# New Zealand
# Urban Design Protocol

# Advisory Group

The *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* has been prepared by the Ministry for the Environment in conjunction with the Urban Design Advisory Group.

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# Foreword

The *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* marks a significant milestone in our nation's urban development. The changes we make now in the way we design our towns and cities will make a difference not just to us, but to our children and our children's children in how they live their lives. The Urban Design Protocol forms part of the Government's *Sustainable Development Programme of Action*, which aims to ensure our towns and cities are healthy, safe and attractive places where business, social and cultural life can flourish.

New Zealand is one of the most urbanised nations in the world – almost 87% of our population live in towns and cities. Yet we haven't paid enough attention to making the places we live in successful places that work for people.

The design of our towns and cities affects almost every aspect of our lives – we all live and work in buildings, and use streets, public spaces, transport systems and other infrastructure. We need to ensure that what we design meets people's needs and aspirations, and that people want to live there. We need to ensure our towns and cities are successful places that contribute positively to our identity as a nation.

The Urban Design Protocol seeks to provide a platform for improving the quality of our towns and cities. The actions that individual signatories take will, together, make a significant difference. The Government is also committed to raising the standard of urban design, and we will lead this change through a programme of actions.

The success of the Urban Design Protocol in attracting such strong support from across New Zealand and so many different sectors illustrates that the time is right for New Zealand to make a leap forward in the quality of our urban design. The Urban Design Protocol is just the start of a number of initiatives that will be developed under the Urban Affairs portfolio, and which will demonstrate the Government's commitment to creating towns and cities that we can all be proud of.

*Marian L. Hobbs*

**Hon Marian L Hobbs**
Minister with Responsibility for Urban Affairs
Minister for the Environment

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# Executive Summary

The *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* provides a platform to make New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design. It is part of the Government's *Sustainable Development Programme of Action* and Urban Affairs portfolio.

Urban design seeks to ensure that the design of buildings, places, spaces and networks that make up our towns and cities work for all of us, both now and in the future.

The Urban Design Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities that together create quality urban design:

- **Context:** seeing buildings, places and spaces as part of whole towns and cities
- **Character:** reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment
- **Choice:** ensuring diversity and choice for people
- **Connections:** enhancing how different networks link together for people
- **Creativity:** encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions
- **Custodianship:** ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy
- **Collaboration:** communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities.

The Urban Design Protocol is a voluntary commitment by central and local government, property developers and investors, design professionals, educational institutes and other groups to undertake specific urban design initiatives. The actions that individual signatories take will, together, make a significant difference to the quality of our towns and cities.

To support the implementation of the Urban Design Protocol, the Government will provide leadership through a suite of supporting resources and a programme of action. These will build the capacity of organisations to deliver quality urban design, provide guidance, raise community awareness, and ensure that the key messages of the Urban Design Protocol are firmly grasped and put into action.

# Vision and Mission Statement

## Vision

Making New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design.

## Mission statement

The *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* calls for a significant step-up in the quality of urban design in New Zealand and a change in the way we think about our towns and cities. As part of a co-ordinated programme of sustainable development, it aims to ensure New Zealand's towns and cities are successful places for people.

It will achieve this by:
- creating a national cross-sector commitment to quality urban design
- providing a national resource of tools, actions and experiences
- setting up partnerships between government, the private sector and professionals
- increasing the awareness of quality urban design and demonstrating its value.

The Urban Design Protocol recognises that:
- towns and cities are complex systems that require integrated management
- quality urban design is an essential component of successful towns and cities
- urban design needs to be an integral part of all urban decision-making
- urban design requires alliances across sectors and professionals
- urban design applies at all scales, from small towns to large cities
- urban design has a significant influence on people and how they live their lives
- our towns and cities are important expressions of New Zealand's cultural identity including our unique Maori heritage.

# 1 – Introduction

This *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* (Urban Design Protocol) is part of the Government's *Sustainable Development Programme of Action*. The Urban Design Protocol is a key deliverable of the 'Sustainable Cities' action area, which seeks to make our cities healthy, safe and attractive places where business, social and cultural life can flourish.

It supports and builds on a range of government strategies for improving our urban environments that encompass economic growth and innovation, transport, housing, regional development, social development, health, disability, and culture and heritage (see Appendix 1).

The principal audiences for the Urban Design Protocol are urban decision makers in government, property developers and investors, and professionals working in the built environment, including planners, architects, landscape architects, surveyors, transport planners, and engineers. The purpose of the Protocol is to signal the Government's commitment to quality urban design, to start debate and raise awareness of urban design across the country, to improve the exchange of learning and information, and to initiate a programme of actions to result in quality urban design.

The Urban Design Protocol is supported by Urban Design Case Studies that show practical examples of successful urban design; an Urban Design Toolkit that provides a compendium of tools and mechanisms to help create quality urban design; a Summary of Urban Design Research, covering current research in New Zealand on urban design and urban environments; and a Value Case, which shows evidence of the link between quality urban design and economic, environmental, social and cultural value (see Section 4).

