



DRAFT REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT

May 2016

Chapter 4

Social and Economic Wellbeing

Pāpori me te ōhanga hauora

I.4 Significant Resource Management Issues: Social and Economic Wellbeing

Issue 4.1 Maximise social and economic wellbeing in Whakatū Nelson's commercial centres.

Commercial centres have existed for thousands of years internationally and they are the most efficient possible way of enabling the exchange of goods, services and ideas. Whakatū Nelson has historically developed around the city centre and, as it grew, secondary commercial centres developed such as Stoke and Tahunanui.

A commercial centres-based approach and compact urban form is necessary to reinforce historical patterns of amenity and character, ensure the best use of existing infrastructure (especially transport), promote energy efficiency, but most importantly to make people's daily lives as easy as possible. Studies, including those by the Council, have identified that key qualities of high density, quality design, a wide mix of uses, and a sense of vibrancy and activity are essential in successful commercial centres.

A compact urban form is primarily to be achieved by way of encouraging intensification of the city centre and other commercial centres, some key passenger transport corridors, and other locations where there are sufficient local amenities that can be accessed by way of a convenient walk. Complementing this will be the retention of a clear urban edge to Whakatū Nelson that will help to maintain the visual and functional contrast between the built environment and our rural and natural environments. As growth pressures demand it, carefully planned urban expansion will occur. This approach will also promote a wide range and diversity of housing to meet the needs of the community.

Issue 4.2 Enabling as much economic development and job creation as possible in Whakatū Nelson.

Creation of employment opportunities is one of the most important issues facing Whakatū Nelson's community. Employment is a driver of social wellbeing and personal satisfaction as well as just being a means to earn income. For a variety of reasons, local, national and international market conditions fluctuate. Industries rise and fall, new ones emerge, and the increasing integration of the digital economy into everyday life brings opportunities for creative enterprises to establish.

It is very difficult to predict what forms of employment will prove more successful than others. For this reason, it is essential that some priority

be given to not only maintaining existing employment activities but encouraging or otherwise enabling new ones to establish. This will include ensuring that existing industrial-type employment areas are not undermined by the proliferation of inappropriate activities including residential and specialty retailing (including supermarkets). Those areas should otherwise remain available for the widest variety of employment activities. Commercial centres are to be promoted as the appropriate location for speciality retail, office and professional service activities, and other commercial activities. In some limited instances large-format retail activities including supermarkets cannot locate readily in either a centre or an industry area. For these activities placement along transport corridors close to commercial centres may be appropriate if there is no centres-based alternative.

Where new employment activities are proposed to locate outside of an identified industry or commercial zone, such as in the rural area, the Council will require applicants to demonstrate that the location is essential for the activity and that there will be substantial social and economic benefits.

Issue 4.3 Housing in Whakatū Nelson should maximise choice and meet the different needs of the community.

Housing is a key concern for those residing in Nelson. Access to housing that meets people's needs as their circumstances change (including as they age) allows them to remain active members in their community and feel safe. For many, the location they live in is more than a random choice. Access to friends and family, preferred schools or a church can be essential to some households. Ensuring that the housing stock across Nelson offers a variety of options within and between suburbs will enable people to meet their needs.

Related to housing choice is housing affordability. This term is generally accepted now as referring to the relationship between household income, house prices and living costs. The determinants of housing prices are varied and many of the forces involved are beyond the ability of the Council to influence. The Council is able to contribute to affordability primarily through managing the supply of zoned land for housing. In this respect the Council will ensure that there is always more land zoned for residential purposes than there is demand.

Promoting safety and comfort will encourage more social and economic activity. Many forms of social or economic exchange are planned or otherwise necessary. An example is having to visit a store to purchase

milk and eggs. But many other forms of exchange are random or spontaneous. An example is travelling past a clothing store and making an on-the-spot impulse decision to purchase an item. This relates to the economic term agglomeration, and describes how activities locate close together to maximise benefits to all. This is ultimately the reason why communities build dense and mixed use city centres. Making the public spaces that connect those activities inviting and pleasant will promote the greatest possible interaction between them.

