

4.1 Future Urban Areas

Introduction and Issues

Hamilton contains three principal areas of rural land within its boundaries. These are located at Rototuna (1107 ha), Rotokauri (748 ha) and Peacocke (702 ha). At present these areas contain a mixture of rural activities and lifestyle rural residential blocks.

These areas provide the city's future urban land bank and there is considerable pressure from land owners and developers to enable development to occur within these areas.

The Council is keen to ensure that the development of these areas occurs in an economic, and sustainable manner. The District Plan is concerned with the management of the effects of activities that currently occur in these areas. It is also concerned to ensure that the key environmental and amenity resources of the area are not destroyed or compromised as the land progresses towards its future urban use.

The Hamilton City Council's 2006-16 Long-Term Plan, identifies a new strategic framework to guide the City's future shape and direction. A key factor in developing a new blueprint for the City is the need to advance quality urban design in its built environment. To this end, the Council has approved and adopted an urban design strategy for ongoing development of the City. It also provides an overarching framework to enact the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (to which Council is a signatory). CityScope commits Council to utilising urban design in all its strategic planning and policy documents, and the active promotion and incorporation of international best practice urban design and sustainable development principles in the planning and design of new growth areas. Council will also seek to develop or support the development of exemplar display projects within these areas.

The principal issues regarding future urban areas in Hamilton are:

- **The amenity standards expected by rural residential and residential dwellers have the potential for adverse impact on established activities.** As urban activities, such as rural residential or low density residential development, take place within established rural areas, many of the effects associated with the operation of farms or other existing activities e.g. noise, dust, hours of operation, odour become less accepted by the community and as a consequence pressures are placed on existing operations to curtail their activities. These pressures are increased as the scale of urban activity increases particularly where it occurs sporadically. This has serious consequences for the continuing economic viability of the existing activity.
- **The modification and removal of riparian vegetation and areas of bush, archaeological and other historic sites and items has a direct impact on the resources of the areas, and on the future amenity values of the land.** The future urban areas of the city contain remnant stands of bush, streams, and some vegetated riparian margins. These play a significant role in the management of rural water quality for rural streams.

Hamilton as a city is characterised by its extensive gully and stream network. The potential loss of such environments and ecosystems from the future urban area will negatively impact on the present environmental health of these systems, and on their future contribution to the amenity and diversity of the urban landscape.

The potential loss or modification of archaeological and historic sites and items has the potential to lead to a loss of amenity and diversity for both the present and the future city community.

- **Interim development of the Future Urban Areas, including infrastructure provision, has the potential to make further conversion to full urban development difficult.** While there is current demand for development, particularly rural residential opportunities in these areas, sporadic interim development, of both rural and rural residential natures, can effectively make further conversion to full urban development uneconomic. This is particularly so if development affects or pre-empts the effective and efficient location of roads, services and other supporting land use activities. The type of infrastructure provided, particularly for rural residential or residential development, can have major impacts on further conversion to urban development. Individual onsite management systems can have significant limitations and the extensive duplication of these systems could lead to unacceptable cumulative environmental effects eg. pollution of groundwater or gully systems. In many instances local systems will operate at a scale or intensity that will not allow for their practical inclusion into any Council network in the future as wider development occurs.

Objective 4.1.1 Development in Future Urban Areas ¹

Ensure that the activities carried out in the future urban area do not generate adverse environmental effects and or compromise future urban use.

Policies ²

- a) Provide an overall framework for future urban areas within which rural, rural residential and urban density development can take place during the transition to full urban development.
- b) Enable the continuation of a range of existing activities providing they avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse environmental effects and do not compromise future urbanisation potential.
- c) Control the subdivision of land and siting of buildings for rural purposes so that the size, arrangement, access and development of rural lots will not compromise potential urban development.
- d) Enable rural residential development in circumstances where it will not unduly conflict with the potential for continuation of existing activities on adjoining properties, compromise future urban development potential or give rise to adverse environmental effects.

¹ 026/P

² 026/P

- e) Enable urban development in rural areas where it is consistent with the overall framework for future urban development, does not adversely impact on uses on adjoining properties, and satisfactory provision can be made for road access and infrastructural services.
- f) Ensure a reasonable share of additional cost on future urban development arising from interim subdivision and development is met by the subdivider.
- g) Ensure that subdivision of land in the Future Urban Zone does not compromise the integrity and viability of the relevant Structure Plan that has been prepared for the Growth Cell. (Var 14)

Reasons

The management of future urban land in Hamilton involves providing for rural activities and lifestyles and a range of compatible uses in the interim, while recognising that urbanisation will eventually occur. Traditional rural development and activities can have significant impacts both on the natural environment and on adjacent urban development. However pressures for lifestyle development and the interface with urban development have equally significant implications for the continued viability of traditional rural activities and other existing activities particularly as reverse sensitivity issues lead to pressures from lifestyle and residential development for existing activities to be further controlled.

The objectives and policies for the Future Urban Areas recognise these competing demands on the future urban area resource and seek to provide for flexibility of use of the resource during its transition to full urban development. To this end rural activities will continue to be provided for in the area. Rural residential and "out of sequence" residential development will also be accommodated in the zone subject to their impacts on the environment, surrounding activities and on future urban development potential being avoided or mitigated. Subdivision will need to be controlled in a manner that ensures the urban needs of future generations can be met while allowing for the needs of the existing landowners.

