

04.01 INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that Naenae town centre is not performing well, economically, or socially. Over decades, several factors have contributed to reduced retail performance. Not all these factors are unique to Naenae, but they include:

- Increased personal mobility, leading to increased capacity to choose to go elsewhere. This is aligned with,
- Lower travel costs.
- Increased household mobility, leading to lower levels of social connectivity and loyalty,
- Shifting trends from a focus on “local” business to “global” business especially major food retailers and therefore much larger retail catchments than those that existed when the Naenae centre was built.
- Social factors in Naenae such as anti-social behaviour that turn off prospective shoppers or visitors to the centre.
- Poor network connections or visibility to the centre.
- Blockages to potential catchment capture to the north west by the rail line.
- Poor quality pedestrian underpass; The underpass does not align with Hillary Court and is a place considered unsafe by local people.
- Weak movement network and local connectivity within the centre.
- Poor arrangement of buildings and rail tunnel that cut off relationships between shops and movement on Cambridge Terrace.
- Too many “fronts” for active retail to survive in a small catchment.
- Pedestrian mall with little origin-destination justification for movement through it.
- The low level of maintenance of ageing buildings.
- Poor built form/architecture - weak visual detail.
- Lack of any sense of cultural representation in the fabric of the built environment (not a place to walk to for its architecture and design quality as this has been diluted over time).
- Weak functional relationship with the Naenae Pool, with little flow-on benefit to retail.
- Hillary Court now too long as a mall space to be activated by retail.

Many of these are a function of a different social and economic environment than that which existed in the 1950’s and 60’s in New Zealand. Grocery

stores have been replaced by supermarkets, and many of the specialty food stores, butchers, fruit and vegetable, wet fish etc., have left the market due to the dominance of supermarkets across all food categories. Likewise, many traditional stores that used to locate in these centres are now obsolete, and so the Naenae business model sits as a historic reminder of how things used to be. Hardware stores have gone mega, as have haberdashery and millinery stores. At the same time, bricks and mortar retail stores are disappearing from the market and online retailing is taking its place.

One of the issues with retail is that the closure and boarding up of shops has a depressing effect on other activities in a centre and tends to tarnish the surrounding community. In strategic terms, retail is the most public of all uses and it is better for the centre to understate the retail offer to ensure that all future shops are viable. The benefits of a successful but smaller selection of shops will have flow on beneficial effects to surrounding residential areas and this has the potential to positively change perceptions of the suburb of Naenae.

Retail utility or the ability to get what you want from the shops (which was everything in the 1950s and 1960s) is now diminished in value. Food and beverage services have become a major part of the total experience in successful centres. Successful centres today are places to “do stuff”, where an experience and the expectation of meeting others is a part of the reason for the trip - not just to “get stuff”. The importance of the movement network and its influence on retail viability and vitality is important for centre health, as shown by the Space Syntax modelling undertaken for this work. See Figures 42. to 45.

The purpose of this scene setting introduction is to highlight the challenges that Naenae faces as it endeavours to achieve relevance. The centre has many issues to resolve to restore at least some of its retail role and former vibrancy to better serve its community.

04.02 NETWORK & CATCHMENT NEXUS

Centres at the crossroads of regional movement is a fundamental tradition that architects and planners in the 1950’s and 60’s consciously ignored. In the 50’s and 60’s it was assumed that the motor car allowed us to move away from efficient movement systems, that activated traditional centres, and provided the opportunity to go anywhere. Planners assumed that all that was required was an attractive retail-only offer and plentiful car

parking. We know now, that when the movement network that irrigates and feeds people movement through a centre's shopping street are compromised, that street begins to fail (see High Street, Lower Hutt CBD).

The movement network (Figure 23.) and the location of competitive centres (Figure 24.) usually work in concert to define a centre's catchment. In the case of Naenae, the competition is many kilometres away in Hutt CBD. The framework for Hutt supermarkets (shown as red dots in Figure 24.) in the analysis map below is focused on the CBD and Petone.

The colour codes indicate the relative strength of the movement network. Green reflects the local street network in its connectivity and role. The major movement corridors in this area are High Street (the important red line north-west of the centre), Fairway Drive/Daysh Street (the main link across the valley also shown in red), the Wingate Overbridge (linking the west side with the east, shown top right-centre crossing the rail line) and Naenae Road/Waiwhetu Rd, which just appears bottom centre-left and then becomes a more circuitous secondary road.

The secondary network of comprising Cambridge Terrace and Naenae Road north also suffer from disconnection. In the case of Cambridge Terrace the street provides only partial access to the centre as the pedestrian tunnel to the railway station prevents parking and direct access to the shops from the street. This means that the "convenience" motivation to stop is largely removed from Cambridge Terrace. Naenae Road misses the centre completely, which means the centre's main access points are from the tertiary network. In network or accessibility terms, this reduces the size of the catchment for the centre as well as making it somewhat of an out-of-the-way destination.

When we look at the catchment, the influences of the movement network on centre catchment definition become clearer.

To read the Economic Background Report please go to:

<https://haveyoursay.huttcity.govt.nz/60543/widgets/314978/documents/187972/download>

To watch and hear a video of the Economic Background please go to:

<https://haveyoursay.huttcity.govt.nz/naenaespatialplan/widgets/314981/videos/23601>



Figure 23. - Movement networks and Naenae. (Aerial Image Source: Google Earth)

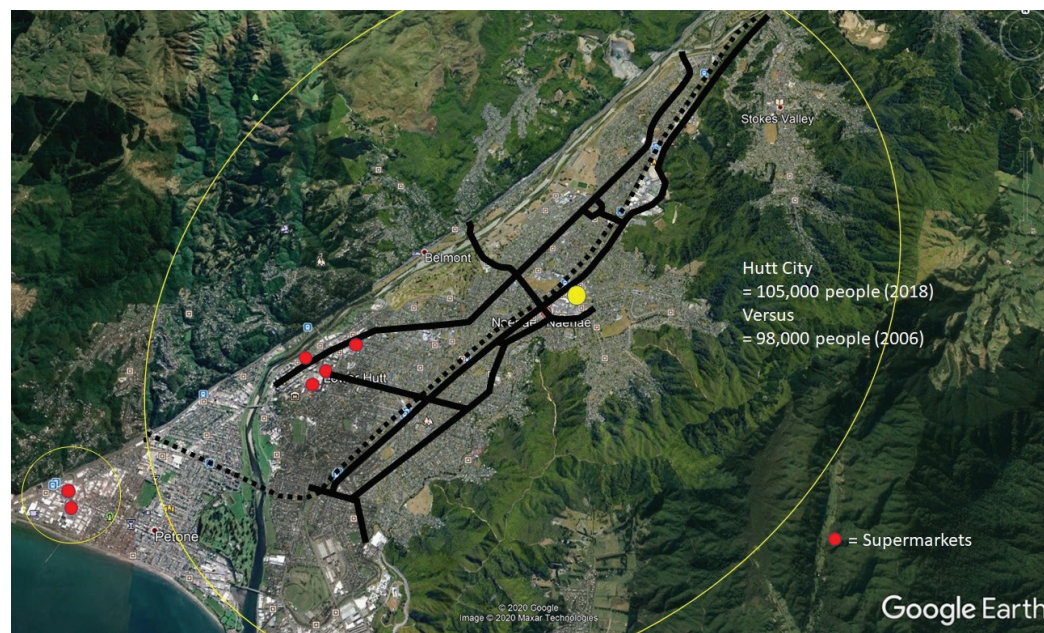


Figure 24. - Movement networks and Supermarkets (Aerial Image Source: Google Earth)

