



YOUR PLAN OUR FUTURE
TIMARU DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW
LAND USE PLAN

Timaru District Plan Review

Topic 18

Institutions

Discussion Document, November 2016



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Timaru District Council has commissioned this report to identify the 'issues' with how the Timaru District Plan 2005 manages institutions. The report subsequently identifies the potential 'options' to address these issues and the strengths and weaknesses of each option.

Institutions include larger ones such as Timaru Hospital or the Ara Institute of Technology through to smaller sites like schools.

The report is intended to inform and provide a basis for public consultation on this matter and to some degree stimulate debate. The report forms part of a suite of public consultation measures that may be used to inform a potential change to the District Plan.

1.2 Report Format

The remainder of the report has been set out as follows:

- Section 2** identifies and describes the issue.
- Section 3** summarises the relevant statutory matters.
- Section 4** briefly explains the current Timaru District Plan approach to institutions.
- Section 5** discusses some potential options to deal with institutions.

This document outlines the issues our district faces in relation to institutions.

We welcome your feedback on this topic.

Sally Parker
Timaru Ward Councillor

2.0 Issue Identification

The Timaru District currently contains a number of institutions located throughout the District such as Timaru Hospital, Ara Institute of Technology and approximately 65 school / preschool sites. These sites are all subject to the rules of the zones they are located in which currently leads to the need to obtain resource consents for even minor activities on these sites. Currently these institutions are not given specific policy recognition in the District Plan.

Additionally, the current District Plan may not recognise changes in the use of these institutions. An example of this are schools – school sites have traditionally also been used for community use, such as evening activities in school halls. This dual role is likely to increase in the future, as nationally schools are considered community hubs. The school facilities may, particularly in more remote communities, be used for services such as libraries, community health provision, social services and community produce markets. These can also be used for conferences, theatre and concert performances, adult education and as community sports facilities. These changes in use can bring with them adverse effects – some not too dissimilar to those which can occur as of right.

Issue 1

Should the District Plan include an institutional zone to provide for institutions?

The use of an institutional zone in the District Plan can be one potential method to provide for the presence of important facilities such as the Timaru Hospital, Ara Institute of Technology and schools.

These facilities operate in quite a different manner to those activities which usually establish in the zones they are currently located in. For example, the Timaru Hospital is currently located in the Residential 2 Zone despite featuring large buildings (5 floors), large areas of carparking, high traffic movements and intermittent high levels of noise (from emergency vehicles). These sorts of activities would not normally be envisaged in a residential zone. Managing institutions in a different manner than they currently are, can allow them to operate more efficiently, for example, avoiding the need to get resource consent for relatively minor building extensions. In providing for these activities by way of an institutional zone, it is important to ensure any adverse effects on those located in close proximity to the sites are avoided or mitigated.

It should also be noted some institutions, such as the Ara Institute of Technology, are located in multiple sites with multiple zones.

Issue 2

If the District Plan is to include an institutional zone, what land use activities should it cover?

The institutions initially identified as being suitable for an institutional zone include the Timaru Hospital, Ara Institute of Technology and schools. With regards to schools, two options exist – (a) to include all schools; and (b) only include the schools not designated by the Ministry of Education. The reason for not zoning the Ministry of Education sites is the fact these are designated in the District Plan. A designation is a form of spot zoning available to the Crown to allow educational activity to be undertaken without needing to comply with any provisions of the District Plan.

Other activities, such as Council's main building / site and fire stations are also potential candidates for inclusion (noting the requiring authorities / Ministers do have the power to designate these). It will also be necessary to consider what scale of activities are appropriate for inclusion in an institutional zone, for example, should all educational activities be included or should childcare centres (due to being generally of a smaller scale) be excluded?

It will also be necessary to consider what activities within an institutional zone will be permitted under the zoning, and what may require resource consent. It is recommended that the activities that are not necessary for the support of the particular activity being undertaken on-site should still require resource consent.

Issue 3

Should the District Plan use 'scheduling' as opposed to zoning to provide for institutions?

Scheduling of activities as a permitted activity is a different approach to provide for the continued existence of institutions. Scheduled activities are specific to a site and would be shown on the Planning Maps. For each site that is scheduled, the District Plan would need to include a description of the activity and permitted activity rules that apply to the activity. The District Plan would also need to include rules to enable consideration of resource consent applications for development that exceeds the permitted activity standards for the scheduled activity.

The key difference between a zoning and scheduling approach is that a zone has its own objectives and policies; a scheduled site would not. This means an activity requiring resource consent on a scheduled site may not find much support from the underlying zone objectives and policies, creating a potential 'roadblock' to expansion.

3.0 Statutory Matters

Issue 4

If the District Plan is to include an institutional zone or scheduling of institutional sites, what performance standards should apply?

In creating an institutional zone or a list of scheduled institution sites, it will be necessary to determine what the suitable performance standards for these sites are, so they do not have adverse effects on the surrounding environment. Institutional activities can have adverse effects, such as high traffic generation, increased levels of noise, and shading from large structures. Performance standards regarding bulk and location, carparking and lighting are examples that will require consideration for inclusion.

Additionally, outline development plans could be utilised instead of creating an institutional zone or list of scheduled institutional sites. An outline development plan would need to be submitted by the relevant institution for a particular site (as part of the District Plan Review process) and would identify the likely envelope for development on a site. Any development 'outside' of what is identified in the outline development plan would require resource consent.

