



# Neighbourhood Shopping Centres in Lower Hutt (1989-2008)

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## **1 Introduction**

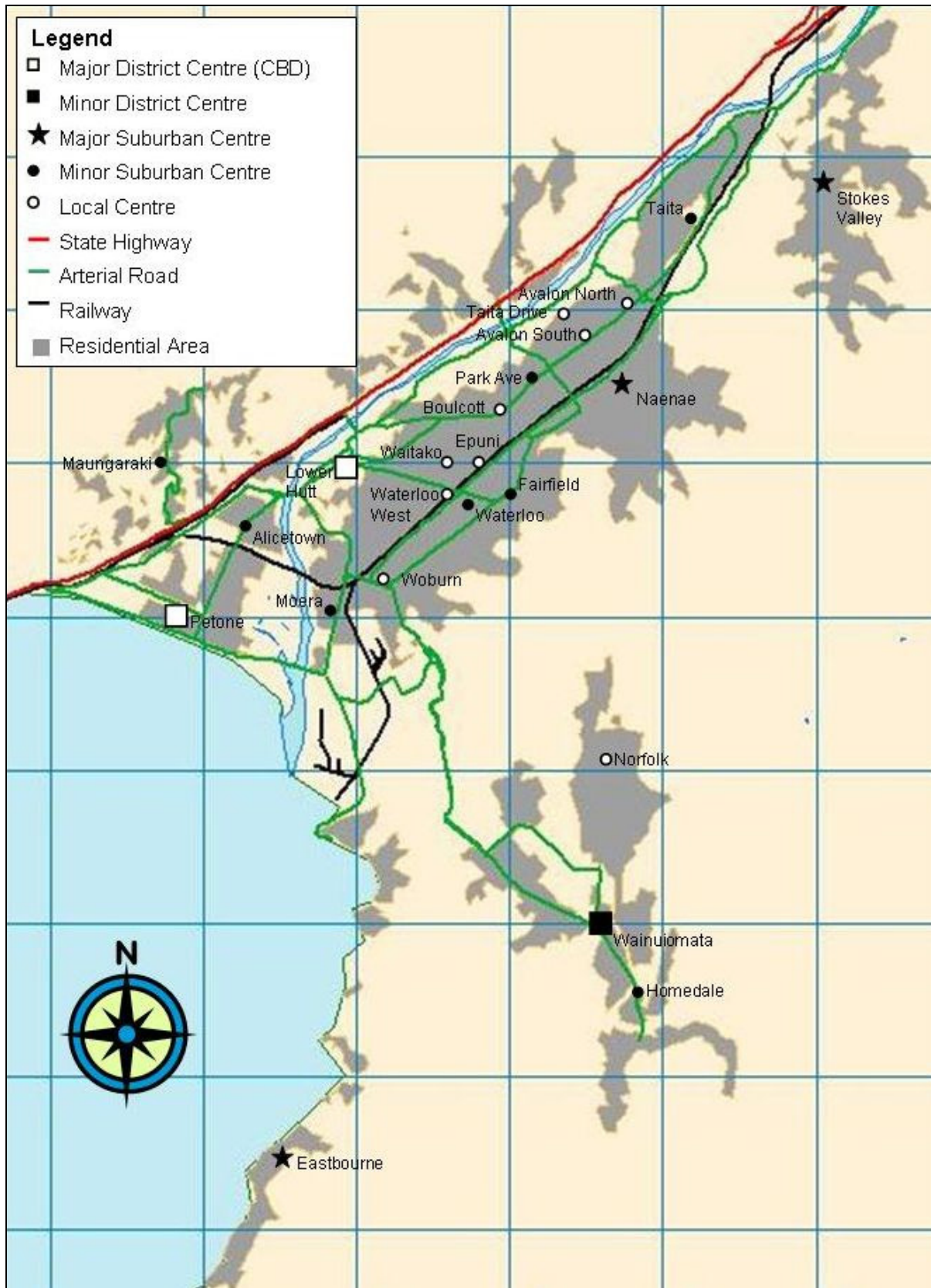
The Hutt City Council District Plan recognises that “Suburban Commercial centres provide residents with facilities to meet their day to day needs in close proximity to their homes” (Hutt City Council, 2006: 5C1). In particular, some people do not have access to a vehicle, are unable to drive, and/or find public transportation does not meet their shopping needs. For such residents, shopping close to home in neighbourhood shopping centres is more convenient than travelling to the city centre. The District Plan allows a wide range of activities in neighbourhood shopping centres to meet residents’ day to day needs. This report seeks to assess changes in the form of Lower Hutt City’s neighbourhood shopping centres over the period 1989-2008, and to identify the macro-level factors influencing the success of these retail centres. A map of Lower Hutt’s retail areas is shown in Figure 1.

## **2 The Historical Development of Neighbourhood Shopping Centres**

The suburbs of the Hutt Valley were developed by the government from the 1930s to 1960s, based around the existing railway infrastructure on the eastern side of the valley. The new government of 1935-1938 responded to housing shortages and poor quality housing with an extensive government house building programme targeting the ‘working man and his family’ (Dravitzki & Powell, 2008). From the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, planned shopping centres developed as a result of the rapid spread of the urbanised area, traffic congestion in CBDs, higher real incomes, and increased use of cars. New government planned centres were designed to cater for both the shopping and community needs of new suburban areas. These included community services like halls and Plunket rooms. These centres were integral parts of government housing developments and were designed according to specifications laid down by the Housing Division of the Ministry of Works. These were sited within walking distance of a large proportion of the community being serviced, were located to be served by public transport, and also involved provision for car parking (Rimmer, 1967). Further developments continued over the 1960 to 1975 period, but these were initiated by the private sector aiming to capitalise on trading opportunities because existing areas did not adequately provide for motorists (Dravitzki & Powell, 2008). For example, the Maungaraki subdivision was completed in 1968, representing the largest non-government land development in the country (McGill & Grant, 1991). Despite different reasons for establishment, the centres are superficially similar in that they segregate pedestrians and cars, and involve coordinated architectural design, the provision of parking facilities, and shops including at least one large store or supermarket (Rimmer, 1967).

The area adjacent to a railway station is often ideal for a suburb’s first shopping centre because of the level of foot traffic. This means neighbourhood shopping centres are often concentrated around transport nodes (Johnson, 1968). In Lower Hutt, suburbs were centred on railway stations at approximately one mile spacing so that a station was within walking distance for most residents. Shopping centres were created by the government at Waterloo, Epuni, Taita, and Naenae to cater for residents’ needs. The private sector developed the suburbs of Wainuiomata and the Western Hills at a time when most households had one car and public transport use was falling by 30 to 50 percent. Retail was changing away from owner-operator businesses to larger shopping centres that were built and rented out (Dravitzki & Powell, 2008).

Figure 1: Lower Hutt Shopping Centres



Leading up to 1989 there were many demographic and social factors influencing the viability of the retail environment in neighbourhood shopping centres. The increasing participation of women in the workforce over the 1970s and 1980s lead to increased household incomes and changes in the frequency and timing of shopping trips. There have also been changes to employment conditions with shorter working weeks, increases in leisure time, and a shift in the perception of shopping from a necessity to a leisure activity. This coincides with increased mobility due to car ownership, greater spending power, wider consumer preferences, and the availability of a wider range of goods. In addition, the rise of refrigerator ownership and large supermarkets has resulted in fewer independent grocer, dairy, butcher, greengrocer, and fish shops (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 2005; Brown, 1991). In 1987, many of the smaller Post Office branches closed throughout the country, followed closely by substantial numbers of bank branch closures in smaller centres.

### **3 Changes in Neighbourhood Shopping Centres 1989-2008**

The form of Lower Hutt City's neighbourhood shopping centres has changed over the period 1989-2008. Albuquerque and Chrystal (1989) provide descriptions of a number of the centres and their report is used as a base for comparison with the current state of the centres. The shopping centres are described in groups according to the size classifications adopted in the report. The neighbourhood shopping centres in ascending order of size are Local, Minor Suburban, Major Suburban, and Minor District centres.

Most of the centres classified as Local by Albuquerque and Chrystal (1989) currently have up to 13 stores, and Minor Suburban centres have 20-30. Park Avenue has grown from a Local centre size in 1989 to 21 shops, and is treated in this review as a Minor Suburban shopping centre. This assessment is concerned with the viability of the neighbourhood shopping centres and, consequently, excludes Petone and the Lower Hutt Central Business District (CBD). Groups of less than three stores are not considered to qualify as shopping centres and are not discussed in this review.

Fieldwork assessment was undertaken to compare shopping centres against a set of criteria developed by Dravitzki and Powell (2008), which indicate the potential failure or successful adaptation of a shopping centre. Indicators of potential failure include vacant shops, shops with security bars, shops with roller doors for night time protection, graffiti, out-of-character shops, and whether a liquor ban is in place. Successful adaptation is evident when new facilities such as boutique suburban cinemas, cafes and restaurants, craft and artist studios move in to vacant stores in a shopping centre. Other factors that may contribute to the success were also noted, including: the proximity of the centre to railway nodes; provisions for different transport modes; the types of shops located within the centre including licensed premises, Lotto outlets, and community facilities like libraries; whether there is living above the shops; the state of the shop facades; and the apparent popularity of the area at the time of assessment. A summary of the main features of the 21 neighbourhood shopping centres assessed is presented in Table 1. Each centre is discussed in greater detail below. The full shop mix of each centre is presented in Appendix 1.

Research regarding neighbourhood shopping centres in New Zealand, including Lower Hutt, over the 1989-2008 period is limited. O'Regan and Lynch (2004) used focus groups and community meetings to assess community needs in the Lower Hutt suburbs of Taita, Naenae, Wainuiomata,

Moera, Alicetown, and Stokes Valley. Community attitudes towards each suburb's local shopping centre formed part of these assessments. In addition, Riley (2007) assessed the type of stores present in a small number of the shopping centres.

**Table 1: Features of Selected Lower Hutt Neighbourhood Shopping Centres**

Shopping centre	Location	1989 classification (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989)	Railway station	Library	Licensed premises	Liquor ban <sup>1</sup>	Lotto outlet	Vacant shops	Shops with roller doors	Graffiti	Out of character shops	Living above shops	Evidence of adaptation
Alicetown	Cuba St at Victoria St	Minor Suburban	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓
Avalon North	High St at De Menech Gr	Not specified (Local)	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X
Avalon South	High St at Tennyson Ave	Not specified (Local)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	X
Boulcott	High St at Mitchell St	Local	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓
Eastbourne	Rimu St	Major Suburban	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓
Epuni	Oxford Terrace at Copeland St	Local	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
Fairfield	Waiwhetu Rd at Fairfield Ave	Minor Suburban	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X
Homedale	Moore's Valley Rd at Main Rd	Minor Suburban	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X
Maungaraki	Dowse Drive	Minor Suburban	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Moera	Randwick Rd at Randwick Cres	Minor Suburban	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Naenae	Hillary Court	Major Suburban	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X
Norfolk	Norfolk St	Local	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
Park Avenue	High St at Stellan St	Local (Minor Suburban)	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓
Stokes Valley	Stokes Valley Rd at Bowers Rd	Major Suburban	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Taita	High St at Taine St	Minor Suburban	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
Taita Drive	Taita Drive at Maybe Rd	Local	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X
Wainuiomata	The Strand	Minor District	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X
Waitako	Waitako St at Epuni St	Not specified (Local)	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Waterloo	Trafalgar Sq.	Minor Suburban	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓

<sup>1</sup> Hutt City Council (2008). Control of Liquor in Public Places Bylaw 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.huttcity.govt.nz/publications-forms/bylaws/Control-of-Liquor-in-Public-Places/> on 10 October 2008.

