

URBAN AMENITY TRIALS REPORT

Report prepared by
Rotorua District Council

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3 Rotorua District Council – Urban Amenity Trials Report

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SECTION 1: Project Summary

Purpose:

To establish a widely shared long term vision for the future of Ngongotaha.

Objectives:

To get a feel for local people's views about the way to handle some important issues like: traffic, the main street, reserves, and housing. The purpose of the exercise was to assist in planning for the town in the context that a) significant change is likely to result which could adversely affect the town (i.e. increase in road traffic) and b) Council has allocated funds to use in upgrading the area.

Understanding of the Community's perception of the current urban amenity was important to help Council consider how to plan for Ngongotaha's future.

Community:

Ngongotaha is a community with strong historical ties to the area, albeit of lower socio-economic status.

Anticipated Output:

- a descriptive report listing all the comments by members of the public;
- a summary document of the above;
- completed templates for the Ministry for the Environment in relation to the Urban Amenity Study; and
- the beginning of a formal relationship with the marae in the area.

Purpose of Information:

The information is going to be used for three things:

- 1) To assist Council make decisions about the future of Ngongotaha. A main street upgrade is planned as traffic flow through Ngongotaha is projected to increase in the next few years. Decisions will also be made about the reserves in the area. Ngongotaha was chosen as an area for intensive research because there are proposed changes to the main road between Tauranga and Rotorua (it will be sealed) and it is expected that there will be a large increase in traffic through the town, including heavy traffic, as a result. It was felt that it was important for Council to consider how best to handle this situation by asking local people about how they felt about their town. An assessment of the parks and reserves was also anticipated in order to plan upgrades and/or acquisition of new reserve land.

This purpose was established prior to the approach by the Ministry for Environment regarding the Urban Amenity Trial, as was the whole PA exercise. The results of the PA exercise have been used in the Urban Amenity study, but at no time was information collected with the study in mind.

Following on from the PA Exercise and after discussion with the MfE, a second output was sought:

- 2) To assist the Ministry for Environment in the Urban Amenity Trial

A further aspect that Council planning staff decided to include as part of the Marae meeting and Focus groups was:

- 3) To begin to gain an understanding of the housing and land needs in Ngongotaha. There is ongoing lifestyle and rural residential development on the rural and lakeshore areas around the town and areas of rural and industrial land which are lying vacant/under utilised. A review of the Operative District Plan is proposed in a few years time and so some beginnings of info collection was seen as useful.

SECTION 2: Methodology

The study was undertaken in 3 components:

1. Participatory Appraisal Exercise
2. Hui
3. Focus Group

Participatory Appraisal Exercise

Techniques

During 11-13 September, six independent facilitators were trained in the principles and tools of the Participatory Appraisal Method. Six Council staff also attended the training so that they could provide back up at the public meetings and at the Drop-in Centre to be set up in the Community Hall. They were joined by a facilitator team leader who had been trained previously and had experience in using the participatory appraisal techniques.

How did people participate:

- A public meeting was held initially with 36 participants.
- Then facilitators went out into the community to different locations to speak to people and get their feedback about Ngongotaha (466 participants).
- There was also opportunity for participants to “drop in” to the Community Hall to share their ideas (81 participants).
- The locations attended included: the main street, shops, a camping ground, dentist/physio, schools, bus stop, church.

Resources Required:

Manager of Community Services, Social Research Officer, Trainer, Independent Facilitators

Other facilitators included : Social Policy Officer, Reserves Planner, Safer Community Co-ordinator , Community Services Officer, Policy Planner.

A time consuming process involving pre-planning, an intense period of consultation as well as a solid commitment to collating and then structuring responses.

Advantages:

The methodology was selected for a particular purpose by RDC, and the project was then recognised as potentially useful to the Urban Amenity Study.

The advantage of the Participatory Appraisal style of exercise was that it incorporated:

- face to face style;
- non-threatening techniques for information gathering;
- the inclusiveness of the process with all contributors having the same rights;
- the way the processes minimise the risk of particular interest groups taking over;
- the appropriateness of the techniques for all ages and abilities including those with limited reading/writing abilities;
- “The participatory appraisal methodology was fantastic for its INCLUSIVENESS, through its informality, accessibility and variable tools. Without setting out to, it gathered much of use to the urban amenity study. Potentially it could be used to focus in exclusively on urban amenity issues. The questions would need to be carefully designed and pre-tested to ensure focus” (Manager of Community and Social Services, Barbara MacLennan).

