



a framework to unlock the potential

SECTION 3

A FRAMEWORK TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL

The urban design framework sets out the key assumptions, priorities, and goals used to help guide the strategy. Its purpose is to provide a rationale and focus for what urban development should achieve.

The framework is based on the following considerations:

Urban Design Principles

- The design fundamentals that shall guide development of the built environment; and
- The essential qualities that are necessary to create the optimal physical settings to facilitate social and economic exchange.

An Integrated Approach

Ensuring that design is undertaken in a holistic manner to avoid the risks associated with ‘tunnel vision’ or artificial separation of intrinsically interrelated elements. This applies to both:

- The core qualities of the environment (the ‘quadruple bottom line’); and
- The intellectual disciplines and specialisations that society uses to apply knowledge (i.e. traffic engineering and landscape design).

3.1 Urban design principles

A ‘Principled’ approach has been used to drive the process, based on key urban design concepts that can best embed and deliver sustainability into a built outcome. This has allowed a robust, defensible ‘bottom line’ to be established against which the potential of the Wairau-Awatere study area has been explored.

It also acts as a ‘safety net’ in that it ensures the framework addresses a broad range of issues, and is not biased or hijacked by one or two main interests, for example stormwater management, ecological protection, household density maximisation, or traffic efficiency.

The sustainable urban design principles that shall underpin the Development Frameworks, in line with the Ministry for the Environment’s “People Places Spaces”,

Principle

Elements

Purpose

consolidation & dispersal

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND INTENSITY

To promote higher intensity development around new nodes and lower density around the periphery. This allows local communities, businesses and public transport to be strengthened, and resource efficiencies to be achieved, whilst reducing environmental impacts on peripheral areas. For Marlborough this means looking for opportunities to increase the density in existing settlements (Blenheim in particular) wherever appropriate, such as in areas that enjoy many close amenities. It also means clustering growth in and around existing settlements wherever possible.

integration & connectivity

MOVEMENT NETWORKS; BUILDING INTERFACES

To promote development that is integrated and connected with its surrounding environment and other existing or future communities. This facilitates ease of access, economy of movement, and improved social interaction. For Marlborough this has a particular relevance to the way in which the different small settlements are compatible and complementary in their offer of facilities and amenities.

diversity & adaptability

RANGE OF DENSITIES; MIX OF USES; FLEXIBILITY OF BUILDINGS

To promote choice through the provision of a diverse mix of compatible activities and uses. These built environments can better adapt over time. This facilitates the ability to respond efficiently to social needs, provides a range of market demands, and allows for changes in lifestyle. For Marlborough this has relevance to the type and nature of intensification that is delivered. An emphasis on ‘mixed use’ can limit the range of business activities that can occur in a town centre, having flow-on impacts for the local employment and social heterogeneity of that environment. Likewise, uniformity in the types of households delivered through intensification can undermine the range of social groups that can viably use them.

legibility & identity

TOWN FORM; VISUAL CHARACTER; SPECIAL PLACES

To promote environments that are easily understood by their users, display a strong local identity, and create appropriate visual character. This facilitates an enhanced usage, enjoyment, and pride in local place. For Marlborough this means that living in the rural townships must remain experientially distinct from living within Blenheim. Each town centre must also be embedded with its own character. For example, the use of generic or formulaic ‘main street’ treatments repeated in each town centre would be a negative outcome. On the other hand some uniformity, for example ‘signature Marlborough signage’, could help with the overall brand of Marlborough.

environmental responsiveness

ECO SYSTEMS; GREEN NETWORK; URBAN WATER; WASTE; ENERGY

To promote urban environments that are responsive to natural features, eco systems, water quality issues, reduced energy usage and waste production, and balance the spatial needs to achieve this with that required for urbanisation. This facilitates improved ecological outcomes. For Marlborough this means having particular regard to the unique ecological and biodiversity context of the landform and ecosystem. Opportunities to retain or restore valuable ecosystems should be understood and capitalised upon. Increasing the population within urban areas will present on-going challenges that need to be managed at the same pace as growth.