<b>Waterloo West</b>	Oxford Tce at Birch St	Not specified (Local)	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X
<b>Woburn</b>	Whites Line East at Waiwhetu Rd	Not specified (Local)	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X

In Lower Hutt, the location of neighbourhood shopping centres relative to transport nodes and the demographics of the surrounding neighbourhood appear to have the greatest influence on the success, shop composition, and catchment of each centre. There does not appear to be a relationship between centre success and living above the shops. However, the Hutt City Council is considering changes to the District Plan to encourage high density housing development around the Stokes Valley, Naenae, Taita, Park Avenue, Epuni, Boulcott, Fairfield, Waterloo, Maungaraki, Wainuiomata, Alicetown, Woburn and Homedale shopping centres. The rationale for developing blocks of townhouses and flats within five minutes walk of the centres is twofold: lifting the level of construction in the city, and enabling people to live closer to shops and public transport nodes (Edwards, 2008). Liquor bans are in place in some of the poorly performing shopping centres. Riley (2007) suggests that Lotto outlets may contribute to the viability of a neighbourhood shopping centre because people may purchase other goods on their trip to purchase a Lotto ticket. Lotto retail was established in 1987, and outlets are found in most of the Minor Suburban centres and all of the Major Suburban centres in Lower Hutt. Lotto retail is integrated into existing retail outlets, which are assessed on the quality of the surrounding business environment, including the age of the district, the types of surrounding shops, and the accessibility of the venue for customers. It costs a retailer \$12,000 - \$25,000 to introduce a new Lotto outlet into their store (New Zealand Lotteries, 2007). The most vibrant neighbourhood shopping centres in Lower Hutt all have a Lotto outlet.

### 3.1 Local Shopping Centres

The nine Local-sized centres assessed are: Avalon North, Avalon South, Boulcott, Epuni, Norfolk, Taita Drive, Waitako, Waterloo West, and Woburn. Albuquerque and Chrystal (1989) do not discuss the Local Shopping Centres in any detail, so it is not possible to compare the 2008 field assessment findings with the situation in the late 1980s.

With the exceptions of Boulcott and Woburn, all of the Local centres are linear configurations along one side of the road. Avalon North, Epuni, Norfolk, Taita Drive, Waterloo West, and Woburn look to have been constructed as small shopping centres with angle parking slightly recessed from the road. The Boulcott and Waitako centres appear to have developed less formally and rely heavily on parking down side roads.

All of the Local centres show signs of failure. The larger centre of Epuni has multiple vacancies, while some of the smaller centres have one vacancy. Avalon South, Taita Drive, and Waitako are the only centres without vacancies. Some of the shops in Avalon North, Norfolk, and Waitako have roller doors for night-time protection. All of the local centres aside from Norfolk have out-of-character shops, for example a nappy shop (Avalon North), bridal shop (Avalon South), massage (Boulcott), mobility centre (Epuni), management services (Taita Drive), and ballet academy (Waitako). Taita Drive is the only centre with a Lotto outlet, and Norfolk is the only centre with a liquor ban. Graffiti was observed in the Norfolk, Waterloo West, and Woburn centres.

The types of shops found in the shopping centres are shown in Table 2. All of the shopping centres except Boulcott have a dairy, and all but Waterloo West have a hair dresser. Four of the

nine centres have a pharmacy, and only three have a bakery. Avalon North is the only centre without some form of takeaway shop. The size of the Boulcott centre is boosted with a mall-type building with seven tenants (optometrists, real estate, beauty, massage, medical, nails, financial advisors), and it is not clear if there are vacancies within the mall. Riley (2007) assessed the make-up of three of the centres. The Taita Drive and Avalon North centres have not changed, but the current Avalon South hairdresser has replaced a dairy. The Fish 'n' chip store located in the Avalon South centre (in a separate building) has adopted a different marketing strategy to all of the other centres, with a trendy building complete with artwork.

**Table 2: Type of Shops found in Lower Hutt's Local Shopping Centres**

Local Shopping Centre	Dairy	Pharmacy	Hairdresser	Bakery	Fish 'n' chip	Other takeaways	Dine in & takeaway	Vacant	Other shops	Total shops
Avalon North	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	Nappy shop	5
Avalon South	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	Caterers, bridal wear, fish market	6
Boulcott	1	1	2	1	1	-	3	?	Optometrists, real estate, beauty, massage, 2x medical, nails, financial advisors, charity (Save the Children) (the Bakery is also a large café)	13
Epuni	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	3	Mobility centre, computer centre, medical centre, commercial school painters, pet supplies & vet	13
Norfolk	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	2	Video store	6
Taita Drive	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	Management services	5
Waitako	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	Dentist, ballet academy	5
Waterloo West	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	Watch and clock repairs, municipal building	6
Woburn	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	Vacuum cleaner sales and service, pet store	8

The Norfolk centre in the Arakura suburb of Wainuiomata is the most poorly performing centre. It is located on Norfolk Street, which connects the two major streets Wellington Road and Wise Street. At the eastern end of Norfolk Street is a primary school. The centre has six premises, two of which are vacant. There is a liquor ban on all the surrounding streets. The largest vacant store is boarded up and appears to have been a healthcare centre. Graffiti is evident and a number of the stores have secure roller doors.

The only Local centre showing signs of potential adaptation is Boulcott, where a large, seemingly successful, café and bakery operates. There is a two-storey L-shaped building in the Boulcott centre that offers a range of service businesses, and it is hard to determine if there are vacancies in this building. This centre is located along a particularly busy stretch of road, is tidy, and had high patronage at the time of assessment.

### **3.2 Minor Suburban Shopping Centres**

Albuquerque and Chrystal (1989) grouped Alicetown, Fairfield, Maungaraki, Moera, Taita, and Waterloo as 'Minor Suburban Shopping Centres'. In 1989, each of these six centres had dairies, butchers, greengrocers, takeaways, bookshops, pharmacies, and hairdressers. All of the centres had superettes and bakeries, aside from Maungaraki, which had a supermarket. All centres aside from Alicetown had hardware stores, and all aside from Maungaraki had clothing stores. Video outlets were located in all Minor Suburban centres except Fairfield and Moera. Service stations were located in the Fairfield, Taita, and Maungaraki centres, and near to Moera and Alicetown. Park Avenue (Avalon) was described as a Local centre in 1989, but it appears to have grown in size over the last 20 years, and is described as a Minor Suburban centre in this assessment.

Over the past 20 years, clothing, video, and hardware stores have vacated these shopping centres. The number of small greengrocers and butchers has also decreased. The Fairfield and Taita centres still have service stations, but the stations at Maungaraki and near Alicetown are gone. Most of these centres have community facilities nearby, including Plunket rooms, recreation amenities, and health facilities.

#### **3.2.1 Alicetown**

The Alicetown shopping centre is located around the intersection of Victoria and Cuba Streets, a major thoroughfare for traffic between Lower Hutt and Petone. The majority of buildings are over 40 years old, with many dating from the 1920s and 1930s (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). The condition of the buildings varies; the northern stores on the west side of the road are relatively run-down, but those stores on the east side appear to have been recently refurbished.

In addition to the convenience stores noted above, Alicetown in 1989 offered a large Toy Warehouse store, a TAB, a cake shop, textile shop, trophy store, and electronic goods shop (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). Today, the centre offers a wide range of specialist stores and few convenience retailers. The latter include two dairies, two takeaway stores, three bakeries (one with a large seating area), and three hairdressers. Other shops include a music shop, sign writer, two trophy stores, a tattoo parlour, children's dance clothing retailer, scooter shop, Italian ceramic tile shop, Hunting and Fishing store, and a lamp store. The Antique Plumbing & Bathroom Ltd shop offers leadlight goods, classes, and restoration, bringing a boutique element to the centre.

The literature suggests that the Alicetown shopping centre has improved over the past 20 years. In the 1989 report, Alicetown was described as offering little "... in range and variety of shops, few if any consumer comforts and major parking problems ... consumer perception of the Alicetown shops was generally poor." Furthermore, the report identifies "... a need for some improvements to the image and overall shopping environment of the centre" (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989, p. 29). In contrast, in the 2004 report, locals describe Alicetown as being well-lit; having good shops,

bus and train services; a friendly community; and, functioning as a well used and valued community centre. Retailers generally indicated pride in the shopping area, but recognised graffiti as a problem (O'Regan & Lynch, 2004).

Today, the centre shows no signs of failure – no vacancies, graffiti, roller doors, or out of character stores. Though many of the shops located in Alicetown would be out of place in the other neighbourhood centres, the shops seem appropriate given the nature of this centre. Some of the shops need to be repainted, but the centre otherwise appears successful. The majority of these shops are unique destination stores, drawing customers from areas beyond the immediate neighbourhood. These stores are viable at this location because Alicetown is located on a busy road in close proximity to larger centres of Lower Hutt and Petone.

### **3.2.2 Fairfield**

The Fairfield shops are located along the Western side of Waiwhetu Road where it intersects with Fairfield Avenue and Porutu Street. It is a linear shopping centre, divided where the roads intersect. There is a church and primary school nearby, but there are no community or recreation facilities in the vicinity. The buildings date from the 1930s to 1980s, with the newer buildings in better condition (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989).

In addition to the aforementioned food and convenience stores available in all the Minor Suburban centres in 1989, the centre also offered a shoe shop, furniture outlet, two household appliance stores, mower store, office supplies outlet, cake shop, and a pet shop. Of these, only dairies, takeaways, a pet shop, bakery, and one home appliance store remain in the centre today. There is still a service station (G.A.S.) in the centre and garden centre opposite. The mix of stores now includes a florist, air movement specialists (fans), carpet traders, liquor store, Thai gift store, home brew supplies, a gothic gifts store that sells party pills, and two vacancies.

Albuquerque and Chrystal (1989) describe the Fairfield centre has having a wider range of shops than most other Minor Suburban centres, with a focus on superette/dairy style shopping. The Bushes Garden Centre was attributed with attracting customers from most Lower Hutt suburbs, broadening the centre's catchment. It was also noted that Waiwhetu Road is not a major arterial route and that the centre is not ideal for pedestrians because the retail strip is split by the adjoining roads, giving the impression that the centre lacks unity. The survey found that consumers did not perceive shopping as pleasurable, due to a limited range and variety of goods (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989).

Today, the centre shows a number of signs of potential failure, but has some vibrancy due to flowers for sale outside all of the dairies. The footpath is narrow and there are also many sandwich boards taking up footpath space. The revamped California Home and Garden Centre (formerly the Bushes Garden Centre), which offers outdoor living goods and a café, may be playing a role in the viability of the centre by attracting patrons to the area. The G.A.S service station may also act as an anchor tenant. The Fairfield centre has a number of vacancies, shops with roller doors (the dairy and liquor stores), some out-of-character shops, and tired-looking façades. This is the only Minor Suburban centre without a Lotto outlet.

### 3.2.3 Maungaraki

The Maungaraki shopping centre, located on Dowse Drive, is the only centre located in the Western Hills. The strip of shops is separated from the road by a reasonably large parking area. This has separate entrance and exit points, with angle parking on both sides of the parking area. The centre is surrounded by residential properties, with community and recreational facilities nearby. The centre buildings range in age, built over the 1960s to 1980s (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). The layout of the centre is shown in Figure 2.

In 1989, the area was described as having basic shops, plus a wholesale liquor outlet and medical centre (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). The centre remains relatively small and isolated, but the retail range has expanded from shops meeting day-to-day requirements to include a gallery and publisher's shop. However, the catchment area is likely to have remained localised due to the centre's isolation. The other retailers include takeaways, a Chinese restaurant, gym, café and general store, hair and beauty shop, superette, and a pharmacy. The economic viability of the pharmacy is dependant upon the medical centre being located within the centre, as demonstrated during a period when the medical centre temporarily vacated the centre (John Patrick, personal communication, 27 November 2008).

The surrounding hilly topography influences transport choice, and most people drive to the centre. There are no cycle facilities, and no pedestrian crossings linking the centre to the surrounding residential area. There is outdoor bench seating for pedestrians, which was not in place during the 1989 survey. The area is tidy and appears well-frequented by locals.

**Figure 2: Aerial Views of the Maungaraki Shopping Centre**



Source: Quickmap V7.1.125 and Google Maps

### 3.2.4 Homedale

The Homedale centre in Waitahanui was not discussed by Albuquerque & Chrystal (1989), so there is little basis for comparison. In addition, a thorough assessment of shop composition was not undertaken in this study. The centre has a number of indicators of potential failure, including

vacant stores, roller doors, and out-of-character shops. The centre has an ATM and bench seats near two sculptures for pedestrian enjoyment. The overall impression, however, is of a struggling centre.

### **3.2.5 Moera**

The Moera shopping centre is a long linear centre along the western side of Randwick Road around the intersection with Randwick Crescent. The line of shops is broken by roads, a service lane, a church, and residential properties. There are some community facilities to the north of the centre, including a community hall, playground, library and toilets. The centre is located on a major arterial route, in close proximity to the Seaview industrial area for lunch-time trade. The buildings vary in age, the oldest being constructed in the 1920s, and others built in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989).

