1.1 BACKGROUND

Rotorua’s population growth is not high with a corresponding lack of increase in the number of businesses and activity in the city centre. This problem was exacerbated with the reduction of central government offices which had supplied a large number of jobs.

In 2006 this prompted Rotorua District Council (RDC) to prepare a Central Business District (CBD) Revitalisation Strategy that identified issues facing the city centre and outlined a series of integrated studies and projects. RDC have commissioned some of these studies including the Lakefront Concept Plan and a Travel Demand Management Strategy. Eat Street was also developed within the objectives defined by the Strategy.

Public enthusiasm for the Lakefront Concept and Eat Street has encouraged RDC to further develop the strategy’s recommendations for the rest of the city centre. The CBD Urban Design Framework (UDF) analyses the Revitalisation Strategy, economic, social and environmental issues that underpin decisions on project types and locations. It is important to note that all of these projects were identified in the community consultation that was part of the Revitalisation Strategy.

1.2 CBD REVITALISATION STRATEGY

The italicised text in Sections 1.2 & 1.3 are quotes from the CBD Revitalisation Strategy. Key strategic objectives from the Strategy include:

- **ACTIVITY INTENSIFICATION**
  “draw and retain people…to CBD”
  The most important principle from the Revitalisation Strategy is that of activity intensification. The city centre has generous public spaces and streets but the lack of activity means they appear to be empty which further discourages visitor and local patronage. Therefore it is important to identify which activities can be intensified and clustered in hot-spots rather than diluted across the city centre. This clustering is the most significant change from the Revitalisation Strategy Plan (Figure 01) which extended across the whole CBD and did not sufficiently prioritise areas of change.

- **INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES**
  The UDF identifies business sectors that have real growth prospects and proposes a key investment opportunity for the tourism market.

- **PRECINCTS**
  “Precincting to encourage clarity and variety within the CBD”
  The UDF identifies precincts that support clustering of key activities to support intensification and improve character.

- **CULTURAL MUSEUM**
  “Best Cultural Museum in the world”
  The CBD does not currently reflect Rotorua’s unique cultural heritage. An Urban Design Framework cannot propose specific installations as it does not include detailed design of suggested projects, but cultural mapping is proposed as a tool to include this issue in future public and private development.

- **YOUTH FACILITIES**
  Encouraging the young people of Rotorua to use the city centre is an economic as well as a social objective. The Haupapa Precinct is envisaged as a “pro-youth” facility with public transport and entertainment located in the same area.

- **PUBLIC STREETSPACE**
  “Ensure streets within the CBD are designed to promote and serve the needs of pedestrian traffic and develop legibility and wayfinding strategies”.

1.3 RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

The Revitalisation Strategy recommended a number of projects, some of which have been developed as part of the Urban Design Framework. The UDF proposes the following projects:

- **HAUPAPA PRECINCT**
  “Creation of an Arts Precinct in the vicinity of Arawa and Haupapa Streets”.
  “Link the Council Offices, Information Centre, Community Building, Library, Public Transport Node and Park into one precinct”.
  “Adapt local and regional tourist transportation,…, and relocate local bus stops to Haupapa Street”.

Figure 01: Plan from Revitalisation Strategy
TUTANEKAI STREET
- “Link north and south parts of street” through a “sequence of spaces, features & events.”
- “Encourage a “northern tourist leisure anchor (with improved Rotorua Central to south)”.
- “Encouraging Higher density development around spine of Tutane-kai Street”.

INTEGRATION OF LAKEFRONT BLOCKS
- “Encouraging the built form to connect town & lake”.
- “Review the Resort A Zone revisions of District Plan”.
- “Examine feasibility of Hotels/Spa on QE site”.

CBD SOUTHERN EDGE
- “Integrate Rotorua Central with the City Centre”.

1.4 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK
An Urban Design Framework is;
“a document that describes an overarching vision and the intended outcome for an entire urban area and gives direction to subsequent policies and site specific initiatives within that area” (MFE Urban Design Toolkit)

This report is to encourage rather than manage growth so the first section outlines economic analysis to identify which business sectors can respond to RDC initiatives. Urban Design analysis then examines existing conditions and is used to locate specific projects as detailed in Section 3.

Section 4.0 presents the UDF Plan in a series of layers that explain the components of the overall plan. Each project is then explained in more detail in individual sections. An Implementation Section proposes a staged project plan for RDC to consider in terms of the LTCCP process. This section also comments on issues that should be addressed in the upcoming District Plan Review. The final section summarises the key elements in the UDF Plan for quick reference.

1.5 OTHER COUNCIL DOCUMENTS
The Urban Design Framework should be read in conjunction with these Council documents:
DISTRICT PLAN
ARTS IN PUBLIC PLACES POLICY
ROTORUA URBAN TRANSPORT STUDY 2003
TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2006
TRANSPORT DEMAND STRATEGY 2008
ROTORUA RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN
ENTRANCEWAYS STRATEGY
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT RETAIL STRATEGY 2003
VISITOR INDUSTRY DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2004-2014
BRIGHT ECONOMY—ROTORUA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
ECONOMIC WELLBEING REPORT 2009
VICTORIA ARTERIAL NOTICE OF REQUIREMENT; APPLICATIONS, SUBMISSIONS AND APPEAL DOCUMENTS

1.6 OTHER DOCUMENTS
NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN IN NEW ZEALAND
2.1 RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL
Compared with its neighbours Rotorua had little population growth (Figure 2) in the last two census periods and this is reflected in slow growth in commercial and retail development. Therefore it is unrealistic to base large amounts of the UDF around extensive commercial or retail development.

For some time RDC has been encouraging inner city apartment development but other than the old post office site there has been few multi-unit apartment developments in the city centre and the lack of inner city activity discourages apartment development. Once the tourism and public transport nodes are developed the increased street activity and amenity may help encourage inner city residential in the longer term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Years</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotorua District</td>
<td>51,033</td>
<td>54,083</td>
<td>5.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tauranga City</td>
<td>90,912</td>
<td>103,635</td>
<td>13.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton City</td>
<td>116,256</td>
<td>129,249</td>
<td>11.2 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 02 Census data for Rotorua, Tauranga & Hamilton.

