

Nelson Urban Growth Strategy 2006



December 2006



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1. Introduction - The Growth Issue

Background

Nelson City, like its neighbour Tasman District, has recently undergone a period of rapid population growth. Sustained high demand for residential land prompted Nelson City Council to take a look at Nelson’s land availability for future growth.

The background work leading up to this strategy revealed the following:

- Nelson is expected to be one of the fastest growing regions in New Zealand over the next few decades.
- Historical trends suggest the higher than average growth rates will be most likely to continue.
- Nelson’s existing average household size is 2.5 people which is below the national average (2.7). This is expected to fall; the implications of this are that more housing will be required.
- An aging population plus in-migration of older age groups will mean a higher proportion of older residents, and changes in a range of household needs such as housing and transportation.
- Housing affordability is an ongoing issue due to high demand for land and houses in Nelson, limited easily developed land, increasing costs of development, and low wages.
- Land suitable for residential development is expected to become severely limited in Nelson around 2026, even with the existing urban area used more intensively.

The research behind these findings is available in the Nelson Urban Growth Strategy 2004 background document, and in the 2004 NUGS Growth Options Consultation Document.

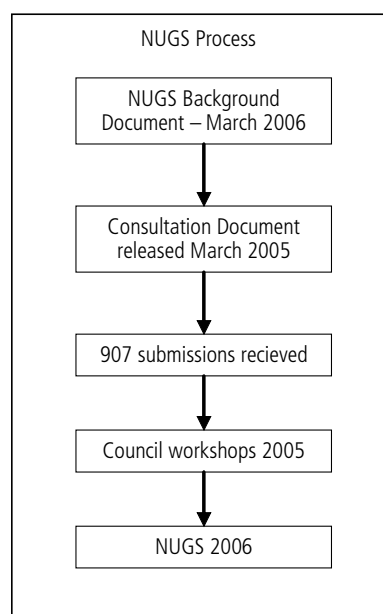
The purpose of this strategy is therefore to provide a set of proposals as to how Nelson City Council intends to meet future growth needs. This strategy sets out a number of general propositions for responding to the demands of growth. It does not get into specific implementation details such as zone boundaries, specific locations, densities and structure plans.

Process to Date

The NUGS process has involved ongoing background research, and a public discussion document on various growth options. Public submissions were invited with over 900 submissions being received, and a series of public meetings were held on the growth options. This process has involved discussions with Tasman District Council, and takes into account the need for integrated planning between the two Councils. The strategy process has also taken into account separate research which has been commissioned privately and by Tasman District Council and the Centre for Housing Research.

Strategy Status

This strategy has no statutory effect. However, it will be important in providing a strategic planning direction for a number of Council’s statutory documents, such as the Asset Management Plans, Regional Policy Statement, Regional Land Transport Strategy and the Resource Management Plan. As such, NUGS is a whole-of-Council





strategy which affects a number of Council’s core business areas and which allows alignment of strategic planning processes.

Timeframe

The development of land today will potentially affect how the whole city functions in the future. However, while it is possible to make a reasonable estimate of future growth, planning beyond 10 years in today’s changing political and economic climate is uncertain. Despite some uncertainty, it is important to have some future point of reference. This strategy has adopted a timeframe of 20-30 years, since this is the time when land resources for urban development are projected to become scarce in Nelson.

NUGS Study Area

The area covered by NUGS includes all of the Nelson City Council area. Although this area excludes Richmond (within Tasman District), there is clearly significant cross boundary interaction between Nelson, Richmond and the wider region that needs to be taken into account.

What is meant by “growth”?

In this strategy, “growth” refers to the projected population growth in Nelson, and what the future land needs might be for housing. “Growth” in this sense does not mean economic growth.

What the strategy covers

This strategy addresses population growth and residential land use needs across the Nelson City area. It does not deal with future industrial and retailing/commercial land needs in any detail. That is identified as requiring further work at the regional scale.



2. CONSULTATION

This strategy is the result of extensive consultation with the community. The three primary consultation processes feeding into this strategy are the annual residents' survey, NUGS submissions, and submissions on the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).

Residents' Survey

Each year, the Council undertakes a comprehensive survey of Nelson residents to assess how the city and district is progressing. The 2004 survey asked specific questions about growth and development. In that survey Nelson residents said that their preferred growth direction for Nelson was:

- A more strategic and planned approach to growth.
- A mix of infill and grow out, with emphasis on a compact city.
- Tighter controls on development in general.
- Some hillside development provided it is not too extensive.

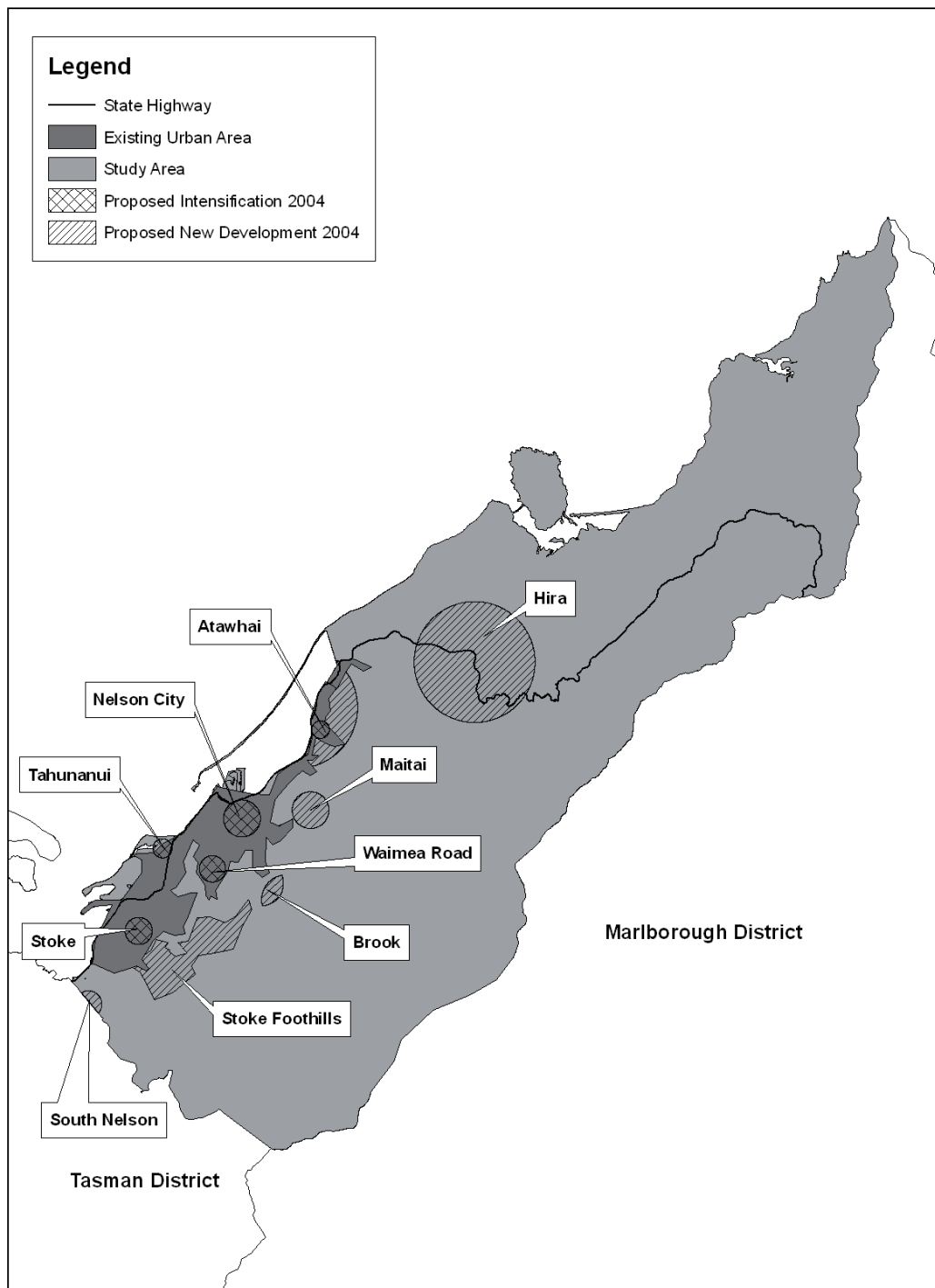
NUGS Submissions

The NUGS process included an extensive period of public consultation, involving public submissions, and presentations by submitters. The growth areas consulted on are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: NUGS Consultation Options 2004

