

Chapter 2**SUSTAINABILITY****2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this District Plan is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources within the City of Napier. In order to achieve this, the resources need to be identified and a strategic direction for the future management of the resources developed.

2.2 NATURAL AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES OF THE CITY

The natural and physical resources of the City that set it apart from other provincial cities have been identified in a number of studies. They include (in no particular order):

- The open nature of the coastal environment – protected by reserves.
- Scinde Hill with its vegetated gullies and eclectic mix of housing styles.
- The Ahuriri Estuary as both an area of ecological significance that is of national importance and as an area possessing value as a significant landscape.
- The landscape values of the Taradale and Bay View hills.
- The highly versatile soils of the Bay View and Meeanee areas.
- The high level of amenity associated with the residential areas.
- Napier's unique Art Deco architectural heritage.
- The physical infrastructure (including reserves) that the City has invested in.
- The heritage and significant landscape features of the City.

2.3 A DIRECTION FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Napier City Council has prepared a Strategic Plan that sets a framework in terms of Council's own role in managing growth and development within the City.

The Plan is based on the Council's Mission Statement:

"The Napier City Council will provide the Facilities and Services and the Environment, Leadership, Encouragement and Economic Opportunity TO MAKE NAPIER THE BEST PROVINCIAL CITY IN NEW ZEALAND in which to live, work, raise a family and enjoy a safe and satisfying life."

The strategic direction for the City is discussed under the main Environment Parts that the District Plan is divided into.

2.4 RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS**1. Urban Growth**

One of the objectives of the City's Strategic Plan is to plan for the future residential growth needs of the City so that a range of choices are available. The Napier Urban Growth Strategy (1999) has identified a need for a range of residential sections with differing characteristics and locations in providing for urban growth needs over the next 20 year period. However, Napier's settlement pattern is impacting on the City's versatile land resource, the cost of its social and physical infrastructure, the viability of transportation

infrastructure and the quality of the environment. To address these issues, the Council has adopted a “compact city philosophy” when considering future growth to avoid urban sprawl and the fragmentation of rural land. New greenfields growth is being concentrated in the north western area of the City where existing and planned infrastructure mitigates the effects of development on the environment and where the effects on the versatile soils to the south of the City are avoided. Development in this area also meets market physical demand. The range of sites is also provided for through infill, rural settlement and rural residential developments.

Adequate and functioning infrastructure including roading, water, stormwater and sewerage networks is an important element of the community’s social and economic wellbeing, particularly in the urban environment. It also represents a major community investment that should be utilised and protected. Promoting the efficient use of the City’s network of services, will aid in reducing the environmental costs of development for present and future generations and sustain the future potential of resources. Development will be limited where the infrastructure is not available, or where provided, inadequate to offset the adverse effects of such development. Development will also be restricted where the effects of development would create significant health and safety issues.

Provisions in the district plan do play a role in promoting the efficient and sustainable use of resources while also managing environmental effects. As an example, site coverage limits are applied to contain increases in stormwater load on the drainage system and to limit building bulk to a level that will maintain the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

2. Amenity and Special Character

Section 7 of the Act places a responsibility on the Council that, in managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources, it shall have particular regard to among other things the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values.

The high level of amenity in the residential areas of the City is a recognised strength. In order to sustainably manage the residential environment, the Council intends that this level of amenity be maintained. The features that contribute to the amenity of the area include the open nature of residential areas, the proximity of reserves, open space requirements for each unit and a height control that does not exceed two storeys. The Council also believes that sustainable management of the residential environment could be endangered by the encroachment of non-residential activities.

Elements of special character exist within the residential environments and because they represent the unique qualities of Napier they are a physical resource that the Council wishes to see retained. The suburban area of Marewa, (developed post-earthquake) exhibits the very popular art deco theme and the heritage of the first state housing. The Plan identifies two small areas of these housing types that have examples that are true to the original form which the Council wishes to see maintained.

Special character also exists in the residential area of the Napier Hill. This character exists in the natural resource rather than any particular housing style. The gullies and the vegetation that characterise the hill must be sustainably managed to ensure that the amenity that is provided by this resource is not adversely affected.