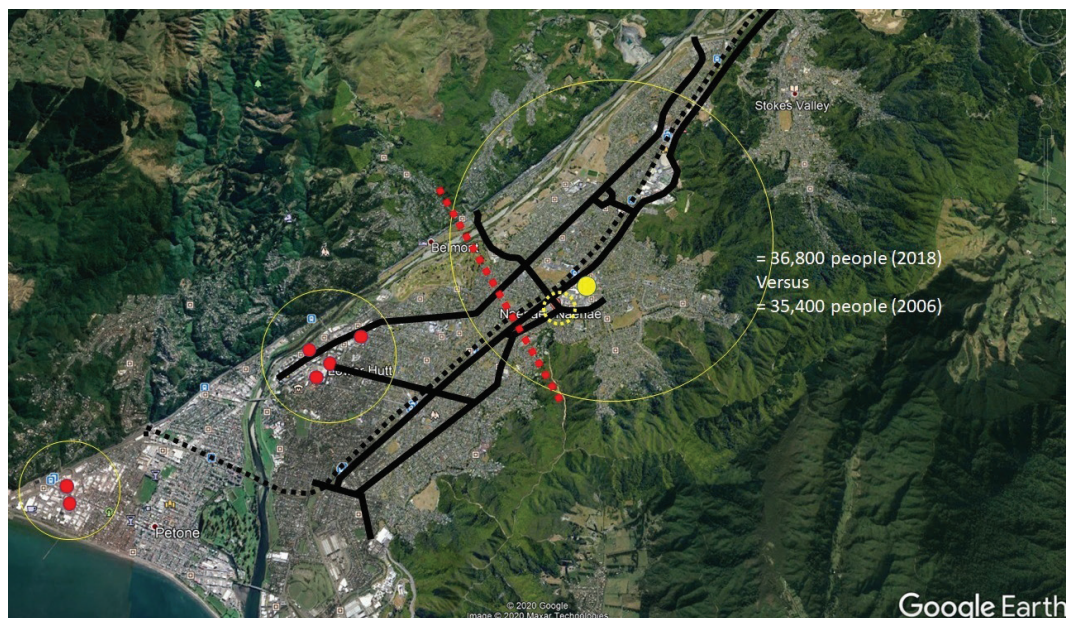


Figure 25. - Supermarket shortage North Hutt (Aerial Image Source: Google Earth)

Figure 25. shows a lack of full service supermarkets in the Hutt Valley, north of the CBD. There are smaller supermarkets in this northern area, but no majors. This area (north of the red dotted line) contains around 35,000 people. The population threshold for a supermarket is less than 12,000 people. This indicates a potential opportunity for Naenae if it can improve access, urban structure and appearance and presentation.

By way of note, the previous supermarket (currently the Sikh temple), was outside of the centre, on the western side of Vogel Street. A supermarket in the appropriate location and *within* the centre would drive the viability of an additional number of retailers based on foot traffic and exposure generated by the supermarket. Typically, a supermarket-anchored centre would contain between 5,000sqm and 7,000sqm of retail and services tenancies. This report and the resultant Spatial Plan deal with the land requirement.

At a local level catchment, the population is around 11,000 - which is on the cusp of feasibility for a supermarket, especially given the relatively low income profile of the catchment population. See Figure 26.

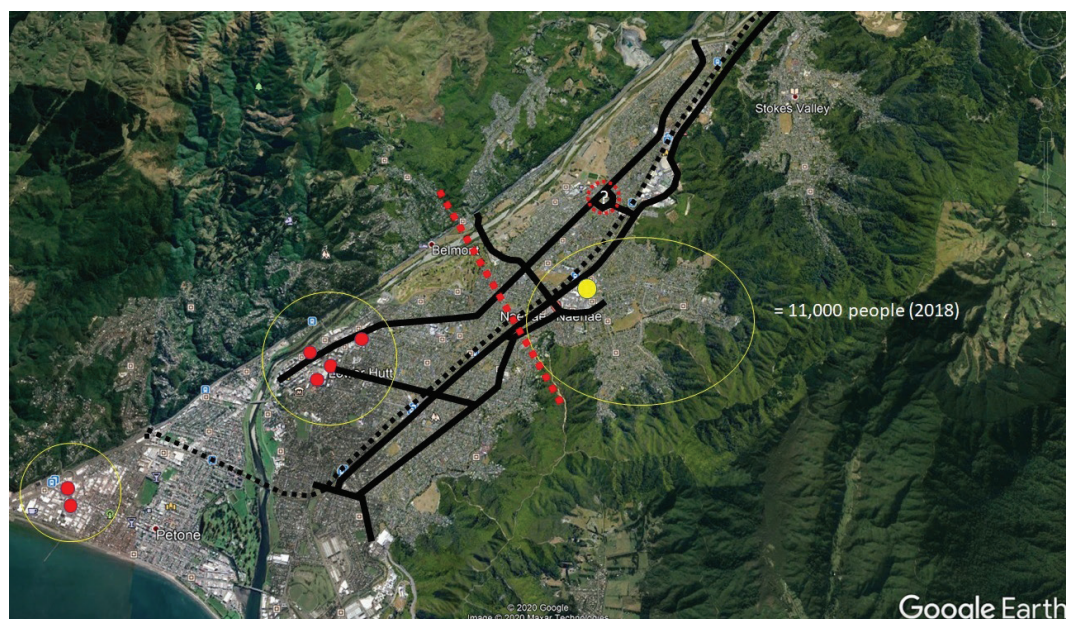


Figure 26. - Naenae local catchment (Aerial Image Source: Google Earth)

The basis of expanding the catchment for a centre that is off the major movement networks is related to two main factors:

- The strength and range of the retail offer within the centre.
- The quality or differentiated experience of the centre.

Naenae at present fails both criteria, as it presents a minor retail offer, poor urban environment and architecture, and the lack of differentiating cultural or other features that would encourage people to visit from a wider catchment.

