

Introduction

Mt Albert is identified in the citywide spatial framework as a local centre. Local centres generally provide retail and small business services for the local community and typically support some social and employment services. For Mt Albert, the local centre is focussed on the intersection of New North Road, Mt Albert Road and Carrington Road. While the centre is focussed on this intersection, there is considerable potential for further development to occur in a corridor along New North Road within the areas identified by the precinct plan as having a mixed use or local centre core outcome.

The area covered by the Mt Albert Precinct Plan ('the precinct') is located close to the city and is accessed by New North Road, Mt Albert Road and Carrington Road. It is well served by several main bus routes and there is also a rail station. There is potential for the precinct to derive considerable further benefit from its rail station. In particular, a redevelopment of the rail station and the surrounding land could act as a catalyst for positive change within the precinct. There is also opportunity to use the air space above the rail corridor as part of an integrated redevelopment of the rail station and its surrounds.

The precinct includes a retail strip which developed in a traditional manner along both sides of New North Road. The nature of the businesses has changed in recent years and a strong Asian influence is currently evident.

There is also potential for the precinct to benefit from future development at Unitec, which is located immediately to the north. The precinct also has good access to well-regarded schools. Gladstone Primary School and Hebron Christian College are within the precinct and Mt Albert Grammar School is within walking distance of the rail station.

Due to its relatively small size, there is limited open space within the precinct but it is well located in relation to adjacent open space at the Mt Albert War Memorial Park, Ferndale Park, Alice Wylie Reserve, Te Auaunga-Oakley Creek and Owairaka-Mt Albert.



Figure 73: Photos clockwise from top left: Local centre public space, local centre streetscape and open space.

Precinct plan assumptions for Mt Albert as local centre

The core assumptions listed below form the basis for the development of this precinct plan. They must be met in order for Mt Albert to strengthen its role as a local centre in the manner envisaged by the precinct plan.

Mt Albert as a local centre is forecast to, within 400m of the New North Road / Mt Albert Road / Carrington Road intersection:

- Employ an additional 600 people by 2050, with an estimated employment density of 198 employees per hectare (as compared with a 2006 figure of 764 and an employment density of 111 employees per hectare)
- Provide an additional 1000 dwellings (including apartments) by 2050 (as compared with a 2006 figure of 930)

The Mt Albert precinct is forecast to:

- Employ an additional 700 people by 2050, with an estimated employment density of 170 employees per hectare (as compared with a 2006 figure of 830 and an employment density of 92 employees per hectare)
- Provide an additional 1240 dwellings (including apartments) by 2050 (as compared with a 2006 figure of 1040)
- Include activities which create employment and more intensive residential development around the local centre, particularly within areas that will be well served by rail or bus transport
- Provide good quality physical infrastructure, environment and supporting social infrastructure as outlined below

To achieve this, the precinct will:

- Require either amendments to the existing district plan or appropriate provisions in the new regulatory plan to be prepared by the Auckland Council
- Require investment from both the public and private sector

Its infrastructure will:

In terms of infrastructure, the precinct will:

- Have a rail service which is frequent, reliable, and integrated with a bus interchange
- Have an upgraded rail station which is well integrated with the surrounding land uses and has safe and convenient pedestrian connections
- Have a walking and cycling network which is functional and easy-to-use

Its environment will:

In terms of environment, the precinct will:

- Have better access to open space of improved quality
- Have a public gathering space or square which is accessible from New North Road, and preferably located close to the rail station
- Have high standards of design and construction, to ensure new developments contribute to the creation of a high quality place
- Retain important aspects of the historic landscape
- Have a well managed interface between the following outcomes:
 - residential and mixed use or local centre outcomes
 - residential and open space outcomes

Supporting social infrastructure

In terms of supporting social infrastructure, the precinct will:

- Have improved provision of, access to, and quality of educational and community facilities, recreation and entertainment activities (particularly for young people), and support network services

Constraints

During the development of the precinct plan, constraints to achieving the growth anticipated within the precinct have been identified. The constraints are:

- There is limited development potential within the areas identified as having the local centre core and mixed use outcomes. This is due to the location of the railway line, the nature of landholdings and the effect of a volcanic viewshaft
- The fragmented ownership of land holdings in some parts of the precinct, and therefore the need for the council to provide a mechanism to support land assembly

