C3 SUBURBAN ZONE

Resource Management Act 1991

Section 5 of the Resource Management Act (RMA) is concerned with the promotion of the "sustainable management of the natural and physical resources". In achieving this aim through the District Plan process the Council shall have regard to the "actual or potential effect of activities on the environment."

The community has invested considerable resources into building and developing the Suburban Zone; in terms of the provision of public services (such as roads, sewerage and water reticulation, and street lighting, etc.), the provision and development of public open spaces, and the development of residential and commercial buildings and properties. Accordingly, the Suburban Zone represents an important and valuable physical resource which should be managed as a sustainable resource for present and future generations.


The report "Residential Needs and Standards" prepared by Council in 1991, formed the basis upon which the key resource management issues concerning the City's residential resource were determined as part of the preparation of this section of the District Plan. The research undertaken at the time showed that the serviced and readily serviced residential land within the City could accommodate at least 5,000 additional dwellings, not including multi-units and infill subdivision. This was an increase of 5,000 over the existing resource of 14,100 (1991). Accordingly, it was identified at that time that there were significant areas of land available for suburban development in many parts of the Suburban Zone.

Traditional views about the role of bulk and location requirements in markedly influencing property values have tended to be challenged by data supplied in this report. Locational factors such as living adjacent to coastal areas, or outstanding views, or site development works, e.g. landscaping and associated residential amenities, have a far greater influence on the value of land than the layout of sections and buildings. Many of the least expensive properties in the City were those developed by the Housing Corporation with large sections and wide separation distances between buildings etc. In contrast, there were many expensive properties with relatively small sections, with limited outdoor living space, poor vehicular access and no provision for off-street parking etc. This reflected both a trend to infill in areas with high land values, and the high values associated with many of the areas of the City which were originally developed as baches with small sections. This information therefore, at that time called into question the merit of having strict controls on the bulk and location of buildings on properties and controls on the subdivision allotment sizes.

Lifestyle changes in the general population also presented a strong case for allowing greater flexibility in the control of allotment sizes and site layout. Family homes were found to have generally increased in size as changes in indoor and outdoor recreational activities have occurred. Increased television, video, and computer usage had meant that families had become more inclined to seek this form of recreation. Accordingly, the need for large areas of outdoor living space was found to have reduced over the years. Increased mobility generated by increases in private motor vehicle ownership had also meant an
increase in formalised sports at sports grounds and indoor facilities. Furthermore, longer working hours reduced the amount of time that people could devote to maintaining large gardens and residential sections.

**Non-residential Activities in the Suburban Zone**

In 1991, around 700 businesses in Porirua City gave a suburban address for their business. The businesses fell into a very wide range of New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification categories. This is consistent with research undertaken on the City's economy which suggests a growing number of small businesses with limited incomes. These businesses might typically be a semi-employment business where the income would be insufficient to cover the rental of commercial premises. Economic research has also identified that unemployment is not confined to any one occupational group, and is not expected to dramatically decline in the near future. On the basis of this research, and following public consultation, it was decided to broaden the range of activities allowed in the Suburban Zone, and to set the level of discretionary activities at the point where the scale or nature of the activity would be significantly different to that of the Suburban Zone generally.

One area of the Suburban Zone where non-residential activities can be expected to occur is in the Baxter’s Knob commercial recreation policy area, on the Aotea Block. This area retains an underlying zoning of Suburban Zone as it is possible that parts of the area could be developed for residential purposes at a later date if commercial recreation activities prove not to be viable. In the meantime, however, it is expected that Baxter’s Knob will prove to be an attractive location for commercial recreation activities, just as it is currently for a range of more passive recreation activities. If not appropriately managed, however, non-residential activities could significantly affect the amenity values of the surrounding environment through generation of unreasonable noise levels, low quality of building design, loss of vegetation or other adverse visual effects and effects from increased traffic. Baxter’s Knob is also the location of an existing broadcasting and telecommunications facility and hence some protection of the coverage area from this existing infrastructure is necessary. The rules and standards of the plan seek to manage these effects and also, via the policy overlay, the reasonable expectations of nearby property owners and occupiers.

**Infill Development in Porirua City**

To a large extent, the District Plan has achieved its intended purpose set in the 1990’s for the Suburban Zone, enabling development to occur with a reasonably high level of flexibility in design options and outcomes. However, there have been numerous changes within Porirua City since the 1991 report and the Plan being made operative in 1999.

Infill housing of established suburbs is provided for in the District Plan as a way to facilitate a compact, sustainable urban form. While this has facilitated some diversification in the range of housing choice within the City and enabled a greater range of housing needs to be met, in some cases the benefits of infill housing have resulted in reduced amenity for adjoining property owners and a reduction in streetscape quality.