Resource Management Act 1991

The Resource Management Act 1991 provides the District Plan needs to include policies and rules that seek to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of institutions whilst safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems. Institutional land use activities must also be undertaken in a manner that sustains the potential of natural and physical resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations, and provide for the social, economic and cultural well-being of the community.

Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2013

The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2013 directs the Council to set out objectives, policies and methods in the District Plan which establishes an approach for the integrated management of urban development. The primary focus in doing this is to ensure there is consolidated, well-designed and sustainable urban patterns', including the avoidance, remediation or mitigation of reverse sensitivity effects. The Regional Policy Statement states that new urban development (including institutions) should be consolidated in, around and integrated with existing urban areas and be appropriately serviced by sewerage, stormwater and water services.

It should also be noted the Regional Policy Statement includes the following as Critical Infrastructure: public healthcare institutions (including hospitals and medical centres), fire stations, police stations, ambulance stations, emergency coordination facilities.

4.0 Timaru District Plan

The current District Plan manages institutions subject to the underlying zoning of the site. Additionally, the institutional activities rely upon existing use rights if it is not a permitted activity within the underlying zone.

Currently a number of institutions within the District are authorised by way of designation in accordance with Part 8 of the Resource Management Act.



5.0 Options

The main options to manage institutions are summarised as:

- Status quo (i.e. retain certain aspects from the current District Plan approach).
- Include an institutional zone.
- Include a list of scheduled institutional sites.

These options are briefly described in turn below, followed by a brief assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. Please note other options exist for the identified issues that have not been reflected here to keep the document concise.

Option 1 – Status quo

The following strategic approach in the current District Plan is still relevant and should be included in the next District Plan:

- The use of performance standards to limit the amount of permitted development / type of activity that can be undertaken on a site.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Development on an institutional site is currently subject to resource consent, allowing the Council to consider the actual and potential effects of these activities through the resource consent process.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Current approach does not provide policy recognition for important institutions.▪ Current approach does not provide certainty of investment.▪ Even the most minor activities could require resource consent, leading to increased development costs, time delays and uncertainties.▪ Current institutions are relying on existing use rights when the District Plan should be more enabling in this regard.▪ Current approach could lead to relocation of activities due to consenting uncertainties.

Option 2 – Include – Institutional zone

The institutional zone approach does not exist in the current District Plan and could be incorporated into the next District Plan.

The approach would:

- Develop an overall more 'enabling' approach for institutions.
- Include an institutional zone in the District Plan complete with objectives, policies and rules.
- Develop a rule framework that provides for sensible expansion on institutional sites where adverse effects can be avoided or mitigated.
- Develop a rule framework that provides for operational flexibility for institutions.
- Develop a policy framework that recognises the importance of institutions to the District, whilst recognising they can create adverse effects.
- Develop a policy framework that supports the presence of schools in Residential Zones.
- Consider more than one institutional zone depending on the type or scale of activity undertaken on-site e.g. Institutional Zone – Healthcare, Institutional Zone – Education.
- Consider whether all schools or just non-designated (private) schools warrant inclusion in a institutional zone.
- Consider what scale of activities warrant inclusion in an institutional zone.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key institutions in the Timaru District are appropriately provided for in the District Plan through objectives, policies and rules. ▪ The objectives and policies would relate to the institution as opposed to the surrounding zone. ▪ Institutions would be sited in a single zone. ▪ The use of zoning for institutional activities provides for increased certainty of investment. ▪ Approach gives effect to Regional Policy Statement objectives requiring urban consolidation. ▪ Approach provides certainty for all parties as to limits for permitted development on institutional sites.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Depending on the performance standards imposed the Council may lose the ability to scrutinise redevelopment through the resource consent process. ▪ The use of multiple institutional zones could add length and number of zones to the District Plan.

Option 3 – Include – Listing of scheduled institutional sites

The approach of listing scheduled institutional sites is not used in the current District Plan and could be incorporated into the next District Plan. The approach would:

- Develop an overall more 'enabling' approach for institutions.
- Consider scheduling of institutional activities in the District Plan.
- Develop a rule framework that provides for sensible expansion on institutional sites where adverse effects can be avoided or mitigated.
- Develop a rule framework that provides for operational flexibility for institutions.
- Consider whether all schools or just non-designated schools warrant inclusion as scheduled institutional sites.
- Consider what scale of activities warrant inclusion as a scheduled institutional site.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key institutions in the Timaru District are recognised in the District Plan. ▪ The use of scheduling for institutional activities provides for increased certainty of investment above the status quo. ▪ Approach gives effect to Regional Policy Statement objectives requiring urban consolidation. ▪ Approach provides certainty for all parties as to limits for permitted development on scheduled institutional sites.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Depending on the performance standards imposed the Council may lose the ability to scrutinise redevelopment through the resource consent process. ▪ Any development on a scheduled institutional site requiring resource consent would require assessment against the objectives and policies of the underlying zone. This may not provide much support for the institutional activity despite the importance of the institution to multiple well-beings of the District. ▪ The use of multiple scheduled institutional sites could add length to the District Plan. ▪ Would not provide as much certainty of investment as an institutional zoning approach.



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