In 1989, the centre offered the staple dairy, butcher, greengrocer, takeaway, bookshop, pharmacy, hairdresser, clothing store, hardware store, bakery, and superette; complemented by a shoe shop, gift shop, second-hand dealer, laundromat, watch and clock repair, wrought iron specialists, TAB, restaurant, post office, and bank. It was considered to offer a wider range of shops than most other minor suburban centres. It also had a widespread catchment, including Woburn, Waterloo, and Eastbourne. At this time, consumer perception of the centre was poor due to the shops looking run-down and inadequate parking (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989).

O'Regan and Lynch (2004) found the shopping centre, library, school and community house, and community hall to be the focus for the Moera community. The centre is also used by residents of Waiwhetu South, Woburn South, and Gracefield. The area has good access to the CBD and buses, and a well-functioning retail and community centre. However, concern was expressed in the community needs assessment about the impact of fast traffic on access to the shops. Residents would like traffic lights to be installed, but retailers were concerned they would have a negative effect on business (O'Regan & Lynch, 2004).

The retail mix has changed over the past 20 years, and the centre no longer has a greengrocer, bookshop, hardware store, clothing store, shoe shop, gift store, hairdresser, TAB, post office (though limited postal facilities are offered by a dairy), or bank. One third of the centre's stores are vacant and some of the shops have roller doors. However, the centre also shows signs of successful adaptation, with a large café that has outdoor seating, a Sri Lankan café, and a glazing and leadlight studio. There is limited living above the centre and a Lotto outlet, which may enhance the viability of the centre. The area still suffers from inadequate parking at busy times, and has only one pedestrian crossing for a long shopping strip on a busy road.

### **3.2.6 Park Avenue (Avalon)**

The Park Avenue centre does not feature in previous assessments of the shopping areas. It is located along High Street where it intersects with Stellin Street and Derwent Lee Grove. The area appears to have grown substantially over the past 20 years, as Albuquerque and Chrystal (1989) classified it as a small Local centre, but it is clearly the size of a Minor Suburban centre today. Its growth could be attributed to the Fairway Street development in the 1980s that linked this part of High Street with the motorway, increasing patronage to the area. The area is also located just

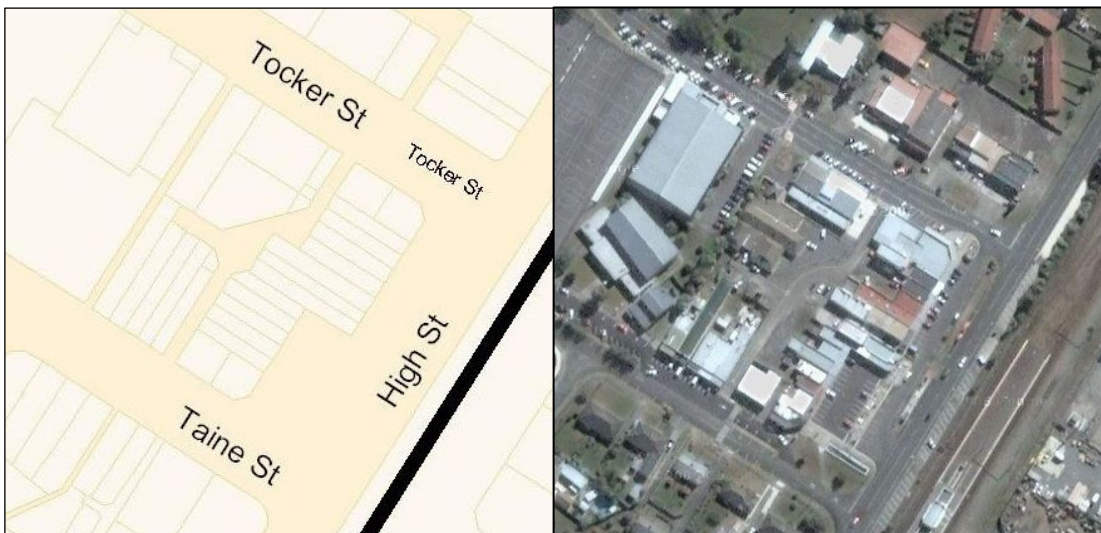
over a kilometre from the Lower Hutt Hospital and may be frequented by Hospital staff and visitors.

The centre has a wide pavement, pedestrian crossings, and is on a number of bus routes. In addition to three dairies, the centre has a greengrocer, butcher, fish shop, superette, five takeaway food places, a hairdresser, a florist, a magazine and Lotto shop, copy centre, laundromat, and hardware store. Services in the centre include a trade union and a health centre. There are no vacancies, nor any other indicators of failure. One shop in particular, a busy café and photo studio with outdoor seating is a sign of successful adaptation. The centre has a somewhat disjointed feel, but it appears to be thriving.

### 3.2.7 Taita

The Taita shops are situated directly opposite the Taita railway station, around the intersections of High, Taine and Tocker Streets. The shops curve around the three street frontages, with service lanes in the centre, as can be seen in Figure 3. There are community and recreation facilities behind the centre, including a library, community centre, RSA hall, and the Walter Nash sports stadium. There is also a primary school nearby and a large liquor outlet (on other side of Tocker St). The shopping centre is linked to the rail platform and industrial area on the other side of railway line via a subway. The centre is serviced by a number of bus routes. The majority of the buildings were constructed in the 1950s, with the remainder build in the 1960s (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). The centre has a dilapidated feel, although there have been some landscaping improvements to the centre, with bench seating along the shop front and in a concrete strip between two car parks to the south.

**Figure 3: Aerial Views of the Taita Shopping Centre**



Source: Quickmap V7.1.125 and Google Maps

In 1989, the approximately 30 shops in the Taita centre were noted as including a TAB, bookshop, pharmacy, superette, video store, post office, pet shop, piazza express, two second-hand dealers, a large liquor outlet, six takeaways, three dairies, two each of greengrocers and

butchers, and three hairdressers (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). Over the 1990s, Taita lost most of its commercial and community services, including banking facilities (though ATMs are in place within the shopping centre). Changes over this period also resulted in locals needing to access the Lower Hutt CBD for affordable food and clothing (O'Regan & Lynch, 2004). Today, one third of the shops are vacant, some shops have roller doors, and graffiti is evident. The retail mix includes four dairies, six takeaways, a restaurant, pharmacy, hairdresser, pet shop, book exchange, two second-hand furniture stores, and a tavern. Services include a laundromat, MP office, community health centre, and community constable. This means the greengrocers, butchers, most off the hairdressers, video store, and post office have vacated the centre.

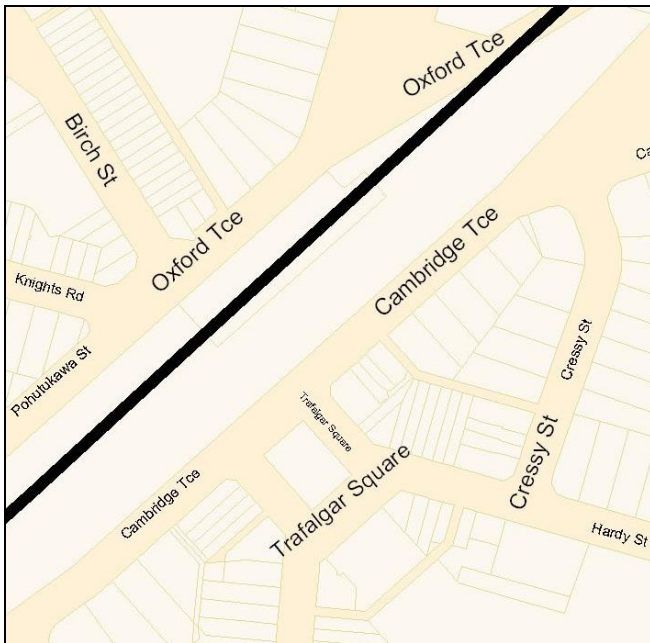
Both the 1989 and 2004 reports note that Taita's main role is for smaller convenience type shopping and that it has little influence outside of its local community, aside from alcohol purchase. Consumer perceptions of the image and layout of the centre are negative have not improved. In 1989, consumers did not consider it a pleasurable place to shop, with high prices and shops in need of updating (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). In 2001, locals expressed concern over the continuing degradation of the shopping centre, though did not see graffiti as a problem (O'Regan & Lynch, 2004). Taita has since received Hutt City Council funding for small upgrades to the area (Paki Maaka, personal communication, 20 October 2008).

The Taita shopping centres is still functioning, but it is evident that it is commercially marginal, with high vacancies and a small catchment.

### **3.2.8 Waterloo**

The Waterloo shopping centre is located around the intersection of Trafalgar Square, Collingwood and Hardy Streets, opposite the Waterloo Interchange railway station (see Figure 4). The railway platform is linked to the centre via a well-lit, inviting underpass. However, it is complicated for pedestrians to move around the centre due to car parking on both sides of the road and the way the roads dissect the shopping centre. Pedestrians emerge from the two underpass entrances onto the square, and must then cross the road to access the shops. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with a primary school nearby. The buildings date from the 1930s and 1960s (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989).

**Figure 4: Aerial View of the Waterloo Shopping Centre**



Source: Quickmap V7.1.125

In the heydays of the shopping centre in the forties and fifties, before supermarkets existed, the shops were utilitarian with three groceries, two dairies, two butchers, and two hairdressers (Hutt Alive, 2007b). In 1989, the centre was recorded as having a pharmacy, bookstore, hairdresser, bakery, greengrocer, hardware store, clothing store, butcher, dairies, TAB, upholster and engraver, and outlets selling survey equipment and servicing scientific instruments. The centre also had a doctor, veterinary clinic, post office, Plunket rooms and St John's Hall. The banking service in the centre closed in late 1980s (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989).

Directly prior to the opening of the rail Interchange in the late 1980s, the centre was mainly used for small grocery items and personal services, with the catchment based mainly within the Waterloo suburb, as well as the neighbouring suburbs of Epuni, Woburn, and Waiwhetu. In 1989, consumer perception of the centre was more positive than for the other local centres. Shopping was seen as a pleasurable experience, the shops were considered to be in adequate condition, and pricing was generally good (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). The Chemist at Waterloo has been in business in the current Waterloo premises since 1955 (Hutt Alive, 2007b).

Today, the centre is one of the more vibrant, with only two vacancies in 23 stores. The TAB, butcher, clothing store, hardware store, and outlets selling survey equipment and servicing scientific instruments have vacated the centre. The latter two businesses may have closed/relocated when the Geological and Nuclear Sciences moved from nearby Gracefield to Avalon. Riley (2007) noted the presence of a video store, which has recently closed, along with a playcentre store. The Doctors have relocated within the centre to share the Plunket rooms.

The vibrancy of the Waterloo shopping centre was attributed to its location opposite the Waterloo Interchange in 1989, and this appears to be continuing to have a positive effect on the patronage of the shopping centre. The centre has a wine store, modern café with outdoor seating, a Lotto outlet, and living above the main block of shops. Along with Park Avenue, the Waterloo centre is the most successful and generally considered "... active and thriving" (Hutt Alive, 2007b, p. 35).

### **3.3 Major Suburban Shopping Centres**

Albuquerque and Chrystal (1989) classify Eastbourne, Naenae and Stokes Valley as Major Suburban centres because of their size, functions and community facilities. At the time, these centres had a wider range of shops than the smaller centres, including supermarkets, cafes, clothing outlets, and real estate agents. Today, the range of shops varies amongst the three centres.

#### **3.3.1 Eastbourne**

The Eastbourne shopping centre is approximately 100m from the foreshore, and is situated around the intersection of Rimu and Oroua Streets. Eastbourne is an isolated community, accessed via a long winding road. The buildings range in age from the old Post Office building to the village shopping complex and supermarket, which were built in the 1980s (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). In 1989, the centre's catchment was restricted to the Eastbourne suburb, due to its isolation from other residential areas. The survey indicated that the area had a positive image in the minds of shoppers. This was attributed to its compactness, proximity to the seafront, and the modernity and pleasantness of the shops (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989).

