

1.2 *What does the District Plan do?*

Through the District Plan, the City Council seeks to turn broad sustainable management principles into a practical set of guides and controls covering the various areas which comprise Wellington City:

- residential areas
- the central city
- suburban centres
- rural and coastal areas
- open spaces such as the Town Belt
- areas occupied by large institutions such as the hospital, universities and airport
- heritage and conservation sites.

While the Plan's provisions are specific to each area, they can be grouped under five overall objectives:

Objectives of Wellington's District Plan

1. **Protect and enhance** the natural, or 'green' areas of the city. This is chiefly all the land beyond the outer town belt, including rural and open space zones, and conservation sites.
2. **Encourage** more intensive and mixed-use development within the existing urban area to achieve better use of transport, infrastructure and energy – in other words, a more sustainable city.
3. **Improve** the overall quality of the built environment from an urban design perspective.
4. **Reduce** the risks associated with natural and technological hazards.
5. **Safeguard** the natural environment – land, air and water – from pollution and contamination.

To achieve these objectives, the District Plan sets out a range of policies, methods and rules. Their aim is not to restrict development but to guide and control the effects of development on the environment.

The District Plan is a *guide* to how Wellington can become a better city – sustainable, accessible, healthy, safe, cohesive and vibrant, capable of providing for change while also retaining character and connections with the past. These values have been identified through a long process of public consultation and research, and reflect the interests of the many communities which make up Wellington. They provide the vision underpinning the District Plan's policies and rules.

The policies and rules *control* the effects of development activity in Wellington. Developments that can take place as of right and without the Council's specific consent (although usually subject to some conditions specified in the Plan) are described as 'Permitted'. All other developments are categorised as either 'Controlled', 'Discretionary' or 'Non Complying', and may not take place without a resource consent. Further information about these categories is provided in the Glossary.

Implementing the District Plan: Resource Consents

The District Plan is implemented mainly by means of the resource consent process. Through this process, the Council assesses developments or activities people want to undertake – for example, building new townhouses, or industrial activities – against the objectives of the District Plan and any negative effects the proposed development may have on the environment.

More detail about resource consents, how to apply for them, and how to make submissions on publicly notified resource consents is in the Council's publication, *A Guide to Resource Consents in Wellington City*, available free from the Council. For more information, please contact the Council's Resource Consents staff on 499 4444, or call in to Level 1, Council Offices, 101 Wakefield Street.

Monitoring and Changing the District Plan

The District Plan is not a static document but subject to ongoing monitoring and review throughout its lifetime. Changes to the Plan may be initiated by the Council or private persons to update the Plan but particularly whenever new information, research or public opinion justifies it.

There is a plan change process to allow for such updates. Proposed Plan Changes must be publicly notified, and anyone may make a submission on the proposal and on the submissions of others. A public hearing is normally held. Once the Council has made its decision, it may be appealed to the Environment Court.

The existing District Plan is due to be reviewed by 2010.