Consultation





The following key themes emerged from the submissions, presentations and public meetings, and confirmed the feedback from the annual residents' survey:

- Strong support for a strategic, planned approach to managing growth
- Intensification preferred before greenfields¹ development, with a preference for mixed density development and high density / low rise buildings in residential hubs².
- A strong desire for more design controls in commercial and industrial zones.
- Support for an integrated regional approach (between Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council) to land use planning, particularly for business and commercial activities.
- General support for greenfields development in South Nelson, the Stoke Foothills and Atawhai.
- Strong opposition to residential development at The Glen and Maitai Valley.
- Submissions both supporting and opposing development in the Hira Basin.
- Support for housing clusters³ in rural areas.
- General acceptance of limited hill-side development which fits into and does not dominate the landscape.
- Strong opposition to changing existing residential or rural small holdings zoning back into rural zoning to protect landscape values.

For practical reasons, the Council will not respond in a detailed way that meets all 907 submitters' specific suggestions. Council has therefore decided that small scale or non-strategic proposals are most efficiently dealt with through the resource consent or private plan change process, and that NUGS will focus on the high level issues affecting the whole district and region.

Long Term Council Community Plan

LTCCP submissions confirmed many of the NUGS and residents' survey submissions, especially in respect of integrated planning between Tasman District Council and Nelson City Council, and providing for more intensification in parts of the City. NUGS and its implementation need to be guided by the Community Outcomes identified in the LTCCP.

¹ "Greenfields" development refers to the conversion of rural land into residential land.

² "Hub" refers to a location around which core residential, commercial and community facilities and amenities are clustered or co-located and which provide a focus for community activity.

³ "Clusters" refers to the concept of co-locating rural dwellings within a close proximity of each other, rather than having rural dwellings dispersed over a wide area.



Table 1: LTCCP Community Outcomes

	Goal	Description
1	Healthy land, sea, air and water	We protect the natural environment
2	People friendly places	We build healthy, accessible and attractive places and live in a sustainable region
3	A strong economy	We all benefit from a sustainable, innovative and diversified economy
4	Kind, healthy people	We are part of a welcoming, safe, inclusive and healthy community
5	A fun, creative culture	We are proud of our creative local culture and regional identity
6	Good leadership	Our leaders are proactive, innovative and inclusive



3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

A vision provides a destination point, or a desired end state to aim for. The following vision and objectives have been developed through the NUGS consultation process and are aligned with the Community Outcomes.

Nelson Growth Vision

Managed growth provides a high quality of life and a range of living choices for all.

The following NUGS objectives are intended to help achieve the vision, and form the basis for the separate growth strategies.