Today, the centre remains vibrant and is dominated by shops catering to a wider catchment than the immediate neighbourhood. The shopping centre has just over 30 shops. In 1989, these included a supermarket, a variety of smaller convenience and comparison shops and banking facilities. The centre currently has two dairies, a greengrocer, butcher, and supermarket (since the 1989 survey, the New World supermarket has been changed to a 4 Square supermarket). Other community-serving retailers include two takeaway food shops, two restaurants, a pharmacy, two hairdressers, a tavern, two real estate agents, and a wine shop. Other shops likely to have a wider catchment include two high-end gift shops, a day spa, a delicatessen, computer company, gelato café, children's high end furniture shop, and a gallery and bookshop. The centre also hosts a number of services, including a boutique fitness studio, health centre, dental centre, building design office, and massage and movement classes. Over the past two years, the art gallery and computer company have relocated within the centre to larger premises. There is a ban on dogs and skateboards within the shopping area, ample car parking, and a bus stop. The overall feel of the centre is one of success, attractive trees, multiple areas for pedestrians to sit, and an 'arty' feel. Eastbourne is clearly the most successful neighbourhood shopping centre in Lower Hutt, having established niche markets to overcome its isolated location.

#### **3.3.2 Naenae**

The Naenae shopping centre has received considerable attention over the years. The Naenae civic centre was a showcase of modern planning with spacious parking and a pedestrian precinct (McGill & Grant, 1991). The suburb was planned by Ernst Plischke, based on 'garden city' planning concepts from Europe, including rambling streets, ample reserves, and green corridors to keep children off the streets on their way to school, and a ban on front fences to create a sweeping community garden effect. The community centre was seen as a focal point near the railway line. Its design was based on san Marco (St Mark's) Square, Venice's social nexus, where

two pedestrian squares are surrounded by public buildings and cafes, intersected by a bell tower as a vertical contrast (Schrader, 2005; Plischke, 1947). Plischke's design for Naenae included a community centre, hotel, and offices around the larger pedestrian square, shopping and eating around the smaller square, and an over bridge to access the rail platform and other half of the suburb. Construction of the Naenae shopping centre commenced in 1945 and Hillary Court, which runs through the middle of the shopping centre, became New Zealand's first pedestrian mall (Schrader, 2005). The suburb was established complete with its needed community facilities, of schools, libraries, medical centres, and community halls. However, Plischke's designs were only partially implemented. The Government sold premises to the private sector, sometimes via an initial lease period (Dravitzki & Powell, 2008). The 1960s were the heydays for Naenae, drawing shoppers from far afield (Hames Sharley, 2002).

Naenae is located just off Cambridge Terrace around Hillary Court and between Treadwell Street, Everest Street and Vogel Street (see Figure 5). It is situated opposite the railway station to the west, which is accessed via a subway. A community centre with Olympic swimming pool and Mildenhall Park are to the south east, the Naenae industrial suburban zone is to the south west, and the Naenae residential area is to the east. The shopping centre is a retail and service hub for various Lower Hutt suburbs (for example, the Western Hills), with retail complemented by a large number of social services (O'Regan & Lynch, 2004).

In 1989, the usefulness of the centre was perceived to be limited due to the absence of some specialist shops, such as appliances and fabrics, and restaurant facilities. Significant numbers of people shopped in the centre for beer, wine and spirits, professional services, and Lotto/TAB. At this time, the catchment was based around the Naenae area, drawing some people from nearby areas, namely Boulcott-Avalon. Thus, though a large shopping centre, Naenae had little influence beyond the surrounding community. Proximity to the Lower Hutt central area was thought to contribute to the area's decline due to competition from the CBD. The environment of the centre was seen as having a poor layout, an old and tired look, and as being unsafe. The survey indicated "... that environmental improvements are necessary to improve the image of the centre and to strengthen its attractiveness to complement the presence of other facilities such as the library and the swimming pool" (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989, p. 35).

**Figure 5: Aerial Views of the Naenae Shopping Centre**



Source: Quickmap V7.1.125 and Google Maps

In 1989 the retail mix in the centre, comprising 70 or so shops, included a post office and post bank, four other banks and convenience and comparison goods shops, the Library, tavern, and several vacant shops (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). Just over 60 shops and services were noted in the 2008 assessment, implying that some shops have been merged into bigger premises. The leading manufacturers Rembrandt Suits and Resene Paints continue to operate adjacent to the centre, along with a supermarket. Naenae seems to be the only shopping centre with a bank in operation. There are nine obvious vacancies, including some of the larger premises located in the pedestrian precinct. The rent for these spaces is high and appears to be deterring businesses (Paki Maaka, personal communication, 20 October 2008).

Participants in community needs focus groups made positive comments about the quality of the Library, bus and train services, and that during fine weather the lawns by the shopping centre are full of people. However, the shopping centre was generally felt to be unsafe, largely due to loitering youth, the dangerous subway, and inadequate lighting. Graffiti was also cited as a problem. In addition, young peoples' experience of low self esteem can be attributed to the run-down appearance of the shopping area, according to Project Adventure New Zealand. The need for a community hall and an upgrade of the shopping centre was also noted (O'Regan & Lynch, 2004). A liquor ban is in place within the centre, and skateboarding is prohibited. Telephone surveys were undertaken in 1989 and 2001 to charter public opinion concerning several of the Wellington region's shopping centres by NBR (cited in Hames Sharley, 2002). The Naenae shopping centre showed declining indices of popularity in every aspect, and rated twice as bad in terms of safety.

In a revitalisation strategy commissioned by the Hutt City Council, Hames Sharley (2002) identified the over supply of retail space as the overwhelming problem in Naenae. For both improved safety and retail viability in the centre, the exposure of the centre must be increased. The classical radian pattern of Naenae's potential sphere of influence is reduced by half because it is split in two by major roads and the railway line. The original plans for Naenae involved an overpass, but this was not built. Instead, a subway was constructed beneath the roads and railway line, which does not link the western suburbs with the shopping centre well. The centre's catchment is further reduced because major roads by-pass the centre rather than continuing in or through it. Once reached, the shopping centre has a parking system that is initially confusing to drivers, with multiple entrances. The centre has approximately 70 shops, with around 11% vacant. The prime retail frontage with the highest rent is occupied by WINZ and HousingNZ. Groups of stores have started marketing themselves separately, splitting the centre. Crime is also a problem. The report recommends reducing the size of the centre to match the size of the catchment population (Hames Sharley, 2002). However, the recommendations were not adopted by the Hutt City Council for political reasons (Paki Maaka, personal communication, 20 October 2008). The Hutt City Council has set aside \$400,000 to spend over the 2007-2008 period on improvements to Hillary Court and to Walter Mildenhall Park. This will include a Community Garden in the park, and CCTV cameras in the business area (Hutt Alive, 2007a).

In May 2008, Naenae locals, retailers, schools and police presented a submission to the Greater Wellington Regional Council's draft annual plan that highlighted the dangers of the railway station subway. The subway is dirty and dangerous, with dog-leg stairwells, and puts residents at risk each day, including about 200 school children. Crime – ranging from petty to aggravated robbery and indecent assault – is a problem in the subway, despite frequent foot patrols by police, Māori

wardens, and Naenae's community patrol. Naenae locals feel the subway is holding the suburb back and are frustrated that the problem has not been addressed over the past fifty years. The Greater Wellington Regional Council and Hutt City Council are jointly funding an engineer's report on options for upgrading the subway (Newton, 2008). An over-bridge is another possible solution.

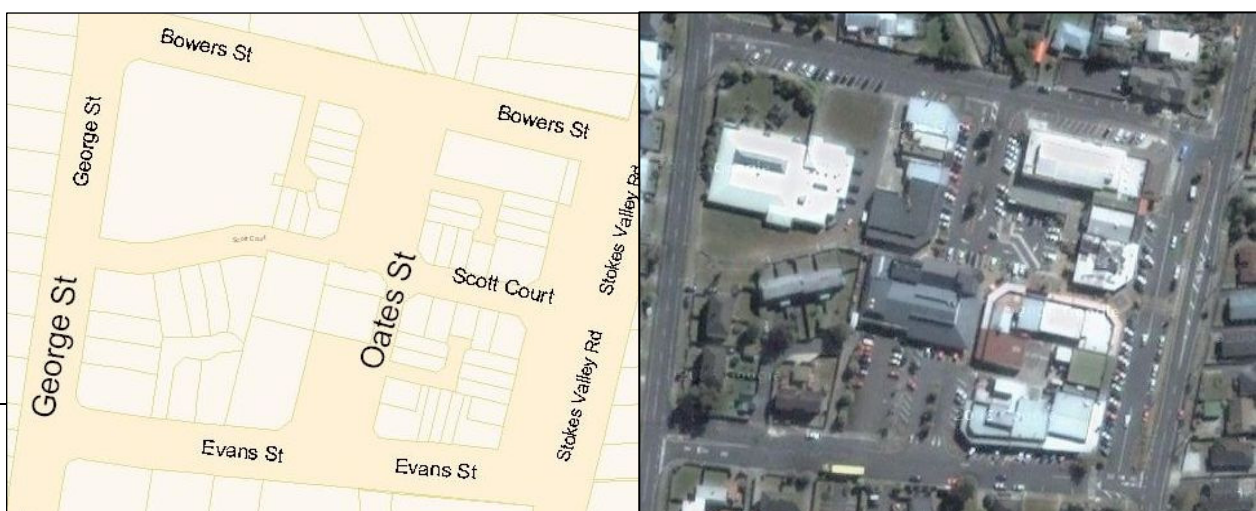
Naenae is a functional centre, but its marginal nature is evident. The cinema and some of the larger stores are vacant. There are also a number of lower level shops such as \$2 shops and second hand shops. The physical structure of the centre appears little changed from the time of construction and this centre has many businesses meeting the convenience needs of the local community. Some shops have been refurbished and are individually attractive, but there is little evidence of new retail, such as cafes, restaurants, artist studios, or boutique cinemas (Dravitzki & Powell, 2008). The exception to this is a popular and attractive health food store and café opposite the swimming pool. There is a playground near the Library, and plenty of seating in the Hillary Court pedestrian precinct. The centre appeared well-patronised at the time of assessment.

### 3.3.3 Stokes Valley

Stokes Valley is a geographically isolated residential area in northern Lower Hutt. The Stokes Valley shopping centre is located on Stokes Valley Road, around the Scott Court pedestrian area, and Bowers Street and Evans Street (see Figure 6). Stokes Valley Road is the main route through the valley, and is consequently busy. The centre includes a community hall to the north east, and there is a swimming pool to the north west. The centre is otherwise surrounded by residential area. The centre's catchment is almost entirely within the Stokes Valley due to the physical isolation of the valley. The majority of the shops were constructed in the 1960s, while others were built in the 1970s and 1980s (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). The pedestrian area has a number of interactive sculptures and there are potted plants along the footpaths, but these need updating.

There were approximately 38 shops within the centre in 1989, but only 26 were noted in the 2008 assessment. In 1989, this mix included a supermarket, hardware store (Mitre 10), appliance store, a number of smaller shops, several vacancies, a post office, two banks, a swimming pool, library and community centre, and a tavern in the vicinity (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). Today, the mix is similar, and includes real estate agents, an accountant, a community constable, laundromat, video store, and health centre. There are two vacant shops and security cameras are in operation (O'Regan & Lynch, 2004), but there are otherwise no indications of failure. The centre appears to meet the day to day needs of Stokes Valley residents.

