

Devonport City Council



The City with Spirit



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1. What is the Retail Strategy?

The Devonport City Council Retail Strategy intends to provide a clear direction for the role of Council in supporting retail activities within the CBD and greater Devonport. Council, with the support of the Devonport Chamber of Commerce and Industry has prepared a Strategy that examines the views, concerns and priorities of retailers and the community and provides a series of actions to be delivered over the next five years to address these priorities.

Importantly, the dynamic nature of retail and its reliance on state and national economic trends means this strategy may also need to evolve over time.

2. Introduction

Retail is an important aspect of Devonport's visitor experience. With the implementation of the Living City Master Plan, the retail landscape in Devonport is undergoing significant change. The city is planning to ensure future growth in downtown retailing occurs in the CBD. With the addition of a big-box homemaker development on the CBD fringe along with the growth of retail and hospitality businesses, Devonport is cementing itself as the retail and services hub of the North West Coast.

The retail industry is integral to Devonport, generating significant employment opportunities (12.4% of Devonport's residents work in retail)¹, attracting investment to the region, supporting the local tourism industry and ensuring Devonport is a desirable place to live and work.

Independent economic analysis completed by HillPDA in 2016, reveals that LIVING CITY is expected to generate almost 830 full-time operational jobs in the Devonport CBD, many within retail and related industries. Once complete LIVING CITY is expected to generate an additional \$112 million each year in the operational phase.

A key element of the strategy was to consider Council's role in supporting retail that compliments the role of the Devonport Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI). Direct engagement with the retail sector is vital to ensure a good shopping experience within Devonport, this supported by infrastructure and accessibility initiatives, will ensure Devonport is a destination that is attractive to visitors.

3. Strategic and Legislative Context

The primary legislation to which Council must comply is the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The Devonport City Council Strategic Plan includes relevant objectives and actions as detailed below:

¹Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016*.

Outome	Strategy
2.2 The Devonport Brand supports our marketing and development efforts	2.2.1 Maintain a local brand that supports our competitive advantages
	2.2.2 Develop an integrated approach to local branding in partnership with business and community groups
3.1 Devonport is the retail and service centre for North West Tasmania	3.1.1 Market and promote the city and its potential as a regional business hub
3.5 Our economic progress continuously improves	3.5.3 Promote, encourage and develop initiatives that maximise the local economy and retain local expenditure
	3.5.4 Develop and support a culture of excellence in innovation and life long learning to enhance employment opportunities

The Devonport City Council Digital Strategy and Parking Strategy both include actions that support the objectives of the Retail Strategy including ensuring availability and affordability of parking in Devonport and by encouraging innovative use of emerging digital technologies.

Council also anticipates the introduction of a Statewide Planning Scheme that will allow council to make special planning provisions unique to its municipality, with approval from the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

4. Background

In the past Council has assisted the Devonport Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) to provide marketing and promotional support to the retail sector through the provision of campaigns and activities.

In early 2017, the DCCI approached Council with a discussion paper outlining its future desires in the retail space. Council agreed to research and develop a city retail strategy, considering feedback from retailers, the community, DCCI and elected members.

The retail strategy examines retail in Devonport employing the following retail districts: Inner CBD retail, Outer CBD retail (Fourways, Forbes St, South of Steel Street) and Neighbourhood Centres including Spreyton, East Devonport and Valley Road.

Development of the Strategy raised the question "What role should Council and DCCI play in ensuring a vibrant and desirable retail destination?".

5. Strategy Development

5.1 Initial survey

Initial feedback was obtained from the retail community via an online or hard copy survey. The purpose of the survey was to understand retailer views, concerns and priorities. The survey also identified ways in which Council can best support Devonport retailers to achieve future retail growth. A total of 38 responses were received from retailers with key themes being:

- a. CBD Parking concerns; The impact of paid parking and the availability of parking in Devonport;
- b. CBD streetscapes and presentation; Council should continue to invest in upgrading streetscapes and the Rooke Street Mall in addition to the Living City Project;
- c. CBD Marketing and Events; Refresh of Devonport brand marketing and greater activation of CBD spaces; and
- d. Lack of communication between Council and retailers.

5.2 Discussion Document

The outcomes of the survey were compiled into a discussion document which gave an overview of key feedback from the survey. This document was used to stimulate discussion within the retail sector and encourage participation at community workshops. The document featured information on parking changes and future allocated capital works which show Council's progression in two key areas of concern from the initial survey; CBD parking and streetscape beautification.

