

Communities that build investor confidence recover better and faster.

Doug Ahlers, Harvard University
August 2011

The private sector needs certainty – if they know the rules and expectations, they can decide how they will participate.

David Lindsay,
Deputy Minister, Province of Ontario, Canada

Keep the city compact. The more compact it is the more vibrant it will be - don't fear high density, but demand high quality.

Anthony, Christchurch

Urgent rebuild of the convention centre, as it brings in significant economic returns to the city.

Caroline, Business Development Manager, Christchurch and Canterbury Tourism

Central City Plan Business Overview

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The Christchurch City Council has adopted the final draft Central City Plan, a historic document which will guide the recovery and redevelopment of the Central City during the next two decades.

There are a number of changes in the Plan from the draft that Council put out for consultation in August 2011, a result of Council listening to the needs of its community and responding accordingly.

What has been critical in this process has been the high level of engagement with key stakeholders and the willingness by all sectors to work with Council to develop a Plan which meets both the aspirations of the community and the needs of the business sector.

The Council thanks everyone for their involvement in helping to create the framework that will guide the redevelopment of the Central City. The conversations with our community and key stakeholders will need to continue during the next 10 to 20 years and beyond, as the Plan is implemented.

Many issues were raised in comments on the draft Plan, in particular relating to building heights, parking and design rules. These have been addressed in the final draft Plan for Ministerial Review.

What Council will do

The City Council has made a commitment to undertake the following projects within the Central City to help revitalise the city centre and drive and support private investment:



Greening the Cathedral

Cathedral Square will be redeveloped and greened to support the opening up of the area, creating a place for people which reflects Christchurch's rich and varied cultural heritage.



Blocks, Lanes and Courtyards

New lanes and courtyards will be developed as part of the rebuild, unlocking the potential of underdeveloped areas of the Central City, connecting spaces and enriching people's experience of the Central City.



Convention Centre

A world-class convention centre in the heart of the Central City will be critical for Christchurch's economic recovery, driving tourism and hospitality activity in the area.



Central Library

A new flagship Central Library will be redeveloped for Christchurch, making it a destination in the Central City, welcoming residents and visitors and connecting to surrounding open spaces.



Papawai Ōtakaro

The Avon River/Ōtakaro will be celebrated and developed as Christchurch's new riverfront park with pedestrian/cycle paths and areas for recreational activity and relaxing.



Metro Sports Facility

A sports hub within the Central City will be home to world-class sporting facilities, strengthening Christchurch's reputation as a premier international sporting destination.



Commuter Rail

A commuter rail network will be investigated to help stimulate recovery of the city. It will be part of a new transport system for the Central City offering accessibility and choice.

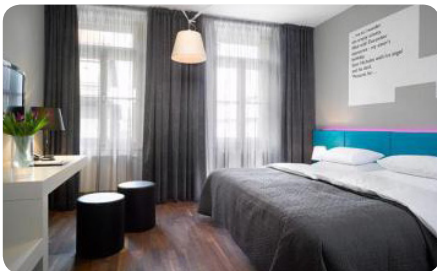
Central City Plan Business Overview

The top issues were

1 Existing use rights

The Council has replaced the proposal to extend existing use rights within the Central City Plan, by introducing a limited life rule that will allow buildings to be replaced up to the current height and/or overall floor area.

This will give property owners up to four years to redevelop sites with a new building of the same height and proportion to that which was either damaged or destroyed in the earthquakes. This provides greater certainty for property owners than the original proposal to extend existing use rights.



4 New hotel area

While not detailed in the Central City Plan, the Council has made a commitment, as part of its deliberations, to establish provisions that favour taller hotel buildings located in proximity to the new Convention Centre. This recognises that hotels need to be higher to achieve the number of rooms which ensure economic viability. This area is currently “floating” until a location for the new Convention Centre is selected.

5 Comprehensive development

The new comprehensive development provision provides greater flexibility for property owners to redevelop larger scale or amalgamated sites in the Central City. These projects will not be subject to the same rules as smaller developments, but rather be assessed on their merit to provide a high-quality urban development outcome and be a catalyst for future investment.

