

Notable Trees

Issues

Identification of significant trees in the district, listed in a schedule of notable trees for protection in the District Plan.

Operative District Plan Approach

The Operative District Plan identifies significant trees in a schedule. The policy and rule framework allows trimming and pruning of scheduled trees when in accordance with recognised horticultural practices. The term 'recognised horticultural practices' is subjective and the policy framework does not provide good direction on the circumstances when trees could be removed and what information should support an application.

Draft Plan Approach

The objective is focused on the identification of notable trees and protection of the identified values. Policy provides clear direction on when and how landowners can modify notable trees (pruning) and when supervision by an expert (a qualified arborist) is more desirable. Direction is given on assessment of new activity and development in proximity to notable trees and the importance of maintaining critical infrastructure is recognised. Policy gives direction on the circumstances in which resource consent could be granted to remove a notable tree.



Changes

Key changes include:

Pruning and trimming of branches less than 50mm diameter are permitted

Any maintenance above the permitted activity threshold is a controlled activity if the work is supervised or undertaken by a qualified arborist

The term 'qualified arborist' is defined

The term 'root protection area' is defined and a rule on new activity and development applies only to the area within the extent of roots and spread of foliage.

Reasons

Feedback in the early stages of the District Plan Review supported retaining protection of significant trees. Nominations for additional trees were received and considered. The Draft Plan provisions improve on the Operative Plan rules, making interpretation and application more readily understandable.

What it Means in Practice

- Landowners are encouraged to keep up regular maintenance of notable trees by limiting the extent of pruning to avoid needing to apply for resource consent
- In the rare situations when new activity and development within the root protection area of a notable tree is necessary or when it is necessary to remove a notable tree, the rules list what information is required when making a resource consent application.