- The need to co-ordinate a range of stakeholders, including owners of both public and private land, in order to achieve an upgrade of the rail station in a manner that maximises the opportunities for integration with surrounding land uses and attracts investment
- The need to co-ordinate public expenditure with private investment and development
- In some cases, the existing district plan provides for development which may work against achieving the aspirations of the precinct plan
- The lack of a mainstreet / Business Improvement District organisation to drive business development
- Market drivers including the demand for development in the area and the need for sites to have a certain level of development potential before redevelopment is economically viable
- The effect of subsequent decisions which may be made to give regulatory protection to those historic landscape elements, areas and landscapes identified as 'significant'

2050 aspirations

It is intended that by 2050, the precinct will experience business and residential growth and the role of Mt Albert as a local centre will be strengthened. The precinct will be served by quality public transport and will have an upgraded rail station which is well integrated with surrounding land uses and a bus interchange. Pedestrian and cycle connections within and beyond the precinct will be improved. Development of public space and private property will be of high quality in terms of both design and construction. The active and well organised business community will have successfully established a market niche for the centre.

Key moves

The following key moves should be read in conjunction with the precinct plan maps. These key moves have been split between short term priorities that could be achieved within the next 0-5 years, medium term priorities (next 5-10 years) and long term aspirations which would take longer than 10 years to plan for and achieve. Those key moves which have a specific funding commitment under council's 10 year plan (2009-2019) have been identified with an asterisk (*).

Table 18: Key outcomes for the Mt Albert precinct plan area between now and 2050

Green the city and protect our heritage
<p>Short term priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and continue to provide protection for the historic landscape elements (trees, buildings and geological) currently scheduled in the district plan • Require regulatory protection for those historic landscapes elements, areas and landscapes which are identified as 'iconic' on the historic landscape map • Provide regulatory protection for those historic landscape elements, areas and landscapes identified as 'significant' on the historic landscape map on a case-by-case basis • Limit building height within the volcanic viewshaft to a height which is consistent with the purpose of the regionally identified viewshaft • Provide high quality pedestrian / cycle linkages to the open space areas outside the precinct eg Mt Albert War Memorial Park, Ferndale Park, Alice Wylie Reserve, Te Auaunga-Oakley Creek, Owairaka-Mt Albert • Plant appropriate street trees in suitable locations in conjunction with pedestrian improvements along New North Road and Carrington Road • Ensure that new development is of a high quality design that implements the principles of Low Impact Urban Design and Development (LIUDD)
<p>Medium term priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that new development is of a high quality design that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – respects the established scale, form and characteristics of the built heritage of the townscape along New North Road and the residential heritage areas – improves the amenity and street environments • Require new development within the low rise apartments / terraces outcome adjacent to Braemar Park, to provide a high quality interface with the open space • Work with public and private landowners to create an urban forest / ecological corridor by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – advocating for planting of indigenous species along the rail corridor – providing information which encourages private landowners to plant appropriate indigenous species – encouraging planting of species which reinforce the link with the ecology of Owairaka-Mt Albert

Develop lively centres

Short term priorities

- Undertake an upgrade within the centre*. This should include:
 - better quality footpaths including increased width where this can be accommodated
 - street lighting
 - design in accordance with CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and LIUDD (Low Impact Urban Design and Development) principles
 - well placed street furniture eg seating, rubbish bins
 - visual cues, such as public artwork, paving details and interpretative signage which helps create a sense of place and a linkage with the heritage of the Mt Albert area
- Undertake a study to determine a location for a public gathering space or square in the centre. This could include consideration of the following options:
 - reconfiguration of the free left turn from New North Road into Mt Albert Road (heading southeast), subject to traffic modelling to determine likely traffic effects
 - opportunities associated with development of the catalyst sites at:
 - 947-955 New North Road
 - rail station / 911 New North Road / 915-943 New North Road
 - opportunities associated with future redevelopment of the council carpark at 984 New North Road
 - site acquisition
- Provide for higher buildings in the following areas:
 - in the low rise apartments / terraces outcome
 - in the mixed use and local centre core outcomes