The centre is not a major part of the everyday or weekly community shop. Putting aside local loyalty to individual small retailers such as chemist, butcher etc, it may not even be first choice as a retail destination for residents. The centre generally does not have enough critical mass of quality retailers to be a feature of daily community life.

Space Syntax has modelled the comparative drive distances for supermarkets in the Hutt as well as drive distances from Naenae.

The Space Syntax analysis in Figure 27., shows drive distances from CBD supermarkets. The black oval line largely covers the extent of catchment that is less than 2 kms from the CBD stores. This extended catchment is a function of the interconnected network in and around the CBD. When the same modelling is undertaken for Naenae (Figure 28), the result is a series of catchment pockets, which are a function of:

- the Daysh Street overpass
- the wider Naenae settlement
- the Wingate overbridge

Figure 28. shows that the Naenae catchment is dispersed, with a relatively small defined area within a 1 km drive (compared with the CBD). This is a function of landform, the railway line barrier and the layout of the wider street network.

To illustrate this, the area of Avalon located immediately across the railway line to the north of the Naenae town centre is less than 200 metres walking distance yet is between 2 and 3 kilometres driving distance. That area is defined in Figure 29. overleaf.

One way forward is to test means by which accessibility to and around the centre is improved. For instance, some of the Taita catchment is walkable to the centre but diverted to the tunnel under the rail line. This perceptive blockage could be overcome through a change in the visibility and nature of the link across the rail line. This would require an agreement with the rail authority and activation of an easement (but would require the cooperation of the rail authority).

The visual link from the rail platform shown in Figure 30. would add visual context and interest to the centre and assist in making both the station and the centre safer. It would also improve the performance of the centre and make the station an integral part of the centre. The tunnel offset from Hillary Court also causes a disconnect between retail facing Cambridge Terrace and traffic on Cambridge Terrace who are unable to park anywhere near the retail that faces the street. This physical barrier is largely fatal to

Catchment analysis Vehicle From supermarkets

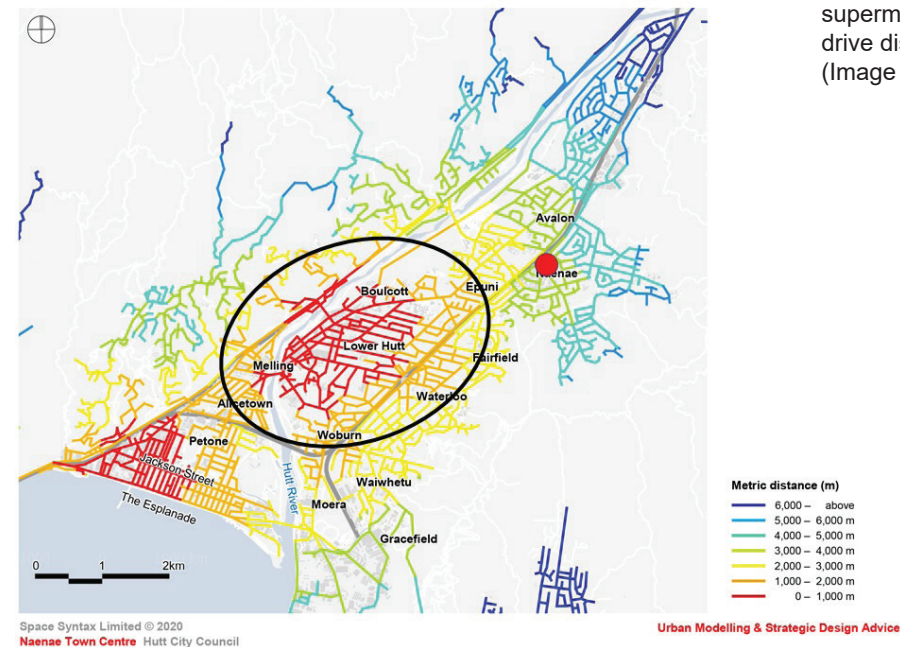


Figure 27. - CBD supermarkets catchment - drive distances
(Image Source: Space Syntax)

Catchment analysis Vehicle From supermarkets

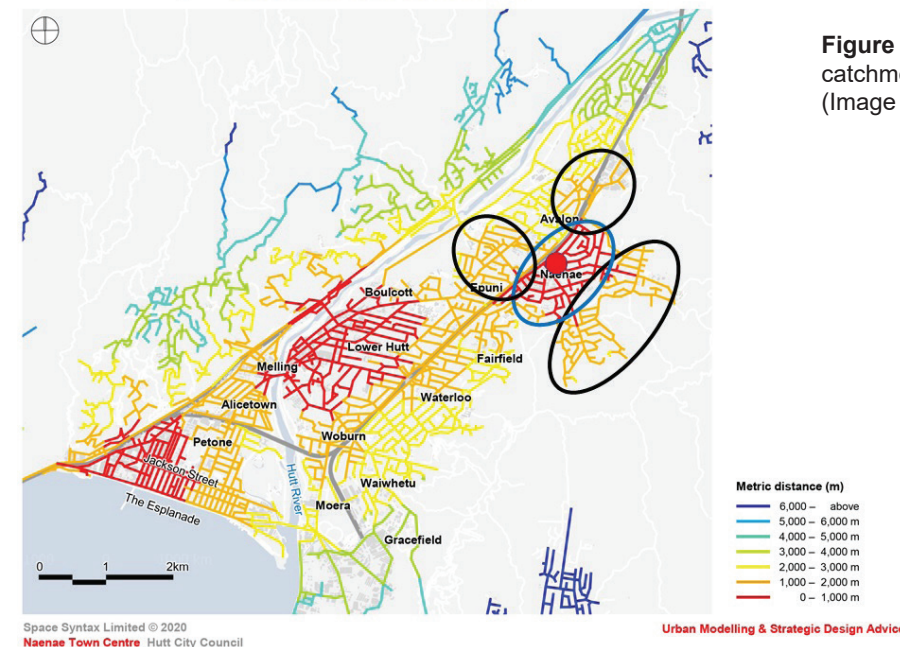


Figure 28. - Naenae catchment - access clusters
(Image Source: Space Syntax)

Catchment analysis Vehicle From supermarkets

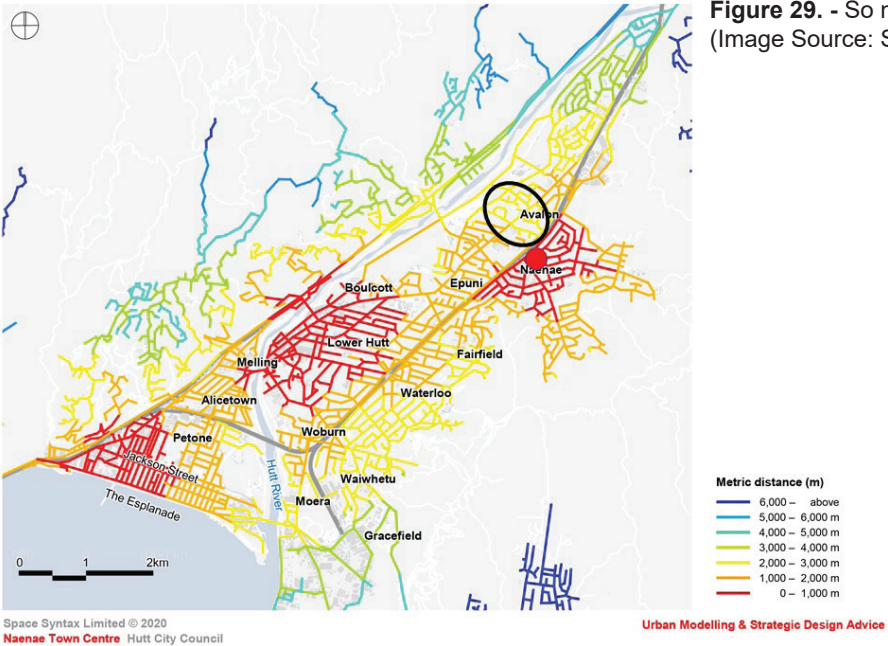


Figure 29. - So near, yet so far.
(Image Source: Space Syntax)

any retail facing Cambridge Terrace.

Other changes to the network are available to test that would increase the capacity of the centre.



Figure 30. - The photo on the left shows the view from the railway station today, and the Photoshopped image on the right shows the potential visual connection between the station and Hillary Court.

04.03 POPULATION GROWTH

As we have seen, the centre suffers from poor accessibility, which largely limits its catchment. However, even with this disadvantage, the centre sits on the cusp of attracting a supermarket. The following table shows growth within the wider catchment since 2006.

Age group	Total people - age group		
Sex	Total people - sex		
Ethnic group	Total people		
Year	2006	2013	2018
Area			
Taita North	3018	2592	3075
Taita South	3039	2946	3078
Avalon East	2295	2334	2466
Naenae Central	3291	3192	3420
Epuni East	2976	2871	2949
Naenae North	2463	2439	2535
Naenae South	2532	2553	2745
Totals	19614	18927	20268
Just Naenae	8286	8184	8700

Figure 31. Catchment areas and growth

The immediate Naenae area south of the rail line contains around 8,700 people, which is approximately 3,300 short of the ideal threshold for a full service supermarket. The catchment population is growing and with Housing New Zealand redevelopment currently under way in the area, will likely continue to grow at a modest rate.

04.04 CONTRIBUTION OF NAENAE POOL

Creating a destination with a range of attractions has implications for retail opportunity. One of the major Naenae assets has been its swimming pool, which attracts swimmers from across the Wellington region. The pool defines the southern end of Hillary Court, but is largely an encased, inward-facing building with a poor building edge relationship with the centre. The main functional relationship is with swimmers, staff and parents arriving or leaving

Spend initially dropped below 2018 levels at Naenae retailers after the pool closed but picked up again from October 2019

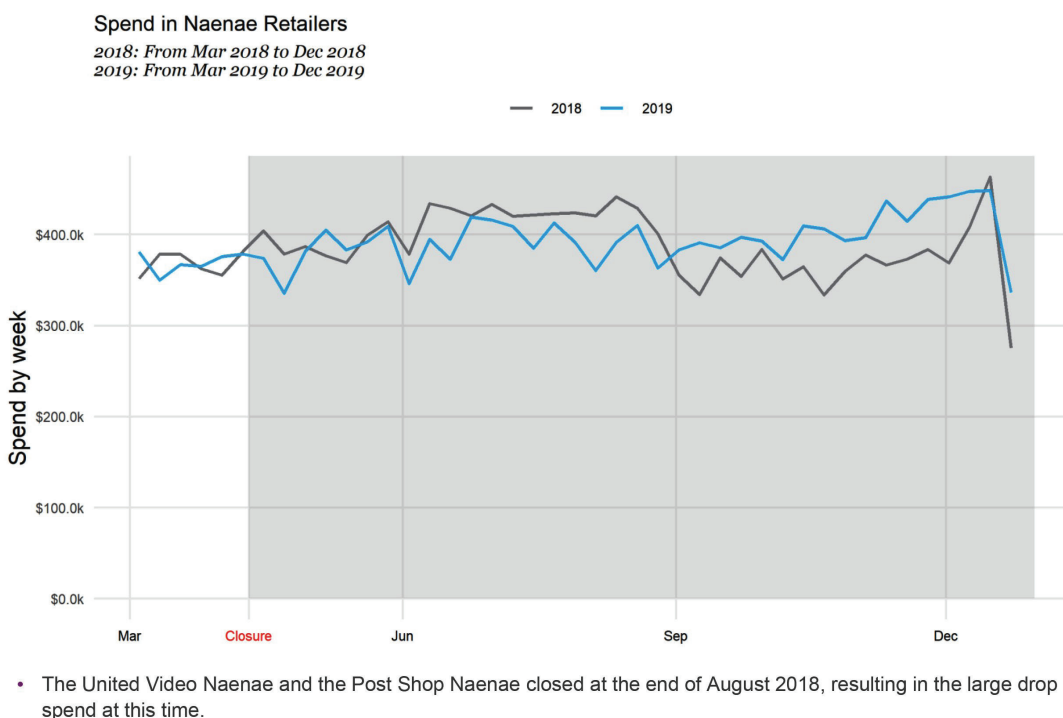


Figure 32. - Sales Trends Pre and Post Naenae Pool Closure.
 (Source: MarketView)

the pool and momentarily exposed to Naenae shops. However, MarketView data shows that less than 20% of pool visitors spend in Naenae shops and the majority of those that do, spend on food, beverages, and liquor. The survey showed that all other retail activity was stable after the closure of the pool indicating the lack of effect the pool had on those activities.

The survey also showed that Naenae customers remained loyal to the centre after the pool closure, but centre spend was reduced by customers drawn from the rest of Lower Hutt. These were mainly pool visitors. This tells us that the pool has not been a major factor or supporter of retail in the centre. However, the pool is about to be replaced with a new pool. Design changes to the new pool with a meaningful interface between the pool and the centre could make a difference in improving the performance of the centre. For instance, a two-way cafe that faced into the pool and out to Everest Avenue would assist at the proposed extension of Hillary Court. Similarly, an extension of Hillary Court to the Bowling Club fence with retail on the western side facing a new pool entrance would secure an improved relationship between the pool and the centre. The Naenae Spatial Plan captures this potential relationship.

The conclusion to be drawn from the sales graph is that the pool closure has made little difference to the performance of the centre.

MarketView also provides an estimate of turnover for Naenae retail at \$19.2 million per annum from around 12,060 square metres Gross Lettable Area (GLA). The amount of “local centre” retail spend available from just the Naenae population (Naenae Central, Naenae North and Naenae South) is \$62 million per annum. Of concern is that the MarketView data suggests that only 11% (or \$7 million) of retail spend is captured locally in Naenae.

This means that 89% of Naenae residents’ expenditure in the categories served by local centre retail is spent outside of Naenae. This is a significant leakage of expenditure to elsewhere.

A conclusion to be drawn is that the centre is not the social and economic hub for Naenae residents and the previous relationship between the pool and the centre had little influence on centre

performance. Going forward, the centre and the pool should be designed for each to recognise and interact with the other, and the centre needs a basic needs retail anchor around which to concentrate its retail offer. These actions or outcomes should enable the centre to fulfil its role as the daily and weekly social hub for Naenae and restore its role as the primary destination for everyday goods and services for the people of Naenae.

The low local market penetration level of the centre highlights two issues for the centre going forward:

- The importance of expanding and improving the quality of the walkable catchment to the centre; (See the Pedestrian catchment diagrams in the urban design analysis)
- Most residents seek product choice so when they get into the car, they will bypass Naenae centre for more choice and competitive prices from supermarkets in Hutt CBD.

As the Naenae centre offers only a limited range of goods and services, once people are in the car the appeal of the centre diminishes in favour of a few minutes additional time (driving) to get to the CBD.



Figure 33. - Naenae Pool - Relationship to Everest Avenue.
(Image Source: Eventfinda)

04.05 RETAIL DYNAMICS - CURRENT CENTRE

An indicator of retail viability is the level to which retailers concentrate together. Retail stores that are spatially isolated require individual destination appeal to be successful. These types of retailers do not rely on the movement network, but rather offer a unique product or service that people seek out. Hairdressers, TABs etc., fit into this category. The heat map in Figure 34. looks at the state of retail around the centre using a simple colour code to reflect retail performance. These maps offer clues as to where interventions are likely to be effective. As urban centres should have a range of business and retail settings at a range of price and lease points, it is important that not all edges are assessed as red.

In most urban centres the heat map transitions from “hot” retail in a core location and then as distance from the core increases, transitions to “warm” with an occasional “hot” spot. Most of Naenae’s retail is either vacant, commercial, or isolated and a one-off destination (shown in blue).

In terms of a revitalisation strategy, there are only two notional retail nodes, one along Everest Avenue and a smaller one facing the car park and library. Neither node is strong enough to activate the potential retail outlets between them in Hillary Court. The heat map shows the only “urban” retail is in Everest Avenue, as the other node survives due to the immediacy of the car park and number of parking spaces. Everest Avenue provides the most logical and obvious start point around to focus a retail revitalisation strategy. The obvious start point for such a strategy, given accessibility constraints and catchment size, is to explore whether the centre can accommodate a supermarket.

04.06 DOES THE CENTRE NEED A SUPERMARKET?

Through an engagement process, the community has expressed positive and negative feelings about a new supermarket in the centre. Most respondents view a supermarket in the centre as a desirable outcome, but some question whether the broader community should rely on a major corporate entity for everyday food supplies. There is sympathy with that view but the difficulty for



Figure 34. - Naenae Retail Heat map - Now.
(Aerial Image Source: Nearmap)

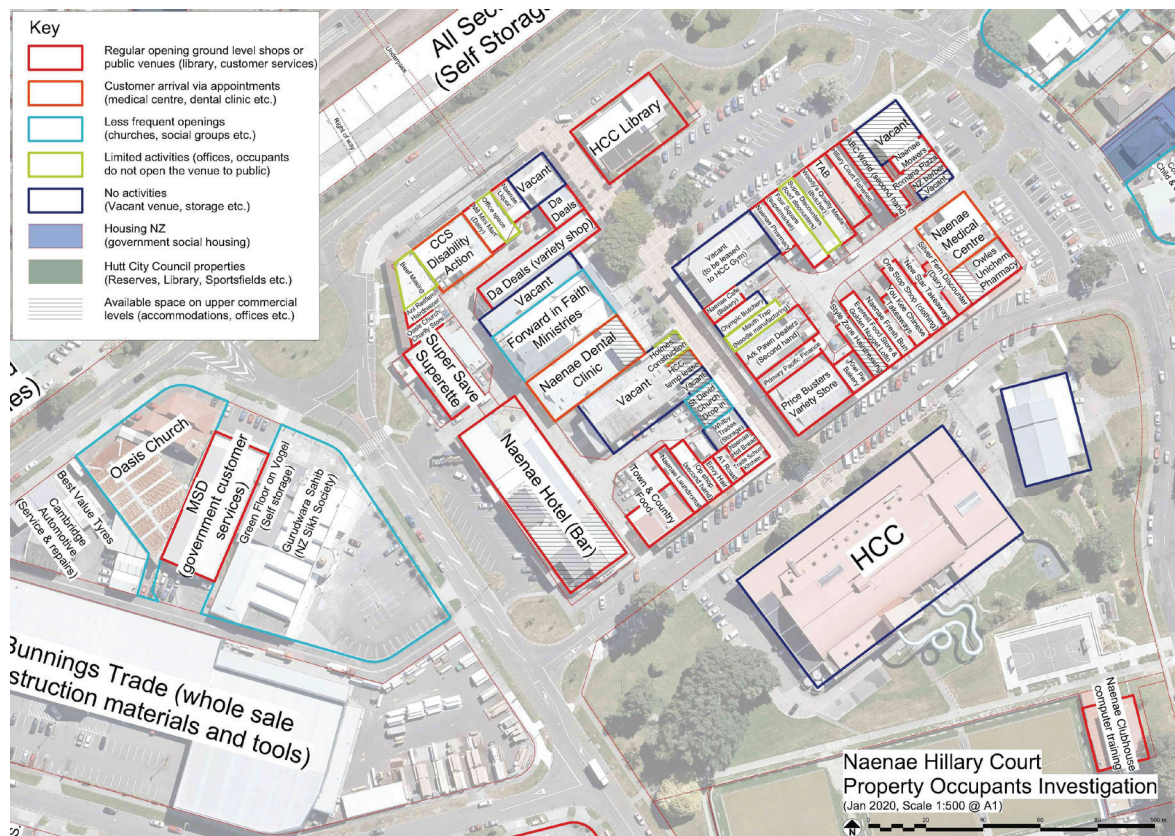


Figure 35. - Naenae Property Occupants.
(Image Source: Hutt City Council)

the centre is that there are no clear alternatives to such an anchor. Ideally, for good health and to support local business, there should be several specialty retailers selling fresh and local food, or a full-time food market. However, that opportunity has been available to the centre for many years, with low rent spaces available, and yet it has never been fully established. The centre enjoys a Village Market for 3 hours each Saturday, where some fresh, local food is sold. Presently, there is a small Four Square store in the centre. Considering the size of the immediate Naenae population (8,000+) this store is too small to properly service the Naenae catchment and it should be encouraged to expand.

