

# 1 THE DISTRICT PLAN

## 1.1 Introduction: What is the District Plan?

The District Plan details the specific objectives, policies and rules that have been adopted to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in Wellington. It sets out the environmental outcomes that Council seeks to achieve.

The Wellington City District Plan is about managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well being, and for their health and safety while:

- (a) Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
- (b) Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems; and
- (c) Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

The Plan opens with an introduction to the basic principles of sustainability which guide the Plan and to the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991. It then describes the breadth of issues covered by the Plan and outlines Maori perspectives on resource management. The final part of the introductory section covers various technical elements of the Plan. The Plan then addresses individual areas of the City. Each area of the city is introduced, then the objectives, policies, and rules for the management of that area are set out.

### 1.1.1 Resource Management Act 1991

The Resource Management Act 1991 requires Wellington City Council to have a District Plan. The purpose of the District Plan is to help Council carry out its responsibilities under the Resource Management Act. Council is responsible for managing the adverse effects of land-use activities, natural and technological hazards, the subdivision of land, the effects of noise, and activities on the surface of rivers and lakes.

The purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. The term "natural and physical resources" includes land, water, air, soil, minerals, energy, all forms of plants and animals (whether native to New Zealand or introduced), and all structures.

### 1.1.2 Towards a Sustainable Wellington City

The District Plan is not the only mechanism that Council may use to promote sustainable management for Wellington. Although the District Plan regulates land use and related matters specified in Section 31 of the Act to promote environmental outcomes, action can also be taken through other Council processes. The District Plan is one component of Council's integrated management of the environment. Integrated management is the cornerstone of achieving sustainable management.

## 1.2 General Principles of Sustainability

The concept of sustainability recognises that there are limits to the use of natural and physical resources. It recognises the need to balance the human desire for growth and development with the need to protect the resources that the environment provides.

People will determine their aspirations and activities, but sustainability implies that these are not unconditional. The planet's resources are not endless, and its ability to maintain life can be compromised. This sets a physical limit. Other physical limits relate to how resources can be used and the rates of renewal for harvestable resources. There are also moral limits that relate to the community's duty to develop the city in a way that maintains the environment for the future inhabitants of Wellington and the planet. Equity, for example, is an important consideration for sustainability, recognising that enabling people to realise their potential and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment means ensuring they have equitable access to resources.

Sustainability is about recognising and understanding these limits so that the human race works with them and not against them.

The concept of sustainability can be built up by looking at a number of principles and issues. The following begin to expand the meaning of sustainability into ideas that can be applied to the management of the environment.

- **Dependency.** All life ultimately depends on the health of the natural environment. Clean air, water and land are essential for life. Pollution, contamination and destruction undermine the environment's capacity to support life.
- **Irreversibility.** Certain elements (such as species, landforms and heritage items) can be lost forever. We do not know which of these things will be needed in the future, or how people will value them.
- **Diversity.** We need diversity in both the natural world and human context. Diversity adds vitality to the city and allows people and systems to adapt to change or disruption. As we lose diversity we lose the ability to counteract adverse effects.
- **Efficiency.** Renewable and non-renewable resources need to be used efficiently to avoid, remedy or mitigate the effects caused by their use. Reducing unnecessary use and recycling resources helps avoid producing waste, pollution and environmental degradation.
- **Finite resources.** Physical laws determine that the planet's basic elements and materials together constitute a resource base that is essentially finite. Other resources are in limited supply. We need to make sound choices about how to use our finite resources.
- **Equity.** Sustainability means allowing people to meet their needs and achieve their aspirations both now and in the future. Equity is an essential step in achieving sustainability and includes enabling communities to care for their environments and influence change.

**NOTE: Clauses 1.1 to 1.5 are included in the Plan as background/ explanatory material and do not form part of the Plan**

• **Precautionary approach.** We can never have perfect information with regard to resource use. There will always be some uncertainty. However, where there is reasonable doubt or the potential exists for significant harm, a precautionary approach should be taken to minimise future regrets.

These principles do not mean that society is restrained from moving forward. They mean that where change or development occurs, sustainability and what it entails must guide the management process.

### 1.2.1 The Global Context

What we do in Wellington is not divorced from the outside world.

Commuters travel to work from the Kapiti Coast and the Hutt Valley, tourists come to Wellington from all over the world and products sold in Wellington shops are purchased from international markets. Products and services from Wellington are sold on international markets, and greenhouse gases released here affect the planet's atmosphere. The complexity of the environment in which we live means that we must look further than our own backyard for the effects of our activities.

The relevance of the statement "Think Globally, Act Locally" comes from the fact that we are all global citizens. As the managers of New Zealand's capital city, Council, in association with regional and central government and international organisations, will promote local action to encourage sustainability.

### 1.2.2 Sustainable Management and the Resource Management Act 1991

The purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. The District Plan must work within the definition of sustainable management contained in the Act. The Act defines the concept as:

*"...managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being and for their health and safety while:-*

*(a) sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and*

*(b) safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems; and*

*(c) avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment".*

The Act defines the environment to include: ecosystems, natural and physical resources, amenity values, and the social, economic, aesthetic and cultural conditions affected by those matters.

