C1 CITY CENTRE ZONE

Current work on the future of the City Centre began in 1989 with a programme of public consultation. This programme involved assessing methods of resolving a growing traffic problem regarding the use of the previous motorway ramp bridge. The provision of parking, landscaping and general amenity areas were also raised. These studies and discussions were directed at providing Porirua with a City Centre appropriate to business, civic and community requirements over the next twenty years.

Floor space projections, parking assessments and urban design studies led to the identification in 1992 of two options for the future form of the City Centre.

Following a second round of public consultation the favoured option was adopted by Council. This has been referred to as "Option 1A". It is based around a new roading network which extends the area of the core City Centre to Parumoana Street, and provides for significant increases in the overall size of the City Centre in a way which integrates with the existing developed area.

Since the adoption of "Option 1A" as the vision for the future of the City Centre, Council has undertaken considerable work on the public aspects of that vision. The new Te Whakawhitinga-O-Ngatitoa bridge and other intersection improvements have been completed. After further public consultation, the new roading network and traffic calmed pedestrian areas have been established. Council is also actively promoting the development of a significant "Whole Environment Shopping" commercial site in the City Centre, and has stated its commitment to the covering of the pedestrian ways in the older shopping area.

The natural environment of the City Centre has been significantly modified. The Porirua Stream is being modified to provide greater flood protection for the City Centre, and considerable work is being undertaken to enhance the attractiveness and recreational potential of the stream and foreshore areas.

Council's role in encouraging local economic developments is primarily to promote Porirua as a prosperous and successful commercial centre within the region. This has been endorsed by the local business people through the Annual Plan and Council has subsequently carried out an active policy of enhancing the standard of support facilities and services in the City Centre.

The provisions in the District Plan dealing with the City Centre are part of this larger picture and provide significant flexibility within this area. At the same time, the rules for the City Centre recognise the importance of public investment in the roading and pedestrian systems and seek to ensure that the high levels of convenience presently enjoyed are continued as the City develops.

C1.1 Objective

TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE CITY CENTRE RESOURCE WHICH IS THE PRINCIPAL COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL FOCUS OF THE CITY.

Explanation

The resources of the City Centre include the buildings, roads, commercial and public services, public open space, and the links between the City Centre and the other parts of the City. Sustaining the City Centre means ensuring that these are efficiently utilised over a long time period.
The City Centre is a strong physical, employment, educational and social activity focus. The City Centre's built resources include significant roading, parking and public open space. The Centre also contains the City's highest density of investment and development.

The diversity of built development and intensity of activity means it also has the greatest potential for change.

Within the City Centre there are strong relationships between the large-scale built form and urban style open space. This produces a vibrant City Centre for its people and visitors. The Council will continue to have an active interest in managing the arrangement of existing and future activities in the City Centre in such a way as to enable its continued development as the principal commercial, civic and cultural centre of Porirua and as a significant regional retail centre.

C1.1.1 Policy

To identify and define the extent of the City Centre and manage it as an integrated resource.

Explanation

The city centre is an area approximately bounded by the Porirua Harbour, Porirua Stream, and Titahi Bay Road. This policy promotes the management of the resources of this area as a whole.

Method of Implementation

The city centre has been defined by the City Centre Zone and is identified on the Planning Maps. The majority of the City Centre rules and standards apply across the Zone, however contained within this Zone are 'Areas' where different standards apply, such as varying height standards for buildings, parking and controls on buildings in areas of known seismic hazard. These 'Areas' have been identified on the Planning Maps. The status of shops in the Vehicle Area of the City Centre Zone varies with reference to the size of the shops and may be permitted, restricted discretionary or discretionary.

Principal Reasons

The older core of the City Centre was purpose designed and built in the 1950's and 60's. There has been significant development since that time and a gradual encroachment of commercial activities into the areas which were originally industrial to the north and south of the City Centre.

The Porirua Harbour and Stream and Titahi Bay Road create the natural boundaries for the City Centre. Within these boundaries the nature of the road network, buildings, activities and the natural environment create a resource which is quite distinct from the industrial, suburban and rural zones of the City.
The clearly defined boundaries of the area make the management of this area as an integrated resource both possible and an effective means of promoting the sustainable management of the environment. Land which is located close to the Porirua Harbour and Porirua Stream that was previously zoned industrial has been incorporated into the City Centre Zone in order to promote a greater appreciation of these areas as an attractive natural resource.

Shops in the Vehicle Area of the City Centre Zone have permitted, restricted discretionary or discretionary status. That will allow, where appropriate, consideration of matters which might affect the amenity and integrated management of the city centre when new developments are proposed.

C1.1.2 Policy

To promote a pedestrian focused environment in the City Centre that provides a high level of visual amenity and pedestrian convenience while minimising the adverse environmental effects of vehicle traffic.

Explanation

This policy applies to the inner parts of the City Centre Zone where existing resources e.g. parking, open space and walkways are shared and are geared towards pedestrian convenience.

Method of Implementation

The Council has a strong commitment to the continued development of the City Centre, and the enhancement of pedestrian convenience in the inner parts of the City Centre. Traffic calming, planting, landscaping and the covered walkway projects are all evidence of this commitment, as is the Council's initiative to promote the City Square development to increase the diversity, convenience and viability of the City Centre resource. These initiatives have and are continuing to be pursued through the annual planning process, and the Council encourages other private parties to contribute to the development of this policy.

The rules and standards for the Pedestrian Areas of the City Centre provide for a wide range of activities to meet the changing public demand for goods and services. An Inner Pedestrian Area and an Outer Pedestrian Area have been defined on the City Centre Zone Planning Maps. The difference between the Inner and Outer Pedestrian Areas is in the calculation of the number of car-parking spaces required on the site. Standards e.g. those dealing with the storage of materials, loading and unloading of goods are also intended to create an attractive and safe environment for pedestrians.

Temporary activities, such as markets, fairs, military training and other promotional activities in the City Centre areas will generally fall into the discretionary activity category. Activities of this nature can contribute significantly to the health and vitality of the City Centre. However, if not managed carefully such activities can cause significant short-term traffic and parking problems etc. The non-notification of such activities has been determined on the basis that any effects would be of a short term nature and therefore would not have wider community effects.
In balancing the need to allow a wide variety of activities against the need to protect community health, and retain the pleasantness of the City Centre as a shopping and business focus, it has been determined that some activities, particularly those that create an objectionable odour, must be specifically identified and required to undergo a rigorous assessment of environmental effects before being allowed to establish in the City Centre Zone. Objectionable trades (refer to the definition for "objectionable trade") have therefore been made non-complying activities.

The second category of activities which present a possible risk to the community are those activities involving the use of hazardous substances. This matter has been dealt with in Section C15 Hazardous Substances. Where relevant industry standards exist these will provide a key method of guidance for Council in the consideration of resource consent applications.

Principal Reasons

The pedestrian areas of the City Centre have a considerable public and private investment in pedestrian convenience. This constitutes a valuable built resource which should be enhanced where possible.

It is Council's aim to create a City Centre which continues to focus on commercial and social activities and, with special regard to built form, a variety of activity areas and visual amenity. The City Centre should continue to be a lively and vibrant central business environment and activity focus for residents, businesses and visitors.

The City Centre functions through the shared use of many resources, and through a collective convenience for pedestrians. The existing resources create a positive cumulative effect and the policy seeks to ensure that this is preserved, and built on in the future.

The continued integration of public developments e.g. covered walkways, limited car parking times, public seating, and private development e.g. new buildings, services and activities is the most appropriate means of ensuring that this resource is sustainability managed.

C1.3 Policy

To encourage a wide range of activities which require vehicle access to locate in the peripheral parts of the City Centre.

Explanation

These activities are those which are generally visited by people wanting particular goods or services e.g. hardware. The periphery, or vehicle oriented parts of the City Centre Zone includes land previously zoned for industrial activities.

Method of Implementation

Including this Area in the City Centre Zone will in itself increase the range of activities which are able to locate in the Area. The recently developed roading layout further enhances the opportunities for vehicle oriented activities by providing convenient vehicle access to these Areas from outside the City Centre.
Rules and standards have been developed for the vehicle oriented area to provide for the widest possible range of activities. Standards have been established to protect the convenience of the area by ensuring that increased intensity of activity in existing buildings only occurs where the effects will not result in a loss of environmental quality for neighbouring occupiers, or affect the streets or surrounding locality, e.g. adequate parking etc.

Temporary activities, such as markets, fairs and other promotional activities in the City Centre areas will generally fall into the discretionary activity category. Activities of this nature can contribute significantly to the health and vitality of the City Centre. However, if not managed carefully such activities can cause significant short-term traffic and parking problems etc. The non-notification of such activities has been determined on the basis that any effects would be of a short term nature and therefore would not have wider community effects.

Shops in the Vehicle Area may require resource consents depending on the size of the shops. In considering applications for restricted discretionary and discretionary activity resource consents to establish shops in the Vehicle Area, an assessment will be made of the impact the proposal will have on the transportation network of the City Centre Zone including the public transportation network.

In balancing the need to allow a wide variety of activities against the need to protect community health, and retain the pleasantness of the City Centre as a shopping and business focus, it has been determined that some activities, particularly those that create an objectionable odour, must be identified and required to undergo a rigorous assessment of environmental effects before being allowed to establish in the City Centre Zone. Objectionable trades (refer to the definition for “objectionable trade”) have therefore been made non-complying activities.

The second category of activities which present a possible risk to the community are those activities involving the use of hazardous substances. This matter has been dealt with in Section C15 Hazardous Substances. Where relevant industry standards exist these will provide a key method of guidance for Council in the consideration of resource consent applications.

Principal Reasons

There are a wide range of activities which closely complement the pedestrian oriented activities referred to in policy C1.1.2. These range from hardware supplies to gymnasiums. They do not have the same level of shared facilities as the activities in the Pedestrian Areas but they are essential to ensuring that the overall resources of the City Centre are sustainably managed, and promoting these activities is an integral part of the objective for the City's principal commercial and social focus.

The Plan permits a wide range of activities within the vehicle oriented area to ensure that the market is able to respond to changing consumer demand. The effects of these activities on the City Centre and the wider environment are primarily controlled through the use of standards which apply to the Vehicle Area. The standards have been established at levels which ensure that the overall attractiveness of the City Centre is protected, and that the public resources e.g. public parking and traffic convenience are not degraded. Consideration of private and public transportation implications of proposals to establish shops in the Vehicle Area is appropriate given the potential for those
activities to attract significant custom and thus affect the transportation network of the City Centre Zone including public transportation options.

C1.1.4 Policy

To encourage a range of activities in the public pedestrian areas of the City Centre while ensuring they do not have any adverse impacts on pedestrian access, traffic circulation and the amenity and visual character of the area in which they locate.

Explanation

This policy seeks to provide the opportunity for public pedestrian spaces to be used for a range of market stalls and other activities which may use parts of public spaces within the City Centre Zone.

Method of Implementation

Provision for open space, landscaping and pedestrian areas may be provided through the annual planning process.

The Council as the landowner of public open space is able to manage the uses permitted in these areas.

Furthermore, the Council may enact new and administer existing by-laws to further manage activities.

Principal Reasons

There are a range of activities which are able to use public spaces within the City Centre without having adverse effects on traffic circulation, the more established retail activities, the convenience and access values of such areas or on the amenity values and visual character of the City. Indeed, many such activities provide vibrancy, interest and diversity, generating a positive benefit for all people working or visiting the City Centre.

C1.2 Objective

TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT VEHICLE, CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION NETWORKS WITHIN AND AROUND THE CITY CENTRE.

Explanation

The effectiveness of the circulation networks is related to the ease with which a destination can be reached.

