

19 GENERAL AMENITY VALUES

19.1 Introduction

“Amenity values” refers to those environmental characteristics of an area that contribute to the pleasantness and attractiveness of that area as a place to live, work or visit. Inherently, amenity values are subjective in nature, although there are qualities that are commonly accepted and shared by most people.

Many factors contribute to the perception of an area’s amenity values. These values derive from a range of environmental characteristics, including the built form (the scale, density appearance, condition, age and other values of buildings), as well as from the absence of buildings – open space, planting, and the naturalness of an area. Other important contributors to amenity values include the level and types of noise, privacy, access to sunlight and types of odour, and the ability to clearly view the night sky.

In general, the combined amenity values of an area go towards defining the character of that area. Thus, amenity values within the Wairarapa vary from location to location, and largely depend upon the perceived character of each area. In other words, the amenity values of an industrial area differ from that say of a residential area; and older residential areas will have different character to other more recently developed residential areas.

These differences in character are important factors in determining which environmental characteristics may be acceptable in one area while not in another. For example, the level of signs within a commercial area would generally not be acceptable in a residential neighbourhood.

Many of the factors that are influential in creating a pleasant environment can be managed, at least in part, by the Plan: for example, the amenity values derived from the density, bulk, height and design of built form. Many of these aspects are managed under the District Plan policies for the various environmental zones and management areas, as these factors directly relate to the management of the character and environmental quality of each of these parts of the Wairarapa.

This section addresses those environmental conditions that can generally affect amenity values across all of the Wairarapa, including the effects of temporary or transitory activities, odour, noise and excessive light and glare.

19.2 Significant Resource Management Issues

1. Temporary activities can potentially create adverse effects on amenity values.
2. Odour or noise can have an adverse effect upon people’s health and neighbourhood amenity.
3. Glare from, for example, outdoor lighting and reflective surfaces, can annoy people and distract motorists.
4. Light emitted from outdoor lighting can cause adverse effects on the brightness and clarity of the night sky

19.3 Objectives, Policies and Methods

19.3.1 Objective GAV1 – General Amenity Values

To maintain and enhance those general amenity values which make the Wairarapa a pleasant place in which to live and work, or visit.

19.3.2 GAV1 Policies

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b) and 19.3.4(c)

- (a) Recognise that temporary activities generally have a minor effect on amenity due to their short duration, provided that some limitations are imposed as necessary to avoid significant, albeit short-term, effects.

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b) and 19.3.4(c)

- (b) Control the levels of noise, based on existing ambient noise and accepted standards for noise generation and receipt.

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b) and 19.3.4(c)

- (c) Manage the interface of different environmental zones to protect the sensitive zones from more noisy areas.

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b) and 19.3.4(c)

- (d) Ensure vibrations occurring through the use of equipment or machinery does not cause adverse effects on the comfort of occupants of adjacent properties.

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b) 19.3.4(c) and 19.3.4(g)

- (e) Manage the intensity, location and direction of artificial lighting to avoid light spill and glare onto adjoining sites and roads, ~~and to protect the clarity and brightness of the night sky.~~

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b) 19.3.4(c) and 19.3.4(g)

- (f) Within the Dark Sky Management Area, manage the light colour temperature, shielding and hours of operation of outdoor artificial lighting to mitigate skyglow to protect the clarity and brightness of the night sky.

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b) and 19.3.4(c)

- (g) Manage activities with unacceptable visual effects on amenity values, in accordance with the qualities of each environmental zone. As a guide to determining if an activity has unacceptable visual effects, consideration will be given to other policies relevant to a particular activity or environmental zone.

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b) and 19.3.4(c)

- (h) Manage the levels of odour and dust by avoiding inappropriate odours and dust from adversely affecting sensitive activities on adjoining properties.

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b) and 19.3.4(c)

- (i) Avoid, remedy or mitigate the potential effects of subdivision and development on street trees.

Implemented through Method 19.3.4(a), 19.3.4(b), 19.3.4(c) and 19.3.4(f)

- (j) Allow for activities undertaken on either reserve land which are consistent with the Reserve Management Plan for that reserve where one exists, or on public land dedicated for community, recreational, sporting, educational, cultural, festive, and ceremonial or gala/market day purposes.

