

26 Town Basin Environment

26.1 Significant Issues

The Whangarei Town Basin is distinctly different from other parts of the city and provides special amenity and function.

There is currently no vision or structure plan to support good integrated development around the basin.

There is a lack of 'usable' or sought-after open space and poor linkages between available space in the city centre.

Existing open space in the Town Basin area is poorly planned and under utilised.

The inappropriate development of existing sites around the Town Basin has the potential to generate adverse effects on roading, amenity, landscape quality and sense of place.

The significance of the Town Basin Area to tangata whenua.

26.2 Overview

Whangarei's Town Basin has developed since the 1990s and is an important and successful amenity and resource for Whangarei's residents and visitors alike. The Town Basin also has a significant pre-European history that is of significance to Maori. Currently, the main uses of this area are passive recreation and limited tourist, retail and entertainment facilities. These activities complement the diverse range of maritime activities taking place in the Basin including the fishing industry, recreation and commercial yachting, charter operations, boat maintenance and repair facilities and other tourist-related marine activity.

The existing Town Basin development is limited in geographic extent and there is significant opportunity to extend the area further along the waterfront (both Up-River and towards the harbour mouth).

While successful development is largely driven by mechanisms beyond the District Plan and RMA process, Council is concerned to ensure that a cohesive development pattern emerges and that the significant resource values of the area are protected.

The Town Basin has been divided into Sub Environments. The Sub Environments reflect individual or special characteristics of different parts of the Town Basin Area. The policies and methods, including rules and environmental outcomes sought for each Sub Environment vary but together help to achieve the objectives for the Town Basin Environment.

26.3 Objectives

26.3.1

A successful and cohesive staged development process for the wider Whangarei Town Basin.

26.3.2

The maintenance and enhancement of the special amenity, recreation and cultural values, including those of tangata whenua and sense of place unique to the maritime setting of Whangarei Town Basin and valued by the District.

26.3.3

Enhancement of diverse and compatible land use opportunities by taking advantage of the distinctive physical resources and natural precincts of the Town Basin area.

26.3.4

The avoidance, remediation or mitigation of the effects of staged development on the existing roading, amenity, landscape quality and sense of place of the Town Basin.

Explanation and Reasons: The Whangarei Town Basin is a significant and special resource for residents and visitors to the City, providing a diverse range of land use, recreation and economic opportunities which provide for the community's, cultural and economic wellbeing. The objectives seek to recognise this significant resource and provide a framework for its continued development and success.

26.4 Environment Policies

26.4.1 Physical and Visual Linkages

To enhance physical and visual linkages between the Town Basin Environment and the coastal marine environment and between the Town Basin and the City Centre.

Explanation and Reasons: The Whangarei Town Basin is an integral part of the City's commercial and community resource, yet it is physically and visually severed by building and roading networks. This can, in part, be remedied through careful thought to urban design and management of future development in the area. Further development of physical linkages between the City Central Business District and the Town Basin will need to be implemented through urban design and management (particularly of the road network) beyond the Town Basin area, for example along John Street.

26.4.2 Amenity values

To protect and enhance the special amenity values (including the open space, nautical themes, human scale, cultural values (including those of tangata whenua) and cohesive development) of the Town Basin Environment.

Explanation and Reasons: The Town Basin is an important resource for the City and Council seeks to build on the success of the first development stage whilst maintaining the special amenity values that contribute to the unique sense of place.

26.4.3 Town Basin Activities

To provide for diverse and flexible land use activities, within the context of the predominant maritime and open space themes and the existing focus to activities which attract visitors to this Environment.

Explanation and Reasons: The Town Basin provides for the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the Whangarei community. Council recognises the importance of this function and seeks to permit diverse and flexible use whilst protecting the special character that contributes to the areas success.

Figure 26 defines the Sub-Environment boundaries of the Town Basin Environment.

26.4.4 Adverse Effects

To carefully manage and mitigate effects of mixed use development in the Town Basin Environment, including, but not limited to, traffic generation, bulk and location of buildings, and cross boundary conflicts (e. g. glare and noise).

Explanation and Reasons: Council does not wish to be overly prescriptive in planning for the Town Basin Environment, however poorly conceived development would undermine the integrity of the area and impact on its social, economic and cultural value. The amenity of surrounding residential activities (to the north and north-west) and the sustained viability of business activities (to the south) also warrant recognition.

