

MARLBOROUGH'S

Small Townships

AWATERE | SEDDON

Seddon Township Plan



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Part One: Introduction

Marlborough's Small Townships Programme

In 2013 the Council adopted the Growing Marlborough District Wide Strategy to guide Council's investment and development decisions.

As part of Council's commitment to implementing the Growing Marlborough Strategy, funding for a new Small Townships Programme was included in the 2015–2025 Long Term Plan to improve public amenities and build the identities of the many small townships in Marlborough.

A Small Townships Subcommittee was established with delegated authority to develop criteria, approve new projects and monitor implementation of the programme. This Subcommittee is currently chaired by Councillor Barbara Faulls.

The Small Townships Programme recognises the unique qualities of smaller communities as well as their challenges. The overarching goal of the programme is to foster sustainable growth and enhance the wellbeing of the people who live and work in these townships.

The process for developing a Township Plan involves engaging with iwi and stakeholders to gain an understanding of the town's unique identity, key concerns, issues, and aspirations. Stakeholders include residents and businesses, as well as community organisations and government agencies.

The Township Plan provides a reference for the Council's future investment in the area, which usually relates to public spaces and infrastructure. However, a Township Plan can also offer a reference point for people in the community who wish to work on projects in their area. Having an agreed list of projects in the Plan will enhance coordination and may assist when seeking funding from external agencies.

Tangata Whenua

Council has shared an initial introduction to the Small Townships Programme with local iwi representatives, inviting feedback on any aspiration's iwi have that may align with the kaupapa (principles and ideas) of the Seddon Township Plan along with any Mātaranga Māori (Māori knowledge) of the area that they wish to share.

The cultural narrative of the area is captured in Ngā Kōrero Tukuiho, which is a resource developed through Te Tātoru o Wairau Project.

Council and iwi will have further conversations to discuss the community feedback and to consider how this relates to iwi aspirations.

Further discussion and sharing will occur over time to ensure township developments reflect the history and associations that iwi have with this area.

Purpose of this Plan

Council, iwi and the community have worked together to develop this Seddon Township Plan. It identifies what makes Seddon special and gives the community a voice at the Council's decision-making table.

Having a clear understanding of the most important challenges facing the community makes it easier for iwi, residents, community organisations, government agencies and Council to work together to achieve our shared vision for Seddon and to address some of the challenges we have identified in this Plan.

Scope

The Seddon Township Plan is primarily focused on investments and actions which support the development of outdoor recreation and links between the township's business, recreation and education spaces.

However, community feedback is often much wider in scope than physical works, covering the elements of social dynamics, community development, business, tourism and more.

Stakeholders

The following organisations were invited to contribute their ideas:

- Seddon Lions
- Seddon School
- Awatere Preschool
- Awatere Community Trust
- Awatere Valley Trust
- South Marlborough Network
- Seddon Youth Group.

The wider community were invited to contribute through both a community consultation event and a survey, and staff in a range of Council departments have provided feedback on the proposed projects.

Budget

A budget of \$340,000 has been allocated to implement the improvements listed in this Plan.

Development of this Plan

The Seddon Township Plan builds on the consultation carried out in 2017 as part of the MDC Smart + Connected initiative. The 2017 engagement process included 25 one-to-one interviews, a public Smart + Connected forum attended by 77 community representatives and a follow-up implementation workshop with 47 community representatives.

Members of the community provided further feedback in 2023, based on the following questions related to the Small Townships kaupapa:

- What makes Seddon Township special/unique?
- What works well?
- What would you like to improve or develop?
- Of the ideas shared, what would be your priority?

- Is there anything else you would like to share?

A summary of this feedback is listed in Part 3 of this Plan.