The respective advantages/disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative style of research has been well documented in research publications and is not elaborated on here, except to say that the information gathered cannot be quantified, but does provide an overall feeling of the key elements considered important by residents.

A disadvantage of this method was that elements of urban amenity may be taken for granted and therefore not mentioned. For example, fresh air, accessibility, lack of noise, good sewerage system, and the presence of a grocery store. These are elements that may only be mentioned when NOT present. This means that it is difficult to prioritise the relative importance of various elements of amenity.

Tips:

- A bright yellow brochure explaining the background issues was circulated to all households and businesses in the Ngongotaha catchment a week prior to the consultation, articles about the PA were published in the Ngongotaha news and an issues paper was written and made available prior to the consultation, however it is felt that, more pre-Participatory Appraisal publicity and promotion would have been useful for the Participatory Appraisal method.
- Training together just before the PA is a huge advantage – even if it is just a refresher for experienced PA facilitators there is a need for focusing on the brief.
- Having the right kind of facilitators and the ability to combine different teams for differing purposes is essential. (The combination of local government and not-for-profit sector personnel worked really well in enhancing all skill-sets in this particular case.) People with confidence and with excellent listening and communication skills are essential to PA.
- A key aspect of the training was that Council staff were also involved, in order to generate additional commitment and understanding of the process and to build capacity within Council for subsequent consultations.
- Members of the facilitation team were played by a flat-rate koha (gift) rather than an hourly rate, and they could ask that it be paid to the organisation they worked for rather than to the individual.
- The training needs to be partly dedicated to developing the client brief into useful questions – in our PA not enough time was spent on this at the training, and the facilitators had to spend valuable consultation time improving on this area. The questions developed affect the usefulness of the outcomes for the urban amenity or participatory appraisal project.
- More pre-set opportunities for meetings with clubs/organisations could have been arranged. We would therefore have needed more facilitators on board to cover both the informal and pre-arranged opportunities.
- Excellent social and demographic information about the community at hand is required – and tracking the demographics daily is a fantastic way of being able to fine-tune the priority focus of each day.
- Time was spent asking people to draw maps of the area with some of the key facilities/shops/features, but this information is proved very difficult to analyse in any meaningful way and in fact was not analysed. It would therefore have been just as useful to provide a map of the town and gone straight to the exercise of asking about likes, dislikes and suggested improvements.
- Having a centrally located facility to display the results of the PA exercise is important, as it allows for a very transparent process.

Hui

Technique:

Meeting chaired by Marae Chairman

How did people participate:

By invitation. The Chair of the Marae, where the meeting was to be held invited members of four other marae. An advertisement was put in the paper as well as an article in the Te Reo section of the paper.

Resources Required:

Manager of Community Services, Manager of Iwi Communications and Policy, Manager of Planning, Director of Environmental Services, Policy Planner, Independent Facilitator, Student Planners.

Advantages of Methods:

The advantage of this was that it demonstrated that Council had a commitment to hear the points of view of Maori people in the community, and it opened the doors for further meetings to be held on the marae. It provided a forum where Maori people could feel comfortable participating and the participants at the meeting said that they would not attend meetings that were held in Council's public meeting hall. The disadvantage was that the meeting took several months to set up and attendance was influenced by whether or not there were tangihanga or other tribal commitments that arose at the time, knowledge of the meeting and interest level.

Tips:

- Two months of pre-warning was not enough for the marae committees. Despite using the correct contact people, protocols and channels, tangata whenua would have liked more pre-PA communication. If there has been a history of lack of communication barriers may need to be addressed.
- Make the effort to set up a meeting on a marae – it is worth it in terms of building relationships and providing a uniquely iwi perspective.
- Be very flexible regarding the agenda – and meet with the Chair of the Marae beforehand to work it out.
- Allow the Chair of the Marae to run the main part of the meeting and communicate with him to find out about the protocol on the marae i.e. the karakia, welcome, etc.
- Visit the Marae beforehand if possible to ascertain how the room will be set up (what resources in terms of chairs, whiteboard etc will be there).
- Have a couple of people recording the meeting including someone proficient in Te Reo Maori. This meeting was wholly conducted in English, but it was felt to be a courtesy as well as potentially useful.
- At Rotorua District Council, there is a Manager of Iwi Communications and Policy and he was invaluable in assisting with protocol aspects, likely agenda as well as providing a bridge to communicating with the Maori community.
- Ensure that a high level Council person is present at the meeting e.g. Director
- Look for sources to advertise the meeting – e.g. the public notices section of the newspaper, an article in the paper, word of mouth.
- Ensure that it is made very clear in the meeting a) why the meeting is being held, b) what will happen with the information collected during the meeting c) the likely timeframes for Council action and d) if Council intends to get back in touch with the marae members for a further meeting or to provide feedback on where Council is up to.

Focus Group

Technique:

Informal meeting with some discussion of the attributes. The aim was to get together a small group (6-8 Persons) to discuss further any outcomes from the PA exercise and fill in any "missing gaps".

How did people participate:

By invitation. Attendees at the final public presentation of the results were invited to participate and three people volunteered at this meeting. The Ngongotaha Progress Association volunteered two members and a further person known to Council in Ngongotaha who had not previously participated, was invited to attend. A total of four persons attended the focus group meeting.

Resources Required

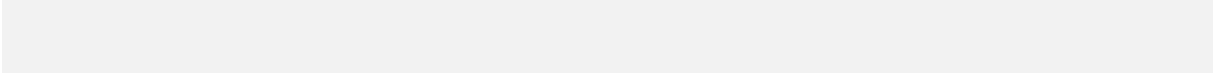
Manager of Planning, Policy Planner. Some materials but built on previous work done during PA exercise. Comparatively little work required to set up focus group.

Advantages

The focus group was useful as it followed on and clarified issues that came out of the PA exercise. The fact that so few people were involved would not make this a good method to use unless as in this case, it could be used to further define or clarify what was previously said, in particular question on the "gaps" in information collected. For example, accessibility was not brought out during the PA exercise, so the focus group provided an opportunity to ask people what they thought about accessibility. In this case study, they said that accessibility was "great" so it could have been therefore

that accessibility was something that was taken for granted and hence was not mentioned during the PA exercise.

Tips

- A focus group is useful to clarify information gained from the public generally rather than as the key source of information, as members in a focus group may tend to have a “hobby horse” that they want to talk about, rather than canvas the range of urban amenity issues.
 - The previous community participation method can be used to determine people interested in participating in the focus group or some of the key people in an area (Progress Association) may have representatives who want to attend.
- 

SECTION 3: Results of the Trial

Introduction

The information that was collected during the study was analysed in terms of the qualities identified by the Ministry for the Environment.

It is noted that the information was collected without prejudice, i.e. a series of open ended questions were asked. At the marae meeting and focus group, however, there was a conscious effort to question on some of the characteristics which were not picked up on by the PA exercise, e.g. accessibility.

This analysis is broken into 1) the kinds of comments during the exercises that could be best classified as relating to that quality and 2) an analysis of the quality in terms of its usefulness in helping us understand what makes up urban amenity.

Qualities and Analysis

Quality 1: Sense of Place

Results:

A number of key things came out of the study, which indicated the strong character of the area, predominantly:

- The friendliness of people
- The village atmosphere and shops

These aspects were brought out in all three methods of community participation.

The mill site was also identified as a strong part of Ngongotaha and was an aspect that people either tolerated (because of its historical associations) or disliked.

Other themes that identified the sense of place of Ngongotaha were:

- the location (the separation from Rotorua by rural land gave Ngongotaha a strong sense of separateness and unique identity),
- views,
- its location next to the lake and mountain,
- the stream which runs through it,
- its quietness and peacefulness,
- the rural aspect of the community; and
- the village feel of Ngongotaha.

People like the fact that Ngongotaha was quieter and more sedate than Rotorua and was away from noise and bustle. There seemed to be an appreciation of a good village community and a rustic or romantic charm about Ngongotaha. It was clear that Ngongotaha had a strong identifiable character to it which people valued.

Comments:

The comments about the importance of the streams were somewhat surprising and not anticipated, but it was clear that the stream is strongly valued in the area.

Conclusion about quality "Sense of Place":

Student Planner:

Landscape aspects came across as important in providing for the sense of place of Ngongotaha. These aspects combined with other special characteristics contributed to the overall village sense, which seemed especially important.

Policy Planner:

Sense of Place is a relevant quality and it was useful to consider the “special” characteristics of Ngongotaha which contributed to a sense of place.

Quality 2: Understandable

Results

Few comments could be identified as falling under this category. There was certainly a strong sense of where the “centre” of Ngongotaha is due to the focus of the shops and participants indicated a good knowledge of the specific shops within Ngongotaha. The fact that Ngongotaha is surrounded by rural land on three sides and the lake on the other provides a sense of Ngongotaha’s boundaries.

Comments

The community participation exercise involved locals and so this aspect was not strongly identified as an issue in Ngongotaha, i.e. locals know their way around Ngongotaha. Questioning of visitors may indicate whether or not it is understandable to outsiders. The location of the shops on a major arterial road contributes to understandability however this was not something that was identified during the study.

Conclusion about quality “Understandable”:

Student Planner:

The understandable category may easily be confused with “Sense of Place” as these two categories seem to be closely related. Rewording may solve this problem, but they seem to be the same sort of aspects classed in a different way, for example Mt Ngongotaha provides for “Sense of Place” for the area, and also makes the area more understandable.

Policy Planner:

The participatory appraisal method did not adequately test this. Although the participants drew maps as part of the exercise, these focussed on the village. The maps identified key roads in the village and the location of specific shops, public facilities and natural features. In a sense, the maps demonstrated the degree of understandability of the town: key features stood out on the maps – namely the stream, the mill site and the pattern of key roads in the town. The maps also identified specific shops and public facilities, the location of the lake, stream and railway to various degrees. It is difficult however to evaluate this information much further or make assumptions or generalisations from the pictures drawn.

A distinction needs to be made between understandability of an area for locals and understandability for visitors, which may be quite different things.

A structured survey could include questions about the entrance signage and its effectiveness.

Quality 3: Comfortable and Safe

Results

Traffic was identified as a major issue in terms of Ngongotaha.

Three major issues in terms of traffic were:

- a dislike for the amount of heavy traffic passing through Ngongotaha, particularly in the main street (Ngongotaha Road).
- traffic speed through the main street.
- a dislike for the volume of traffic in the main street. The volume of traffic seems to be most problematic (congestion) in the afternoons between 3pm and 6pm.

The roads were also identified as a prevalent theme among the dislikes in Ngongotaha. Two prominent concerns were pedestrian crossings (or pedestrian safety generally) and concern over the state of the footpaths.

Crime and safety were expressed as concerns although a notion that came through was that people feel safe because everyone knows everyone in Ngongotaha.

Conclusion about quality “Comfortable and Safe”:

Student Planner:

This category seems to me to relate to how “at home” you feel in an urban environment. Personally I do not feel particularly comfortable and safe in Auckland, as it is an unfamiliar and larger urban environment than what I am accustomed. Therefore is urban amenity perceived by locals as higher in their local environment, because they feel more comfortable and safe than in an unfamiliar environment?

Policy Planner:

The quality was useful in terms of identifying that safety is an important component of urban amenity. I do not believe, however, that safety and comfort are two qualities that should be categorised together. Safety may relate to such aspects as road and pedestrian safety, burglaries and personal safety from attack, whereas comfort is a term which conjures up images of pleasantness, absence of hardship, the person-friendliness of the environment, such as whether seating is provided. Comfort may also relate to the quality of the housing, a concept of some degree of luxury as compared to provision of the “bare basics”.

Comfort seems to be more closely related to “quality of services”.

Quality 4: Healthy Environment

Results

Some concerns were expressed regarding the health of the environment, namely:

- pollution, rubbish and littering

As well as general comments, there were comments about specific areas in Ngongotaha such as the reserves and gullies being used as rubbish dumps and people dumping rubbish at the lakefront.

Many people pointed to the lake as being dirty or polluted and provided feedback such as “unsuitable for general use by the public”, “the lake stinks”. There was also concern about rubbish in and around the streams and river area generally.

There were a number of concerns about the visual appearance of certain areas such as the Old Mill Site (eyesore, polluted, messy) and the rundown appearance of the shops.

Comments:

It must also be noted that this area has natural resources that are highly valued – two streams, both of them valued for their trout, the bushclad Mount Ngongotaha and the lakefront of Rotorua. It is also surrounded by rural land. In the overall context of possible living environments, then, the area can be considered to be very healthy. The high natural qualities of the area may be somewhat taken for granted.

Conclusion about quality “Healthy Environment”:

Student Planner:

The aesthetics of the urban environment don’t seem to fit within the 10 categories. For example in the Ngongotaha PA exercise, the old stock yards and mill sites came up numerous times as unsightly old industrial sites. These were classified under the ‘Healthy Environment’ category despite the comments indicating that the negative attitude towards these sites was mainly to do with the appearance of these sites. It was felt that these comments were not really classed in the right category, but it was not clear where else they should go.

Policy Planner:

This category is useful to consider as the perceived health or otherwise of an environment is an important part of urban amenity.

Quality 5: Choice

Results

When asked about likes in Ngongotaha, a number of the major services and features in the area were mentioned namely recreation, parks and reserves, the shops, the school, facilities, services and clubs generally including the medical service. This seems to indicate a satisfaction with the range of services/facilities on offer.

When asked about dislikes, some of the comments seemed to indicate a lack of choice – e.g. a lack of amenities at some of the parks and reserves, a need for particular shops (e.g. McDonalds, Warehouse) – however these appeared to be aspects of something that was overall satisfactory - for example, a positive may have been “the parks and reserves” while the negative included things such as the swings being too small or not enough places to cross the stream.

The marae group identified that there was a lack of choice in terms of how Maori could develop maori-owned land, as the current rules for subdivision were too prohibitive to allow the land to be developed for housing. This group also indicated that options for housing choice were constrained by affordability.

The focus group indicated that Ngongotaha was “just the right size”.

Comments:

Nearly forty percent of the participants in the PA exercise were children. This is unusually high for a consultation exercise, and the strong emphasis in the study on the lack of activities for young people the substandard skatepark and the desire for fastfood chains have been strongly influenced by the age of many of the participants.

Conclusion about quality “Choice”:

Student Planner:

The boundary between ‘Choice’ and ‘Ability to Adapt’ could be further refined. In relation to this study, the ‘Choice’ option was defined as the current range of activities and experiences available to the community, while the ‘Ability to Adapt’ was defined as the potential of the community to accommodate and support a range of activities. However, it may help to further distinguish these categories.

Policy Planner:

Whether or not choice is perceived as adequate is affected by social norms as well as an understanding of the economics of retailing. The size and location of the town in relation to other retail areas (catchment area) dictates what may or may not be economic in terms of the presence of for example, banks, major retailers and clothing shops. It is considered that most adults have an understanding of what might be expected in a town of this size, which influences their perception of whether choice is adequate. Changes in the provision of some of the shops e.g. if the supermarket was to go, could significantly affect whether people felt there was adequate choice.

Choice could also be considered in terms of a range of affordability of housing or a range of types of lifestyles (from units to single houses to lifestyle lots to large rural lots). An objective assessment may yield a better analysis but only if there was an identified baseline against which to evaluate “adequate choice”.

Quality 6: Ability to Adapt

Results:

Some people liked Ngongotaha because it was a business friendly town with easy access to local businesses, cheaper rents, easy parking and no meters and a supportive local community and Councillors. There were positive comments about Ngongotaha’s potential. Development of tourism was seen as a possible direction for Ngongotaha. The focus group participants indicated that there was opportunity for the township to adapt in the sense that there is further land available in the town centre which could be developed for commercial uses.

The Marae group indicated that the zoning of Maori land in the area as rural or industrial limited the opportunities of the land to be used for housing. They also noted that Maori did not have the resources to be able to subdivide or provide the infrastructure requirements of standard subdivisions.

Comments:

Few of the comments by the PA exercise indicated that ability to adapt was a major factor of urban amenity, however this could be an aspect that has been taken for granted. Ngongotaha is an old community established around the five marae in the area and previously based on a Mill and has seen a number of changes in the past, while still retaining a village atmosphere.

Conclusion about quality "Ability to Adapt":

Student Planner:

A clarification in the wording of the 'Ability to Adapt' category is required. This category seemed to be very similar in definition to the 'Choice' category, but we found it difficult to define any attribute within this category. The definition is unclear and fails to project how this quality is associated with urban amenity.

Policy Planner:

This quality is related to the resilience of the urban form. It is a little vague in the sense that the:

- a) ability to adapt can be seen as a quality that is related to the actual physical environment to accommodate change; or
- b) it can be related to the flexibility of the District Plan,

There isn't a clear context for this quality, i.e. adapt to what?

If we consider another petrol crisis, then it may be difficult for a suburban environment to adapt to changes in transportation (private to public); or if we consider changes in the family structure, then 4 bedroom houses on medium sized lots may no longer be appropriate; however I do not believe that these are aspects of urban amenity per se. Ability to adapt in terms of lot sizes being large enough to accommodate extra houses may be important in areas of high population growth but not in stable population areas. Ability of an area to adapt to a declining population also needs to be considered, but may only be relevant in some areas of New Zealand.

It is unclear what kind of time frame is being considered here – i.e. are we talking about 5 years in the future or 50 years in the future.

Quality 7 - Accessible

Results

Accessibility again was one aspect that was not strongly identified in the community participation exercise, but when participants in the focus group were questioned on it, they agreed that accessibility was excellent in Ngongotaha. Convenience, easy parking, and the shops were all identified as aspects of good accessibility, although lack of parking in the main street was also identified as a concern with the town.

Conclusion about quality "Accessible":

Student Planner:

The accessibility of Ngongotaha seems to be an aspect that is taken for granted by the residence, and therefore if the access was for some reason decreased I think it would be something, which would upset the community. Accessibility seems to be a category, which in a town like Ngongotaha wouldn't be mentioned until it was taken away.

Policy Planner:

Accessibility may be better measured by objective means e.g. how close is the bus stop to the shops, what percentage of the area is within 400m of a bus stop, how close are the shops in the main shopping area etc. Accessibility or perception of it is considered to be an important component of urban amenity despite not being a strong feature of the results of the PA exercise.

Quality 8: Quality of Services

Results

It seems that shops are a focal point for the community because by far the most prevalent theme under “Likes” in the PA Exercise was Shops/Shopping. People thought shopping in Ngongotaha was easy and compact and the staff were genuinely friendly and helpful. In terms of dislikes, shops/shopping centre was the second most prevalent dislike theme. At first this may appear contradictory, however the fact that shops and shopping were prevalent as both a like and as a dislike illustrates the importance of the shopping centre to the people of Ngongotaha. Appearance of shops was the aspect that people appeared concerned about (unattractive, messy, old, in disrepair). Positive comments were made about the school and medical services.

In terms of Council services, comments were made about road safety, toilets and the state of the footpaths.

Conclusion about quality “Quality of Services”:

Student Planner:

Agree with following Policy Planner comments that an explanation of the type of services included in this category is required.

Policy Planner:

This quality is a little unclear in terms of what services are meant, i.e. does this include public services or all services provided by the service industry (including banks, doctors etc). An objective assessment may yield better results than questioning. Despite not being a prevalent theme in the exercise, Quality of Services is considered to be an important quality of urban amenity.

Quality 9: Included

Results:

The friendliness of Ngongotaha and the inclusion of all sectors of the community were emphasised strongly as a characteristic aspect of Ngongotaha in all participation exercises and this provided a strong sense of identity and community.

The participants at the Marae meeting said that they did not feel able to participate in the formal planning process so welcomed the chance to have a meeting on the marae.

Conclusion about quality “Included”:

Student Planner:

The ‘Included’ section may need to be reworded. The use of the word ‘process’ is not clear, and further explanation would be helpful to define what this ‘process’ actually is. From the Ngongotaha study there were two aspects incorporated in this category. The inclusiveness of the local community was categorised under this section, and also the inclusiveness of the community in the political process (this is how we interpreted the word process from the definition). However it was generally thought that the inclusiveness in the political process was not adequately tested, as few specific questions of this nature were asked. Perhaps redefining this definition to include within this category the political process (if this has in fact been interpreted correctly), the local community and cultural inclusiveness would clarify this section

Policy Planner:

I do not consider that this is a factor of urban amenity. It may be a characteristic of the community – and may be related to cultural aspects – the importance placed on either being part of the family or community or being separate due to the importance or otherwise placed on social status issues. Cultural tolerance is also a part of this. Another way ‘included’ could be interpreted is whether people feel included in the political process and whether they feel able to participate in Council planning decisions. This is an aspect related to democracy and is influenced by education/cultural background, socio-economic status and the quality of the local politicians and is therefore considered to stand outside of urban amenity. I think the wording of this quality is better as “Sense of Belonging”.

Nonetheless, when considering changes to physical elements within the urban form, it needs to be considered whether or not the proposed changes will enhance or detract from a sense of belonging. For example, situating a skateboard park in a remote location may imply the exclusion or isolation of young people from normal activity, use of maori motifs or articulating maori history will imply inclusion and recognition of maori within the urban environment.

Quality 10: Wellbeing

Results:

Overall, the feeling that came out very strongly in the participation exercises was that people like living in Ngongotaha and have a sense of pride in the community (village) atmosphere.

Comments:

There were few comments that could be directly categorised as falling into this category.

