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Urban Amenity**

Urban Amenity Trials Report

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Signposts for sustainability

Acknowledgements

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- Regan Yarrow (Project Leader Urban Amenity, Ministry for the Environment)
- The four people leading the council urban amenity trials:
 - Greg Vossler (Palmerston North City Council)
 - Phillip Brown (Waitakere City Council)
 - Stephen Colson (Rotorua District Council)
 - Richard Johnson (Waimakariri District Council)
- Paul Honeybone (Sustainable Cities Trust) who assisted in discussions on community engagement processes and setting up the trials and Bob Nixon (Christchurch City Council) who was also involved in earlier trialling discussions and was originally going to be one of the councils involved in trialling.

Executive summary

This report aims to provide information to the councils involved in trialling key approaches to urban amenity, and as such is an essential step in the Ministry funded Urban Amenity Project. The overall purpose of this paper is to provide a clear statement on some tools for defining, managing, and monitoring urban amenity (including indicator development) in local environments, and to set up the four council trials to test these ideas.

Chapter 1, the introduction to this report, provides a brief explanation of the Urban Amenity Project and an outline of how the trials fit into this project.

The purpose of the trials is to apply different approaches to defining, managing and monitoring urban amenity (including the development of urban amenity indicators to measure changes in urban amenity), at the local and regional scales. The lessons learnt from the council trials will be included in the urban amenity good practice guide that will be sent to all councils after its completion at the end of June 2001.

Defining urban amenity is a challenging task. The urban amenity trials are an important means of testing the working definition of urban amenity that has been adopted for this Urban Amenity Project, which is that urban amenity is: “*the liveability of our urban environments*”.

Chapter 2 provides a description of each trial and explains the methodology for each trial. The councils involved and their trialling topics are:

- Waitakere City Council - key person: Philip Brown
A review of work already completed to engage the community in defining urban amenity issues for them, and how this relates to the urban amenity conceptual framework developed under this Urban Amenity Project.
- Rotorua District Council - key person: Stephen Colson
Testing the quality of urban amenity in the township of Ngongotaha as compared to the ideas generated under the Urban Amenity Project. This will involve a community participatory appraisal process to gain input from the community and comparing these ideas against what is provided for in the District Plan (in relation to urban amenity).
- Palmerston North City Council - key person: Greg Vossler
Do the key qualities of urban amenity (developed under this Urban Amenity Project) provide a means of defining urban amenity? How to define urban amenity by engaging the community and working with an urban designer.
- Waimakariri District Council - key person: Richard Johnson
How practitioners can develop urban amenity indicators to assess how effective the District Plan provisions are and to test these against the aspirations of the community from previous community consultation and visioning exercises.

In order to gain agreement on the trials, a conference call was held between Regan Yarrow, Karen Bell, Fiona Hill, the key council person from Waitakere, Rotorua and Palmerston North. A similar conference call is likely to be held soon with Waimakariri District Council to confirm the details of the Waimakariri trial.

Chapter 3 of this report documents in detail the steps involved in trialling the key urban amenity approaches. This includes some tools and techniques to define, manage and monitor urban amenity – including developing urban amenity indicators.

This chapter provides a diagram of the conceptual framework for urban amenity development that has been adopted for this project, and a series of templates that are to be filled in by the trialling councils and included in the reports from each council on their trial. An attempt has been made to ensure that it is clear what questions the Consultant Team would like answers to from these trials. The templates can be filled out and included directly in the relevant section of the report to the Ministry and the Consultant Team.

Chapter 4 of the report provides an overview of the key expected output from the trials, including a table of contents to structure the council trialling reports. An indicative number of pages for each section of the report is also provided.

In conclusion, this report provides the expectations in relation to council trials on how to define, manage and monitor urban amenity. The feedback obtained from the council trials on various urban amenity approaches will then be incorporated into the “Good Practice Guide on Urban Amenity” which will be completed at the end of June 2001.

The Consultant Team and the Ministry for the Environment would like to acknowledge and thank the councils involved in these urban amenity trials for the time and energy they are putting into assisting with this Urban Amenity Project.

Glossary of terms

Accessible	Ability to reach other places, people, activities, resources, and services.
Amenity values	The less tangible aspects of the environment such as people's perceptions, expectations, desires, and tolerance. "Amenity values" is defined in the Resource Management Act as " <i>Those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes</i> ".
Attributes	Attributes are the elements of each quality of urban amenity. Basically attributes are the building blocks for the qualities.
Biophysical	The biological, geological, hydrological, and atmospheric components of the natural environment.
Community characteristics	The demographic characteristics of communities such as age, gender, ethnicity etc.
Design guide	A guide that illustrates principles of urban amenity and provides design guidance and makes explicit the benchmarks for assessing the level of amenity and design quality of a development.
Comfortable and safe	Creation of a physical environment that is relatively free from nuisance/overcrowding/danger – allows people to live and work in reasonable comfort.
Healthy environment	A sustainable urban environment that is relatively free from noise and pollution and also where the natural features of the urban environment are looked after.
Indicator	An indicator is a measure (eg a distance from a goal, target, threshold, benchmark) against which some aspects of policy performance can be assessed. Indicators are information tools. Environmental indicators simplify, quantify and communicate trends in and impacts on the environment. They also tell us the extent to which our policies are working.
Intangible	The attributes associated with urban amenities that reflect people's perceptions of the environments within which they live.
Liveability	Unique combinations of amenity values (open space, design features, urban vegetation); historic and cultural heritage; location; and intangibles such as character, landscape, and 'sense of place'.
Monitoring	The deliberate act of observation and surveillance over time with a defined purpose.
Quality of service	Extent to which use of existing infrastructure is maximised.
Residential environment	Urban areas used predominantly for residential activities, but including open space and local support services.
Sense of place	Memorable or distinctive characteristics that differentiate one place from another.
Understandable	Existence of entrances/exits/throughways that are easily identified and understood.
Urban	Cities, towns and areas characterised by a high ratio of buildings and structures to open space including a variety of housing styles including apartments, terrace housing and semi-detached and detached housing. Reduced areas of private open space and vegetation.
Urban amenity	The liveability of urban environments.
Well-being	The overall sense of satisfaction that people feel about a place.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	I
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	II
GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	IV
1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. DESCRIPTION OF THE URBAN AMENITY TRIALS.....	6
3. STEPS INVOLVED IN THE TRIALS.....	12
4. OUTPUTS FROM THE TRIALS	32
5. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD	34
APPENDIX 1 – MEMBERS OF THE URBAN AMENITY FOCUS GROUP	36
APPENDIX 2 – QUESTIONS SENT PRIOR TO CONFERENCE CALLS TO DISCUSS URBAN AMENITY TRIALS	37
APPENDIX 3 - KEY LESSONS LEARNT.....	39

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and audience for this report

The purpose of this report is to provide guidance to the four councils to be involved in trialling the key approaches to defining, managing and monitoring urban amenity that have been developed under the Ministry for the Environment's Urban Amenity Project.

The intended audience for this report is the Ministry for the Environment and the four councils involved in trialling the key urban amenity approaches (developed under the Urban Amenity Project).

This report is not a definitive statement on the management of urban amenity. It provides some recommended approaches and processes that councils can use to assist them to define, manage and monitor urban amenity. These approaches and processes will be trialled by four councils (over the next four months) and will provide practical examples to include in the "Good Practice Guide on Urban Amenity" that will be developed by 30 June 2001.