3.2 An integrated approach

An integrated approach has been applied to this Marlborough Growth and Development project to ensure win-win benefits are achieved from more than one 'sphere'. Typical examples include:

Economic

A connected street network that offers economic benefits through the efficiency of traffic movement as well as social benefits by providing greater personal safety as a result of the wide-spread presence of motorists offering surveillance.

Ecological

Features that are celebrated and integrated into urban environments rather than closed-off or destroyed can enhance the recognition and identity of those towns, as well as adding value to the built form through better visual and aesthetic amenity.

Social

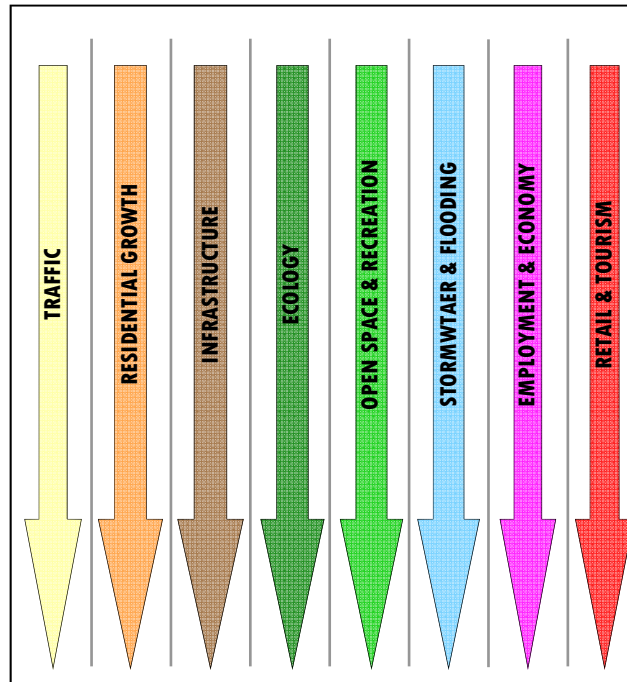
Coordinated residential land uses provide the greatest potential for social services to be accessible and relevant to their users. Employment opportunities are also a critical component of engendering social pride and well-being.

Cultural

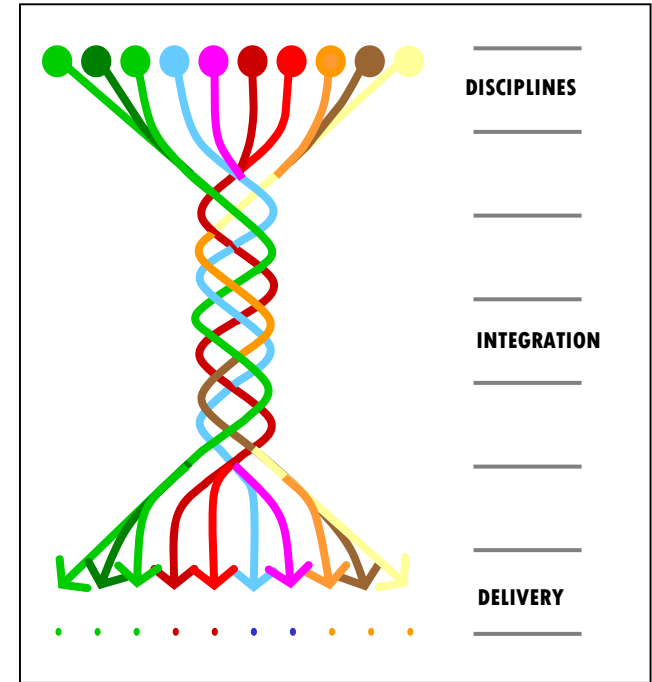
The growth strategy must be relevant to all cultural and ethnic groups, providing them with ownership and identity in the built form. If the strategy focuses solely on the mechanical task of providing 'X' houses for 'Y' population it will exacerbate existing and create new cultural suppressions.

Integration of disciplines

The project integrates the technical specialities that each partially manages spatial planning and the built environment (refer to Figures 3-1 and 3-2). This is to ensure the strategy is robust, grounded, and deliverable.



ABOVE FIG. 3-1: Traditional 'silo-based' approach, in which each discipline tries to resolve its own issues and achieve its objectives in isolation from other disciplines.



