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Issues

Twelve significant resource management issues are identified for the Matamata-Piako District in the District Plan. Six of these issues are commented on in this report:

- Rural Development
- Residential Growth
- Solid Waste
- Natural Environment
- Heritage
- Natural Hazards

The remaining six issues are briefly outlined below. These issues will be addressed in more detail in future state of the environment reports.

TRANSPORTATION

A good transportation system is vital to the prosperity of the district. Transport enables businesses to access resources and markets and provides people with access to social, cultural, recreational and employment opportunities. Transportation and traffic growth can result in economic, environmental, social and safety impacts that need to be managed through careful land use decisions.

Objectives and Visions

- To protect and improve the safety and efficiency of the State Highway and District Road network
- To protect residential amenity from the effects of excessive traffic generation and on-street parking in residential streets

- To encourage self sufficiency in the provision of parking and loading spaces to avoid conflict with on-street usage
- The avoidance, remediation and mitigation of the effects of transportation
- To encourage the provision of alternative transportation networks where it is clearly demonstrated that the provision of such networks will positively benefit and enhance the environment and community which they serve
- To ensure that those activities that place demands on the roading network contribute fairly to any works considered necessary to meet those demands.

Pressures

Transport systems provide the link between different areas, connecting people with their needs and activities. An efficient transport system provides communities with mobility, freedom and a means of communication. Whilst Matamata-Piako maintains an efficient transport system providing many benefits, there are also several significant social and environmental impacts.

New Zealand has a relatively low-density population, so New Zealanders tend to travel a lot, mostly by private vehicle. We have 46 cars for

every 100 people compared with a world average of 11. Our high level of motor vehicle use produces some significant environmental effects, mainly evident in large congested, densely built urban areas. Limited air quality studies show that, at times, carbon monoxide levels in some urban traffic corridors exceed the New Zealand guidelines. Transport is also responsible for some of the extensive heavy metal contamination evident in some harbours and estuarine areas. Transport contributes 40 percent of New Zealand's carbon dioxide emissions. Many of the environmental effects of transport services are diffuse and this makes them difficult to deal with.

Over the period 1975 - 1996, the number of private vehicles on the roads nationally has increased rapidly at the expense of public transport¹ and other alternatives such as walking and cycling. Lower cost, imported diesel fuelled vehicles have increased in popularity and can emit relatively high levels of particulate and cancer causing agents. Collectively, increased traffic volumes and changes in fuel use can result in adverse effects on amenity values. Noise, community separation by roads and pollution have also become worse over the 1975 - 1996 period.

Key Issues

Key issues regarding transportation in the Matamata-Piako District are

- The urban areas are relatively free of significant parking, loading and vehicle access problems. Traffic safety along the State Highways and arterial routes is of concern.
- Traffic generates adverse effects particularly noise on State Highways and collector roads. In some locations, roads with high vehicle counts can affect the amenity values and function of the adjacent environment detrimentally.
- Reliance on the motor vehicle generates adverse amenity, environmental and some social effects. Development of alternative passive transportation modes, particularly cycling will have environmental and socio-economic benefits. Council wishes to encourage cycle paths throughout the District as an alternative means of transportation particularly in urban areas.



INCOMPATIBLE ACTIVITIES

The RMA requires Council to manage the effects of activities rather than attempt to control activities by description, definition or in their own right. If activities have minor effects and are generally compatible, there is no justification for preventing such activities from locating together.

Objectives and Visions

- To manage activities in a manner that gives certainty to the public as to the potential location and effects of activities
- To implement effective separation between incompatible activities

Pressures

In some cases however, no amount of mitigation will be sufficient to reduce the incompatibility between certain activities. For example, the heavy traffic volumes and building scale and character of industrial sites is unlikely to be compatible with a residential environment, and the effects of heavy traffic cannot be mitigated without seriously undermining the viability of industrial use. In these circumstances, activity separation by zoning can be justified.

RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT

Riparian margins are strips of land adjacent to waterways. Riparian management is a land use practice adopted along waterways, which is recognised as an effective tool in the promotion of sustainable resource management. Improved riparian management can result in cleaner water, which can benefit stock and increased farm production. Better habitats for fish, birds and other animal life, and better erosion control are other advantages. Riparian management can enhance the visual attractiveness of a farm and provide more opportunities for recreational activities such as swimming.

Objectives and Visions

- To maintain and enhance, where appropriate public access to and along the District's principal waterways.
- To improve through subdivision, use and development the public's access to, and enjoyment of, the District's waterways and the environmental quality of riparian margins and waterways.

Pressures

The amenity values of the District's principal waterways

are affected by development that restricts public access to those waterways. Subdivision and consequential development can threaten and/or degrade significant indigenous vegetation and habitats including waterbodies and archaeological or heritage sites.