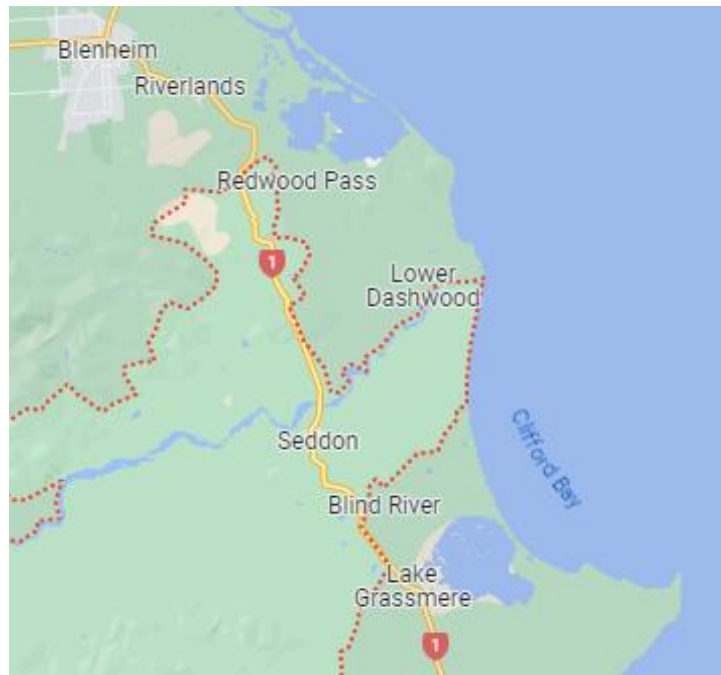
Timeline

- 2017 process
- Stakeholder interviews
- Public forum
- Follow-up implementation workshop
- 2023 process
- Stakeholder engagement
- Community consultation event
- Consultation display at the Awatere Information Centre
- Community survey.

Part Two: Seddon

Where is Seddon?

Seddon is located 25 kilometres south-east of Blenheim on State Highway 1, on the main route between Blenheim and Kaikōura. It is in the centre of the Awatere Valley and is close to the mouths of the Awatere and Blind Rivers and the Lake Grassmere Saltworks.



About Seddon

A diverse community lives in Seddon and the surrounding area, ranging from older people who have lived in the area all their lives, to young families moving to Seddon to take advantage of comparatively low-cost housing. The permanent population of just over 1200 people is bolstered by the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE) workers who live in and near the town for much of the year. More RSE workers travel to the area each day to work.

The Seddon township was established after the Government bought Starborough Estate in 1899 and subdivided it into smaller pastoral agriculture farms. Now salt and lime have become major local industries, and the Awatere Valley has been an important part of the Marlborough wine region since the 1990s.

People come into Seddon and the surrounding area each day to work and to attend school, while some Seddon residents travel to Blenheim for work.

There are several holiday areas which attract summer visitors, including Marfells Beach and the local campgrounds. The Awatere Community and Visitors Centre provides information, travel arrangements, internet and advisory services for visitors and locals. Tourist attractions include the scenic Marlborough Flyer steam train journey between Blenheim and Seddon, and the Whale Trail, a cycling and walking trail which will connect all of the coastal communities (including Seddon) between Picton and Kaikōura.

The Seddon War Memorial stands on a hill overlooking the town, and offers an impressive view of the area, as shown in the photo on the front cover of this Plan.

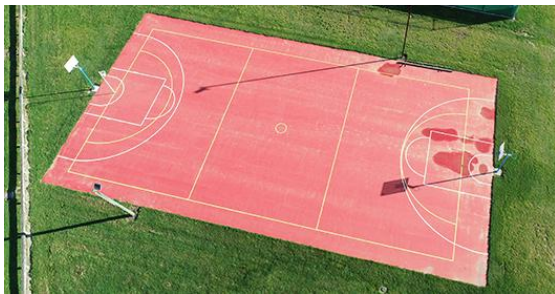
Recreation Facilities

Seddon Domain is an important focal point for the Seddon community and beyond. A number of activities occur at the Domain including rugby, tennis, netball and cricket.

The Domain Hall, which includes a main hall, meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, and a gym, services these activities and many other community events and clubs.

Council owns and provides funding for maintenance of the outdoor swimming pool in the Domain, which is open between December and March, and is operated by the Awatere Community Trust.