The Urban Design Protocol will be implemented through the actions of its signatories, through leadership by government, and through raising wider awareness of the value of quality urban design. By endorsing the Protocol, signatories are indicating their commitment to the pursuit of quality urban design that will result in benefits, both to the signatory and the wider community.

## What is a protocol?

A protocol is a formal undertaking between signatories. Parties to a protocol agree to support and demonstrate the principles outlined in the document and to make demonstrable progress towards achieving its vision. A protocol is an agreement and has no force in law.

## What is urban design?

Urban design is concerned with the design of the buildings, places, spaces and networks that make up our towns and cities, and the ways people use them. It ranges in scale from a metropolitan region, city or town down to a street, public space or even a single building. Urban design is concerned not just with appearances and built form but with the environmental, economic, social and cultural consequences of design. It is an approach that draws together many different sectors and professions, and it includes both the process of decision-making as well as the outcomes of design.

## What is the value of urban design?

Quality urban design is important for everybody because our lives are connected through our common built environment. We all live and work in buildings, and use streets, public spaces, transport systems, and other forms of urban infrastructure. Quality urban design creates places that work and places that we use and value.

Urban design has economic, environmental, cultural and social dimensions. Increasingly we are recognising the economic importance of our towns and cities to the national economy. Quality of infrastructure and quality of life are key factors in creating successful towns and cities. Urban design can have significant positive effects on both. Quality urban design also increases economic value with higher returns on investment, reduced management and maintenance costs, more productive workplaces, and enhanced image and prestige.

Quality urban design values and protects the cultural identity and heritage of our towns and cities and provides for creativity. It reinforces New Zealand's distinctive identity. Quality urban design also adds social, environmental and cultural benefits by creating well-connected, inclusive and accessible places, and by delivering the mix of houses, uses and facilities that we need. It can enhance safety, reduce crime and fear of crime and enhance energy efficiency. Quality urban design can provide us with more and better opportunities for physical activity, resulting in improved physical and social wellbeing.

Quality urban design produces benefits at a city-wide level as well as at the scale of neighbourhoods and individual buildings or spaces. For example, a well designed transport network integrated with land use improves accessibility and mobility, contributes to a better quality of life, encourages healthier lifestyles, uses less non-renewable energy, and contributes to improved economic performance.

A well designed building and adjacent spaces produces higher capital values and rental returns, lower long term maintenance costs, increased productivity from its occupants, better security and less crime and fear of crime, and increased civic pride.

The benefits of quality urban design accrue to businesses through increased productivity and prestige; to communities in improved urban environments and safer, healthier places; and to developers and investors in better returns on investment.

Research has found no evidence that quality urban design necessarily increases development costs. Indeed good design is fundamental to achieving value for money, because it creates functional, productive, robust and attractive environments. Design costs are typically a very small proportion of whole life costs (less than 0.5 percent), yet design choices have a significant impact on construction and operating costs and on the wider community.

The Value Case (see Section 4) contains our research and examples that support this.


## Urban settlement in New Zealand

Urban settlement in New Zealand has occurred relatively recently, especially when compared to Europe and Asia. Our first urban areas were Maori settlements sited strategically to take advantage of a natural food source or an easily defended position. Patterns of previous Maori settlement and the relationship of tangata whenua with the land remain important aspects of urban design.

The colonial pattern of European settlement has strongly influenced the development of our towns and cities. It is no accident that most of our towns and cities are located on or near the coast, as a sheltered harbour was a prerequisite for access by coastal transport before the development of the road and rail networks.

The founders of new towns in New Zealand sought to provide residents with the amenities perceived to be lacking in large industrial British cities. Because land was readily available and towns relatively small, many more people could aspire to suburban living in a detached house with a garden. The prevalent mode of transport had a significant impact on the pattern, size and form of our towns and cities. Suburbs initially grew around horse-drawn vehicles, but the introduction first of trams and then of private motor vehicles saw rapid suburban expansion into outer areas. Today our larger cities have extensive, low-density housing on their suburban edges with inner areas typically having a more varied mix of housing densities and uses, often laid out in a traditional grid pattern.

Our towns and cities are characterised by their distinct natural topographies and often dramatic landscape settings. For example: Auckland's volcanic cones, Rotorua's geothermal features, Wellington's faultlines and harbour, Christchurch's floodplain and mountain backdrop, and Queenstown's spectacular lake and mountains. These landscapes create the uniqueness of our urban areas but they can also dictate growth patterns and present obstacles to infrastructure development.

## What can urban design do for New Zealand?

Our towns and cities are experiencing significant growth pressures, ranging from the massive population growth of Auckland and continued urban expansion in Wellington and Christchurch to growth in smaller regional towns that offer desirable lifestyle opportunities like Queenstown, Nelson and Tauranga. How we manage this growth and the quality of development will have a significant influence on the liveability and sustainability of where most New Zealanders live. The growth issues we have to deal with include how to design better suburbs on the edge of towns and cities, how to successfully intensify in our inner suburbs, and how to design liveable apartments in city centres.

