



Shaping Wanganui

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Residential



WANGANUI DISTRICT COUNCIL DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW

Phase 2: Residential

ISSUES, OBJECTIVES AND OPTIONS

DISCUSSION PAPER 2A

26 January 2012

1 Introduction

This report is very much a working draft technical paper. It is designed to assist the review of the existing District Plan provisions relating broadly to residential areas.

The report sets out the draft resource management problems (issues) facing our community, along with the draft resource management outcomes (objectives) our community wishes to strive towards over the next 10 years. The report contains a brief commentary and a list of District Plan related options which might help to address or solve the resource management issues relevant to Wanganui.

The purpose of this document is to record our technical analysis to date. It will be used to encourage discussion with stakeholders, to ensure that the resource management issues and objectives facing the community are accurately recorded and carried through to the District Plan.

To develop this report, Council staff used information gathered during preliminary public consultation and targeted stakeholder consultation sessions, held in October 2011. This information has been combined with a review of the existing District Plan Issues and Objective statements and research into planning best practice approaches.

Consultation has included:

- Community Link advertisement of the Open Forums and a website survey for making comments.
- Four Open Forum sessions in October 2011, at St Anne's School Wanganui East, Gonville Library, Majestic Square and the Rivertraders market.
- District Plan review Newsletter 7, released in October at Council libraries, i-site and offices; a feedback form was included and comments were invited.
- Workshops were held separately with Councillors and the Youth Committee.
- Stakeholder meetings, including meetings with iwi groups.

What happens next?

It is intended that there be a further workshop with the Youth Committee, along with public release of the report for comment in February 2012. This will be advertised in the Community Link and be aimed at encouraging community interest and response. Targeted discussions will be offered to key stakeholders such as iwi, developer groups and community groups. It is intended that this work be completed by the end of February 2012.

The issues and objectives will direct the development of policies to guide decision makers about how to achieve the Plan objectives. Discussion Paper 2B will discuss

the proposed policies and a similar consultation process will be followed. Finally Council planners will define rules to implement the policies and these will be combined with the issues, objectives and policies to be consulted as a complete draft of the proposed Plan changes. This consultation is expected to occur around August 2012. With formal notification of proposed Plan changes, expected to occur at the end of October 2012.

2 Phase Two - Residential

2.1 Residential Development

Development density

Issue 1 Adhoc and poorly designed infill/medium density housing developments reduce urban amenity and put pressure on existing infrastructure. Well designed and located infill and medium density housing development can contribute to the amenity values of the surrounding area, provide quality spaces and places to live, and efficiently utilize existing levels of infrastructure.

Objective 1 High quality residential areas where:

- a) **Development is integrated with infrastructure;**
- b) **Urban infill and intensification within Wanganui is positively integrated into the existing residential area;**
- c) **Quality places to live are provided;**
- d) **Communities are well connected; and**
- e) **Amenity values are maintained or enhanced.**

Comment

With an aging population and the need to develop a more compact and efficient urban form, it is likely that existing areas of residential development will be required to redevelop and intensify. Generally, the residential areas of Wanganui are characterised by large lots with single dwellings, sometimes in areas of similar character. Medium density development, when inappropriately designed and located, has the potential to affect the particular qualities and visual amenities of the areas in which they locate.

Not all residential intensification provides for quality living environments. Location and connectivity to amenities, on-site outdoor living space, and solar access are key factors in providing quality living conditions.

Intensive development density can also place additional demands on the capacity of infrastructure including potentially increasing storm water runoff,

Options for addressing the issue

- (a) Identify where existing infrastructure has capacity and promote infill/medium density housing in those locations.
- (b) Provide design guidelines in the Plan, on how to achieve quality infill/medium density developments and ensure that site development achieves high quality amenity for both the development site and the surrounding residential area.
- (c) Provide for urban intensification in Wanganui where designed in a compatible manner, located close to amenities, and where it provides for quality living environments.
- (d) Status quo - Provide for urban intensification within Wanganui, but let the market decide how it is provided and where it is located.

Recommendation

1. Investigate policies relating to options (a) - (c)

Ad-hoc residential sprawl

Issue 2 New residential development beyond the existing Residential zone, needs to be carefully managed or it will reduce the sustainability of our urban service infrastructure and the amenity of our urban environment.