2.5 COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

1. Commercial Trends

The Council is very much aware of the importance of the commercial areas to the community. They have become a destination for recreation activities and as a social focus for the community. The development of Napier can be traced through the commercial areas. The Inner City is located in the centre of what was pre-earthquake Napier. Post-earthquake Napier developed to the south-west and shopping centres such as Marewa and Onekawa were established to meet the day to day needs of the emerging suburbs. A defined hierarchy of commercial centres has evolved. The Council considers that there is an adequate area of commercially zoned land within the City (51 hectares within the inner city alone) especially with trends for subdivision of existing tenancies, and commercial transactions using computer technology.

The Council places great emphasis on the existing commercial hierarchy and the importance of the Central Business area in particular to the sustainability of the City's social, cultural and economic wellbeing. The Council will encourage a diversity of activities as long as the effects on adjoining zones are adequately managed. Similarly, there is a balance between the activity levels in suburban centres and the effects on the adjoining residential activities that they serve.

2. Commercial Areas as a Physical Resource

Commercial centres include physical resources that should be managed in an efficient manner for the social and economic wellbeing of the community. This includes such facilities as carparking, reserves and street amenity improvements. In the central business area, the art deco architecture is also a physical resource that should be managed on sustainability principles. It is Napier's primary tourist attraction particularly for overseas visitors and as such is an increasingly important employment and revenue base for Napier. The value of this resource should be recognised by continuing to promote the inner city commercial centre as the focus for business and specialty retailing. Large Format Retail developments which incorporate smaller specialty shops can have a profound effect on established retail environments and this is recognised in the Council's Retail Strategy. As a result small specialty retailing outside of the inner city will be controlled to ensure the sustainability of the inner city art deco resource, a resource which has significant cultural and economic importance for the City.

3. Management of Commercial Activities

A market approach to the location of commercial activities is not advocated as this would have a significant adverse effect on the sustainable management of the art deco building resource – a resource that was purpose built for retail activity. The negative effects of a dispersed retail function for Napier would be significant. Napier's future relies on the vibrancy of this inner city area. This resource may be in private ownership but is also a community resource as it is recognised by the people of Napier as a unique asset that has major economic benefits to the City. Retention of the art deco buildings and all associated infrastructure, is consistent with sustainability principles because it avoids the needless duplication of resources. A market approach to the retail environment would also have significant adverse effects on the road network as the arterial routes would be the preferred location for this type of activity.

There is more to the sustainable management of commercial environments than the buildings. Commercial areas should also have an integrated traffic, parking and pedestrian system to provide for the health and safety of the community. The sustainable

management of vehicle parking requires that it is strategically placed and is efficiently managed in terms of turnover and circulation.

2.6 INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENTS

1. Industrial Trends

Research has shown that there is ample vacant land, infill potential and empty industrial premises within the City's existing industrial areas to cope with the anticipated level of market demand for industrial sites well beyond the 10 year life-span of this district plan. Consequently there is no need to expand the present industrially zoned areas.

An emerging trend is that industrial zones in parts of the City are coming under pressure from competition for the land resource from commercial development interests. The industrial land resource must be sustainably managed as significant resources have gone into servicing certain areas for specific industry needs, eg wet industry at Pandora, and these same areas have come under increasing pressure from commercial development interests. Council has provided a specific zone to cater for Large Format Retailing to overcome these issues.

2. Marine Industry

As a coastal city, Napier has an industrial base that trades on its locational advantage. Given the limited availability of industrial land having access to the foreshore, an area has been identified on Meeanee Quay to ensure that marine industry retains access to the foreshore whilst any adverse effects on the character of the foreshore are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

The Port of Napier is the only harbour on the east coast between Gisborne to the north and Wellington to the south. The Port is an established physical resource that is an essential contributor to the wellbeing of the Napier and regional community through the export of local produce and import of a wide range of goods. The District Plan recognises that the Port of Napier is primarily industrial in its nature and character. The Port also generates something in the order of 40% of the region's gross domestic product and therefore the sustainable management of this physical resource is necessary to protect the resource while recognising the potential for the adverse effects of this activity on the environment.

3. Awatoto Industrial Area

Given the City's long term strategy for wastewater treatment, the land and facilities required to implement this strategy are provided in this Plan. The staged development of the wastewater treatment facility is programmed for a period in excess of this district plan's lifetime however, the early identification and provision in district planning terms for such a major infrastructural service for the City is essential.