1.2 Explanation of the Urban Amenity Project

This work on urban amenity trials stems from the Ministry for the Environment's work under the Environmental Performance Indicators (EPI) Programme and work on good practice for local government and builds on all the earlier work that has been progressed to date as part of the Ministry's Urban Amenity Project.

All previous relevant work on urban amenity is fully referenced in the following documents:

- draft technical report: "Urban amenity indicators – the liveability of our urban environments" (by Karen Bell and Peter Glasson, June 2000); and
- "Key approaches to urban amenity" (by Karen Bell, Peter Glasson and Fiona Hill, September 2000).

These background reports should be referenced for full details of the Urban Amenity Project and how it has progressed over the project period. The project has essentially evolved from a focus on the development of national urban amenity indicators to a focus on providing good practice advice to local and regional councils in New Zealand to assist with managing urban amenity locally. A subsequent project to this Urban Amenity Project is likely to be to develop nationally applicable urban amenity indicators.

The "Key approaches to urban amenity" report (September, 2000) provided a conceptual framework for the management of urban amenity in New Zealand. The report suggested some approaches and processes that can be used by councils to define, manage and monitor urban amenity (including the development of indicators to measure changes in urban amenity). The Consultant Team developed these key approaches with the advice and assistance of the Urban Amenity Focus Group (Appendix 1). The next step in this process is to trial these approaches and to provide some real life examples to include in the "Good

Practice Guide on Urban Amenity” that will be developed by 30 June 2001. Before discussing the trials, it is important to outline the working definition of urban amenity that has been adopted in this work.

1.3 Liveability and the Resource Management Act

Defining urban amenity is not an easy task and is one of the key issues that will be explored in the urban amenity trials.

The conclusion of the first Urban Amenity Focus Group workshop was that in defining urban amenity, the following question should be asked “*what is it about a place that makes us feel good or bad about it?*”. For the purposes of these urban amenity trials the working definition we are using for urban amenity is the “*liveability of our urban environments*”. Furthermore, we need to ask the question: “*How sustainable are our urban environments and do we have a sense of well being in relation to our urban environments?*”

The urban amenity trials are important in terms of testing this working definition of urban amenity and assessing what it is people value about their place locally.

An additional challenge is the variation between what members of the public think of as urban amenity - i.e. issues such as pleasantness, attractive landscapes, privacy and peace and quiet and physical things – and what local authorities can manage under the Resource Management Act (RMA). The RMA definition of urban amenity relies heavily on the tangible and measurable, but there are intangible elements that combine to “*make a place feel good*” or “*contribute to quality of life*” or “*liveability and well being*”. These less tangible elements are important and will be considered (despite the complexities of doing so) as part of this project and throughout these urban amenity trials.

The RMA definition of the environment, does include the social, economic, aesthetic and cultural conditions which affect ecosystems and their constituent parts (including people and communities) and all natural and physical resources and amenity values. When coupled with the RMA definition of amenity values (refer to glossary) this implies that the well being of people in their urban environments (which is both tangible and intangible) is important as an element of promoting the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. This is reflected in case law:

- Shell Oil NZ Ltd v Wellington City Council (1992) 2 NZRMA 80, at 84 – places a strong emphasis on present neighbourhood character (which is to some extent intangible); and
- Hill v Wellington City Council (1971) 4 NZTPA 29 at 30 considered coherence as congruity or consistency to the extent that it considers the harmonious connection of several parts of a system.

1.4 Trialling of urban amenity approaches -

Purpose of the trialling

The overall purpose of the trialling is to apply different approaches to defining, managing and monitoring urban amenity at a local level. The lessons learnt from the council trials will be included in the good practice guide on urban amenity, and the trials will provide a practical test and examples of how to define, manage and monitor urban amenity.

Objectives of the council trials are to

- evaluate different approaches to defining, managing and monitoring urban amenity and highlight the advantages and disadvantages of each;
- develop methods to assist councils with engaging communities to define urban amenity locally;
- document what each council has done in terms of managing urban amenity (in order to provide ideas to other councils);
- develop methods to assist councils to define locally relevant indicators for urban amenity; and
- provide real life examples for the “Good Practice Guide on Urban Amenity”.

The role of the Consultant Team in the trials

The Consultant Team will be available to discuss the trials as they progress and will be in regular email and phone contact to ensure that everything is progressing well. Karen Bell and Fiona Hill have time allocated to visit councils as the trials progress if the key council staff would find this useful. It is anticipated, following discussions with key people involved in the trials, that visits to Rotorua and Christchurch (Waimakariri) will be necessary – Waimakariri before Christmas and Rotorua in January. The Waitakere and Palmerston North trials may not require a face-to-face meeting in order to progress the trials and report write-up. This will be reviewed closer to the time of the write-ups of the council urban amenity trials reports.

Key output – Council report on the trial

Briefly, the key output will be a draft report from each council (described in further detail in chapter 4 of this report). It is envisaged that the draft report will contain the following:

- description of community where the trial occurred;
- an outline of the methodology that was used;
- a description of the results of the trial;
- an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the methods used;
- a list of key lessons learnt; and
- an indication for other councils of the resources required to complete this work.

An exception to the required output is for Waimakariri District Council. In the case of this council the Ministry and Consultant Team will be involved in a one day workshop prior to Christmas to discuss practitioners’ views on what the key attributes are for urban amenity (based on all of the community views expressed as part of the preparation of the District Plan

and included as one of the five councils case studies) and work towards developing a core set of indicators to reflect the community aspirations in relation to amenity. This workshop and any attributes and indicators developed will be written up by the Consultant Team and checked by staff at Waimakariri District Council, prior to inclusion in the good practice guide on urban amenity.

How the results of the trials will be used

The results of and examples from the four council urban amenity trials will be summarised by the Consultant Team and included in the “Good Practice Guide on Urban Amenity” to illustrate good practice on:

- defining urban amenity with input from the community;
- managing urban amenity – using statutory and non-statutory processes; and
- monitoring changes in urban amenity – including the development of urban amenity indicators.

It is anticipated that in addition to including examples from the councils’ urban amenity trials in the good practice guide, that the results of the trials will be published (in the full council report format) either as

- an appendix in the “Good Practice Guide to Urban Amenity”

OR

- as a stand alone report of the four urban amenity trials published by the Ministry for the Environment.

Timeframes for the urban amenity trials

The council urban amenity trials will start in October/November 2000. The councils have agreed to complete the trials and the subsequent write-up of the trialling by the end of February 2001 at the latest.

1.5 Scope of this report

This report on trialling of urban amenity covers the following:

- description of the urban amenity trials;
- the steps involved in trialling urban amenity approaches;
- outputs from the urban amenity trials; and
- conclusions and way forward.

Attention will now focus on a description of each of the four council urban amenity trials.

2. Description of the urban amenity trials

2.1 Introduction

This section of the report documents for the councils involved in the trials, the Consultant Team and the Ministry for the Environment understanding of what each council will focus on, including the methodology for the trial, and when the council report will be completed.

2.2 Overview of the trials

The trialling of the key approaches to defining, managing and monitoring urban amenity developed under this Urban Amenity Project marks a new phase of this project. As mentioned in the introduction of this report, the purpose of the trials is to apply different approaches to defining and monitoring urban amenity at a local level including the key urban amenity qualities developed as part of this project and outlined in “Key approaches to urban amenity”, September 2000.

A description is provided below of each of the trials. Appendix 2 lists the key questions that were asked of the key council people, in setting up these trials, during the conference calls.

2.3 Description of each trial

Waitakere City Council – Philip Brown

Waitakere City Council’s (WCC) urban amenity trial will be a review of work that has already been done by WCC to engage the community in defining important urban amenity issues for them, and how this relates to the conceptual framework developed under this Urban Amenity Project. WCC took a strategic approach in creating a vision for the City, including:

- a place based approach in that it focuses on specific areas, such as New Lynn;
- charettes were used in 1996 to gather information about what people like and dislike about where they live and their visions for the future. At the charettes, which were public meetings, people were asked three questions:
 - What do you like?
 - What don’t you like?
 - How would you like to see it changed?
- slides of different issues were also presented to the community;
- to be sure that all community views were captured, stakeholder meetings were also held;
- from this information a ‘map’ or ‘diagram’ of the communities vision was created and this map was then presented back to the community;
- in addition, WCC has undertaken annual residential household surveys, since 1996. These surveys are sent to all households in the city so as to provide useful trend information in terms of changes over time and in different locations.

Philip explained that this vision sits outside and is separate from regulatory planning documents. Broadly speaking, WCC's urban amenity trial will consider:

- the communities original vision (in 1996);
- what has happened since then;
- how urban amenity and urban amenity values have changed since then; and
- how this relates to the conceptual framework developed under the Urban Amenity project.

The trial will assess and analyse how the earlier work done by WCC relates to the conceptual framework and tools and techniques for defining, managing and monitoring urban amenity (including the development of indicators to assess changes in urban amenity), developed under the Urban Amenity Project. This will include:

- *defining urban amenity*
 - what has worked well?
 - the value of including visual material; and
 - what Waitakere communities thought/think the key elements of urban design and amenity are (in comparison to the qualities developed during this project).

[This will be cross-referencing and retrofitting the feedback gained from the charettes and comments in the annual surveys with the key qualities developed under this project.]

- *managing urban amenity*
 - consideration of the ways of using the information Waitakere has gathered in a non-regulatory sense to manage urban amenity
 - consideration of how a community developed vision can help people understand what you are aiming for in a management sense
 - how much discretion should the council have in relation to urban amenity?
 - what processes do you have to have in place to make non-regulatory management methods work? (i.e. meetings with developers before they apply for consent, good design guidelines etc)
 - consideration of statutory and non-statutory approaches and regulatory and non-regulatory approaches that work.
- *monitoring urban amenity*
 - what are the key qualities and attributes that should be monitored? This will be assessed in-house by practitioners (rather than asking the community again)
 - what are the key indicators that should be monitored in Waitakere to track changes in urban amenity and design?

Philip agreed that he would be able to work through answers to the questions discussed during the conference call. He indicated that he would find filling in tables and templates developed by the Consultant Team and included in the trialling report a useful way of organising information in his report. Philip also agreed to try to include as much visual information as possible in this report and information about the resources needed to undertake this work.

The Waitakere trial is likely to start in mid-November and a draft of the report will be completed before Christmas. Philip will complete the final trialling report by mid January. Philip will keep in touch with the Consultant Team and inform them if a visit to Waitakere would help progress the report, but at this stage a visit is not viewed as essential.

Rotorua District Council – Stephen Colson

Testing the ‘quality’ of urban amenity in Ngongotaha was seen as providing a useful starting point for the development of an urban amenity trial. In particular, the work that the Council is conducting using the participatory appraisal community engagement process, to gain input and involvement from the community in relation to a town centre revitalisation project, will be included in the Rotorua urban amenity trial. The Council is funding an upgrade to the Ngongotaha town centre and is seeking community input as to the best way to do this. The Council will also assess (through this process) whether the District Plan is meeting the needs of the community (in relation to amenity and a number of other issues) and as a consequence whether adjustments to the Plan may be necessary.

People involved in the five-day participatory appraisal approach to date were asked:

- what they liked about the town;
- what they did not like; and
- what they would like to change.

Over 400 people have been interviewed (in the streets and public meetings). Stephen is of the view that the information gained from these interviews will provide the qualities and attributes that people value most. These results can be compared to the qualities developed in the Urban Amenity Project.

As part of this urban amenity trial the Council will hold another 1-2 Marae Hui and 1-2 focus group meetings (by invitation and to represent a range of community characteristics) to assess what people think the key amenity qualities and possibly attributes are.

From this, practitioners at the Council will attempt to provide a small list of key indicators to measure changes in amenity.

Stephen agreed that he would be able to provide answers to most of the questions discussed during the conference call. He indicated that he would find filling in tables and templates developed by the Consultant Team (and included in the trialling report) a useful way of organising information in his report. Stephen also agreed that he would place emphasis on the following:

- the rural/urban interface issues;
- Maori perspectives on amenity (from the Marae hui);
- providing some good ‘town planning’ ideas to the challenge of managing urban amenity (including defining and monitoring it). What works well? and
- resources to undertake this work.

The Rotorua trial has (to some extent) started, but Stephen mentioned the current resourcing issues he faces with many staff changes, and that he would appreciate some ideas and advice

on the methodology as this is firmed up (for the focus groups etc). Stephen said he would appreciate meeting with the Consultant Team to discuss the work as it progresses and share ideas. A draft report of the trial will be completed by mid-February and the final report will be completed by the end of February.

Palmerston North City Council – Greg Vossler

Greg expressed concerns about answering all the questions provided before the telephone conference call regarding the scope of the PNCC urban amenity trial (in addition to the PNCC case study work that has already been progressed for this project). It was agreed that the PNCC urban amenity trial would focus primarily on *how to define urban amenity* (which will assist with the management and monitoring of urban amenity to some extent).

The work that the Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) is currently doing on validating the key urban amenity qualities as part of their urban design strategy development provides a good trial for the Urban Amenity Project.

To progress this task, a series of 5 workshops were convened to discuss those factors that contribute to making Palmerston North a 'good' place to live. In order to ensure that the format and content of these workshops was 'professionally' robust the Council contracted Graeme McIndoe, architect and urban designer, to be involved in the process.

A brief (two page) discussion document was prepared and circulated to participants before the workshops to provide a background context to the workshops. In addition to incorporating relevant contextual information, it also included a series of questions for participants to consider.

As a means of increasing participant comprehension of “liveability” and to help stimulate more informed workshop discussion on contributing qualities, a series of slides were presented at the commencement of each of the workshops. The material selected included both internationally and locally derived images of what it is that makes cities liveable along with examples of the key qualities that make places work from an urban amenity perspective.

From this work PNCC will be able to assess what aspects of the physical environment contribute / do not contribute to making Palmerston North a good place to live. Equally, it will also help to verify whether there is a range of core qualities that participants generally perceive as comprising urban amenity. The PNCC urban amenity trial will be citywide.

To date, workshops have been held with the following four groups:

- PNCC Councillors;
- design professionals in Palmerston North;
- developers and significant landowners; and
- community representatives (from such diverse organisations as Massey University Students Association, Neighbourhood Support, Youth One Stop Shop, Federated farmers, Sports Manawatu etc).

An additional workshop is to be held with Iwi. Information derived from this workshop should allow comparisons to be made regarding any perceived differences and/or similarities between Maori and Paheka views on the liveability in Palmerston North.

From these five workshops the PNCC hope to obtain an understanding of how acceptable the urban amenity qualities are in relation to what people in Palmerston North value, and a sense of (at the next level) what attributes are important. This trial will also be able to report on an approach to actively engaging the community in discussions on urban amenity.

Greg said he would appreciate what the Consultant Team offered: either a detailed table of contents or a series of tables and templates to fill in to structure the report he will prepare for the Ministry and the Consultant Team. Greg also agreed that he would place emphasis on the following:

- defining urban amenity - the key qualities, typologies and attributes;
- how the perspectives of Iwi and the other four groups compare in relation to views on liveability;
- how visual images can be used to create and increase participant awareness / understanding of the qualities that comprise urban amenity;
- a means of engaging the community in defining liveability (urban amenity)? and;
- Resources needed to undertake this work (in terms of people involved in the process).

Greg agreed that a draft report of the PNCC urban amenity trial will be completed by mid-December, and that it may be useful to meet with Karen and Fiona in about the third week of January to discuss the draft report. The final report will be completed by mid-February.

Waimakariri District Council

Waimakariri District Council (WDC) staff are interested in being involved in some additional work under the Urban Amenity Project, but have not been involved in earlier discussions on setting up the council urban amenity trails.

It has been discussed and agreed that Waimakariri District Council will be involved in an urban amenity trial that will focus on the monitoring of urban amenity and the development of urban amenity indicators for use in Waimakariri. The WDC trial will focus particularly on:

- how to progress from knowledge about the aspirations of the community in relation to amenity values to developing indicators to monitor changes in urban amenity (over time and space); and
- the development of indicators to monitor the effectiveness of provisions in the District Plan relating to amenity issues.

This work on developing indicators to measure changes in urban amenity will be undertaken in a different way to the other trials due to Waimakariri District Council being brought into the process at a later date than the other three councils involved in the urban amenity trials. A one-day workshop will be held on 15 December 2000 at Waimakariri District Council on urban amenity indicator development. The Consultant Team will write-up a record this

workshop and check with Council staff that the workshop report accurately records the session.

The following process will be followed for the WDC trial:

- possible conference call to confirm agreement of what will be achieved in this trial;
- Council staff will be sent all relevant background material shortly after receipt of this trialling report:
 - the draft technical report “Urban amenity indicators – the liveability of our urban environments” (by Karen Bell and Peter Glasson, June 2000); and
 - “Key approaches to urban amenity” (by Karen Bell, Peter Glasson and Fiona Hill, September 2000);
- Council staff will be sent the agenda for the day workshop and all the templates that will be used as a starting point for practitioners to develop amenity indicators for Waimakariri District;
- the workshop on 15 December 2000 will focus on processes for practitioners to develop urban amenity indicators based on the values of their community. This approach will test and possibly enhance the approach to developing indicators that was developed by the Ministry for the Environment in 1997 (and summarised in the technical report); and
- the Consultant Team will write up this one-day workshop and agreement will be gained from Waimakariri District Council staff that this is an accurate write-up of the workshop.

The following chapter of the report provides a step-by-step process for trialling how to define, manage and monitor urban amenity.

3. Steps involved in the trials

3.1 Introduction

An outline of what the councils will be trialling has been described in Chapter 2 of this paper. The purpose of this section of this report is to explain, in detail, the steps to be undertaken in each of the trials.

As previously mentioned, the overall purpose of the trials is to put into practice the ideas contained in the “Key urban amenity approaches” report (September, 2000). The ideas in this report were developed as a result of the Focus Group workshops and the Mini-Focus Group workshop. These ideas have been summarised in a conceptual framework for urban amenity. This framework is shown in Figure 1 included on the following page. This figure has been further revised following feedback from the Focus Group on the “Key urban amenity approaches” report.

Since the release of the “Key urban amenity approaches” report, different perspectives have emerged on the framework. These differences relate to where the ‘qualities’ sit in terms of the cycle of ‘urban amenity’ (whether they are part of defining or monitoring) and also in terms of the precise words used to describe the ‘qualities’. The revised Figure 1 takes into account the comments received. Given what each of the trialling councils have agreed to undertake for their trials, the answers to these questions may be addressed once the results of the trials are known. The trials will therefore provide an opportunity to test the conceptual framework.

Following on from the conference calls with each of the councils involved in the trials it has become apparent that not all councils have the ability to trial all three parts of the project in the timeframes that have been set aside for trialling. Consequently, not all parts of this section of this report will be relevant to all councils involved in the urban amenity trials.

This section is divided into three main parts:

- defining urban amenity;
- managing urban amenity; and
- monitoring urban amenity (including the development of indicators).

In each of these sections the *italicised words* in boxes highlight the questions or issues that information is being sought on in the trials. This information is required to be included in the report on the trials. The structure of the trialling report is discussed in Chapter 4. Attached to this chapter are a number of templates. The templates are referred to in shaded boxes in each section of this chapter. The templates are attached to this chapter (refer pages 20-31). These templates have been prepared to assist councils with the preparation and implementation of the trials. These templates should be filled out as part of the trials and included in the trialling report.

We are also interested in your views on the templates. Have they worked well? How could they be improved?

Urban Amenity Objective

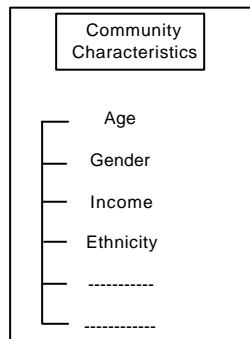
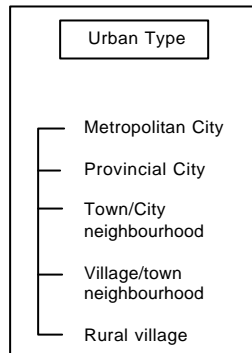
Liveability



Qualities of Urban Places

Attributes

Indicators



Is / does the place:

have a 'Sense of Place'
Memorable or distinctive characteristics that differentiate one place from another.

'Understandable'
Existence of entrances/exits/throughways that are easily identified and understood.

'Comfortable and Safe'
Creation of physical environment that is relatively free from nuisance/over crowding/ danger - allows people to live and work in reasonable comfort.

'Healthy Environment'
A sustainable urban environment that is relatively free from noise and pollution and also where the natural features of the urban environment are looked after.

have 'Choice'
Availability of places that cater for all sections of the population - That provide for a diverse range of activities and experience.

have the 'Ability to Adapt'
Degree to which the elements that make-up a city are versatile enough to accommodate and support the range of activities that people might want to engage in and their changing social / cultural needs expectations

'Accessible'
Ease with which it is possible to reach other places/ people/ activities/ resources/services in a relatively direct and comfortable manner

have 'Quality Services'
extent to which opportunity costs and travel time are reduced and use of existing infrastructure is maximised

make people feel 'Included'
Extent to which there is a wide constituency of community members empowered to participate in the process and the extent to which people from different cultural background feel included

foster people's 'Wellbeing'
The overall sense of satisfaction that people feel

Definition and Management Context Monitor

- Cultural heritage
- Topography
- Vistas
-
-

Value Typing Capture

Urban Amenity Development

3.2 Defining urban amenity at the local level

Defining urban amenity was described in the “Key urban amenity approaches” report as being the first stage in the cycle of urban amenity. This paper suggests in order to define urban amenity locally you need to ask people what it is that they value about the environment that they live in.

In the conference calls people involved with the trialling have described the places, community, and methodology that they will use to define urban amenity locally. For some councils this will involve ‘asking their local communities’ while for others it will involve an evaluation of past practices of consulting the community about what they value about where they live. Furthermore some councils have focused on using the qualities as a means to define urban amenity, while others have adopted a broader and more open-ended approach (i.e asking what do you like? What don’t you like? What would you like to see changed? etc).