2.2 TOURISM
Currently international tourism is affected by a recession but it is the main sector that can drive CBD growth (Figure 03). Ministry of Tourism forecasts show that international rather than domestic tourists will be the main growth area. Therefore location of new hotels for this market becomes the opportunity.

The problem is that the tourists particularly organised groups spend most of their time at attractions and hotels on the city’s periphery. Therefore they are not encouraged to walk around the city centre. Figure 04 shows the location of hotels and backpacker hostels in Rotorua. Height and other development standards are similar for both the CBD Resort A zone and the Resort D zone at Whakarewarewa. Given that land is cheaper at Whakarewarewa then it is logical that developers currently look there for new hotels. RDC cannot decrease existing site development allowances at Whakarewarewa so it should look to increase those in the city centre area to encourage hotels there. Dispensations to allow hotels in the Resort B zone along Fenton Street should also be stopped.

2.3 PROPERTY VALUES
Figure 05 shows the Council Valuation/square metre for sites in the city centre. Generally the higher value sites are along each side of Tutanekai Street as would be expected. Higher value sites on the periphery are the RDC offices and Novotel, Ibis, Millennium & Sudima hotels. Surprisingly the Resort A sites in the north and northeast areas are not highly valued despite their potential lake views. This lower valuation is an advantage as the potential valuation increase makes them more attractive for tourism development with an improved Resort A zone. This is one of the main suggestions for the District Plan review.

2.4 EDUCATION
Tertiary training facilities and their associated accommodation would be beneficial for the CBD. However current discussions with new education providers are all based around city edge locations. RDC should encour-
age CBD campus locations or accommodation. Site specific provisions are better than some blanket provisions in the UDF so they are not included in this study.

2.5 CBD AREA

There is a perception that Rotorua's CBD is too large for its population but comparing the ratio of total population to CBD area of other cities shows it is at the higher end but not abnormally large (Figure 06). However this reinforces that RDC should not allow wholesale leakage of CBD activities to peripheral big-box retail and business park developments. Current growth rates means this will undermine the economic viability and therefore the amenity of the city centre.
3.1 PROJECT STUDY AREA
The project study area is shown in Figure 07. The area includes the Commercial and Residential D zones but extends to Ohinemutu and the Victoria Arterial alignment. Linkages to Ohinemutu and Pukeroa Hill are important for the Lakefront Project and a proposed heritage trail as part of the cultural mapping. Definition of a new CBD edge along the Victoria Arterial alignment is a key recommendation of the Urban Design Framework and the areas inside the alignment are considered in detail. Kuirau Park is considered in terms of heritage, linkages and vistas from the CBD but no physical changes are contemplated so it is outside the defined study area.

3.2 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
The colour gradations in Figure 08 show the topography levels in the study area. Generally the land is flat with the dominant features being Lake Rotorua and Pukeroa Hill. A shallow ridge extends south from Pukeroa Hill along the Amohia Street axis. Pukeroa Hill, the lakefront and Government Gardens form a strong natural boundary to the northern part of the CBD. The UDF builds on the CBD/lakefront linkages proposed in the Lakefront Plan. Stronger east-west linkages are proposed into Pukeroa Hill, QE site and Government Gardens as part of the UDF.

3.3 THERMAL AREAS
Figure 09 maps ground level active thermal areas in the CBD. This was important in considering how geothermal activity could be used to create uniquely Rotorua streetscapes and open spaces. The city centre lacks geothermal activity which hampers this concept. The QE is the other key site with geothermal activity.

3.4 BUILDING FOOTPRINT
Mapping building footprints is a useful graphic tool to describe how buildings define (or do not define) streets and public open space. Figure 10 shows the central city blocks are largely built out and define streets in the main retail area with some exceptions such as the courthouse. Street edge definition decreases around the periphery. This is an advantage where open natural character is preferable but in a city centre open spaces usually benefit from a strong built edge. The building backs detract from the open space and lane on Haupapa Street opposite the library.

The Whakauer/Tutanekai street edges around the Novotel are an example where building setbacks do not help address the large scale of the Village Green. The drawing also shows the lower intensity development in the north eastern corner of the CBD. The figure ground analysis clearly shows how carparking space dominates Rotorua Central.
3.5 BUILDING HEIGHT
Building height is mapped on Figure 11 to show the location of more intensive development. Higher buildings punctuate the dominant 1-2 storey building form. Typically higher buildings would be located on a main street like Tutanekai Street but the large number of developable sites and more expensive land on the main street may have contributed to their spread around the CBD. This shows there is no single commercial address in Rotorua to base planning around.

Height is also a factor in street spatial definition which will be discussed in a subsequent section.

3.6 PUBLIC FACILITIES
Schools and RDC facilities are mapped on Figure 12. The location of the Library, Tourist Information, Council offices, convention centre, police and court buildings reinforce the Haupapa proposal as an arts/civic precinct built around a public transport interchange.

3.7 FRONTAGE ACTIVITY
Figure 13 maps the type of business located on the ground floor of CBD buildings. It is important to judge the extent of non-active frontages in main retail streets i.e. blank walls or offices with closed off windows.

There is a substantial amount of blank walls along Tutanekai Street so RDC should consider rules requiring active frontages to discourage offices and clinics to locating on the ground floor of the main retail street. Streetscape improvements will also encourage better quality retail.

The drawing also highlights the inactive frontages connecting Tutanekai Street to the Resort A zones in the north east corner of the CBD. This issue is addressed in the recommended projects.

3.8 ZONING
The Urban Design Framework does not recommend substantial changes to existing zones (Figure 14). The existing District Plan is overly focused to the southern part of the city centre, but in reality there is little difference between Commercial A & B.

The UDF proposes a change for the QE Hospital site from Reserve to Resort A zoning to encourage central city hotel development and lakefront connections. Rule changes are also proposed for the Resort A zone in general.

There will be re-zoning associated with the Victoria Arterial roading project but these will be changed gradually to avoid oversupply of existing CBD commercial zones.
SECTION 3.9 STREET PROPORTIONS

One of the main reasons why there appears to be a lack of activity in Rotorua is the wide street proportions. Streets that are narrower and have higher buildings are more contained spatially. Streets that people describe as having a human or pedestrian scale generally fall within a range of 2.5:1 width to height or narrower (refer Alan Jacobs; Great Streets). Any wider and human beings look small on the other side of the street and the place is usually car dominated.

