

## 6.2 Suburban Business

### Introduction and Issues

The provision of suburban business opportunities enables the community access to a wide range of goods, services and employment in their local area. A range of centres throughout the city exists to meet this demand, ranging from corner shops to major concentrations of retail and other commercial and community activities.

Suburban centres make an important contribution to the community, but their presence in residential areas can adversely affect the amenity and environmental qualities of these localities.

The principal issues for suburban business in Hamilton are:

- **Changing commercial investment can give rise to significant adverse effects on neighbourhood amenity values.** Suburban centres distributed throughout residential areas provide local access to a range of goods and services while also providing a community focus and thereby contribute significantly to maintaining and enhancing neighbourhood amenity values. Current commercial trends favour larger centralised facilities in key locations. This intensifies the effects of these activities on adjoining sites and localities. It also has the potential to make some centres less viable or even redundant which can create other negative amenity effects, particularly if there is not a range of economically viable activities that these can be used for.
- **Suburban commercial activity can adversely affect surrounding residential amenity.** Commercial centres generate considerable activity giving rise to traffic, noise, glare and other negative effects. The scale of buildings and the amount of advertising can also conflict with surrounding residential areas and lead to the degradation of local community amenity.
- **Vehicle and pedestrian conflict can compromise the safety and amenity of suburban centres.** Suburban centres generate significant concentrations of both pedestrians and vehicles particularly as they increase in size. This raises issues concerning shopper amenity, convenience and safety, particularly if adequate provision is not made in the design and development of any centre to accommodate the needs of both pedestrians and vehicles in a compatible manner.
- **Suburban centres can give rise to traffic and parking impacts on both the roading network and the local neighbourhood.** Traffic movements and parking generated by commercial centres can detract from efficient traffic movement, particularly on the arterial roading network with consequent impacts on the environment and on people's convenience. Larger suburban centres can have significant traffic and parking impacts on surrounding residential streets to the detriment of neighbourhood amenity values.
- **Poorly designed suburban centres can detract from the quality and functionality of the public domain and are less likely to function as a focal point for the local community.** Suburban centres which do not have a positive relationship with the adjoining public space can become disassociated from the environment that surrounds them. The quality of the public space is then reduced

through a loss of amenity, attractiveness and general functioning which can affect the safety and well being for the surrounding community.

## **Objective 6.2.1 Suburban Business Opportunities**

To facilitate a wide range of suburban business opportunities throughout the city in association with residential neighbourhoods in an environmentally acceptable manner.

### **Policies**

- a) Enable a wide range of commercial and related activities to be established within suburban centres.
- b) Facilitate the wide distribution of suburban centres throughout the city including the new growth areas, which enables convenient access to a wide range of goods and services, provided the adverse effects of any development on adjoining areas can be minimised.
- c) Ensure that the scale of suburban centres is compatible with the amenity values of the surrounding residential neighbourhood.
- d) Enable the expansion of existing suburban centres in established residential areas in circumstances where the scale and location of development would not impact significantly on the wider residential neighbourhood.
- e) Minimise the adverse effects associated with suburban centres on the traffic safety and efficiency of the city's transport network.

### **Reasons**

The wide distribution of suburban centres is desirable to facilitate convenient access to goods and services. However, the development, growth and composition of suburban centres reflects rapidly changing market principles. The plan facilitates opportunities for change, provided the impact on adjoining residential areas and on the capacity of the transport network to accommodate additional demand is fully addressed.

Flexibility in the plan is reflected in the wide range of activities that can establish in suburban centres, provided that the scale and nature of the effects of such activities are consistent with the amenity values anticipated in these areas.

The city includes three major growth areas, Rototuna, Rotokauri and Peacocke. The development of these areas should accommodate the appropriate provision of local suburban business opportunities to serve the day-to-day needs of their residential populations.

## Objective 6.2.2 Suburban Commercial Development

To ensure suburban centres maintain accepted commercial amenity values while minimising impacts on the surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

### Policies

- a) Ensure that adequate provision is made to accommodate car access and parking in suburban centres without compromising pedestrian safety and convenience.
- b) Encourage a configuration of buildings, a development and layout of sites, and a distribution of activities within suburban centres, which maintains pedestrian shopping convenience and commercial amenity values.
- c) Ensure that commercial activities adjacent to residential zones are developed and operated in a manner which avoids adverse effects on residential amenity values.
- d) Ensure that the scale of buildings in suburban centres is compatible with surrounding development and does not unduly detract from local residential amenity values.
- e) Ensure that drive-through service facilities are integrated into suburban centres in terms of scale, amenity and safety.
- f) Encourage the design of new suburban commercial development in the new growth areas to have regard to the amenity of the residential areas developing around them.

### Reasons

Suburban centres are dependent upon convenient access and parking as well as a safe and convenient shopping environment. This requires the provision and maintenance of basic shopping amenities and well developed carparking and access. Traffic and parking in residential streets adjacent to suburban centres does have a detrimental effect on local residential amenity values and these spill over effects need to be avoided

Intensive vehicle based activities (Drive-Through Services) need to be carefully integrated to protect pedestrian safety and the functionality of the suburban centres themselves.