Conclusion about quality "Wellbeing":

Student Planner:

I don't think well-being is a suitable indicator of urban amenity. It is extremely subjective in its nature, and influenced by a range of variables outside the urban amenity categories such as a persons financial and relationship situation. This may cause a bias due to people being generally more positive about everything if they are having a good week, and more negative about everything on a bad week. This also makes the quality very difficult to measure. However it may be a useful indicator to measure alongside the urban amenity indicators to use as a contrast. This will ensure that the urban amenity indicators are not totally misrepresenting the community views.

Policy Planner:

In my view, wellbeing is a factor which influences people's response to or perception of the urban environment. If there are high levels of wellbeing, then the overall response to the qualities of urban amenity are likely to be high and conversely where wellbeing is low, then people will "colour" the overall perception of urban amenity.

I consider that the sense of wellbeing is influenced by issues such as alienation and inclusion. Alienation from the community may occur for economic/ employment and cultural reasons. In Ngongotaha, the socioeconomic status of the community is relatively low. There is no single major employer in Ngongotaha, however there are a range of employment opportunities in the region (including tourism and forestry industries) which may lead to a positive evaluation of the economic climate. Although the community includes both Maori and Pakeha (which could potentially lead to cultural divisions), the overall sense of community was high and it was emphasised at the marae that divisions do not occur along cultural lines.

It is known that there is a long association for the tribal Maori in the area who own large tracts of land, and this contributes a great deal to the sense of belonging and ownership of those people. In addition, Maori own businesses in the area and this may also contribute to a sense of belonging. It is also known that there are pakeha families that have stayed in the area for generations, however no precise information on this is available.

Perhaps the whole exercise – looking at urban amenity – is in order to enhance wellbeing and it could be considered to be the sum total of the urban amenity works.

Missing Qualities

Student Planner:

Difficulties were presented when attempting to categorise the specific shops/services and parks people mentioned, for example when people were asked what they liked about Ngongotaha they often mentioned "The Hub Dairy" or "The Pet Shop". It was decided that these created a sense of place for the community. The proximity of these certain shops and services is especially important to the Ngongotaha community, as it is the characteristic of having these shops and services close by while maintaining the village feel which is one of the main positive attributes of the community.

There were aspects mentioned by the community, which they liked or disliked about their town that were difficult to place within the urban amenity categories. Specific roads was one of these aspects as it is hard to know whether this was a safety or access issue. Other aspects that were not categorised were; disliked the increase in population; improvements in the health support and rates being too high.

The actual aesthetics or appearance of the urban environment does not seem to clearly fit into any particular category. This seemed to be an important issue mentioned in the Ngongotaha survey, such as a need to improve the appearance of several run-down old industrial sites. This is an aspect, which could be more clearly defined in the urban amenity categories.

Another aspect, which was found to be missing in the 10 categories, was customer service aspects. These have been included under the quality of service aspect, despite the definition not really including customer service within this category. Perhaps this category should be reworded to include this aspect, or it should somehow be included in another category.

Policy Planner:

A category specifically for aesthetics or visual appearance is needed such as “Aesthetic Appearance” or “Visual Amenity” as there was no clear way to categorise comments about things looking nice (like the hanging baskets in the village area) or unattractive (dislike appearance of old mill site and junk shop). The sense of things being attractive and appealing (visual coherence, good design, well-maintained, beautiful, appealing materials) is an important aspect of the urban environment as compared to e.g “ugly” industrial areas.

Relationship between Qualities and Sustainability

Student Planner:

Sustainability is a difficult concept to define, and even more difficult to achieve. While the qualities may help to define what a sustainable urban environment may involve, it is unlikely that the qualities will tell us if they are sustainable over time. Sustainability is affected by so many factors, and there will be a number of factors outside the qualities defined which will also influence the sustainability of an urban environment, such as the economy, reliance on other urban centres and rural surrounds. The qualities may be useful to aggregate with other sustainability indicators in order consider sustainability across the entire natural and physical environment.

Planner:

I don't believe that these qualities will tell us about the sustainability of the environment over time. More important factors are economic ones – if a town loses its main employer e.g. a factory, then the urban environment is likely to become unsustainable. Government or business policy which results in the withdrawal of important services (such as Post Offices, banks and public transport) is likely to have a big impact on the sustainability of an urban or rural environment. The price of petrol is also an economic factor which will influence the sustainability of an environment.

This aspect is also related to “Ability to Adapt” which I have talked about previously.