Streets in New Zealand are generally 20.12 metres wide or 1 chain in the imperial surveyors measurement. Rotorua’s streets at 30 metres are wide for New Zealand. The width of the Queenstown streets is shown in Figure 15, and Figure 16 is a photograph of Shotover Street. The three or four storey buildings create a 1.7:1 ratio in the widest and most car dominated street in Queenstown.

Tutanekai Street is the least car dominated street in Rotorua and Figure 17 has some of the higher corner buildings at the Pukuatua Street intersection. With a 30 metre wide street and say 12 metre high (three storey) buildings the ratio is 2.5:1. With two storey or 8 metre buildings the ratio extends to 3.75:1.

Wide streets can be a benefit but they need stronger spatial definition than exists in Rotorua. The low population and corresponding business growth means there will not be enough commercial development to change key streets. Matamata and Cambridge generally have one or two storey buildings but have large plane trees down a central median that perform the role of containing the street space. This spatial concern is the underlying reason for the proposal to plant large trees to make Tutanekai into a special street within the Rotorua CBD.

Empty lots and corners are also part of the same issue. In key retail/pedestrian streets RDC should encourage owners to build out to the street boundary with a zero front yard and added height bonuses for corner sites. One example is the corner plaza in front of the courthouse. The building does not have an active ground floor so the plaza is usually empty and detracts from Tutanekai Street. Either the courthouse can introduce leased tenancies along the plaza edge to improve the open space or build out to the front boundaries to contain the street space as discussed above (Figure 20).

3.10 PEDESTRIAN STREETS

These considerations led to the proposal for a ‘pedestrian street’ to be added to the collectors and arterials in the transport hierarchy. Pedestrians will have higher priority than cars in these streets and buildings should be built out to the front boundary with active ground floors. The overall approach in this regard is to achieve a high level of accessibility for pedestrians while continuing to provide a shared environment for cars.

Figure 18 shows the existing roading hierarchy and the proposed addition of pedestrian street types. Tutanekai and Hinemoa near City Focus are currently classified as ‘special’ streets in the roading hierarchy. In the proposal all of Tutanekai Street will become a pedestrian priority street along with the Haupapa Street bus interchange area. Whakaue Street and the northern section of Fenton Street are also proposed as pedestrian streets to link any development on the QE and Resort A sites to Eat Street.

Urban design audits of the pedestrian streets should be completed if the proposal is adopted. These look at the building frontages, pedestrian crossings, cycling provision and streetscape character (Figure 19).

3.11 PARKING

Removing central median parking will require replacement parking. The provision and management of carparking is included as one of the key implementation packages in the Transport Demand Strategy. The overall approach includes giving priority to parking for shorter-stay shoppers and visitors in a way that achieves efficient use and turn-over of on-street parking spaces. Use of parking for commuters is given lower priority in the Strategy, with longer stay parking managed to the periphery and in off-street locations. As such, the removal of parking needs to be considered as a whole rather than in isolation. This is recognised in the separate parking policy review that is to be briefed and completed in 2010.
SECTION 3.0: URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

Figure 16: Street proportions of 1.7:1 in Shotover Street Queenstown.

Figure 17: Street proportion of 2.5:1 at the Pukuatua & Tutanekai intersection.

Figure 18: Existing road hierarchy top and proposed hierarchy bottom.

Figure 19: Example of an urban design audit on Tutanekai Street.

Figure 20: Sketch showing how a building strengthens the courthouse corner.
4.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Rotorua city centre is located on flat land and has an extensive gridded street pattern which in large makes the city centre well connected and walkable. Some roading designs have hampered this with Tutanekai Street being severed by the Arawa Street median and City Focus.

The northern, eastern and western edges are well defined by Pukeroa Hill, open spaces and Lake Rotorua. The lakefront/city centre connections suffer from too much undefined open space although the Lakefront Concept Plan is addressing this issue. The southern edge of the city centre has suffered through changes from rail yards to a large format retail centre which severs Tutanekai Street from the south.

There is a number of nationally significant heritage buildings and sites within the City Centre which often terminate vistas or street views that reinforce their landmark qualities.

Ohinemutu to the north west is a culturally important inner suburb with some important heritage buildings and marae. Its labyrinthine narrow lanes contrast with the city centre’s grid and this character should be protected in the District Plan.

4.2 LAKEFRONT OPEN SPACE

The Lakefront Renewal Project proposes a structure of urban, recreation, tourism and commercial spaces at the lake’s edge. A number of measures are proposed to strengthen the links between these urban spaces and the city centre. A new pier structure will visually extend Tutanekai Street into the lake and a new urban square is located at the intersection of Tutanekai Street and Lake Rotorua. Pergolas along the Village Green edge of Tutanekai Street provide cover but also strengthen the street edge to encourage walking to the lake. Changes to Fenton Street will improve the vista of Lake Rotorua from the city centre.

The Urban Design Framework builds on these measures with a zero front yard and active edge requirements in the Resort A zone sites in Tutanekai & Whakaue Streets. This continues to strengthen the Tutanekai Street connection to the lakefront and seeks to create an urban edge to the Village Green. The measure anticipates longer term hotel, apartment or serviced apartment developments on Whakaue Street.
4.3 LAKEFRONT PRECINCT

The UDF also proposes re-zoning the QE Hospital site from Reserve B to Resort A to encourage a lakefront hotel and mixed use development. The objective is to intensify activity on the lakefront with a café boardwalk on the lake frontage. The development allowances will be increased to attract development but within a Masterplan for the QE/Ngāti Whakaue land to protect the lakefront and open space amenity.

A fine grain street development rather than a single large block will improve lake and Government Garden connections and control the scale of buildings. It is proposed that Hinemaru Street be extended through the QE site and align with the waka shed that is part of the Lakefront Renewal Plan.

4.4 WALKABLE CITY

The Walkable City is an important design tool to encourage locals but with a focus on tourists to explore the city centre. The first step is to improve Tutanekai Street as the main street in the city centre. Tree planting and other streetscape improvements are proposed to make a more intimate human scale to encourage shopping and walking. These measures are covered in detail in the projects section.