Quality urban design can help us avoid some of the problems of poorly designed low-density developments that we have experienced in the past, such as traffic congestion, unsustainable energy use, overloaded urban infrastructure, a lack of distinctive identity, social isolation, and reduced physical activity with its associated problems such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. In many of our cities we have seen a trend towards multi-unit developments (these accounted for 20-30 percent of all building permits approved in Auckland over the past 5 years). Quality urban design can help ensure multi-unit developments provide attractive, liveable and affordable options, without impacting on our heritage and distinctive identity, our privacy, or overloading our urban infrastructure.

In some of our smaller towns, we are experiencing different issues associated with stagnant or declining populations. Some of the issues we have to deal with include the declining quality of the building stock, insufficient funding base to maintain and renew urban infrastructure, and pressure to accept poor-quality design to secure economic development opportunities. A proactive strategy to ensure quality urban design can help address some of these issues.

The costs of poor design fall on all of us, when we have to live or work in poorly designed buildings, when we have to use dysfunctional or unsafe public spaces, when we are cut-off from essential services, and when, as property owners, businesses or ratepayers, we have to pay for long term maintenance.

The message we can learn from overseas is that addressing these issues requires co-ordinated thinking and a more structured approach to management of our urban areas.  Managing the effects of individual activities is not enough on its own, we also need to manage urban systems and their interconnections.  Quality urban design is an approach that can help us achieve this.

## A co-ordinated approach

Creating quality urban design requires action across a wide range of sectors, groups and professions. Professionals in all disciplines need to work together in a 'common space', as no one profession can understand the full complexity of a town or city.

Each group can make an important contribution to realising the vision.

| | |
|---|---|
| Central government | • Lead at a national level<br>• Demonstrate quality urban design through its own development and activities<br>• Co-ordinate policies and actions across whole of government<br>• Develop appropriate legislation and policy guidance<br>• Set appropriate national standards and policy statements<br>• Promote national awareness of urban design<br>• Support local government<br>• Co-ordinate urban design research<br>• Work with education institutes to improve urban design education |
| Local government | • Lead at a regional/local level<br>• Demonstrate quality urban design through its own development and activities<br>• Develop appropriate statutory policies, rules and guidance<br>• Manage statutory decision-making processes to ensure quality urban design outcomes<br>• Promote regional/local awareness of urban design<br>• Share research and 'best practice'<br>• Integrate urban management<br>• Work collaboratively with the private sector |
| Developers and investors | • Demonstrate quality urban design in every development<br>• Work collaboratively with local government<br>• Involve communities in projects<br>• Recognise the public interest |

| | |
|---|---|
| Consultants | • Champion quality urban design |
| | • Promote quality urban design to clients |
| | • Participate in local decision-making and design advisory processes |
| | • Develop and promote 'best practice' approaches and tools |
| Professional institutes | • Champion quality urban design |
| | • Develop and promote 'best practice' approaches and tools |
| | • Improve skills and knowledge through education and training |
| | • Work collaboratively with other professional institutes |
| Educational institutes | • Lead research on urban design |
| | • Work collaboratively with the public and private sectors |
| | • Participate in local decision-making and design advisory processes |
| | • Develop training courses to improve understanding and application of urban design |
| Sector organisations | • Work with their sector to improve understanding and application of urban design |
| | • Advocate for quality urban design |
| | • Work collaboratively with the public and private sectors |
| Community | • Demand quality urban design |
| | • Develop community action projects |
| | • Participate in community engagement forums |
| | • Lead proactive neighbourhood projects |
| Iwi and iwi authorities | • Recognise the kaitiaki roles and responsibilities with urban environments |
| | • Advocate for quality urban design |
| | • Develop community action projects |
| | • Participate in community engagement forums |

# 2 – Attributes of Successful Towns and Cities

Successful towns and cities are increasingly being recognised as vital to the health of our national economy. Success does not happen by chance but as a result of good planning based on a long term vision and co-ordinated implementation.

This section identifies six essential attributes that successful towns and cities share. Drawing on the *Sustainable Development Programme of Action*, they incorporate economic, environmental, social and cultural factors. It is the combination of all these attributes that leads to success.

Quality urban design is an important contributing factor to all six attributes. Well designed urban spaces, places, buildings and networks are essential building blocks upon which many other attributes of successful towns and cities are built.

## Successful towns and cities are:

### Competitive, thriving, creative and innovative

Successful towns and cities are competitive centres and economic hubs for New Zealand. They provide platforms for growth, especially in advanced business services, creative industries, hi-tech industries, and as centres of learning and innovation.

Competitive and thriving towns and cities attract dynamic and innovative knowledge workers, entrepreneurs and companies. They appeal to talented people because they offer a high quality of life, effective transport systems, high environmental quality, good leisure and recreation opportunities, thriving cultural centres, arts and historic heritage, and a distinctive cultural identity.