North-west of the Main Industrial Zone at Awatoto, a deferred industrial zone has been identified to recognise the potential for heavy industry to locate in close proximity to the Napier City Council's wastewater treatment facility thus reducing the costs and effects on wastewater infrastructure.

4. Ahuriri Industrial Area

Ahuriri was one of the City's principal industrial areas. Changes in the wool industry signalled a new era for the Ahuriri area which was dominated by wool stores. The seaside

location makes it a desirable residential area and industrial buildings are being reused or demolished. It is the Council's intention that the mix of activities that characterises this area be maintained and that any new residential activity be made aware that the level of adverse effects that might be experienced would be higher than that of a conventional residentially zoned environment.

2.7 RURAL ENVIRONMENTS

1. Rural Pressures

The Napier Urban Growth Strategy 1999 has identified a need for a range of residential sections with differing characteristics and locations in providing for urban growth needs over the next 20 year period.

The ultimate use of some rural land for residential housing is to be in accord with the strategy identified in the Napier Urban Growth Study. Future residential and rural residential development need to have regard to the environmental and servicing constraints of the particular locality. A means of ensuring that this occurs is through the preparation of structure plans.

Residential development is not the only land use that places the rural land resource under pressure. Other activities that require large areas of land such as Large Format Retailing can seek to locate within the rural zone. The Council will control such activities to achieve the sustainable development of the versatile soil resource set out in Section 2.7.2 below and also to ensure the continued viability of the inner city art deco resource.

The Council will ensure that non-rural activities in the rural area do not lead to a breakout of the 'urban boundary'.

2. Versatile Soils

The rural area of the City is not extensive. However in national terms it comprises some of the most versatile soils. It is recognised that agriculture/horticulture continue to make a huge contribution to the region's economic wellbeing. The Council will continue to sustainably manage the versatile soils in the Meeanee and Bay View areas to ensure that fragmentation of the resource does not continue with a consequential reduction in the inability to use the land efficiently. Fragmentation of the land would also prevent future generations from obtaining the same benefits from the land that are currently enjoyed today.

Viticulture and winemaking in the district and the wider Hawke's Bay has also resulted in increased tourist numbers who visit Napier to tour the wineries and enjoy the wine, food and other associated activities. The Plan aims to enable such operations while managing any adverse effects that they may create.

3. Reverse Sensitivity

In order to facilitate the sustainable management of the land resource the Council has incorporated a "right to farm" philosophy into the rural environment. This recognises that under the Act, the rural environment is becoming an area where a wider range of activities may be able to establish and where the level or type of effects that could be experienced may be considered adverse by new residents. The Council's emphasis on managing reverse sensitivity in the rural environment is primarily in relation to the potential conflict between rural and non-rural activities. The Plan sets minimum performance standards applicable to all rural activities in order to allow sufficient flexibility for a wide range of land

use activities to occur while avoiding significant adverse effects on the environment. Reverse sensitivity which may occur between rural activities meeting the performance standards is therefore an operational and management issue between those landuses.

To enable land to be used in a sustainable manner, the Council is putting property owners on notice that the effects will not be the same as those experienced in an urban environment. Rural activities should be able to operate provided that the level of effects are reasonable. One way of mitigating these reverse sensitivity effects is to ensure that separation distances are built in to any new greenfield residential development. The Council intends to use structure plans to show the separation area that is required for new greenfield development, and will apply the buffer as a condition of approval for any plan change request for rezoning of land for residential purposes.

These measures recognise the Council's role in ensuring that the City's natural and physical resources are used and developed in an efficient manner.

4. Rural Amenity

As well as the physical resource, the rural environment also has values that are less readily defined but fall under the heading of amenity. Rural amenity is a combination of features of the rural environment. A particulate element of rural amenity (and in some cases value in cultural, historical and city-wide amenity terms) is the value of significant landscapes throughout the City. Many of these landscapes are located within the rural environment. Section 6 of the Resource Management Act 1991 states, as a matter of national importance, that the Council must recognise and provide for the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Recognition and provision for this matter of national importance is approached in a manner relying on a combination of both regulatory and non-regulatory methods.

5. Rural Settlements

The two rural settlement areas and the Jervoistown Zone are constrained in their development potential through a combination of their physical characteristics and the lack of services. The Essential Services Development Reports and Plan have demonstrated the effects and subsequent costs of development of these areas. With the exception of the Bay View Wastewater project, at the time of writing this Plan, the Council has no financial plans to provide services to these areas.