Wellbeing in Nelson will be maximised when all forms of exchange are made as easy and convenient as reasonably possible. To achieve this, studies including those undertaken by the Council have consistently identified that there is a relationship between comfort (including perceptions of safety) and people's willingness to linger. Having high quality, interesting and safe streets increases the probability that people will spend more time walking along them engaging in more spontaneous social or economic exchange. This could be by way of talking with strangers, meeting friends, or purchasing goods or services. It is most important in commercial centres and also in the residential areas of Whakatū Nelson.

Comfort and safety in this context relates to the way in which activities orientate and interact with public spaces, provide legible and easily discernible entrance points, overlook spaces from windows, and offer shelter from the elements. It also relates to how servicing, loading and vehicle access matters are managed so as to keep unsafe or objectionable waste away from the public.

R.4 Resource Management Responses: Social and Economic Wellbeing

Objectives

Objective 4.1 Whakatū Nelson's commercial centres maintain a hierarchy of scale and function whereby they form the social and economic focal points of the community.

Objective 4.2 Urban growth and intensification in Whakatū Nelson promotes public health and active lifestyles, and is focused in and around commercial centres with an emphasis on enabling:

- a) Mixed use developments that support a variety of compatible land uses and reflect local needs**

- b) **Flexibility to adapt buildings and spaces to accommodate a range of uses both now and in the future**
- c) **A range of building types to provide accommodation and offer opportunities for all groups within the community**
- d) **The staged and structured release of additional land for residential as required over time, coordinated with investments in infrastructure networks**

Objective 4.3 Residential subdivision and development provides for a wide range of housing choices, neighbourhood types, compatible employment opportunities and leisure and cultural activities.

Objective 4.4 Maintain and enable the intensification of industrial areas to support industry-based employment and economic development opportunities. Ensure that industrial areas are not compromised by the encroachment of incompatible activities including residential or speciality retail activities (including supermarkets) within them.

Objective 4.5 Rural areas contribute to Whakatū Nelson's economic productivity. Rural production and other activities that support rural communities are enabled while protecting open spaces and rural amenity values. Reverse sensitivity effects with lifestyle living and urban development are avoided.

Policies

Policy 4.1 Adopt a commercial centres hierarchy and allocate land use zones to reflect it as shown on the planning maps. The hierarchy shall be:

- 1) **City centre**
- 2) **Village centres: Tahunanui and Stoke**
- 3) **Neighbourhood centres: Milton, Ngawhatu Valley, Waimea Road/Van Diemen, Marsden Valley, Raewards/Couplands, Robinsons/McCashins, Victory**
- 4) **Convenience centres: Atawhai, Bishopdale, Black Cat, Hales Corner, Monaco, Nayland**

Explanation

A commercial centres hierarchy enables the integrated planning and management of commercial centres. It gives certainty to the community, and can align the provision of intensification opportunity to infrastructure capacity and those locations where there are more activities that can be accessed on foot. The City Centre is Whakatū Nelson's premier centre. It is expected that the tallest buildings, highest densities, and highest value activities will locate there. It is also the main visitor hub and should overall exhibit the highest standards of design quality and urban amenity values, including heritage values.

Village centres (Tahunanui and Stoke) serve large local catchments and are typified by a range of commercial activities, good passenger transport services, and a range of community facilities. In these locations a wide variety of activities are appropriate including high density housing. However, they have less ability to accommodate tall buildings than the City Centre and in most cases three to four storeys will be the most that is appropriate.

Neighbourhood centres (Milton, Ngawhatu Valley, Waimea road/Van Diemen, Raewards / Couplands, Robinsons / McCashins, Victory) are smaller and local suburb-focused nodes that are often characterised by only one small cluster of convenience shops. These centres exhibit small scale buildings and are mostly already well established. For these centres limited further vertical growth is likely to be appropriate, however medium density housing around them would usually be appropriate.