Table 2: NUGS Objectives

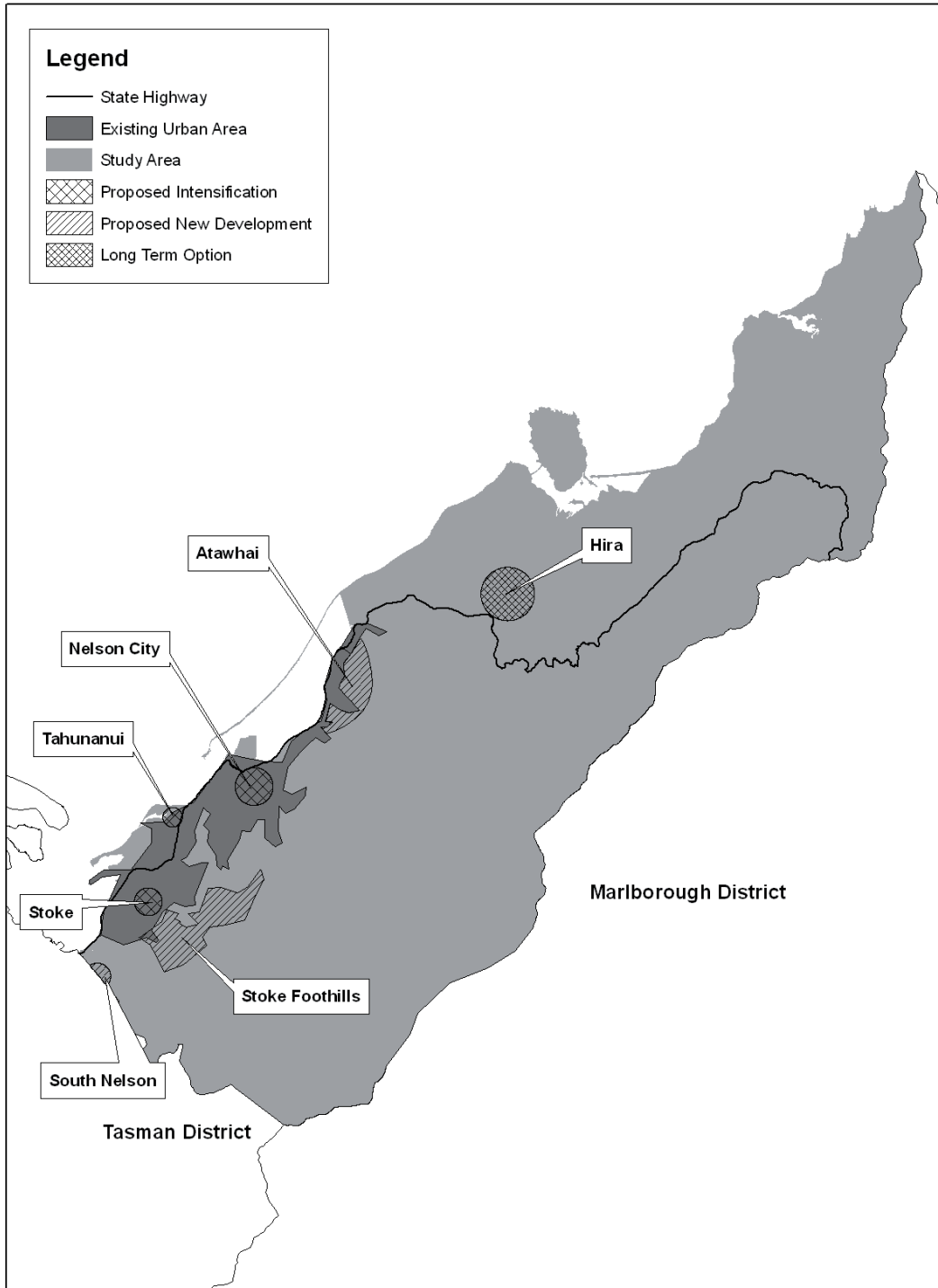
Growth Issue	Objective
Nelson City Centre	A people friendly city centre which functions as the cultural and commercial heart of the Nelson-Tasman region
Residential	Concentrated urban areas with higher density around residential hubs and transport corridors Housing and neighbourhoods that offer living choices to residents Integrated and functional access systems
Rural	Defined boundaries between urban and rural areas
Amenity and landscape	Outstanding natural features are protected from development The hillside backdrop to the city is not dominated by buildings or structures
Business, industry and commerce	Business and industrial activities located within a functional and efficient land use pattern Local service centres of high amenity as an essential part of residential hubs
Open space and recreation	Urban areas which are well provided with open space and recreation opportunities, including recreational transport links between green space and waterbodies
Community facilities	Regional community facilities co-located Local community facilities adding to the vitality of residential hubs
Infrastructure	Functional and affordable services, roads, cycleways and footpaths to a durable standard, with costs spread equitably between developers and the community Walkway and cycleway linkages between all developments and existing urban areas Provision for cycling and walking as part of new transport links



4. STRATEGY

The following strategy sets out Council’s intended approach to responding to future residential growth pressures. Figure 2 shows the location of the preferred residential growth options.