Addressed by Objective 1

Comment

The lack of Plan guidance about where development should occur and how urban form should be managed, has resulted in ad-hoc, uncoordinated, and dispersed development of the Wanganui urban fringe. This has created inefficient, fragmented development that is expensive to service. Urban service provision was never planned for the Restricted Services Residential zone, but services are demanded by some residents. Provision of such infrastructure will be costly and adhoc if the 'pepper pot' development approach continues.

The residential population is not presently growing in the district and care needs to be taken to ensure that the community can sustain the existing level of infrastructure service in the future. The Plan needs to encourage greater consolidation of development within the existing Residential zone, where significant development potential remains.

It will be important for the sustainability of the community that Council provides clear signals about where growth is anticipated to occur, through provision of services in those areas and resistance to expanding services in other areas. Aligning development with the spend on new and improved infrastructure will allow a more targeted and sustainable approach to growth and development.

Options for addressing the issue

- (a) Identify potential infill areas within the existing residential zone. Discourage subdivision and development beyond the Residential zone, and encourage infill/ medium density development within the zone.
- (b) Identify the appropriate scale of Greenfield development for the life of the Plan, based on NZ Statistics projections. Reconfigure and rezone areas of the Restricted Services Residential zone to better reflect the distinct areas appropriate for rural lifestyle purposes or future greenfields residential activities.
- (c) Identify and promote priority areas for development through the development of structure plans and/ or provision of infrastructure, and promote residential zone intensification where infrastructure and good design supports this.
- (d) Status quo – retain no/limited controls on subdivision and development within the wider urban fringe.

Recommendation

1. Investigate policies relating to options (a) - (c).

Varied housing needs

Issue 3 Households are becoming smaller but the housing market has not adapted and needs to provide for the changing and varied housing needs of the urban community.

Objective 2 A variety of housing options are available within the urban environment to meet the needs of the community.

Comment

The Wanganui population is projected to decline. Changing demographics mean that the average number of people living in a dwelling will decrease. A variety of household types will become prominent eg older single person households seeking smaller houses on compact sections. A variety of housing solutions will be required to fulfil their needs. It is projected that 70-80 additional dwellings are likely to be demanded each year. Statistics New Zealand projects a 1% decline in Wanganui's population between 2006 and 2021. At the moment large, stand alone houses on medium size sections are the norm. The NZ Statistics projections for an aging population is likely to see demand grow for medium density housing located close to amenities.

Options for addressing the issue

- (a) Allow the market alone to define where development is required and

what type of development is required.

- (b) Facilitate development of a variety of housing types within the urban area.
- (c) Status quo –Retain existing plan provisions which allow for different densities of development.

Recommendation

1. Investigate policies relating to options (b) and (c).

Commercial creep into Residential zones

Issue 4 Commercial activity creep into the Residential zone along high volume traffic routes, can undermine the compact nature of the central commercial area, and adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding residential environment.

Addressed by Objective 1

Comment

Some commercial activities are attracted to highly visible sites, particularly those adjacent to the state highway network. Where these areas have an existing strong residential character, with predominantly residential dwellings occupied for residential purposes, this may result in adverse effects.

Sustaining vibrant commercial activity in the city centre is fragile and may not withstand an exodus of even a few commercial activities to sites outside the existing commercial zoned areas. This is evidence of market weakness in the CBD. Main Street Wanganui identify that 13.5% of business sites within the CBD are vacant. This is a total of 31 vacant sites out of 229.

Options for addressing the issue

- (a) Ensure that adequate Neighbourhood Commercial zoned areas exist, to facilitate commercial activities that serve the local area.
- (b) More strictly regulate non-residential activities in residential zones eg commercial activities have non-complying activity status, with more onerous amenity controls.
- (c) Review existing regulation in the residential zones to ensure that commercial activities are discouraged from establishing in this zone and conversely, encouraged to establish in appropriate commercial zones.
- (d) Use regulation such as landscaping requirements and maximum parking limitations in residential zones, to encourage commercial activities to locate in commercial zones and discourage location in residential zones.

- (e) Acknowledge the attractiveness of sites adjacent to arterial roads and provide for limited commercial activity.
- (f) Status quo – retain existing provision where commercial activities have a discretionary activity status.