26.4.5 Traffic Effects

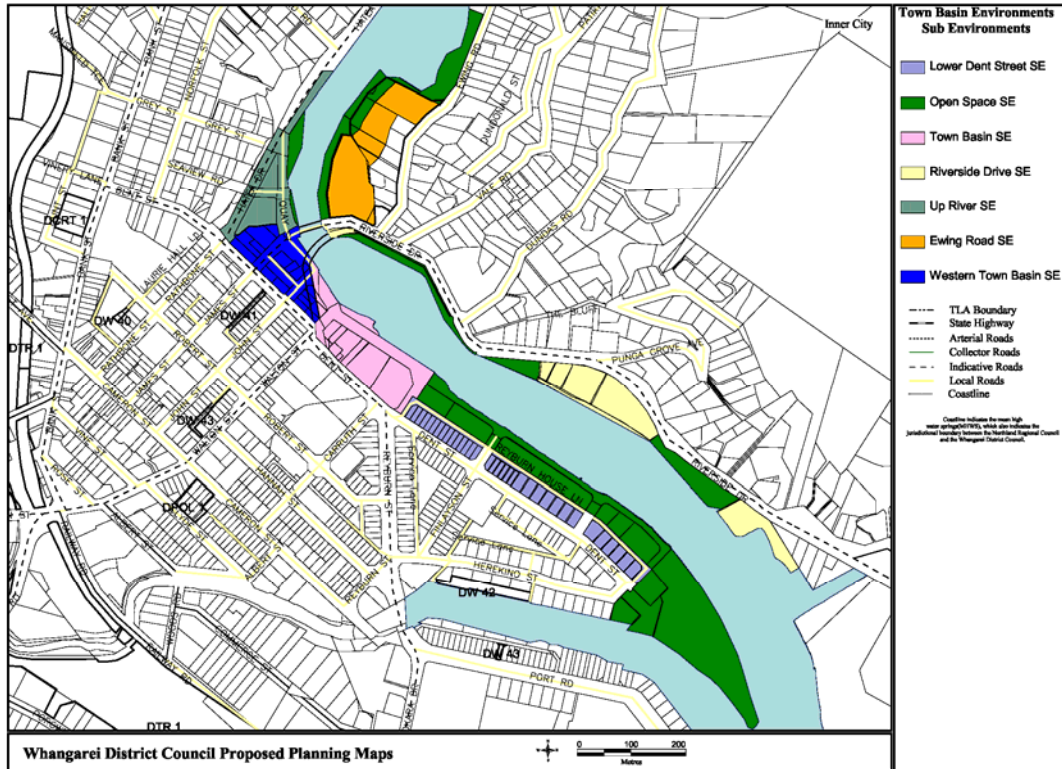
To ensure development minimises traffic and traffic movement within pedestrian oriented areas of the Town Basin, including, where appropriate, the provision of parking off-site to be encouraged.

Explanation and Reasons: The pedestrian focus of the Town Basin is recognised as an important aspect of the amenity and special character of the area. While Council seeks to encourage the ongoing use and development of the Precinct it recognises that an increased number of vehicles within the area has the potential to adversely impact on the special amenity and character of the area.

26.5 Sub-Environment Policies

Figure 26 (If this figure appears in greyscale refer to the maps, Volume II)

Note: A distinction was made between “environment” as defined in the RMA and “Environment” which means zoning.



26.6 Up-River Sub-Environment

26.6.1 Up-River Activities

To maintain and enhance the open space and passive recreation experience of the Up-River Town Basin area.

Explanation and Reasons: The definition of the Up-River Sub-Environment recognises the distinctive resource values and the relative lack of development north of the Whangarei Heads Road bridge (excluding the existing pool complex site).

26.6.2 Integration

To integrate the City's open space resource and active and commercial recreation activities, within the Town Basin Centre.

Explanation and Reasons: The Up-River Sub-Environment is considered an important open space area providing pedestrian and recreation linkages between the Town Basin Precinct and other recreation areas in the City (including Mair Park and Parahaki). However, it also recognised that limited commercial development in the area can enhance linkages between these recreation areas and the Town Basin facility, subject to the careful design and management of such activities.

