

Item 3: Helwick Street Urban Realm Improvements

SESSION TYPE: Workshop

PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:

The Lower Helwick Street Urban Realm Improvements project seeks to build on the Wānaka Town Centre Masterplan (2019) and the Heart of Wānaka (2023) project initiatives to create a high-quality boulevard and public realm connection between Wānaka's town centre and waterfront, integrating with the Stage 4 Lakefront Improvements and proposed jetty project.

Rather than revisiting fundamental questions about the future of the town centre, the project will focus on confirming, refining and progressing existing community-supported outcomes into a coordinated urban design solution ready for future implementation. The purpose of presenting the project plan to the Wānaka-Upper Clutha Community Board (WUCCB) is to:

- Seek endorsement of the proposed project scope, governance arrangements, and procurement approach before design work commences;
- Confirm alignment with previous community planning and investment decisions;
- Provide visibility of the proposed delivery programme, consultation approach, and decision-making process; and
- Establish clear WUCCB decision points throughout the project, including consultant appointment, endorsement of the preferred concept, and endorsement of the final design package.

DATE/START TIME:

Thursday, 24 September 2026 at 12.15pm

TIME BREAKDOWN:

Presentation: 15 minutes

Questions or Debate/Discussion: 30 minutes

PRESENTERS:

Cameron Martyn (Manager Strategic Infrastructure Planning)

Prepared by:



Name: Cameron Martyn
Title: Manager Strategic Infrastructure Planning

7 September 2026

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Tony Avery
Title: General Manager, Property & Infrastructure
16 September 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

A	Lower Helwick Street Urban Realm Improvements Project Plan
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Lower Helwick Street Urban Realm Improvements

Project Plan and Delivery Programme - August 2026 to July 2027

1. Project Context

Wānaka is experiencing continuing growth in both resident and visitor numbers, placing increasing pressure on the function, character and connectivity of the town centre. At the same time, significant public investment is occurring across the waterfront and civic environment, creating an opportunity to deliver transformational improvements that reinforce Wānaka's identity as one of New Zealand's premier lakeside communities.

Over the past decade, extensive planning and community engagement has been undertaken through the Wānaka Town Centre Masterplan (2019), subsequent transport and public realm initiatives, and the Heart of Wānaka project (2023). Collectively, these projects identified a consistent aspiration to:

- Bring the lakefront experience further into the town centre.
- Create safer and more attractive pedestrian environments.
- Improve connections between key public spaces.
- Strengthen Wānaka's unique identity and sense of place.
- Prioritise people and community outcomes alongside transport function.
- Create business/commercial opportunities.
- Deliver an integrated and coordinated approach to town centre development.

Lower Helwick Street occupies a unique role within this vision. It forms one of the most direct and visible connections between the commercial heart of Wānaka and Lake Wānaka itself, linking Dunmore Street, Ardmore Street, the waterfront reserve, and future lakefront infrastructure.



Figure 1 - Wanaka Masterplan example image - for reference only

The upcoming delivery of Stage 4 Lakefront Improvements, including the proposed new jetty aligned with the Helwick Street axis, provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a coherent and seamless public realm corridor extending from the town centre to the lake edge



Figure 2 - Wanaka Lakefront Footpath Upgrade Stage 4 design.

This project represents the next step in implementing the long-term vision established through previous planning initiatives. Rather than revisiting fundamental questions about the future of the town centre, the project will **focus on confirming, refining and progressing existing community-supported outcomes into a coordinated urban design solution ready for future implementation.**

2. Project Area



Figure 3 - Project Area

The area denoted within the **Red** line in Figure 3 represents an area of initial focus encompassing upper Helwick Street including the intersections with Dunmore Street and Ardmore Street along with the footpath on north side of Ardmore Street to where this meets the Lakefront improvements Stage 4 project boundary. The red arrow denotes an interface with the Lakefront Stage 4 improvement project and focus on linkages between Helwick Street and the lakefront and proposed new jetty alignment.

The area within the **Blue** line is an area of secondary focus and takes in the car parking and public realm to north of retail / commercial properties on Ardmore Street. Both zones will be included in the design process to ensure integrated and cohesive public realm outcomes for the community, however delivery of proposed interventions and improvements within the secondary project focus area will be dependent upon project budget remaining after completion of the initial focus area.

3. Vision

The vision for Lower Helwick Street is to create:

A high-quality boulevard and public realm connecting the heart of Wānaka to its waterfront, creating a welcoming, accessible and memorable civic corridor that strengthens community connection, celebrates the lakefront setting, and delivers a seamless transition between town and lake.