The lowest tier on the hierarchy are convenience centres (Atawhai, Bishopdale, Black Cat, Hales Corner, Monaco and Nayland). These are essentially single corner stores or other very small convenience outlets that are not expected to grow or change substantially over time. For these centres the purpose of the centres zone is to enable ongoing operation and protection from reverse sensitivity effects on adjoining residential sites. Limited residential intensification around these centres may be appropriate if there are other amenities such as public open spaces also within a convenient walking distance.

Policy 4.2 Protect and enhance the economic and employment role of commercial centres and in particular the agglomeration benefits that commercial centres uniquely offer the City.

Explanation

Commercial centres are hubs of substantial investment in terms of public amenities and facilities, infrastructure, and community identity. Under the RMA it is not allowable to protect commercial centres from reasonable

trade competition, but it is appropriate that the qualities and values that centres provide to the community be protected in light of the wellbeing and amenity advantages those commercial centres provide.

Protecting the role of commercial centres includes a number of strategies, including ensuring that centres are protected by way of clear planning rules from sensitive land uses adjacent to or within them, and requiring applications for activities that could locate within a commercial centre to demonstrate why it cannot locate in a commercial centre.

Policy 4.3 Encourage growth in commercial centres, with a particular emphasis on economic development and employment creation, including by:

- i) Adopting an urban design-based process and encouraging applicants to follow this when preparing applications**
- ii) Applying an assessment and merit-based, rather than controls and standards-based, approach to development in commercial centres**
- iii) Requiring applications for very large buildings (including either or both of height or overall bulk) to be of a very high quality and demonstrate that a net improvement in local amenity values will result**
- iv) Enabling residential growth in and around commercial centres in a manner that will not undermine the employment and economic functions of commercial centres**

Explanation

Commercial centres are busy environments. Promoting additional growth within them can bring about a number of efficiencies and benefits but it can also exacerbate adverse effects including privacy, shadowing, noise and other nuisances (like truck deliveries disturbing residents in apartments above a shop). The Council has identified that a rules or compliance-based approach is not an appropriate means of balancing the efficient optimisation of sites with the reasonable protection of adjacent amenities. For this reason, and while rules governing key effects of concern will also remain appropriate, the Council has identified that a merit and assessment-based approach shall be used. This will involve encouraging applicants for development in a centre to make applications on the basis of the benefits they will bring to that commercial centre, rather than just on avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects. This will allow applicants to identify the best outcome for their site and

not be unintentionally discouraged because of predetermined rule thresholds.

This approach will enable the greatest amount of growth in an innovative and responsive manner.

Policy 4.4 Industry, apart from those directly associated with rural activities or other geographically fixed sites such as aquaculture, should locate in identified industry areas and zones where such activities would:

- i) avoid reverse sensitivity effects on other activities**
- ii) leverage benefits and positive effects from co-location with infrastructure, other industry activities and the Port and Airport**
- iii) have good freight and transport access**

Explanation

Industrial areas can require irregular hours of operation, occasional noise and odour, and other functional requirements including frequent large commercial vehicle deliveries, storage of hazardous substances, and visually plain buildings. Because of these characteristics it is effective to enable them in appropriate defined locations that are compatible with their operational needs including generally flat land with excellent transport access.

Policy 4.5 Manage the finite nature of rural land suitable for residential development by giving preference to development and redevelopment of existing urban areas.

Explanation:

In order to achieve the strategic outcomes of enabling a range of housing choices, intensification around commercial centres and their subsequent vitality, protection of outstanding natural landscapes and features, and ensuring that efficient use is made of existing infrastructure capacity, redevelopment of existing areas before encroachment into the rural environment is expected.

