

1 INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

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1.1 BACKGROUND

Te Awa O Whanganui – Kō au te Āwa, kō te Āwa kō au. I am the river, the river is me.

These words embody the spiritual, cultural and historical relationship and defines the Iwi (Māori people) of the Whanganui River and region.

Traditionally used by local Māori, this saying has become increasingly relevant to locals of European descent whose lives and history have also become interwoven by the river.

Whanganui means 'Big Bay' or 'Big Harbour'. Located on the West Coast of New Zealand's North Island and home to approximately 42,500 people (Census 2013), the District covers an area of 2337 km². The Whanganui urban area sits at the junction of State Highways 3 and 4, on the banks of the Whanganui River.

Whanganui has a strong cultural and recreational focus. The river and its surrounds are used for a number of recreational activities including kayaking, jet boating, tramping, camping and cycling (including the 'mountains to sea' national cycleway). Pukenui (Queen's Park) in the central township has several cultural institutions including the [Sarjeant Gallery](#), the [Whanganui Regional Museum](#), the Davis Library, the Alexander Heritage and Research Library, and the Whanganui War Memorial Centre.

The Whanganui District is predominantly rural, with an urban area around the lower reaches of the Whanganui River. The Council area encompasses a total land area of about 2,400 square kilometres. The urban area takes up less than 1% of the total Council area, but is home to about 90% of the population. Rural land is used largely for sheep grazing, beef and dairy farming and forestry, with some horticulture and orcharding. A large proportion of the district contains the Whanganui National Park (which was established in 1986).

The landforms of the Whanganui District are young and subject to rapid geological change. The soft papa and sandstones of the Whanganui basin

are easily eroded and have resulted in the finely dissected hill country which makes up the bulk of the District.

The landscape is relatively simple, consisting of coastal dunelands, lowland marine terraces and steep dissected inland hill country with deeply incised rivers and narrow valleys. Three main rivers flow through the District from the central volcanic plateau to the sea - the Whanganui, Mangawhero and Whangaehu.

The Whanganui and Whangaehu Rivers and their main tributaries flow in a general southerly direction. The Whanganui River, where it crosses the lowlands, is deep and tidal, entrenched below terrace remnants on either side of the channel. Numerous small tributaries flow in a regular transverse direction almost at right angles to the River.

Coastal, terrace and river valley landscapes are largely rural in character, dominated by mainly pastoral farming. Further inland, especially to the northwest, there is a much greater proportion of scrub and forest cover. The indigenous vegetation cover has been retained due to the steepness and erodibility of the slopes in these areas. The unifying common feature between these landscapes is the Whanganui River - Te Awa Whanganui.

1.2 WHAT IS THE DISTRICT PLAN?

This District Plan is a community document which reflects the views and values of our community as identified through the ongoing 'Shaping Whanganui' engagement processes, which began in 2009.

The Plan provides a framework to guide development in our District. It is a forward-looking document, managing use and development of resources today while protecting the interests and opportunities of future generations to also utilise those resources in a sustainable way.

Council regularly monitors development trends in the District to ensure that directions set in the Plan are appropriate to achieve sustainable development in the Whanganui context.

The Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act) has a primary purpose to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. The Act requires the Council to prepare a District Plan on behalf of the community and to review it every 10 years.

1.3 DISTRICT PLAN STRUCTURE

The District Plan consists of three parts:

- **Chapters** – contain the introduction, definitions, the zoning environments, District wide and topic specific provisions applying to all zones.
- **Appendices** – contains specific detailed content relating to matters including historic heritage, airport, designations, the WDC Engineering Document, structure plan guidance, urban design guidelines, and the airport.
- **Planning Maps** – identifies spatially all the site features and information of relevance for each site in the District including historic heritage, hazards, zoning and any overlays. The maps assist users in understanding the development opportunities and constraints for specific sites.

Objectives, policies and rules are used in the Plan to guide users about what the community identifies as sustainable development. They reflect the community's aspirations and responses to key resource management issues. The Plan adopts the following interpretations:

Issues are existing or potential resource management problems that must be resolved to promote the purpose of the Act. Issues can also be positive opportunities that if taken advantage of, can assist in promoting the purpose of the Act.

Objectives are goals, or end states to be strived for. They are expressed as broad statements of what is to be achieved.

Policies are the broad strategies to achieve the objectives. They give direction, and represent a general course of action to be taken.

Regulation, being rules and performance standards, is the principal method for implementing the Plan's objectives and policies to achieve the purpose of the Act.

Rules identify activities you can do as of right (permitted activities) and those activities for which resource consent must be obtained prior to being undertaken.

Performance Standards identify thresholds for effects of an activity that must either be achieved or not be exceeded for the activity to be deemed to have a permitted status.

Zones are a tool used in most District Plans to group together areas of distinct amenity and physical character in the District. Zones enable finer grained regulation to apply. Examples of physical characteristics include landscape features, vegetation and the nature and scale of development and the amenity values generated from activity groupings. Areas with similar physical characteristics and amenities are often identified within the same zone. Zone character forms the basis for objectives, policies, rules and performance standards for that zone to guide new development to be sustainable.

1.4 HOW TO USE THE DISTRICT PLAN

- A. Council's duty planner is available to assist you to interpret the Plan requirements, either by phone (06 349 0001) or in person at the Council offices during normal office hours. The Council's duty planner will also refer you to Horizons Regional Council for regional resource consent requirements.
- B. Most of the words in the Plan have their common meaning. Chapter 2 – Definitions identifies words and terms with specific meanings in this Plan.
- C. To identify specific requirements for a property or activity, follow these steps:
 - 1. Locate the property on the planning maps.
 - 2. Identify the Zone and any Overlays or special features which apply to the property.

3. Turn to the Zone chapter (Chapters 3 to 10) to identify the specific objectives, policies and rules to manage the potential effects of the proposed activity.
 - a. To determine the status of your activity, each Zone has a list of permitted, controlled, restricted discretionary, discretionary, or non-complying activities.
 - b. Controlled, restricted discretionary, discretionary and non-complying activity status will require resource consents.
 - c. Go to the next section in the Zone Chapter to find the relevant performance standards for permitted activities for the Zone affecting your property. Some standards are complex and detailed in their own chapter (Chapters 12 – 14 and 16 – 18)
4. If the planning maps identify a heritage item, any natural environment or natural hazard overlays applying to the property, you will need to refer to Chapters 9 – 11 respectively for objectives, policies and rules that will also apply.
5. If your activity includes papakainga, relocating buildings or temporary activities refer also to Chapters 15 or 19.
6. If the activity is a network utility refer also to Chapter 22.
- D. If it is determined that a resource consent is required, refer to Council's website for current information regarding the resource consent process, application forms, information requirements for a resource consent application and making a resource consent application.

1.5 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Council's strategic framework shows the links between Whanganui's 'Leading Edge' community vision, the District Plan and other key strategic documents including the Long Term Plan. All of these documents influence or are influenced by the Plan. Some are directly linked, or complementary or supplementary to the Plan.

Together these framework documents (Figure 1 below) set out the community’s priorities and guide the Council’s activities. The major plans that are closely related to the Plan are briefly outlined below:

