

## PART 18 URBAN ISSUES

Part 18 shall be read in conjunction with Parts 37, 37A, 40 and 40A.

The following issues are currently the most significant in terms of Franklin's "urban" areas and activities:

### 18.1 GROWTH OF MAIN URBAN AREAS

Issues facing the District's main urban areas relate to growth management. Council is managing both residential and business growth throughout the District. Pukekohe, Waiuku and Tuakau all have their particular advantages and consequently all have potential to grow and develop. For example, Pukekohe is renowned for motorsport and equine activities, Waiuku has its estuary and steel mill and Tuakau is well-situated in relation to the ports of Auckland and Tauranga.

#### Urban design

The standard of urban design is an issue that Council is addressing by recognising the importance of the following:

- **Context:** acknowledging that buildings, places and spaces are complementary elements of towns and that a town is an integrated, holistic entity
- **Character:** reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of a town
- **Choice:** promoting diversity and choice for people
- **Connections:** supporting choice, social cohesion, social contact, vibrancy and safety
- **Creativity:** encouraging creativity and innovation
- **Custodianship:** promoting environmentally sustainable and responsive design solutions
- **Collaboration:** promoting good communication between, and co-ordinated actions from, decision-makers

#### Sustainable development

Sustainable development of the main urban areas is an issue that Councils is addressing by recognising the importance of the following:

- Containment and intensification, providing for new development in selected places where there are specific opportunities
- Integration of the elements live, work and play
- Planning for the provision of public infrastructure
- Providing for the integration of land use and transport
- Promoting enhancement of the aesthetic dimension of developments.
- Promoting healthy and safe places where business, social and cultural life can flourish, incorporating CPTED\* principles

\*crime prevention through environmental design

**18.2 PROVIDING FOR RURAL-RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES**

As another mechanism to counter the effects of 'rural sprawl' referred to in Section 1 of the Plan, and as a means of providing lifestyle choice the strategy is to provide for rural-residential activities in specified areas rather than generally throughout rural areas. This strategy is supported by providing for rural-residential subdivision in and around "urban" areas, as appropriate to each locality. The most extensive areas of rural-residential development currently are to the south of Tuakau, and to the south and east of Waiuku.

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## **18.4 MANAGING RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

The District's residential areas offer a wide range of locations and lifestyles. But all areas display a low intensity of development indicating an ongoing preference for the "quarter acre" section and a reliance in most rural and coastal villages on septic tanks (i.e. on-site wastewater disposal). In general on-site disposal of wastewater will be subject to more stringent standards, as set down by Regional Councils, and the result could be larger lot sizes in most settlements.

The Plan applies a number of different zones to the residential areas of the District with specific controls applying to each of those zones. In addition to the Residential and Rural-Residential Zone, the Plan also identifies a Village Zone. This approach recognises the diverse character of the District's residential areas and their different constraints and opportunities for growth. As a result, a single residential zone would not be justifiable.

Multi-unit housing standards and the provisions relating to "subdivision" need to be brought together so as to achieve a consistent level of amenity within residential areas irrespective of the types of land tenure. This is particularly so as cross-leasing is deemed to be "subdivision" under the Act. There is also a need to remove the inconsistencies in reserve contributions and "development impact fees" that have been payable between freehold and cross-lease subdivisions.

Where a residential or settlement community wants a particular character to be preserved ('village' 'heritage' or 'holiday'), or wants the Council to be proactive in improving an area (slowing traffic or extending footpaths), then a local plan may need to be prepared. Such a plan could lead to zone changes, or it may simply aim to steer the spending of money by the Council in that locality. Communities will need to take an active part in those plans, and may need to initiate their preparation or respond to the Council's Annual Plans as appropriate.

The Plan contains policies on improving residential areas and villages, but it is made clear that because this usually involves capital expenditure, the policies are subject always to the Council's Annual Plan process.

## 18.5 MANAGING BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Business activities are established within well-defined areas within the District. These areas have formed over time through both market forces and public controls (zoning). They signify that like activities benefit from proximity to like activities; that a central or main road location is very important to business activities; and that the community has sought to spatially confine or isolate the effects of business activities. The effects to be managed range from traffic, noise and odour, to visual and "amenity" impacts. Generally the effects of business activities have the greatest potential to generate adverse consequences at the boundaries of sites or areas which accommodate business activities. This includes roads; they often form the interface between land-use types, and always present a challenge in terms of their dual functions of providing access for, and enabling movement of, vehicles. The methods and rules of the Plan are aimed primarily at avoiding or mitigating the potential conflict at these interface areas.

Business areas represent decades of investment in physical resources by both the public and private sectors. It can be expected that the vast majority of businesses will continue to locate in these areas, in preference to entirely new areas. In considering the effects of activities, the Plan has to consider and appropriately manage the possibility of business activities seeking to locate outside the 'established' areas. The Plan also has to consider and manage the adverse effects of sensitive activities on physical resources within the Business Zone, Industrial Zone and Industrial Services Zone. This is called "REVERSE SENSITIVITY" (defined in Rule 50).

The business community is both experiencing and expecting less regulation and intervention. The business environment in New Zealand is constantly changing with greater exposure to "global" factors. The Franklin business community needs both simplicity and flexibility in a District Plan if it is to compete in the regional context. Scope should be provided for differing types and modes of business operation to establish, evolve, and move about within the District. For example it is considered desirable and appropriate that the same minimum requirements on businesses apply in both Waiuku and Tuakau, or Pukekohe and Paerata, assuming that similar infrastructural services and environmental constraints exist.

Higher environmental standards are now required of all INDUSTRIES, as set out in regional and district plans, and national environmental standards, effectively bringing them in line with cleaner and tidier RETAIL activities. In general, all businesses should satisfy the same 'bottom line' standards, no matter where they are located. Due consideration is to be taken for all activities, be they INDUSTRIAL or RETAIL or WHOLESale, based on principles of sustainability and impacts on infrastructure and the health and well-being of the community.

The Act challenges Plans to focus on the effects of business activities rather than their type. This should lead to the degree of flexibility which businesses are expecting by removing arbitrary zoning boundaries. It may also mean that businesses that have been able to justify poor site management and continuing adverse effects in areas (zones) set aside for 'undesirable' industries will be forced, in time, to 'tidy up'.

This Plan provides different business zones for different business activities because the effects of those activities are different. For example:

- Different types of businesses require different sized SITES. When larger SITES are divided into smaller sections, it reduces opportunities for those businesses requiring larger SITES. On the other hand, certain business operators require relatively small SITES to operate most effectively. Furthermore, small SITES help to retain human scale and small-town character. Thus, different minimum lot sizes apply to different business zones.
- Different business activities have the potential to adversely affect the environment in different ways. Different areas, due to their different man-made and natural characteristics, can accommodate different effects. Consequently, one particular area will be suited to some businesses but not suitable for other businesses.
- Retail activities outside town and village centres can have an adverse effect on town and village centres. Hence in some business zones the extent of RETAIL activity is more controlled than in other zones.

- Some activities are incompatible with each other, e.g. office activities are sensitive to the noise generated by the movement of heavy vehicles. As most INDUSTRIAL activities use heavy vehicles, it is prudent to separate OFFICE activities from INDUSTRIAL activities. The opportunity exists, for example, for INDUSTRIAL activities to obtain consent as a non-complying activity to operate in an area characterised by OFFICES with due regard to limitations on infrastructure and impacts on the environment.
- The ISZ requires considerable infrastructural investment for it to function effectively; this zone is a scarce resource. Thus business activities that are more appropriately located elsewhere should not be provided for in the ISZ. Similarly, the IZ requires considerable infrastructural investment and activities that are more appropriately located elsewhere should not be provided for in the IZ. Thus, different zones provide a measure of certainty that the needs of particular types of business activities will be met in the longer term.

Within the main urban areas of Pukekohe, Tuakau and Waiuku, a 'central' area can be seen to have developed, through a combination of public and private factors, to serve the needs of the shopping public. Off-road parking areas, shop-front verandahs, and seating and planting areas are the most obvious indications of this particular environment. The amenities of these central areas need to be recognised in the standards for managing the effects of business activities, in order that the social, economic and cultural strengths of this environment are maintained, and where practicable enhanced. Accordingly some of the 'bottom line' standards, such as permitted noise levels, are tougher for the defined "centres" of the *Business* zone (refer to Map104 for the "centres").

However, the exception to this is for parking standards. On-site parking requirements are generally less for the centres, in recognition of the following: the existence of dedicated off-road public parking areas and time-restricted kerbside parking spaces; properties are generally smaller and on-site parking can be impracticable; it is desirable that a greater intensity of on-site development is allowed, to allow for developments of greater benefit to a shopping environment (such as malls or arcades).

Business activities that are established in rural locations and not adjacent to "urban" areas need to be managed in more site-specific and activity-specific ways. In this category are the steel mill at Glenbrook and the timber mill on State Highway 2.

As a result, the District Plan has adopted a single business zone within the main urban areas of Waiuku, Tuakau and Pukekohe, whereby all businesses shall be assessed against the same development and performance standards.

Business activities are managed within the District's rural and coastal settlements by way of a Village Business Zone. The use of a Village Business Zone provides only for specified business activities that may have less adverse effects than some activities that may be established within the Business Zone. This is to ensure that business opportunities within the rural and coastal villages are in keeping with the rural and coastal character of the areas.

## 18.6 SUPPORTING CENTRAL BUSINESS (RETAILING) AREAS

There is a range of non-regulatory methods available to the Council and the community to achieve the desired central area/RETAILING environment. The principal alternative method to rules for supporting main retailing areas (town centres) is to actively support and improve their function and appearance, a proactive management approach which necessitates the allocation of capital funding. The Waiuku Heritage Concept and mainstreet work is a good example of implementing this proactive and strategic approach.

Arguably the Council already has a far more significant role, than its potential regulatory one under the Act, in terms of managing town centres. This is due to its financial responsibility for "service delivery" functions, such as:

- Roading;
- loading zones;
- kerb-side spaces;
- underground services;
- landscaping;
- community facilities (library; information; toilets);
- service lanes;
- parking areas;
- parking/loading restrictions (and enforcement);
- "amenity" works in roads and reserves (seats, street trees);
- public reserves

These Council functions, and the allocation of funds to them through the *Annual Plan*, have been and can continue to be used in a strategic and proactive way to achieve a range of "planning" objectives; objectives that previously were stated in District Schemes but without clear policies or explicit methods of implementation. Rules cannot achieve the many desirable outcomes that are achievable through these "other functions". Rules generally focus on the standards to be met when activities commence; rules cannot make things happen. This is particularly so for roads and other infrastructure, the key resources which support business activities and which are "developed" through *Annual Plan* processes.

To focus the strategic planning task, detailed centre plans need to be prepared, outside the District Plan context, and in consultation with the business and general community. Centre plans can have both short term and long term objectives, and can include a wide range of works and proposals affecting both public and private land. They can be supported by design guidelines and incentives where necessary to achieve agreed objectives. The costs of the capital works and other programmes would be shared by all those who would benefit.

While using a proactive approach to support the central business areas, there must be an understanding that the same level of support can not be provided in the outer business areas (of Pukekohe, Tuakau and Waiuku). This is in order that those activities that the community wants to see congregating in the central areas are not attracted out by increased amenity and convenience elsewhere. It would therefore be inappropriate to provide communal parking areas, or kerb-side parking restrictions and enforcement in the "outer" business areas of Pukekohe, Tuakau or Waiuku.

The Plan both supports and anticipates the preparation of centre plans which express the agreed objectives and policies of the community. Changes can be made to this District Plan to reflect these plans, particularly where a regulatory method is demonstrated to be the most appropriate way to achieve a specified aim of a centre plan.

**18.7 PUKEKOHE'S CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA**

The focus of activity in Pukekohe, particularly for retailing, is inside the "ring road". This area is well served with public parking areas and service lanes, and has seen a range of amenity works such as lights and street trees which have lifted its overall appeal. A range of community activities is also located in this area. Many properties remain underdeveloped. While there are two public reserves within the ring road, there is not an identifiable "town heart". A centre plan could bring this and related urban design matters into focus.

The District Plan will recognise the "town centre" as defined by the "ring road" in terms of some of the controls affecting development. But the Council acknowledges that it will be the other functions it performs which will become more significant in terms of the longer term viability and attractiveness of Pukekohe's central business area.

The designated "building lines" (Plan Map 101) are to support future "business centre development" initiatives aimed at improving traffic movement efficiencies, providing more kerb-side parking spaces, and creating *amenity areas*.

**18.8 TUAKAU'S CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA**

The focus of retailing in Tuakau is in that area which is demarcated by the heavy traffic bypass, but it is not as compact as it could be in terms of pedestrian convenience. The central park and other community facilities are separated from the main retailing areas by the bypass.

There is general concern for the lack of visual appeal in the main street and for the overall pleasantness of the area. This is a reflection of building design and appearance, the width of the street relative to the centre's size, the amount of through traffic, the absence of vegetation, and the lack of verandah cover in some areas.

As with Pukekohe the town lacks a central public place which is well integrated with business activities, and closing portions of road may be the only way to ensure that this occurs. Again a centre plan prepared outside this Plan is needed in order that desirable change occurs at an acceptable rate.

**18.9 WAIUKU'S CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA**

The main concerns for Waiuku are supporting the Heritage theme and mainstreet work already completed, and linking the retailing area with the foreshore area which is being developed for tourist-related activities. The foreshore area is presently isolated from the business centre by the bypass road (Kitchener to King Street). These concerns must be addressed outside the Plan by way of allocating financial resources through the *Annual Plan*. A centre plan would facilitate this, one that picks up on the design work already done.

Regulating for building design and appearance towards a heritage objective is a very difficult task without detailed guidelines for assessing proposals. Even then, the most cost-effective means by which to administer such guides would be informally within the local area. This is already happening to a degree. It would not be appropriate to put every building proposal through a resource consent process unless the community had confirmed that there was no other way to achieve the heritage objectives.

A local system of design guidance would in time achieve a far greater degree of commitment to the heritage objectives. The issue of private rights versus "common good" will always need to be carefully worked through.

The District Plan can support the "centre" and in time give greater effect to the heritage theme if design or other rules are found to offer the appropriate means of implementation.

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