5.3 Community Workshops

A series of workshops were held to further understand the key themes and encourage solutions focused brainstorming and development of ideas. The workshops were independently facilitated and involved members of the retail sector, DCCI, Council and community members. Each session attracted on average 10 participants and discussion was varied across each workshop. At the beginning of each session Council explained future parking changes as recently endorsed following Council's review of the Parking Strategy. Parking being a hot topic for discussion was 'parked' with participants asked to brainstorm the positives and negatives associated with retail in Devonport. It was suggested that participants may wish to come up with an idea to satisfy their parking concerns such as a spend and save promotion.

It was clear from the workshops that there was not an appetite for retail to initiate or subsidise

parking promotions and this was seen as the role of Council.

Each workshop was consistent in their brainstorming with four key areas of feedback identified:

- > Communication between Council, retailers and community
- > Need for a strong destination branding/identity for Devonport
- > The need to explore the future of the Rooke Street Mall and consider wind and weather improvements.
- > Continue to build the capacity of the retail sector.

6. Purpose and Objectives

The aim for the Retail Strategy over the next five years is to promote Devonport as the retail and services hub of North West Tasmania.

It is anticipated that this will be achieved through a number of actions grouped under four key focus areas:

Objective 1 – Increase visitation to CBD

Objective 2 – Strengthen the retail experience

Objective 3 - Build the capacity of retailers

Objective 4 – Strengthen communication between Council and retailers

Key challenges, desired outcomes and suggested actions have been developed from a combination of community and Council staff feedback and current and future retail trends. A detailed action plan is provided in Appendix A.

6.1 Objective 1 - Increase visitation to CBD

This includes actions that promote Devonport as a desirable place to visit through the activation of CBD spaces, a vibrant yearly program of events and the development of strong identity branding and associated digital media presence.

Key Challenges:

- > Regional demographic profile characterised by small population
- > Low income earners and high proportion older residents results in reduced spending activities.

Desired Outcomes:

- > Improved Marketing of the city
- > Vibrant, alive and exciting CBD
- > Increase in visitation by out of region visitors

- > Greater city pride from community and retail sector
- > Raised profile of Devonport in media and tourism sectors

Actions Include:

- > Refresh destination branding and create associated website/social media
- > Create a destination campaign around new branding
- > Continue a yearly program of community cultural events
- > Investigate ways to encourage more CBD events – Street Eats/Markets
- > Develop an education campaign for parking options
- > Promote Council's CBD Mural Art tour

6.2 Objective 2 - Strengthen the retail experience

This includes enhancing the visitor's experience physically, emotionally and socially therefore encouraging repeat visitation and word of mouth endorsement.

Key Challenges:

- > Fixed infrastructure time consuming and costly to alter
- > Ability to meet changing customer and retailer expectations
- > Private enterprise not always willing to invest
- > Entrenched negativity and reluctance to embrace change

Desired Outcomes:

- > Attractive city scaping
- > Weather resilient open space
- > Comfortable and easy to use facilities
- > Private enterprise follows Councils lead in investing in their own visual frontage

Actions Include:

- > Continue upgrades to CBD streets
- > Investigate options for the future of the mall
- > LIVING CITY development

6.3 Objective 3 - Build the capacity of retailers

This includes actions that encourage retail improvements through training, networking and advocacy. Highlighting available resources to retailers and staff and encouraging more communication between retailers.

Key Challenges:

- > Historical differences between retail sector, DCCI and Council

- > Desire by some to levy a promotional fee for CBD business however, Council has voted against introducing a levy in this instance
- > Retailers time poor during business hours

Desired Outcomes:

- > A strong network of retailers that often initiate activity
- > Improved customer service and positive retail transactions
- > Utilisation of contemporary retail techniques
- > Improved engagement between retail community and Council
- > Improved relations between Council, DCCI and other stakeholders

Actions Include:

- > Establish an annual retail conference
- > Identify and promote existing workshops and training opportunities

6.4 Objective 4 - Strengthen communication between Council and retailers

This includes actions that establish patterns of regular contact between Council and retailers and allows a forum for questions, requests and discussion between all parties.