The other proposed pedestrian streets connect Tutanekai Street to important pedestrian destinations. Haupapa Street connects Tutanekai Street with the proposed public transport interchange and through the Council offices to Government Gardens. Hinemoa Street improves the city centre retail appeal and also connects to the Polynesian Pools, Millennium & Sudima Hotels. Whakaue Street will connect Eat Street with inner city hotels in the Resort A zone in the longer term. A heritage trail incorporating Government Gardens, Ohinemutu, Lakefront and Pukeroa Hill is proposed as part of the Framework. No changes are proposed for Arawa Street but it is included on this drawing with its significant vista to the Prince’s Gate. The Haupapa Street location is favoured for the public transport interchange as it has the potential to form a cultural and arts precinct focused around existing buildings and the existing park.
4.5 VICTORIA ARTERIAL
This drawing shows the proposed alignment for the Victoria Arterial project. The Urban Design Framework proposes some additional measures to extend the function of Victoria Arterial from ‘just a road’ to become a future southern boundary to the city.

The old ‘town belt’ was the strongest open space element in this part of Rotorua but has been weakened with land sales and the Rotorua Central development. It will be better to design Victoria Arterial as a landscaped boulevard to create a better urban space and improved southern edge to the city.

The boulevard can form a strong edge to define commercial and residential zones and there is sufficient land for many years of commercial growth. The problem will be more one of restricting commercial developments anticipating this change instead of locating in the existing commercial zones. A careful plan for land release will have to be created.

4.6 BLOCK/STREET REALIGNMENT
A landscaped boulevard is not an enhanced city edge if it just screens tagged backyard fences or even worse blank tilt-slab walls. This poor result is entirely possible so the UDF proposes slip lanes on the city side of Victoria Arterial to achieve an improved urban edge.

The slip lanes make a wider road but designed properly it creates buildings with front doors facing the arterial road across the quieter slip road. Pedestrians and cyclists can use the slip road away from noise and fumes of the main road. The slip lanes in turn connect to the existing street patterns in the Whakatau Street and Ti Road areas.

A new street linking Pererika and Whakatau Streets reconnects neighbourhoods severed by Victoria Arterial and the Town Belt. This street combined with enhanced street connections through Rotorua Central and longer term road proposals in the Ti Street area aim to create a connected local road network inside Victoria Arterial. This allows local trips to be made without needlessly congesting the arterial and the cross town traffic route maintains its capacity.
4.7 CBD ENTRY BOULEVARDS

As well as creating a new southern edge the Victoria Arterial can form southern gateways for the city centre. The Ranolf and Fenton intersections should be designed with this result in mind. Suitable zoning and urban design controls can be put in place so that buildings rather than fast food or service stations dominate these important entry points. Ranolf Street from Victoria Arterial to Arawa Street should be designed to match Fenton and Arawa Streets with pin oaks planted in a grassed central median. This creates an obvious hierarchy of streets for drivers to find their way through the city centre without having to look at a map.

It is important that the city centre presents an attractive face for people travelling to and from the airport across the southern edge. This encourages people to explore the city centre and lakefront. Concrete tilt slab walls and tagged fences will encourage people to stay in their motels and hotels on Rotorua’s periphery and not contribute to a vibrant urban atmosphere.
CULTURAL MAPPING

Rotorua’s city centre does not currently reflect its unique cultural and geothermal setting. An Urban Design Framework should not attempt to detail specific designs to include iwi or geothermal elements, nor is trying to define a preferred style or colour palette the correct approach. It would be wrong to stifle artistic creativity in this area.

The correct approach is to encourage a Arts Layer in the UDF that coordinates projects across the city. This can become an extension of the Art in Public Places Policy that establishes an art trail and specific projects. The trail can define narratives or briefs that guide streetscape and public space projects, mark waahi tapu locations and other special locations. This can also be used to influence private development to include art projects. This approach is consistent with the objective of encouraging visitors to walk around the city centre.
FRAMEWORK PLAN

LAKEFRONT PRECINCT
1. Protect Ohinemutu's cultural heritage and urban form
2. New urban square at junction of Tutanekai Street axis, lakefront and wharf.
3. Encourage buildings built up to the street edge with active frontages around the Village Green & Lakefront Precinct. Remove centre parking in Whakaue Street and create pedestrian improvements.
4. Visible entry for Pukeroa Hill walk from Whakaue Street and Lake Drive.
5. Rezone QE site/ Ngati Whakaue land with masterplan for urban design outcomes. Hinemaru Street extended to waka shed on lakefront.

TUTANEKAI STREET
6. Tree planting to change street scale. Examine other streetscape improvements in design project.
7. Upgrade Eat Street with flexibility for winter and summer dining numbers.
8. Design project for Hinemoa pedestrian street type and options for integration with City Focus.

HAUPAPA PRECINCT
9. New bus interchange around existing park. Design project looking at removing centre parking and developing arts and entertainment buildings around interchange.

SOUTHERN EDGE
10. Victoria Arterial designed as city edge boulevard with slip roads to encourage active frontages.
11. Connect existing streets to slip lanes. Extend Whakatau Street to Pererika Street to connect severed land.
12. District Plan review and zoning changes to support Victoria Arterial active frontage and boulevard gateways.
13. Plant additional cherry trees to provide stronger landscape buffer to Rotorua Central. Work with owner on street face for new buildings.
15. Long term planning for block between Fenton, Ti and Amohau Streets as future CBD area.

Figure 34; Framework Plan
The slow rate of growth and the decision to focus on tourism activities means that attention should be focused on a few high quality projects that benefit intensification of tourist activity and walking generally. This is one criticism of the CBD Revitalisation Strategy in that it proposed wholesale changes across the whole CBD so it was hard to know where to start and why. The following four project (or precinct areas) are arranged in a timeline to explain the staging reasons.

**TUTANEKAI STREET PROJECTS**
- The Lakefront Project predates the UDF Framework and is likely to be the first project that is ‘contained’ within the Framework Plan.
- Therefore the Tutanekai Street Projects are the next stage to build on lakefront changes. They are public street projects which RDC can proceed with, without needing private partnerships.
- Developing a detailed design for the typical blocks including Eat Street, City Focus and Amohia Street so that subsequent sections of work will be consistent with the overall plan. Making Tutanekai Street a special character street and containing the street spatially are the key objectives from the urban design analysis.