**Figure 6: Views of the Stokes Valley shopping centre**



Source: Quickmap V7.1.125 and Google Maps

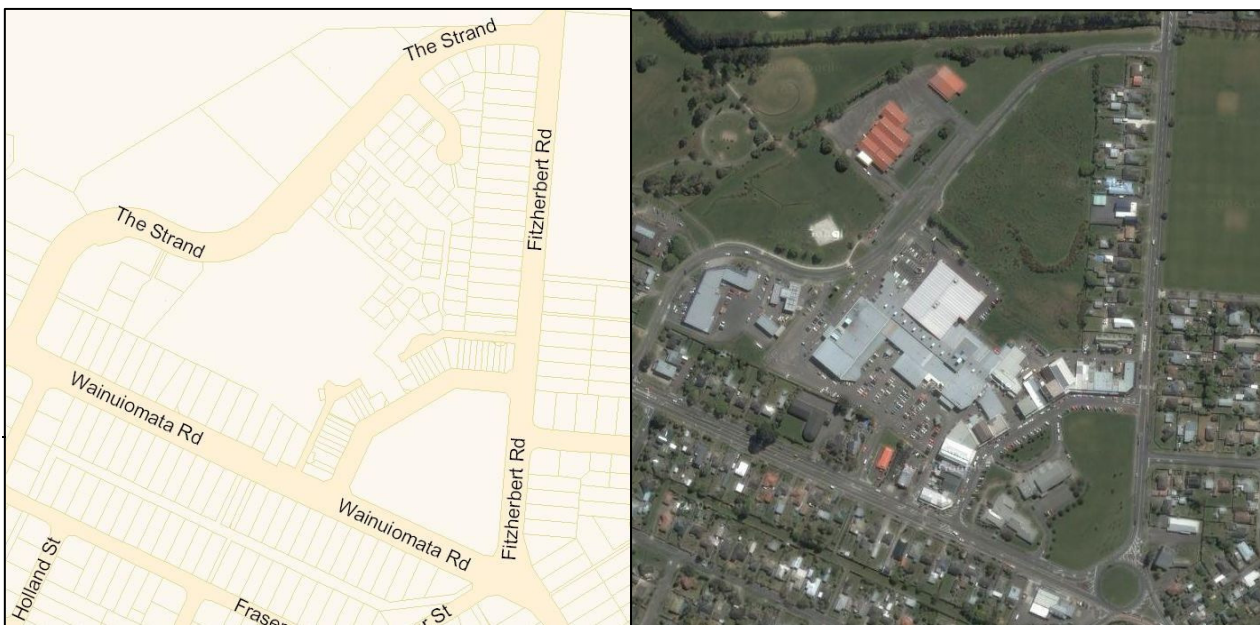
### 3.4 Minor District Centre (Wainuiomata)

Wainuiomata is a large isolated urban centre, separated from the rest of the Hutt Valley by the large Wainuiomata Hill. Wainuiomata is not discussed by Albuquerque and Chrystal (1989), and the specific composition of the centre was not noted during the assessment. Wainuiomata commercial centre has both a main-street style shopping area and an indoor mall linked with a pedestrian precinct. The mall and large tenants are accessed from The Strand and the main-street shops are located along the north side of Queen Street. Adjacent to this a large landscaped grass area and a number of community facilities are located, including a community centre, library, and Plunket rooms. There is also a local MP office in the area. Aerial views of the shopping centre are shown in Figure 7.

Riley (2007) describes the composition of the main-street style shops. These include a number of fast-food takeout style businesses, book shops, banks, a pet store, a bar, a post office, a dentist, real estate agents, a finance company, and three \$2-type shops. There was only one empty shop, and it appeared to be being renovated. In general, the shops were considered tidy, fairly well presented, and well-patronised and these comments still apply today. The Warehouse remains the anchor tenant of the mall, and other large tenants include New World Supermarket, Countdown Supermarket and McDonald's (with a large children's playground). The indoor mall is tired in appearance, with a number of empty premises. Dravitzki and Powell (2008) describe the centre as typical of the 1960s era and note that it is functioning well, with some new uses including cafes. In comparison, the local Wainuiomata centres at Norfolk and Homedale have multiple vacancies and appear to house marginal businesses with little renewal.

According to the 2006 Census of Population and Dwellings, Wainuiomata represents one 17% of the Lower Hutt population, with a higher number of residents on a benefit than the city average. House ownership is high, the population is stable, and many people have access to a motor vehicle (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). O'Regan and Lynch (2004) found Wainuiomata to have a strong community, with good local networks and a tradition of finding local solutions to local problems. The patrons they interviewed considered the shopping centre to be generally clean and safe, with graffiti not perceived to be a problem. However, businesses were concerned that the area was deteriorating, and concern was expressed by community members that the privately owned mall and neighbourhood shopping centres are often full of litter and allowed to look run down.

**Figure 7: Aerial Views of the Wainuiomata shopping centre**



Source: Quickmap V7.1.125 and Google Maps

### 3.5 Provision for Different Transport Modes

It is not clear to what extent the shopping centres have adapted to accommodate different transport modes. For example, whether parking facilities were expanded to current levels or if these were part of the original centres. All of the centres aside from Boulcott and Park Avenue have ample car parking facilities, and almost all of the centres are linked by bus routes. However, it is evident from the information presented in Table 3 that the provision for walking and cycling varies amongst the centres.

In general, the shopping centres cater to those arriving by motor vehicle via parking spaces. The majority of centres do not have bicycle parking facilities. Taita has a low profile stand for nine bicycles near the entrance to the subway that links the shopping centre with the railway platform. The centres with libraries have inverted U stands outside their respective libraries.

**Table 3: Provision for Different Transport Modes at Selected Neighbourhood shopping Centres**

Shopping centre	Classification	Private car	Bicycle	Walking	Other
<b>Alicetown</b>	Minor Suburban	Some angle parks and undelineated parallel parking.	No cycle parking facilities.	One zebra crossing at the northern end, traffic light crossings at the intersection with Montague St.	Covered bus stop. Ava railway station within walking distance.
<b>Avalon South</b>	Local	Some car parking on street.	No cycle parking facilities.	Zebra crossing, area in front of southern shops is lower than the road, with gentle steps and a handrail. Park bench seating.	Bus station opposite.
<b>Avalon North</b>	Local	Adequate angle parking.	No cycle parking facilities.	Nothing notable.	Nothing notable.
<b>Boulcott</b>	Local	Very busy road, business centre has adequate parking, but parking inadequate along High Street with lots of cars down side-roads.	No cycle parking facilities.	Zebra crossing.	Nothing notable.
<b>Eastbourne</b>	Major Suburban	Ample angle parking.	Three inverted U stands outside Library.	A zebra crossing and raised cobbled crossing. Extensive outdoor seating areas, painted footpath in places.	Bus stops.
<b>Epuni</b>	Local	Plenty of car parking, separated from road.	Vertical cycle stand	No zebra crossings.	Train station nearby; assume some of the car parks are used by rail commuters.
<b>Fairfield</b>	Minor Suburban	Ample angle parking.	No cycle parking facilities.	Zebra crossing, narrow footpath and busy road.	Nothing notable.

Shopping centre	Classification	Private car	Bicycle	Walking	Other
<b>Homedale</b>	Minor Suburban	Ample angle parking.	No cycle parking facilities	Two sculptures and a bench seat for pedestrian enjoyment.	Nothing notable.
<b>Maungaraki</b>	Minor Suburban	Ample angle parking in separate car park.	No cycle parking facilities	No zebra crossings. Some bench seating outside.	Nothing notable.
<b>Moera</b>	Minor Suburban	Ample angle parking.	No cycle parking facilities.	Only one zebra crossing for a long strip of shops. Bench seating between shops and car parking.	Taxi stand.
<b>Naenae</b>	Major Suburban	Ample parking all around the shopping area, including angle parks and specific parking areas that are not separate from the surrounding roads.	Two inverted U stands outside library.	Pedestrian only shopping area with signs prohibiting skating and cycling and with plenty of seating, zebra crossings across all surrounding roads, poor quality (dangerous) subway under railway line.	Only access to rail platform and other side of railway line via dangerous subway. Bus stops and taxi stand.
<b>Norfolk</b>	Local	Ample angle parking.	No cycle parking facilities.	Nothing notable.	Bus stop nearby.
<b>Park Avenue (Avalon)</b>	Minor Suburban	Very busy road, inadequate parking with lots of cars down side-roads.	No cycle parking facilities.	Wide pavement, zebra crossings.	Bus stops.
<b>Stokes Valley</b>	Major Suburban	Ample. Parking area at either end (one closer to supermarket).	Two inverted U stands outside the Library and three outside the pool.	Pedestrian only area with seating, sculptures, plants. Zebra crossings. No cycling in the pedestrian zone.	Bus stops.
<b>Taita</b>	Minor Suburban	Ample. Parking area separate from road.	Low profile ground loop stands for nine bicycles.	Zebra crossings, attractive seating.	Bus stops for seven routes, unpleasant subway to train platform.
<b>Taita Drive</b>	Local	Adequate angle parking.	No cycle parking facilities.	Nothing notable.	Bus stop over road.
<b>Wainuiomata</b>	Minor District	Adequate angle parking along road and separated car parking for mall and supermarket.	Not noted by observer, assume entrance to mall and library has cycle stands.	Pedestrian mall area.	Bus stops.
<b>Waitako</b>	Local	Ample angle parking.	No cycle parking facilities.	Nothing notable.	Nothing notable.
<b>Waterloo</b>	Minor Suburban	Ample parking. Angle park on outside of square in front of all shops. Also angle and some parallel parking along inside edges.	No cycle parking facilities.	No zebra crossings, but an accessible and well-lit subway links the shopping centre to the railway interchange.	Large park and ride car parks, large taxi stand, many bus shelters, and cycle parking at the covered railway platform.

Shopping centre	Classification	Private car	Bicycle	Walking	Other
Waterloo West	Local	Ample angle parking.	No cycle parking facilities.	Zebra crossing.	Taxi stand, many bus shelters, and cycle parking at the covered railway platform.
Woburn	Local	Ample; angle parking and undesignated parallel parking.	No cycle parking facilities.	Only pedestrian crossing is from the railway to the shops at the traffic lights.	Park and ride car parks, taxi stand and bus stop shelter near railway platform.

Some centres have additional provisions for pedestrians that may arrive via public transport (train or bus), or on foot from nearby residences. Pedestrian provisions include pedestrian (zebra) crossings over busy roads adjoining the centre, and comfort facilities such as outdoor seating, sculptures, and trees/plants that make the centres more pleasant for customers. In general, there is greater provision for pedestrians in the larger centres (the Minor Suburban and Major Suburban centres). The subways at Naenae, Waterloo, and Taita provide pedestrian access to the nearest train station and the suburb on other side of the railway line. The Naenae subway in particular is considered unsafe, and violence is prevalent. The Taita subway is also dark and uninviting. The more modern Waterloo subway, constructed when the Waterloo Interchange was developed in the 1980s, is wide and designed with a transparent ceiling so is well-lit and inviting.

All of the Minor Suburban and Major Suburban centres are linked to bus routes. The Naenae and Moera centres also have taxi stands, as does the Waterloo Interchange near the Waterloo and Waterloo East shopping centres.

## 4 Macro-level Factors Influencing Neighbourhood Retailing

The retailing environment in New Zealand has changed markedly since the late 1980s. Social changes like the rise in car-borne shopping, greater participation of women in the workforce, and shopping increasingly considered a leisure activity, have continued to change consumption patterns. There have been a number of legislative changes that have directly or indirectly impacted on neighbourhood retail. Trade competition from supermarkets, shopping malls and big box retailers has influenced neighbourhood centre decline. The demographic circumstances of the local community also play a role in the success of neighbourhood retail centres.

### 4.1 Social Changes and Consumption Patterns

Shopping centres have spheres of influence where they dominate the provision of specific goods and services (Johnston & Rimmer, 1967). A number of theories have been presented in the planning literature to describe the size and shape of a centre's catchment area. Central Place Theory (CPT) sees centres forming hierarchies or nucleated shopping districts with discrete categories, like neighbourhood, community, and regional shopping centres. In comparison, the Elliptical Sphere of Influence theory observes a shopping centre's sphere of influence extending further in the direction opposite the city's CBD due to traffic flow and the economics of spatial competition (Clark, 1967; Johnston & Rimmer, 1967). These and other theories have attracted much academic attention, but are based on assumption rather than empirical observations

(Brown, 1993). For example, Johnston & Rimmer (1967) calculated spheres of influence for food and non-food purchases in the Melbourne suburb of Chadstone. They found that the theories of shopping centre influence apply only loosely in practice. Lower Hutt loosely follows CPT, because a hierarchy of Local, Minor Suburban, Major Suburban, Minor District, Major District (Petone) and Regional centres (Lower Hutt CBD) is apparent (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989).

A particular centre's sphere of influence may be best explained through an understanding of the types of goods it provides and the distances customers are willing to travel to purchase those goods. Handy and Clifton (2001) found that residents of Austin, Texas, were prepared to travel different distances for different types of goods. Utility theory suggests that travellers opt to minimise the time and cost of travelling, and therefore shop at the closest destination. However, the attractiveness of a destination is influenced by the nature of the goods available and the type of shopping experience. This relationship between consumer needs and retail response is outlined in Table 4. According to this classification, neighbourhood shopping centres meet the needs of essential shopping and time-pressured shopping. These are 'convenience services', which are needed frequently and do not require comparison shopping (Berry & Parr, 1988).

The predominant change evident in Lower Hutt's neighbourhood shopping centres over the past 20 years is a shift from stores almost exclusively meeting convenience needs, to a mix of shops meeting both convenience and specialist needs. For example, Alicetown has specialist music, sign making, trophy, children's dance wear, scooter, tile, flooring, hunting and fishing, and leadlight stores. Rather than meeting a neighbourhood's day-to-day needs, these shops attract customers from a wider catchment area. Other centres, like Stokes Valley and Taita cater almost exclusively to the day-to-day needs of the neighbourhood.

