

15. Urban Environment

Issue 15.1

Potential adverse effects of population growth, development, and subdivision on the rural setting and the built, social, economic and cultural fabric of urban environments.

Objective 15.1.1

Quality urban environments which maintain and enhance the form and function, the rural setting, character and amenity values of urban areas.

Policy 15.1.1.1

Integrate new development, subdivision, and activities into the urban environments in a way that maintains and enhances the form, function and amenity values of the urban areas.

Explanation

The urban environment covers all the settlements. This includes Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Oxford and Woodend, the beach settlements, the new town of Pegasus and small towns of Ashley, Sefton, Cust, Ohoka and Tuahiwi. The areas zoned as Rural-Residential in the Transitional District Plan are also considered to provide urban environments. These areas are valued as small residential areas in rural settings with the benefit of some urban standard services.

Urban form relates to the manner in which an urban area is arranged around natural features and how it has been shaped by choices in its servicing by roads, open space and other infrastructure. Historical choices in the way an area develops commonly leaves legacies for present communities to benefit from, or with which to grapple.

Urban form has a major bearing on how successfully an urban area functions and contributes to its resident's social and economic wellbeing. The form and function of an urban area significantly affects its qualities reflected in its setting, character, and amenity values.

The form and function of an urban area affects its ability to fulfil a full range of resident and visitor needs for living, work, economic, social, recreation and educational purposes. How well these needs are met depends in part on:

- accessibility to key locations such as the town centre, schools and recreation areas;

2 Urban Environment

- the integration of new development into the rest of the urban area through roading layout and traffic management, walking networks, open space links, and the careful use of natural features;
- possible conflicts between new residential developments and existing uses nearby; and
- the efficient utilisation of infrastructure.

Consultation has indicated that the community values, as part of the form and function of the District's urban areas, the following:

- all settlements, including main towns, are small compared to Christchurch;
- rural setting – all urban areas are separated and surrounded by rural open space;
- dominant central community focal point and concentration of business activity in main towns;
- easy accessibility to locations within the urban area, to other urban areas within the District, and to Christchurch;
- relatively low housing densities, with flexibility in some areas to provide for varied housing needs;
- absence of high-rise buildings;
- generous open space such as parks and reserves;
- no heavy industry;
- urban services such as reticulated or community sewerage and water, kerb and channelling footpaths and street lighting particularly in the main towns;
- a relatively quiet and safe environment when compared with a large metropolitan area; and
- cycleways.

These characteristics provide high quality living and working areas.

This policy seeks to maintain and enhance the form and function of urban areas in order to promote sustainable management of natural and physical resources of the District's urban environments.

Policy 15.1.1.2

Within the urban environment subdivision, land use, development and protection should avoid, or mitigate adverse effects on:

- a. the rural setting of the District's towns and settlements;
- b. efficient and effective functioning of roads;
- c. ease and efficiency of access;
- d. urban water bodies, and downstream effects on rural water bodies;
- e. low scale, low density housing, with flexibility in some areas to provide for varied housing needs;
- f. quiet and safe environments;

- g. cycleways; and
- h. the individual character of the settlement.

Policy 15.1.1.3

Promote subdivision design and layout that maintains and enhances the different amenity values and qualities of the different urban environments.

Explanation

Subdivision design plays an important role in the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values and environmental quality of the District.

Good subdivision design can:

- promote links to public open spaces including walkways, cycleways and roads;
- lay out lots to maximise the benefits from topography, water bodies, and climatic conditions (including sunlight);
- enhance the form and function of the surrounding environment;
- promote efficient and effective transport networks including cycleways;
- integrate new developments with the rest of the urban area, where they adjoin existing urban areas; and
- avoid or mitigate conflicts between the effects of different land uses, such as between residential and business activities.

Methods

District Plan Rules 15.1.1.3.1

Health, safety and wellbeing rules.

Floor area threshold tests for the location of some retail activities.

On-site parking standards.

Subdivision rules.

Constraints on development rules.

Concept plans or outline development plans.

District Plan Zones 15.1.1.3.2

Distinguish different densities and character of development by lot size.

4 Urban Environment

Provision of deferred zones, where required in urban growth areas.

Road Hierarchy 15.1.1.3.3

Maintenance of a safe, convenient road network that is managed in terms of a hierarchy which sets roles and functions for different roads.

Esplanades 15.1.1.3.4

Plan standards provide for esplanades along nominated rivers.

Guidelines 15.1.1.3.5

Urban design.

Subdivision design.

Coastal settlement design guidelines.

Principal Reasons For Adopting Objectives, Policies and Methods 15.1.2

The natural and physical resources of urban environments shall be sustainably managed to enable people and communities to provide for their wellbeing, and health and safety (section 5 Resource Management Act 1991). The Council has a function to prepare resource management proposals that achieve integrated management of the use, development or protection of those resources. It is also required to control effects of land use (section 31(a), (b) Resource Management Act 1991).

The Regional Policy Statement identifies the role of rural towns in meeting regional settlement needs (Chapter 12, Objective 5, Policy 7).

Recent growth, change, and development in the District has raised the issue of how recent trends, which are projected to continue, will be managed in a sustainable way. The policies highlight the key features of the District's urban environments that must be maintained in considering growth and development proposals. The community wishes to retain the qualities of its towns; it is necessary for a policy framework, and some regulation, to secure those qualities as a consideration in resource management decisions.

Anticipated Environmental Results and Monitoring 15.2

Anticipated Environmental Result	Monitoring Indicator	Information	Monitoring Frequency
Maintenance of the rural setting, character and amenity of urban environments	Nature of land use on urban boundaries	Subdivision and land use consents Aerial photos Community survey	Annually
	Extent and condition of indigenous flora and fauna	Biological surveys	5 yearly
Maintenance and enhancement of the form and function of urban environments	Changes in measures of compactness; distances from periphery to town centre	Survey and analysis	5 yearly
Housing is still predominantly low scale, and low density	Number of buildings three storeys and more	Subdivision and land use consents	Annually
	Percentage of sites in excess of Plan density standards	Building consents Aerial photographs	