Creativity is a hallmark of successful towns and cities. Creative towns and cities facilitate new ways of thinking and innovative ways of solving problems. They foster new partnerships and support centres of learning. Creative cities have a strong identity, a rich cultural life and are well connected regionally and internationally. They have a culture of innovation and they invest in people. Creative cities connected to global markets are a primary source of innovation, technological development and wealth creation in modern economies.

### Liveable

Successful towns and cities provide a high quality of life where people choose to live and work. They provide attractive living environments, they offer good leisure and recreational opportunities, and they support a thriving cultural life.

Liveable places provide choices in housing, work, transport and lifestyle opportunities. They are easy to move around, with accessible services and a variety of integrated transport options that include walking and cycling. Their public spaces are accessible, well used and safe. Liveable places are healthy places to live, and they have low levels of crime.

### Environmentally responsible

Successful towns and cities maintain, celebrate and add to their best environmental attributes. They recognise the role that landscape and the natural environment play in making their urban

areas great places to live and work, and they value the contribution they make to their identity, liveability and quality of life. They enhance these qualities by maintaining and sometimes recreating natural networks throughout their urban areas, and by designing new buildings, transport services and infrastructure that meet the highest standards of sustainable design and construction.

Environmentally responsible towns and cities manage resources to take account of the needs of present and future generations. Growth and economic development is sympathetic to the natural environment and cultural heritage and minimises the city's environmental footprint. Environmentally responsible towns and cities constantly seek ways to minimise adverse impacts on human health and natural and cultural systems, including air quality and water quality. They minimise waste production, energy and water use, and maximise the efficiency of land use and infrastructure.

## Successful towns and cities have:

### Opportunities for all

Successful towns and cities accommodate all citizens and offer opportunities for young and old, people on low incomes and people with disabilities. The benefits of urban life are widely shared. They provide access to jobs, affordable homes, services and community facilities. Successful towns and cities are inclusive societies that respect and celebrate diversity and care for the disadvantaged. They build a strong sense of community, and encourage people to participate in making decisions that affect them. A successful town or city is equitable and everyone feels a sense of ownership, which is reflected in their safe and dynamic public spaces.

### Distinctive identity

Successful towns and cities have a strong and locally distinctive identity that builds on the unique strengths and characteristics of each place and the cultural identity of New Zealand. They reflect our heritage and culture in their built form, in the landscape, and in the way spaces are organised and used. Successful towns and cities reflect our increasingly diverse ethnic mix, including all people who have made New Zealand their home - indigenous Maori, Europeans, Pacific Islanders, and Asians. Recognising and promoting a town's or city's identity encourages diversity of cultural expression through design that recognises distinctive use of space, form and materials. It fosters local pride, civic engagement and confidence, and it stimulates innovation, creativity and economic opportunities.

### Shared vision and good governance

A successful town or city has a clear sense of direction and a widely shared vision. There is genuine engagement with communities and leadership at many levels. Creative ideas are encouraged and freely exchanged between people and government.

In a successful town or city, local governance is effective, efficient and confident. Leaders are prepared to take risks to deliver the best outcomes, but priorities and trade-offs are made explicit, and the benefits and costs of decisions are understood. Decision-makers think holistically and creatively, and they learn from mistakes. They work in partnership with businesses, iwi and other local communities to reach shared goals.

# 3 – Key Urban Design Qualities – The Seven Cs

The Urban Design Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities that create quality urban design: the seven Cs.  They are: Context, Character, Choice, Connections, Creativity, Custodianship and Collaboration.  These are a combination of design processes and outcomes.

The seven Cs:

- provide a checklist of qualities that contribute to quality urban design

- are based on sound urban design principles recognised and demonstrated throughout the world

- explain these qualities in simple language, providing a common basis for discussing urban issues and objectives

- provide core concepts to use in urban design projects and policies

- can be adapted for use in towns and cities throughout New Zealand.


## Context

Quality urban design sees buildings, places and spaces not as isolated elements but as part of the whole town or city.  For example, a building is connected to its street, the street to its neighbourhood, the neighbourhood to its city, and the city to its region.  Urban design has a strong spatial dimension and optimises relationships between buildings, places, spaces, activities and networks.  It also recognises that towns and cities are part of a constantly evolving relationship between people, land, culture and the wider environment.

Quality urban design:

- takes a long term view

- recognises and builds on landscape context and character

- results in buildings and places that adapt to local climatic conditions

- examines each project in relation to its setting and ensures that each development fits in with and enhances its surroundings

- understands the social, cultural and economic context as well as physical elements and relationships

- considers the impact on the health of the population who live and work there

- celebrates cultural identity and recognises the heritage values of a place

- ensures incremental development contributes to an agreed and coherent overall result.