Some land management practices related to land uses such as farming, forestry, roading and horticulture can cause soil erosion and/or a build-up of contaminants such as bacteria and chemicals which are washed off the land and into water bodies during heavy rainfall.

Stock wading in water bodies, poor cowshed effluent treatment, overgrazing, inappropriate fertiliser application, stock pugging farmland and poor runoff control on cultivated land or roads and tracks can all contribute to the contamination of water bodies. Water bodies can be protected from much of this degradation by utilising better land management practices including riparian management of river and stream banks.



WORKS AND UTILITIES

Works and utilities and other essential services are physical resources which are a means of providing for the social and economic well being and health and safety of people and communities. They also support the functioning of other activities within the district.

Objectives and Visions

- To enable effective, efficient and environmentally appropriate water supply, sewerage reticulation and treatment, and stormwater services, to continue to be provided and maintained.
- To manage the effective provision of works and utilities so as to minimise the adverse environmental effects and maximise community benefits.

Pressures

Rainfall events that exceed the design capacity of the drainage and flood control schemes have led to inundation. The District's agriculture is dependent on the continual maintenance of the Piako and Waihou River drainage/flood control schemes. Te Aroha township is dependent on the flood control works on the tributaries of the Waihou River to reduce the effects of major flood events as occurred in 1985. On the plains future modifications may be necessary to flood control structures to mitigate the effect of rising sea levels.

Works and network utilities may have adverse effects. However, the community often accepts this because the service is required for the effective functioning of our society. Adverse social, economic and environmental effects would result if works and infrastructure services were not provided. It is acknowledged, that works and infrastructure can be developed by "Requiring Authorities", private companies and in some cases individual groups or persons.



TANGATA WHENUA

The Treaty of Waitangi, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is the founding document of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It provided for the exercise of kawanatanga, governance, by the Crown, while actively protecting te tino rangitiratanga, full authority, of the iwi in respect of their natural, physical and metaphysical resources.

In exercising this governance, the Crown has made laws relating to the promotion of sustainable management of natural and physical resources. The Resource Management Act 1991, requires that in achieving the purpose of the Act all persons exercising functions and powers under it shall

- Recognise and provide for the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga as a matter of national importance
- Have particular regard to kaitiakitanga
- Take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Objectives and Visions

- To maintain and encourage kaitiaki responsibility (guardianship) of Maori by

implementing a partnership approach to the sustainable management of the District's natural and physical resource.

Pressures

Land use activities and subdivision development may adversely affect sites of cultural significance to iwi. Sites might be modified, damaged or destroyed by construction activity, roads or housing development. To avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects will require

- An understanding with the local iwi or hapu to identify sites of cultural significance potentially affected by development
- Development of a partnership between iwi and Council
- Increased involvement of iwi in the decision making process such as plan development and monitoring.

Matamata Piako District has been subject to settlement by a range of peoples. Maori first arrived and were followed by Europeans. As a result there is a wealth of diverse cultural heritage within the District.



AMENITY

The District's residents desire healthy and safe working, living and recreational environments. Generally, a high value is placed on their residential privacy and they consider that generous access to daylight, sunlight and private open space must be maintained, especially in urban areas.

Objectives and Visions

- To maintain and enhance a high standard of amenity in the built environment without constraining development innovation and building variety.
- To minimise the adverse effects created by building scale or dominance, shading, building location and site layout.
- To provide healthy and safe working, living and recreational environments by avoiding and mitigating the effects of excessive noise, vibration, odour and dust.
- To protect residential amenity by requiring compliance with minimum performance standards for noise, glare, odour, dust and vibration control which ensure that generated effects do not generally exceed background or ambient limits.
- To minimise the adverse effects of signage on the character of rural,

residential, industrial and business areas.

Pressures

The amenity and heritage values of Te Aroha and Matamata could be adversely affected by unsuitable development. It is acknowledged that the special amenity and heritage characteristics would be lost by rapid change to the existing physical characteristics of the built environment.

Amenity in rural areas may be compromised by rural activities that generate noise, odour, dust and other effects. In general, there is a higher degree of tolerance of the effects of legitimate farming activities. However in urban areas, and near large-scale rural industry there is an expectation that significant adverse effects on amenity values should be avoided, remedied or mitigated; and in many cases this will justify separation of potentially incompatible activities.

Increased signage and advertising can also impact upon the visual amenity and traffic safety of the environment.

¹ Transport and Environment Committee, 1998: Inquiry into the Environmental Effects of Road Transport, Interim Report of the Transport and Environment Committee, New Zealand House of Representatives.