**HAUPAPA PRECINCT**
- Timing of this project is dependent on completion of a separate Interchange Study.
- When this is complete RDC can look at other opportunities integrating the Transport Centre with the Information Centre, Jean Batten Square, Library and potential land purchases in the Hau-papa/Pukutaua/Fenton/Tutanekai block.
- Scoping of a possible theatre and/or entertainment project can commence after the PT study to confirm if it forms part of the precinct plan.

**LAKEFRONT PRECINCT**
- The re-zoning proposal for the QE site and Resort A areas is key to encourage development in this area. This will require completion of the District Plan Review and Variations which will take approximately two years to complete. This period can be used to agree a masterplan for the QE site with the owners.
- Demand for a new (possibly 5 star) hotel is also some years away so the District Plan Review is not ‘holding up’ this possibility.
- Whakaue Street development as a pedestrian type street is dependent on the QE site completion and development proposals on Whakaue Street itself.

**SOUTHERN EDGE**
- Some physical works around Rotorua Central are likely to occur in the short term i.e. development along Amohau Street Reserve and planting along Victoria Street.
- However most changes in the area are dependent on Victoria Artery proceeding to detailed design, so timing is uncertain but is likely to be in the medium term.
- Rezoning of land along the northern edge of Victoria Arterial will substantially increase the amount of commercially zoned land. Therefore the release will be organised to avoid an oversupply that competes with the central CBD areas.

Principles that are relevant for all the projects include:

**IDENTITY**
- A contemporary and uniquely Rotorua design
- Achieving individual precinct character.

**BUILT+ LANDSCAPE STRUCTURE**
- Streetscape amenity
- CPTED & safety
- Barrier free streets and
- Design that enhances streets with distant axial views and those with terminating views and

**MOVEMENTS + STREET LINKAGES**
- Enabling legible connections for pedestrians
- Maintaining parking numbers
- Bicycle requirements and
- Way-finding

**EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**
- Public arts and events programme.
- Youth events and
- Night time entertainment
6.1 Resort A Zone

The Lakefront Concept Plan proposes a redevelopment of parkland and urban spaces to accommodate a broad range of tourism and recreation activities with a key focus on the natural setting, the geothermal resource and Maori culture (Figure 37). The Urban Design Framework links the Lakefront Concept Plan with the City Centre by intensifying people and activity in the adjoining landholdings.

Concentrating tourism accommodation in the CBD was proposed in Section 2: Economic Analysis. The existing Resort A zoning is correctly located along the northern and eastern edges of the CBD so that higher floors can have lake views (Figure 36).

However the Resort A Zone has some suburban type residential development controls that constrain development potential. The daylight planes create a stepped building form as seen in Whakaue Street (Figures 38 & 39). The stepped floors decrease development yield and do not allow vertical stacking of structure and services. The daylight plane starts at 3 metres above ground level precluding a two level podium. Therefore no street spatial containment is possible and there are no active frontage controls.

The proposal is to increase the maximum height from 15 metres in Commercial B and 8 metres on the Reserve B land to match the 20 metres allowed in the Commercial A zone. A two storey podium with active frontage controls should be compulsory to improve street amenity.

It is recommended that a review of these controls become part of the District Plan Review to improve the commercial attractiveness of the Resort A Zone when compared to Resort B & D and encourage inner city development.
SECTION 6.0: LAKEFRONT PRECINCT

1. New urban square at junction Tutanekai Street axis and new wharf.
2. Review Resort A zone to encourage buildings on front boundary with active ground floors.
3. Remove centre parking on Whakaue Street and new landscaping on southern boundary.
4. Boardwalk cafes on lake frontage of QE site.
5. Agree extended street and lane connections through Ngati Whakaue land to lakefront & Government Gardens.
6. Extend Hinemaru Street through to waka shed on lakefront.
7. First stage hotel & mixed use development dependent on relocation of QE Hospital.
8. Relocated QE Hospital.
10. Discuss linkage from Pukaki Street to Government Gardens with Ngati Whakaue.

Figure 40: Lakefront Precinct Plan.
6.2 QE HOSPITAL SITE

The site with the most development potential is the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QE) site. It is the closest developable site to the lakefront and the northern edge could make an attractive restaurant boardwalk with hotel accommodation set behind so that it does not overly dominate the lakefront.

The current Reserve B zone could be replaced with the reviewed Resort A zone to encourage development. The level of new development must be sufficient to pay for relocation of the QE Hospital to the eastern part of the site without compromising public amenity.

Massing studies were developed to show the possible bulk of hotel developments on the QE site. Two 200 bed hotels were used for the studies to consider the larger visual effects of the bigger buildings. Smaller boutique hotels would have less visual effects.

The top view shows two 200 bedroom hotels (grey volumes) with the main blocks arranged north-south on each edge of the site to allow more lake views. A 4-5 metre lobby has been allowed, which leaves 5 floors of hotel rooms (at 3 metres height each) fitting within a 20 metre height limit. 100 carparks has been allowed for each hotel. Underground car-parking is impossible so a large two level podium takes all the space between the hotel buildings. This approach keeps the hotel height lower but the block is fully developed and does not offer a variety of streets and paths through the site.

The bottom two views allow another floor to decrease the long length of the hotels. The seven floor height is the same as the Novotel on the western edge of the Village Green. The other benefit is an internal street and walkways to decrease the scale of the development and provide more permeability to the lakefront. This approach has better street spaces but the extra height will be contentious. Different bulk standards and amenity controls will be reviewed with the owner before becoming part a District Plan Change.

The brown volumes show potential 20 metre high developments on the second stage of the QE and other Resort A Zone sites. These are only drawn on sites with smaller amounts of existing development so illustrates the potential development if the right planning regulations and market sentiment allow.

This is a large building proposal but supports the overall strategy of attracting hotels back into the city centre and thereby intensifying activity in city centre streets. This development can only proceed with agreement from the landowner and their tenants, but our recommendation is that the commercial gains for the landowner contribute to an improved city centre and active lakefront.

6.3 WHAKAUE STREET

Whakaue Street is proposed as a pedestrian street type in the Lakefront Precinct. Once the QE site is developed it will become an important pedestrian path to Tutanekei Street and Eat Street. Development of Whakaue Street could also be coordinated with hotel, serviced apartment or apartment development on the street itself given its north facing views to the Village Green and Lake Rotorua.