The corridor will:

- Function as a primary pedestrian connection between the town centre and waterfront.
- Complement and integrate with Stage 4 Lakefront Improvements.
- Support a vibrant and attractive town centre environment and increased patronage for businesses.
- Improve accessibility, amenity and safety for all users.
- Reflect the character, landscape and environmental qualities unique to Wānaka.
- Create a cohesive public realm experience extending from Dunmore Street to the lakefront.

4. Objectives

The project will seek to:

Place and Identity

- Reinforce Wānaka's identity as a lakeside town.
- Enhance the visual and experiential connection between town and lake.
- Deliver a public realm befitting the strategic importance of the location.

Connectivity

- Improve the quality of movement between the town centre and waterfront.
- Strengthen pedestrian, cycling and other micromobility connections.
- Improve interface between Helwick Street, Ardmore Street and the lakefront.

Urban Realm Quality

- Create a boulevard-style streetscape with high-quality materials and landscape treatments.
- Improve amenity, comfort and accessibility.
- Provide opportunities for activation, commerce, gathering and community use.

Integration

- Ensure seamless integration with:
 - Stage 4 Lakefront Improvements
 - New Jetty Project
 - Existing town centre public realm initiatives
 - Future revitalisation opportunities

Deliverability

- Develop a realistic and implementable concept.
- Identify staging opportunities.
- Provide cost estimates and implementation pathways.

Proposed Project Principles

1. **Build on Existing Work**

The project will not revisit previous strategic direction unless significant new information emerges.

2. **One Waterfront Experience**

Lower Helwick Street and Lakefront Stage 4 should be perceived as a single connected public realm experience.

3. **People First**

Prioritise pedestrian accessibility, safety, comfort and place quality.

4. **Wānaka Identity**

Design outcomes should reflect local landscape, culture, lakefront setting and community character.

5. **Deliverable Outcomes**

Design recommendations must be practical, cost-conscious and capable of future implementation.

6. **Integrated Planning**

Transport, public realm, landscape, accessibility and waterfront outcomes must be considered together.

5. Programme Summary

Stage 1: Project Initiation & Scope Confirmation

Aug - Sep 2026

Purpose Confirm project scope, objectives, governance and project requirements, building on the Wānaka Town Centre Masterplan and Heart of Wānaka initiatives rather than revisiting previous strategic work.

Key Activities

- Review previous plans and consultation outcomes.
- Confirm project objectives and design principles.
- Establish governance and reporting arrangements.
- Confirm integration requirements with Stage 4 Lakefront Improvements and the proposed jetty project.

Deliverables

- Project Brief
- Governance Framework
- Procurement Strategy

Decision Point Community Board endorsement of project scope and procurement approach.

Stage 2: Consultant Procurement

Oct 2026 - Dec 2027

Purpose Appoint a suitably qualified consultant team to lead the urban design and public realm planning process.

Key Activities

- Open market Expression of Interest (EOI).
- Shortlisting of suitable teams.
- Invited Request for Proposal (RFP).
- Evaluation and consultant appointment.

Deliverables

- Shortlisted consultant teams
- Evaluation Report
- Consultant appointment

Decision Point Community Board endorsement of preferred consultant.

Stage 3: Design Development

Jan - Apr 2027

Purpose Develop a preferred urban realm concept for Lower Helwick Street that delivers a high-quality boulevard connection between the town centre and waterfront.

Key Activities

- Project inception and site investigations.
- Existing conditions and opportunities assessment.
- Urban design, landscape and transport integration.
- Coordination with Stage 4 Lakefront and jetty projects.
- Regular Project Delivery Team and Project Control Group reviews.

Deliverables

- Design Principles
- Concept Options
- Preferred Design Direction

Stage 4: Community Confirmation & Design Refinement

Apr - May 2027

Purpose Confirm that the preferred design reflects the aspirations and priorities identified through previous community engagement.

Key Activities

- Targeted stakeholder engagement.
- Public information sessions.

- Online feedback opportunities.
- Refinement of preferred concept.

Deliverables

- Consultation Summary Report
- Refined Preferred Concept

Decision Point Community Board endorsement of preferred concept.

Stage 5: Final Design & Endorsement

May - Jul 2027

Purpose Complete the final concept design package and establish a future implementation pathway.

Key Activities

- Final design development.
- Cost estimation and staging recommendations.
- Preparation of implementation roadmap.
- Final reporting and presentations.

Deliverables

- Final Concept Design Package
- Cost Estimate
- Staging and Delivery Recommendations
- Final Project Report

Decision Point Community Board endorsement of final design package.