## Character

Quality urban design reflects and enhances the distinctive character and culture of our urban environment, and recognises that character is dynamic and evolving, not static.  It ensures new buildings and spaces are unique, are appropriate to their location and compliment their historic identity, adding value to our towns and cities by increasing tourism, investment and community pride.

Quality urban design:

- reflects the unique identity of each town, city and neighbourhood and strengthens the positive characteristics that make each place distinctive
- protects and manages our heritage, including buildings, places and landscapes
- protects and enhances distinctive landforms, water bodies and indigenous plants and animals
- creates locally appropriate and inspiring architecture, spaces and places
- reflects and celebrates our unique New Zealand culture and identity and celebrates our multi cultural society.

# Choice

Quality urban design fosters diversity and offers people choice in the urban form of our towns and cities, and choice in densities, building types, transport options, and activities. Flexible and adaptable design provides for unforeseen uses, and creates resilient and robust towns and cities.

Quality urban design:
- ensures urban environments provide opportunities for all, especially the disadvantaged
- allows people to choose different sustainable lifestyle options, locations, modes of transport, types of buildings and forms of tenure
- encourages a diversity of activities within mixed use developments and neighbourhoods
- supports designs which are flexible and adaptable and which will remain useful over the long term
- ensures public spaces are accessible by everybody, including people with disabilities.

# Connections

Good connections enhance choice, support social cohesion, make places lively and safe, and facilitate contact among people. Quality urban design recognises how all networks - streets, railways, walking and cycling routes, services, infrastructure, and communication networks - connect and support healthy neighbourhoods and towns and cities. Places with good connections between activities and with careful placement of facilities benefit from reduced travel times and lower environmental impacts. Where physical layouts and activity patterns are easily understood, residents and visitors can navigate around the city easily.

Quality urban design:
- creates safe, attractive and secure pathways and links between centres, landmarks and neighbourhoods
- facilitates green networks that link public and private open space
- places a high priority on walking, cycling and public transport
- anticipates travel demands and provides a sustainable choice of integrated transport modes
- improves accessibility to public services and facilities
- treats streets and other thoroughfares as positive spaces with multiple functions
- provides formal and informal opportunities for social and cultural interaction
- facilitates access to services and efficient movement of goods and people
- provides environments that encourage people to become more physically active.

## Creativity

Quality urban design encourages creative and innovative approaches. Creativity adds richness and diversity, and turns a functional place into a memorable place. Creativity facilitates new ways of thinking, and willingness to think through problems afresh, to experiment and rewrite rules, to harness new technology, and to visualise new futures. Creative urban design supports a dynamic urban cultural life and fosters strong urban identities.

Quality urban design:

- emphasises innovative and imaginative solutions
- combines processes and design responses that enhance the experience we have of urban environments
- incorporates art and artists in the design process at an early stage to contribute to creative approaches
- values public art that is integrated into a building, space or place
- builds a strong and distinctive local identity
- utilises new technology
- incorporates different cultural perspectives.

## Custodianship

Quality urban design reduces the environmental impacts of our towns and cities through environmentally sustainable and responsive design solutions. Custodianship recognises the lifetime costs of buildings and infrastructure, and aims to hand on places to the next generation in as good or better condition. Stewardship of our towns includes the concept of kaitiakitanga. It creates enjoyable, safe public spaces and a quality environment that is cared for, which creates a sense of ownership and responsibility in all residents and visitors.

Quality urban design:

- protects landscapes, ecological systems and cultural heritage values
- manages the use of resources carefully, through environmentally responsive and sustainable design solutions
- manages land wisely
- utilises 'green' technology in the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure
- incorporates renewable energy sources and passive solar gain
- creates buildings, spaces, places and transport networks that are safer, with less crime and fear of crime
- avoids or mitigates the effects of natural and man-made hazards
- considers the ongoing care and maintenance of buildings, spaces, places and networks
- uses design to improve the environmental performance of infrastructure
- considers the impact of design on people's health.

# Collaboration

Towns and cities are designed incrementally as we make decisions on individual projects. Quality urban design requires good communication and co-ordinated actions from all decision-makers: central government, local government, professionals, transport operators, developers and users. To improve our urban design capability we need integrated training, adequately funded research and shared examples of best practice.

Quality urban design:

- supports a common vision that can be achieved over time

- depends on leadership at many levels

- uses a collaborative approach to design that acknowledges the contributions of many different disciplines and perspectives

- involves communities in meaningful decision-making processes

- acknowledges and celebrates examples of good practice

- recognises the importance of training in urban design and research at national, regional and local levels.

# 4 – Making it Happen

The *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* is more than just a statement of the importance of quality urban design. It seeks to make a real difference to the quality of New Zealand's towns and cities through concerted action by all stakeholders. Making it happen requires action by the signatories to the Urban Design Protocol, leadership from central government, the development of resources to support its implementation, and raising awareness across New Zealand of the value of quality urban design.