The principal effects associated with the operation of suburban centres relate to noise and odour, often associated with storage yards and to lengthening hours of operation. Management of these effects at the residential interface is important to protect adjoining values.

## Objective 6.2.3 Design of Suburban Centres in New Growth Areas

To manage development within new suburban centres to ensure that development acts as a community focal point and achieves an integrated and pedestrian friendly environment that maintains an interactive relationship with the street and surrounding area.

## Policies

- a) Enable physical and visual integration of development through building form, site layout and connectivity.
- b) Ensure that development within suburban centres encourages the informal surveillance of streets, shopping frontages and other areas of public open space through the provision of active frontages.
- c) Ensure that activities establishing at ground floor level within any defined primary frontage will encourage strong pedestrian interaction between buildings and the main shopping street.
- d) Utilise building height and form of development within any defined primary frontage to provide definition and enclosure of the principal shopping streets and contribute to a high quality integrated pedestrian environment.
- e) Ensure that the form of development within any defined primary frontage contributes to interest and variety in the shopping frontage through building articulation and finer grain tenancy widths.
- f) Ensure that any defined primary frontages are edged by built development rather than large parking areas, loading and service areas.
- g) Facilitate the inclusion of legible, accessible and safe pedestrian and cycling connections with surrounding land uses.
- h) Facilitate a vibrant commercial area through mixed use development, including the use of upper floors for business, entertainment and residential activity.

## Reasons

Suburban Centres are an essential component of the urban fabric, providing essential goods and services to communities, and helping create a community identity and focal point. Good urban design seeks to ensure that these centres develop as attractive employment, living and community nodes which is important to create successful and sustainable centres that are vibrant and distinctive and an environment that is high quality, safe and accessible to the surrounding community.

Development of new growth areas provides opportunities for new suburban centres to establish where quality outcomes can be achieved through appropriate site layout and building design. New suburban centres should be outward facing and well integrated with the surrounding environment through appropriate building scale, use of active frontages, well located parking areas that do not dominate the street frontage and inclusion of pedestrian and cycling linkages. Development which has a strong relationship to the street contributes to safety and CPTED principles by enabling passive surveillance of the street and ensuring shop entrances are visible to passers by.

Primary frontage areas are identified where appropriate, to facilitate the development of retail focused principal shopping streets where buildings have a close relationship with adjoining streets and public spaces through a minimum two storey enclosure of the space and by adding variety and activity to the shopping frontage.

Mixed use development is encouraged within the suburban centre which will benefit the community by enabling more activity in the area contributing to greater urban vitality, and more variation in the external fabrication of buildings through the provision for a wide range of living and employment opportunities to locate above ground floor activities. Whilst residential activities are encouraged, they are not provided for at ground level in order to ensure continuous active retail and commercial activity street frontages.

Safe and accessible environments contributed to by well designed suburban centres encourages walking and cycling, thereby reducing dependence on the motor vehicle and promoting more sustainable use of land and infrastructure.

## Methods

The Suburban Business objectives and policies will be implemented through the following methods:

### District Plan

- **Suburban Centre Zone Rules** - will accommodate commercial development in association with residential neighbourhoods and help facilitate an appropriate distribution of commercial activities.
- **Residential Zone Rules** — provide for the development of commercial activities in new growth areas, subject to a range of development criteria.
- **Vehicle Service Areas** - will be used to facilitate drive-through service facilities in suitable locations
- **City-Wide Standards** - will be used to ensure impacts including vehicle provision, site layout, visual amenities, noise and pollution associated with suburban centres are adequately dealt with.
- **Structure Plans** - will be used to provide a development framework for the new growth areas which will help identify preferred locations for new suburban centres in new growth areas of the city. Refer to Residential Zone Rule 4.1.1 e) and Section 9.0 Structure Plans.

### Other Methods

- **Council Guidelines and other Educational Material** - including guidelines illustrating best practice can be used to encourage appropriate forms of development
- **Economic Instruments** - such as incentives could help encourage development in appropriate locations.
- **Council Works Programmes** - can help enhance accessibility and commercial amenity values.

## Anticipated Environmental Results

The following environmental results are anticipated:

- A high degree of accessibility to commercial facilities and services in suburban areas.
- A wide distribution of suburban business opportunities.

- Commercial amenity values of suburban centres enhanced.
- Impact of commercial activities on residential neighbourhoods minimised.
- Traffic impacts of suburban centres adequately managed.
- A pedestrian friendly urban form that facilitates a strong sense of community for new suburban centres within new growth areas.
- Development of Suburban Centres in new growth areas that addresses and engages the street and public spaces through the provision of active frontages and definition/enclosure of spaces at the public/ private interface, contributing to safe and vibrant public spaces.