PART A

INTRODUCTION
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A INTRODUCTION

A1 BACKGROUND

This District Plan replaces the Porirua City District Scheme, and the District Scheme for that part of the Hutt County which was amalgamated with Porirua City in 1989.

The Porirua City District Scheme was prepared under the Town and Country Planning Act 1977, notified in 1982 and became operative in 1991. The Hutt County District Scheme (Review 2) was prepared initially under the Town and Country Planning Act 1953. It was completed and notified under the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 and became operative in 1984.

Following the enactment of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) these two Schemes have been administered by the Council as the Transitional Porirua City District Plan.

A2 THE DISTRICT PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The process of District Plan preparation began in 1991 with the passing of the Resource Management Act 1991. The timetable for the review process was based on one year of research work, one year to prepare a Draft Plan and one year to prepare the Plan for notification.

A3 THE CONSULTATION PROGRAMME

The review programme has included three stages of public input. The first stage entailed targeted consultation on the resource management issues facing the four main areas of the City. The methods of consultation included public meetings, brochures and questionnaires, public displays, and the distribution of Draft Plan proposals. Input from these programmes helped shape the Draft District Plan which was released for public discussion in August 1993. Brochures on the Draft District Plan were distributed to all households in the City, and public meetings held in each Ward. In addition, copies on the Draft Plan were available on loan from the Council office and public libraries. Council officers also attended a number of meetings around the City to discuss specific issues in the Draft Plan.

Iwi have been involved throughout the review programme and resources made available to iwi to ensure that adequate consultation was undertaken.

A4 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The preparation of the District Plan was a new project, not a review of the existing District Scheme. Considerable emphasis was applied throughout the programme to identifying whether an objective or policy was warranted, and determining the best methods by which these could be achieved. For example, landscaping is to be promoted through guidelines rather than the imposition of conditions on resource consents because the judgement on whether the condition had been complied with would always be a subjective one. This would make it very difficult to enforce such a condition effectively. In determining where rules were required particular attention was given to whether the effect to be managed was readily measurable.
### ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PURPOSE OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS OF METHOD</th>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>SITUATIONS IN WHICH METHOD IS MOST APPROPRIATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REGULATE</td>
<td>BYLAW</td>
<td>Where there is a yes/no answer e.g. parking offences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DISTRICT PLAN STANDARD</td>
<td>Used with rules to control the effect of a measurable factor e.g. height.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DISTRICT PLAN RULE</td>
<td>Where it is necessary to determine whether an activity is permitted, or a resource consent must be sought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DISTRICT PLAN POLICY</td>
<td>To state Council's position on a resource management issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COUNCIL POLICY</td>
<td>Where Council can provide leadership by its own actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO NOTHING</td>
<td>DO NOTHING</td>
<td>All properties are subject to rates, general bylaws etc. This category means that the Council has no other specific policy or rule on an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENCOURAGE</td>
<td>PROMOTION</td>
<td>Where the community can be encouraged to develop higher standards e.g. through guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FINANCIAL INVESTMENT BY COUNCIL</td>
<td>Where there is a clear public function e.g. the upgrading of roads and parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COUNCIL FINANCIAL INCENTIVE</td>
<td>Where there is community benefit from a private action e.g. through grants to community groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1**

The permissive emphasis of the Resource Management Act requires that the point at which an activity changes from being permitted to controlled or discretionary must be unambiguously defined. This has been achieved by setting performance standards for permitted activities which are clear, unambiguous, measurable and relate directly to the effect which they seek to manage.

Where methods other than rules have been proposed it is recognised that the District Plan provides guidance to, but does not supersede, the Council's annual planning process through which works and services are funded. Having determined that few rules are required to promote the sustainable management of the resources of the City, the establishment of the costs and benefits of those rules has been relatively straightforward. Excluding the trade related costs and benefits implicit in any zoning, the standards established in each zone have been set with a view to balancing the reasonable expectations of
neighbours with the reasonable expectations of the individual. These standards have been established through studies and consultation which constitute assessments of the costs and benefits of those or other standards.

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE DISTRICT PLAN TO OTHER COUNCIL POLICY DOCUMENTS**

**FIGURE ONE**

The Resource Management Act has established a complex set of relationships between the Act, the National Policy Statements, Regional Policy Statements, Regional Plans, and District Plans. In order to reduce the risk of confusion, or contradiction an effort has been made to avoid covering in the District Plan issues which are more appropriately included in another policy document.
The processes of research, analysis, rationalisation and justification have resulted in a District Plan which contains the minimum level of controls on the individual. This has been a conscious process on the part of the Council in order to preserve a healthy, safe and attractive environment while maximising the opportunities for jobs, growth and development.

A5 IDENTIFICATION OF ZONES

Eight distinct zones have been identified with Porirua City: the City Centre, the Industrial, the Suburban, the Aotea Supermarket, the Judgeford Hills, the Rural, the Recreation, and the Open Space zones. These zones have been defined by quite different rules, standards and assessment criteria.

City Centre Zone

The City Centre is clearly defined by the harbour, State Highway One, and the Titahi Bay Limited Access Road. There has been significant private and public investment in the City Centre since research into the growing role of the City Centre was first undertaken in 1989. A long term vision has therefore been developed through a process of wide community debate. This vision is being pursued through the District Plan, together with the Council works programme for roading and landscaping, and through the promotion of development opportunities. The vision recognises areas with a pedestrian focus and areas with a vehicle focus, and includes the capacity for development on a wide range of sites over the next 20 years.