In order to avoid, remedy or mitigate the effects of development in Jervoistown and the rural settlement areas of the City, rules apply to manage the density of residential development and types of non-residential activities within these areas. Development at greater densities would result in significant adverse effects for the existing community and the environment. The Council will also give careful consideration to the cumulative effects of any future development.

2.8 OPEN SPACES / RESERVES

1. Planned Development

Napier City has one of the highest ratios of open space to population of any City in the country. Many of the reserves separate discreet development stages within the City and were co-ordinated with some of the essential services such as drainage channels. Reserve land is jealously guarded by the community and the Council wishes to maintain the level of amenity that is currently enjoyed. The Essential Services Development Reports and Plan have identified the reserve requirements for all proposed greenfield

development. These requirements will be introduced by means of structure plans and from funds resulting from financial contributions.

Sports fields are being strategically planned to allow for multiple use of large areas of land rather than a number of smaller reserves that make sustainable management of the resource more difficult.

2. Coastal Environment

Part of the open space reserve areas is in the coastal environment. Access to the coast was raised as one of the more important issues when consultation was undertaken for the Ahuriri section of the Plan. Uninterrupted access to the coast and river margins is part of our national heritage and the provision of reserves immediately adjacent to the foreshore is a feature of the Napier coastline. The Council intends to maintain and enhance public access to the coast and rivers to meet public expectations and recognising that it is a matter of national importance under the Act.

The Ahuriri Estuary is particularly important and is recognised as being of national significance for its ecological values. As an area of open space it is also of great value to the City. The Estuary and its surrounds have also been identified as possessing value for its natural and physical landscape qualities. Its proximity to the City means that it is well used, however, its accessibility also means that it must be carefully managed to maintain the fine balance between public use and preservation of the natural values. The Council has been active in pursuing opportunities to enhance access to the foreshore and preserve and improve the open character of the foreshore environment within the City. It will continue with this approach within the life of this Plan.

2.9 INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Sustainable Use and Development

The City's Strategic Plan highlights the importance of infrastructural services and recognises that their provision is a core responsibility of the Council. They represent a major community investment that should be sustainably managed. Promoting the efficient use of the City's network of essential services, community services, utilities, roads and other infrastructural components will aid in reducing the environmental costs of development for present and future generations and sustain the future potential of natural and physical resources. The environmental costs of any failure of the City's infrastructure system would be significant.

Financial contributions are closely linked to the provision of services. They have a very real environmental benefit in avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of activities resulting from subdivision and land development as the contributions are directly applied to that part of the environment that is affected. The sustainable management of infrastructural services is an issue that applies across all areas of the City.

2.10 HERITAGE

1. Napier's Identity

Elements of the City's heritage give Napier an important identity – one that sets it apart from other cities in New Zealand. The Council recognises the inner city art deco buildings as the city's primary heritage resource.

2. Contribution to the Community

It is acknowledged that tourism makes a significant contribution to the City's economy and New Zealand visitor statistics indicate that 45% of overseas visitors visit places of historic and heritage interest.

The Council is endeavouring to raise the profile of the City's heritage values and it will do this by means of a number of different mechanisms. Many of these are currently being used. However the public do not have a clear understanding of the process used or the areas of responsibility among bodies with statutory responsibilities for heritage.

2.11 SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES AND NATURAL FEATURES

1. Inappropriate subdivision, use and development

Section 6 of the Resource Management Act 1991 states, as a matter of national importance, that the Council must recognise and provide for the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Under Section 7(d) of the RMA, Council must also have regard to the intrinsic values of ecosystems. This section is particularly relevant to biodiversity as it is the biological and genetic diversity that determines an ecosystems integrity, form, functions and resilience. A variety of significant landscapes, each possessing unique cultural, historical, visual and/or rarity values are located within the City, and have been identified in the Napier City Landscape Assessment Study.

Protection of the City's outstanding natural features and significant landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is very important to the maintenance and enhancement of the City's identity, including its cultural, historical, ecological, recreational and amenity values.

A number of other documents are also of relevance to the protection of New Zealand's biodiversity, including the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2000 which is a Plan adopted by the Government which has the aim of halting the decline in New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity."