

## 7 Objectives and Policies for the District's Infrastructure and Development

### 7.1 Introduction

The district contains network utilities and infrastructure that play a key role in New Zealand's economy and prosperity, and underpins the district's future. This chapter describes the significance of this infrastructure and the key industrial sites in the district, and outlines the management approach adopted to manage these physical resources.

As the main north-south link and the primary national state highway, State Highway 1 is a critical component of the transport network within the Central North Island for the movement of people and freight. The security of this route is important, not only for the sub-region, but also for other parts of the country as well. State Highway 5 is an important sub-regional route providing access to Rotorua to the east, particularly for tourism. Both highways need to be protected and developed through appropriate land use planning and transport network integration.

State Highway 30 provides an east-west connection from Waitomo and Otorohanga which has potential to be a major tourism route through the District. Opportunities to strengthen the tourist route links through South Waikato between Waitomo, Taupo and Rotorua need to be recognised and developed to allow for economic growth in this sector. State Highways 27, 28 and 32 are also of strategic importance.

There is capacity within the rail network, particularly the Kinleith Branch rail line, to accommodate increased freight movements. New freight hubs utilising the railway are a possibility to better utilise this capacity.

The section of the Waikato River running through the district has five hydro-electric power generation facilities, and there are also major National Grid, electricity lines, and gas transmission lines in the district. These are of national significance and have been recognised within the district plan. Their future and that of additional renewable energy generation, are provided for.

Specific upgrading and maintenance works on telecommunications facilities and on existing electricity transmission lines are permitted nationally under National Environmental Standards. These standards prevail over the requirements of the district plan, unless the NES specifically states otherwise.

There are several important industrial sites that form the cornerstone of the district's economy and prosperity. These sites are the industrial facilities at Kinleith (pulp and paper/wood products mills), Fonterra milk processing plants at Tirau and Lichfield, the hydro-electric power stations along the Waikato River, and large industrial estates in Tokoroa and Putāruru. Zone provisions have been formulated to manage the particular issues associated with these industrial sites. These provisions recognise both their significance to the local economy, and the particular resource management issues that arise in respect of them.

A strong focal point of local industry is its comparatively skilled technical and process engineering workforce serving the agricultural and forestry industries.

Performance Standards have been developed which address potential adverse environmental effects of infrastructure, and aim to avoid incompatible development that could result in pressure for infrastructure facilities to be curtailed. Managing the potential impacts of infrastructure on outstanding landscapes and significant natural areas and historic heritage is of particular importance.

#### 7.1.1 Financial contributions

Financial contributions are imposed to avoid, remedy, or mitigate adverse environmental effects on infrastructure networks resulting from subdivision and associated development, and for the purpose of achieving the objectives and policies of the district plan. Under Section 108(9) of the RMA Council may impose consent conditions requiring financial contributions to be paid for purposes specified in the plan.

Financial contributions are imposed so that the costs associated with new development from subdivisions do not fall inequitably upon existing ratepayers. Subdivision and development adds incrementally to demands on the

infrastructure of the District. Council considers new developments should contribute a fair and reasonable sum towards meeting the cost of additional demand. Financial contributions are intended to cover a fair share of the cost of expanding the capacity of existing infrastructure systems to meet demand created from new development. Contributions are imposed in respect of car parking, roading, water supply, stormwater, wastewater, and reserves. Allotments created for the purpose of accommodating network utility and infrastructure operations are exempt from the payment of financial contributions.

While there are effectively several separate networks in the district, Council has chosen not to develop differing contributions given the existing District-wide funding source and the potential to create unintended cost barriers to development in parts of the District based on differentials in contributions. Council has therefore chosen to balance these varying costs by developing a district-wide contribution for each of the services for which a financial contribution is required. The levels of the contributions are based on the financial value of the existing networks divided by the number of existing users. In this manner new subdivision or developments effectively 'buy in' to the existing networks.

## 7.2 Objectives for Infrastructure and Development

- 7.2.1 To ensure that an integrated, efficient, safe and sustainable transportation network is maintained and enhanced to support the social and economic wellbeing of people and communities in the District including provision for active transport and physical activity options.
- 7.2.2 To ensure safe and efficient land use, subdivision and development, well-integrated with the functions of different roads, and which is designed to provide for appropriate alternative transport modes (particularly walking and cycling).
- 7.2.3 To provide for the sustainable, secure and efficient use and development of infrastructure within the District, while seeking to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the environment recognising the technical, locational and operational requirements and constraints of the infrastructure concerned.
- 7.2.4 To ensure that new development in the District has regard to improving energy efficiency and to enable production of energy from renewable sources, provided their development promotes the sustainable management of the district's natural and physical resources.
- 7.2.5 To provide for the important industrial sites and infrastructure, including strategic transport networks, in the District and for Tokoroa Airport, and safeguard them from the reverse sensitivity effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- 7.2.6 To put in place adaptation and response mechanisms to manage the challenges of, and respond to the opportunities afforded by, future climate change.
- 7.2.7 To ensure that the development, operation, maintenance, repair and upgrading of the components that comprise the Waikato hydro scheme, are recognised and provided for.
- 7.2.8 To recognise and provide for the exploration, development and use of geothermal, wind and hydro resources, for the purpose of renewable electricity generation in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the environment and also takes into account cultural impacts.
- 7.2.9 To recognise and provide for the national, regional and local benefits of a sustainable, secure and efficient electricity transmission and distribution network, radiocommunication and telecommunication facilities including broadband, and renewable electricity generation activities.

## 7.3 Policies

- 7.3.1 Promote consolidation of new residential, commercial and industrial development in the existing vacant, zoned and serviced land in order to achieve the efficient use of existing infrastructure.

- 7.3.2** Establish networks of parks and walkways along the urban streams to provide linkage between neighbourhoods.
- 7.3.3** Encourage adaptability of the District's productive base to climate change, including provision for new crops (with associated processing facilities) that may become viable in the future.
- 7.3.4** Enable the efficient operation and development of the District's key industrial sites (namely the industrial facilities at Kinleith, the dairy factories at Tirau and Lichfield, the hydro-electric power stations along the Waikato River, and the Tokoroa and Putāruru industrial estates) in a manner that will avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the environment from activities associated with the operation, maintenance, and upgrading of these key industrial sites.
- 7.3.5** Provide for generation of electricity at the community and household scale, due to its renewability, the energy efficiency benefits involved, and because potential adverse effects can be managed effectively while recognising the relationship iwi have with the environment.
- 7.3.6** Enable the efficient operation, maintenance, and upgrading of the electricity transmission and distribution networks and the existing renewable electricity generating infrastructure and related activities in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates additional adverse effects on the environment.
- 7.3.7** Enable the exploration, development, construction and operation of new renewable energy sources and generation activities (including ancillary activities) in a manner that avoids, remedies, or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.
- 7.3.8** Recognise and have regard to:
- a) The maintenance and protection of existing renewable electricity generation activities
  - b) The practical, logistical or technical constraints associated with the location, logistics and operation of new and existing renewable electricity generation activities
  - c) The opportunity for environmental offsetting and compensation measures to be considered in instances where adverse environmental effects from new renewable electricity generation activities cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated.
  - d) Adaptive management measures.
- 7.3.9** Ensure that new subdivision land uses and development in close proximity to electricity generation core sites and network utilities and infrastructure are compatible with the use and operation of such sites by specifying appropriate environmental performance standards.
- 7.3.10** Manage new subdivision, use and development that may adversely affect the existing operation of the District's key industrial sites, airport, network utilities and infrastructure and related activities.
- 7.3.11** Development should be located, designed and managed to minimise the need to travel, minimise conflict to and across arterial routes, and provide appropriate access.
- 7.3.12** Protect the safety and efficiency of the land transport network from the adverse effects of inappropriate noise-sensitive activities located close to State Highways and designated rail corridors.
- 7.3.13** Ensure vehicle access onto the transportation network does not adversely affect to a more than minor extent the safety, efficiency operation and maintenance of these roads and other road users.
- 7.3.14** Allow new electricity transmission and distribution lines and telecommunications lines to only traverse areas identified as Outstanding Natural Landscapes, Significant Natural Areas and Significant Amenity Landscapes where the infrastructure is subject to a significant functional constraint, or where there is no feasible alternative route and/or when significant adverse effects are outweighed by the overall benefits of the proposal.

- 7.3.15** Recognise existing electricity lines within outstanding natural features and landscapes and significant natural areas, and significant amenity landscapes, and provide for their operational, maintenance and upgrading requirements.
- 7.3.16** Enable infrastructure development where the associated effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated and the functional requirements of the developer and operator of the network utilities and infrastructure are considered.
- 7.3.17** Include financial contributions as consent conditions on subdivision consents, to reflect the demand on infrastructural services generated by the subdivision and the associated development.
- 7.3.18** Require financial contributions for the provision of car parking where this cannot be provided by an activity or development to the extent required on site.
- 7.3.19** Allow for the payment of financial contributions in accordance with the planned stages of any subdivision activity subject to financial and security arrangements being entered into by Council and the developer.
- 7.3.20** Provide for an annual review of the level of financial contributions that will be applied.
- 7.3.21** Manage infrastructure development to ensure it does not adversely affect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River.
- 7.3.22** Manage infrastructure development to avoid adverse effects on the historic heritage of the district, whilst recognising the technical, locational and operational requirements and constraints of the infrastructure concerned.
- 7.3.23** New activities shall not establish in Putaruru Growth Cell 4 (Business) shown on the Planning Maps prior to the formation to the appropriate standard and vesting in Council of the Possible Future Road identified on the Planning Maps connecting Growth Cell 4 and Princes Street.