Industrial Zone

The industrial areas of Porirua are modern, purpose built industrial subdivisions. They are well defined geographically and well serviced. For the most part, the activities in the Industrial Zones remain industrial, and the compact nature of the City Centre makes retail expansion into the Industrial Zones both unnecessary and unlikely. The Plan does not however limit retail activities from locating in the Industrial Zone, but does impose standards on development to ensure that any potential adverse environmental effects are appropriately managed.

Suburban Zone

The suburban areas of Porirua are diverse, ranging from the redeveloped baches of Plimmerton, to the large areas of state built housing in Cannons Creek and Waitangirua, and the extensive privately planned Whitby development.

In the very early stages of District Plan research it was recognised that the characteristics and amenity levels of suburban zones had only a limited relationship with the physical layout of the areas. For example, some of the most highly valued beach front real estate is small sections with limited parking and minimal usable open space. In contrast, many of the state built areas have extremely large sections, wide road berms, good access etc and a relatively low market valuation.

It became clear through the study of this and other comparisons that the planning controls which guide the layout of sections and buildings play a relatively limited role in establishing the value, amenity or character of a suburban zone. Other factors e.g. location, landscaping, site development
works, building style etc., play an equal or greater role. As a result of this analysis it was decided to avoid the definition of different planning provisions for character areas within the suburban zone and to instead establish a set of standards to protect neighbour amenity and overall residential character throughout the suburban zones of the City.

Rural Zone

Approximately 80% of the land area of Porirua City is rural and has been zoned rural in recognition of the fact that it is different from the urban areas in terms of its character, the type of urban infrastructure available to the residents, and therefore the type of activities which are undertaken in the area.

Three main factors emerged as vital to the future management of the Rural Zone. Discussions held with the rural community were a vital part of the District Plan review process to ensure that a workable long term resolution of these issues could be achieved. The issues relate to the management of rural activities, the protection of the natural and physical environment, and controlling urban expansion.

Taken in turn, the proximity of this zone to an urban centre, and the often steep nature of the land itself does not make farming an easy activity. The District Plan provisions for the Rural Zone must recognise this and not attempt to turn the rural landowners into the caretakers of a pseudo-reserve.

Secondly, no part of the Rural Zone is far from the coast, and much of the coastal area of Porirua is considered to be of national or international significance. One of the questions addressed in the review process was the identification of the areas which either because of their intrinsic values, or because of the risk of damage, warranted protection policies over and above the general level of protection afforded by the continued rural use of the land.

Thirdly, the capacity of the serviced and readily serviced areas of the Suburban Zone makes any encroachment into the rural area unnecessary, and unsustainable. There has been widespread support for the recognition of a clear distinction between the rural and urban zones of the City.

Judgeford Hills Zone

The Judgeford Hills Zone identifies a specific area for clustered development in accordance with defined criteria and standards to facilitate the creation of additional rural lifestyle choices.

Aotea Supermarket Zone

This zone identifies a specific area in Aotea considered to be suitable for a stand-alone supermarket provided certain design and amenity standards are met. The zoning is intended to provide an opportunity to meet local supermarket retail demand in a manner that will enhance a sustainable and resilient urban form.

The retail use authorised by the zone is complementary to the primary retail focus of the City Centre and not in competition with it.
A6 ACTIVITIES VERSUS STANDARDS

The previous District Scheme contained controls on development which were based around the listing of activities or uses deemed appropriate for each zone, and performance standards appropriate to those uses. This approach has several advantages. It is simple to understand and administer, is well known, and those professionals which deal with District Plans on a day to day basis are familiar with the system and understand its workings.

The principal disadvantages of listing activities are that it takes little account of the effect of an individual activity, and it relies on definitions of activity which change very rapidly. A modern service station, and a modern church have effects never envisaged when these activities were first defined in the early planning documents. A service station used to consist of a workshop and two or three petrol pumps and was open for quite limited hours. The modern service station is very different. Similarly a modern church often operates programmes seven days of the week, through the day and evening. Using definitions of activities as the basis for controlling the effects of those activities has a limited value when the nature of the activity is changing rapidly.

A survey of the Suburban Zone identified a wide range of different types of businesses. It became obvious that the nature of the business had only a limited relationship with its environmental impact. Similarly, there is not a direct correlation between the floor area of a business and the scale of environmental effects that the activity is likely to generate.

Employment has also been used to distinguish between home occupations and larger businesses, however it is apparent that the effect of a two person joinery firm could be quite different if the business had one joiner and one office worker, or two joiners.

A7 CONCLUSIONS

The approach to the management of the impacts of activities on the Porirua environment has changed considerably over the years. This District Plan has been prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991 and replaces Schemes prepared under the 1953 and 1977 Town and Country Planning Acts. It is significant to note that the major resource management issues facing the City today have changed little over time. This is reflected in the zoning structure of the new Plan, and in the policies which cover a wide range of resource issues. While the issues have changed very little, the approach to their management has changed dramatically. The new Plan has liberalised many aspects of land use, while ensuring that the effects of any activity which trigger some effects threshold (a permitted activity standard) are very carefully assessed.