The Act's definition of sustainable management highlights the importance of the natural world but recognises that resource use, development and protection should enable people to provide for their wellbeing and for the needs of future generations.

### 1.2.3 Sustainability and the Urban Context

The urban environment is both a resource user and a resource in itself.

The size and scale of the urban environment in terms of population density and economic development can lead to an intense application of resources to new development, the provision of service infrastructure and the consumption of energy for industrial, transport and household use. Urban environments are large consumers of global resources and may contribute significantly to environmental degradation.

Although the urban environment places stresses on the natural environment, it also provides us with many benefits. The buildings and infrastructure of the city such as roads, parks, communication facilities and sewers are important physical resources. The urban environment is a multi-faceted entity that provides, among other aspects, a focus for innovation, a sense of heritage, a human-made environment, an area of adaptation and change, a diversity of cultural, recreational and educational opportunities and a varied productive base for growth.

The urban environment is a dynamic and complex social construction. The planet's stock of resources (natural capital) provides the resources that the city depends on, but in turn it is itself a resource that sustains much of our social, economic and cultural life. The urban environment is an **essential** component of human societal interaction. Its vitality must be sustained.

The decisions of urban authorities are important in the pursuit of sustainability because cities are highly productive as well as high resource users. City policies will affect the balance between this productivity and resource use. Regulation, service delivery, education and promotion can reach a large, concentrated audience quickly.

## 1.3 Working toward Achieving a Sustainable Wellington City

The Wellington environment is unique and has evolved as a result of many factors. Its history, and the fact that its natural character has been extensively altered in both the rural and urban parts of the District has shaped the way it is today. The District Plan must take heed of the City's:

- existing pattern of development
- topography and long coastline
- geographic location
- existing infrastructure
- social, cultural and economic diversity
- vulnerability to natural and technological hazard.

As well as issues of natural resource use, other issues surrounding sustainable management for Wellington include:

#### Managing Adverse Effects of Human Activities on the Environment

[The population's] <sup>PC33</sup> use of natural and physical resources can result in damage to the environment. Controlling these effects is an important part of sustainable management. Their impacts can be managed by establishing environmental limits for the effects of development. Built in to this process is the principle of pro-active hazard management.

#### Considering the Natural Environment

The natural environment has values that are important to Wellington. Where significant values are identified, the Plan is used to manage and protect these sites, areas and systems. Some natural processes pose a hazard to Wellington and must be considered in line with the principles of emergency

management.

### Enabling People to Meet their Needs

The Plan makes provision for activities that enable people to meet their needs and aspirations while at the same time it aims to ensure that the environment can sustain the needs and aspirations of future generations. The Plan provide a level of certainty to the community about what can happen in their environment and gives people the ability to influence how things occur.

### Future Generations

Each generation has a continuing obligation to bequeath to future inhabitants of Wellington a sustainably managed environment. Just as we benefit from the City's heritage, so must we ensure that future citizens inherit a clean, conserved, functioning environment and a viable economy. This includes both the physical appearance of the city and the retention and health of the natural environment.

### Efficient Resource Use

Sustainable management requires the city to use natural and physical resources in an efficient manner. Improving the way resources are used can lessen adverse environmental effects. [Increasingly this means focussing on efficiency in the way we use energy, energy conservation, and increasing the use of energy from a range of renewable energy sources.] PC32

### The Council as an Energy Efficiency Advocate

[Within the context of sustainable management, and the optimal use of energy resources, the Council has a role to advise and inform residents and building owners on renewable and energy efficiency homes. For example, the Council is an advocate for the use of solar energy for heating.] PC32

Sustainable management in Wellington is thus about maintaining the balance between development and the need to protect the natural and physical, as well as the human, environments. At the same time we need to think about the city's role as a resource user and a resource in itself.

Managing Wellington sustainably means considering the impact of Wellingtonians' activities on the natural environment and other communities. A District Plan is a basic step towards achieving sustainable outcomes.

#### 1.3.1 Vision of a Sustainable City: Wellington into the Future

Many elements go to make up a sustainable city. A sustainable city is one that its inhabitants feel proud of. The District Plan is intended to encourage Wellington to develop in a way that promotes that pride. This section describes a vision of Wellington as a sustainable city.

A sustainable city is efficient in the way it uses resources. It is likely to be compact and have a strong commercial centre. It is a competitive market-place without unnecessary regulation. It has a quality environment where people feel safe, can access its various parts easily (by means of efficient road, rail and pedestrian links) and can orientate themselves (via public views, landscape features and feature buildings). It is a city where people can identify with its whole (with cohesive urban form and protection of the character of different areas) and its parts (because of its street environment, use of open space and the design and appearance of its buildings). Those attributes of the city that contribute to its identity are supported and enhanced while others are added to increase the vibrancy and vitality of the city (such as support for architectural development and the promotion of urban design principles).