The table below summarises the key qualities of urban amenity and provides some guiding questions as to what these key qualities mean. The Focus Group and the Mini – Focus Group, developed the information contained in this table. The table has also been revised based on the feedback that was received from the Urban Amenity approaches paper.

Table 1 – The key qualities of urban amenity

Key Quality	Key questions / Key concepts
Sense of Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes this place unique/different? • Signature/essence/“personality” • How do you feel about the place? • Does it have a good image?
Understandable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you find your way?
Comfort and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it safe? • Is it comfortable?
Healthy environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it pleasant? (including air quality, water quality, noise levels)
Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there options/choices in terms of lifestyle choices e.g. skateboard parks, places to shop, places to be entertained • Are there options/choices in terms of where you live/work and play?
Ability to adapt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there the potential to change? • Is there the ability to change? • Is the place fulfilling its purpose?
Accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it easy to get around?
Quality of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do services work well? (ie water, getting into town)? • What urban form would meet your lifestyle needs?
Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it affordable? • Can you influence what happens? • Can you make a difference? • Do I belong? • Do you have a sense of belonging?

Key Quality	Key questions / Key concepts
Well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does a place nourish you? • What is the energy of the place/feeling for you? • Are you happy living in this place? • What sort of future will my children /grandchildren have here?

Setting up the process

Frequently, minimal time and effort is put into the setting up of community engagement processes. It is important for the “Good Practice Guide on Urban Amenity” to be able to highlight points of good practice.

For this reason it is considered that the following points are important considerations prior to designing any community engagement process for defining urban amenity:

- It is vitally important to plan all steps of the community engagement process. A clear sense of the purpose of the process, the anticipated outputs, time required, and the resources must be obtained at the commencement of the process. A project plan for the process should be written.

Template 1 attached to this chapter provides a checklist of important considerations and a project plan template when planning a community engagement process. Please use this checklist and the project plan. Comments on the suggested project plan and checklist are invited.

- It is important to have an understanding of the characteristics of a community before any decisions are made about methods for engaging the community. The characteristics of a community include factors such as: age, gender, ethnicity, literacy, income levels etc. An understanding of these factors will inform the methodology chosen, venue and also timing. Information such as this is typically held by most councils. Information from the last Census (while sometimes dated) can also be useful.

Template 2 attached to this chapter provides a framework for recording the characteristics of the community.

- The choice of a suitable venue is critical to the success of any community engagement process. It is important in selecting a venue to have an idea of the anticipated numbers attending and the space required. Other important factors to consider when selecting a venue include cultural (community hall, marae, church etc), access (location and access for people with disabilities), proximity to public transport, and acoustics.
- Hospitality is also an important consideration. Meetings of any type normally revolve around the provision of refreshments. It is important that consideration is given to the provision of refreshments throughout the process. While people are having a cup of tea/coffee and some food they can informally chat to council staff and other meeting participants and this is a good way of breaking the ice and developing a friendly environment in which people can discuss the issues.

From your experience in engaging communities are there other important points that need to be listed that will be of assistance to councils when they are planning for community engagement processes?

Methods to engage the community in defining urban amenity

In the urban amenity approaches paper different methods for engaging the community were described these included:

- Ask “What do you like”? / “What don’t you like”?
- Public satisfaction surveys
- Focus group workshops
- Charettes
- Photographs/visual records
- The SpeakOut
- The ‘Blob Plan’
- Food modelling

As part of the trialling different methods for engaging communities in defining urban amenity will be used.

For the good practice guide we are also interested in answers to the following question:

- *What methods have you used in the past to engage communities?*
- *Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the processes used (please provide sufficient detail so that other councils could pick up on your good ideas and lessons learnt).*
- *Are there any additional approaches you have used to engage your community that were not included in the urban approaches report?*

Collation of information

Once you have collected the information from the community then it is important that the information is collated in a systematic manner. This will of course be dependent to some extent on the methodology chosen.

Template Three provides a means to collate the information so that it can be compared easily between the different trialling councils.

Record of lessons learnt

For the good practice guide on urban amenity we are interested in the lessons that have been learnt through undertaking the processes that have been chosen to define urban amenity. Attached to this report in Appendix 3 is the summary of the key lessons learnt that was included within the “Key urban amenity approaches” report. We are interested in developing

this list further for the good practice guide. We are interested in your answers to the following questions:

- *What worked well and why?*
- *What did not work well and why?*
- *What would you do differently next time?*

3.3 Management Context

Documentation of Management Techniques

The urban amenity approaches report suggests once urban amenity has been defined that different tools and techniques can be chosen to manage urban amenity. This section of the trial focuses on the current management context and in particular the tools and techniques that are currently being used to manage urban amenity locally. It is acknowledged in terms of the ‘big picture’ that all sections of this trial are about management, in the wider sense of the word.

Through the survey on urban amenity and plan effectiveness monitoring conducted by the Consultant Team (April 2000), a range of different methods and techniques were identified that assist in the management of urban amenity. These methods were listed on pages 6-7 of the “Key urban amenity approaches” report.

This section of the trial essentially involves the identification of methods that are currently being used to manage urban amenity - both statutory and non-statutory by councils involved in the trials. It also involves the documentation of methods to manage urban amenity that may have been identified through engaging communities in defining urban amenity.

Template Four is relevant to this section of the trial.

Record of lessons learnt

For the good practice guide on urban amenity we are interested in the lessons that have been learnt through undertaking the processes that have been chosen to define urban amenity. Attached to this report in Appendix 3 is the summary of the key lessons learnt that was included within the “Key urban amenity approaches” report. We are interested in developing this list further for the good practice guide. We are interested in your answers to the following questions:

- *What worked well and why?*
- *What did not work well and why?*
- *What would you do differently next time?*

3.4 Monitoring Urban Amenity (including the development of indicators)

The final phase of the trial is the monitoring of urban amenity including the development of indicators.

The conceptual framework for urban amenity has been included in this report as Figure 1. This framework provides the links between place, community characteristics, qualities, attributes and indicators.

These links were described in the “Key urban amenity approaches” paper as follows:

- **“Qualities:** *The key qualities listed in the model are generic and therefore apply equally to all urban spaces.*
- **Urban type:** *The qualities need to be applied to urban places. The wide variety of urban places are recognised in the model. It is recognised that there may be a variety of urban places within a town /city. For example the qualities may be applied at a metro scale level and they may also be applied to urban villages within the metro city.*
- **Attributes:** *Attributes are the elements of each quality. Basically attributes are the building blocks for the qualities. For example landform is an attribute of the quality ‘sense of place’. An attribute may also relate to more than one quality.*
- **Community characteristics:** *It is important to understand the dynamics of the various communities within different urban spaces. The characteristics of a community such as age, gender, income, ethnicity etc. are important factors to understand when both developing attributes and indicators and collecting information on the selected indicators.*
- **Indicators:** *It is possible to develop indicators from the identified attributes and with knowledge of the characteristics of a community. Indicators for urban amenity may relate to both tangible and intangible measurements. For example in terms of noise:*
 - *it is possible to physically measure noise in terms of dBA; and*
 - *it is also equally important for amenity that people’s perception of the level of noise in an area is recorded. One way of documenting people’s perception of the noise environment may be through surveying.*

It is also important that the indicators developed take into account community characteristics. As an example, it will be important if there is a projected increase in elderly within an area that the ‘indicators’ developed for qualities such as accessibility take this characteristic into account.”

In the trialling undertaken as part of this project the overall ‘robustness’ of this framework will be tested.

For this section of the trial there are a number of key issues/questions:

- *Can attributes be generic? Or are they place specific?*
- *What processes have you used to develop attributes? How much information was obtained directly from your community and how much was provided by practitioners?*
- *Is the Ministry for the Environment checklist for indicators relevant to your work to develop ways of monitoring urban amenity?*
- *How have you decided to measure the indicators?*

Template 5 attached to this chapter documents the suggested steps to follow for this section of the trial.

Record of lessons learnt

For the good practice guide on urban amenity we are interested in the lessons that have been learnt through undertaking the processes that have been chosen to define urban amenity. Attached to this report in Appendix 3 is the summary of the key lessons learnt that was included within the “Key urban amenity approaches” report. We are interested in developing this list further for the good practice guide. We are interested in your answers to the following questions:

- *What worked well and why?*
- *What did not work well and why?*
- *What would you do differently next time?*

3.5 Overall Conclusions

From being involved in this trial the Consultant Team are interested in your reflections on the following questions / issues:

- *Are there any amendments that you feel need to be made to Figure 1 – The conceptual framework for urban amenity?*
- *Are there overall points / conclusions that need to be made or highlighted in the ‘Good Practice Guide for Urban Amenity’?*
- *The costs involved in this type of work will be of interest to other councils. Please estimate the costs in terms of staff time, in particular, for the work undertaken in association with this trial.*
- *From being involved in this trial, do you have any further thoughts as to whether or not this methodology could be used at the national level?*

TEMPLATE 1 – Project Plan and Checklist for Community Engagement Processes

Steps to be carried out:

1. Fill out the project plan for defining urban amenity
2. Use the check list to assist in setting up the community engagement process.

PROJECT PLAN: *(Insert the name/title of the project)*

Purpose: *(State the overall purpose of the project)*

Objectives: *(State the objectives of the project)*

Community: *(Describe the community including the key characteristics)*

Anticipated output : *(Describe the anticipated output including what the information is going to be used for)*

Methodology: *(Describe the steps involved in the methodology chosen using the table below)*

Steps	Time	Resources	
<i>(Describe the sequence of steps involved in the methodology)</i>	<i>Indicate the time required to undertake the different steps</i>	<i>Provide a list of resources required in each step including staff resources including who is responsible and any other resources required</i>	
		Who is responsible?	Other resources
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Checklist for community engagement process / Questions to consider:

Do you understand the characteristics of the community?

- *Age*
- *Gender*
- *Culture*
- *Literacy levels etc*

(A description of the characteristics of the community will need to be included in the trialling report. Template 2 has been designed to assist in the recording of the characteristics of the community).

Given the characteristics of the community, will all people in the community be able to participate effectively? Have you trialled the methods with people concerned? Visual material will assist in explaining terms.

Is representation of different groups important to the purpose of the process?

In terms of venue:

- *Appropriate for community concerned (may need to ask local people about this)*
- *Size*
- *Layout*
- *Audio/visual equipment*
- *Proximity to transport routes*
- *Disabled access*
- *Material needed (pens, paper etc)*

How will the information/responses be recorded?

What methods will be used to feed information back to the community?

TEMPLATE 2 – Community Characteristics

This template provides the steps to be followed to record the characteristics of the community. There are two stages involved in completing this template. These stages are described below:

Steps to be carried out:

1. Fill out the characteristics of the community from information gained from the census or other information sources that the council may hold.
2. Fill out the characteristics of the community that have been consulted or engaged as part of the methods chosen to define urban amenity.

Description of Characteristic	Characteristics of the community (sourced from census or other data)	Characteristics of the people who were 'engaged' in defining urban amenity
<i>Age</i> (proportion in different age brackets)		
<i>Gender</i> (proportion of males and females)		
<i>Ethnicity</i> (proportion of people in different ethnic groups)		
<i>Literacy</i> (proportion of people who are considered literate)		
<i>Employment status</i> (proportion of people in different employment groups)		
<i>Any other characteristics that is of importance to the community concerned</i>		

(Note: We do not intend on comparing community characteristics between different trialling councils. The way in which these figures are shown is therefore not important to the project)

Questions:

1. *Do the characteristics of the community that have been engaged as part of defining urban amenity represent the characteristics of the community as a whole?*
2. *If there are differences, do you feel that the issues involved are significant?*

TEMPLATE 3 - Defining urban amenity

This template provides the steps to be followed for collating the information gained from defining urban amenity.

Steps to be carried out:

1. From the information that has been gained from the community summarise the information under the headings of the different qualities as follows:

Sense of place

(Memorable or distinctive characteristics that differentiate one place from another)

-
-
-

Understandable

(Existence of entrances/exits/throughways that are easily identified and understood)

-
-
-

Comfortable and Safe

(Creation of physical environment that is relatively free from nuisance /overcrowding danger – allows people to live and work in reasonable comfort).

-
-
-

Healthy environment

(A sustainable urban environment that is relatively free from noise and pollution and also where the natural features of the environment are looked after)

-
-
-

Choice

(Availability of places that cater for all sections of the population – That provide for a diverse range of activities and experience)

-
-
-

Ability to adapt

(Degree to which the elements that make up a city are versatile enough to accommodate and support the range of activities that people might want to engage in and their social/cultural needs)

-
-
-

Accessible

(Ease with which it is possible to reach other places / people / activities / resources / services in a relatively direct and comfortable manner)

-
-
-

Quality of services

(Extent to which opportunity costs and travel time are reduced and use of existing infrastructure is maximised)

-
-
-

Included

(Extent to which there is a wide constituency of community members empowered to participate in the process and the extent to which people from different cultural backgrounds feel included)

-
-
-

Well-being¹

(The overall sense of satisfaction that people feel)

-
-
-

¹ A question has been raised as to whether well-being is a quality of urban places or whether well-being and liveability are in effect similar things. In other words by gaining an understanding of all the qualities then a picture of the well being of the community will be obtained. We are interested in your feedback on this issue.

TEMPLATE 4 - Managing urban amenity

Steps to be carried out:

1. List the full range of methods available to manage urban amenity.
2. Identify the methods that are currently selected by the council to manage urban amenity locally.
3. Identify methods that may have arisen through engaging the community in defining urban amenity.
4. Identify whether the methods chosen are regulatory or non-regulatory.

Potential methods	Methods chosen by Council	Methods chosen by the community	Regulatory	Non – regulatory
• Rules				
• Design guides				
• Councils works				
• Mainstreet programmes				
• Beautification projects				
• Bylaws				
• Provision of information				
• Other council plans ie reserve management plans				
•				
•				

Once this table is filled out we are interested in your answers to the following questions:

- *How effective are the different techniques?*
- *Has the community identified any different methods for managing urban amenity than are presently used by the council? If so what are these? Would you consider adopting these methods?*
- *Do the methods presently used by the council assist in managing urban amenity – given the way in which the community has defined urban amenity?*

TEMPLATE 5 – Monitoring Urban Amenity

Introduction

This template outlines the main steps involved in the trial for monitoring urban amenity including the development of indicators.

For this part of the trial the following has been assumed:

- there is an understanding of the characteristics of the community; and
- urban amenity has been defined.

This template focuses on the development of attributes and indicators.