The former Naenae supermarket was relatively small (a little over 2,000 square metres) and located outside of the centre within the industrial estate site located to the west of Vogel Street. (The property has now been converted to a Sikh temple).

The basis of a conventional retail strategy requires one or more signature retailers to assist to fulfil the daily and weekly requirements of 8,700 people at a minimum. This means that there is a need for a decent sized supermarket. The ideal size of such a store is complicated by a history that saw a relatively large supermarket close due to lack of performance. There is some doubt about catchment size and whether problems with accessibility will reduce the size of a “dedicated” catchment to below the population threshold for a supermarket of 3,000+ square metres (around 12,000 people). Also, when the available sites for such a large supermarket and its attached parking are analysed, there would be a need to consolidate numerous sites. Figure 35. shows the complexity of ownership in the centre.

The site area for a full-service supermarket, assuming an at-grade carpark would be in the order of 7,000 - 8,000 square metres. The entire Naenae centre site including the surrounding carparking is around 30,000 square metres. Therefore, a full service supermarket would require around 25% of the entire centre’s site area. That requirement is likely too onerous as it would require the acquisition of numerous properties, as shown in Figure 36.

The 8,000 square metre footprints are overlaid on two blocks of the site to demonstrate the difficulties in the centre accommodating a full-service supermarket.

One criticism of these options is that they are too submissive in terms of the “ideal” parking requirements of the supermarket operator. Generally, operators require an area of two and a half times the area of the supermarket to get the requisite servicing and parking areas. Whilst it is appropriate to argue for a more efficient or a less onerous parking requirement, the difficulty is that an operator is unlikely to accept such a constraint on a site that is marginal in terms of viability for a supermarket of this size. In other words, the bargaining position to convince an operator to purchase multiple sites and have reduced parking is weak. Even a reduced supermarket of 6,000 square metres would require the purchase and consolidation of several sites. The only realistic conclusion is that Naenae is unlikely to attract a full-service supermarket as the hurdles faced are too high. Furthermore, initial discussions with Progressive Enterprises (operator of Countdown supermarkets) to test interest in Naenae resulted in only lukewarm interest and even then, for a smaller store.

For Naenae it is left to seek a retail anchor at a scale that would not be onerous yet still deliver wider catchment appeal as the basis for a retail revitalisation strategy around Everest Avenue. If the catchment is limited to Naenae residents (8,700 people, a slightly reduced catchment from that shown in Figure 28), then we would be looking for a supermarket between 1,000 square metres and 2,000 square metres. The 1,200 +/- square metres Stokes Valley New World supermarket would fit into this category. The size and placement of the supermarket at Naenae would be determined by two things:

- Where it would have best effect to act as an anchor to wider retail.
- Where Council would have the best chance of managing the desired outcomes, and where property purchases are either at a minimum or not required (such as on Council land).
- Where improved urban design outcomes were able to be achieved.

For the first issue (best effect as an anchor), it is relatively obvious to map where a small supermarket in the centre has the greatest chance of success and where it can act to support improved performance of the retail outlets in the centre. However, as part of



Figure 36. - Full Service Supermarket & At-Grade Parking Footprint Options.
(Aerial Image Source: Google Earth)



Figure 37. - Naenae Potential Supermarket locations.
(Aerial Image Source: Nearmap)

developing options for the Naenae Spatial Plan, the two most likely sites will be tested and compared in terms of their characteristics and contributions to the overall town centre. It is important to note that the siting and timing of a supermarket will depend on a response from supermarket operators.

As shown in Figure 37., there are two sites where the supermarket can assist to anchor the centre. Apart from a physical “fit” there are other elements which affect the choice of location.

- Parking
- Site ownership
- Ease of development
- Urban design consequences

At the Library site there is parking immediately adjacent, which could flow or extend to the additional 40 car parks off Treadwell Street. This would bring nearby parking numbers to a total of 110, (assuming the supermarket did not take any space from the existing car park).

Currently, for the swimming pool site, there are 94 angled parking bays in Everest Avenue. With the parking spaces along Treadwell Street, this totals 134 parking bays.

In terms of site ownership, a smaller supermarket provides the opportunity to locate on Council land and not require the operator to purchase multiple sites. The other benefit of locating the supermarket on Council land (apart from revenue) is greater level of control over the design and placement of the supermarket to best suit the centre.

In testing supermarket size options, the easiest fit on Council land would be a 1,700 square metre supermarket. At this size, the critical relationship with dedicated car parking is reduced. The two Council-owned sites in shown in Figure 37. could accommodate a supermarket of this size.

To accommodate a supermarket along Cambridge Terrace would require demolition and replacement of the library. This would obviously add to the cost of this option as well as remove a key community resource from the town centre. There would also be

a range of poor urban interface outcomes under this option, as the building would only address the car park and would have two totally blank walls - one facing Cambridge Terrace and one facing Treadwell Street. This would be an extremely poor outcome.

In proposing the Everest Avenue site, the supermarket is contained within the footprint of the existing pool buildings and associated parking areas to avoid reducing parkland. The existing pool and community hall sites are proposed to accommodate a new expanded pool, new retail, a small supermarket, a youth centre, and an extension of Hillary Court. This has been modelled in the Space Syntax analysis and measured to quantify the impact on the ped-shed or walkable catchment.

The extension of Rata Street across Treadwell Street to link to Vogel Street has also been tested by Space Syntax analysis. The two supermarket location Options are shown in Figure 38.

The Everest Avenue supermarket option is located within the current pool footprint and does not encroach on the park. The swimming pool site in this scheme is 1,500 square metres larger than the current pool. The other major benefit is that the pool and the supermarket, specialty shops and cafe are designed to work together to benefit the Naenae centre. If they are not packaged and the supermarket is located elsewhere, then the “obligation” for the pool design to engage with and address the centre is reduced.

If the supermarket is located on Cambridge Terrace, then the retail in Everest Avenue becomes secondary. The Cambridge Terrace supermarket will trade to a car park, not to a street, which again would reinforce the priority in favour of cars, not pedestrians. This focus would mean that the flow on effects to the rest of the centre would be muted.