## Signatories to the Urban Design Protocol

The leading signatories to this Urban Design Protocol come from a wide range of organisations spanning central government, local government, the private sector, educational institutes, professional bodies and other sector groups. They represent many of our major towns and cities, infrastructure providers, decision-makers and influencers. Each of these organisations has made a commitment to create quality urban design through their own actions. By setting an example for others to follow, they will make a real difference to the quality of our urban areas.

To maximise the impact of this Urban Design Protocol, we need to increase the number of signatories over time. We are aiming for commitment from all local governments, including those that represent our smaller towns, from all relevant government departments and crown entities, and from all sector groups involved in the design of our towns and cities. Getting this commitment will require a concerted effort across New Zealand to raise awareness of the importance of urban design, and the example set by the leading signatories will be instrumental in achieving this.

A register will be kept of all signatories to the Urban Design Protocol, and will be updated regularly.

## Benefits of being a signatory

Becoming a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol signifies an organisation's commitment to continuous improvement of its urban areas, and recognises its role in helping set an example for others in their sector.

Signatory organisations will have exclusive access to the 'Design Champions Network', providing a valuable forum for sharing information and experiences in developing policy and actions on urban design issues. Nominated design champions will be able to attend training sessions and workshops and meet high level representatives from both their own sector and other sectors. Signatories also have access to the package of resources developed to support the Urban Design Protocol, to help them develop and implement their action programmes.

Signatory organisations will be eligible for special categories of award within the overall 'National Urban Design Awards' for relevant programmes, projects and developments. Signatories will also be given preference in future funding or support programmes developed as part of the Protocol implementation package.

## Actions by signatories

Signatories commit to putting the Urban Design Protocol into effect by developing, monitoring and reporting a set of actions specific to their organisation. Over time these actions will change the way our towns and cities are managed, and will ensure that the commitment to quality urban design is carried out throughout the work of each organisation.

The 'Action Pack' provides examples of possible actions an organisation might take to implement the Urban Design Protocol. Ideas are provided for local government, central government, developers and investors, and other organisations. Actions can be targeted across all aspects of an organisation's activities, from strategy development to decision-making to research and staff training. The ideas are grouped in categories, including:

- championing urban design and raising awareness
- developing strategy and policy
- planning futures
- being a good client
- making decisions
- exchanging information and research
- integrating management
- building capacity
- monitoring and evaluation.

Signatory organisations select their chosen actions and report them to the Ministry for the Environment within six months of the date of signing up to the Urban Design Protocol. The choice of actions is at the discretion of the signatory organisation, and they are expected to be challenging and ambitious. The Ministry for the Environment will prepare and keep up-to-date a publicly available list of actions.

There is only one mandatory action: each signatory must appoint a 'Design Champion' - someone influential at a senior level who can promote and champion urban design, and who can challenge existing approaches throughout the organisation.

## Monitoring and reporting

As part of their commitment to the Urban Design Protocol, signatories monitor and report on the implementation of their specific set of actions. They will develop a monitoring plan and submit this to Ministry for the Environment alongside their set of actions. The plan will outline how the implementation and outcomes of the actions will be monitored and reported. Guidance on how and what to monitor will be provided.

Each signatory will be required to submit a report to the Ministry for the Environment on the implementation of their set of actions. The first report back will be 31 August 2006, and thereafter every 2 years. These reports will be collated into a national report on the implementation of the Protocol and progress in achieving quality urban design in New Zealand. This will track:

- implementation of Urban Design Protocol actions across New Zealand
- lessons learnt from implementing the Urban Design Protocol actions
- awareness of urban design
- significant changes to urban design processes

- demonstrable urban design outcomes.

# Review

The Urban Design Protocol will be reviewed after a period of 2 years to determine if it has contributed to improving the quality of urban design, and to ensure that it is still relevant and targeted appropriately. The monitoring programme forms an important part of this review. As part of the review process, all signatory organisations will be asked to renew their commitments.  An organisation may be removed from the register if, after 2 years, they have not made adequate progress in implementing their set of actions, and have not met their commitment to quality urban design.

# Leadership by central government

The Government recognises its role in providing leadership to improve the quality of urban design across New Zealand. It supports the Urban Design Protocol and will ensure that central government departments and relevant crown entities become signatories and participate fully in its implementation.

The Government has developed a suite of supporting resources and a programme of action to support the Urban Design Protocol. These aim to build capacity and knowledge across all sectors, providing further guidance, raising community awareness, and ensuring that the important messages of the Urban Design Protocol are firmly embedded and put into action.

### (a) Supporting resources

A number of resources have been developed to help signatories and other key decision-makers with realising the vision of the Urban Design Protocol.  They are relevant to public and private sector organisations, professionals in all the design disciplines (e.g. planning, engineering, architecture, landscape architecture and surveying), as well as other sector and community groups.

- **Urban Design Toolkit** – the toolkit provides a compendium of tools and techniques that can be used to create quality urban design.  It includes a set of common terms to describe the tools and processes, outlines their purpose, advantages and disadvantages, gives examples of where in New Zealand they have been used, and provide links to further information. The tools are linked to common categories of work to make finding information easy.