ABOVE FIG. 3-2: Integrated approach in which each relevant discipline seeks to achieve their objectives in dialogue with other disciplines, leading to richer outcomes and synergies.

3.3 Urban Design principles per network

Five technical 'themes' have been identified for this project. These are community, land uses, movement, green and blue, and infrastructure. Infrastructure is guided by affordability, efficiency, legacy and connectivity to existing networks. For the remaining themes, the following guiding principles apply:

COMMUNITY

GENERAL

Community network refers to the provision of social infrastructure such as educational, healthcare and community facilities, and also the qualitative aspects of fostering a sense of place and identity. A successful social network provides residents with a sense of community, good accessibility to facilities and networks and the opportunity to participate. This leads to improvements in the level of health and well being in addition to providing leisure and recreational opportunities.

KEY AIMS FOR MARLBOROUGH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT:

- Maintain a strong sense of local identity, ownership, participation, and pride in Marlborough as a District and the individual settlements within Marlborough;
- Designing a built environment which responds to the needs of an ageing population and changing demographics; and
- Providing for community and other facilities (including local retail) as required to support the residential population.

LAND USES

GENERAL

Towns or township centres need to be vibrant economic and social hubs with residential, employment and community uses and public transport, shops, community facilities and jobs within walking distance. Residential areas should be varied, attractive, liveable, and walkable. Employment areas should be mixed, amenable and as attractive as possible.

KEY AIMS FOR MARLBOROUGH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

In terms of land uses:

- Strengthen the character of the townships with retention of small scale expansion of local convenience retailing in the village centre in the face of population growth and movement network change;
- Using the township centres as magnets for people and goods, harnessing the movement economy;
- Aim for the provision of a wider range of employment opportunities than those currently available; and
- Consider future provision of higher density residential and a mix of uses that will not undermine the existing conventional residential / rural nature of residential land uses in Blenheim and the townships.

MOVEMENT

GENERAL

This refers to the system of roads, cycleways, pathways and linkages throughout a location. It has a relationship with green networks in respect of pedestrian and cycling linkages.

KEY AIMS FOR MARLBOROUGH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

The key to the continued and coherent development of Marlborough will be:

- A coordinated approach to provide for necessary road changes in conjunction with land use activities;
- Enhancement of connectivity to enable continued pedestrian and vehicular accessibility between township centres and residential catchments without undermining the ability of the State Highways to efficiently handle through-traffic;
- The establishment of public transport provision where possible;
- Urban blocks should be kept relatively small to facilitate and encourage walkability. Suitable provision should be made to allow attractive and safe-feeling footpaths;
- To ensure layouts are easily understood by users, routes should be relatively direct and legible. Vistas and key junctions should be marked by landmark elements;
- A range of interconnected networks should be provided to maximise the choice, viability and attractiveness of as many transport modes as possible in addition to private motor vehicles;
- Streets with a large amount of pedestrians, such as those in the centres of townships should be liveable, active and encourage lower vehicle speeds on local roads; and
- Mitigate the visual impact of off street parking and retain on-street parking wherever practical.

GREEN + BLUE

GENERAL

The **green network** refers to the system of parks, pedestrian walkways, recreational spaces, and facilities that interact with the movement network and land use mix. A key to a successful green network is in providing a range of experiences that correspond to logical movement patterns and which provide choice and amenity to users.

The **blue network** relates to water management, typically integrating stormwater, and the consideration of water quality and quantity issues. A successful blue network provides visual amenity value in addition to ecological servicing and additional safety to buildings through reduced flood risk. It is also integrated into green (open space) networks and is a source of local identity and amenity.

KEY AIMS FOR MARLBOROUGH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- Providing a high amenity interface between land uses and open spaces through green buffers;
- Provide for community parks & neighbourhood reserves within walkable distance of new residential areas;
- Use street trees and landscaping along key roads and wherever possible in Blenheim and the townships;
- Using stormwater management areas / open drainage retention areas for walking and cycling opportunities;
- Pursuing opportunities for low impact solutions to stormwater management (treatment and discharge); and
- Increasing, improving or restoring areas of native planting to attract bird- and insect life.