In particular, the District Plan’s flexible accommodation of infill development has enabled infill development to occur at a scale, rate and in a form that was not anticipated at the time that the Plan was promulgated. In some cases, this
has resulted in development that is incompatible and uncharacteristic with its surrounding neighbourhood and has provided little on-site amenity for residents.

A region wide assessment of similar developments within other city councils in the Wellington region has shown that this is not a unique issue for the City.

**A Standards Based Approach**

While recognising these changing lifestyles and demands, and the desire of private landowners to have a minimum of control placed on the activities that they wish to conduct on their land, there is a need to ensure that adjoining landowners and the residential resource itself are not adversely affected by such activities.

Accordingly, the approach adopted in this section of the Plan is to place the emphasis on assessing potential environmental impacts through a series of activity standards which must be met in order for an activity or structure to be a permitted activity. Failure to meet one or more of these standards means that a resource consent would be required, at which time a full and comprehensive assessment of the resulting environmental effects would be undertaken prior to a decision on the application.

**C3.1 OBJECTIVE**

**TO ENCOURAGE SUBURBAN ACTIVITIES TO UTILISE LAND MOST SUITABLE FOR THAT PURPOSE.**

**Explanation**

The Council will encourage the suburban use of land within the Suburban Zone, which is suitable for urban development on the basis that the land can be serviced with reticulated water and sewerage systems, is able to be provided with appropriate roading, access and parking, and has no topographical or natural hazard constraints which would preclude development.

In order to accommodate the demand for residential growth, land needs to be made available for suburban growth. Council's research has identified that there was sufficient land zoned under the Transitional District Plan to accommodate the anticipated demand for the next twenty years.

The purpose of ensuring that there is sufficient quantity of suitable land to meet the anticipated growth is to enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing. The suitability of land, in sustainable management terms, means not only physical suitability but also balancing the other objectives for Rural, Industrial or City Centre Zones. It also seeks to maximise the use of existing resources, including infrastructure.
C3.1.1 Policy

To define a Suburban Zone which provides for the present and future suburban development needs of Porirua City.

Explanation

The Suburban Zone recognises the existing residential resource and suburban shopping centres, and allows for its future expansion into areas suitable for residential development.

Method of Implementation

The six residential zones provided for in the Porirua City Transitional District Plan 1991 have been incorporated into one Suburban Zone. The extent of this zone is shown on the Planning Maps.

Principal Reasons

The Suburban Zone boundary incorporates all six residential zones provided for by the Porirua City Transitional District Plan. No new areas of rural land have been included in recognition of the fact that there is sufficient land available within these boundaries for up to 5000 additional dwellings (not including infill subdivision and multi unit development – Source: Porirua City Council Residential Needs and Standards Report, 1991). Based on future growth projections for the City, it is anticipated that there will be sufficient land available for suburban purposes within the 10 year life of this Plan.

Growth trends will however be monitored and reviewed through the use of population statistics released periodically by Statistics New Zealand, and through the monitoring of building and resource consents.

An analysis of the residential zones in the Transitional District Plan showed that the differences in the nature of development between these zones did not warrant different subdivision, and bulk and location standards. On this basis, a single Suburban Zone has been adopted.

In identifying land generally suitable for suburban purposes, it is necessary to balance the competing demands for the use of resources with the suitability of the land for such uses. There will be some land within the Suburban Zone which physically cannot be built on, or at least, is generally unsuitable for building on, while there will be other land which may be more appropriately left as rural farmland, or left undeveloped for conservation purposes, and there will be other land generally suitable for low density residential building forms. Such land uses may be an efficient use of resources, particularly when regard is had to the topography and other characteristics of the land. Furthermore, the zoning of land for suburban purposes does not guarantee that full urban services are available. Where adequate services are not available, the financial contributions part of the Plan provides for these to be provided by the subdivider or developer. Council will ensure that reticulated urban services are provided. Council will retain a discretion over the appropriate level of such services, and of other services and utilities that are required to be constructed at the time of the development.
C3.1.2 Policy

To encourage the maximum utilisation of the existing infrastructure and resources by encouraging suburban activities in areas which are already serviced.

Explanation

There are areas of land which already have services in place and are suitable for suburban activities. These areas shall be specified in the District Plan, and residential development shall be a permitted activity in those areas.

Method of Implementation

District Plan rules require a resource consent for all subdivision in the Suburban Zone. Where subdivision occurs, the Council may impose conditions on a resource consent to ensure the existing infrastructure is used efficiently.