Recommendation

1. Investigate policies relating to options (a) - (d).

2.2 Neighbourhood Commercial

| Adverse impacts on surrounding residential areas | |
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| Issue 5 | Neighbourhood commercial centres can adversely impact on surrounding residential neighbourhoods in terms of visual amenity, noise, traffic volumes, and pedestrian safety. This can conflict with the desire to have neighbourhood facilities close by within easy access of where people live. |
| Issue 6 | Under-utilised neighbourhood commercial centres can impact on amenity values including a sense of safety within the surrounding residential environment. |

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| Objective 3 | Safe, convenient, vibrant and compact neighbourhood commercial centres designed and operated to complement the character and amenity of the surrounding Residential zone and that encourage community interaction. |
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Comment

Commercial activities serving the neighbourhood and clustered within a residential environment have the potential to impact on residential amenity values and activities. Adverse effects may result from increased traffic volumes, an increase in the volume and change in the type of noise; and differences in the design and densities of the built environment. Activities within these areas need to be managed in terms of scale, character and intensity to ensure they contribute positively to the vibrancy and sense of community within the surrounding residential area.

In some localities, Neighbourhood Commercial zoned property is under-utilised, with empty shops resulting in a general loss of amenity and sense of safety. A permissive approach to home occupations and commercial activities in the Residential zone may impact on the vibrancy or neighbourhood commercial areas.

Options for addressing the issue

- (a) Review the existing provisions that require any new development within the Neighbourhood Commercial zone to meet relevant bulk and location standards, and any new activity to meet operational standards such as noise, traffic generation, car parking, loading and access, hours of

- operation, and light and vibration.
- (b) Refine the location and extent of Neighbourhood Commercial zoned land within the district. Identify and prioritise areas required or suitable for commercial activities in the residential context.
 - (c) Assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing Outline Development Plans as a tool for managing and coordinating the development of these centres in relation to amenity, car parking, loading and access. Clearly articulate the purpose and regulation associated with Outline Plans if they are to be retained.
 - (d) Require any new development within the Neighbourhood Commercial zone to be consistent with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.
 - (e) Discourage commercial activities (except home occupations) from locating in non-commercial zones.
 - (f) Status quo – retain existing provisions relating to new development within Neighbourhood Commercial zones.

Recommendation

- 1. Investigate policies relating to options (a) – (e).

2.3 Reserves and Open Spaces

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| Reduced access to recreational open space | |
| Issue 7 | Progressively smaller lot sizes, coupled with bigger houses means that people have less private recreation space. Access to public green space will become increasingly important. |
| Issue 8 | Design and use of reserves and open space can have both beneficial and adverse effects on the surrounding environment: |
| a) | People will not use areas they perceive as unsafe to pass through or for recreational activities. |
| b) | Activities at reserves or open space areas may create noise or other nuisance effects for surrounding residents. |

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| Objective 4 | Parks and open space areas that are safe, accessible and pleasant to use, that meet the varied recreational needs¹ of the community and enhance the amenity values of the surrounding environment. |
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¹Definition of recreational Includes passive and active activities

Comment

Recreational space is important for people to unwind and be in touch with nature. Publicly provided open space provides this opportunity as well as providing opportunities for the community to interact. Reserves and open spaces serve a variety of functions, including ecological corridors, pedestrian or cycle linkages, informal neighbourhood parks, urban parks and play areas, formal sports fields and general recreational, amenity areas, heritage protection or commemoration.

The objective seeks to achieve pleasant, safe, easily accessed resources in all areas to improve community well-being. Throughout the District there are reserves with distinct characteristics. A wide variety of activities take place on reserves and these have the potential to adversely affect the surrounding residential environment. These objectives seek to ensure that provision, design and use of reserves promotes sustainable management including access to this resource for the wider community.

Options for addressing the issue

- (a) Require a minimum site size and site coverage that ensures private outdoor space is provided on site in residential areas with a lower development density.. Ensure public open space areas are conveniently located in areas where infill/ medium density housing is promoted.
- (b) Ensure a minimum access to open space throughout the urban environment, particularly in relation to new development. Require a percentage of new development areas to be set aside for open space.
- (c) Implement CPTED principles for the design and maintenance of reserves and open space areas created through subdivision, including local roads.
- (d) Require provision of quality well located neighbourhood reserves and open space in new residential areas and maximise the benefit and access of such facilities with linkages to existing residential areas wherever possible.
- (e) Ensure that activities on reserves operate using best practicable options to avoid or minimise any temporary adverse effects such as noise or glare on surrounding residential environments.
- (f) Status quo – retain existing reserve and open space provisions.

Recommendation

1. Investigate policies relating to options (a) - (e).

2.4 Natural Hazards

Insufficient awareness and information

Issue 9 Insufficient public awareness and a lack of information about the identification of, and level of risk associated with Wanganui's exposure to natural hazards, hinders the avoidance and mitigation of those hazards.

