

GROWING OUR *cultural* HEART

TIHEI HERETAUNGA

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT FOR INVESTMENT IN THE OPERA HOUSE AND PLAZA

WHY ARE WE SPEAKING WITH YOU?

Council wants your views on strengthening the Opera House, to allow it to once again be reopened to the community.

Last year Council updated the community on the closure of the Hawke's Bay Opera House and Municipal Building.

The closure was due to the risks they posed in a moderate to intense earthquake and the likely costs of strengthening the buildings to meet legal requirements to enable them to be reopened.

The costs are high and Council signalled that it would take time to fully consider the community's options.

As part of that, Council has reviewed other city centre projects in its Long Term Plan. Those included attracting a hotel and the redevelopment of Civic Square.

To ensure fresh eyes looked at all the options, Council put together an independent working party (IWP), made up mainly of local people, all with a mix of skills. You can read their ideas in their IWP Report Tihei Heretaunga at growingourculturalheart.co.nz

While the work over the last 10 months has focused over the whole of the city's growing leisure and arts area, reaching from Civic Square to the Opera House, the decision has been made to firstly concentrate on the Opera House.

The Opera House work is a stand alone project, however Council is also looking at whether the Plaza should be permanently roofed, and wants your views on this idea as well.

Any projects on the Municipal Building and/or Civic Square would be brought back to residents for separate consultation at a later date.

See: growingourculturalheart.co.nz

WHAT ARE THE OPERA HOUSE AND THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING?

The Opera House precinct is made up of three components as follows:



OPERA HOUSE THEATRE

This consists of the main theatre area with seating for 980 people and a stage capable of hosting a range of performances and events. This area has a

significant risk of structural failure in a moderate to intense earthquake. That failure would pose a threat to audience members inside the theatre.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING

This building was formally the Hastings City Council chambers. Before its closure it was used as office space, function rooms, and an assembly room on the first floor, with a retail tenancy on the ground floor. This building also has significant risk of structural failure in a moderate to intense earthquake. That failure also presents a threat to life.



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THE PLAZA/CAFÉ

The Plaza is the open air (partially covered) area which links the Opera House and the café that has been operated as Opera Kitchen. This area is

not considered to pose any serious risk during an earthquake, however the retractable roof limits its use as a venue during winter and inclement weather.

WE WANT YOUR VIEWS

The main points are:

- ▶ Strengthening the Opera House to a level of 70-75% of the National Building Standards;
- ▶ Permanently covering the Plaza area and making associated improvements, subject to the plans making financial sense;

- ▶ Undertaking more work to find a better use for the Municipal Building before seeking community views on options;
- ▶ Deferring further work on the Civic Square concept plan at this time;

We also want your views on the broader Tihei Heretaunga vision.

OPERA HOUSE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

WHY DO WE NEED TO DO ANYTHING?

In March 2014, an engineering report showed that the Hawke's Bay Opera House was earthquake prone under building regulations and posed a threat to life. Further reviews and detailed analyses have confirmed this.

Council obtained engineering advice from a number of sources, all of which broadly agreed on the building's earthquake-prone status and threat to life. This information was peer reviewed.

The Council closed the Opera House immediately and not long after closed the next door Municipal Building after a report showed it too was at risk.

WHAT NEEDS DOING AT THE OPERA HOUSE?

The proposed work would essentially add steel to the basic structure and tie all the parts of the building together so it will be better able to stay standing in a moderate to intense earthquake.

This work will lesson the risk of injury or death and allow people to get out of the building during such an earthquake.

No building can ever be made wholly earthquake proof. The strengthening proposed for the Hawke's Bay Opera House focuses on maintaining the safety of people inside the building and allowing them to get out, not on fully preserving the building as that would significantly increase costs (initial indications are in excess of \$35 million).

STRENGTHENING LEVEL

Council, in conjunction with experts in strengthening brick buildings, has evaluated the options in respect to the best and most practical level of strengthening work to be undertaken on the Opera House.

This requires a detailed and complex computer model analysis which anticipates the likely performance of the building under certain earthquake conditions. The "earthquake" used to calculate this is not a "real" earthquake, rather it is a model that GNS Science (a NZ Crown Research Institute) has derived for the geographical area the building is in; in our case Hawke's Bay.

The strengthening schemes for the building are focused on lessening the risk to life in case of an earthquake – this is the focus of the building regulations.

The minimum strengthening level to meet Council's legal responsibilities is 34% of current building standards.

Council commissioned work on a range of strengthening alternatives from the minimum 34% through to 100%. The percentage relates to an existing building's strength compared to a new building built to today's standards.

In simple terms the more investment over and above the 34% level, the more protection in terms of lives potentially saved in an earthquake is achieved.

The New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering recommends strengthening to a level above 67% of National Building Regulations. Council agrees because, as well as providing an increased level of safety, it builds in a buffer should the building codes or engineering standards change. If Council opted for 34%, a change in those rules could force it to again look at work to upgrade the historic buildings.



IS STRENGTHENING OLD FACILITIES WISE?

Is spending up to \$21.3 million on existing facilities to deliver the same use to the community wise?

Council's view is that given its unique character and purpose, the options for changing the use of the **Opera House Theatre** are limited. **We either invest in protecting this heritage asset or we don't.**

The situation with the Municipal Building is more complex. Because of its layout it has limited uses.

Council's view is that at a cost of up to \$7.3 million to strengthen it, there really needs to be a better purpose for the **Municipal Building** – and ideally some way of gaining income from it to help pay for the costs of upgrading it. Council will further consider options for the Municipal Building in 2016, once further work on its potential uses is completed.

WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHENING COSTS?