The existing street has three rows of parking with the centre parking creating a car dominated streetscape. Replacing the centre carparking with a planted central median is the cheapest option as the existing kerblines and stormwater drains can remain largely unchanged. However the landscaped centre median does little to improve the walking experience (Figure 42).

Relocating the parking lanes to the northern side of the street leaves more space alongside the future development sites for a landscaped footpath area (Figure 43 & 44). The images of North Terrace in Adelaide show the road pushed off to one side and an arrangement of seating, lawn and landscaping to provide pedestrian amenity on the sunny side of the street (Figure 45).
SECTION 6.0: LAKEFRONT PRECINCT

Figure 42: Whakaue Street existing (top) and With central planted median replacing existing central carparking (bottom)

Figure 43: Whakaue Street with parking concentrated on northern side of street to create a landscaped southern side to the street.

Figure 44: Whakaue Street view, existing (top) and proposed (bottom)

Figure 45: North Terrace in Adelaide
7.1 A SPECIAL STREET?

Rotorua citizens will tell you that Tutanekai Street is their ‘main street’, but visitors do not make the same observation. The reason is that the street space of Tutanekai does not make it stand out above other streets. The streetscape paving, seating and mid-block crossings are all good elements but the spatial containment discussed in the urban design analysis is poor. The liquid amber trees in Amohia Street (Figure 48) reduce the street scale making it more human scaled and generally attractive. Although the pin oaks on Arawa Street do not have the same enclosing presence (Figure 49) their long centre median arrangement tells you that this is a special street in the city centre.

Compare this with Tutanekai Street in Figure 50. Trees have been planted in the corner and mid-block build outs but their scale has no impact and do not contain the street space as happens in Amohia Street. City Focus provides a venue for events but it severs Tutanekai Street visually and reduces the length that can be exploited to make Tutanekai the most special street in Rotorua. The plane trees between Haupapa and Arawa are an example of what can be achieved with major planting.

Figure 48 shows the current situation in a plan form and Figure 47 adds trees to the corner and mid-block kerb extensions. The number of trees, changes to seating, paving, art installations will form part of a future detailed design but the planting strategy to change Tutanekai Street’s spatial qualities is the main UDF proposal.
7.2 REVITALISATION STRATEGY
The CBD Revitalisation Strategy proposed Tutanekai Street as a ‘string’ of spaces with the creation of various precincts. It rejected some consultation suggestions for full pedestrianisation and proposed that art, street furniture and covered access be included in developed designs. These were to be based on iwi narratives such as the Hinemoa and Tutanekai theme at City Focus.

The urban design analysis confirms why full pedestrianisation is not a good option. There is insufficient activity to fill the existing space and a pedestrianised street will feel even more empty. The lack of spatial containment will be worsened. Creation of individual spaces as highlights is also supported but to work these must contrast with a consistent design that emphasises Tutanekai as ‘a special street’.

7.3 TYPICAL BLOCK PATTERN
Therefore how a typical block is consistently treated is the first issue. Figure 51 shows larger trees added to the existing kerb extensions. This is a less expensive option as changes at footpath level can be staged and detailed design can examine if the tree canopies should touch (Figure 52) or leave a gap to promote the street vista.

Figure 53 are sketch plan studies showing more trees for each block to create a stronger avenue of trees (left) or fewer trees on the existing kerb extensions (right). The middle sketch shows how artwork or geothermal installations can be located to provide highlights along the street.

Each option has advantages and disadvantages but both create a basic block pattern that will make Tutanekai the obvious main street in the city centre.
7.4 CULTURAL MAPPING

The cultural mapping concept discussed in the framework section would be applied to Tutanekai Street. Artwork has more public acceptance if it strongly connected to the place where it is installed. The cultural mapping looks for specific places to tell narratives of Iwi or European history. Alternatively it makes a trail and a story unfolds as you explore the city centre.

The sketches and photos show how these concepts can be applied to specific artwork, streetscape elements such as seating or in creative lighting designs.

Figure 54: Sketches for sculptural or geothermal elements in the streetscape.

Figure 55: Design challenge to use steam as street art element.

Figure 56: Involve local artists in the design process.

Figure 57: Creative lighting design in Sydney’s Chinatown.
SECTION 7.0: TUTANEKAI PRECINCT

7.5 EAT STREET

Council initiated the ‘Eat Street’ project over Summer 2008-9 in an experiment aimed at encouraging visitors to the city centre. The project entailed the vehicular closure of the restaurant precinct in northern Tutane-kai Street. Restaurant, cafes and bars experienced increased patronage in a safe and pleasant environment. One of the briefing items for the UDF was to formalise Eat Street with more permanent streetscape designs.

The number of trees from the basic block pattern would apply, but the ground level treatment would differ given the full pedestrianisation. Eat Street is successful in summer but does appear empty in winter. Some flexibility in the design could allow some winter traffic and a more compact outdoor seating area.

The detailed design will look at shelter options (Figure 58) and to flush pave the street so cars can be removed and reintroduced to suit. This central area can act as a pedestrian promenade in the summer and low speed lane in the winter (Figure 59).
TUTANEKAI PRECINCT

SECTION 7.0:

Figure 60: Summer Eat Street with central pedestrian promenade and eating spaces out to the promenade edge and against buildings.

Figure 61: Winter Eat Street with low speed central lane and eating spaces under cover against buildings.

Figure 62: Concept Plan.
7.6 CITY FOCUS
City Focus performs an important role as a community meeting space on Tutanekai Street. However, the bottom photo in Figure 63 shows how the structure that supports the shade cloth blocks the visual connection along Tutanekai Street. The UDF proposal is that a detailed study should look for a balance of retaining the meeting space function but reconnecting Tutanekai Street visually.

One option is to design slimmer support structures and review the planting to open up the visual connection at street level. This is the cheaper option as it maintains the current street elements and will fit into a general Tutanekai Street upgrade. Alternatively, new shade structures that are visually lighter are possible (Figure 64) but will be a more expensive option.

City Focus’ other weakness is the disconnection with the retail frontages. The best public open spaces have active edges where retailing and eating spill out and animate the public space. The location in the middle of an old intersection has a weaker oblique connection to the retail spaces (Figure 63 top & middle).

