



### 1.3. WHAT DOES THE DISTRICT PLAN TRY TO ACHIEVE?

Through the District Plan, the City Council seeks to turn public desires and broad sustainable management principles into a practical set of guides and controls for Wellington City.

While the plan's provisions are specific to particular zones, they can be grouped under five overall goals:

- Protect and enhance the natural or 'green' areas of the city. This includes the Town Belt, Outer Green Belt, rural and open space zones, and conservation sites.
- Encourage more intensive and mixed-use development within the existing urban area to achieve better use of transport, infrastructure and energy – in other words, a compact and more sustainable city.
- Improve the overall quality of the built environment from an urban design perspective.
- Reduce the risks associated with natural and technological hazards.
- Safeguard the natural environment – land, air and water – from pollution and contamination.

To achieve these goals, the District Plan sets out a range of objectives, policies, methods and rules. Their aim is not to restrict development, but to guide and control the effects of development on the environment.

### 1.4. HOW IS THE DISTRICT PLAN IMPLEMENTED?

#### Resource consents

The District Plan allows some developments to take place as of right and without the Council's specific consent (although usually subject to certain standards specified in the plan). Other developments that have the potential to cause environmental impacts are categorised as 'controlled', 'discretionary' or 'non-complying' and may not take place without a resource consent. Further information about these categories is provided in the glossary (page 14).

The resource consent process is the main method of implementing the District Plan. When someone applies for resource consent, the Council assesses developments or activities they are planning against the objectives, policies, and rules of the District Plan and any effects the proposed development may have on the environment.

More detail about resource consents, how to apply for them, and how to make submissions on publicly notified resource consents can be found in the Council's publication, *A Guide to Resource Consents*, available free from the Council's offices and website. For more information, please contact the Council's resource consents staff on 499 4444, or call in to Level 1, Council offices, 101 Wakefield Street.



## Designations

The RMA allows for areas of land to be designated for use as network utilities (such as roads and telecommunications facilities) or large public works (such as schools). These designated areas (or ‘designations’) are identified in District Plan maps.

Land can only be designated for public works or network utilities by ‘requiring authorities’. These can be:

- ministers of the Crown
- local authorities
- approved network utility operators (generally organisations which provide infrastructure).

Once a designation is put in place, the requiring authority may do anything allowed by the designation, and the usual provisions of the District Plan do not apply to the designated area.

A designation also places restrictions on what anyone other than the requiring authority can do on the designated land without first getting the requiring authority’s permission.

## Plan changes

The District Plan is subject to ongoing monitoring and review. Changes to the plan may be initiated by the Council or private persons. Reasons for plan changes include:

- new information or research becoming available
- new legislative requirements from central government or regional council
- changes to public opinion or wider policy
- requests to develop or use land in a manner different from that provided for in the plan.

Proposed plan changes are always publicly notified, and anyone may make a submission on the proposal. This is normally followed by a further submission stage and a public hearing. Once the Council has made its decision, it may be appealed to the Environment Court.

Further information on designations and plan changes can be found on the Ministry for the Environment website ([mfe.govt.nz](http://mfe.govt.nz)).