Policy 4.6 Manage the finite nature of industry areas by:

- i) Identifying specific areas to accommodate industry**
- ii) Providing for a range of land suitable for different industries**

- iii) **Avoiding the establishment of activities, particularly residential, that may result in reverse sensitivity effects and which may diminish the efficiency and functioning of industry**
- iv) **Restricting commercial activities where these are more appropriately located in the City Centre or other commercial centres**
- v) **Restricting retail to trade supply outlets and yard-based retail and retail that provides for the convenience needs of employees in industry areas**

Explanation

Industrial areas need to be protected including by way of restricting activities that do not need to locate within them. This is because industrial activities are often limited in where they can locate and can be easily displaced due to their often low value land intensity. The lack of numerous alternative locations in Whakatū Nelson means that if industries are displaced or unreasonably constrained they may leave the district. Such losses would not promote sustainable management and could harm the community's wellbeing.

- Policy 4.7** **Ensure that sufficient zoned land is available at all times to meet at least 10 years' demand for housing and employment in Whakatū Nelson, and that the zones enable a variety of housing and lifestyle choices.**

Explanation

Maintaining an appropriate supply of zoned residential and employment land will promote a competitive land market and ensure that the costs of housing or employment land are not unnecessarily subject to scarcity-related price uplifts. Maintaining a forward supply of zoned land will also allow the community to proactively engage with future planning for employment, schools, open spaces and other facilities. Land use intensification will be an important part of ensuring continued supply, particularly given the need to achieve an efficient and compact form of urban development that sits within the valued rural backdrop to the City.

- Policy 4.8** **Enable a wide range of residential activities and a range of non-residential activities in residential zones when they are of a scale and intensity that is compatible with the amenity and character values of the zones.**

Explanation

In the residential zones a wide range of lifestyle opportunities should be provided for including, subject to appropriate amenity controls, minor units and family flats, large and small houses, attached housing, and boarding houses. Related to this, landowners should have relative freedom regarding whether they build more expansive one storey dwellings or more spatially compact multi-level houses to enjoy more on site open space.

A number of activities are compatible with residential neighbourhoods and if located within residential areas can make life easier for residents. Examples can include small scale; hairdressers, professional services, childcare facilities, bed-and-breakfast facilities and medical practitioners. Enabling these, subject to amenity safeguards, will provide energy and transport efficiencies, employment opportunities, and efficient use of larger houses.

Policy 4.9 Activities including rural industry and services should be enabled in rural areas when they:

- i) depend on the use of rural resources**
- ii) require a rural location**
- iii) predominantly serve residents in rural and coastal areas**
- iv) provide economic and operational efficiency benefits**
- v) avoid effects on Significant Natural Areas, Outstanding Natural Landscapes, Heritage values and, in the Coastal Environment, areas of Significant or High Natural Character**

Explanation

The rural environment has substantial potential to accommodate economic and other activities but the risk of adverse amenity, landscape, biodiversity and other effects can also be substantial. For this reason the Council has adopted a management approach of enabling activities in the rural environment on the basis of bottom-line requirements. If met, then activities should generally be enabled and encouraged to efficiently utilise the land resource. Farm and large property plans are an important method in giving effect to this policy and those in the coastal, landscape, heritage, biodiversity and freshwater chapters of the Plan.

Policy 4.10 Recognise the productive potential of land together with other conditions such as favourable microclimate, good drainage, water availability or established physical, economic or social

infrastructure and encourage the continued use of this land for rural production.

Explanation

Some parts of the district, for instance Wakapuaka, exhibit locational attributes that can make them uniquely suited for productive economic activity. These areas should be given clear and supportive provisions within Resource Management Plans that enable those uses.

Conversely, on such land where it is not appropriate for sensitive activities such as residential to occur, those provisions should unambiguously prevent them.

Policy 4.11 Require sensitive activities (such as new lifestyle development) to adopt on-site methods to avoid reverse sensitivity on rural activities.