Land use and occupation of hazard-prone areas

Issue 10 Land use and occupation of hazard-prone areas can cause risks for people and property.

Objective 5 A community informed about the risks to people and property of the potential natural hazards present in our District.

Objective 6 The risks of natural hazards on our District communities are avoided or mitigated, while minimising adverse effects on natural, cultural, and ecological values.

Comment

The Wanganui District is affected by a number of natural hazards; however knowledge of the location and characteristics of natural hazards and their impacts on surrounding development and the environment is far from comprehensive. Lack of knowledge hinders the ability of the community to avoid or mitigate the risks from these hazards.

While a hazard may be present, the hazard potential is only realised when there are people, land use activities, buildings or structures and important natural values in the vicinity of the hazard. Although it is not possible to eliminate hazards, it is possible to manage the location, design and operation of land use activities to avoid, remedy or mitigate the potential adverse effects of hazards on people, property and the environment.

Options for addressing the issue

- (a) Undertake further research to determine the risk, severity and location of residential liquefaction, ground shaking resulting from earthquake, slope instability, flooding, ponding, and coastal erosion hazards.
- (b) As improved information is obtained on the risks and severity of hazards, identify the hazards on the District Plan Maps and use Plan provisions to regulate development appropriately to minimise risks to people and the environment:
 - i. Require dwellings/buildings to be constructed to a minimum floor level when located within flood or ponding areas;
 - ii. Regulate and restrict subdivision and development on erosion prone slopes, areas subject to flooding or ponding, areas prone to coastal hazards, tsunami risk and/ or liquefaction risk.

- (c) Require resource consents when activities are proposed which may worsen or accelerate a natural hazard or cause risk to life or property. The purpose of the consent would be to ensure a site and activity specific assessment is made, of the potential impact of such hazards.
- (d) Status quo – do not undertake any further research, or require resource consent applicants to provide additional information on natural hazard risk.

Recommendation

- 1. Investigate policies relating to options (a) - (c).

2.5 Matters of significance to Maori

In reviewing the residential sections of the Plan, it is recognised that there are wider matters such as the location of waahi tapu, archaeological sites and other sites of significance that need to be addressed holistically. This will be done at a later stage in the Plan review process. The matters of significance to Maori that are addressed specifically here are those aspects of residential subdivision and land development, such as earthworks and land modification.

| Maori Values | |
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| Issue 11 | The development process through impacts on land modification, building location, scale, height or even presence alone, may adversely affect Maori values for that place. |
| Issue 12 | Maori values and information are not always well understood or respected in resource management processes. |

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| Objective 7 | Development that avoids or mitigates adverse effects on the cultural values of items and places of significance to Maori. |
| Objective 8 | Traditional Maori practices and beliefs in resource management are recognised and valued. |

Comment

Part II of the Resource Management Act requires matters of significance to Maori to be variously ‘taken into account’ or ‘recognised and provided for’. Subdivision and new development may compromise Maori values and beliefs where this issue has not been addressed in an appropriate way.

The nature of conventional works for subdivision and development means they may exist for generations, and may involve significant alteration to landforms. This includes the removal of topsoil.

It is not uncommon for previously unknown Pa sites, battle sites, urupa (burial sites), and other significant features to be located during the earthworks phase of subdivision or development. Council endeavours to ensure this is addressed in a

culturally appropriate manner to avoid the potential for significant adverse effects on cultural values and relationships.

Options to address the issue

- (a) Encourage tangata whenua to participate in the subdivision and development process.
- (b) Encourage the early identification of sites of cultural significance to enhance the protection of these sites.
- (c) Encourage tangata whenua to participate in earthworks and land modification consent processes of significant scale or to identify and prioritise areas where wahi tapu/ archaeological sites are known to be located.
- (d) Status quo – retain the existing Plan provisions.

Recommendation

1. Investigate objectives and policies relating to (a) - (c).

2.6 Infrastructure

Compatibility with network infrastructure

Issue 13 Network utilities contribute to the health and well-being of the community. However, this can be compromised by development that is not compatible with their operational requirements.

Objective 9 Subdivision and development that is compatible with the operational requirements of network utilities.

Comment

Network utilities provide a range of essential services that have wide benefits to the community, such as telecommunications infrastructure, structures for the transmission of energy including gas, and land designated for network utility purposes.

The effectiveness of network utilities can be compromised by subdivision and development that does not adequately take into account the particular operational requirements of a network utility service.

Only the effects of residential activities on network utilises is considered in this phase. The effects of network utilities themselves will be reviewed in a later phase of the Plan review programme.