The flow-on effects of the Cambridge Terrace and Everest Avenue options in relation to heat map analysis are shown in Figure 39. The figure show that a supermarket on Cambridge Terrace (but trading to the car park) would strengthen retail on the opposite side of the car park and adjacent spilling into the northern end of Hillary Court. The Everest Avenue option shows stronger support for retail in and around Everest Avenue and consolidates the retail to one place, with sites around the car park likely to trade as they



Figure 38. - Supermarket Options on Cambridge Terrace (left) and Everest Avenue (right). (Aerial Image Source: Mapinfo)



Figure 39. - Retail Heat Map Projections. (Aerial Image Source: Mapinfo)



Figure 40. - A Way Forward - Towards a Spatial Plan for Naenae.
(Aerial Image Source: Mapinfo)

do currently or move to new tenancies in and around the supermarket and swimming pool. By consolidating the retail around Everest Avenue, Council then has the ability to concentrate community facilities in the centre of Hillary Court to form a community heart (the most obvious place), with housing clustered around the northern, western and eastern perimeter of the town centre. Organisationally the development pattern for the centre may look something like Figure 40.

There are a couple of structural interventions that would reinforce this pattern and improve the viability of the community space, whilst also offering improved accessibility and servicing for the community space and future multi-level residential development. The first is the extension of Hillary Court in a southern direction, and the second intervention would be the creation of a shared space as an extension of Sladden Street. This allows for a better definition of development footprints whilst offering the security of cars “walking” through and assisting to activate the space. This shared space could be closed to vehicles at times, for instance to accommodate a street market or community events.

The supermarket is needed for the daily and weekly retail role of the centre as well as to anchor a wider retail role for the location. In the unlikely event of supermarket providers electing to remain away, the Naenae Spatial Plan becomes a community and residential project with minor retail, restaurants, cafes around the pool and Everest Avenue and professional and personal service retail (hairdressers, physio, medical, accountant, dentist etc.) on the ground floor of residential developments.

There is only a minor retail role for the centre without a supermarket.

04.07 EVEREST AVENUE - A REVITALISATION CATALYST

The two potential supermarket locations offer different flow-on effects for the revitalisation of the Naenae town centre. Vibrant public streets are the basis for flow-on investment, not car parks. Analysis by Urbacity of over 100 centres in New Zealand and Australia shows that a wider spectrum of land use occurs when nearby streets are active and land values increase. This analysis has been reinforced by analysis undertaken by the Commission for Architecture &

the Built Environment UK (CABE). *“For retailers, a good-quality public environment can improve trading by attracting more people into an area. It has been shown, for example, that well-planned improvements to public spaces within town centres can boost commercial trading by up to 40 per cent and generate significant private sector investment.”*

A major benefit of the Everest Avenue proposition is its unique ability in Naenae to concentrate the retail offer to the strongest part of the centre thereby strengthening and reinforcing it. This will create a vibrant street as a basis for looking at the broader functional layout for the centre. It also requires an integrated design approach to the Hillary Court extension. If just the pool is built on this site, then the opportunity to engage the south side of Everest Avenue with a functionally seamless extension disappears. The south side of the street would then simply replicate the current condition where the pool is functionally divorced from the centre. A vibrant public street would be the result of retail and pool merging on the south side of Everest Avenue, sharing the Hillary Court extension as a dual gateway to both facilities. As discussed, a vibrant street is a catalyst for a range of other uses, but the most important of these for Naenae would be inducing and triggering demand for multi-level housing.

As mentioned previously, the centre is around 12,060 square metres GLA. However, much of the centre (around 18%) is vacant. A further 4,130 square metres is composed of non-public uses, a church, a medical and dental facility, and an hotel. Total “active” retail is only 5,700 square metres of the total GLA (47%).

As discussed previously, centre turnover was estimated at \$19.2 million per annum. This means the average retail turnover per square metre in the centre is \$3,370. This is approximately 37% of economic turnover rate for retail of this type experienced across New Zealand. Apart from one or two retailers, the centre is surviving because there’s little ability for it to feasibly convert to anything else of quality without wholesale consolidation of sites.

There is too much retail and commercial space for the centre’s catchment, and it is lacking an anchor retailer to attract more shoppers and higher spend. The small retailers in the centre are having to do all the heavy lifting themselves.

