

2.1 Residential Areas

The District Plan defines two broad residential areas. The Inner Residential Area adjoins the central city and is mostly within the inner town belt. Its features include high population density, many multiple dwelling units (houses divided into flats; apartment blocks etc), a generally nineteenth century character, and the presence of diverse non-residential activities.

The Outer Residential Area comprises the remaining suburbs from the inner town belt to the boundary of the Rural Area. Houses of varying character are located on larger sections. Most non-residential activities in the outer area directly service local residents.



KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE DISTRICT PLAN:

- **Generally contain development within the established edges of the city**

Explanation:

The outer town belt and other rural areas effectively establish clear edges to the city. The Council believes that the continual expansion of the city beyond these edges does not support sustainable management except where it builds on existing communities. So that the city remains compact, the rules promote more intensive building development. This will help reduce transport distances, make public transport more viable and result in better use of existing infrastructure.



- **Encourage more intensive development within existing residential areas**

Explanation:

To help contain urban development within the city's edges, the District Plan encourages subdivision and development of existing sites (known as infill subdivision or development) in the Residential Area. Infill is managed to maintain the general character and amenity of such areas.



- **Maintain a high standard of residential amenity**

Explanation:

'Residential amenity' means the many qualities and attributes which enable people to enjoy living where they do – such as visual amenities, sunlight, access, noise levels and safety.

To preserve these qualities for residents, there are rules to manage the effects of noise, traffic safety, nearby non-residential activities, storage of hazardous substances etc. Visual issues are addressed through the relevant Design Guides. While recognising that sunlight and views are important qualities for residents, the Council also recognises that Wellington's hilly terrain means it is not possible to safeguard these from change in all cases and locations. From time to time, therefore, activities that are Permitted may still have adverse effects for some people.





- **Encourage a greater mix of uses within residential areas**

Explanation

The character of Wellington's residential areas owes much to the many non-residential activities and community services that take place within them – schools, shops, churches, service stations, childcare facilities, medical centres etc. The District Plan encourages a diverse mix of activities, providing they are appropriately located and compatible with residential amenity.

It particularly encourages people wishing to work from home, as this is a way to reduce travel and save energy. In the Plan, working from home is a Permitted Activity; all other non-residential activities are Controlled or Discretionary and are therefore carefully assessed to ensure consistency with the character of the Residential Area.



- **Protect and enhance character areas**

Explanation

In Wellington's Residential Area, there are several neighbourhoods with a distinctive character due to the presence of many older buildings. The Council considers such areas – which include Thorndon, Mt Victoria and the Aro Valley – are important to Wellington's identity, and should therefore be protected from inappropriate development.

Protection is provided by the Design Guides, by extra controls on multi-unit housing in some neighbourhoods, and by rules restricting the demolition of pre-1930 buildings in Thorndon and Mt Victoria.



- **Improve the quality of multi-unit development**

Explanation

Multi-unit housing developments are an effective way to use land in the city's more developed areas, but they can adversely affect residential amenity – especially if they are significantly different from an area's established style of housing. To ensure quality multi-unit housing, the Plan requires any new developments to be assessed against the relevant Design Guide for the area. The aim is to ensure certain design principles are followed, without dictating the development's appearance.

- **Improve the quality of subdivision design and development**

Explanation

Well-designed subdivisions make effective use of the available land, are well oriented to the sun, are accessible for pedestrians and are well serviced by public transport. To encourage such developments, the District Plan includes flexible siting provisions and Design Guidelines for larger subdivisions. Proposed subdivisions are assessed against these guidelines, and the Council's Code of Practice for Land Development.