26.7 Ewing Road Sub-Environment

26.7.1 Recreation Activities

To focus active recreation for the Town Basin on and around the existing physical resources in the Ewing Road Sub-Environment whilst maintaining passive recreation linkages.

26.7.2 Adverse Effects

To avoid development within the Ewing Road Sub-Environment that is incompatible in scale to surrounding residential and open space areas or when viewed from within the Town Basin precinct.

Explanation and Reasons: The swimming pool complex provides a significant recreation resource for the wider Whangarei area. If carefully redeveloped, further expansion of recreation activities in this Ewing Road Sub-Environment can be compatible with and support the objectives for the Basin area overall and provide opportunity to enhance reserve linkages to the wider open space network.

26.8 Town Basin Open Space Sub-Environment

26.8.1 Open Space Values

To maintain and enhance the open space and urban recreation experience of reserves and existing open space areas within the Town Basin, in particular the open space linkages within the Town Basin and the seascape experience of the Hihihaua Peninsula.

Explanation and Reasons: The Whangarei Town Basin and surrounding open space areas are highly valued by the community. While poorly developed and currently of limited utilisation, these areas have the opportunity to be enhanced to create a diverse range of recreation opportunities providing for the community's social, cultural and economic well-being and enhancing the special character and sense of place of the Town Basin.

26.8.2 Limited Development

To recognise the potential for limited development of open space areas to enhance the recreation and cultural values of the Town Basin to provide an attractive and vibrant open space environment.

Explanation and Reasons: The open spaces of the Town Basin Environment are currently poorly developed and not well utilised. In recognition of the urban and special character of this area, limited development is considered an appropriate mechanism to ensure development of these areas is undertaken in a timely manner, as well as providing a buffer to the existing industrial activity on Lower Dent Street, without compromising the overall open space values of these areas. Furthermore, this development will contribute positively to the existing cultural values of the area, providing for the community's social, cultural and economic well-being.

26.9 Western Town Basin Sub-Environment

26.9.1 Town Basin Activities

To provide for the complementary westward expansion of the existing Town Basin commercial and community precinct, subsequent to the reconfiguration of the arterial roading network.

26.9.2 Adverse Effects

To ensure development within the Western Town Basin Sub-Environment of a scale, intensity and character that is compatible with surrounding activity and the maritime setting of the Town Basin Environment.

Explanation and Reasons: The reconfiguration of the arterial roading network in the vicinity of the Whangarei Town Basin provides opportunity to extend the existing and successful commercial and community development. However, development must be compatible with the existing Town Basin resource and avoid adverse effects on the wider commercial resources of Whangarei City.

26.10 Town Basin Precinct Sub-Environment

26.10.1 Town Basin Activities

To maintain the integrity and sense of place of the successful heart of the Town Basin, founded on the existing infrastructure, urban design and amenity resources.

Explanation and Reasons: The Whangarei Town Basin has been a successful model development for residents and visitors to the City. It provides a unique sense of place in the heart of the City complementing the maritime activities that have been long established in the area.

26.11 Lower Dent Street Sub-Environment

26.11.1 Mixed Use Development

To provide for complementary mixed use development eastward of the Town Basin enhancing the diversity and vitality of the Town Basin Environment.

Explanation and Reasons: Mixed use development adjacent to the Town Basin affords opportunity for the community to provide for their economic, social and cultural well-being and enhance the diversity and sustainability of the Town Basin Precinct. However, development must be compatible with the existing Town Basin resource and avoid adverse effects on the existing retail resources of this area. Some industrial activities will not be compatible with mixed uses, such as residential accommodation. This Sub-Environment also provides opportunity to reinforce the buffer between heavier business activity in the south and east with the Harbour and suburbs north of Riverside Drive.

26.11.2 Adverse Effects

To carefully manage and mitigate the potential adverse impacts of development in the Lower Dent Street area on the amenity of the overall Town Basin

Environment, particularly (but not limited to) impacts on the Open Space Sub-Environment and view corridors to the Hatea River.