**Table 4: A Classification of Shopping Activities**

<b>Consumer need</b>	<b>Retail response</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
Essential shopping	Local convenience shops Corporate mass merchandisers	Convenience Low prices, utility
Fun/leisure shopping	Specialist shopping areas Large leisure/shopping complexes Fashion/lifestyle retailing in planned cluster	Wide product range, style Leisure activity, style Multi-purpose activity
Purposive shopping	Large, target shopper units Wide range or variety stores Internet shopping	Wide product range Good value Wide product range, value
Time-pressured shopping	Home shopping Petrol station shops/convenience stores Internet shopping	Saves time Saves time Saves time
Innovative shopping	Home based facilities Catalogue showrooms	Good access Good product range

*Source:* Adapted from Dawson and Sparks (1987)

A number of social factors have influenced the frequency and purpose of shopping trips, changing consumer demand for goods and services provision. These include the rise in car-borne shopping, greater participation of women in the workforce, and rise of shopping as a leisure activity. Car-borne shopping has continued to increase since 1989, due to greater levels of car ownership and low fuel prices. This has meant that people are equipped to shop farther from their home. The trend of increased participation of women in the workforce has also continued since 1989. This means families have higher levels of income and less time for shopping trips. Supermarkets offer a greater range of foods at lower prices and the convenience of one-stop shopping, drawing customers away from neighbourhood shopping centres. Increasing rates of overseas travel has led to greater sophistication in the New Zealand palette, and higher expectations of supermarkets. Smaller neighbourhood convenience stores struggle to provide such a range of goods.

In the late 1980s and into the 1990s, a large number of Post Office and bank branches were closed throughout the country. In 1987, the old New Zealand Post Office split into three state owned enterprises (New Zealand Post Limited, Telecom Corporation of New Zealand Limited, and Postbank Limited) and 432 of the smaller Post Offices were closed nationwide. These closures were followed by bank branches, with the number of branches reduced from 1551 in September 1993 to 849 in December 2000. Many of these closures resulted from mergers, where the new merged bank decided to reduce the number of branches operating in close proximity and eliminate duplicated locations (Matthews, 2001). Automatic Teller Machines were installed in many of the locations that previously had a bank branch. The closure of neighbourhood bank branches changed spatial behaviour because people had to travel further to larger centres in order to meet their non-cash withdrawal banking needs. Automatic Teller Machines are in place in many of the larger neighbourhood centres. Kiwibank was launched in 2002 and has a single branch in Naenae, which is the only bank found in Lower Hutt's neighbourhood shopping centres. In most of the neighbourhood shopping centres limited postal services offered by either a dairy or bookshop.

## **4.2 Legislative Changes**

The changes in legislation that have had the greatest impact on retail activities over the period 1989-2008 in New Zealand relate to trading hours, the sale of liquor, and planning permission.

The Shop Trading Hours Repeal Act 1990 replaced the 1977 Act, making New Zealand's shop trading hours more liberal. Under the 1977 Act, trade was restricted to 7am-9pm on weekdays, and this was extended in 1980 to allow for Saturday morning trading. The present Act removed restrictions on weekend, public holiday, and weekday trade, with the exceptions of Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and ANZAC Day morning. These modifications were made to reflect changing social patterns (namely increased participation of women in the workforce and less time for shopping), providing greater consumer choices and business opportunities (Shop Trading Hours Working Group, 2003). This has counted against neighbourhood shopping centres, because people are encouraged to shop for leisure on the weekends in locations further from home.

The Sale of Liquor Act 1989 was amended in 1999, removing Sunday and public holiday trading restrictions, with the exception of Easter Sunday and Anzac Day morning. The amendments

allowed supermarkets to sell wine and beer, and the drinking age was lowered from 20 to 18. This impacted on local liquor retailers because supermarkets, with the ability to offer cheaper prices, soon dominated the market share for beer and wine sales. In addition, some members of the community may feel more comfortable purchasing wine and/or beer during a grocery shopping trip, than being seen entering a liquor store for the same items. The mainstay of local liquor retailers is now spirit sales, which supermarkets are not allowed to sell. There is also a possible link with the lower drinking age and liquor-related problems in public places.

In 1991, the Resource Management Act (RMA) replaced a large number of statutes, including the Town and Country Planning Act (1953). The earlier Act allowed Councils to zone areas for specific land uses, but this is not possible under the sustainable management aim of the RMA. Buchanan, Barnett, Kingham, and Johnston (2006) attribute peripheral urban expansion in Christchurch since the mid-1990s to the planning provisions of the RMA, which replaced regulatory controls with effects-based urban growth policies. More recently, large commercial developments have been rejected under the RMA on the basis of adverse social and economic impacts on existing communities. For example, a proposal to build a shopping centre in Silverstream, Upper Hutt was challenged at the Environment Court and rejected on the basis of a Social Impact Assessment (SIA). The SIA showed that the proposed centre would have significant adverse impacts on the social and economic well-being of the community, particularly of Upper Hutt's established commercial centre. The economic analysis indicated that the social costs would be greater than the social benefits of the development. Under the RMA the SIA had to demonstrate that the proposal is consistent with sustainable management and enables people and communities to provide for their social well-being. In addition to direct negative effects on the retail activity of existing centres, the development would have negative impacts on recreation amenity at the proposed greenfield site (Taylor, McClintock & Buckenham, 2003). Other similar Environment Court decisions are given in Baines and Taylor (2008).

The RMA states that "sustainable management means managing the use ... of natural and physical resources in a way ... which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while ... avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects on the environment." This definition has provided a basis for a number of social arguments against new commercial retail developments. Some of these arguments are outlined by Baines and Taylor (2008):

- Commercial retail development contributes to social well-being;
- Enabling provisions apply to all, regardless of social and economic advantage;
- Both long-term consequences and short-term opportunities must be considered;
- Proposals that may undermine the efficient use of physical resources (devoted by private, public, community/voluntary sectors) in the built urban environment (commercial buildings, community facilities, community services, physical amenities, transport infrastructure, transport services) must demonstrate that these negative effects can be avoided, remedied or mitigated; and,
- Losses of existing amenity in one location for one set of beneficiaries cannot be off-set against gains in new amenity elsewhere for a different set of beneficiaries.

These recent cases have set a precedent so that the impacts of future proposed commercial developments on local businesses and nearby retailing areas will be more fully considered in future consent decisions. The new National Government is currently reviewing the RMA to make it

more efficient and this may change the way proposed developments are dealt with (Fleming, 2008).

### **4.3 Trade Liberalisation and Competition**

From the early 1980s New Zealand's trade was gradually liberalised, opening the country up to imports and giving consumers greater choice for lower prices. New Zealand's official position on Trade Policy published in 1992 included multilateral trade liberalisation via the WTO (which was the GATT at the time) and regional trade liberalisation, for example through APEC (New Zealand International Business Forum, 2002). A retail boom ensued, fuelled by cheap imports from China and higher end products from Europe (Troy, 2007). Today, shopping is an important leisure activity; in the USA shopping is the second to watching television as the most popular leisure activity nationally (Southworth, 2005). Postmodern cities around the world continue to focus on consumption and the retailing environment has responded with various large-scale retail models (Glennie, 1998). Growth in the Lower Hutt Central Business District over the 1950-2008 period has included multiple supermarkets, large scale 'big box' warehouse retail, and a large shopping mall (Dravitzki and Powell, 2008).

The rapid rise of supermarkets worldwide can be attributed to a number of forces, many of them interconnected. These include rising incomes, higher ownership of consumer durables like refrigerators and automobiles that facilitate supermarket shopping, urbanisation, greater participation of women in the workforce (increasing the opportunity cost of time), and improved avenues for advertising (Traill, 2006; Messinger & Narasimhan, 1997). These factors have enabled large-scale supermarket retailers to service a wide catchment, resulting in the closure of many neighbourhood convenience food stores, particularly butchers, delicatessens and fish shops (Department of Internal Affairs, 2008 ; Press, 1994).

Shopping malls are a collection of stores at a single location that are owned and managed as a unit. These arose as consumers became more affluent and mobile in post-war America, and were copied in other developed nations. Representing increasing economies of scale in retail capital and organisation, malls are attractive to consumers for a number of reasons. They offer initial novelty value, potentially lower prices, protection from the elements, and the convenience of reduced transport cost and time savings (Press, 1994). There was a distinct shift in perception over the latter part of the twentieth century from shopping as a necessity, to shopping as a leisure activity and shopping malls have proved popular with consumers.

Shopping malls can have a large social impact because an increase in the number of retailers in an area results in 'intertype' competition between stores with different organisational structures but similar types of goods (Press, 1994; Reimers & Clulow, 2004). The influence of a shopping mall on the successful operation of neighbourhood shopping centres is dependant on whether the neighbourhood centre is within the mall's sphere of influence. In Lower Hutt, the Queensgate mall has had a large influence on independent retailers.

Westfield's Queensgate mall started trading in the Lower Hutt CBD during the 1986 to 1990 period. It has affected retailers in Lower Hutt by altering the spatial behaviour of consumers. This has resulted in a number of Lower Hutt retailers closing or relocating nearer to, or into, the complex. According to Press (1994), Queensgate has affected retail in Lower Hutt by:

- Altering consumers' spatial behaviour;

- Increasing competition within several retail goods markets;
- Concentrating retail facilities in the Queensgate area;
- Changing the distribution of pedestrians and traffic in the city, concentrating consumers around the shopping centre; and,
- Increasing the value of land and the level of retail rents in the vicinity, which have also impacted on retailers.

When Queensgate was proposed, retailers' were concerned that the mall would reduce their trade and the viability of the High Street, so the then Lower Hutt City Council built the Centre City Plaza on the High Street in the late 1980s. The Plaza is a cinema and shopping complex on Lower Hutt's busy High St, with a multi-storey car park and ground floor shopping area. Unlike Queensgate, the mall has proved unsuccessful, and was sold by the Council to Tony Tay Group in 2002 at a substantial loss. Hoyts Cinemas closed the centre's five cinemas in May 2008, after 14 years of operation in the complex, and the mall is on the market again (Patterson, 2008).

Councils are recognising the impact of shopping malls on independent retailers. A proposed \$100 million rapid redevelopment of the Johnsonville Shopping Centre has prompted the Wellington City Council to make a district plan change giving officials the power to reject large retail projects if they will have detrimental effects on retailers in Wellington's CBD shopping area. The change known as District Plan Change 66, allows the economic impact of major retail development on the CBD to be considered in resource consent applications. The changes will apply to stores larger than 10,000 square metres and complexes larger than 20,000 square metres (Burgess, 2008; Mulrooney, 2008).

Considerable concern has also been expressed about the size and distribution of 'big box' stores in New Zealand. As in America, the ability of these stores to provide a wide range of cheap goods is changing the way people shop. By controlling increasingly more of the retail spend, these retailers edge out smaller retailers (Envision New Zealand, 2003). In particular, big box stores compete with independent hardware, garden, appliance, and furnishings shops. Big box developments are usually associated with costs that are not reflected in the price of goods, such as traffic congestion, loss of trees and open space, displaced small businesses, abandoned shopping centres, and a degraded sense of community (McLaughlin, 2008). There are also concerns about the economic decline in a community resulting in reduced rate take by the local Council, and the potential non-local ownership of big box developments (Envision New Zealand, 2003).

However, consumer demand for big box retailers is clearly high. The impact of large format retailers in small towns in New Zealand has been shown to depend on socio-economic factors and the ethnic circumstances of various community groups. For example, Māori were found to have a more positive orientation towards the introduction of The Warehouse to small towns in New Zealand than people of other ethnic groups. For Māori historically excluded from small-town retail consumption due to restricted disposable income, The Warehouse offers affordable, new goods. Big box retailing such as The Warehouse also brings employment opportunities (Sayers, Low & Davenport, 2007). Research on the impact of big box retailers on shopping areas in New Zealand is otherwise limited.

In Ireland and Norway, restrictions have been placed on the size of new retail stores, while the UK Government limits the locations of big-box stores to protect the character of established high

streets (Envision New Zealand, 2003). The Hutt City Council's District Plan recognises that large scale retail activities (exceeding 500m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area) can negatively impact the transport network. Policies include managing and mitigating adverse effects on the transport network, and ensuring that new large scale retail activities are designed to provide for public transport (where appropriate), access to existing or planned public transport services off-side, and pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities (Hutt City Council, 2006).