The efficiency of the network is a reflection of the time taken and distances travelled in reaching a destination.

This objective deals with traffic within the City Centre Zone as well as traffic wishing to pass around the Zone to other parts of the City.
Transportation of the majority of goods and people to and from the City Centre is undertaken within the existing road network. This network is a significant resource. It is essential to ensure that the management and development of this resource is integrated with the management of surrounding land uses to ensure a high level of accessibility for people and goods by all modes of transport.

C1.2.1 Policy

To improve traffic flows within and around the City Centre through the design and management of the intersections and roads.

Explanation

This policy deals with the design and location of the roads in order to separate traffic wishing to pass around the City Centre from traffic wishing to enter the City Centre, and also to enable traffic to travel in an orderly and safe manner, by all modes of travel including by car and public transport, to and from sites and parking areas in the City Centre.

Method of Implementation

The development and maintenance of the transportation network may be undertaken by Council through the annual planning process. Recent consultation on the overall transportation network and on the traffic calming areas has demonstrated Council’s commitment to involving the public and the business community in the ongoing development of the roading network.

Where necessary, parking controls through Council bylaws will be used to reduce congestion and ensure that traffic is able to flow freely.

Principal Reasons

The layout of the City means that traffic needs to be able to pass around the City Centre conveniently.

The nature of activity in the City Centre gives rise to a situation where the differing requirements of motor vehicles, cycles and pedestrians lead to a potential for conflict and possible accidents. The provision of safety measures to decrease the congestion, improve access to and from sites, enhance driver visibility at intersections, and ultimately decrease the accident rate in the City has been a priority in the planning of the City Centre.

Recent changes to the transportation network, in association with the new northern access bridge, have provided a clear separation of traffic wishing to pass around the City Centre, traffic wishing to go to a site in the Vehicle Area and traffic wishing to enter the pedestrian oriented areas.

C1.2.2 Policy

To ensure adequate car parking is provided to meet the needs of visitors and workers in the City.
**Explanation**

This policy deals with both the short term parking needs of shoppers and other visitors, and the long term parking needs of those who work in the City Centre. The term “adequate” in the Policy wording recognises that total parking provision will be consistent with the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy and in particular those provisions dealing with managing travel demand on the strategic transportation network through management of the relationship between the short term parking needs of shoppers and other visitors, and the long term needs for workers in the City Centre.

**Method of Implementation**

The Council may continue to provide publicly available short and limited long stay parking spaces within the core of the City Centre through both control of Council owned parking spaces within the core of the City Centre, and their maintenance and extension through the annual planning process. Council, in the management of public parking areas, will ensure a balance between all short and long stay public and private parking, consistent with the provisions of the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy.

**Rules and standards** have been developed to ensure that new developments provide all the parking which those buildings are likely to require over the longer term. This approach recognises that most buildings will be used for a range of activities but have great difficulty "adding in" parking after they are built. Establishing parking standards associated with the building rather than a specific activity is an effective means of promoting sustainable management of the limited city centre resource by:

(a) Ensuring adequate parking; and

(b) Maintaining and enhancing the vitality of the City Centre by reducing the risk of buildings being constructed that cannot accommodate a range of uses and which would remain vacant for long periods.

Different car parking standards have been developed for the Inner Pedestrian, Outer Pedestrian, and Vehicle Areas.

Within the Vehicle Area, parking is required to be provided within each site. This reflects the need to protect the convenience and efficiency of the road network by preventing congested road side parking, and it reflects the single-destination style of activities appropriate to this Area. It is accepted that there may be some sites within this Area where a change to a more intensive use will not be possible because it is not possible to accommodate the required number of car parks on the site.

In parking terms the Pedestrian Areas work as a single large system - visitors park in one place and shop throughout the Areas. Because of the balancing out effect of this larger concentration of parking it is possible to set a lower standard of parking for individual developments than is necessary in the Vehicle Area.
The Inner and Outer Pedestrian Areas already have a high level of retail/commercial development. The real effect of the car parking standard is to ensure that adequate car parking provision is made at the time of building e.g. additional floors, or the redevelopment of existing areas.

