

# Integrated small town regeneration: Insights from Oamaru

BUILDING BETTER  
HOMES, TOWNS  
AND CITIES

Ko ngā wā kāinga hei  
whakamāhorahora

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## Research objective and questions

To explore which projects work for small town regeneration, why and how?

Q1. What is the role of the council and other community leaders in achieving integration across town improvement initiatives?

Q2. What needs to happen to ensure that regeneration practitioners are working towards a common goal/strategic vision for the town?

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# Why Oamaru?

- The potential of this topic emerged from talks with community stakeholders involved in a variety of initiatives to improve the economy, environment and social well-being of Oamaru.
- We encountered a suite of local initiatives. A view shared by many was the need to ensure the integration of these initiatives to support a broader strategic vision for the town.

## The Township

- 2<sup>nd</sup> tier settlement (12,000) of “halves” (physically, socially and economically).
- Multifunctional setting/economy:
  - I. Established: farming; hydro electricity, (commercial) recreation, food processing
  - II. Emerging: amenity migrants, international tourism/domestic visitors



# The Initiatives

- We are currently interviewing people who are attempting to improve the town by making the best use of local resources.
- Initiatives include: the A20, Harbourfront revitalisation, heritage (e.g., Opera House and the Industrial Heritage Precinct), Steampunk, Blue penguin colony and Whitestone GeoPark.
- The visitor sector (SH1).
- Amenity migration



# Mapping the Initiatives

- The research is documenting and describing these initiatives and the key factors influencing their success e.g., funding, leadership, organizational structures, promotion, local and external actors and resources.
- Through inductive interviews and documentary mapping (3 site visits ... ongoing)



# The Literature

A literature review is also underway

Key points thus far:

- Multi-functional approach around four key areas: retail growth, residential growth aiming for repopulation, growth of the rural-service centre role and providing new visitor attractions.
- Key factors in success: amenity and attractiveness including heritage, convenient geography, influential local people or pressure groups, political will, planning and governance arrangements.
- Inexorability of demographics. Need to plan for cycles of decline (and growth!).