Figure 2: Preferred Growth Options NUGS 2006





4.1 Intensification

Intensification is the process of creating higher density housing within existing urban areas. This was strongly supported by both the NUGS background research and through the NUGS submissions. It is also recommended as a strategy in a research paper on affordable housing in Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough⁴.

Intensification – strategy

- Provide for further residential intensification in the key residential hubs of Stoke, Tahunanui, and Central City.
- Assess other areas which are potentially suitable for intensification, including along transport corridors and around public open spaces, such as the Waimea Road area, and Atawhai.
- Develop proposals for location-specific intensification taking account of height, bulk, density, urban amenity and quality of local environments.
- Develop planning mechanisms that create a regulatory framework which enables intensification.
- Prepare specific infrastructure analysis for intensification.
- Evaluate the role of development contributions policy in enabling intensification.
- Work with the private sector (developers and community services) to achieve intensification in a strategic way, and to help achieve “win-win” outcomes.

Reasons

- Intensification is generally seen as a cost effective and an efficient use of scarce land resources.
- Intensification offers efficient use of infrastructure where existing capacity exists.
- Intensification options are in line with the trend to smaller households, support public transport options, and add critical population mass to residential hubs.
- There is a strong body of national and international research supporting intensification as being more sustainable and good planning practice.

4.2 South Nelson

South Nelson refers to the rural area immediately north of Champion Road. This area is strategically located between Richmond and Nelson, and close to Saxton Field. At the time of preparing this strategy, South Nelson is subject to applications for multi-lot residential subdivisions.

Servicing of this area is relatively easy and affordable with good existing roading networks.

South Nelson - strategy

- Allow private development proposals to be processed through resource consent and plan change processes.
- Seek opportunities to acquire additional land for future expansion of Saxton Field to meet future recreational needs.

⁴ “Affordable Housing in Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough; Taking Action”. Centre for Housing Research, 2006.



- Retain the rural open space backdrop from Saxton Field to the Bryant Range ridgeline that provides landscape continuity with the Stoke foothills.
- Prepare a structure plan with Tasman District Council.

Reasons

- Private applications have been lodged for residential development in this area. These need to be allowed to be processed based on their merits.
- Saxton Field is a regional resource which will be of increasing importance in the future.
- The working farm between Stoke and Richmond contains regionally significant open space and landscape values.
- Preserving these values is important to offset increased residential development, and to provide continuity with the open spaces on the Stoke foothills and the Bryant Range.

4.3 Stoke Foothills

The “Stoke foothills” generally describes the area extending from Ngawhatu Valley through to The Brook. It includes the hills and valleys behind Stoke and Enner Glynn, and takes in the easy grade valley system extending to The Brook. The Bryant Range and Jenkins Hill provides the open space backdrop.

This area features undulating topography with areas of topographical and geotechnical constraints. There are some areas that are easy to develop. Servicing is considered feasible.

Stoke Foothills – strategy

- Allow private development proposals to be processed through private plan change and resource consent processes.
- Work with landowners and applicants to provide comprehensive and integrated developments through private plan changes and resource consents.
- Retain the landscape values on the foothills and valleys, in particular the prominent “front faces” overlooking Stoke.

Reasons

- This area has significant capacity with the potential to accommodate at least five year’s worth of Nelson’s estimated residential growth.
- Private plan changes have been lodged for rezoning, and must be processed based on their individual merits.
- If approved, the private plan changes will ensure continuity in supply of residential land.
- The community values the rural backdrop to Stoke and the undeveloped front faces provide an important edge to urban development.

4.4 Nelson North

Nelson North describes the area north of Todds Valley, and includes the Wakapuaka Flats, The Glen, Hira, Lud and Teal Valleys, and Cable Bay. The Nelson Resource Management Plan currently signals the potential for a future settlement at Hira.