The city is diverse (recognising different character and promoting specific character areas) so that no culture or group feels alienated and where the needs of all groups are met (by means of residential environments, employment opportunities and the recognition of culture and people's links with land). People, including people with mobility restrictions, are able to meet their own needs both now and in the future (by the removal of inappropriate barriers to development and the maintenance of resource viability). It welcomes change and innovation (with dynamic growth and development areas), and allows innovative design solutions whilst retaining character and connections with the past (heritage buildings, Maori sites).

The surrounding environment provides people with opportunity to experience healthy, functioning natural resources (such as protected ecosystems and habitats, enhanced water quality). It enables recreation (open space, walkways, Town Belt), and respects educational and intrinsic values. Landforms, landscapes and outstanding natural features (undeveloped ridgelines, hill-tops, areas of open space and visually prominent landscape elements) that contribute to the city's identity are protected from activities that damage them.

Wellington already has many of the features of a sustainable city. With care and a long-term view, this can be developed into significant comparative advantage.

The District Plan provides a building block that, along with many other elements (such as community involvement, Central and Regional Government support and other Council activities) can be used to progress towards the goal of a sustainable city.

## 1.4 Integrated Management of the Environment

The District Plan alone cannot achieve a sustainable Wellington City.

Numerous other institutions and policies influence, and in some cases dictate, the direction the Council takes in managing the environment or controlling adverse effects. Other influences range from community aspirations to government legislation. To achieve sustainable management, and to maintain it, means managing all these diverse aspects in an integrated manner. Integrated management is the foundation on which sustainability can be built. The following gives a brief overview of the influences on, and factors that relate to, the District Plan.

### 1.4.1 Levels of Government

The Resource Management Act defines different roles for central, regional and local government. The District Plan shall not be inconsistent with:

- any New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement
- any other national policy statement



- the Regional Policy Statement
- any regional plan in regard to any matter of regional significance for which the Regional Council has primary responsibility under Part IV of the Resource Management Act 1991.

#### Central Government

Central government is responsible for determining national resource management policies and monitoring the implementation of the Resource Management Act. It can issue National Policy Statements of policy on certain matters of national significance that are relevant to achieving the purpose of the Resource Management Act. The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement is one example of this.

#### Regional Government

Wellington Regional Council has responsibility for developing regional resource management policy. The Regional Council's resource management functions are determined by Section 30 and the Second Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991. It must prepare a Regional Policy Statement and a Regional Coastal Plan. It can formulate other regional plans for specific resource management issues, if that is necessary. The Council's responsibilities include the control of discharges to land, water, and air [and the identification and monitoring of contaminated land] PC69 within the Region. The Council shares some of its coastal marine area management responsibilities with the Minister of Conservation.

#### Territorial Government

Wellington City Council has responsibility for managing the environmental effects of land use in the Wellington District. In preparing the District Plan, Council has had regard to national and regional resource management policies. In particular, Council has considered how the Regional Policy Statement, the Regional Coastal Plan and other Regional Plans influence the District Plan and has aimed to achieve consistency of approach.

### 1.4.2 Planning and Policy Influences

The Resource Management Act enables Council to address a very wide range of environmental issues in the District Plan. The issues vary considerably in their scale and complexity. For example, the District Plan could include policies concerning global environmental issues through to policies relating to the local effects of a particular activity.

Therefore the District Plan, in complying with the requirements of the Act, also aims to reflect a number of other influences and factors. In the preparation of this Plan, Council has had regard to the influences that affect its resource management function. These include:

#### *The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and International Agreements*

The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro involved international debate on, and commitment to, the principle of sustainability. The summit placed emphasis on the need for local communities and local government to espouse co-operative, locally based approaches to the environment. The set of principles on this theme is published as Agenda 21. Other international agreements such as the Montreal convention on climate change and the convention on the protection of biodiversity can also influence Council activities.

#### *Maori principles of resource management: tino rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga*

Sustainable management for Maori includes sustaining the mauri/life essence or maintaining the life-supporting capacity of the resource. It can be achieved through the management and care of Te Ao Turoa/the natural world, in accordance with Maori custom, which incorporates cultural and spiritual values with particular regard to the exercise of kaitiakitanga and tino rangatiratanga; and the recognition of whakapapa/genealogy and the maintenance of the mauri/life essence of the district's resources. Kaitiakitanga is the exercise of guardianship and stewardship, which to the Maori embraces concepts rooted in cultural and spiritual belief.

These concepts represent the form and character of the relationship that Maori have with the environment and the obligation to respect, protect and preserve it on behalf of past and future generations. The Resource Management Act reaffirms the importance of these concepts by placing significance on the obligations which derive from the Treaty of Waitangi.

#### *Wellington Regional Council Regional Policy Statements and Plans*

The District Plan must not be inconsistent with the intent of any Regional Policy Statement or Plan. The Wellington Regional Council has indicated matters of regional significance for which local authorities should have regard. These include waste discharges, soil loss, protection of the coast, air pollution, ecosystems, landscape features, natural hazards, energy use, waste management, transport, hazardous substances, the built environment and recreation.