Over the past twenty years, larger retailers have benefited more than small independent retailers from advances in technology and increased avenues to market, sell, deliver, service and communicate with consumers. Larger retailers have more capacity to engage in mainstream advertising (TV, press, radio), modify the shop environment, promote sales, utilise the world wide web, produce catalogues, use in-store digital media and demonstrations, employ celebrity endorsement, develop loyalty programs, and undertake competitions and sweepstakes (Ogden-Barnes, 2007). Small neighbourhood retailers on the other hand, rely more on meeting a community's immediate needs and word of mouth in the neighbourhood.

Barber and Tietje (2004) identify ways for smaller retailers to compete against big box stores. For all types of retailers, an individual retailer's strategy is a function of merchandise pricing and the distribution services accompanying that merchandise. Distribution services include the accessibility of the location, the breadth and depth of product mix, assurance of immediate product availability (including extended open hours and the reliability that products will be kept in stock), store ambiance, and product information. Big box retailers demand higher travel time and travel costs of the customer in exchange for lower product prices. Smaller retailers are generally more accessible to local customers, but cannot compete for low prices on the same scale. In particular, smaller retailers can secure niche markets by delivering higher levels of ambiance and information. Press (1994) noted that stand-alone retailers in Lower Hutt had made little effort to alter their store's internal practices in response to competition from the Queensgate mall.

In Lower Hutt, the neighbourhood shopping centres closest to the Lower Hutt CBD are functioning better than the more distant centres. Those in closer proximity to the CBD, such as Alicetown, are functioning well and incorporating new uses for the retail infrastructure already in place (Dravitzki and Powell, 2008). It is the more distant centres, like Taita and Stokes Valley, that have failed to effectively adapt to competition.

#### **4.4 Neighbourhood Demographics**

In the United Kingdom and North America, the existence of suburban urban 'food deserts' has been observed, where the disadvantaged areas of cities have relatively poor access to healthy and affordable food (Larsen & Gilliland, 2008). Contrary to this international trend, it has been found that those living in New Zealand's more deprived areas have greater access to food and alcohol retail. This means that supermarkets, convenience stores, fast food and alcohol outlets are disproportionately located in more deprived urban neighbourhoods in New Zealand, and the range of outlets in these areas is more extensive than in more affluent urban areas (Pearce, Day, & Witten 2008; Pearce, Witten, Hiscock & Blakely, 2008; Pearce, Hiscock, Witten, & Blakely, 2007).

Individuals of similar income demand similar goods and services, or 'market baskets' (Berry, & Parr, 1988). In Lower Hutt, there is an observed relationship between the façade and success of the larger shopping centres, and the surrounding neighbourhood's level of deprivation according

to the New Zealand Deprivation Index 2006 (NZDep2006) (Salmond, Crampton & Atkinson, 2007). Based on data from the 2006 Census undertaken by Statistics New Zealand, the NZDep2006 reflects eight dimensions of material and social deprivation. The variables in order of decreasing weight in the index are:

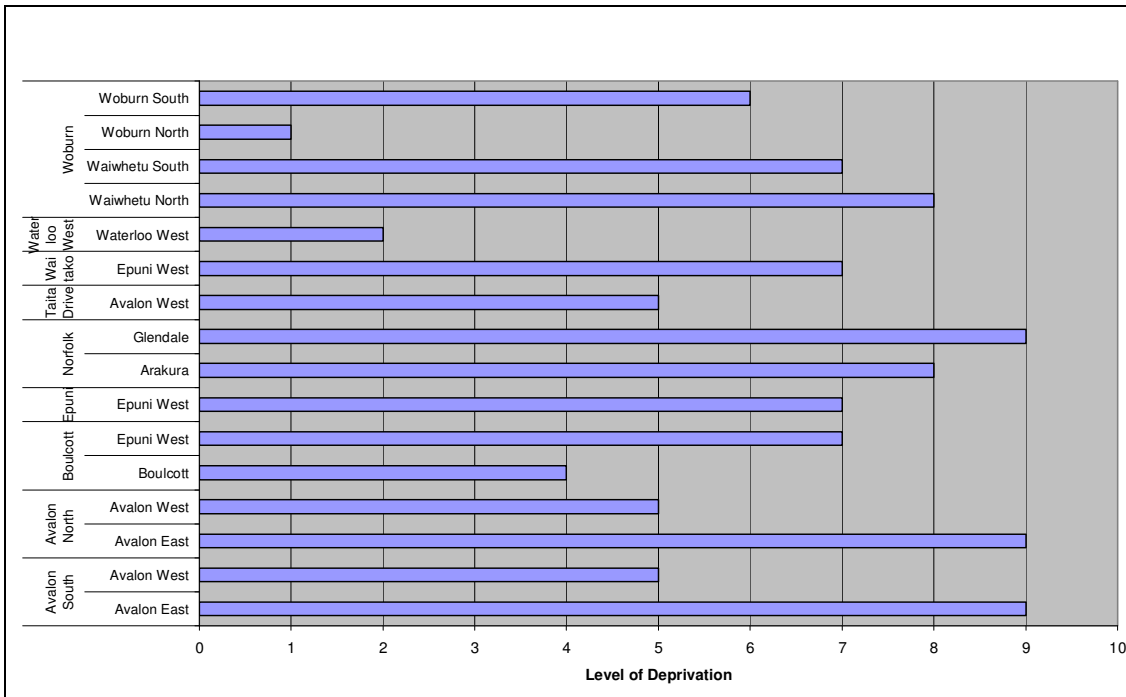
- People aged 18 - 64 receiving a means tested benefit;
- People living in households with income below an income threshold;
- People not living in own home;
- People aged < 65 living in a single parent family;
- People aged 18 - 64 unemployed;
- People aged 18 - 64 without any qualifications;
- People living in households below a bedroom occupancy threshold;
- People with no access to a telephone; and,
- People with no access to a car.

Each area unit is rated on a scale of one to ten, with ten indicating the greatest degree of deprivation. The index indicates relative socioeconomic deprivation, not absolute deprivation, so there will always be area units within the tenth decile (Salmond, Crampton & Atkinson, 2007). The deprivation scores for each the area unit/s that constitutes the majority of patrons to each shopping area are shown in Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10. The relevant area units were selected based on the findings of a survey undertaken by O'Regan & Lynch (2004), and the geographical proximity of the shopping centre to nearby area units. Shopping centres like Eastbourne and Alicetown are located within one area unit, but other centres like Taita, Naenae, and Avalon North are located on the edge of two units. The centres located along major transport corridors or at transport nodes are likely to have a wider range of patrons living outside the immediate neighbourhood.

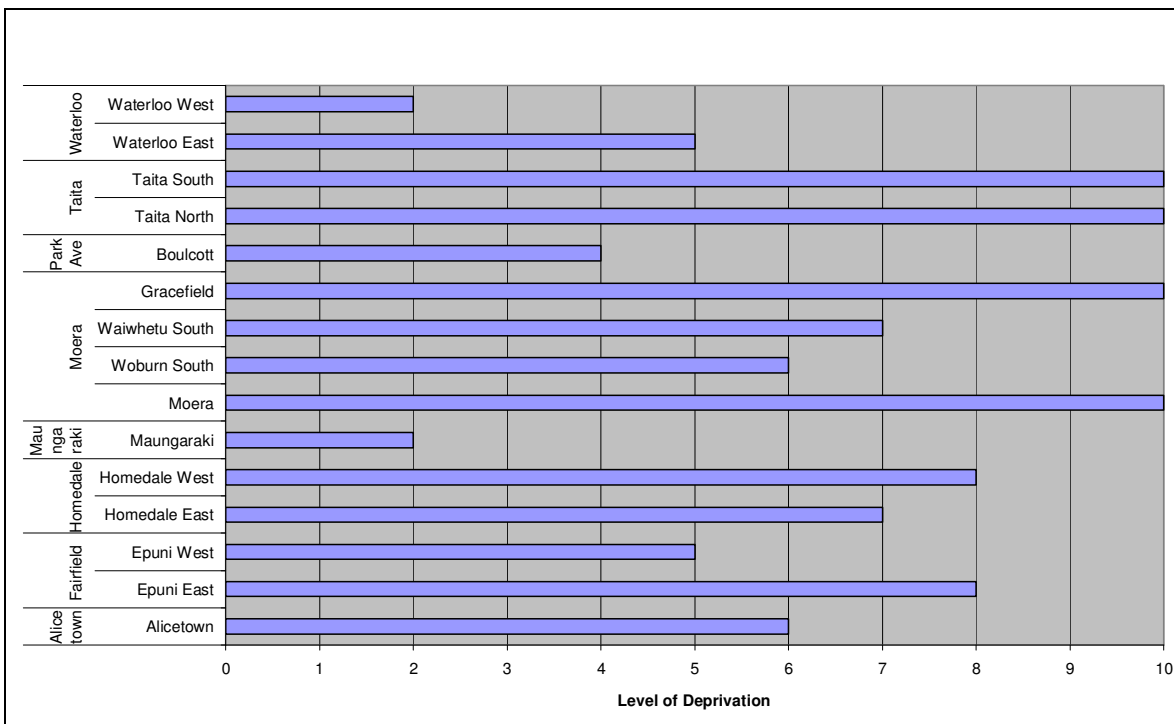
Many of the Local shopping centres are located on the boundary of two or more area units. The Norfolk centre is the most poorly performing and the surrounding neighbourhoods have high deprivation levels of eight and nine. There is otherwise no clear relationship between the state of the Local shopping centres and the level of deprivation within the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The Minor and Major Suburban shopping centres show much stronger relationships between shopping centre success and low Deprivation Index scores (Figure 9 and Figure 10). The Maungaraki and Park Ave shopping centres are two of the most successful, with deprivation levels of two and four respectively. The Waterloo centre predominantly services the Waterloo East area unit, with a rating of five, but is also located at a busy railway node, enhancing the success of the centre. Alicetown is another of the more successful centres, but the Alicetown area unit has a moderately high deprivation rating of six. The composition of this centre is less oriented towards neighbourhood needs than the other centres. Its success is more appropriately attributed to the niche markets it has established and its location on a busy thoroughfare between Petone and the Lower Hutt CBD.

**Figure 8: Level of Deprivation in Suburbs surrounding Local Shopping Centres in Lower Hutt according to the 2006 NZ Deprivation Index**



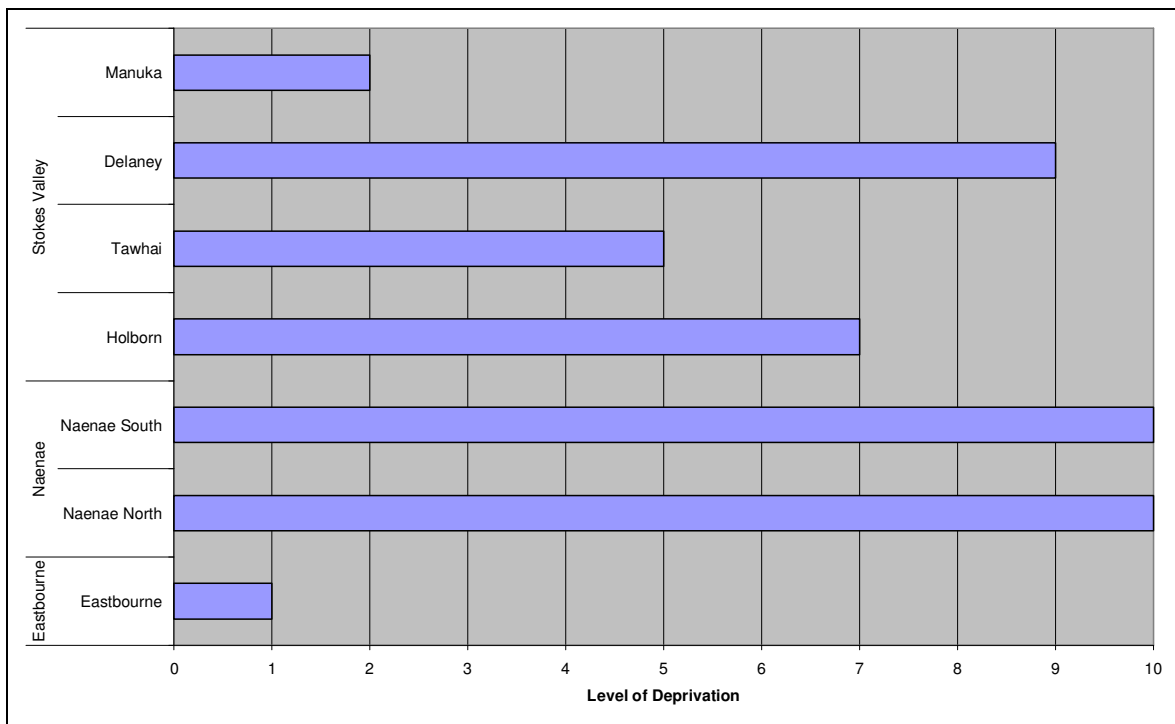
**Figure 9: Level of Deprivation in Suburbs surrounding Minor Suburban Shopping Centres in Lower Hutt according to the 2006 NZ Deprivation Index**



The Fairfield centre draws on the Epuni East and West area units, with deprivation levels of eight and five respectively. The Moera centre draws on a large catchment of four area units, ranging in deprivation from levels six to ten. Homedale is a relatively unsuccessful centre, with area unit rankings of levels seven and eight. Taita is the least successful of the Minor Suburban centres, and the Taita South and Taita North area units have the highest level of deprivation.

