

Natural Hazards

Issues

- Identify and map areas of the District at risk from natural hazards and understand the level of risk in various areas.
- Avoid subdivision, use and development in high hazard areas, and protect people and property from risks associated with all other identified natural hazards.
- Avoid undertaking works that would exacerbate any risks from natural hazards.
- Protect, maintain and restore natural features that assist in mitigating the effects of natural hazards.

Operative District Plan Approach

The planning maps in the Operative Plan identify stopbanks but do not identify areas at risk from any other natural hazards (except coastal erosion and inundation).

The natural hazard provisions address river flooding. Other natural hazards including earthquakes, subsidence, and wind were deemed to be more effectively addressed through the Building Act.

The objectives and policies that manage natural hazards are found in several chapters of the Plan including the Natural Hazards, Rural Zone, Residential and Recreation 1 Zone chapters. However, they all essentially seek to minimise adverse effects from flooding by avoiding areas that pose a significant risk to new development and managing activities in other areas i.e. building to minimum floor height. Furthermore, some of the policies are written as rules and whilst the objectives and policies are very directive, they do not provide an overall picture of how natural hazards will be managed in the District.

The rules are also duplicated in the zone chapters. Of particular note:

- Permitted activities include all household units and other residential activities are to be constructed with a floor height such that the risk of flood waters rising to that level shall not exceed 0.5% in any year, except that this rule shall not apply to extensions of existing household units and other residential activities where the extension will not increase the total floor area by more than 20%. Residential activities that do not meet this rule are generally non-complying
- The erection of a building or structure on the landward side of a Regional Council stopbank within 100 metres of the centreline of that stopbank identified on the District Plan maps is a discretionary activity
- Household units and other residential activities on the river side of a Regional Council stopbank, and new holiday huts are generally prohibited.

Draft Plan Approach

The following areas will be mapped:

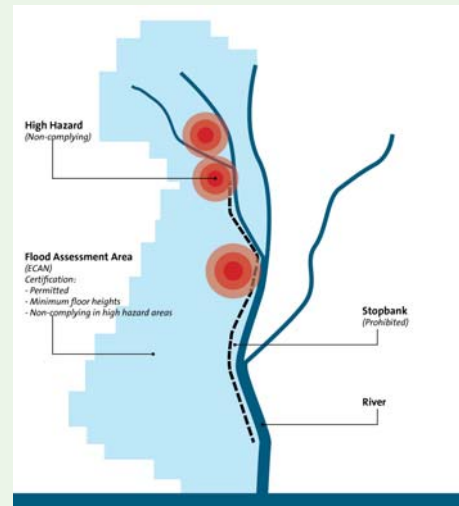
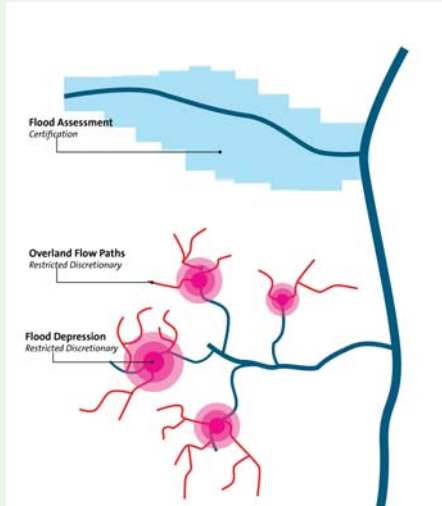
- Liquefaction areas
- Earthquake Fault (Subdivision Awareness) and (Infrastructure or Facilities Awareness) areas
- Overland flow paths and Flood depression areas – applying in main settlements
- Flood Assessment areas – applying mainly to the rural areas
- High Hazard areas – applying only to the Holiday Huts and an area in Temuka
- Within the main settlements, high hazard and flood hazard areas will be mapped by the time the proposed District Plan is released and rules relating to these areas are included in the draft for completeness.

A certification process will be applied within the Flood Assessment areas to enable site specific assessment of risk at the time of any proposed development, and the ability to determine if development is appropriate or not through a consenting process if required. Other rules will be risk-based rules, permitting some development with standards and requiring resource consent for sensitive development or in high hazard areas or where mitigation measures such as minimum floor levels are not met.

Changes

It is proposed to provide for critical infrastructure and subdivision as restricted discretionary activities in the areas where liquefaction is possible to enable site specific geotechnical investigations to be undertaken. Similarly, critical infrastructure and subdivision are to be provided for as activities in areas of known fault risk to enable site specific investigations to be undertaken.

In the floodable areas and overland flow paths, the rules apply as follows:



It is proposed that these rules do not apply to:

- Farm buildings in a Rural Zone, that only have an unsealed or permeable floor
- An extension to an existing building at first floor or above and which is certified by a qualified engineer as being above flood levels.

Reasons

The Council has a requirement to manage risks from natural hazards under both the RMA (s6h), Local Government Act and the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement. Several reports commissioned for this review have identified that the District is at risk from natural hazards and these risks necessitate management. The National Planning Standards also require all District Plans to include a Natural hazards chapter that contains all provisions relating to natural hazards (except coastal hazards which are addressed in the Coastal Environment chapter).

What it Means in Practice

- Existing activities such as farming, and some new activities or buildings/structures built to meet minimum floor heights, outside of high hazard areas, will be permitted
- Activities in areas subject to identified natural hazards are likely to require resource consent, including some that are currently permitted
- There will be some cost to landowners in flood assessment areas to obtain a flood risk certificate when development is proposed.