Developers will also have the flexibility to use the previous height or floor area entitlement across an entire comprehensive development area.



2 Building heights

Under the Central City Plan, Council will introduce new permitted building heights in the Central City.

- Within the Compact Core – bounded to the north and west by the Avon River/Ōtakaro, Lichfield Street in the south and Manchester Street to the east – the height limit will be 31 metres, with a 45-degree recession plane from 21 metres.
- The Fringe Zone – surrounding the Core and extending south to Moorhouse Avenue, north up Victoria Street to Bealey Avenue and east to Madras Street – the height limit will be 21 metres.
- In the Mixed Use Zone – predominantly in the southern and eastern corners of the Central City – the height limit will be 17 metres.

Minimum building heights in the Core will be two storeys, while in the Fringe and Mixed Use Zones the minimum has been removed.

These height provisions provide flexibility and allow for financially feasible developments, while recognising the likely tenant response to high-rise buildings and the community preference for a relatively low-rise city.

Note: Proposals for building higher than these permitted heights will need to go through a resource consent process.

3 Parking

Minimum and maximum car parking requirements for building developments within commercial areas of the Central City have been removed, giving property owners the freedom to determine what parking requirements are necessary for the success of their development and the revitalisation of the Central City.

The Council has also made a commitment to either repair or rebuild its supply of public car parking buildings within the Central City on the edge of the Compact Core, the facilities to be re-opened to support retail and office development throughout the area.

Central City Plan Business Overview

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6 Incentives

A range of business incentives for both temporary activities and permanent reinvestment have been adopted in the Central City Plan by Council. These include Development Contributions rebates for all commercial developments within the four avenues for the next five years and a per-employee grant for businesses which return their operations to the Compact CBD and health precinct. This incentive is available to businesses for the first 20,000 retail, office and medical employees relocated back in the Central City.

A streamlined consenting process will also be introduced to ensure development proceeds as quickly as possible.

What happens next?

The final draft Central City Plan will be presented to the Minister for Earthquake Recovery on Wednesday 21 December for consideration.

At the same time, the Council will notify the Plan, on behalf of the Minister, for further written comments. These can be made until early February 2012 to the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Private Bag 4999, Christchurch 8140 or emailed to CBDrcoveryplan@cera.govt.nz

Copies of the final draft Central City Plan can be downloaded from the Council's website – www.ccc.govt.nz/centralcityplan – or viewed at Christchurch City Libraries and Council Service Centres from Wednesday 21 December 2011 until early February 2012.

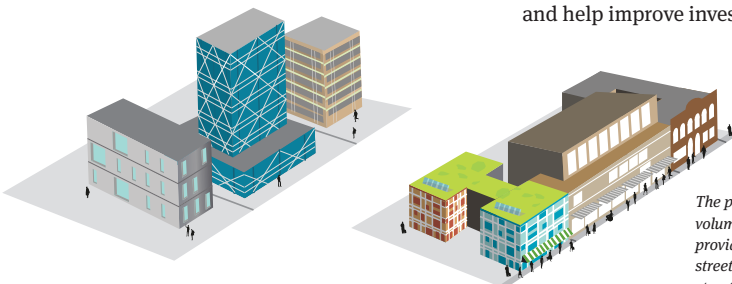


7 Build to the street

Within the Compact Core property owners will need to build to the street along 100 per cent of the street frontage. However, in the Fringe Zone, this rule has been reduced to only 65 per cent of the street frontage.

8 Plot ratios removed

To reduce the impact of lower building heights, the Central City Plan has significantly increased the potential floor area of each site "as of right" in the Compact Core, Fringe and Mixed Use Zones by removing plot ratios. This will allow for greater flexibility with design and help improve investor returns.



The plot ratio controlled the volume of taller buildings, but provided little consistency at street level. Reduced height and street frontage controls enhance street life and the removal of the plot ratio enables buildings to occupy more of the site.

Also of note, the retail floor area minimums and maximums proposed in the draft Plan have been removed and motor vehicle dealerships are recognised as complying activities in the Mixed Use Zone. The Plan makes no major changes to the Residential Zone provisions.