Options to address the issue

- (a) Adopt best practice approaches to protecting the operational requirements of network utilities, including adopting National Standards and Guidelines.

- (b) Require subdivision and development to 'take into account' the operational requirements of network utilities where these are potentially affected.
- (c) Status quo – do not manage the effects of subdivision and development on the effectiveness of network utilities.

Recommendation

- 1. Investigate objectives and policies relating to options (a) and (b).

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| Low impact urban design | |
| Issue 14 | While conventional solutions to supply of services are effective in some circumstances, a lack of consideration of alternative approaches often limits the potential to achieve sustainable low impact urban design which works with the natural land forms, while maximizing the potential environmental benefits. |

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| Addressed by Objective 1 and Objective 10 |
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Comment

Subdivision and development that modifies the land to fit development rather than working with the land and development that adopts hard engineered infrastructure solutions can be appropriate in some circumstances. However they can also potentially limit positive environmental outcomes, and result in unintended adverse affects e.g. creation of large impermeable hard standings.

Low impact urban design solutions include a range of servicing options that minimise modification to landforms and natural processes. They work with the natural landforms rather than against them.

Best practice approaches to the performance and role of infrastructure have changed. Roads and storm water management areas are now more than just functional amenities. Infrastructure can play a role in improving biodiversity, place-making, community engagement, connectivity, personal safety and other functions. There is also a greater acceptance that infrastructure outcomes can be delivered in many different ways rather than simply the pipe and concrete approach.

Options to address the issue

- (a) Require subdivision and development of infrastructure to be 'low impact' and consistent with wider urban design principles.
- (b) No requirements - let the market decide what and how to provide infrastructure to service development.
- (c) Status quo - retain provision for the 'concrete and pipe' approach to developing infrastructure.

Recommendation

1. Investigate policies relating to options (a)

2.7 Subdivision

Sustainable site Design

Issue 15 New and redeveloped sites may be less sustainable due to poor drainage, poor solar access, inappropriate site orientation, and a lack of consideration of the benefits of energy efficiency in the design process.

Objective 10 Subdivision that promotes a high quality urban environment and encourages a pattern of land use integrated with the provision of infrastructure to promote a safe and healthy urban environment and encourage resource and energy efficiency.

Comment

Conventional site development seeks to maximise site yield and cost effective installation of infrastructure, particularly roads. In some instances this has led to poor outcomes with regard to broader issues like connectivity and energy efficiency, but has also neglected sustainable design at the site level.

Site orientation and on-site storm water detention are amongst the more apparent aspects of energy efficiency at a site level. This is also complementary to the development of low impact infrastructure and the limitation of onsite works and land modification.

Options to address the issue

- (a) Require subdivision and development to implement sustainable site design features as identified in NZS4404:2010, by incorporating these requirements into the Plan.
- (b) Status quo – do not require subdivision to take into consideration sustainable site design features.

Recommendation

1. Investigate policies relating to option (a).

Earthworks/Land modification

Issue 16 Poorly managed earthworks activities can create a range of adverse effects on amenity values and the physical environment, such as dust, damage to infrastructure, water flow paths and impact on cultural values.

Addressed by Objective 7 and Objective 10

Comment

Subdivision and development can involve significant site works. Earthworks and land modification have the potential to create significant adverse effects, both on and off site, especially if not carefully managed. Conversely, development that can be designed with a minimum of earthworks may promote positive environmental outcomes by reducing loss of topsoil, maintaining landforms and protecting vegetation and trees.

The effects of site works such as dust, noise, vibration, and visual effects can have significant impacts on the level of amenity enjoyed by people surrounding these activities.

Site works can also pose a risk to the environment, people and property through the creation of instability, erosion, runoff, modifying landscapes and landforms, altering overland and secondary flow paths, disturbing contaminated land, exacerbating natural hazards, and impact on sites of significance to Maori. Discharges of sediment to Council infrastructure can also damage reticulated services.

There are also a range of effects that relate to the natural environment that are the responsibility of Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council and managed through the provisions of the One Plan.

Options to address the issue

- (a) Manage the effects of earthworks/land modification on hazards, human life and amenity, and cultural values.
- (b) Manage the effects of earthworks on the natural environment.
- (c) Require works to be sympathetic to underlying landforms and natural processes of the site and surrounding area.
- (d) Status quo - Do not manage the effects of earthworks/land modification.

Recommendation

1. Investigate policies relating to options (a), (b) and (c).