- **Urban Design Case Studies** – the case studies provide 16 examples of built developments that demonstrate some of the urban design qualities outlined in the Urban Design Protocol. They come from a range of locations and land uses throughout New Zealand.  Each case study is analysed against the Urban Design Protocol's seven Cs, the benefits that urban design has added, and the lessons learnt from the design process.  The case studies demonstrate the practical application of urban design principles in New Zealand, the resulting benefits, and areas where improvements could be made. Over time, new case studies will be added to this database, including those carried out by signatories as part of their programme of actions.

- **Summary of Urban Design Research** – this database summarises current New Zealand research on urban design and issues related to the form and function of urban environments. Decision-makers can use it to find relevant research to help them develop programmes, policies and actions. It includes research being undertaken by central and local government,

tertiary education institutions, private consultants and other service providers. This summary will be updated annually.

- **Urban Design Value Case** – the value case presents a rationale and evidence for the link between quality urban design and economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits. It demonstrates the value that urban design adds at the site and city-wide scales. Qualitative and quantitative examples and scenarios show the contribution that good urban design makes to successful towns and cities. It is particularly relevant to property investors and developers and to key decision-makers.

## (b) Programme of action

### THEME: Championing Urban Design and Raising Awareness

- **National Urban Design Awards**
  National awards for quality urban design developments, projects and programmes. To be developed in conjunction with professional institutes and the Property Council.

- **Year of the Built Environment 2005**
  2005 has been declared the 'Year of the Built Environment', and there will be a co-ordinated programme of events to raise community awareness of built environment issues and how they affect people's lives. This is being undertaken in conjunction with the New Zealand Institute of Architects and a steering group of other organisations.

### THEME: Developing Strategy and Policy

- **National Policy Statement (NPS)**
  Actively investigating whether a national policy statement on urban design could provide guidance to councils making decisions under the RMA. A work programme for developing national policy statements will be determined in early 2005.

### THEME: Being a Good Client

- **Best Practice Urban Design Guidelines (Government Departments)**
  Guidelines on how government departments can ensure that their direct development activities achieve quality urban design.

### THEME: Exchanging Information and Research

- **Urban Design Research**
  Working with research funders to revise target outcomes for urban-related research as part of investment strategy reviews.

### THEME: Integrating Management

- **Government Precinct Demonstration Project**
  Development of a framework plan and implementation programme for a "Government Precinct" in Thorndon, Wellington. This will be developed in conjunction with the Wellington City Council as an urban design demonstration project under the Urban Design Protocol.

**THEME: Building Capacity**

- **Urban Design Champions Programme**
  A programme to provide shared learning and networking across sectors for design champions identified by signatories to the Urban Design Protocol.

- **Continuing Professional Development Training**
  A programme of urban design continuing professional development training for architects, planners, landscape architects, engineers and surveyors.

## (c) Further initiatives to be investigated

In addition to these programmes, the Government (in conjunction with potential key partners) will investigate the feasibility and suitability of other initiatives to increase the take-up and delivery of quality urban design. Many of these were proposed in feedback on the draft Urban Design Protocol. The implementation of these further initiatives would be subject to resources being available.

- **National Urban Design Guidelines**
  Developing national guidance on achieving and assessing the quality of urban design in the development and redevelopment of urban areas, possibly including performance criteria and best practice tools and techniques. This could become a pivotal resource to help decision-makers, particularly those involved in Resource Management Act decisions, and would be especially useful where more detailed local guidelines are not available.

- **New Zealand Centre of Urban Design Excellence**
  Creating a national centre of excellence in urban design to promote good practice, co-ordinate and disseminate research and develop training and skills. This could start as a virtual centre and might grow into a physical resource. It could be developed as a collaborative venture between several partners.

- **National Urban Design Advisory Panel**
  Forming a national advisory panel to provide advice and comment on development proposals. The panel could comprise design professionals and representatives from the property sector. It could provide voluntary advice on projects of national importance and projects undertaken by government departments. This could be particularly helpful for smaller local governments who are facing major development pressures.

- **Urban Design Initiatives Fund**
  Creating a funding pool to provide matched funding for urban design projects and programmes undertaken by local government, professional bodies, sector and community groups. This could accelerate the uptake of urban design across New Zealand.

- **Capacity Support for Local Government**
  Forming a pool of urban design experts to be made available to smaller local governments to support the development of agreed urban design projects and initiatives. This could provide access to expert skills not otherwise available for resourcing or locational reasons. It might also help address the critical shortage of skilled urban design resources in New Zealand through providing flexible part-time work attractive to retired or non-working professionals.

- **Addressing Skills Shortages**
  Addressing the current shortage of professionals with skills in urban design and urban management through a programme to identify skills shortages, and work with other agencies (e.g. tertiary education institutes, the New Zealand Immigration Service and professional institutes) to find solutions to address them.