Explanation and Reasons: Council considers that careful development of the Lower Dent Street area provides an opportunity to enhance the amenity and landscape character of the area, particularly the physical linkages between the Town Basin and the Hihihaua Peninsula. However, it is recognised that this resource will need to be carefully managed and mitigated to ensure that adverse impacts on the Open Space character of the areas are no more than minor, and that important view shafts are maintained and protected.

26.12 Riverside Drive Sub-Environment

26.12.1 Integration

To reinforce and enhance the visual and physical integration of this area with the Town Basin Precinct.

Explanation and Reasons: Riverside Drive is a natural northern limit to the Town Basin Environment. Commercial development south of Riverside Drive currently largely complements the maritime environment and is a valuable development area. Council recognises the need to provide for ongoing economic use and development of this area but wishes to strengthen both the maritime and Town Basin linkages. Riverside Park is well located as a local open space area providing visual linkages back to the heart of the basin.

26.12.2 Adverse Effects

To carefully manage and mitigate the potential adverse effects of development in the Riverside Drive area on the amenity of the Town Basin, in particular impacts on the Town Basin Open Space Sub-Environment.

Explanation and Reasons: Council considers that careful development of the Riverside Drive Sub-Environment provides an opportunity to enhance the special character of the Town Basin area, particularly physical linkages between the Town Basin and the other side of the Hatea River. However, it is recognised that this resource will need to be carefully managed and mitigated to ensure that adverse impacts on visual amenity and the sense of place for the wider Town Basin, in particular the open space areas, are no more than minor.

26.13 Methods

A range of methods are proposed to achieve maximum benefits of the objectives and policies:

26.13.1 Regulatory Methods

- Identification of a Town Basin Environment on the Planning Maps.
- Identification of Sub-Environments within the Town Basin Environment.
- Environment and Sub-Environment rules for open space, amenity (location, type and effects of activities), buildings (including bulk and location), visual impact, traffic.
- Resource Consent Conditions.

- Resource Area Rules relating to identified protected view corridors.
- To utilise other regulatory methods already provided for in the Proposed District Plan.

26.13.2 Economic Instruments

- Financial Contributions from land use development within the Environment applied to development and maintenance of the open space network within the Environment.
- Annual Plan allocation for development of Town Basin Environment open space network in recognition of its District wide benefits.
- Financial incentives may be considered and offered to current leaseholders of Whangarei District Council land to promote sensitive redevelopment or enhancement projects that contribute to the amenity and visitor appeal of the Town Basin.
- Financial incentives may be considered and offered to current leaseholders of Whangarei District Council land, with activities inappropriate to the long-term vision to relocate elsewhere.
- A contestable fund is made available by Whangarei District Council to paint and decorate buildings located within the Town Basin within prescribed guidelines.

26.13.3 Council Works and Services

- Preparation of a Town Basin Strategic and Activity Plan for development of Council's land holdings in the area.
- Works and services relating to the creation, maintenance and operation of public open space areas within the Town Basin Environment.
- Works and services relating to the linkage of open space areas within the Town Basin Environment to the wider network of Whangarei's reserves (particularly Parahaki, William Fraser Park and Mair Park).
- Supply of social infrastructure (including street furniture, lighting, signage, public artworks and other visitor facilities).

26.13.4 Information, Education and Advocacy

- Preparation of an urban design guide to promote good development within the Town Basin Environment.
- Liaise with the Northland Regional Council on development of the Town Basin below Mean High Water Springs.
- Liaise with Tourism Northland and other tourism and economic development agencies to promote the Town Basin Environment.
- Preparation of the Urban Growth Strategy.
- Establishment of a community liaison group chaired by Whangarei District Council to meet regularly and shares issues and ideas impacting on the Town Basin.

26.14 Anticipated Environmental Results

The following results are expected to be achieved by the foregoing Objectives, Policies and Methods. The means of monitoring whether this Plan achieves the necessary outcomes are also detailed below.

- A pattern of land use and development complementary to the natural, historical and cultural values of the Town Basin, particularly those associated with maritime and nautical themes.
- A cohesive process of development involving compatible and complementary land uses that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the natural, historic and cultural environment.
- A process of land use and development that ensures an economically, socially and culturally vibrant community, whilst ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of the special amenity, recreational and cultural values and sense of place associated with the Town Basin.
- The maintenance and/or enhancement of open space areas, and linkages between open space areas, in the Town Basin Environment.