7.7 HINEMOA PEDESTRIAN STREET
Council has asked the project team to consider removing the central parking from Hinemoa Street and using the pedestrian street type proposed for Whakaue Street. A wider landscaped footpath could be established along the sunnier southern edge with two lanes and parallel parking on the northern side.

However, the offset traffic lanes will not integrate easily with the existing traffic layout at City Focus. This would reconnect the public space with retail edges and locate it in a sunnier location. Options for Hinemoa Street and City Focus can be combined into one design study.

The UDF recommendation is that a detailed design study consider City Focus and Hinemoa Street together and that options be prepared for public and Council review.
Figure 65: City Focus existing

Figure 66: Spatial analysis of urban design issues at City Focus.
8.1 ON STREET INTERCHANGE

The Transport Demand Management Strategy and associated passenger transport studies have confirmed a preference for a central passenger transport terminal that combines tourist, regional and local buses into one location. Tourist buses are unlikely to relocate given the iconic status of the Tourist Centre so a location between Arawa or Haupapa Streets is the obvious location for the interchange. The civic buildings and proximity to Tutanekai Street make this an ideal location. The Council owned car-park and small park are opportunities for a comprehensive plan.

The UDF recommends that an on-street interchange is preferable to an off street location. Current best practice for urban design and transport planning supports this approach on the basis that the volume of bus movements can be safely and conveniently integrated with the traffic environment. Off-street bus locations generally have less passive surveillance and become CPTED and graffiti problems. On street interchanges have more passing vehicle and pedestrian traffic which deters anti-social behaviour and values bus patrons as part of the city centre population. They also add to street vibrancy and activity intensification which is the core principle of the UDF.

New Lynn is a current example of this approach. Even though the existing terminal can be seen from the street the distance does not deter violence and graffiti problems (Figure 67). As part of the railway trenching to reconnect severed parts of the town centre the bus stops are relocated back on to the streets surrounding the rail station to decrease the transfer walking distance (Figure 68). More relevant to Rotorua is the section on the right side of Figure 68 which has a commercial building developed on the existing bus terminal site. The retail is set back in an arcade so that waiting bus passengers do not crowd out the shop frontage.

It is a common problem at transport interchanges that retailers do not want bus stops immediately outside their shopfronts. This is why Haupapa Street is the best interchange option from an urban design perspective. Bus stops can be located near the small park (Figure 70) so that they are overseen by vehicle and pedestrian passersby but they will not be located immediately outside shop frontages. By comparison Arawa Street is an arterial road so it is not as suitable for an on-street bus interchange. There are two options, one location on Haupapa Street and the second around an island park design. Both have redevelopment of the carpark on the southern side with ground floor retail that looks over the bus stops from the opposite side of the new lane.

Development of an interchange in this location will provide an opportunity for the area to become a focal point bringing visitors for shopping as well as providing transport for local people. The retail frontage and possible entertainment development will ensure the bus stop become part of a lively urban square (Fig 69).
In addition to the interchange itself, it is important that other stops be provided for local buses and that the stops are properly supported by convenient and efficient bus routes. At present, and as shown in Figure 71 a series of 'in and out' routes serve local links between the suburbs and the city centre, finishing at the existing terminal end in Pukuatua Street (Fig 72).

The single bus terminal discourages bus patronage for those people who work on the edges of the city centre. The two pedestrian-shed diagrams (Figures 73 & 74) show a 400 metre walk from the lakefront and main tourist hotels. Figure 74 shows a 400 metre walk from Rotorua Central entry and City Focus. These distances are considered the maximum to encourage bus patronage and show how a single terminal does not cover the lakefront of hotels in Hinemaru Street.

Some reorganisation of local bus routes to become 'pass-through' routes is considered appropriate to achieve better connection and penetration through the CBD in a way that presents better linkages and easier walking to the city’s activities and attractions. Such rationalisation could include options to combine routes and to also introduce a 'hop-on hop-off' city loop service as identified in Transport Demand Strategy. Layovers should be positioned outside of the city centre. These principles and outcomes of the UDF provide the basis for the separate more detailed passenger transport study to come.
8.3 ISLAND OPTION

Intercity buses remain in front of the Tourist Centre with the possible relocation of stops on to Fenton Street to increase the plaza area. Tourism coach stops can be located on Haupapa Street near the Tourist Centre.

Local bus stops are located on a new road around the existing park. Shelters and new planting is designed to suit the bus interchange (Fig 75 & 76). The balance of the existing carpark land can be developed with ground floor retail and accommodation or commercial space above.

The proposed retail along with other existing buildings provide passive surveillance to the bus stops. But as they are on the opposite side of the road the problems with bus patrons blocking shops is avoided (i.e. current problems in Pukuatua Street).

More comprehensive development involving land through to Fenton and Pukuatua Streets will depend on private owners or Council purchases, but they could accommodate arts, theatre and entertainment activities to create a focus for these areas. This will be an ideal location for cinemas but relocation of the existing business is unlikely.

The bus waiting shelter design should be similar to those for Tutanekai Street and the lakefront to reinforce the CBD identity.

8.4 STREET OPTION

The street option (Figure 77) places the local bus stops on Haupapa Street and allows more space for development on the existing carpark and park area. Stops for the intercity and tourist buses are the same as in the island option (Figure 76 overleaf).

Although more development is possible the bus stops are directly in front of a retail ground floor and the library. This will simply relocate the existing problem with patrons blocking shop access on Pukuatua Street. The amount of park space is smaller and given the lack of green space in the centre of the CBD this is a disadvantage with this option.
SECTION 8.0: HAUPAPA PRECINCT

Figure 76: Concept sketch of Island option
SECTION 8.0: HAUPAPA PRECINCT

Figure 77: Concept sketch of street option
9.0 DEFINING A BOUNDARY

There are two major items in considering growth and urban design for the southern part of Rotorua city centre: Rotorua Central and the Victoria Arterial project. The UDF attempts to use both as major elements in forming a new masterplan for what is being called the Southern Edge.

The Framework drawings in Section 4 showed how the southern part has little structure or space defining features when compared to the northern part of the city centre. Victoria Arterial should be conceived as a new southern edge of the city and a boundary for commercial and residential development (Refer Figures 81 & 82).