The preliminary cost estimates for strengthening the two buildings are:

Earthquake Strengthening Level	Preliminary Design – Cost Estimate (\$ Million)		
	Hawke's Bay Opera House	Hastings Municipal Building	Total
34%	6.5–7.0	4.8–5.5	11.3–12.5
70–75%	10.0–11.0	5.6–6.4	15.6–17.4
100%	13.0–14.0	6.3–7.3	19.3–21.3

OUR PERFORMANCE VENUE

A building needs a viable use. This has been an underlying principle in the assessment of options for the historic Hawke's Bay Opera House and Municipal Building.

In terms of the Opera House Theatre, it would be difficult to modify for a different use. A performance venue in some form is considered the only viable option. The options are to strengthen the building, to demolish and build a new fit-for-purpose facility, or to demolish and leave the community without a significant performance venue.

Council's view is that while it will cost a significant amount of money, strengthening the Opera House is the best option for the community.



THE PREFERRED OPTION

Strengthening the Opera House to 70-75 per cent of the National Building Standards.

The following reasons are given for this:

- 1 It will return an outstanding performance venue for community use
- 2 It could be a catalyst for related private development and investment
- 3 Urban design advice and international evidence points to the importance of the retention of a city's heritage buildings as a lever to grow from
- 4 It is a more cost effective option than building a new facility
- 5 It is Council's perception that this is what the community expects it to do.

THE PLAZA

A COMPLIMENTARY INVESTMENT

The Plaza, next to the Opera House, is a stunning space. One considerable weakness of the plaza at the moment is that it only has a canvas retractable roof. It is not weather proof and the venue cannot be used in winter at night due to a lack of heating and temperature control, both of which limit its use.

The opportunity exists to revisit the way the space works:

- ▶ Should the Municipal Building find a new use, for example a hotel or office space, then its biggest space, the assembly room, would be lost and alternatives may need to be found – potentially the Plaza;
- ▶ If the Municipal Building was turned into a hotel then a nearby multipurpose function room may be useful;
- ▶ The café currently run as Opera Kitchen is moving to new premises, creating the opportunity to rethink how that space is used and how it joins with the Plaza;
- ▶ The moveable canvas roof structure which currently covers the Plaza is due for replacement.

For these reasons Council is suggesting converting the Plaza into an all-weather space, including covering it with a permanent roof, at a cost of about \$2 million.



PAYING FOR IT

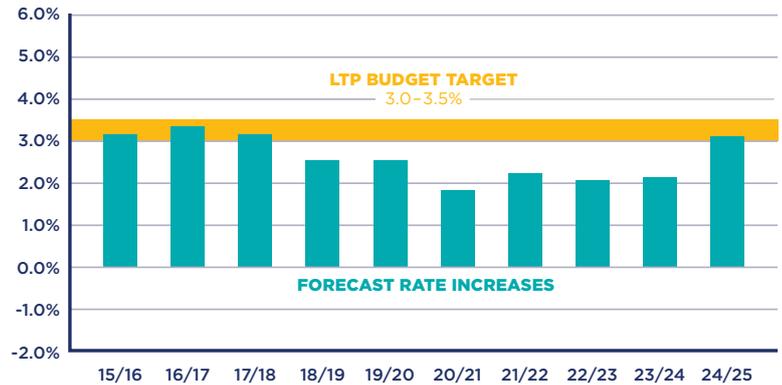
LONG TERM RATES AND DEBT FORECAST

It is important to note that the amount Council will spend on these projects will be capped at \$20m. Those funds are already in Council's budgets for city centre improvements and can be used for these projects should they be approved. Potential operational costs are also already included in the budgets.

Because they are already in the budgets, going ahead with the projects will make no difference to the forecast rate increases which average 2.6% over the 10 years of the 2015–2025 Long Term Plan (as shown by the graph below).

Consultation on these budgets has been previously held with the community. Council will work to attract external funding for those projects that proceed.

ANNUAL RATING REVENUE MOVEMENT



CONSULTATION DETAILS

OBTAINING DOCUMENTS AND MAKING SUBMISSIONS

This proposal is open for public consultation from Saturday February 13 to Monday 21 March, 2016.

This document is only a brief summary of the full proposal which is available by:

- ▶ Calling **871 5000** and requesting a copy
- ▶ Visiting a public library
- ▶ Downloading or viewing the documents on www.hastingsdc.govt.nz
- ▶ Or seeing: www.myvoicemychoice.co.nz or find My Voice My Choice on Facebook.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN MORE

Information on the project will be on display in the Hastings city centre from February 15, 2016.

Information sessions on the proposals will be held in Hastings, Flaxmere and Havelock North.

Flaxmere Park, February 25 (4pm to 6pm)

Opera House Plaza, March 5 (11am to 1pm)

Hastings Night Market, March 10 (5.30pm to 7.30pm)

Havelock North town centre, March 12 (10am to 12.30pm)

www.growingourculturalheart.co.nz

You can also see this website for a one-stop-shop containing all information on this proposal, including current and past supplementary reports.



PLEASE CUT HERE AND RETURN



IF YOU ONLY HAVE A MOMENT, PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR VIEWS BELOW AND SEND THEM BACK TO US USING THE INCLUDED FREEPOST ENVELOPE.

1 Are you in favour of strengthening the Opera House Theatre to 70-75% of National Building Standards at an estimated cost of \$10-\$11 million?

- YES
- NO – Demolish building
- NO – Replace new (Estimated at \$20m)

2 Are you in favour of building a permanent roof over the Plaza if a feasibility study shows it is good value for money (estimated at \$2m)?

- YES
- NO

3 Do you have ideas for the future use of the Municipal Building?

4 What are your thoughts on the overall Tihēi Heretaunga strategy?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

PLEASE TELL US HOW STRONGLY YOU FEEL ABOUT THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND RETURN BY FREEPOST