Explanation

When lifestyle development occurs in the rural environment it can adversely affect adjacent rural uses. To avoid these adverse effects new lifestyle development should incorporate mitigation techniques to ensure that appropriate and reasonable rural activity, noise, odour, and disruption can be overcome. This may include mechanical ventilation, the planting of visual screens or buffers, and other ongoing legal covenants.

It may also include control over the density and shape of new lots, and the location or orientation of buildings.

Policy 4.12 Minimise the potential for conflicts by preventing sensitive activities (such as lifestyle development) from establishing in areas valuable for rural production, mineral extraction and regionally significant infrastructure.

Explanation

While parts of the rural environment may appear scenic and peaceful they are still working environments that are periodically, if not often, busy and noisy. They can involve agricultural chemicals or other chemical processes, and activities that could harm visitors.

Activities that require ongoing visual or other adverse effects and which are geographically tied to a particular part of the district can be significantly affected by sensitive activities locating near them. Some of these activities do not emit continuous or consistent adverse effects, and this can mean that visitors may not always appreciate the effects that exist in that environment.

The most appropriate means of protecting the important economic role of such locations is to restrict sensitive activities from locating in them.

Methods

Regulatory methods	Who	Policy link
Nelson Plan		
Implement zone rules and activity enablement that reflects the centres hierarchy, with greatest change promoted in the city centre and least change promoted in neighbourhood centres.	Council	Policy 4.1
Implement development controls and resource consent assessment methods to apply in centres including an urban design-based approach.	Council	Policy 4.1 Policy 4.2 Policy 4.3
Implement District Plan policies requiring discretionary and non complying activity proposals, as relevant, to include consideration of impacts on centres	Council	Policy 4.2
Implement development controls and consent requirements to govern industrial and employment activities and the use of industrial and employment zoned land in the district	Council	Policy 4.4 Policy 4.5 Policy 4.9
Implement development controls and consent requirements enabling housing choice and non- residential activities within residential zones	Council	Policy 4.7 Policy 4.8
Implement public plan changes to zone additional residential and/or employment land after monitoring and structure planning processes identify this as appropriate	Council	Policy 4.5 Policy 4.7 Policy 4.8
Implement development controls and consent requirements to govern subdivision and development in the rural zones, including the use of large property plans.	Council	Policy 4.9 Policy 4.10 Policy 4.11 Policy 4.12
Implement consent requirements to manage industrial, productive, or other employment uses in or very close to outstanding natural landscapes, significant natural areas, heritage, or (in the coastal environment) areas of significant or high natural character	Council	Policy 4.9
Other Statutory Policies, Standards and Plans		
Annual Plan projects to upgrade and improve public spaces in centres	Council	Policy 4.1 Policy 4.2 Policy 4.3
Bylaws		
Review bylaws relevant to entertainment, noise, footpath seating, special events, food preparation and waste to support increased growth and amenity in centres	Council	Policy 4.1 Policy 4.2 Policy 4.3

Non-regulatory methods	Who	Policy link
Monitoring and information		
Monitor residential and employment land supply and demand.	Council	Policy 4.7
Advocacy and education		
Provide advocacy for higher design quality in centres	Council	Policy 4.3
Provide advocacy for new employment and industrial activities to locate in Whakatū Nelson	Council	Policy 4.2 Policy 4.3 Policy 4.4 Policy 4.5 Policy 4.9
Provide advocacy for greater housing choice and variety	Council	Policy 4.7 Policy 4.8
Non-Statutory Plans and Strategies		
Structure plan new growth areas as appropriate, integrated with infrastructure planning and provision	Council	Policy 4.7