The Seddon Domain Reserve Management Plan provides for and ensures the use enjoyment, maintenance, protection and preservation of the area. This plan is currently under review and will consider some of the issues highlighted in Part Three of this document.



Seddon's nine-hole golf course attracts members from both the Marlborough and Clarence regions. It is well known as a course with excellent drainage and a micro-climate that makes it still playable when Marlborough is experiencing rough weather or heavy rainfall.

The Awatere Rugby Football Club was formed at a meeting in the Starborough Tavern in 1906, beginning a proud rugby history in South Marlborough, home of the Mighty Tussock Jumpers, who wear the green and gold colours of the Awatere landscape.

Who lives in Seddon?



Usually Resident Population

2006	1200
2013	1242
2018	1218



Census Night Population

2006	1233
2013	1287
2018	1182



Community Age

Under 15	234
15 to 29	171
30 to 64	612
65+	177



Home Owned	417
Home In Trust	90
Don't Own Home	303



Ethnicity

European	1068
Māori	174
Pacific	75
Asian	33
Other	24



Employment

Full Time	585
Part Time	174
Unemployed	21
Not In Labour Force	195

Cultural Significance of Seddon

Seddon is a culturally significant area for iwi, particularly for Rangitāne.

Located in alpine reserve in the Inland Kaikōura ranges, Mount Tapuae-o-Uenuku is the sacred mountain of the Kurahaupō tribes of Marlborough.

At 2,885 metres (9,465 ft), Tapuae-o-Uenuku is the highest mountain in New Zealand outside the main ranges of the Southern Alps, and is 80 metres taller than Mount Ruapehu, the tallest peak in the North Island.

Seddon's Recent History

The 2013 earthquakes were both shocking and destructive for residents in the small Seddon community. The first major quake struck on 21 July 2013, about 20 kilometres east of Seddon, at a depth of 17 kilometres and measuring 6.5 on the magnitude scale. It caused minor damage in the region, with more significant impacts in Wellington.

On 16 August a second quake hit measuring 6.6 on the magnitude scale, with an epicentre only 10 kilometres southeast of Seddon, at a depth of 8 kilometres. The earthquake caused significant land damage in the local area, with landslips blocking roads, including the main highway between Blenheim and Christchurch. Most of the buildings in Seddon were damaged in some way, with many declared uninhabitable.

The community gathered around to support the residents of Seddon as people came to terms with the impact of the quakes. Affected businesses, amongst them many wineries and the Grassmere Saltworks, which soon reopened with minimal long-term effects. However, a third of the houses in the vicinity of Seddon were left empty in the aftermath of the second quake.

Part Three – Vision, Issues and Actions



Introduction

The following statements are based on the feedback provided during the 2017 Smart + Connected consultation process.

Vision for Seddon

More facilities and housing will support our future success.

The community's greatest assets

The community is made up of caring people with community spirit, a strong work ethic and amazing skills. The people are the area's biggest asset, as shown in the way the community came together after the earthquakes.

The school is a central community asset, and the community hall, pool and sports facilities in the Domain are also highly valued by the community.

Key Issues

Medical Clinic

Seddon lacks a place for a visiting nurse's/doctor's clinic.

Facilities and Infrastructure

There is a need for new and more (or repaired) facilities, housing and infrastructure, including accommodation for RSE workers, clean drinking water, and good walking paths around Seddon.

Collaboration

A key concern for some people is a lack of governance and collaboration skills within and between community groups.

Ideas to achieve the vision and values and address key issues.

In 2017, the most popular idea was to establish a medical clinic for a travelling doctor or nurse.

Other popular suggestions at that time were:

- An under-fives hub
- Youth activities
- More accommodation
- The East Coast Cycle trail (now known as the Whale Trail)
- Community events that bring people together.

Completed Projects

Several large projects have been completed since 2017. The Awatere Hall, a \$2.75 million post-earthquake renovation project funded by the Council, opened on 11 August 2019. It has a main hall, meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, and a gym.

The Awatere Early Childhood Education Hub opened in February 2022. This community-driven and funded project includes an Early Learning Centre, Plunket and Playcentre.

The Domain tennis courts have been redeveloped, with new fencing and surfacing.

Small Township Consultation 2023

The Marlborough Small Township Programme asked for further input from the Seddon community in 2023, which is summarised below.

Living in Seddon

Things that are unique to Seddon, and make living in the area special, include:

Assets such as the Domain sports areas, the hall, information centre, bowling green and pavilion, school and Early Childhood Education hub -

- The beautiful and productive environment
- The mountain and river
- The rail bridge
- Community initiatives such as the community gardens and Taekwondo sessions
- Community services such as Fire and Emergency
- Great volunteers who offer their time and effort.

Ideas for Improvements

Seddon Domain

Suggestions for the Seddon Domain masterplan included enhancements to the accessibility, safety, appearance and range of facilities, as well as solar heating for the pool, and refocusing the campground on short term stays rather than permanent accommodation.

Footpaths and Walkways

Suggestions included improved connectivity between the town centre, community facilities, the Awatere River and the Whale Trail. As well as more signage, trees, a pedestrian overbridge for safer crossing of the railway line.

Traffic Safety and Transport

Suggestions included reducing speed limits and clearing vegetation on road reserve in the township to improve safety and visibility.

Tui Garden and Market on the Green

In 2015, a funding grant from Councils Tui to Town Project led to significant planting on private land across from the Cosy Corner on Main Street. Tui Garden is now a well-established native forest enjoyed by many.

A community market called 'Market on the Green' takes place each month on private land adjacent to Duncan Street.

Further improvements and approaches to managing these areas are being considered and may be achievable through a lease agreement.



Township Identity and Beautification

Opportunities for further enhancements of the township include plantings on Marama Road and Duncan Street, information at the Seddon War Memorial about the significant landmarks visible from this location, and local history and the Memorial.

Housing

Suggestions included making granny flats and duplexes a permitted activity to support affordable housing development.

Services and Events

Suggestions included having a practice nurse one day a week, a locally based police officer, and a paid coordinator for planning, organising and communicating community projects one day a week. Other ideas were a space for the youth group to use, and running creative workshops, rainy day events, computer sessions and film evenings.

Project Prioritisation

Several projects were identified during the 2023 consultation process, and some can be funded through the Small Townships budget.

However, we do not need to be limited to actions which are directly funded by Council or on public land. The full list of ideas is included in this Small Township Plan to give people the opportunity to work with others to make things happen in their community, including applying for funding to support a project.

Priority Projects for this Plan

	Action	Why	When	Who
1	Awatere Rail Bridge – Southern End Planting and placemaking.	Connectivity Liveability	Short	MDC Whale Trail Lions Club
2	Footpath and parking in Newcome Street and the associated area.	Connectivity Liveability	Short	MDC MR
3	Township wayfinding.	Connectivity Liveability	Short	MDC South Marlborough Network
4	Landscaping the pedestrian/cycle accessway in Seymour Street and the Main Road.	Connectivity	Short	MDC
5	Development of the Tui Garden as a town recreation area.	Unique identity Liveability	Short	MDC Awatere Valley Trust

Future Opportunities

Action	Why	When	Who
Planting on the Marama Road bank opposite the school.	<i>Unique identity Liveability</i>	Medium	TBC
Planting /placemaking in Duncan Street (the main side street of the town)	<i>Unique identity Liveability</i>	Medium	TBC
Rail signage – revamp the Seddon railway station sign to welcome those arriving in Seddon on the steam train.	<i>Unique identity Connectivity</i>	Medium	TBC
Information boards at the War Memorial to inform visitors about the significant landmarks visible from the location, and about local history and the Memorial.	<i>Connectivity</i>	Medium	TBC

Notes:

- MDC = Marlborough District Council
- MR = Marlborough Roads

Appendix – Background Information

Reference Documents

1. Te Tātoru o Wairau – Ngā Kōrero Tukuiho
2. Seddon and Awatere Community – Smart + Connected Debrief Report
3. Growing Marlborough Strategy