

Appendix 2: Regional urban design principles

The region's urban design principles are adapted from the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and are as follows:

1. Context

Quality urban design sees buildings, places and spaces not as isolated elements but as part of the whole town or city.

In this regard quality urban design:

- (a) takes a long-term view
- (b) recognises and builds on landscape context and character
- (c) results in buildings and places that are adapted to local climatic conditions
- (d) provides for public transport, roading, cycling and walking networks that are integrated with each other and the land uses they serve
- (e) examines each project in relation to its setting and ensures that each development fits in with and enhances its surroundings
- (f) understands the social, cultural and economic context as well as physical elements and relationships
- (g) considers the impact on the health of the population who live and work there
- (h) celebrates cultural identity and recognises the heritage values of a place
- (i) ensures incremental development contributes to an agreed and coherent overall result.

2. 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.

In this regard quality urban design:

- (a) reflects the unique identity of each town, city and neighbourhood and strengthens the positive characteristics that make each place distinctive
- (b) protects and manages our heritage, including buildings, places and landscapes
- (c) protects public open space, and improves the quality, quantity and distribution of local open space over the long term
- (d) protects and enhances distinctive landforms, water bodies and indigenous plants and animals
- (e) provides a positive contribution to the environmental health of urban streams, the harbours, beaches and their catchments
- (f) creates locally appropriate, and where relevant, inspiring, architecture, spaces and places
- (g) reflects and celebrates our unique New Zealand culture and identity and celebrates our multicultural society.

3. 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.

In this regard quality urban design:

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

4. 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, 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.

In this regard quality urban design:

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

5. 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.

In this regard quality urban design:

- (a) emphasises innovative and imaginative solutions
- (b) combines processes and design responses that enhance the experience we have of urban environments
- (c) incorporates art and artists in the design process at an early stage to contribute to creative approaches
- (d) values public art that is integrated into a building, space or place
- (e) builds a strong and distinctive local identity

- (f) utilises new technology
- (g) incorporates different cultural perspectives.

6. 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, a quality environment that is cared for, and a sense of ownership and responsibility in all residents and visitors.

In this regard quality urban design:

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

7. Collaboration

Towns and cities are designed incrementally as we make decisions on individual projects. Quality urban design requires good communication and coordinated 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.

In this regard quality urban design:

- (a) supports a common vision that can be achieved over time
- (b) depends on leadership at many levels
- (c) uses a collaborative approach to design that acknowledges the contributions of many different disciplines and perspectives
- (d) involves communities in meaningful decision-making processes
- (e) acknowledges and celebrates examples of good practice
- (f) recognises the importance of training in urban design and research at national, regional and local levels.