

1.3 *The District Plan in Context*

The District Plan and city planning

The District Plan is not the only city planning tool used by the Council, and in fact focuses on only one aspect of city planning – environmental management. The Council's approach to city planning is much broader, drawing not only on the District Plan but also on other strategies and policies covering transport, urban design, heritage, parks and open spaces, and more.

In addition, the new Local Government Act also requires all councils to prepare long-term community plans. These are a way for councils to coordinate their long-term financial planning with city development and planning. Wellington's District Plan is now part of this wider strategic planning framework, and will continue to be the primary means by which the Council implements regulations to achieve specific land use or environmental results.

The District Plan and the Resource Management Act

The present District Plan is the first Wellington City Council has produced under the RMA.

The passing of the Act allowed councils to take a completely new approach to their management of natural and physical resources. The main difference between the RMA and previous planning and environmental legislation is its focus on the effects proposed activities or developments will have on the environment – not on whether activities are or are not allowed.

Another important aspect of the Act is that it assumes local communities are the best judges of their own environmental issues and how to deal with them. For this reason, the Act does not say how District Plans should be formulated. It is enabling – giving councils scope to develop the plans their communities want – not prescriptive.

Under the Act, Wellington's District Plan is a platform upon which – in combination with other elements, including community participation, central government policy, and other city council initiatives – the vision of a sustainable city can be realised.

The District Plan and Tangata Whenua

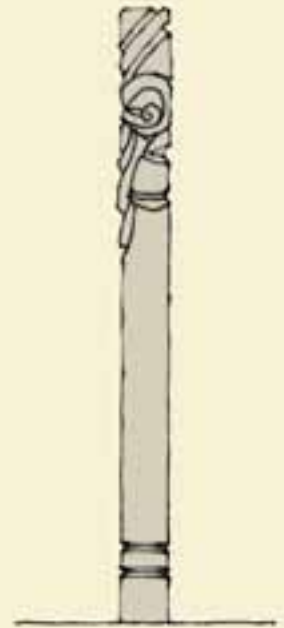
Under the Treaty of Waitangi, Wellington City Council and the tangata whenua¹ of the area have a special partnership. The RMA requires the District Plan to put the principles of the Treaty into action, and to affirm the importance of Maori approaches to sustainable resource management.

For Maori, sustainable management means maintaining *mauri*, the life essence of all animate and inanimate resources. This is done by caring for *Te Ao Turoa* (the natural world) in accordance with Maori custom – especially through the practice of *kaitiakitanga* (the exercise of guardianship and stewardship, usually by those with genealogical links to a particular place or resource). These concepts underpin the relationship Maori have with the environment.

What does the Council's Treaty-based partnership with Maori mean for the District Plan ?

- Consultation with Maori about specific resource management issues (especially water, pollution and sacred sites), and the broader concepts of resources and the environment, was a core part of the development of the District Plan. This consultation continues as the Plan evolves.
- Places of traditional importance to Maori are shown on the District Plan Maps, demonstrating how the area has been shaped by Maori settlement throughout history.
- Whenever development activities are proposed that have the potential to affect Maori traditions, interests and aspirations, tangata whenua representatives participate in the resource consent process.

As the District Plan evolves, the role of tangata whenua will expand, adding a valuable dimension to the management of Wellington's resources.



" The complex history of human settlement in the Wellington area means several tribes can claim to be regarded as tangata whenua, including Te Atiawa and Ngati Toa. The group representing the tangata whenua in its partnership with the Council is the Wellington Tenth's Trust, the longest-standing organisational structure for Te Atiawa and an iwi authority under the Resource Management Act. The Council also has a relationship with Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira, another iwi authority, which promotes the interests of Ngati Toa.