This area retains a rural character, with pockets of rural residential development and a small residential zone in Todds Valley. Apart from the Wakapuaka Flats, which are for the present time in productive use, economic productive farming is limited. The area has experienced land fragmentation through wide-scale small holding development, particularly on the easier country. Public services extend (water and sewerage) as far as The Glen and Hillwood Valley. Extending services beyond these areas would be expensive.

Nelson North – strategy

- Recognise Hira as a long term growth option, estimated as being needed in approximately 20 years – 2026.
- Continue to process the Nelson North Plan Change such that the option of future potential for comprehensive and integrated residential development at Hira is retained.
- Develop a structure plan for the integrated development of Hira as part of any plan change to make provision for urban development in the Nelson Resource Management Plan.
- Seek opportunities to acquire land for future reserve or recreation development.

Reasons

- Population projections indicate a shortage of land for residential growth in Nelson around 2026. Hira has been identified as a future residential growth hub to help meet future demand.
- Because of the cost of servicing, development of this area is seen as a longer term growth option.
- Further land fragmentation of the Hira Basin could reduce opportunities for future residential development.
- The existing Nelson North Plan Change presents one opportunity to minimise land fragmentation, and to keep open the option for future residential development.
- The development of Hira into an urban centre requires a structured and co-ordinated set of proposals to ensure an appropriate, effective and efficient form is created. A structure plan is an effective way to achieve this.

4.5 Atawhai

In this strategy, “Atawhai” is the area extending from the Wakapuaka Cemetery through to Todds Valley. It is characterised by relatively steep topography, with some limited opportunity for further development. The topography limits the productive potential of this area. There are landscapes that do not have a lot of capacity for development, and world class views from elevated areas. There is a small suburban commercial zone in Dodson Valley which services the local area for its day to day needs.

Atawhai – strategy

- Provide for further development in this area through privately initiated subdivisions or plan changes, rather than through Council initiated plan changes.
- Retain the landscape values of the Atawhai foothills by fitting new development into the landscape.



- Prepare a structure plan that ties location, density and form of residential development in with key servicing, access and linkage, community facilities and community hubs.
- Seek opportunities to acquire land for future reserve or recreation development.

Reasons

- Further development is feasible in some existing rural areas of Atawhai.
- Servicing is relatively easy for this area, but would require some services upgrades, for example, water supply.
- NUGS submissions on this area supported further development.
- The scale of potential development in this area is relatively small. In that sense development options are not strategic in nature; is not seen as a priority for Council initiated plan changes.
- The community values the rural context of Atawhai and it is important to retain a distinct rural/urban edge to future development. Future development of Atawhai will likely be in pockets so an overall structured and co-ordinated framework to provide a logic to this development will create an appropriate low density or distributed urban form.

4.6 Maitai Valley

The NUGS consultation document identified a south-facing basin in the lower Maitai Valley as potentially able to accommodate further residential development. This area is currently undeveloped, but has a rural small holdings zoning allowing lots down to 1ha. The basin area is of easy topography, is south facing and currently has limited services as far as Ralphine Way.

Maitai Valley – strategy

- Do not provide for any future residential zoning in this area.
- Extend the existing rural small holdings zone in the “Maitai basin”, by way of privately initiated plan change.

Reasons

- There are parts of the basin currently zoned rural which are suitable for rural small holdings development.
- NUGS submissions on the Maitai were very strongly opposed to any residential zoning, based on loss of open space, conflicts with recreation values, and the effects of more traffic and noise.

4.7 The Brook

This area extends from the OK Corral on the eastern side of The Brook Road up to the campground, and includes Tantragee Saddle. It is of undulating to steep topography, with some geotechnical constraints. It is a popular recreational area with walkers and mountain bikers.

The Brook – strategy

- Retain the existing zoning, to provide opportunities for some development
- Do not provide for any Council-initiated residential or rural small holdings plan changes.