It is recognised that rural lifestyle development will have only limited impact on resubdivision for urban purposes but where urban style development is involved there will be practical and financial implications for subsequent urban development.

Objective 4.1.2 Sustainable New Growth ³

To ensure that development in the areas identified for new growth is carried out in a manner that meets the community's needs and avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse environmental effects.

Policies ⁴

- a) Establish the supply of appropriately zoned and serviced urban land within the city to meet the current and future demands of the city's population.

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- b) Identify the key infrastructural, community, cultural and environmental opportunities and constraints for each new growth area and ensure that these are reflected in the development of each area.
- c) Accommodate a wide range of activities in new growth areas that will contribute to the development, functioning and amenity of local communities, and contribute positively to the community's identity.

Reasons

Development of new growth areas will require effective planning to ensure that the critical structural elements are identified and set aside or planned for prior to development occurring.

In particular the District Plan recognises the desirability of establishing the opportunities for the provision of those facilities and activities that assist the community, including local commercial employment and service opportunities, recreation, community facilities, and effective transport networks within and beyond the area.

Objective 4.1.3 Protection of Environmental and Cultural Values ⁵

To ensure that any development in the future urban area, particularly the development of new growth areas, does not have an adverse impact on the significant environmental, ecological and cultural features of the area.

Policies ⁶

- a) Protect and enhance the natural features of gully and riverbank areas in future urban areas.
- b) Ensure that the environs of Horseshoe Lake and Lake Rotokauri and the associated peat soils are sustainably managed to safeguard their ecological values and to avoid compromising the drainage system through inappropriate subdivision and development.
- c) Identify and protect sites of archaeological, historic and cultural significance and notable trees within future urban areas.

Reasons

Hamilton's gully system and the Waikato River are key components of the city's overall amenity as well as significant ecological systems in their own right. Opportunities exist during the development of the Future Urban Areas to ensure their protection and enhancement. Opportunities also exist to protect notable trees and archaeological, historic and cultural sites at the time of land development to contribute to the future amenity and diversity of the urban landscape.

Methods ⁷

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The Future Urban objectives and policies will be implemented through the following methods:

District Plan

- **Development Strategies and Master Plans** — will be prepared by Council for new growth areas. These will be used to articulate the shape, direction and quality of new development to complement the defined character and amenity of these areas or component areas.
- **Future Urban Zone Rules** - provide for the interim management of the city's Future Urban Areas pending subsequent urban development, ensuring that such development is not unduly compromised and in particular seeks to accommodate traditional rural activities and manage pressures for peri-urban development including lifestyle subdivision.
- **Subdivision and Development Rules** - will control how subdivision occurs, and establish the financial and reserves contribution requirements for development in the new growth areas.
- **Structure Plans** - will be prepared for each new growth area. These integrate the land uses, and identify key natural resources, transport and infrastructure requirements, any potential constraints to development, and investigate management options to protect significant features including development incentives. Consideration will be given to the need to protect established activities against reverse sensitivity effects. Structure Plans also identify the staging programme for land release in the areas that matches the community's ability to service the land. Structure Plans set out the development concept for longer term growth and the likely extent of future infrastructure provision that will be needed. To ensure that infrastructure is provided in a logical sequence and in time to serve the needs of new development the Structure Plans will establish the principle of development levies that will need to be paid as part of subdivision proposals. Structure Plans are therefore a key vehicle for achieving the early and orderly release of land for development and will be prepared through consultation with the local community.
- **Environmental Protection Overlay, Heritage Items Overlay, Significant Archaeological, Historic and Cultural Sites Overlay and Significant Trees Overlay** - will be used to ensure that identified natural and cultural and heritage values are taken in account with respect to the subdivision and development of land.
- **City-Wide Activities Rules** - provide for roading and other infrastructure in relation to Future Urban Areas.
- **City-Wide Standards** - will be used to ensure impacts including vehicle provision, site layout, visual amenities, noise and pollution in future urban areas are adequately dealt with.
- **Subdivision Design Guidance** — will be used to provide an interpretation of Assessment Criteria and Performance Outcomes in so far as they relate to the subdivision of land.

Other Methods

- **Council Guidelines and Other Educational Material** - will raise public awareness of the need to address the longer-term resource management implications of interim rural development and activities.

- **The Hamilton City Council's 2006-16 Long Term Plan** - will identify Council's programme of major infrastructural investment and its funding sources.
- **CityScope** — Council's Urban Design Strategy has been developed to foster a design-led approach to development in new and established areas of the City. It also provides an umbrella policy framework to promote and encourage quality urban design in the City's built and natural environment.
- **Access Hamilton** — is a transport strategy and infrastructure programme which promotes and encourages a wide range of transport options. It includes various initiatives designed to manage and accommodate future traffic growth in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- **District Plan Changes** - will be used to progressively rezone land in the Future Urban Areas for urban purposes, to enable the effective supply of land for urban development to be maintained.
- **Designation Procedures** - may be used by the Hamilton City Council and other requiring authorities to identify and set aside land for public works in the new growth areas.

Anticipated Environmental Results

The following environmental results are anticipated:

- Development which is integrated with the local natural and physical conditions of the locality and area.
- The provision of a wide range of activities in the Future Urban Area.
- Opportunities for the provision of future urban infrastructure maintained.
- Significant natural features protected.
- Future urban development not compromised by lifestyle subdivision.
- Conflicts with rural activities minimised in the interim.