Key Challenges:

- > Past negative experiences with DCCI and Council
- > Misinformation or no information causes incorrect assumptions
- > Expectation that Council will initiate all communication

Desired Outcomes:

- > Increase in communication initiated by retail sector
- > Improved knowledge in community of Council plans and activities
- > Improved engagement between retail community and Council

Actions Include:

- > Consider a single Council resource for retail marketing
- > Investigate a digital retail community
- > Publish regular retail update
- > Marketing & Events

7. Implementation

Devonport City Council will be responsible for facilitating the implementation of the Strategy. Review of Strategic Focus Areas and Actions will occur on an annual basis by the Marketing and Events Coordinator and align with Council's Annual Plan and Estimates process.

Progress of the Strategy will be reported to Council within the minutes of the Governance, Finance and Community Services Section 23 Committee and be integrated into annual corporate reporting. Progress on the action plan will be communicated to residents via a range of Council communication mediums.

8. Timeframes

Actions assessed using two criteria:

1. Level of importance / strategic impact
2. Ease of implementation (considering time, resources, complexity)
 - Ongoing - day to day/recurring tasks which are budgeted for annually
 - Short Term: Complete within 1-2 years
 - Medium Term: Complete within 3-5 years
 - Long Term: Complete within 5 year

9. Resources Required

The level of human or financial resources required:

- A-OPEX: Annual operational expenditure by Council – staffing or operational resource allocated as part of the annual plan.
- F-OPEX: Future operational expenditure by Council – identified increased requirements for future consideration in annual allocation.
- F-CAPEX: Future capital expenditure by council - identified future capital cost for future consideration in capital works budget.

Appendix A - Action Plan

Action	Details	Responsibility	Priority/ Timeframe	Resources	
Objective 1 – Increase visitation to CBD					
1.1	Refresh destination branding and create associated website/social media	Logo redesign and tag line update. Consistent destination brand across web and social media.	Marketing & Events/Visitor Services	High Short Term	F-OPEX
1.2	Create a destination campaign to promote brand refresh	Print and Digital regional campaign NW Tas possibly extending Statewide	Marketing & Events/Visitor Services	High Short Term	F-OPEX
1.3	Continue a yearly program of community cultural events	In accordance with Council's Events Strategy. Ensure events activate CBD spaces.	Marketing & Events	Medium Ongoing	A-OPEX
1.4	Investigate ways to encourage more CBD events	Promote available spaces, increase support in these spaces.	Marketing & Events	Medium Medium Term	F-OPEX
1.5	Develop an education campaign to promote parking options	Promote available parking options, Easy Park app and best value parking scenarios.	Marketing & Events/Parking	High Short Term	A-OPEX
1.6	Promote Council's CBD Murals through destination website	Development and promotion of a discovery trail that takes in CBD Murals	Marketing & Events	Medium Short Term	A-OPEX
Objective 2 – Strengthen the retail experience					
2.1	Continue upgrades to CBD streets in accordance with Street Design Guidelines adopted by Council	In accordance with Council's Future Works Program	Infrastructure & Works	Various Ongoing	F-CAPEX

Action		Details	Responsibility	Priority/ Timeframe	Resources
2.2	Investigate options for the future of Rooke Street Mall	Analyse the impact of Living City on the Rooke Street Mall and determine a suitable future for the space	Economic Development	Medium Medium	F-CAPEX
2.3	LIVING CITY	Multi-staged revitalisation project for Devonport	Economic Development	High Ongoing	F-CAPEX
Objective 3 - Build the capacity of retailers					
3.1	Establish an annual retail conference	Full day/evening conference with a mix of workshops, networking and presented sessions. Presented in collaboration with Business Tasmania and DCCI.	Marketing & Events	High Medium Term	F-OPEX
3.2	Identify and promote existing workshops and training opportunities	Encourage Chambers of Commerce and Business Tasmania to host events in Devonport and promote to retailers.	Marketing & Events	High Short Term	A-OPEX
Objective 4 - Strengthen communication between Council and retailers					
4.1	Consider a single Council resource for retail marketing	Identify or create appropriate resource and ensure responsibility is clear across organisation	General Manager	High Short Term	A-OPEX
4.2	Establish a digital retail community	Explore digital platforms that facilitate a digital community with blog, discussion and file download capabilities	Marketing & Events	Low Medium Term	F-OPEX
4.3	Publish a regular retailer update	Publish a regular email update to retail database	Marketing & Events	High Short Term	A-OPEX

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