.5 SUSTAINABLE URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

where the natural environment, landuse and movement networks combine towards a healthier environment for people

Objectives to achieve this goal:

- **Ensure large scale urban projects, including new subdivisions and neighbourhoods, deliver and/or contribute to sustainable urban settlement patterns.**
- **Ensure all new urban redevelopment or expansion incorporates sustainable landscape practices.** To better integrate the urban and natural environments. This includes: the open space network; encouraging street trees, green walls and green roofs; protecting natural waterways; providing adequate areas of permeable surface; and encouraging sustainable stormwater and wastewater practices.
- **Advocate for best practice for delivery of sustainable buildings.** This includes energy used during construction, energy consumption over the life of the building, and stormwater and wastewater management.
- **Raise awareness of best practice sustainability and urban design principles.** To demonstrate the wider benefits for individuals, communities and the District as a whole.
- **Consider the impact of potential natural hazards on the form and location of design.**

4 Urban Design goals and objectives

GOAL 4.6 COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

where the urban environment fosters a stronger sense of local community by encouraging participation in public life of as wide a cross section of the community as possible

Objectives to achieve this goal:

- **Advocate for a greater range of house types, tenures, and affordable housing units within any new multi-unit residential development.** To create more socially balanced and equitable communities.
- **Ensure civic and community oriented buildings are located in established town centres.** So they retain their relevance to the resident community as well as visitors.
- **Ensure that new development contributes towards a safer public environment by creating strong visual links between public and private space.** To encourage mutual passive surveillance, and a clear distinction between public and private spaces in urban areas.
- **Alter the priority of neighbourhood streets and public spaces through improved and more sensitive design.** So that the pedestrian is given greater priority over the private car.
- **Consider public art as part of any street and public space upgrade in our town centres.** Encourage large scale private developments to contribute towards providing public art.
- **Ensure that urban design implications are considered across the broad range of Council functions and Council Controlled Organisation initiatives.**
- **Provide strong community leadership and advocacy for better urban design outcomes.** This includes developing initiatives to increase public awareness of urban design principles and good urban design practice.

5 Implementation

The Council has a number of implementation methods that can address the goals and objectives outlined in this strategy. These come under the following areas:

- 1 Leadership
- 2 Strategy and policy
- 3 Regulation and monitoring
- 4 Recognition and awareness

The table below describes how the Council will work towards the six urban design goals identified, by using the tools available within these four areas. The actions tend to address a number of the goals at once, reflecting the inter-related nature of urban design.

The table also sets out timeframes for implementation and whether or not the action has been carried over from the prior action plan, formulated in response to Ministry for the Environments Urban Design Protocol.

Action		Goal	Implementation Timeframe	Carried over from a prior action plan?
5.1 Leadership				
Action	Become a signatory to the Ministry for the Environment's Urban Design Protocol		2007	
Description	This action reflects Council's commitment to raising the standard of urban design in the District. The two requisites of signatories are to appoint an urban design champion and to develop an urban design action plan.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Appoint a Council 'Design Champion' at a senior influential level to promote and champion quality design and to challenge existing approaches to the Council		2007	
Description	Ex-Councillor Lou Alfeld is appointed as the Design Champion.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Appoint an urban designer to the Council Policy Team		2007	
Description	Nick Karlovsky is appointed as the urban designer.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Create Urban Design Panels		2004	
Description	The Council uses panels of independent built-environment professionals and community representatives to review and provide urban design advice on significant public and private projects in Queenstown and Wanaka.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes

5 Implementation

Action		Goal	Implementation Timeframe	Carried over from a prior action plan?
5.1 Leadership (continued)				
Action	Set high-level objectives			
Description	Key members of the management team have objectives in their personal development plans that relate to urban design.	1 to 6	Ongoing	No
Action	Council capital projects are reviewed by the Urban Design Panel			
Description	All Council's physical works projects are reviewed by the urban design panel, or a suitably qualified consultant or staff member, against the Ministry for the Environment's 'seven Cs' to ensure best practise urban design. This includes community facilities, buildings, open spaces and infrastructure.	1 to 6	Ongoing	No
Action	Set the highest possible urban design objectives for key Council projects			
Description	Pursue the best possible urban design outcomes on key district wide projects through advocacy, negotiation and strategic collaboration with key stakeholders to overcome any potential barriers to quality urban design decision-making.	1 to 6	Ongoing	No
Description	For capital projects in public areas, apply urban design outcome criteria to prioritising projects, setting project objectives and briefs and reviewing project design.			
Action	Involve the community			
Description	Involve the public in the planning and urban design process in their community in pursuit of a common vision.	6	Ongoing	No
Action	Review construction briefs			
Description	Make a commitment that all briefs for construction should consider urban design issues and are appropriately reviewed by the Urban Design Panel or a suitably qualified consultant or staff member.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Tender			
Description	Ensure tender procedures for construction and maintenance are judged against value for money and quality rather than just least cost.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Maximise external funding for good urban design through transport projects			
Description	Work with NZ Transport Agency to ensure that funding assessments recognise the full economic benefits of the urban design elements of QLDC transport projects.	1 to 6	Ongoing	No

5 Implementation

Action		Goal	Implementation Timeframe	Carried over from a prior action plan?
5.2 Strategy and policy				
Action	Develop a District urban design strategy			
Description	Develop an urban design strategy to provide overarching direction for the role of urban design in the District.	1 to 6	2009	Yes
Action	Regularly review and monitor the urban design strategy action plan			
Description	Review action plan every three years, prior to 10 year Council Community Plan reviews, commencing with an Urban Design Panel future visioning session.	1 to 6	2010	No
Action	District Plan Review			
Description	Include the seven Cs as urban design assessment matters in the High Density Residential rules in the District Plan.	1 to 6	2007	Yes
Description	Before notification of any relevant draft council policy, consider the urban design implications of that policy. This is currently being achieved either through review by the Urban Design Panel or by relevant Council staff /consultants.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Description	Review activity status of buildings in Town Centres in order to be able to say no to poor urban design outcomes and include robust urban design assessment criteria in relevant sections of the District Plan.	1 to 6	2010	No
Description	Review activity status and assessment criteria of all kinds of urban expansion in terms of the sustainability of the resulting settlement pattern.		2010/11	No
Action	Place-specific urban strategies			
Description	Develop a Town Centre Strategy for Wanaka.	1 to 6	2009	No
Description	Develop a Town Centre Strategy for Queenstown.	1 to 6	2009	No
Description	Identify and prioritise future neighbourhoods and places for place specific urban design strategies.	1 to 6	2010	No
Action	Future visioning			
Description	Implement a think tank process whereby the urban design panels, in workshop format, scope future urban initiatives and directions.	1 to 6	2010	No

5 Implementation

Action		Goal	Implementation Timeframe	Carried over from a prior action plan?
5.2 Strategy and policy (continued)				
Action	Develop urban design guidelines			
Description	Arrowtown design guidelines (2007).	1, 5, 6	2007	Yes
Description	Queenstown Town Centre design guidelines (2007).	1, 5, 6	2007	Yes
Description	Wanaka Town Centre design guidelines.	1, 3, 5, 6	2009/10	No
Description	Queenstown/Wanaka public space guidelines.	1, 3, 5, 6	2010/11	No
Description	High Density Residential and Mixed Use design guidelines.	1 to 6	09/10	No
Action	Professional input			
Description	Provide opportunities for design professionals (through the Urban Design Panels) to pro-actively identify and provide input into key urban design issues facing the District.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	LTCCP			
Description	Continue to work towards creating high quality urban design through the Long Term Council Community Plan.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes

5 Implementation

Action		Goal	Implementation Timeframe	Carried over from a prior action plan?
5.3 Regulation and monitoring				
Action	Decision making			
Description	Ensure that urban design issues and the advice of the Urban Design Panel and/or design consultants are given appropriate weight in the decision making process.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	In-house resources			
Description	Employ urban design specialist(s) on Lakes Environmental staff.	1 to 6	2009	No
Action	Professional input			
Description	Provide opportunities for design professionals (through the Urban Design Panels) to pro-actively identify and provide input into key urban design issues facing the District.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Develop CBD models			
Description	Develop a 'town model' for the Queenstown and Wanaka CBD areas. The model may be computer generated and permit a streetscape 'walk through' of design proposals <u>or</u> a physical model.	1 to 6	09/10	Yes
Action	Monitor the Urban Design Panel			
Description	Actively monitor the effectiveness of the Urban Design Panel in influencing urban design outcomes in the District.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Monitor urban design outcomes in LTCCP			
Description	Monitor and report on Council's progress toward influencing urban design outcomes in the District as part of the Council's Monitoring Strategy for the Long Term Council Community Plan.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Description	Review all past urban design panel reports to assess impact.	1 to 6	2009/11	Yes
Description	Monitor the resource consent process for urban design outcomes.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Early input			
Description	Encourage and promote opportunities for private sector developers to obtain the advice of the Urban Design Panels early in the design process for new development projects.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes

5 Implementation

Action		Goal	Implementation Timeframe	Carried over from a prior action plan?
5.4 Recognition and awareness				
Action	Urban design awards			
Description	Develop an awards scheme that recognises and celebrates quality urban design in the District.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Education			
Description	Incorporate an educative component in the Council's communication material to raise the community's understanding of urban design issues and solutions and activities that Council is undertaking to promote best practice urban design in the District such as the Urban Design Panels.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Description	Hold a series of public meetings to discuss the role of urban design in future development initiatives.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Promote Urban Design Panel Process			
Description	Produce an Urban Design Panel brochure.		Completed 2006 Update required	Yes
Description	Place promotional material about the Urban Design Panel on the QLDC website.	1 to 6	Updated 2009	Yes
Description	Regular educational articles in local media and Scuttlebutt.		Ongoing	Yes
Action	Initiate an urban design speaker forum.	1 to 6		
Description	Bring a world-class speaker to Queenstown each year to meet with the Urban Design Panel, community representatives, Councillors and Council staff and hold a one day workshop to discuss and develop urban design issues/ideas/opportunities for the District as well as provide a presentation on urban design best practice and issues facing the District. Where possible these initiatives should be organised in collaboration with New Zealand Urban Design Forum, local branches of the Central Otago Branch of the Planning Institute, the Southern Branch of NZ Institute of Architects and the Southern Branch of NZ Institute of Landscape Architects, and other local and regional Councils who are also signatories to the Protocol.		Ongoing	Yes

5 Implementation

Action		Goal	Implementation Timeframe	Carried over from a prior action plan?
5.4 Recognition and awareness (continued)				
Action	Training			
Description	Provide opportunities for all Councillors and staff who contribute to the planning and management of the built environment to undertake training and education programmes to increase their understanding of urban design issues.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Specialist advice			
Description	Provide decision makers, consent and strategic planners with access to specialist urban design advice through the Urban Design Panel and educate them on the need for them to seek and consider this advice as part of the decision making process.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Education			
Description	Document examples of development that illustrate best practice in urban design and make this information available on the Council web site.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes
Action	Research			
Description	Research existing examples of urban design best practice before beginning a major development project or policy development process.	1 to 6	Ongoing	Yes

A1 Glossary of urban design terms

Urban

Urban means “relates to cities” or built up areas. “An urban area is an area with an increased density of human-created structures in comparison to the areas surrounding it. Urban areas may be cities, towns...but the term is not commonly extended to rural settlements such as villages...” (Wikipedia)

Public realm

The space within an urban environment that the public have common access to, including lanes, streets, squares and parks.

Positive enclosure of public space

The clarity and strength of a public space is principally derived from its built and/or landscaped edges that create a sense of enclosure. This gives positive definition to the shape and function of the space.
(delete - not referred to in the document)

Active frontage

When a building fronts onto a public place, it should add life and vitality to the area by including:

- frequent doors and windows with few blank walls, particularly at street level;
- narrow frontage buildings, giving vertical rhythm to the street scape;
- articulation of facades, with projections such as bays, porches and balconies encouraging interaction with passers-by; and on occasion, lively internal uses visible from the outside, or spilling onto the street

Connectivity

How the street and footpath network connects to enable ease of movement. More options, and more direct options, make for greater connectivity.

A typical grid street layout, for instance, offers several options for getting from any one place to another.

Cul de sacs and disjointed subdivisions on the other hand can force people into ‘going the long way’ increasing travel distances and sometimes focusing all traffic towards bottlenecks at arterial junctions.

Permeability

Closely related to connectivity, permeability is the degree to which the urban form facilitates ease of movement within it.

Tighter urban grids generate smaller block sizes facilitating greater permeability. This influences the ease of movement, and in particular the walkability of a given neighbourhood or town centre.

Urban grain

Urban grain is derived from the parcel size of land, and the subsequent scale of development on the land within an urban block.

Small parcels or plots give rise to a fine urban grain which encourages a diversity of forms and allows a rich variety of buildings to emerge. This contributes to generating more active frontage and encourages a more human scale of development.

The original subdivision of Queenstown into camp site size lots has played a key role in generating a fine urban grain of smaller scale development, contributing to a human scaled, intimate and lively town centre.

A1 Glossary of urban design terms

Perimeter block development

A key ordering tool to the design of urban areas, where buildings are concentrated around the edge of each urban block.

This gives strength of definition to the public space that is principally contained within the street network between the blocks. It also enables the containment of more private and sheltered space within the core of the block.

This is then reinforced by making a clear distinction between public fronts and private backs, with primary access to the buildings from the street, the principle frontage. By presenting their public face to the public realm, buildings effectively give life to it and activate the edge.

Where this principle is not followed, stand alone pavilion buildings often expose blank sides, car parking and rear servicing to the street.

Legibility

The ease by which an urban area can be understood and navigated in terms of the hierarchy and coherence of built form and urban space network.

Shared space

A shared street is a retail or residential street that has been designed to give priority to pedestrians, significantly reducing the dominance of motorised vehicles.

Characteristics can include:

- no kerbs or change in grade between pedestrian and traffic area; pedestrian, carparking and traffic lanes are instead defined by changes in surface texture and/or colour, bollards, trees etc;
- no impediments to pedestrian movement such as screens, rails and walls allowing general freedom of pedestrian movement;

- active retail frontages in retail zones with spill-out activities such as outdoor café and bar seating;
- few (if any) designated crossings or signs to regulate traffic. Narrow vehicle lanes and/or the proximity of buildings and/or trees, tight turning radii, and the possibility of pedestrians crossing at any point, combine to create a very slow speed environment and require drivers to reclaim responsibility;
- motorised vehicles, including delivery, service and refuse vehicles still have access but must give way to pedestrians, who conversely should not hinder vehicles.

Almost counter intuitively, this results in 'an environment of care where motorised traffic has a specific reason for travelling through the street. This reduces vehicle numbers and means drivers of the remaining vehicles take more care. Environmental conditions and road safety also improve .. and streets become open spaces for walking, sitting, playing and talking. (5-5 Ped planning & design guide LTNZ 2008).

Upper Beach Street in Queenstown is a local example.

CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design)

To a large extent levels of personal safety, and people's perception of their level of personal safety, are influenced by the design of the physical environment. Some of the basic premises in this field are:

- **passive surveillance (eyes on the street)** – the extent to which a public place is watched over by other people going about their everyday activities, such as people in nearby buildings overlooking the space, or motorists passing by in vehicles. Passive surveillance also works in reverse to the extent that where building frontages are clearly seen from public space, would be vandals or burglars are deterred.
- **clear lines of site through pedestrian linkages** – off-street pedestrian connections can create out of site locations that foster undesirable behaviour patterns, therefore linkages should ideally have clear lines of site through them and not be overly long or too narrow.
- **appropriate scale of vegetation** – planting generally between 1 and 2 metres

A1 Glossary of urban design terms

above ground as well as larger trees where the foliage extends to ground level, can hinder passive surveillance over public spaces. Similarly high fences along boundaries between public and private space can deny opportunities for mutual passive surveillance.

- **clarity of distinction between public and private space** – this enhances custodianship over the private realm while sending a clear message as to where people are and are not supposed to go.
- **appropriate lighting** – lack of adequate lighting in the public realm can create dark spots where surveillance is denied. Overly powerful lighting however can also create glare and leave areas just beyond the zone lighted in relative darkness.