The Regional Council is also concerned that development does not compromise the natural values of the coast and waterbodies. The sustainable use of our coastal environment is promoted by Wellington's Regional Coastal Plan.

#### *Wellington City Council Strategic Plan*

The Strategic Plan represents the aspirations of Wellingtonians and sets out the Council's vision and priorities in terms of long-term goals and planning for Wellington City. The Strategic Plan allows Council, as manager of Wellington City, to express its vision for the City. Its mission statement, "making Wellington the city of excellence", states seven operating principles summarising Council's goals.

Together the operating principles help the Council deliver a sustainable city. Particularly relevant operating principles include "Responding to the needs of our communities", "Striving to achieve equity in all our actions" and "Striving to ensure environmentally sustainable outcomes in all areas of operation". The Strategic Plan also refers to numerous Council initiatives that help it deliver the mission statement and operating principles. These outcomes include numerous strategies, plans and policies such as the:

- Healthy City Project
- Safer City Project
- Effective Emergency Management Techniques
- Social Policy, including Council's 'Policy For People With Disabilities'
- Urban Design Strategy
- Environmental Policies
- Retail Strategy
- Heritage Strategy

- Solid Waste Management Strategy
- Recreation Strategy
- Inner City Transport Strategy
- Town Belt Management Plan

Many Council activities contain both regulatory and non-regulatory measures in varying proportions. An example is the heritage strategy, which uses a mix of regulation through the District Plan, incentives through financial assistance to owners, and providing information through research and inventories of heritage buildings and sites.

#### *Wellington City Council's Annual Plan Process*

The Annual Plan allocates resources and funding for proposed operations and special projects in relation to anticipated income and expenditure for the year ahead. Within the Annual Plan, Council can allocate resources to promote sustainable environmental outcomes. The Resource Management Act envisages that many District Plan objectives will rely on the Annual Plan process to provide resources to deliver some or all of the anticipated environmental results. An example is the allocation of funds to support incentives and provision of information under the heritage strategy.

### **1.4.3 Communities of Interest**

The District Plan is produced by Council for the communities of Wellington, and is administered on behalf of the people of Wellington. Council made an effort to establish the status of this Plan as a public document by consulting with as wide a range of people as possible.

In the context of a balance between permitting activities and protecting environmental quality, the District Plan provides protection for the environment. People are provided with a degree of certainty as to what activities can be undertaken (such as additions to buildings) and what environmental quality can be expected (such as how high a neighbour's house may be).

Tangata whenua are centrally involved in the management of the environment. The Act's reference to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the emphasis on consultation encourages Maori views to be considered comprehensively. The District Plan recognises the place that tangata whenua have among Wellington's communities.

Sustainable management also requires that consideration be given to the integrity and quality of the environment itself. In some ways the environment is also a "user" of the Plan. All needs, wishes, wants and aspirations, including those of people with disabilities, are weighed against the need to maintain a healthy, functioning environment that has the capacity to deliver sustainability.

Wellington consists of many communities that can be defined in many different ways. At the smallest level, there are as many "communities of interest" as there are people in Wellington. At the broadest layer, there is one community of people who share the City. The District Plan recognises and celebrates the City's diversity.

## **1.5 The Scope of Wellington's District Plan**

The Act is enabling and not prescriptive. In this respect Council is free to produce a framework that reduces its reliance on regulation within a District Plan that is both visionary and pro-active. A key issue is to ensure a balance between regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to achieve resource management objectives in the most effective and efficient manner.

The issues that have been dealt with in the Plan have been established through a number of means. The starting point for this process is provided by the requirements contained within the Act. In preparing this Plan, Council has had regard to the purposes and principles of the Act (as described in Part II), the functions that territorial authorities have under the Act (section 31), the matters to be considered by territorial authorities in preparing plans (section 74) and the contents of district plans (section 75).

Specific criteria used to select issues for inclusion within the District Plan were:

- establishing the significant national and regional resource management issues outlined by the various Policy Statements and Plans generated at the national and regional levels (as directed by the Resource Management Act)
- establishing the significant resource management issues of the District
- establishing those matters contained within Part II of the second schedule that are of relevance to the district
- establishing the resource management issues of special relevance to Maori, both generally and specifically
- determining those matters that can best be addressed through the District Plan
- determining those matters (of local, regional, national and international significance), which may be best effectively dealt with through other Council processes (for example, through the Annual Plan).

The criteria listed above limit the number and scope of issues that are included within the Plan.

Section 32 requires that all policies and rules are critically examined to ensure that they are necessary, efficient, effective and do not impose costs on the community that exceed their benefits. Where rules are not considered to be the best way of achieving an outcome, alternative mechanisms are identified.

This Plan has been produced in accordance with these principles of policy development. Any rule that has been included is considered to be necessary for the sustainable management of Wellington's natural and physical resources. The costs and benefits of each decision, both economic and non-economic, have been taken into account. The full detail of this analysis is not included in the plan, but sufficient information is given to indicate why particular methods have been chosen.

## **1.6 Significant Resource Management Issues for Wellington**

Major resource management issues relevant to Wellington have been identified through a process of public consultation and research. These issues have formed the basis of the sustainable management goals for Wellington. In preparing the District Plan, Council has drawn on an extensive range of sources, including:

- formal submissions on all Council planning processes, including the Annual and Strategic Plans
- consultation with Maori and contributions from iwi
- previous objections and submissions to the former District Scheme (the transitional District Plan) and applications for resource consents
- councillor seminars
- District Plan brochures circulated to all households, related submissions and feedback from public meetings
- targeted consultation and workshops with individuals and interest groups
- policy research and the content of the former District Scheme.

The major resource issues have been identified as either qualities and values people wish to see as a part of living in Wellington, or as more specific issues in relation to the actual use of resources. The former are judgements or opinions rather than real or tangible features of the City. For example, it is not only the physical attributes of a heritage building, but how people feel about it, that make it important.

The Council considers the following **qualities and values and specific issues** to be the significant resource management issues for Wellington.

### 1.6.1 Qualities And Values

#### Q1 Efficient City

Efficiency is a measure of how resources are allocated or used.

In a city many types of natural and physical resources are used and many types of demands are placed on them. A city can be said to be efficient if its resources are used in such a way that adverse environmental effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated, it functions effectively and it achieves its goals with a minimum of wasted effort, including reducing the unnecessary use of energy and resources. [Methods can be employed to encourage efficiency in the use of energy, energy conservation and the use of renewable energy from a range of renewable energy sources.]<sup>PC32</sup> Cities often produce wastes that exceed the environment's ability to absorb; effective policies and education are needed to reduce resource use.

#### Q2 Amenity

Amenity is an important City issue, and the Plan's methods are aimed at maintaining and enhancing amenity values. "Amenity Values" are formally defined in the Resource Management Act. Amenity is an expression of how people value the environment that they live in. Conditions within the City can be positive or negative influences. The success of a City relates largely to whether its inhabitants enjoy living within it.

The Maori view of amenity is very much affected by a personal relationship with the natural environment. Maori and tribal identity relates to markers in the environment, mountains, rivers and sea, lakes and harbours. The personification of elements of the environment intensified the relationship between people and the environment.

Quality of life involves the range of emotions we have about the place we live in. People will have different perceptions based on their experiences and attitudes. A sense of continuity with our past is encouraged if places and buildings we value are retained. A sense of hope for the future builds on this if the city's economy is strong. A feeling of belonging is encouraged when new development respects places with special character, or cultural or spiritual significance. Pleasure is created by beautiful buildings and open spaces. All these are elements of amenity. Promoting accessibility within the community, particularly for people with mobility restrictions, is an important means of enhancing amenity values in all parts of the environment, including housing and public spaces such as streets and other urban spaces, open spaces, and the coastline.

Sentiment has value, too. While living in a city, people grow accustomed to its particular attributes such as patterns and distinct, recognisable landmarks. The ways people enjoy their city and are able to identify with it add to their quality of life.

#### Q3 Healthy/Safe City

A healthy living environment is one that creates a state of wellbeing for all people. A healthy city enables people to feel safe as well as comfortable. This has much to do with the way a person interacts with their physical surroundings and their ability to move around in and use the city's features.

A healthy city is one that creates a sense of belonging for all its inhabitants and minimises feelings of alienation.

The main determinants of health occur outside of the formal health care sector. A healthy city enables people to live lives that are meaningful and enjoyable. It involves creating a vibrant, stimulating and non-threatening environment that promotes people's sense of security.

A healthy city must also recognise the potential that natural and technological hazards have for disrupting community life. The aim of effective emergency management is to reduce this potential. This is achieved in part through the application of land use controls and resource management policies.

Creating a sense of security also involves addressing other socio-economic factors such as unemployment. It should be recognised that until these factors are more effectively dealt with in the wider context outside the District Plan there will always be significant impacts on the ability for people to live meaningful and enjoyable lives.

#### Q4 Accessible City

Accessibility is defined in terms of people, including people with mobility restrictions, and people's needs. An accessible city is one in which people can achieve access destinations which enable them to meet their needs. This need not mean travelling further or faster. Land use planning can help create an accessible city by encouraging patterns of development whereby many destinations are in close proximity to one another. In an accessible city transport and land-use planning are integrated to enhance accessibility for all people while minimising the adverse effects of transport on quality of life and the environment. The level of accessibility achieved by a city can provide a measure of how well a city functions and how well it responds to the needs of its inhabitants.

For people with mobility restrictions, equity of access to and use of the City's housing and of its amenities, facilities, public spaces and workplaces is a significant issue, given Wellington's topography, narrow streets, its range of public spaces, and the nature of its housing stock. The term "people with

mobility restrictions” refers not just to people with physical impairments that restrict their ability to move about freely, but also to older people and to those with young children who equally find their access to, or use of, a building, site or public space hindered by poor physical design or by distance.

Improving accessibility by using the international standard design criteria for people dependent on wheelchairs is known to provide significant safety and usability benefits, not just for those with mobility restrictions, but across the rest of the community, enabling a more equitable quality of environment and enjoyment of amenity values.

**Q5 Natural Environment**

Several concepts underpin the workings of the natural environment. The first is ecological integrity. This refers to the ecosystems of the natural world being able to function without failing. The second is assimilative capacity. This is the level of impacts (such as pollution) that can be accepted by the natural environment without it being unduly harmed. Managing the natural environment involves looking at how development impacts on these two components. The third idea is that the environment holds intrinsic value. It has value, and a right to exist, that is separate from any values that humans may bestow upon it.

To Maori, elements of the natural environment have a mauri or life essence. The mauri relates to the life-supporting capacity of the resource as a whole. Sustaining the ecological and cultural values of the natural environment may require its preservation and conservation.

It is important to recognise that preservation and conservation are as much uses of land as are development and exploitation. The protection of natural ecosystems should not be seen as lost opportunities, but as a source of natural wealth.

The natural environment has much to offer people, from being a place of beauty and relaxation away from the pace of modern life to being a source of new experiences and new discoveries (species and genetic information). The natural environment is also a source of spiritual and cultural revitalisation.

**1.6.2 Specific Issues**

**S1 Managing Urban Development on the Edge of the City**

The Plan works toward general containment of city expansion and the intensification of development within the existing urban boundaries. This will encourage the better utilisation of existing infrastructure and transport systems and save energy. This is consistent with the requirement to promote the sustainable management of the City.



**S2 Managing Rural Areas, the Coastal Environment, and Waterbodies**

Land use and activities will be controlled to the extent necessary to maintain the “natural” environment of Wellington’s Rural Areas, the coastal environment, and waterbodies and to protect the rugged landscape which gives these areas their character. Public access to and along the coastal marine area and waterbodies will be maintained, and enhanced where appropriate and practicable.



**S3 Protecting Open Space**

Open space, particularly the Town Belt lands and other undeveloped hill-sides within the urban area, constitute an essential element of the character of Wellington City and provides important recreational opportunities. Other “active” open spaces (such as sportsfields) also provide important social and amenity benefits. The qualities of these areas will be protected.



**S4 Maintaining the Quality of Living Environments**

The Residential Areas of the city are where the majority of people spend most of their time. The public expectation is that these areas will remain primarily for residential purposes and that existing amenity values will be maintained. A greater mixture of compatible non-residential uses will nevertheless be supported, which is consistent with the requirement to promote the sustainable management of the City. Sustainable management also entails achieving a significantly greater proportion of housing which is easily accessible and usable.



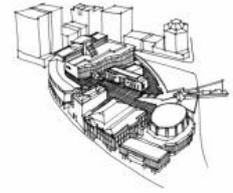
**S5 Providing Areas to Facilitate Economic Growth and Development**

The central city area and other centres within the suburbs provide a base from which business and a wide range of other commercial and related amenities can operate with a minimum of regulation. The areas are contained, to encourage the efficient use of existing facilities and to protect people living nearby from adverse environmental effects.



**S6 Maintaining and Enhancing the Quality of the Built Environment**

The quality of the built environment contributes to the way people relate to and feel about their city. Controls on urban design implications of new building are therefore central to improving the quality of urban environment. It is also important to protect areas of special character and heritage conservation, and to improve accessibility to, ease of use, and enjoyment of the public spaces, amenities and facilities provided by the built environment.



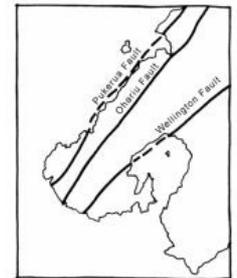
**S7 Maintaining and Enhancing the Quality of the Natural Environment**

The maintenance of the life-supporting capacity of the environment is essential and requires safeguards for land, air and water from pollution and contamination. Also important is the protection and conservation of remaining natural habitats and ecosystems as part of the city's natural heritage.



**S8 Reducing Risk**

Wellington experiences earthquake activity and other natural hazards, including flooding and landslips. This requires measures to reduce risks to acceptable levels. This also applies to technological hazards such as the use, storage or transportation of hazardous substances [and the use, development and subdivision of contaminated and potentially contaminated land.] PC69



**[S9 Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**

Energy issues such as efficiency, conservation and use of renewable energy from a range of renewable resources have direct links to health and social wellbeing and to wider level issues including climate change. These concepts are discussed in the Council's Sustainable Development Strategy. ] PC32



**1.6.3 District Plan Objectives**

The significant resource issues identified above have been used to define the objectives that identify the direction that Council intends to take in promoting the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the City.

The objectives provide a link between the resource management issues and the particular policies and rules in the Plan. Ultimately, they allow the rules to be traced back to their role under the [Resource Management] PC32 Act of promoting the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

The objectives are expressed for each area of the City in the relevant Chapters of the Plan. These specific objectives shall be applied in the implementation of the Plan.