Principal Reasons

Parking is a vital component of commercial, retail and related activities. Commercial developers are well aware of the importance of adequate car parking, and of the need for convenient car parking.

There is a significant amount of Council provided car parking in the City Centre within the roading network. In addition, many, but not all, buildings have their own visitor and/or worker car parking.

If a parking shortfall is allowed to develop through inadequate parking provisions at the time of development, it is extremely difficult and expensive to solve this problem e.g. to find suitable locations and create further car parks which are conveniently located to the City Centre. There is at present an adequate parking resource and Council wishes to sustainably manage this resource by ensuring that future developments do not create a parking shortfall and lead to a loss of convenience for all concerned.

Council recognises the need to limit long term parking where this contributes to peak demand on the strategic network through journey to work travel. It is recognised in the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy that the use of single occupant private vehicle travel to work in peak periods is a very inefficient use of resources producing significant environmental costs. In recent years the most significant area of growth in parking supply in the Central Business District has been in private time-restricted shopper customer parking. Also with the redevelopment of the Housing Corporation carpark on Walton Leigh Avenue long term parking supply in the Central Business District has actually declined. Known future developments and projected growth for the Central Business District indicate that long term parking supply is likely to decline in the future as a proportion of total supply. For travel to work to the Porirua City Centre an important consideration is that as Wellington City is the main place of residence outside Porirua City for City Centre employees the journey to work does not add significantly to peak hour motorway congestion. Limiting long stay car parking is an important measure in helping to reduce peak demand on the strategic transportation network. Public transport access is also encouraged in the Porirua City Centre consistent with the provisions of the Wellington Region Regional Land Transport Strategy.

C1.2.3 Policy

To encourage the use of bicycles by reducing the potential for conflict between vehicles and bicycles.

Explanation

This policy relates to the provision of cycle ways which separate cyclists from vehicular traffic.

Method of Implementation

The Council may continue to take appropriate action and set aside funds for improvements through the annual planning process.
Principal Reasons

The purpose of this policy is to encourage the use of bicycles as an alternative means of transport. The bicycle offers an attractive alternative to the private car, thereby reducing congestion and the associated adverse environmental effects.

Cycle ways can be provided through public open space areas to avoid the need to use roads altogether in some cases.

C1.2.4 Policy

To improve pedestrian linkages to, and within the City Centre.

Explanation

Pedestrian links include footpaths, pedestrian crossings, connections between buildings, linkages to the railway station and public transport, and to the surrounding suburban areas.

Method of Implementation

As with cycleways and other Council funded works the annual planning process may continue to address these issues through traffic calming and similar techniques. The Council initiated project to cover the walkways in Hartham Place, across Cobham Court, and through Serlby Place demonstrates Council's commitment to this policy.

The overall vision for the City Centre which has been developed through research and consultation, and adopted in 1992 (Option 1A) provides a strong basis from which Council, the public and intending developers can identify opportunities for improving pedestrian links.

Principal Reasons

This policy seeks to encourage the creation of spatial and activity relationships which promote a variety of clearly identified social and cultural focal points for special interest groups and all persons using the City Centre. Pedestrian routes and well designed pedestrian areas and linkages will assist in the development of this philosophy. This can be achieved by adding new links and enhancing existing links by covering exposed footpaths and improving lighting and services.

Such amenities are vital for the successful operation of all parts of the City Centre and the activities found there, and to meet the needs of all groups in the community including those with disabilities, the elderly, and care givers with children.

C1.3 Objective

TO PROMOTE A COHESIVE URBAN FORM WHICH ENHANCES THE AMENITY AND CHARACTER OF THE CITY CENTRE.

Explanation

The overall form of the City Centre is determined by the extent of the Zone, the shape of the roading network, and the shape of the buildings within the Centre. This objective deals with the latter of these factors.
A compact City Centre will ensure the retention and enhancement of the surrounding natural green areas which represent a 'soft' edge to the image of the City.