The road itself should be designed as a landscaped boulevard to present a good face for the city centre. However landscaped buffers are insufficient if they are only masking tagged back fences. Long stretches of blank concrete walls on the back boundaries of commercial properties will make an even uglier face for the city centre. To prevent this happening slip roads are proposed as an addition to encourage active frontages and provide pedestrian and cycling routes away from the noise and fumes of the main road (Figure 80). The slip lanes then connect to existing local roads keeping a connected street network to disperse traffic and encourage walking and cycling.

Rotorua Central already has blank concrete walls facing Victoria Street so the design of Victoria Arterial should keep the existing cherry trees and extend them in front of the existing open area. Negotiations with the landowner should try and break apart buildings to provide visual permeability and include openings into the walls.

The UDF recommends completing a masterplan for the triangular block of land between Fenton, Amohau and Ti Streets to ensure a good urban structure evolves. This includes slip lanes and active frontages to Victoria Arterial and connected local roads to the existing SH1 Amohau Street. In the longer term a connection to Hinemaru Street will be good but it is across supermarket land.

NB: This document uses the proposed alignment 8CB for the Victoria Arterial which is under negotiation with submitters and may be changed dependent on the final NOR decision.
**SECTION 9.0: SOUTHERN EDGE**

1. Slip lane on city side of Victoria Arterial. Entry to slip lane may have to be closer to Hireremoa Street for safety at the Pukua-tua intersection.

2. Possible development on the funeral home site

3. Replanning of the Town Belt and surrounding land to create an urban park with active edges.

4. New connection between Whakatiau & Pererika Streets

5. Rezone commercial land at Ranolf & Fenton Gateways to create an urban entry point and control service stations or fast food dominance.

6. Landscape southern edge of Rotorua Central, negotiate urban design outcomes for buildings on existing carpark boundary.

7. Connect local roads to encourage local trips away from arterial.

8. Masterplan Ti Street block for urban development over long term.

*Figure 81: Concept plan of southern edge*
Figure 82: Aerial view of long term southern edge concept
SECTION 10.0: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1. Lakefront
   a. Tutanekei Street Axis
   b. Hinemaru Extension post QE MOU

2. Haupapa Node
   a. Post PT Study

3. Tutanekei Street
   a. Eat Street
   b. Typical Blocks
   c. City Focus/Hinemoa

4. Lakefront Precinct
   a. Feasibility with POHL
   b. Council Contribution
   c. Plan Change

5. Whakaue Street
   a. Post QE/Whakaue development

6. Southern Edge
   a. Amohau Reserve
   b. District Plan Changes
   c. Victoria Arterial completion
   d. Rotorua Arterial completion
   e. Whakatau
   f. Te Ngae
In 2006 Rotorua District Council (RDC) prepared a CBD Revitalisation Strategy because of the loss of central city business activity. The Strategy outlined a series of integrated studies and projects and RDC have commissioned some of these including the Lakefront Concept Plan and a Travel Demand Management Strategy. Eat Street was also developed within the objectives defined by the Strategy. Public enthusiasm for the Lakefront Concept and Eat Street has encouraged RDC to further develop the strategy’s recommendations. The CBD Urban Design Framework (UDF) was commissioned to develop some of the projects outlined in the Revitalisation Strategy.

The most important principle from the Revitalisation Strategy is that of activity intensification. More people leads to more business which leads to more people and so on. It is important to choose projects that are realistic commercially to start this process. Commercial or retail projects are less feasible because of Rotorua’s slow population growth. Inner city residential was considered unlikely in the medium term given little difference between apartment and house prices and that people choose to live in Rotorua for an outdoor lifestyle.

Rotorua is an international tourist destination and this remains the key to central city activity intensification. Perhaps the most important UDF recommendation is to intensify activity by encouraging central city visitor accommodation. Figure 84 shows how most hotels are located outside the central city area and it is likely that many of these visitors do not come into the CBD for long periods. To make this desire a commercial reality District Plan changes are proposed to increase the attractiveness of developing in the Resort A Zone. Re-zoning and completing an agreed masterplan with the owners of the QE site is the single most important project in the UDF. Relocation of the hospital from this key site has never worked financially, but if Council increases the allowable development then the feasibility may work.

The ability to easily walk around or catch a convenient circuit bus is also important to attract visitors to stay, shop and eat in the city centre. A pedestrian street type is a proposed addition to the road hierarchy to create a walkable city. The proposed streets are important shopping streets and connections to hotels e.g. Tutukaei, Hinemoa and Whakaue Streets. Parking in the centre of these streets is removed and increased landscaped areas planned for the sunnier south side.

Haupapa Street is the preferred public transport interchange from an urban design perspective. Clustering arts, library and entertainment activities will reinforce a hub space for Young Rotorua and create a precinct with a different character. Locating the bus stops on the existing park is the preferred option so that retail and bus stops can coexist at a comfortable distance apart (Figure 86).

From an urban design perspective Tutukaei Street does not compare favourably with other city streets. Amohia Street because of its larger trees and the long planted median in Arawa Street both make grander statements than Tutukaei. Different options for footpaths, carpark layouts and art installations are proposed but the main recommendation is to plant large trees to contain the street space. This is not mere beautification but re-establishing Tutukaei as the special street in the city centre.

Options are proposed for City Focus and Hinemoa Street. Retaining the community meeting place is essential but our concern is that the existing shade structure severs the continuity of Tutukaei Street. Options are proposed that keep a sheltered plaza space, integrates the streetscape proposals for Hinemoa Street but most importantly reopen the Tutukaei Street vista.

A strategy titled the Southern Edge is proposed for the southern part of the city centre. The Victoria Arterial becomes a planning boundary to control commercial growth as well as a landscaped boulevard presenting a good face for the city centre. Slip roads are proposed to create front boundaries on the city side to avoid tagged back fences and ugly concrete tilt slab walls which mar many major urban roads. Concepts are suggested to reconnect streets and provide for longer term commercial development.

The UDF identifies which activities can be intensified and clustered in hot spots rather than diluted across the city centre. This clustering is the most significant change from the Revitalisation Strategy Plan which extended across the whole CBD and did not sufficiently prioritise areas of change. Restricting proposals to those activities which are feasible economically will enable early starts and ‘runs on the board’ for Rotorua.