The building heights are indicated by the 'maximum number of storeys' shown on the base outcomes map. Where five storeys are indicated, this means:

- for the rail station block catalyst site - up to two storeys at the front boundary (podium level) adjoining New North Road, with provision for
 - two additional storeys which shall be set back from the front boundary, and
 - one additional storey below the level of New North Road (ie fronting Ballast Lane)
- for all other sites - up to three storeys at the front boundary (podium level) adjoining New North Road, with provision for two additional storeys which shall be set back from the front boundary

The purpose of the setback for the upper two storeys is to maximise visual amenity and sunlight access on the footpath. The depth of the setback is to be determined by urban design review

- Direct the expected emphasis of the mixed use environments ie
 - mixed use - commercial emphasis, on the northwestern side of New North Road
 - mixed use - residential emphasis, on the front sites on the southeastern side of New North Road
 - mixed use - flexible, on some properties in Willcott Street, and on the rear sites on the southeastern side of New North Road

Medium term priorities

- Manage the transition of existing development to mixed use outcomes on the southeastern side of New North Road
- Undertake a study to determine opportunities to provide a feature at the key landmark corner ie the intersection of New North Road / Mt Albert Road / Carrington Road
- Support safe, clear and active pedestrian linkages between the main destinations being the rail station, Unitec, local schools, Owairaka Domain and the Mt Albert War Memorial Park



Figure 74: Artist's impression of carpark area at 867c New North Road, looking southwest towards Carrington Road

House our growing population well

Short term priorities

- Introduce restrictions on residential infill in areas where low rise apartments / terraces or mixed use are the desired outcomes
- Provide for and encourage a variety of housing choices, including detached houses, terrace housing, low rise apartments and residential units within mixed use developments
- Provide for mixed use with a residential emphasis along the southeastern side of New North Road
- Require new residential development adjacent to the rail corridor to be designed in a manner which mitigates the impact of noise and vibration from rail operations and maintenance on residential amenity
- Work with the owners of the Everill Orr Village (a resthome and retirement village) and other stakeholders to develop a regulatory regime for this site which provides for redevelopment for the same or similar use in a manner compatible with the characteristics of the surrounding residential area

Medium term priorities

- Manage intensification within the low rise apartments / terraces outcome to ensure that new development is of high quality design that respects the established scale, form and characteristics of existing development

Be economically competitive

Short term priorities

- Work with the business community to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) via a mandate achieved by a poll of commercial ratepayers in the centre. If the BID is established, then work with local businesses, property owners, landlords and other stakeholders to:
 - Develop and promote a coherent brand, a 'point of difference', niche services and a marketing plan
 - Target tenant attraction to improve the retail mix and food offer
 - Improve tidiness, physical environment and safety
 - Identify, understand and serve the surrounding and passing customer base
 - Deliver business development initiatives to support business success
 - Promote economic linkages to education facilities (particularly Unitec) and businesses in the Carrington Road area
 - Work with Unitec to develop a masterplan for their site which strengthens economic linkages between Unitec and the precinct
- Advocate for and support development of the following catalyst site in a manner which meets the listed objectives:
 - 847-859 New North Road (corner Lloyd Avenue)
 - Comprehensive development of the three sites (847, 849, 859 New North Road)
 - A high quality apartment development which helps to delineate the northeastern edge of the centre and create an attractive gateway into the centre
 - Safe vehicle entry and exit
- Provide for development which will increase the scale and critical mass of the centre ie provide for the centre to grow both up and out
- Install gateway signage to delineate and promote the centre
- Identify opportunities to benefit from any future development of the Unitec site and the Horticulture and Food Research Institute on Mt Albert Road
- Provide for business uses such as offices within existing buildings on sites with a single dwelling / traditional site outcome located on the southeastern side of New North Road between Mt Albert Road and Lloyd Avenue

Medium term priorities

- Advocate for and support development of the following catalyst site in a manner which meets the listed objectives:
 947-955 New North Road
- A comprehensive masterplan including all of these properties
- A high quality mixed use development with a commercial focus and an active frontage along New North Road
- Well designed access and internal circulation which provides improved pedestrian connections both within the sites and to the street and surrounding land uses
- Advocate for and support development of the following catalyst site in a manner which meets the listed objectives:
 Rail station / 911 New North Road / 915-943 New North Road
- Safe and direct pedestrian access between the rail station and New North Road, Carrington Road, and Willcott Street
- Improved public space
- Integration between the rail station and surrounding uses
- Improved pedestrian access at the northwestern corner of Carrington Road and New North Road
- Integration with a bus interchange

Take a proactive role in facilitating masterplanning of this catalyst site, including contributing the council's own land, such as the slip lane (in front of 915-943 New North Road), where this would improve the public benefit. Ensure that options for building over the rail line (via an air space lease) and over Ballast Lane are fully considered.