The Eastbourne community clearly has the lowest level of deprivation and is the most successful of the three Major Suburban shopping centres. Likewise, the Naenae centre is the least successful, and the area units within the catchment of the Naenae shopping centre both have the highest level of deprivation. There are four area units within the Stokes Valley centre's catchment and these display the greatest range for deprivation, from levels one to level nine. The five area units in Wainuiomata are more similar, ranging in deprivation from levels seven to nine.

**Figure 10: Level of Deprivation in Suburbs surrounding Major Suburban Shopping Centres in Lower Hutt according to the 2006 NZ Deprivation Index**



## 5 Conclusion

Over the period 1989 to 2008, Lower Hutt's neighbourhood shopping centres have changed in composition. Many of the neighbourhood shopping centres in Lower Hutt show signs of decline, with multiple vacancies and deteriorating façades. A few of the centres appear vibrant and successful. Today, most centres have fewer retailers meeting the day to day needs of local residents. Independent food (greengrocer, butcher), hardware, and clothing stores have vacated most of the centres since 1989. It is also apparent that the profit margin is small for some neighbourhood retailers.

All of the nine Local centres show indications of potential failure. The Boulcott centre appears to be the most vibrant and successful, while the Norfolk centre is the least. The smaller Local centres generally have fewer vacancies, implying that they have an established catchment and are an appropriate size for serving that catchment.

Of the eight Minor Suburban Centres, Waterloo, Alicetown, and Park Ave are the most successful. Each of these centres is located at a major transport node or along a busy transport corridor. The Waterloo centre is adjacent to the Waterloo rail interchange, and Alicetown and Park Ave are located on major thoroughfares. The Waterloo centre appears vibrant and successful, with a range of shops providing services other than convenience food. The Alicetown centre is situated between Petone and the Lower Hutt CBD and largely comprises of special destination-type stores. Park Ave is the only centre that has clearly increased in size over the past two decades. It is a tidy area with attractive storefronts. The Maungaraki centre is the only centre in the Western Hills and is relatively successful. The Fairfield centre has a mixed range of convenience shops, gift shops, and specialist shops like suppliers of home brewing equipment and carpet traders. Many of the Fairfield shops are looking tired from the outside and there are some vacancies in the centre. The Moera centre shows signs of decline, with multiple vacancies and a generally deteriorating façade. Homedale and Taita are the least successful of the Minor Suburban Centres. Both centres have a large number of vacancies, a deteriorating image, and shops with roller doors.

The three Major Suburban Centres have varying degrees of performance. Eastbourne is vibrant and successful, catering to both the needs of the local, fairly affluent, population and visitors to the area. The centre has a number of special destination gift shops and galleries and few vacancies. Stokes Valley is a similarly isolated part of Lower Hutt city. However, the Stokes Valley shopping centre consists of shops meeting the needs of local residents and does not have any special destination retailers. This difference between the two centres may be because Eastbourne is located at the coast and draws weekend visitors to the area, while Stokes Valley is not a visitor destination. The demographics of the areas may also play a role in this, with Eastbourne being a more affluent suburb. Naenae is the least successful of these three centres, with a large number of vacancies and a generally run-down appearance. One of the greatest obstacles for Naenae is that there are too many shops for the size of the catchment, meaning that vacancies are inevitable. The Minor District Centre of Wainuiomata has a generally deteriorating façade, and some vacancies, but appears to be meeting the needs of the community.

The neighbourhood shopping centres accommodate multiple transport modes, with a focus on the automobile. All of the centres aside from Boulcott and Park Avenue have ample car parking facilities, and almost all of the centres are linked by bus routes. The provision for walking and cycling varies amongst the centres. Cycle parking stands are located at all three of the Minor Suburban centres (outside each library), as well as Taita and Epuni. Wainuiomata, Stokes Valley and Naenae have pedestrian-only areas, and most of the Minor and Major Suburban centres have permanent outdoor seating. Many of the centres can be accessed on foot by pedestrian crossings. Waterloo, Naenae, and Taita are linked to rail platforms and the suburbs on the other side of the railway line via subways. The Naenae subway is unsafe, and the Taita subway is similarly uninviting. In comparison, the more recent Waterloo subway is well-designed and pleasant for pedestrians to use.

The overall trend evident in Lower Hutt's neighbourhood shopping centres is one of declining façades. The Hutt City Council's District Plan has policies on the design and external appearance of buildings and structures, in order for the amenity values of neighbourhood centres to be maintained. This includes verandas to protect pedestrians from rain, landscaped car parking areas, and design "...to maintain and enhance the visual quality and attraction of Suburban

Commercial centres” (Hutt City Council, 2006: 5C5). It is recognised that low investment in shopping areas reduces the attractiveness of the area and sets off a cycle of decline (Albuquerque & Chrystal, 1989). There is little evidence of reinvestment in Lower Hutt’s neighbourhood shopping centres, aside from outdoor bench seating and sculptures in a few of the centres. The Hutt City Council has a suburban shopping centre improvement fund, which invests \$100,000 - \$200,000 every two years in the upgrade of existing shopping centres, on the basis of a priority list. Naenae and Stokes Valley are the current priorities. The Stokes Valley improvements will be physical upgrades to the pavement and streetscape. Because the funding for physical upgrades is low, a Master Plan approach is being undertaken for Naenae (Paki Maaka, personal communication, 20 October 2008).

Social changes like the rise in car-borne shopping, greater participation of women in the workforce, and shopping increasingly considered a leisure activity, have changed consumption patterns. These factors have contributed to a change in focus from neighbourhood shopping to shopping at large supermarkets and malls further from home. There have been a number of legislative changes that have directly or indirectly impacted on neighbourhood retail. In particular, the liberalisation of trading hours and changes to laws regarding liquor sales has benefited the larger shops, including supermarkets and big box retailers, more than small neighbourhood businesses. Trade competition from supermarkets, shopping malls and big box retailers has influenced neighbourhood centre decline. There is a relationship between the apparent success of a neighbourhood shopping centre and the level of deprivation in the surrounding community. The more successful centres also tend to be located at or along busy transport nodes or corridors, increasing the number of patrons to the area.

Neighbourhood shopping centres are often the heart of the neighbourhood, providing convenience goods for the transport disadvantaged in close proximity to community meeting places and services. These centres are likely to become more important to the community as increasing emphasis is placed on policies for lower car use.

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## Appendix 1: Shopping Centre Composition

### Local Shopping Centres

Shopping Centre	Dairy	Greengrocer	Butcher	Fish Shop	Superette	Supermarket	Bakery	Takeaways	Dine in & takeaway	Restaurant	Pharmacy	Hairdresser	Beauty	Pet supplies	\$2 shop	TAB	Vacant	Other shops	Shops implying successful adaptation	ATM	TOTAL
Avalon North	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	Nappy shop, (hair & beauty combined)	-	-	5
Avalon South	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Bridal, Caterers	-	-	6
Boulcott	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	Charity shop (save the children), Optometrist, Massage, Medical centre x2, Nails, Real Estate, AMP	Large bakery and café	-	18
Epuni	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	3	Mobility centre, Computer centre, Medical centre, Commercial school painters, (Pet supplies includes Vet)	-	-	13
Norfolk	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	Video store	-	-	6
Taita Drive	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Management services	-	-	5
Waitako	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Dentist, Ballet academy	-	-	5
Waterloo West	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	Watch & clock repairs, Municipal building	-	-	6
Woburn	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	Vacuum cleaner sales & service, Pet shop	-	-	8

## Minor Suburban Shopping Centres

Shopping Centre	Dairy	Greengrocer	Butcher	Fish Shop	Superette	Supermarket	Bakery	Takeaways	Dine in & takeaway	Restaurant	Pharmacy	Hairdresser	Beauty	Pet supplies	\$2 shop	TAB	Vacant	Other shops	Shops implying successful adaptation	ATM	TOTAL
<b>Alicetown</b>	2	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	Music store, sign maker, 2x trophies & engravers, tattoo, children's' dance wear, scooter shop, Lotto & magazines, Italian ceramic tiles, carpet & vinyl flooring, hunting & fishing, lights, refrigeration & air conditioning installation services, promotional marketing, heat pumps	Antique leadlight studio (craft, classes, restoration, sales)	1	24
<b>Fairfield</b>	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	2	Electronics, Florist, Air movement specialists (fans), Carpet traders, Liquor store, Thai gifts, Home brew supplies, Gothic gifts	-	-	22
<b>Maungaraki</b>	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	Café and general store, Gym, Medical centre, First edition publishers, Real estate, Gallery, Liquor,	-	-	15
<b>Moera</b>	3	-	1	-	-	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	9	Cheese, Clocks, Laundromat, Health and social services	Café with seating Sri Lankan café Glazing and leadlight	1	27
<b>Park Avenue (Avalon)</b>	3	1	1	1	1	-	-	4	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Florist, Magazines & Lotto, Copy centre, Hardware, Trade union, Health centre, Laundromat	Café & photo studio	1	21
<b>Taita</b>	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	10	Book exchange, Tavern, 2x 2nd hand furniture, Laundromat, MP office, Community health, Community constable	-	2	31

Neighbourhood Shopping Centres

Shopping Centre	Dairy	Greengrocer	Butcher	Fish Shop	Superette	Supermarket	Bakery	Takeaways	Dine in & takeaway	Restaurant	Pharmacy	Hairdresser	Beauty	Pet supplies	\$2 shop	TAB	Vacant	Other shops	Shops implying successful adaptation	ATM	TOTAL
Waterloo	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	1	2	1	1	-	-	2	Wine store Bookshop Tattoo parlour 2nd hand bookshop Flowers & vases Engravers Gifts (Pet supplies includes Vet)	Modern bistro	1	23

Major Suburban Shopping Centres

Shopping Centre	Dairy	Greengrocer	Butcher	Fish Shop	Superette	Supermarket	Bakery	Takeaways	Dine in & takeaway	Restaurant	Pharmacy	Hairdresser	Beauty	Pet supplies	\$2 shop	TAB	Vacant	Other shops	Shops implying successful adaptation	ATM	TOTAL
Eastbourne	2	1	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	Tavern, 2 x gifts, Day spa, Wine, Deli, Café Gelato, Children's furniture, Gallery & bookshop, Dental, Boutique fitness, Health centre, Plunket, Sustainable building design office, Interior glass goods office, Massage and movement classes, 2 x real estate	2 firms (art gallery and computer company) have relocated within the centre to larger premises.	1	30

*Neighbourhood Shopping Centres*

<b>Naenae</b>	5	1	3	1	1	(1) <sup>2</sup>	2	4	2	1	2	4	-	-	3	2	9	Computer centre, 2nd hand furniture, Island food, Cheap variety, United video, Liquor store, Hotel & sports, bar, 2 <sup>nd</sup> hand clothes, Lingerie, 2nd hand and Asian goods, 2nd hand & money lenders, Loans, 3x Health organisations, Electrician, MP office, Tailor, Dental clinic Mower services, Print store, Kiwibank	Café Healthfood store & café	5	64
<b>Stokes Valley</b>	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	3	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	1	2	Super liquor, 2x Real Estate, 2nd hand white ware, Bar & café, Video store, Accountant, Materials testing, Electrician, Community constable, Health centre, Laundromat	-	3	26

<sup>2</sup> New World supermarket located adjacent to the centre, not in the centre.