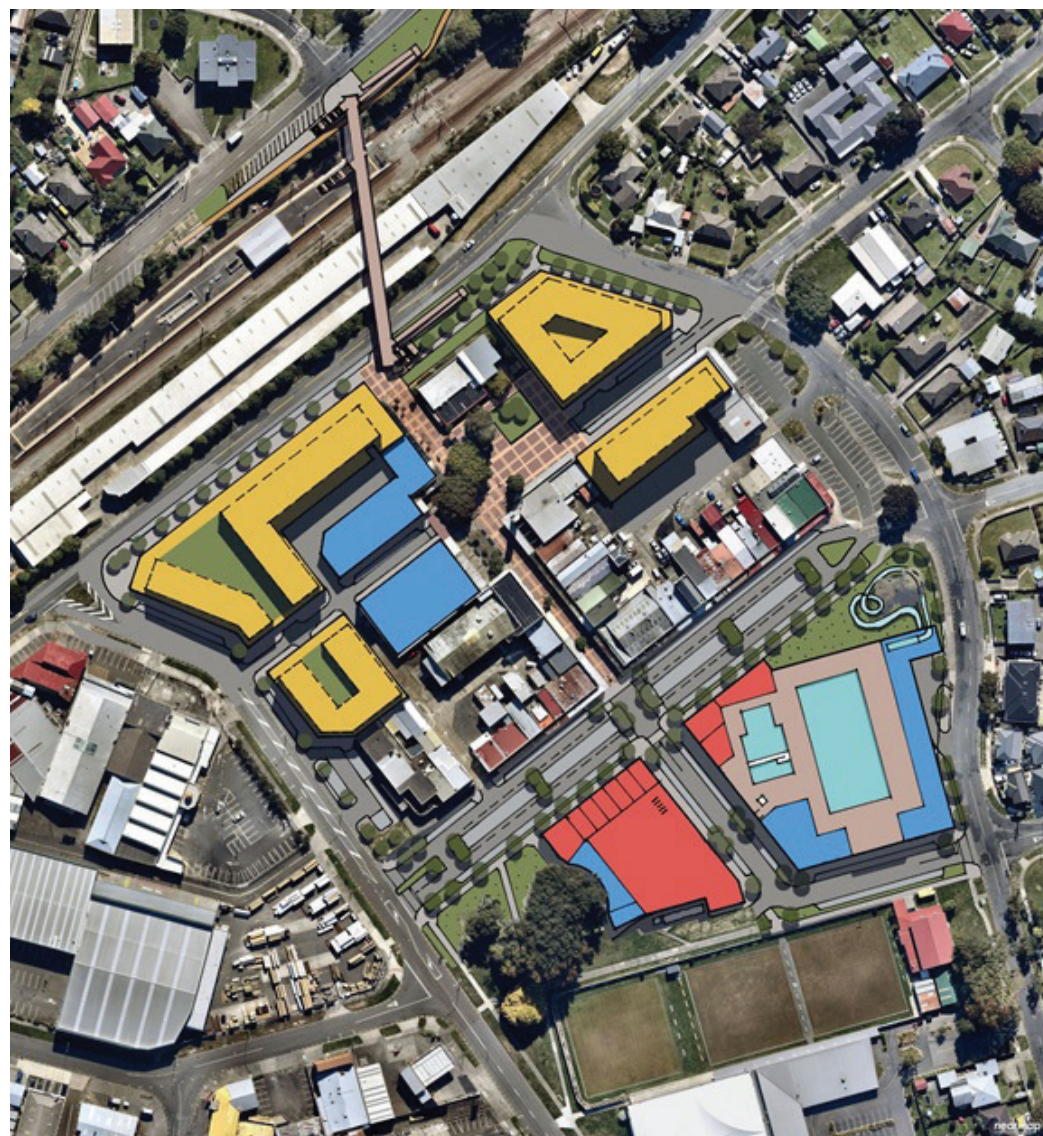


Figure 41. - A Way Forward - Plan showing initial Options towards a Spatial Plan for Naenae. (Aerial Image Source: Mapinfo)

There has been a profligate amount of land wasted for use as car parks that are hardly used, over-sized streets, over-sized roundabouts, and leftover pieces of land due to odd street and site configurations. It is estimated that there is around 5,000 square metres of wasted Council-owned land that could be reclaimed for development. The yellow “Housing” zone in Figure 40. shows how this land could be usefully utilised to the advantage of the centre.

Apart from the monetary value of this land for development, strategically offering this land for enhanced development outcomes is a potential strategy that the Council could follow. Generally, supermarkets require a parking ratio of between 4 and 5 car parks per 100 square metres of floorspace. For a 1,300 - 1,800 square metre supermarket the operator would want somewhere between 55 and 65 car parks.

To improve the performance of Everest Avenue retail there is a pressing need to improve the pedestrian environment. This requires a change in the configuration of the street, as angled parking results in low levels of pedestrian satisfaction and reduces the viability of outdoor dining. At present the parking in Everest Avenue requires vehicles to “spear in” at the footpath. From work and research undertaken in other places, angled parking is the worst kind of parking for pedestrian satisfaction. Angle parking sacrifices pedestrian satisfaction solely to increase car park numbers. A body of evidence gathered by the charity Living Streets suggests that public space design all too often favours the private car at the expense of pedestrians. Living Streets has particularly gathered evidence of the effect of this priority on children. This is the case in Everest Avenue with cars seen as more important than pedestrians with the consequence that the footpath environment is poor. In addition to creating a poor walking and alfresco dining environment, the parking is dangerous for vehicles reversing into on-coming traffic, often sight unseen when parked next to larger vehicles.

The other amenity depleting issue in Everest Avenue relates to any desire to cross to the other side of the street. If the swimming pool and the supermarket were located on the opposite side of the street, then informal crossing of the street is made more difficult with the cars parked at an angle. The street could easily be reconfigured to improve amenity and safety.

If Everest Avenue becomes successful as an urban street, then there is a case for it to be able to close on say Friday and Saturday nights, with outdoor seating and dining or indeed to convert to a market street in weekends. It would be a relatively simple matter to provide power and cover infrastructure to the central parking zone in the middle of the street to be assembled when needed for dining or for the market.

Everest Ave would become an urban amenity device to change perceptions of the centre and increase developer interest for multi-level housing and other businesses across the rest of the centre.

It is well recognised that in traditional centres when a street or streets are successful and vibrant that this energy improves the potential for and viability of other uses.

Reconfiguring Everest Avenue in this way would provide 104 car parks for around 2,800 square metres of retail being the addition of Everest Avenue shops and the supermarket. An additional 40 spaces are available in the area just off Treadwell Street. This parking is more than sufficient for the quantum of retail in the centre, including the supermarket. Refer to Figure 70.

04.08 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS & LOOKING FORWARD

There are serious structural issues in the Naenae town centre including:

- A poorly conceived pedestrian mall that is lacking an origin-destination rationale.
- A rail tunnel which divorces retail and business from the street. Poor visibility and relationship with the rail station.
- Too many urban edges that need to be activated (relative to the size of the catchment).
- The centre’s location off the major regional movement networks. The centre’s retail component is over-developed for the size of the catchment.
- The existing pool is not a meaningful contributor to the viability or vitality of the centre.
- There is no visibility between the centre and the rail station.
- The centre lacks a retail anchor around which to build an everyday role for residents.

- 89% of Naenae resident's convenience retail expenditure is spent in and around Hutt CBD, not in Naenae.
- The centre has poor built form, and a poor amenity partnership exists between buildings and the public realm.
- There are low levels of maintenance in some buildings.
- Buildings are poorly presented to the surrounding streets.
- Too much unused space in and around the centre, which exacerbates the impression of low levels of activation.
- Angle parking in Everest Ave which diminishes the pedestrian experience in favour of car parking.

The centre can deliver a strong community and everyday goods and services role for Naenae. Given the low likelihood of attracting a major supermarket, Council should leverage its assets to create a future for the centre by signing up a supermarket and associated shops on the land that currently sits under the existing pool footprint.

04.09 THE POOL, THE SUPERMARKET, ANCILLIARY USES, AND THE CENTRE

The trend in modern pool design is to use associated assets to defray annual pool operating costs (OPEX). Currently, the consultants preparing this Naenae Spatial Plan are coincidentally writing a business plan for a new pool in Darwin in the Northern Territory. A part of the task is to assess what associated facilities can co-exist with the pool. In Naenae, the supermarket and associated specialty retail would likely deliver between \$400,000 and \$600,000 in annual rent if the Council were to build these assets simultaneous with the pool. The Council could include allied health and a gym to offset the OPEX for the pool. Typical OPEX for FINA quality Olympic pools are high (usually well over \$1million per annum). Expense recovery is usually around 65%-70% when ancillary retail and health-related facilities are co-located with the pool, with the difference made up by rates.

If Council is strategic in the way it delivers assets for the community then a rates subsidy may not be necessary.

The provision of commercial resources on a notional community asset site (such as the current pool footprint) is an obvious strategy to defray pool operating costs. The designs shown in this report and finalised in the Spatial Plan do not encroach beyond the existing pool footprint, and yet enhance the existing parkland by providing frontage development to this park. This in turn will improve the perception of safety in the park and induce more community use of the park.