## (d) Urban affairs

The Government, led by the Ministry for the Environment, is also preparing a Statement of Urban Affairs Priorities that will define the focus of the urban affairs portfolio and identify the Government's priorities for further action. Improving the quality of urban design is likely to be one of the initial priorities of this programme. Some of the initiatives suggested as part of the feedback on the draft Urban Design Protocol, but which fall outside the scope of urban design, will be considered in the wider context of urban affairs.

# 5 – Signatories to the Urban Design Protocol

We, the undersigned, are committed to creating quality urban design and we recognise our role and responsibility in achieving this.  Within six months of signing we will develop a set of actions to implement our commitment, and we will monitor and report by 31 August 2006 to the Ministry of the Environment on these actions.

Central Government
*(names of organisations to be added)*

Educational Institutes
*(names of organisations to be added)*

Local Government
*(names of organisations to be added)*

Sector Organisations
*(names of organisations to be added)*

Developers and Investors
*(names of organisations to be added)*

Community
*(names of organisations to be added)*

Consultants
*(names of organisations to be added)*

Iwi and Iwi Authorities
*(names of organisations to be added)*

Professional Institutes
*(names of organisations to be added)*

# Appendix 1 – Guiding Documents

The *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* is part of a growing framework of national policy guidance around successful towns and cities and quality urban design.

## Sustainable Development Programme of Action (January 2003)

A programme of action for sustainable development. This programme is based on four initial action areas, one of which is 'Sustainable Cities'. The overall goal for sustainable cities is – our cities are healthy, safe and attractive places where business, social and cultural life can flourish.

The key government goals to guide the public sector in achieving sustainable development are:

- strengthen national identity and uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi
- grow an inclusive, innovative economy for the benefit of all
- maintain trust in government and provide strong social services
- improve New Zealanders' skills
- reduce inequalities in health, education, employment and housing
- protect and enhance the environment.

www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/sus-dev/sus-dev-programme-of-action-jan03.html

## People + Places + Spaces: A Design Guide for Urban New Zealand (January 2002)

A design guide for urban New Zealand. This document supports the Urban Design Protocol and provides detailed guidance on urban design principles and how to create better urban design at a project level.

www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/rma/people-places-spaces-mar02/index.html

## The Growth and Innovation Framework (February 2002)

A framework to achieve higher levels of economic growth through sustainable development. It acknowledges the important role cities play in economic growth, and it recognises that a key factor in international competitiveness is the ability to retain and attract talented people, partly through the quality of our urban environments. It also recognises the importance of working in partnership with other sectors to achieve sustainable growth.

http://www.gif.med.govt.nz

## Creating Great Places to Live + Work + Play (June 2002)

A practical guide for local government and others on the processes and tools to create liveable urban environments.

www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/rma/live-work-play-jun02/live-work-play-jun02.html

## New Zealand Transport Strategy (December 2002)

The strategy calls for transport to be integrated with other urban issues and identifies the key role transport must play in helping New Zealand develop economically and socially in a sustainable way.

Five key objectives are identified:
1. Assisting economic development
2. Assisting safety and personal security
3. Improving access and mobility
4. Protecting and promoting public health
5. Ensuring environmental sustainability.

The strategy covers all modes of transport and recognises that transport is integral to every community and is a principal determinant of urban form.

www.beehive.govt.nz/nzts/home.cfm

## New Zealand Health Strategy (December 2000)

The strategy forms the strategic framework for the health and disability sector in New Zealand and outlines the goals and objectives for health gain. It identifies the priority areas the Government wishes to concentrate on. It outlines 13 health objectives, including some relating to the built environment and increasing physical activity.

www.moh.govt.nz/nzhs.html

## New Zealand Disability Strategy (April 2001)

The strategy provides a framework to begin removing the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating fully in society and ensures the needs of disabled people are considered by government before making decisions.

www.odi.govt.nz/nzds/about-the-strategy.html

## Building the Future: Towards a New Zealand Housing Strategy (April 2004)

The draft strategy sets out a direction for housing for the next 10 years. It recognises that housing plays a major role in creating healthy, strong and cohesive communities as well as contributing to our national economic wealth. Six action areas are proposed, including improving housing quality and improving housing affordability.

www.hnzc.co.nz/nzhousingstrat/index.htm

## Heritage Management Guidelines for Resource Management Practitioners (2004)

Guidelines to promote the sustainable management of historic heritage and to assist local government, owners and developers through the resource management process.

www.historic.org.nz/publications/HM_guidelines.html


## Safer Communities Action Plan To Reduce Community Violence and Sexual Violence (June 2004)

This action plan sets out a range of initiatives to combat community violence and sexual violence. The action plan consists of four priority areas:

- Attitudes to violence
- Alcohol related violence
- Violence in public places
- Sexual violence.

The violence in public places priority area focuses on establishing and supporting national 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' guidelines to be used by local government and other urban design practitioners.

www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2004/action-plan-community-sexual-violence