Figure 75: Artist's impression of New North Road looking northeast



Figure 76: Artist's impression of rail station connections and interface, looking southwest towards 915-927 New North Road (Video Easy)

Connect communities

Short term priorities

- Work with the relevant stakeholders to improve pedestrian links to and from the rail station in conjunction with an interim upgrade of the station. The interim upgrade will include the improvements required for electrification as well as new shelters, improved lighting, and an overall upgrade similar in design and form to the Ellerslie station upgrade. Ensure that any improvements made in the short term will tie in with the long term aspirations for a more integrated development including a bus-rail interchange in this location
- Work with relevant stakeholders to determine a plan for an upgraded Mt Albert transport interchange incorporating rail and bus through the creation of a transit interchange square, supported by integration with adjacent land uses and site redevelopment opportunities
- Protect the future operation of the rail by requiring new development for noise sensitive activities, such as residential uses, locating adjacent to the rail corridor to be designed in a manner which mitigates the impact of noise and vibration from rail operations and maintenance
- Undertake a pedestrian study of the centre and surrounding people generating activities (eg the rail station, Unitec, schools and public parking areas) to determine measures which will improve accessibility and pedestrian safety throughout the precinct. Measures are likely to include:
 - improvements to pedestrian crossings, both formal and informal
 - opportunities to explore through site links, including providing for an additional connection between Allendale Road and New North Road
 - improved lighting
 - addressing safety issues through use of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles
 - options for improving the footpath environment on the Carrington Road bridge
 - opportunities to work with the owners of 22B Willcott Street to provide pedestrian access to the rail station as part of any redevelopment of this site
- Undertake an upgrade within the centre that provides an improved pedestrian environment including additional crossing points across New North Road
- Provide adequate cycle facilities within the precinct such as on-road cycle facilities (eg cycle lanes and advance stop boxes), cycle racks in the centre and cycle lockers at the rail station
- Complete a study of parking demand, both existing and future, taking into account the rail station upgrade and growth within the precinct. Determine options for:
 - locating and managing additional parking that may be required
 - introducing or changing time restrictions and paid parking
 - redeveloping existing public parking areas which are at grade with an integrated parking and land use development
 - appropriate regulatory parking requirements
- Advocate for improved bus connections to and from nearby activity generators such as Unitec
- Identify and implement opportunities for bus priority measures to support the high quality high frequency QTN (Quality Transit Network) within the precinct including options for bus lanes on Mt Albert Road and / or New North Road
- Improve vehicle and pedestrian safety at the New North Road / Mt Albert Road / Carrington Road intersection
- Work with relevant agencies such as Ontrack / KiwiRail to ensure the electrification of the Western Line is undertaken as required

Medium term priorities

- Implement the actions determined in the studies related to the following:
 - pedestrian accessibility and safety
 - parking demand
- Introduce regulatory changes to the requirements for on site parking to better reflect demand management (eg requirements which take into account diversity of land use activities, availability of public transport and investment in active modes such as walking and cycling). Regulatory changes may include use of parking 'maximums' which specify the maximum amount of parking that can be provided
- Implement the plan for an upgraded Mt Albert transport interchange
- Work with Ontrack / KiwiRail and other relevant stakeholders to evaluate the feasibility of cycle facilities alongside the western rail line having regard to any development and operational constraints, including safety and security issues
- Determine further options for improving safety for road users, pedestrians and cyclists in the precinct, such as on Allendale Road

Long term aspirations

- Implement the further options determined for improving safety
- Grade separate the rail crossing at Woodward Road if safety concerns arise as a result of increased train frequencies. Grade separation should consider the needs of cyclists and pedestrians, as well as motorists