Reasons

- There are some topographical constraints to further development in this area.
- The area is a popular recreational resource with potential conflicts arising through further development.
- The potential additional lots in this area are limited. The cost of public investment in rezoning is not matched with that yield.
- Development in the Brook will not strategically influence future urban form, nor defer the need to find other locations for urban development, because of its small scale.

4.8 Business and employment activities

Business and employment activities is a collective description for industrial activities and the retailing sector. It includes large format retailing, as well as non-retailing activities, such as wholesaling, call centres or servicing.

These activities are strong determinants of urban form and function. Urban form (pattern or layout of urban areas) is typically determined by how business and employment activities function (e.g. transport links), and where they are located. They are destinations and sometimes hubs in their own right. They often generate development around them, and are usually located on the basis of regional physical and socio-economic factors, such as proximity to transport and a work force.

Given that these activities can determine the urban form of both Nelson and Richmond, business and employment activities will be considered in more detail on a regional basis.

Business and employment activities – strategy

- As a matter of priority, work with Tasman District Council to develop a joint regional strategy specifically for business and employment activities.

Reasons

- NUGS submissions overwhelmingly supported a regional approach to business and employment activities.
- There is a growing body of research, including private, local government and central government, which consistently recommends a joint regional approach to business and employment activities.
- These types of activities have potentially significant cross boundary effects between Tasman and Nelson, given their influence on shaping the regional patterns of land use, development, and transport.
- Demand for further industrial and large format retailing development is strong and expected to continue. The alternative to a regionally planned approach is privately initiated ad-hoc development.

4.9 Nelson City Centre

Nelson City Centre is evolving with its own function and character. However, the future roles, functions, and relationships between the City Centre and Richmond Town Centre remain unclear, and are evolving mainly through private development opportunities.



There is a need for collaborations and development of joint projects to ensure that the best planned outcomes are achieved. There was significant synergy to be harnessed from aligning investigations, proposals and timeframes for the long term development of both centres. There was significant support in submissions for a regional approach to centres development and planning.

Nelson City Centre – strategy

- Clearly identify the future role and function of Nelson City Centre, as it relates to the wider region.
- Review the Inner City Strategy, and coordinate the existing planning processes for Nelson City Centre into one single strategy or outline development plan for the area.
- Develop a clear preference for the form and function of the City Centre.

Reasons

- The role of Nelson City Centre is evolving through private developments rather than in an integrated and strategic way.
- There are cost and outcome efficiencies in one single strategic study for this area, rather than a series of unconnected studies. Review of the Inner City Strategy provides an opportunity to implement this.
- Identifying more clearly how the Nelson City Centre will function within the region would assist in making strategic decisions on issues like carparking and regional facilities.

4.10 General

A number of other issues or themes emerged during the NUGS consultation. These included:

- Building design.
- Housing affordability.
- Transport planning.
- Rural clustering.
- Urban design.

While each of these issues are important considerations, they relate more to the detailed implementation of the strategy (“how to”), rather than providing a strategic direction in their own right. Put another way, NUGS sets out the strategic “skeleton”, while these issues help put the “flesh” on the bones.

These specific issues will be considered in detail through the implementation of NUGS.



5. Implementation

There is a large body of work needed to give effect to this Strategy. Nelson City Council intends coordinating this work with the Tasman District Council. Any future strategic land use planning work will take a regional approach, in line with the feedback received on NUGS. Implementing NUGS will be an on-going process, and will be spread over many years. NUGS will be implemented using the following methods:

Privately

- Through private initiatives such as resource consents and private plan changes.

Publicly

- Through Council's strategic planning in coordination with Tasman District Council.
- Long Term Council Community Plan and annual plan processes.
- Through aligning and amending Council's planning documents, including asset management plans, other strategies (e.g. Regional Land Transport Strategy) and regulatory plans (e.g. Resource Management Plan).
- Through central government initiatives, such as the Centre for Housing Research 2006 Affordable Housing Study.

Public-private partnerships

- Partnerships – between groups, agencies, public bodies and individuals.

Future LTCCPs and annual plans will contain more detail on how and when this strategy will be implemented.