Anticipated Environmental Results

Anticipated Environmental Result	Link to policy	Indicator	Data Source
Employment in Nelson increases	Policy 4.3 Policy 4.4 Policy 4.5 Policy 4.8 Policy 4.9	Employee counts	Statistics NZ / Council
Zoned land supply exceeds demand for residential and industrial activities	Policy 4.6	Zoned land capacity vs. projected demand	Statistics NZ / Council
Centres are a focal point for the community	Policy 4.1 Policy 4.2 Policy 4.3	Community surveys and the percentage of new Nelson growth that occurs within a centre zone	Council
Urban form quality improves in centres	Policy 4.2	Community surveys and professional assessments	Council
Sensitive activities do not inappropriately locate in rural or industrial zones	Policy 4.5 Policy 4.8 Policy 4.10 Policy 4.11	Analysis of approved resource consents	Council
The value of economic activity in the rural area increases	Policy 4.8 Policy 4.9	Estimates of GDP from rural zone	Statistics NZ / Council
Housing affordability is improved	Policy 4.7	Nelson average price compared to regional and national averages	Statistics New Zealand
Housing choice is improved	Policy 4.7	Community surveys and analysis of approved building consents	Council

Principal Reasons

The purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Whakatū Nelson's streets, centres and suburbs are physical resources. The RMA definition of "sustainable management" also prominently includes the following:

"...managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety..."

For Whakatū Nelson, enhancing the social and economic wellbeing of the community is an essential imperative. Resource management plans must ensure that opportunities for the community to provide for its wellbeing are both maintained and enhanced over time. Maintenance amounts to ensuring that existing opportunities to establish and retain employment; enjoy safe, affordable and comfortable housing; and be part of a caring community are retained. Enhancement amounts to taking every opportunity to make people's lives easier including the avoidance of unnecessary red tape; providing more and easier opportunities for development to occur in locations where further development is desirable; and providing more certainty to people in terms of how the qualities they currently enjoy will be safeguarded.

Social and economic wellbeing is not just about accommodating growth or promoting more jobs. It is also about making sure that the qualities in Nelson that attract tourists and other visitors are retained. This includes high quality housing, well connected and safe-feeling park and transportation networks, high quality high amenity, well designed and attractive centres that acknowledge heritage values, and opportunities that expand the choice and variety of things that can be undertaken in Nelson.

The principal reasons for adopting the Social and Economic Wellbeing provisions are outlined below:

- Economic wellbeing is very much reliant on employment opportunity and this in turn requires market certainty and a clear signal of where and how employment activities will be appropriate. Promoting and enabling employment activities reflects that in Nelson there is a need to grow employment and attract new investment.
- Employment activities are often limited in where they can locate and a clear regulatory framework to protect these, whether in dedicated employment areas or in mixed use centres, is appropriate and necessary to safeguard them into the future.

- Social wellbeing is a key concern of existing residents as well as necessary to attract future residents. Outlining the key qualities that contribute to this will help ensure relevant effects are managed.
- Activities likely to generate social and economic wellbeing have the potential to result in significant environmental effects, including on the social and economic wellbeing of existing activities and people. Because of this, a clear management framework that will ensure appropriate avoidance, remediation or mitigation of effects is desirable.
- The Council already has sufficient zoned land to last up to 30 years and for this reason further re-zoning should be undertaken on the basis of need and a careful structure plan process that will deliver a high quality outcome for both existing and new Nelsonians.
- Commercial centres have substantial capacity to accommodate change and intensification and it would not be efficient or effective to not promote them as the focal point of community life and future intensification.
- Complementing initiatives to enable more development in centres is a non-statutory and ongoing program of Council-led public space upgrades.
- Housing is an issue of critical importance to the community. Wider housing choice is related to affordability and is also becoming of increasing interest to the community. The approach of seeking to minimise the Council's contribution to unnecessary house price increases is a recognition of the seriousness of the issue as well as the Council's willingness to help address it.
- The rural environment is valued by the whole community and is contested in terms of the activities that are promoted within it by different parts of the community. Recognising that the rural zone is primarily a working environment and prioritising rural production and economic activity ahead of sensitive activities, notably including residential, is appropriate to ensure that opportunities are available for existing and new employment generating activity to prosper.