C13 Signs Objectives and Policies

C13 SIGNS

Signs play an important role in modern communications. In addition to advertising goods and services they also identify places, provide information about essential services and community facilities and control and direct traffic. The importance of this communications role needs to be balanced against the impact that excessive poorly designed or inappropriately located signs can have, particularly on the safety of traffic and the amenity values of an area.

Given the emphasis of Sections 6 and 7 of the Resource Management Act 1991, matters such as the protection and enhancement of the quality of the environment and amenity values are important considerations in the control of signs.

Council considers that signage is an important means of communication. It is therefore appropriate that some signs be allowed as permitted activities subject to specific conditions. These conditions would ensure that amenity values are maintained and driver distraction minimised for traffic safety reasons.

C13.1 Objective

TO ALLOW SIGNS WHICH ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE FUNCTIONS, CHARACTER AND AMENITIES OF EACH AREA OF THE CITY.

Explanation

Signs in the City Centre and Industrial Zones exist and are an important part of the success of those zones. Signs can contribute to the character of these zones and are often part of the design of a building or can be a statement of a business. The need to advertise is more associated with the City Centre and Industrial zones and there is general public acceptance to advertising in these zones.

C13.1.1 Policy

To allow signs in those areas where they will contribute to the commercial or industrial character and where the site activities benefit from advertising, and restrict the number and size of signs where they will detract from the character and amenity of the area.

Explanation

This policy recognises that signs are an essential part of City Centre and industrial zones but can have a negative effect on suburban and rural zones.

The purpose of this policy is therefore to provide for appropriate signage indicating the location and nature of businesses operating from that site. Signs that do not directly relate to the site are a discretionary activity.

Method of Implementation

The objectives and policies are to be achieved firstly, by way of the District Plan rules and standards, which govern the bulk and location of buildings. Where a sign fails to meet the relevant rules and standards for a permitted
C13. Signs Objectives and Policies

activity it will be dealt with as a discretionary activity and a resource consent required.

In the City Centre and Industrial Zone of the City the only controls on signs will be rules requiring that they relate to activities on the site, and the permitted activity performance standards for the bulk and location of buildings. A sign which cannot meet these requirements will be a discretionary activity.

In the Rural and Suburban Zones there are standards specifying the number and size of signs in order to protect the amenity of these areas. Flashing signs have the potential to create a significant impact on residential neighbours and on the overall character and amenity of a road and are a discretionary activity. Signs in the Rural Zone and visible to drivers on a State Highway are a discretionary activity.

The second method is by way of Council's Engineering Code of Practice. In the context of signs, this code relates to the roads within the City and to the safety and convenience of the use thereof.

The third method is by way of the Transit New Zealand Bylaw 1987/3. The effect of this bylaw is that no person may erect a sign on any part of a State Highway subject to the bylaw unless the Transit New Zealand consents in writing to such. This bylaw does not apply within 50 kph speed restriction areas.

Council's signs bylaw will continue to be used to manage the effects of signs within the City's roads.

Principal Reasons

The point at which the painting of a building becomes a sign is often unclear. It is therefore almost impossible to control the design of signs and the responsibility for their design should remain with the landowner as it is with any other form of development. Signs should be placed within the site to which they relate. They are usually an addition to an existing building or are sometimes a separate structure. Signs should therefore conform with the same site rules relating to control of development as any other structure. In rural and suburban zones where activities are not reliant on advertising and where signs can more noticeably impact on visual amenities, additional development controls will be necessary. Third party signs should not be permitted.

While signs can add to the vitality of a commercial area in a visual sense, they can also detract from the visual amenities in other areas. The amenities of the Rural and Suburban zones relate to natural open space and residential housing. In these areas advertising signs are not consistent with the general character and amenities and the areas do not generally contain activities that can justify large-scale commercial advertising. Outside the main City Centre and Industrial zones, signs should be restricted to informing people of a location rather than attracting attention.
C13. Signs Objectives and Policies

C13.1.2 Policy

To ensure that signs do not interfere with the safe and efficient use of roads and pedestrian ways.

Explanation

This policy seeks to ensure that signs do not create traffic hazards nor impair the efficient function of State Highway and district roads. Signs which could in the opinion of Council obstruct vision, cause confusion, distract drivers or create a hazardous situation are likely to be declined.

Secondly, in pedestrian areas signs should be of a high standard and well maintained. Where possible visual clutter can be avoided by encouraging amalgamation of a number of signs into one structure.

Method of Implementation

The objectives and policies are to be achieved firstly, by way of the District Plan rules and standards, which govern the bulk and location of buildings. Where a sign fails to meet the relevant rules and standards for a permitted activity it will be dealt with as a discretionary activity and a resource consent required.

In the City Centre and Industrial Zones the only controls on signs will be rules requiring that they relate to activities on the site, and the permitted activity performance standards for the bulk and location of buildings. A sign which cannot meet these requirements will be a discretionary activity.

In the Rural and Suburban Zones there are standards specifying the number and size of signs in order to protect the amenity of these areas. Flashing signs have the potential to create a significant impact on residential neighbours and on the overall character and amenity of a road and are a discretionary activity. Signs in the Rural Zone and visible to drivers on a State Highway are a discretionary activity.

Signs must also meet the requirements of the Building Act 1991. This is to ensure that they are soundly constructed, and do not endanger the public.

The third method is by way of the Transit New Zealand Bylaw 1987/3. The effect of this bylaw is that no person may erect a sign on any part of a State Highway subject to the bylaw unless the Transit New Zealand consents in writing to such. This bylaw does not apply within 50 kph speed restriction areas.

Council's signs bylaw will continue to be used to manage the effects of signs within the City's roads.

Principal Reasons

Many signs which contribute to the effective functioning of an area or which form an important part of a business or occupation are sited on legal road. In some localities these signs are sited on the berm, in other areas signs are attached to buildings and verandas which are directly above legal road. A consent is required for any sign located on or above public land.
The public has the right to expect the freedom and safe use of roads and footpaths. Any sign that overhangs or occupies legal road should be subject to controls that ensure that the structure does not interfere with the public’s right of use, and ensure that the construction and location of the sign is safe to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

C13.2 Environmental Outcomes Anticipated

The following environmental outcomes are anticipated:

C13.2.1 Adequate and reasonable provision is available for the advertising of goods, services and facilities.

C13.2.2 The special qualities of the physical, cultural and recreational features of the City which make it a pleasant place to live will be retained.

C13.2.3 Accepted standards relating to the amenity values of neighbouring properties will be retained.

C13.2.4 Expected standards of traffic safety will be retained.