Steps to be carried out:

Using the information gained from defining urban amenity complete the following:

1. Identify the key components associated with urban amenity for each quality.
(The key components are the concepts associated with each quality that have been identified by the community).
2. Identify the attributes associated with urban amenity.
(Attributes are the building blocks for the components and the qualities).

Add the components and the attributes to the following table. *(Delete those attributes and components that are not relevant)*

Qualities	Key Components	Attributes
Sense of Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History • Landscape • People • Architecture • ... • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation type • Landform • Architecture • Cultural Heritage • People's perceptions • Defined entrances and exits • Open Space • Safety • Accessibility • Sense of belonging • ... •
Understandable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigable urban areas • View shafts • Person scale • ... • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location/type of signage • Landform • Viewing points • ... •
Comfortable and safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe • Comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection from weather • Quality of public/private spaces • Lighting

Qualities	Key Components	Attributes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing
A healthy environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lakes • Rivers • Stream • Air • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality • Water quality • Solar access • Noise • Odour • Trees
Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of experiences cultural sporting etc. • Variety of Open Space • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of public transport • Passive open spaces • Active open spaces • ...
Ability to adapt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive to technology • Capacity for physical form to absorb changing land use demands • Capacity to accommodate range of activity • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport routes • Design of neighbourhoods • Characteristics of public spaces • ...
Accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct routes • Range of transport options • Quality of routes • All levels of ability ('disabled') • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of different transport options • Accessibility of different transport options • Quality of streets • ...
Quality of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability • Availability • Meet present and projected demand • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewage • Water • Stormwater • Roads • Public Transport • ...
Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging • All views represented • No/limited socio-economic and cultural barriers • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation on local council • ...
Well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes you happy • Energy/feeling of the place • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image • Community Spirit • ...

3. From the identified attributes develop relevant indicators.
(An indicator is a tool to measure eg a distance from a goal, target threshold or a benchmark. They tell us the extent to which our policies are working)

An example of the development of indicators for noise was given in the “Key urban amenity approaches” report as follows:

Quality:	Sense of Place
Place:	Neighbourhood scale
Attribute:	Noise
Indicator:	a) Daytime background noise levels within the neighbourhood b) The change in desired noise levels within the neighbourhood
Methodology:	a) Physical measurement of sound levels throughout the scale of urban environment concerned. b) Surveying people to ascertain desired noise levels.

It is likely that for a number of indicators both ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ measurements will be required.

In order to assess the overall ‘robustness’ of the indicators chosen apply the Ministry for the Environment indicator selection criteria using the matrix on the next page. You may wish to refer to the full template for indicator development the Ministry for the Environment developed in 1997 and that was included as Appendix 2 in the “Key urban amenity approaches” report.

The Ministry have explained the selection criteria as follows:

1. Simple and Robust

2. Policy Relevant:

- Able to monitor the environmental outcomes of environmental Policy and key legislation including the resource Management Act.

3. Analytically Valid:

- developed within a consistent analytical framework:
- able to relate causes, effects and human responses:
- be responsive to environmental change:
- able to detect human induced trends from natural variations:
- responsive to the system being assessed:
- reproducible, based on critical attributes of that system:
- scientifically credible, robust and simple:
- reference to an environmentally threshold, stand or policy goal, to allow progress towards the goal to be measured; and have consistent stands for data collection, analysis and data management.

4. Cost Effective

- limited number of indicators established:
- use existing data and information where possible: and

- simple to monitor

5. Easily understood

- limited in number, simple to interpret, accessible, robust and appealing; and
- Involve agencies, sectors and communities in the development of indicators to promote “ownership” and participation in monitoring and reporting.

Once you have completed the table we are interested in your view on the following question:

- *Are the selection criteria helpful and relevant?*
- *For the indicators selected, when will they need to be reviewed?*
- *Is it possible to set thresholds below which indicate when action is required with respect to the indicator selected?.*

Indicator Selection Criteria

EPI PROGRAMME STRAND: Urban amenity

ATTRIBUTE: Open Space

NAME POTENTIAL INDICATORS	CRITERIA					
	Policy relevant	Measurable	Analytically valid	Cost effective	Understand-able	
• Daytime background noise levels within the neighbourhood	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
•						
•						
•						
•						
•						
•						
•						
•						
•						
•						
•						
•						
•						

4. Outputs from the trials

4.1 Introduction

This section of the report aims to clarify what is expected of each of the four councils to be involved in urban amenity trials, in terms of the output reports.

4.2 Emphasis of the council trialling reports

As previously mentioned, the urban amenity trials will result in a report from Waitakere City Council, Rotorua District Council, Palmerston North City Council and a write-up of the workshop with Waimakariri District Council (from the Consultant Team). The draft council reports should include the following:

- description of community where the trial occurred;
- an outline of the methodology that was used;
- a description of the results of the trial;
- an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the methods used;
- suggestions to improve the framework outlined in Figure 1 of this report.
- a list of key lessons learnt (what worked/did not work and what would you change);
- an indication for other councils of the resources required to complete this work;
- comments on the usefulness of applying this type of framework at a national level; and
- what good practice advice would you give to other councils?

The emphasis of these urban amenity trials should be on the successes and weaknesses of the various approaches that were used to define, manage and monitor urban amenity (including the development of urban amenity indicators for use locally). Any suggestions of how to improve the framework outlined in the “Key approaches to urban amenity” report would be appreciated.

An annotated table of contents is listed below to provide guidance to the councils preparing reports on their trials. It is also suggested that the councils fill in as many of the tables and templates as possible that were included in chapter three to ensure consistent formatting and to save time for all involved in the trials.

4.3 Recommended Table of Contents for the report

We have included a recommended table of contents and estimated number of pages for the write up of the various sections of the council trialling report. It is estimated that the trialling reports will be somewhere between 15 – 30 pages long and will include as many of the filled in tables and templates as possible. These figures are indicative only. It is the advice that can be passed on to other councils (and therefore the pat on the back you can give your council for doing this work) that matters, rather than the length of the report that you prepare.

1. Brief description of community where the trial occurred (1/2 – 2 pages)

This sets the scene for the report and will be important in terms of community characteristics and urban typology but should not be long (half to two pages). (Refer Template Two)

2. Methodology used for the trial (4-5 pages)

Include a brief overview of what you did and why. Provide as many “how to” tips as possible i.e. how did you engage the community in order to define urban amenity? How did you manage urban amenity in the Plan and how would you manage it on reflection? How do you plan to monitor changes in urban amenity etc. (Refer Template One)

3. Description of the results of the trial (5 – 6 pages)

What did you find? Broadly what worked well and what did not work well? Were the qualities described by your community the same, similar to, different from the qualities developed by the Urban Amenity Focus Group? What are the key attributes of urban amenity as described by your communities? What indicators did you decide were important for monitoring changes in urban amenity? (Refer Templates Three, Four and Five)

4. The advantages and disadvantages of the methods used (4-6 pages)

Please provide as many hot tips as possible for other councils (3 – 4 pages)
How could the framework be improved? Is the framework robust and worthy of going into the good practice guide or are amendments needed and if so what would you suggest. (1 - 2 pages)

5. A list of key lessons learnt (1 – 3 pages)

- what worked well?
- what did not work well?
- what would you change?

6. Resources required to complete this work (1 page)

Please include this in full time equivalents, i.e. how many people hours were required and what help did you get externally compared to what you did in house, who in-house was involved etc.