The objectives listed below are a summary of the objectives which have been applied to each area of the City and are listed here for information purposes only.

The objectives are:

- To maintain and enhance the amenity values of the City.
- To maintain and enhance the physical character of Wellington and in particular of identified areas of special streetscape or townscape character.
- To maintain and enhance the quality of the City's coastal environment.
- To promote the efficient use of natural and physical resources within Wellington.
- To encourage most new residential development to take place within existing developed parts of the City, and ensure that new subdivisions, where developed, are on suitable sites and are well designed and adequately serviced.
- To avoid or mitigate, where possible, the adverse effects of both natural and technological hazards on people, property and the environment.
- To maintain and enhance the quality of the City's coastline.
- To maintain and enhance natural features (including landscapes and ecosystems) that contribute to Wellington's natural environment.

[• To encourage the efficient use of energy, and the use of energy from a range of renewable sources.] PC32

- To prevent or mitigate any adverse effects of the storage, use, disposal, or transportation of hazardous substances, including waste disposal, and to manage [contaminated and potentially contaminated land] PC69
- To improve standards of accessibility, including the accessibility and ease of use of both public spaces and housing for older people and all others with mobility restrictions, and the efficient, convenient and safe movement of people and goods within Wellington City.
- To promote the development of a safe and healthy city.
- To facilitate the exercise of tino rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga by Wellington's tangata whenua.
- To maintain and enhance the City's heritage, to ensure continuity with Wellington's past in the development of the City.
- To maintain and enhance the open spaces of Wellington City.
- To maintain and enhance high-value habitats and ecosystems by protecting them from modification and loss.
- To provide for the efficient development and maintenance of utility networks throughout the city while avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

## 1.7 The Character Area Approach

Wellington comprises many special or different areas. Each one has something that identifies it as being particular. Elements such as landforms, vegetation, streets and buildings, historic and traditional associations, and communities of people make up an area's character and contribute to its uniqueness of place.

Character is not fixed. In some areas, change is as much a part of character as is the preservation of existing features. Character can be created by change. Identifying the desired character of an area is the first step towards managing the effects of activities. The level and rate of allowable change will depend very much on an area's particular characteristics.

### 1.7.1 Defining Areas on the Basis of Character

Character difference or distinctiveness allows the City to be broken down into different areas. The impacts of development have significantly different consequences in different areas and require different approaches to their management.

The definition of areas in the Plan allows for environmental effects to be categorised and managed appropriately.

The areas identified in this Plan are:

- Suburban Area:
  - Outer Residential Area
  - Inner Residential Area
  - Centres
  - Business Areas
  - Institutional Precincts
  - Airport and Golf Course Recreation Precinct
- Central Area
- Rural Area
- Open Space
- Conservation Sites

Within these areas, specific character areas have also been identified. These define the character of an area to a greater level of detail in the form of Design Guides. The Design Guides provide the guidance for the exercise of discretion by Council.

The character area Design Guides identified in the Plan are:

- Suburban Area:
  - Thorndon Character Area Design Guide
  - Mt Victoria North Character Area Design Guide
  - Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area Design Guide
- Central Area:
  - Courtenay Character Area Design Guide
  - Cuba Character Area Design Guide
  - Civic Centre Character Area Design Guide

## 1.8 The Plan's Components

### 1.8.1 Objectives and Policies

Objectives within the Plan set out the direction Council intends to take in relation to any particular issue. Its methods do the same, on a more specific level. Both objectives and policies allow the Plan's rules to be interpreted in the context of what Council is trying to achieve and what environmental outcomes are being sought.

The objectives and policies will guide decision-making when the granting of resource consents is being considered or when Plan changes are contemplated. Because integrated management is essential to the proper working of the Plan, they will also have an influence on other Council policies.

### 1.8.2 Methods

As required by Section 32 of the Act, the Council will consider alternative methods to achieve the objectives and policies of the District Plan.

In many cases, the method used in the District Plan to achieve objectives and policies will be the setting of rules to control land use. Resource consents (and their associated conditions) are a crucial tool for the management of the effects of development. Integrated management of the environment will, however, require the use of other mechanisms to help achieve environmental outcomes.

Council will use advocacy, the provision of information, education and incentives (including economic incentives such as financial contributions, or rates relief) where appropriate. Often these approaches are backed up by District Plan rules. Council also has the ability to use other regulatory means (for example, bylaws) and its operational activities to influence the use, development or protection of natural and physical resources.

It is the Council's intention to minimise administrative and compliance costs over time, [by]<sup>1</sup> reducing the extent of reliance on rules instead of alternative means of management.

<sup>1</sup> District Plan Change No.34 – General Amendments to District Plan Text and Maps (Operative 6 July 2006)

### 1.8.3 Explanations, Reasons and Anticipated Environmental Results

As required under Section 75 of the Act, each policy is followed by an italicised section that incorporates an explanation of the policy, the principal reason for adopting the policy and associated methods, and a description of the environmental results expected from the implementation of the policy and methods.