19.3.3 Explanation

This Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the amenity values within all neighbourhoods. To this end, the policies recognise the importance of amenity to health and welfare and the inclusion of rules that will maintain amenity values are important Plan methods.

Temporary activities that only have minor effects should be permitted activities: for example, galas and fairs, construction works and sports events, and temporary filming. The impact of such activities may be quite large at the time when they occur, but requiring resource consent would be out of proportion to their overall longer-term impact. In general, because their duration is short-term, and there are economic social and cultural benefits from such activities, the adverse effects are largely accepted by the community. However, where such effects may become unacceptable if too frequent or too lengthy, maximum durations may need to be specified for some temporary activities. Other special

standards may also need to be applied to limit the potential adverse effects of some types of temporary activities.

Residential amenity is particularly sensitive to noise, artificial light and other site-specific adverse effects. These effects can seriously impact upon the health and create considerable animosity between neighbours. The policies and methods have been established to protect residents from such adverse effects.

Noise limit standards are directed at two main types of potential adverse effects: first, the potential for disturbed sleep, particularly during night hours, and second, the interference with people's enjoyment of activities undertaken, particularly in residential and rural areas.

Vibration from land use activities can range in effect from structural damage to buildings to the disturbance of sleep and general annoyance. Such effects can be effectively managed through the imposition of recognised national standards.

Artificial lighting, particularly in residential areas, can adversely affect people's ~~the~~ ability to sleep and ability to view the night sky. The two main causes are the general loss of night sky from the cumulative effects of urban lighting, and the nuisance caused by single sources that emit high levels of glare. The visibility of the night sky is most affected by artificial lighting that is projected upwards and excessive lighting that is reflected upwards, in particular by lighting that creates more blue light (cooler colour temperatures). Again such effects can be mitigated through compliance with standards on light emission, including those that control levels across property boundaries, light temperature and light shielding.

Offensive or objectionable odours and excessive dust can result from a range of activities. Odours and dust can detrimentally affect the enjoyment and amenity values of living and working environments. Therefore, it is important these effects are contained within the boundaries of the subject site to an acceptable degree.

Street trees contribute to the overall visual quality of an area. Inappropriate works on the street trees themselves, or on land surrounding the street trees could potentially compromise their special qualities.

There is a variety of public reserve land owned and administered by the Councils. Given the range of land, and diverse legal and reserve status of these different areas of land, different management approaches are used throughout the Wairarapa. It is important the reserve land can continue to be used and maintained for a variety of purposes.

19.3.4 Methods to Implement General Amenity Policies

- (a) **Performance standards for permitted activities to maintain general amenity values throughout the Wairarapa.**
- (b) **Assessment of environmental effects through the resource consent process for activities that do not comply with performance standards.**
- (c) **Conditions on resource consent to control adverse effects of activities.**
- (d) **Education and information on ways to avoid remedy or mitigate adverse effects on amenity values.**
- (e) **The allocation of funding through the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) process for services or initiatives that support the policies on general amenity.**
- (f) **The use of other statutory powers to support the policies, such as Bylaws, Road Controlling Authority controls and Reserve Management Plans.**
- (g) **Liaison with Road Controlling Authorities to promote the use of streetlighting with a colour temperature of 3000 Kelvin or lower, shields and other devices on-streetlights to direct light downwards.**

19.3.5 Principal Reasons for Adoption

Noise limits have been set to control intrusive noise in each of the zones and are within range of limits recommended in New Zealand Standards relating to acoustics.

The methods for artificial light, glare and access to sunlight allow for flexible use and development, while setting minimum amenity standards. This will ensure the amenity for neighbouring properties is not compromised by activities and development on adjacent sites.

There are a number of other methods outside the RMA that can assist in the managing the adverse effects of activities on amenity values. For example, as road controlling authorities under the Local Government Act, Councils have controls over activities occurring within roads.

19.4 Anticipated Environmental Outcomes

- (a) **The maintenance of amenity values appropriate to the surrounding environment.**
- (b) **Minimised conflict over amenity between established uses and temporary activities.**
- (c) **Preservation of the brightness and clarity of the night sky within the Dark Sky Management Area.**