Secondly, where new land is being developed, the Council will ensure the utilities needed to service the development are provided. Reticulated urban services will be required. Council will retain discretion over the appropriate level of such services, and other services and utilities required to be constructed at the time of the development, and the manner of their construction. This is to ensure that while future development potential of the land is not comprised, some services that are required to be constructed at the time of subdivision may be commensurate with the impact of the proposed development.

Principal Reasons

Considerable investment has been put into the establishment of urban infrastructure such as roading, and reticulated water supply and sewerage systems. The efficient utilisation of this existing infrastructure is considered to be a sustainable use of public resources, and development will be channelled in the first instance to these areas.

C3.2 OBJECTIVE

TO ENCOURAGE AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH CONTINUES TO SUSTAIN PORIRUA CITY'S SUBURBAN ZONE AS AN ATTRACTIVE, HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE.

Explanation

It is important for the wellbeing of the community that the Suburban Zone continues to be an attractive place in which to live.

There has been a considerable amount of investment in Porirua City's suburban resources, both in terms of physical structures (buildings), and the supporting infrastructure (roading, sewerage and water supply). There has also been a considerable amount of investment put into developing natural resources, such as reserves and native vegetation, to provide an appropriate level of residential amenity.

There are some 16,368 dwellings (2006 census data) in Porirua City which provide homes for some 48,500 people (2006 census data). In addition, there are also a number of activities and facilities associated with the Suburban Zone
which service the needs of the City's residents (such as shops and schools). As such, the Suburban Zone is a particularly significant resource, primarily as a place to live. It is therefore necessary to promote and continue to encourage the use of this area as a place for residing.

C3.2.1 Policy

To protect and enhance the amenity and character of the residential resource by defining standards for the bulk and location of buildings, the provision of open space, and the nature and scale of activities.

Explanation

The suburban resource is a combination of buildings, infrastructure, communities and community facilities, and open spaces. These natural and physical resources contribute to the amenity and functioning of the Suburban Zone. Together these factors combine to make up the City's suburban resource.

It is the Suburban Zone's function to provide a good environment for people to live in. Accordingly, activity standards have been used which specify a minimum acceptable level of environmental effect at which an activity can operate if it is to be acceptable within the context of the surrounding environment.

Method of Implementation

District Plan rules and standards will be used to achieve this policy. The standards will ensure that the present levels of amenity are maintained in relation to setbacks from boundaries, noise, access, parking, etc. It is anticipated that the majority of residential dwellings and accessory buildings will be able to meet the activity standards and therefore be permitted activities. The rules and standards more specifically will control the scale and character of non-residential activities, and residential buildings which cannot meet one or more of the bulk and location requirements.

Five groups of activity are identified that require special consideration and these are as follows:

(a) Temporary activities, such as markets, fairs and other promotional activities in the Suburban Zone will generally fall into the discretionary activity category. Activities of this nature can contribute significantly to the health and vitality of the City as a whole. However if not managed carefully such activities can cause significant short-term traffic and parking problems etc.

(b) Temporary military training activities can vary considerably in their scale, nature and intensity. The Plan makes provision for certain types of temporary military training as permitted activities provided compliance with the permitted activity standards is achieved. Where the nature, scale or intensity is such that these standards cannot be met, they will be considered as discretionary activities.
(c) In balancing the need to allow a variety of activities against the need to protect community health, and retain the character and amenity of the suburban neighbourhoods, it has been determined that some activities, particularly those that create an objectionable odour, are generally not acceptable activities in the Suburban Zone. Offensive trades (refer to the definition for "offensive trade") shall therefore be non-complying activities.

(d) A second category of activity 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.

(e) Vehicle yards have been specifically listed as a discretionary activity as distinct from other activities. The character and nature of a vehicle yard is very different from the character of residential areas. The parking of vehicles on large expanses of hard surfacing, banners and flags, signage, and floodlighting etc. contrast in character to a normal residential street scene. It is appropriate to have a measure of discretion in assessing the merits of individual applications. On this basis vehicle yards will be a discretionary activity and subject to a resource consent application.

Building controls, under the Building Act 1991, also ensure minimum standards of building design for the purposes of natural daylight in habitable rooms, accessways, and internal and external structures. These requirements are imposed through the building consent process. Where relevant industry standards exist these will provide a key method of guidance in the consideration of resource consent applications.

Principal Reasons

The purpose of this policy is to protect the suburban resource from activities which result in significant adverse environmental effects. The suburban resource is comprised predominantly of residential properties. The attractiveness of a residential area as a place to live can be defined according to the following:

1. Pleasantness - matters which have a significant impact on the desirability of an area as a place to live, as determined by such factors as the level of noise, sunlight, privacy and overshadowing, views, streetscape, open space etc.; and

2. Character - this can be defined with respect to the scale of the activity, the appearance of the buildings or area, and the way the activity relates to the surrounding area. These factors are controlled generally by conventional bulk and location requirements; and

3. Natural/Ecological effects - these matters go beyond the compatibility of one activity with others (as outlined in 1 and 2 above), and relate more to the effect on land, water and air. For example, uncontrolled levels of earthworks may cause environmental degradation of adjacent waterways through increased water and soil run-off, and the destruction of sensitive ecosystems.
The first two categories, 'pleasantness' and 'character,' together constitute amenity. The RMA defines amenity values as:

"... those natural and physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes."

The "amenity" of the Suburban Zone can therefore be seen as a number of interrelated factors which individually may be relatively unimportant in relation to the overall qualities and conditions constituting the amenities of the area. A proposed change in some of those qualities and conditions may affect only a few neighbouring occupiers. Other qualities and conditions may be important or even fundamental to the amenities of that neighbourhood and a proposed change in them may affect appreciably all the persons who enjoy the amenities of the neighbourhood.

The Council has adopted a standards approach to controlling the scale and other effects of activities in the Suburban Zone. Activity standards specify a maximum permissible level at which an activity may operate, for example, in relation to noise or vehicle movements etc. Activities not able to meet these standards are deemed to have potential adverse environmental effects beyond what is considered acceptable. Such activities or structures would require a resource consent application at which stage a full assessment of the potential effects may be undertaken.

The standards allow flexibility for a range of building types, building locations and activities, while also ensuring that the amenities of neighbouring occupiers are not adversely affected. Limits have also been placed on building bulk, siting, height, site coverage, and providing a minimum outdoor living area. Allowing a wide range of building sites on a section provides a greater opportunity for individuals to obtain the maximum sun, view, privacy and design flexibility, while also ensuring that a certain level of amenity is maintained both on an individual site and within the surrounding neighbourhood.

No specific activity standards have been included on sunlight, daylight, privacy, and loss of views. This is due to a number of reasons. There is no absolute right as an owner of land to the preservation of his or her private view, either in common law or in planning law; and an owner is consequently not entitled to have District Plan provisions made for the absolute protection of that view. There are a vast range of circumstances created by differences in the topography and size of sites, the design and size of buildings, and in particular the variations in the general public's perceptions of what is acceptable and what is not. It is not possible to have definitive standards on subjective issues such as privacy and views. To attempt to have such standards for permitted activities would create more problems than it is likely to solve. On this basis the Council has not attempted to control these amenity issues through the use of specific permitted activity standards. However, the yard requirements, site coverage limits, outdoor living space requirement and height restrictions specified in the Plan, which are both measurable and able to be uniformly applied across the City, together contribute to ensuring an acceptable density and size of development sufficient to maintain minimum levels of sunlight, daylight, retention of significant views, and loss of privacy.
However, where one or more of these minimum standards cannot be met, and is therefore subject to a resource consent, the Council will, on a case by case basis, assess the potential adverse effects on these amenity issues. When assessing non-compliances with the minimum standard, the Council will give particular consideration to any cumulative adverse effects arising from multiple non-compliances with the standards.

Bulk and location standards for buildings have also been directed towards providing neighbours with a reasonable degree of protection rather than seeking to standardise the layout of houses on sections. A minimum area of outdoor living is also required to be provided for each dwelling unit to ensure that a certain level of on-site usable space for both recreational use and internal amenity is provided for residents.

No minimum size standard has been specified for allotments in an attempt to encourage a variety of allotment sizes, with a range of residential buildings designed to reflect the demands of the market. The standards relating to bulk and location will however ensure that allotments are created of sufficient size and configuration to accommodate a habitable dwelling. Where the minimum permitted activity standards are not met, the Council will consider the degree to which non-compliance results in a development density that is not consistent or compatible with the surrounding residential environment.

Other activity standards have been imposed which relate primarily to controlling the scale of activities. In particular controls have been imposed on vehicular movements, water usage from the public mains, and waste water discharges.

Standards have also been imposed on the third category of effect relating to the control of natural or ecological effects. These standards apply to such matters as earthworks, the removal of native vegetation, and hazardous substances.

C3.2.2 Policy

To allow non-residential activities which do not detract from the amenity values of the Suburban Zone.

Explanation

Some non-residential activities e.g. dairies, are a recognised part of the Suburban Zone and serve the needs of the local community. Other activities e.g. small commercial businesses may have little or no effect. This policy recognises and allows for such activities provided they do not cause adverse effects beyond the boundary of the site.

Method of Implementation

District Plan rules will be used to implement this policy by way of activity standards. These standards will set levels at which non-residential uses may operate as permitted activities. Activities unable to comply with these standards will be subject to a resource consent where the activity would be approved subject to conditions; or where the activity is inappropriate, and the adverse environmental effects cannot be adequately mitigated by conditions, the application will be refused.
Principal Reasons

There is a wide range of non-residential activities occurring within the Suburban Zone. Some of these activities serve the residential area by making it a more attractive place to live (such as dairies and childcare centres). The studies also showed that a range of business activities are currently located in the City’s Suburban Zone. It is important therefore to recognise that the Suburban Zone provides an important source of employment for local residents and these legitimate activities should be allowed for in the Suburban Zone.

Some activities have the potential to have significant adverse effects beyond the boundaries of the site. The District Plan shall therefore specify a set of minimum standards which any activity must comply with if it is to be permitted. In some suburban areas there are small clusters of industrial activity which will be retained on the basis of existing use rights. New industrial activities which border onto suburban activity will however be required to meet the standards of the Suburban Zone.

C3.2.3 Policy

To provide and maintain reserves and open spaces for the purposes of improving the amenity values of the Suburban Zone.

Explanation

Open space in both public and private ownership, is a major factor contributing to the character and amenity of the Suburban Zone.

Method of Implementation

The financial contribution provisions in Part E of the Plan provide for the taking of a recreation and civic development contribution from subdividers and developers. This contribution provides the financial basis for the purchase and development of new reserves and the improvement of existing reserves and other recreational facilities throughout the Suburban Zone.

The Recreation and Civic Development Contribution is intended to provide not only for the recreational needs of the neighbourhoods where development is occurring but also for the recreational needs of the wider community through the provision of reserves for sports fields and other recreation facilities such as tennis courts. In the past, Council took land as well as cash for reserves. This led to situations where Council was given land that was of little recreational value. The taking of cash under the Recreation and Civic Development Contribution will enable Council to acquire reserves that meet the needs of the community more appropriately.

The Recreation and Civic Development Contribution sets the maximum amount of contribution that may be required at time of subdivision or development for reserves, open space and civic development. There is a range of circumstances in which it may be appropriate to take less than the maximum amount of contribution that is specified in E1 Recreation and Civic Development Contribution.

Without precluding other considerations, Council will take into account the following matters when considering whether or not to reduce or waive the Recreation and Civic Development Contribution required from an applicant for a subdivision or land use consent:
(a) Whether or not the applicant for the resource consent or any predecessor in title of the applicant, has on this or any earlier subdivision or development in the same locality made (prior to or after the commencement of the Resource Management Act 1991), a contribution in excess of the requirements of the provisions of E1 of this Plan relating to Recreation and Civic Development Contributions or the reserve requirements of the Local Government Act 1974 or any equivalent former legislation;

(b) The nature, purpose and utility of the reserves vested where the excess contribution was in the form of land;

(c) The adequacy of the reserves in the neighbourhood where the subdivision or development is taking place; and

(d) Whether or not the purpose of the Recreation and Civic Development Contribution as stated in E1.1 is unduly compromised by any proposed reduction or waiver.

(e) With regard to proposals associated with the Aotea Block, the high ratio of reserve land provided through the Comprehensive Development Plan Process is appropriate given the landscape values of the block, and of itself this is unlikely to be accepted as a basis for justifying reductions or waivers of Recreation and Civic Development contributions on subsequent subdivision or land use proposals."

The Council may also use the annual planning process to identify financial priorities for the provision of further open spaces on a three year programming basis and through the development of reserve management plans for existing reserves. This will be based on an analysis of present provision, and future needs, of the entire Suburban Zone.

Principal Reasons

The site coverage and yard requirements for the Zone ensure that there will be a measure of open space throughout the Zone. In addition, provision must be made for the public open spaces which contribute to the overall character and amenity of the Zone. These include informal areas e.g. bushy gullies, small formal areas e.g. neighbourhood playgrounds, through to major open space resources e.g. playing fields. In many cases the only time at which these resources can be obtained is at the time that a subdivision is laid out.

C3.2.4 Policy

To allow for the ongoing use of existing non-residential buildings and facilities in the Suburban Zone in a manner which does not detract from the long term amenity or character of the Zone.

Explanation

This policy applies particularly to such areas as the Porirua Hospital and the Royal New Zealand Police College where there are substantial non-residential buildings and facilities.
Method of Implementation

While the suburban permitted activity standards include scale of operation limits for non-residential activities, this policy provides the recognition that there is a difference between the creation of a large new non-residential building/activity and the minor alteration of an existing building or activity. This matter will be taken into account in the consideration of resource consents for alterations to activities or buildings in the Suburban Zone.

Principal Reasons

There are a significant number of existing large non-residential buildings in the Suburban Zone. Activities of this scale might not be generally acceptable throughout the Zone. It is recognised that in some situations e.g. the Porirua Hospital, where the new zoning is significantly changed from the previous zoning, and where the existing activities are not imposing an unacceptable environmental effect on the existing adjacent activities, there is a need for transition provisions which allow these buildings to be used for as long as they are needed, and to be modified if necessary consistent with that established use.

C3.2.5 Policy

To enable the creation of a range of residential development types and densities to reflect the diversity of needs and housing choices in the community.

Explanation

This policy recognises that conventional types of housing and conventional densities of residential development do not necessarily meet the needs of all sectors in the community. People’s housing needs often vary as they progress through different stages of their lives. There are many people, for example, who prefer to live in an apartment rather than a traditional detached dwelling with large yard areas. Increasing residential densities in appropriate locations can also offer benefits in terms of improved efficiency of infrastructure provision and increased catchment areas for public transport and commercial services. The district plan aims to provide opportunities for all kinds of housing, subject to appropriate provisions to ensure that potential adverse effects are avoided or mitigated.

Method of Implementation

The following methods have been adopted to implement this policy:

(a) District Plan rules, standards and assessment criteria (including a Medium Density Residential Policy Area)

(b) Non-regulatory methods (e.g. this may include design guidelines, design advisory services and private covenants)
Principal Reasons

The Suburban Zone provisions in the District Plan enable medium density residential developments to be considered throughout the zone. In respect of the Aotea Block, however, the Plan identifies a policy area where medium density residential development is given additional encouragement. The Aotea Block is a new greenfield development area located in close proximity to the Porirua City Centre. Well-designed medium density residential development in those parts of the Policy Area intended for residential development has the potential to maximise the utilisation of these most strategic locations within the Block while contributing to its character and identity. In other words, provision of this type of development maximises the number of future residents able to enjoy the advantage of the most strategic locations and their linkages to the City Centre.

The Medium Density Residential Policy Area overlay covers the western part of the Block which is generally all the area within about 1.5km of the existing Porirua Railway Station (as shown on the Aotea Planning Map). The lower, western part of the Commercial Recreation Policy Area is excluded from the Medium Density Policy Area only because of the anticipated commercial recreation use of Baxters Knob. If, however, the land should revert to residential use at any time, then its proximity to the main Aotea recreation reserve and the Aotea Mixed Use Policy Area (including neighbourhood shops) means that it would be suitable for medium density residential development.

The policy area provides opportunities for medium density residential development within the walkable catchment of Porirua City Centre and Railway Station, in an effort to grow long term sustainability and vitality of the City Centre and provide viable alternatives to private vehicle movements. The purpose of this policy and methods is to cater for different residential market segments and to encourage comprehensively designed medium density residential development in this strategic location while ensuring that it is well designed.

C3.2.6 Policy

To ensure that medium density residential developments are well designed and contribute to the character and identity of the area in which they are located.

Explanation

It is recognised that without appropriate environmental safeguards and standards of design, some medium density residential developments could result in undesirable amenity outcomes, for those living in the developments, for neighbours, and for the general public in the area.

Accordingly, this policy provides a framework for district plan provisions which ensure that medium density residential developments are designed to appropriate standards and are assessed in the context of the area in which they are located.
Method of Implementation

The following methods have been adopted to implement this policy:

(a) District Plan rules, standards and assessment criteria (including a Medium Density Residential Policy Area)

(b) Non-regulatory methods (e.g. this may include design guidelines, design advisory services and private covenants)

Principal Reasons

Council recognises that quality, layout and design of an urban area can strongly influence the amenity, attractiveness and functioning of that area and the safety and wellbeing of people living in the area. In respect of the Aotea Block, the Medium Density Residential Policy Area provides an opportunity for a wider variety of market choice in the housing stock, which is of a high quality and contributes to a sense of place. Assessment criteria are included in the district plan to ensure these outcomes.

Medium Density is also considered an efficient use of the land resource because it provides for a higher density of population within a localised area which makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and enables the support of public transport routes and community facilities.

C3.3 OBJECTIVE

TO ENCOURAGE THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTRES AND THE AOTEA MIXED USE POLICY AREA.

Explanation

The existing suburban shopping centres represent a significant urban resource. The sustainable use of these centres will therefore be encouraged.

Porirua City contains a number of significant and established suburban centres including Plimmerton, Mana, Whitby, Waitangirua, Cannons Creek and Titahi Bay. These centres are significantly different from their residential surroundings. Many of the centres are under utilised and the 'do nothing' option is likely to lead to the continued decline of these areas. This has the effect of creating inefficiencies in the use of an existing resource, with negative spin-off effects on the surrounding areas. The centres are generally solidly constructed with good parking areas, and are well serviced. While the function of providing services to the local community is in the hands of the market, Council can encourage the utilisation of the built resource by permitting a wide range of activities.

In addition to the existing suburban shopping centres, the proposed development of the Aotea Block is to include a small new Suburban Shopping Centre area in the eastern part of the block, and also a new Aotea Mixed Use Policy Area to the east and south of Aotea College. The latter policy area will include an area of neighbourhood shops but may also include a range of other community facilities such as a nursery, cultural centre and a tertiary institution. Both the new Suburban Shopping Centre and the new Aotea Mixed Use Policy Area may be used for social services such as medical clinics and community support services. These areas may also include a mix of non-residential and
residential uses, e.g. dwellings over shops. Mixing residential and non-residential uses in these areas helps improve their vitality, viability and safety.

C3.3.1 Policy

**To encourage a wide range of activities in the Suburban Shopping Centre Area while ensuring any adverse effects on the environment are avoided, remedied or mitigated.**

**Explanation**

Providing for a wide range of activities, with suitable performance standards, is one means of encouraging the efficient utilisation of Suburban Shopping Centre Areas which currently have high levels of vacancy.

Some commercial activities however have the potential to adversely impact on the neighbouring occupiers and land uses by causing noise, overshadowing and loss of privacy, parking and traffic safety problems etc. For each environmental effect an activity standard has been set which cannot be exceeded.

**Method of Implementation**

The Suburban Shopping Centres have been identified on the Planning Maps as distinct Areas within the Suburban Zone. The rules and standards for parking, vehicle movements, signs etc in these Areas reflect the existing development and provide for a wide range of activities.

**Principal Reasons**

Purpose built Suburban Shopping Centres are quite different in character from their residential surroundings. The centres are in locations which are suitable for a high level of activity from a traffic perspective, and where, over the years, there has been community acceptance of non-residential activity. These areas include significant areas of car parking, provision for service vehicles, and built structures.

A wide range of activities is already locating within the general residential area, and the range of such activities is likely to increase. The suburban centres can, due to their comprehensive design, more readily accommodate activities which would not be acceptable in the general Suburban Zone. This policy is intended to allow this trend to occur, and in so doing, promote the efficient use of that resource.

C3.3.2 Policy

**To ensure that new suburban shopping centre areas, and new activities within the Aotea Mixed Use Policy Area (and individual activities and buildings within such areas) are designed and constructed to a high quality and standard of appearance.**
Explanation

The quality, layout and design of an urban area can strongly influence the amenity and attractiveness and functioning of that area and the safety and wellbeing of people living in the area. This policy is aimed at creating a framework to ensure a high quality of appearance from the development of suburban shopping centres located near residential areas.

Method of Implementation

The following methods have been adopted to implement this policy:

(a) District Plan rules, standards and assessment criteria (including a Suburban Shopping Centre policy overlay and an Aotea Mixed Use Policy Area overlay)

(b) Private Covenants

Principal Reasons

Council recognises that urban form can strongly influence the desirability and liveability of an area and ultimately the success of a newly developed urban area. As part of the overall development of the Aotea Block there is a strong focus on sustaining a high quality of design to assist in the development of a positive sense of place. It is also important the establishment of new suburban shopping centres are appropriately managed in relation to their interface with surrounding residential properties.”

C3.3.3 Policy

To avoid large-scale or widespread shopping activities in the Aotea Mixed Use Policy Area so as not to undermine the retail role of the Porirua City Centre and consequently its function as the primary commercial and social focus for the City.

C3.3.4 Policy

To avoid the consequential loss of vitality and amenity from the Porirua City Centre due to a significant redistribution of office or entertainment facilities. Activities shall not result in significant adverse consequential effects on the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of the community served by that centre.

Explanation

The Porirua City Centre is the City’s principal commercial, civic and cultural focus. As part of these functions the City Centre is a significant shopping area serving not only the community of Porirua City, but also people from around metropolitan area of greater Wellington. The commercial and entertainment sectors also contribute to the vitality of the centre, particularly during normal working hours (commercial) and at night and during public and school holidays (entertainment). Porirua’s City Centre is therefore a valuable resource, which provides significant social and economic benefit, and its function warrants protection.
This policy aims to ensure that activity within the Aotea Mixed Use Policy Area does not compromise the function of the City Centre. The particular focus of the policy, and its related rules and standards is to protect the role of retail within the City Centre. As noted, shopping is a key functional element of the Porirua City Centre. If this element is compromised by the unrestricted establishment of shops elsewhere in the City, then the City Centre’s social value and social amenity will be significantly undermined as a consequence. Another, less direct, focus is to ensure that significant redistribution of office activity and entertainment activity does not occur as these functions also play an important part in maintaining a vibrant City Centre in conjunction with shops.