In all cases the reason for having objectives is to promote sustainable management in relation to the resource management issues that have been identified for Wellington.

The italicised explanations following each District Plan rule are not required by the Act, but have been included to help readers understand and interpret the Plan's provisions.

### 1.8.4 Rules

The rules contained in the District Plan are intended to protect the environment from the adverse effects of activities.

District Plan rules operate on a general or specific level. Where an adverse effect or resource issue has city-wide implications, the rules will be in a general form. Heritage provisions are an example of this. For more specific areas, effects or resource issues, rules focus on the particular level of effect or the situation where the effect will be experienced. For example, noise rules differ in different locations.

The District Plan uses the following categories of rules:

#### Permitted

#### Controlled

#### Discretionary (Restricted)

#### Discretionary (Unrestricted)

Broadly speaking, the rule types are listed in order of increasing actual or potential adverse effects. Resource consents (land use consents or subdivision consents) are not required for **Permitted Activities** but are required for all others. **Discretionary Activities** have been divided into those where Council has chosen to restrict the exercise of its discretion to certain matters, and those where there is no restriction on the exercise of Council's discretion: these are identified in the Plan as **Discretionary Activities (Restricted)**, and **Discretionary Activities (Unrestricted)**. Where rules in the Plan are contravened, applications will be deemed to be **Non-complying**.

The Resource Management Act also allows for a **Prohibited** category to be used. This category has not been used in this District Plan.

The Resource Management Act 1991 requires Council to monitor compliance with rules. If rules are not complied with they can be enforced and substantial penalties can be imposed in line with the provision of Part XII of the Act.

The rules will also state which applications will be notified. Applications for resource consents will be publicly notified where Council is of the opinion that community input into any decision is necessary. Where Council thinks that the effects of an activity are not significant or immediate neighbours are unaffected, or where the matter under consideration involves the administration of city infrastructure, the rules may state that notification will not be needed. This may also apply in cases where Council is acting on behalf of the wider community to achieve a better quality environment, such as urban design issues, or to enable the efficient administration of the Plan.

### 1.8.5 The Parts of the District Plan

The Plan consists of three separate documents that in total constitute the District Plan for Wellington. The documents are:

Volume 1: Objectives, Policies and Rules

Volume 2: Design Guides

Volume 3: Maps

Other documents, such as New Zealand standards, are referred to in the Plan. These documents do not form part of the District Plan.

#### Objectives, Policies and Rules

Volume 1 containing Objectives, Policies and Rules forms the main part of the Plan. The objectives are the environmental outcomes the Council seeks to attain and the policies are the ways the objectives or outcomes will be achieved. The rules provide the means for Council to carry out its functions under the Act and to achieve the objectives and policies of the Plan.

#### Design Guides

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Design Guides relate mainly to building or site development where Council has decided that discretionary control is warranted. There are four types:

- General Design Guides
- Character Area Design Guides
- Institutional Precinct Design Guides
- Non-Statutory Design Guides.

Non-Statutory Design Guides are included for information purposes only and do not form part of the District Plan.

#### Maps

Maps form an important part of the District Plan. These maps illustrate where particular policies or rules apply. They help to describe the City, graphically interpret District Plan policies and show specific requirements of sites.

## 1.9 Evolution of the District Plan

This District Plan is the first to be produced by Wellington City Council under the Resource Management Act. The Act radically changed the approach to the management of natural and physical resources. It also provided an opportunity to initiate a new era in planning for the city's health and vitality.

Topics and issues that were not previously part of Council's planning sphere (such as conservation issues) are now included. Other topics are developed further, while some are excluded entirely (such as economic planning and tourism promotion).

Council views this District Plan as an evolving document. It has been designed so that additions can be made whenever new information, research or public opinion justifies it. The document is subject to ongoing reviews and monitoring. Limited resources and the Resource Management Act's new approach mean that some issues need further work and refinement to match the community's expectations.

Council intends the Plan to be flexible enough to deal with issues that are raised in relation to new information that comes to light. To address these issues, Council is monitoring the performance of the District Plan.

Some aspects of the Plan which will be further investigated are as follows. These investigations may lead to future changes to the Plan.

- The development of future Design Guides for central city character areas, such as Lambton Quay, the Port area, the railway yards and Lambton Harbour. This work would be undertaken in close consultation with landowners to promote quality developments that benefit Wellington.
- The review and expansion of the list of Conservation Sites.
- Assessment of an all-hazards approach to land use and emergency management.
- Examination of the potential for a residential precinct, involving targeted bulk and location requirements, for the Tawa area.
- The development of an Oriental Bay Character Area Design Guide.
- A city-wide landscape evaluation.
- An assessment of the assimilative capacity of the Rural Area for development.
- Refinement of the management of sites and precincts of significance to tangata whenua.
- An assessment of the relationship between noise and residential uses within the Central Area and Centres.
- The financial contribution levels contained within the Plan. These will be refined to target more closely the public and private costs of developments.
- The development of monitoring systems to meet the requirements of the Act and to allow Council to assess the performance of the Plan.