## **7.4 Methods to Achieve Objectives and Policies**

The objectives and policies in 7.2 and 7.3 above will be implemented through the following methods:

### **7.4.1 District Plan Methods**

- Rules in Chapter 13 that allow for domestic and community-scale renewable energy generation
- Provision for larger-scale new geothermal, wind and hydro development as a discretionary activity. (Rule 13.8)
- Provision for renewable energy testing and related temporary structures in Chapter 12 Temporary Activities
- Industrial Zone and Electricity Generation Zone provisions for key industrial sites and electricity generation core sites, including noise control boundaries
- Tokoroa Airport Zone and height plane restrictions in relation to airport approach slopes
- The location of traffic-generating uses will be controlled through the zone rules to avoid adverse effects on the safety and efficiency of major transport routes
- Setbacks from roads, transmission lines and gas lines (shown on planning maps)
- Buffer areas restricting small-lot subdivision around the key industrial sites and Tokoroa Airport
- Limits on habitation within and close to the Industrial Zone, noise control boundaries and hydro electric power operating easements
- Provision for network utilities and infrastructure throughout the District in Chapter 13

- Permitted activity status for maintenance and construction of roads and railways
- Rules on surface water activities applying to the hydro lakes under Chapter 16
- Esplanade reserves and strips created at subdivision stage under Rule 10.10
- Imposing consent conditions requiring the payment of a financial contribution in respect of roading, water supply, wastewater, stormwater and reserves, in accordance with the formulae detailed in Chapter 10
- Requiring the payment of cash in lieu of providing car parking spaces in accordance with the formulae detailed in Chapter 11
- Infrastructure proposals are subject to assessment including their proximity to significant landscapes and natural areas (Chapter 14) and the presence of natural hazards
- Rules on hazardous substance use and storage in Appendix G.

#### **7.4.2 Other Methods**

- Telecommunications Facilities National Environmental Standard (NES) 2008
- Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009.
- New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances 2001
- Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003
- NES on Electricity Transmission Activities 2010
- Advocacy and education on energy efficient building methods, and the use of micro-generation
- Funding for upgrading and maintenance of Council infrastructure networks set aside in the Long Term Plan
- Development of the District's transport systems that is consistent with the Regional Land Transport Strategy
- Design standards for transport infrastructure to maximise public safety and to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on the environment
- A roading hierarchy maintained and monitored within the District
- Council initiatives to encourage employment growth via the "Economic Spirit" Strategy
- Local Action Plan on Climate Change, and Council's Energy Plan
- Standards under Council's Code of Subdivision and Development that promote low-impact environmental design solutions and consider climate change implications for stormwater networks. This Code aims to implement the principles of NZS 4404:2010 Land Development and Subdivision Infrastructure.

#### **7.5 Reasons**

Functional and efficient infrastructure cannot be achieved only through RMA methods, and needs to be furthered through a variety of works undertaken by Council and other utility providers. The importance to the local and national economy of infrastructure, the key industrial sites in the district, and communications means that if their maintenance and upgrading is not safeguarded under the district plan, there could be significant community impacts. Likewise the district needs to play its part in the national (and international) imperative to improve energy efficiency, generate more energy from renewable sources and respond to future climate change.

Financial contributions are a tool used by Council to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse environmental effects, and to ensure the reserve and infrastructural networks of the district are maintained to an appropriate standard for existing and future users.

Financial contributions may be used as a consent condition on subdivision and land use consents to:

- Avoid land use activities generating adverse environmental effects as a result of infrastructural systems not being able to cope with demand generated;
- Avoid downgrading of the quality of service offered to existing users as a result of additional loadings from new subdivision and development;
- Provide a mechanism to mitigate adverse effects that cannot otherwise be avoided or remedied on the district's natural and physical resources that may result from new subdivision, use and development; and
- Avoid pressure on reserves and recreational areas in existing areas by providing additional reserves and enhancement of existing reserves.