7. The usefulness of adopting a similar approach at a national level (1-2- pages)

Could this urban amenity conceptual framework be applied at the national level? Or only at the local level? What could/should be done nationally?

8. What advice and suggestions would you give to other councils? (1 – 2 pages)

5. Conclusions and way forward

The purpose of this report is to provide guidance for the councils involved in the trialling. Trialling of the ideas in “Key approaches to urban amenity” is an important phase in this project as it provides an opportunity to do ‘on the ground’ testing. The results of the trials will provide practical examples for the “Good Practice Guide on Urban Amenity”.

The trialling phase of the project is programmed to occur from November 2000 to February 2001. The Ministry and the Consultant team understand from the conference calls that have been held with the councils involved in the trials that these timeframes are sufficient to enable the completion of the trialling report by mid to the end of February 2001 at the latest. This timeframe will enable the results of the trialling to be presented to the third Focus Group planned for April 2001 and for the information to be used as part of the draft good practice guide. The timeframes for the rest of the project are shown in the box below.

Timeframes for the rest of the project

29 September 2000	Draft report entitled <i>Key urban amenity approaches</i> was completed and circulated to MfE and Focus Group Completion of current council case studies
31 October 2000	This paper for four selected trialling councils on what to trial in relation to key urban amenity approaches Workshop in Wellington for the five urban amenity and plan monitoring case study councils (Waimakariri District, Christchurch City, Tasman District, Palmerston North City, and Auckland City councils)
November - February	Council trialling of urban amenity ideas by Palmerston North City, Rotorua District, Waitakere City and a mini-trial by Waimakariri District councils.
20 February 2001	Deadline for council reports on trialling of urban amenity approaches
11-15 March 2001	NZPI Conference – workshop on urban amenity
24 March 2001	Report collating all council trials on urban amenity
30 March 2001	Draft good practice guide on how to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define• Manage• Monitor urban amenity and• Develop indicators to measure changes in urban amenity.
5 or 6 April 2001	Third full Urban Amenity Focus Group workshop
30 April 2001	Workshop report
30 June 2001	Final good practice guide for councils.

The Consultant Team and the Ministry would like to thank the councils involved with the trials for their level of commitment to this project. It is acknowledged that the time of the year set aside for the trials is to some extent difficult as people are winding down for the Christmas and the New Year break. Given this and also the inevitable end of year pressures to get projects completed the Consultant Team and the Ministry are grateful for the time that people have committed to this project.

Both the Consultant team and the Ministry are looking forward to catching up with people involved in the trials during the November to February timeframe and together adding to the pool of knowledge of how to effectively define, manage and monitor urban amenity in New Zealand.

Appendix 1 – Members of the Urban Amenity Focus Group

Members of the Ministry for the Environment Urban Amenity Focus Group are:

Graeme McIndoe – Urban Design, Wellington

Paul Honeybone – Sustainable Cities Trust, Christchurch

Rewi Thompson – Architect, Auckland

Greg Vossler – Palmerston North City Council

Philip Brown – Waitakere City Council

Phillipa Robertson – Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (previously Porirua City Council)

Bob Nixon – Christchurch City Council

Stephen Colson – Rotorua District Council

Robyn Fisher – Hutt City Council (previously Brendon Marshall)

James Corbett – Manukau City Council

Clive Anstey – Landscape Architect, Wellington

Previous member was Bruce Halligan Southland District

Appendix 2 – Questions sent prior to conference calls to discuss urban amenity trials

1. What trialling of urban amenity do you envisage doing – given all the previous discussions we have had about the possibilities? Are there any major changes to what was briefly outlined in the Mini-Focus Group report?
 - What?
 - Where?
 - When?
 - How?
 - Why?
2. In relation to managing urban amenity, what key methods do you think work best (ie rules in the Plan, design guidelines etc) and how are these methods being implemented, and is this effective in your council?
3. Do you (planners etc at your council) AND the community agree with the key urban amenity qualities identified in the conceptual framework? How will you use these qualities? Towards the end of the trials will you be able to provide a comment on the usefulness of the qualities (and add or subtract any that do not work in your environment)?
4. What are the key attributes of urban amenity in your view? How will you develop further the attributes of urban amenity included in the *Key approaches to urban amenity* report? Do you intend to do this in-house or ask the community or both?
5. How have you worked with the community in the past and how do you intend to engage the community during this trial to define what they value in relation to urban amenity? Please be specific about approaches used/to be used in relation to those outlined in the urban approaches report.
6. Off the top of your head what are some key best practice ideas for community engagement processes (that we may be able to include in the trialling report)?
7. Have we missed key ideas about the management of urban amenity that could be trialled?
8. In relation to monitoring changes in urban amenity – do you think you can relatively easily explain the conceptual framework developed by the Focus Group and apply it in your area? How will you apply it?
9. What would you / do you do to measure the key urban amenity attributes? ie how to do measure changes in urban amenity?
10. Can you provide a list of indicators that you have used or developed to measure changes in urban amenity? What do you think you need to measure in order to effectively manage urban amenity?

11. Please confirm the timing of the trials: When do you envisage completing the trials? When can you give Karen and Fiona your draft report by?
12. Do you have any ideas or suggestions on the structure of the trialling report that you will write for MfE and the Consultant Team?

Appendix 3 - Key lessons learnt

The following is the lessons learnt that were documented in the “Key urban amenity approaches” paper:

- *“urban amenity has the greatest meaning at a local level;*
- *a key lesson learnt is the significance of language. A number of people have reported both in the focus group meetings and in the meetings with case study councils that confusion can occur when there is not a common understanding of different terms. This can happen not only because of the use of ‘technical terms’ but also due to age and cultural characteristics of the population;*
- *in the survey of local authorities, a number of councils reported that they had not begun plan effectiveness monitoring, and one of the reasons often stated was lack of resources. Because of this the councils involved with the case studies are documenting the resources required to undertake the work they have been involved in. It is interesting to note that most councils relied on outside assistance to undertake the work. On the other hand, Tasman District Council undertook the work for their case study with in house staff and the assistance of a student;*
- *the importance of having people involved in monitoring with a range of skills including data analysis and computer skills. Although some councils will not necessarily have people with a range of skills dedicated to monitoring there may be people within the organisation that have these skills;*
- *an issue that has arisen at a number of different meetings is the importance of timing. Councils reported that communities can suffer from survey fatigue. Considering this it is important to plan the timing of consultation programmes and for there to be co-ordination between different council units;*
- *importance of engaging the community in defining and monitoring urban amenity – ie this work “must” be a bottom-up rather than top-down process;*
- *councils want step by step processes to follow (and a variety of approaches seems to work well). A workbook format would be good structure to adopt for the ‘good practice guide on urban amenity’;*
- *using only statutory instruments (ie rules etc in resource management plans) alone will not give the full answer (need design guides, work with the community etc);*
- *an approach that only focuses on the most measurable things is not desirable it is important to find a way of capturing and tracking the least measurable but most important things;*
- *some councils have found it very useful to use visual images like photos of what people do and don’t like;*
- *visioning exercises with the community build trust and provide councils with a good sense of what the community aspiration are in relation to urban amenity;*

- *there is no “one” correct way of managing urban amenity;*
- *use of public satisfaction surveys may be a good means of collating information about people’s views on urban amenity from across the country; and*
- *it is important to record the lessons learnt to date on this project. The lessons learnt will assist in the development of the good practice guide.”*