Method of Implementation

(a) District Plan rules, standards and assessment criteria

Principal Reason

The Council recognises the City Centre as a significant retail centre and wants to ensure that future development of the Aotea Mixed Use Policy Area does not adversely affect its vibrancy and efficiency.

C3.4 OBJECTIVE


Explanation

The site is prominent from a wide viewing catchment and as such its significant amenity and landscape values need to be protected. Baxters Knob is listed as a Landscape Protection Area under the District Plan. It forms part of the main ridgeline running through the Block, the values of which Policy C9.1.7 identifies and aims to protect. Further any commercial recreation development needs to avoid, remedy or mitigate its potential adverse effects on the amenity of surrounding land and properties and functioning of existing utility infrastructure.

C3.4.1 Policy

To identify a specific area around Baxter’s Knob in which commercial recreation activities are encouraged subject to avoiding, remedying or mitigating potential adverse effects on Baxters Knob, its amenity and landscape values, and on the amenity values of the surrounding area.

Explanation

This policy provides the framework for the establishment of rules and performance standards which encourage suitable commercial recreation activities to locate in the Baxter’s Knob area while allowing potential adverse effects to be fully addressed. It is intended that these activities will contribute to a sense of place and enhance the identity of Porirua City while enabling the creation of employment and enjoyment opportunities. It is also intended that these activities will be designed to take into account the landscape values of...
Baxters Knob as recognised through Policy C9.1.7 and by the status given in the District Plan to parts of Baxters Knob as a "Landscape Protection Area".

**Method of Implementation**

The following methods have been adopted to implement this policy:

(a) District Plan rules, standards and assessment criteria (including a Commercial Recreation Policy Area)

(b) Private Covenants

**Principal Reasons**

Specific provision is being made for commercial recreation activities in order to take advantage of the significant natural attributes (elevation and great views) of the Baxters Knob area, and to potentially boost regional visitor numbers with consequent economic and employment benefits. The main purpose is to provide a clear indication to both potential investors and to nearby residents that, subject to meeting all requirements, this is a suitable area to “develop” recreational and tourist activities.

Any residential development (only after 2010, if at all) would only be around the lower margins of the “Baxters Knob Commercial Recreation” area and outside the “Landscape Protection Area”. Without further amendment to the District Plan the standard provisions of the Suburban Zone will apply to any such residential development. However, as noted in the principal reasons to policy C3.2.5 the lower western portion of Baxter’s Knob would be suitable for Medium Density Residential Development and an appropriate change to the District Plan may be pursued in the future.

**C3.4.2 Policy**

To provide for the protection of the amenity and character of the Baxters Knob landscape protection area by defining permitted activity standards and assessment criteria.

**Explanation**

Baxters Knob is recognised as containing unique attributes and is a distinctive landmark located in close proximity to the City Centre. The Council is focused on protecting the unique attributes of Baxters Knob while sustaining the ability to develop activities which can complement and enhance the natural characteristics for the enjoyment of the wider community.

**Method of Implementation**

The following methods have been adopted to implement this policy:

(a) District Plan rules, standards and assessment criteria (including a Commercial Recreation Policy Area and Landscape Protection Area)

(b) Private Covenants
Principal Reasons

Protecting the amenity and character of Baxters Knob is part of the overall objective of achieving a high quality design throughout the Aotea Block. For this reason permitted activity standards have been defined which limit site coverage and vegetation clearance in the Landscape Protection Area. Commercial recreation activities are also subject to a range of permitted activity standards intended to limit the scale and impact of activities within the Commercial Recreation Policy Area. Assessment criteria have also been defined for all activities that require consent under D3.1.4 (iv).

Council also recognises the importance of this landmark in context to the surrounding environment and to attracting commercial recreational and tourism activities envisaged for the area.

C3.5 ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES ANTICIPATED

The following environmental outcomes are anticipated:

C3.5.1 A high standard of residential amenity which benefits the health and wellbeing of the community.

C3.5.2 A mix of residential and non-residential activities which creates an attractive and vibrant place in which to live and work.

C3.5.3 An extensive and well managed system of open spaces and reserves which enhance the amenities of the Suburban Zone and make it an attractive place to live.

C3.5.4 Suitable urban land available for use by present and future generations of Porirua City’s residents.

C3.5.5 All suburban activities serviced to an urban standard.

C3.5.6 Suburban Shopping Centres which reflect the needs of the local community by allowing for a range of activities with minimal adverse impacts on neighbouring land uses.

C3.5.7 Safe suburban streets and adequate pedestrian access and movement.
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