A cohesive form is also important to ensure a logical distribution of activities and associated services, and the ease of movement and orientation within the City Centre.

C1.3.1 Policy

To facilitate the development of a central tall "spine" of buildings and to provide a gateway to the City Centre.

Explanation

The main entrance to the City is over the Mungavin Bridge. This policy enables the development of a tall spine of buildings in this area.

Method of Implementation

The **height standard for Height Area 1** on the City Centre Zone Height Map provides for the creation of a tall spine of buildings up to 30m in height as outlined in the Policy. This provision allows developers a significant range of sites which are potentially suitable for high rise development. The number of buildings of this height which are developed in the long term is likely to be dependent on the economic situation, and on other provisions of the Plan e.g. those dealing with parking and seismic hazard.

Principal Reasons

This policy seeks to build on the existing natural and built form of the City. The natural form of the City includes the scarp to the south west of the City Centre. It is possible to build to quite a high level close to this scarp without the link to the natural landscape being lost. The policy is also based on the recognition that there are several modern tall buildings in this Area, and the gateway effect of these would be enhanced by the addition of further tall buildings in this Area.

C1.3.2 Policy

To allow development over the majority of the City Centre to a level which will complement both the tall building spine and the Porirua Harbour and Stream margins.

Explanation

This policy establishes the height control for much of the City Centre.

Method of Implementation

The **height standards for Height Area 2** on the City Centre Height Map provides for the development, as of right, to a maximum of 15 metres throughout this Area. In this Area, the rule provisions also allow for buildings above 25 metres to be assessed as a Restricted Discretionary Activity. This is to allow the effect of proposed buildings of this height to be considered on a case by case basis. The number of buildings of this height which are developed in the long term is likely to be dependent on the economic situation,
and on other provisions of the Plan e.g. those dealing with parking and seismic hazard.

**Principal Reasons**

This policy seeks to allow wide scope for development through the City Centre while preserving the overall form of the City Centre and its relationship with the natural environment.

It is the intention that individual buildings in Height Area 2 do not dominate the landscape, or detract from either the gateway effect of the tall spine (Height Area 1, refer to Policy C1.3.1), or the low, open, development pattern near the Porirua Harbour and Stream (Height Area 3, refer to Policy C1.3.3). There is some scope for buildings of different heights within Height Area 2 depending on their location relative to other buildings and the key natural features of Harbour and Stream.

**C1.3.3 Policy**

**To protect the visual relationship of the City Centre to the Porirua harbour and stream by limiting the height of buildings at the edge of the City Centre.**

**Explanation**

This policy applies to an area covering the northern and southern parts of the City Centre and that land fronting the Porirua Harbour and Stream.

**Method of Implementation**

The **height standards for Height Area 3** on the City Centre Height Map provides for the development, as of right, to a maximum of 10 metres throughout this Area. The effect of development up to 12m in height will be considered on a case by case basis.

**Principal Reasons**

Low rise development at the edge of the City Centre will allow a wide range of activities and enhance the attractiveness of the City Centre and protect views to the harbour and river from other parts of the City Centre. The green edge along the foreshore will be better defined for recreational purposes.

**C1.4 Environmental Outcomes Anticipated**

The following environmental outcomes are anticipated:

**C1.4.1**  The City Centre will continue its development as the principal commercial, civic and cultural centre of Porirua and as a significant regional centre.

**C1.4.2**  The City Centre will continue to provide for convenient access for motor vehicles, buses, cyclists and pedestrians. Pedestrian links, cycleways and long and short term parking will be provided along with traffic calming mechanisms in order to create a safe, convenient and aesthetically pleasing shopping environment.

**C1.4.3**  The emphasis will be on the creation of a variety of clearly identified social and cultural focal points within the City Centre for all persons using the City Centre.
C1.4.4 The use of standards will establish and maintain a minimum level of amenity, safety and health for the benefit of Porirua residents, people visiting and working in the City Centre, and protect and enhance the natural environment and the built environment.
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