Overall Conclusion on Ten Qualities

Student Planner:

The qualities did provide a means to define urban amenity in the Ngongotaha village. Several distinct trends were projected by the PA exercise. This included a strong sense of pride and community atmosphere. The relative location and proximity of Ngongotaha to Rotorua while maintaining its village feel was also identified as important by the residents. There were also negative aspects of urban amenity, which the Ngongotaha community raised as issues, which should be changed or improved. Some of the negative aspects (such as shops/shopping) seemed to be the same and therefore contradict the positive aspects. This was perhaps due to these aspects being part of the

community's strong points, but people want to continue to improve these aspects due to them being part of the village's character.

Policy Planner:

The study identified the qualities that were important for this particular community in terms of urban amenity, namely sense of place, choice, safety and a healthy environment. Although Sense of Belonging (included) was an important component of the community and it is useful to consider changes to the environment in terms of whether they enhance or detract from a sense of belonging, I do not believe this to be an element of Urban Amenity.

Accessibility and understandability are also considered to be important from an objective analysis, but were not qualities that were identified through the PA process.

The weighting given to the urban amenity qualities is important. If a re-evaluation of Ngongotaha was undertaken in ten years time which indicated that e.g. Safety had declined but Visual Amenity had increased, it would be difficult to determine whether, overall, the urban amenity had increased or declined. The key quality may well be the particular components of "Sense of Place" and if it was considered that sense of place had declined, then it could well be argued that urban amenity overall had declined.

Comparison between different towns or suburbs will be difficult using this model.

Manager of Community Services:

The language of urban amenity presents many issues in inter-cultural work. It requires a lot of "unpacking" just as the metamorphosis of the participatory appraisal outcomes for urban amenity purposes required careful reflection.

SECTION 4: Managing Urban Amenity

Three template styles were used to assess the methods that Council uses to manage urban amenity.

Table 1: Potential Methods/Methods Chosen by Council/Methods Chosen by the Community

The first one is the template from the MfE documents. Information in the column “Methods Chosen by the Community” is based on suggestions by the community (PA Exercises) in terms of “what would you like to change” in Ngongotaha, as well as further comments that came out of the marae and focus group exercise.

Table 2: Quality/District Plan Method/Comment

This uses the quality as the starting point.

Table 3: Desired Outcomes/Methods/Within Control of District Plan?

The final method to use is to turn the table upside down and instead of starting with the methods and then evaluating them, start with the desired outcomes and then analyse appropriate methods to achieve that outcome.

Table 1: Potential Methods/Methods Chosen by Council/Methods Chosen by the Community

Potential Methods	Methods Chosen by Council	Methods Chosen by the Community	Regulatory	Non-regulatory
Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rules in District Plan relating to height, setbacks, lot size, residential density, site coverage, noise, zoning (land use) Control on lot size, - Performance standards relating to: height, daylighting, buffer and site coverage standards, - The classification on non-residential uses as controlled, discretionary or non-complying activities, - Conditions for controlled activities relating to buffers, layout, design and appearance, access, parking and manoeuvring, - Assessment Criteria for discrete uses relating to visual appearance, character of area, separation between houses, vehicular access, noise, natural environment, servicing, zone interface, cumulative effect, public safety, natural hazards and residential character. 	<p>Additional rules or changing the rules in the District Plan was not identified by participants in the PA exercise.</p> <p>The Marae exercise identified that the zoning of Maori land as rural and/or industrial land and the infrastructure requirements of subdivision were impediments to Maori providing additional housing for their community. It is noted that this zoning allows rates to be considerably lower than if zoned Residential.</p> <p>Participants in the Focus Group were asked specifically about the District Plan rules and indicated that the rules were familiar, understood and were an expected part of land use, and that they produced the right result in terms of scale and neighbor expectations.</p>	X	
Design Guides	Nil	Design not identified as an issue by participants.	N/A	N/A
Council Works	Major upgrade planned for town with decisions to be made about allocation of money in terms of roading, reserves, beautification, etc (no decisions made as yet)	Roading changes were suggested through the PA exercise including parking, roundabout/traffic lights, pedestrian/traffic conflict, a bypass for heavy traffic, slowing traffic and upgrading of footpaths.	X (traffic speed)	X
Mainstreet Programmes	As for Council works	A facelift/upgrading of the shopping area was the predominant theme in terms of desired changes to the town. Other works suggested were in relation to toilets, amenities at the parks and reserves, cycle/walkways upgrading, beautifying township with potted flowers, seating, beautification, art work, cobblestones, lighting, theming, use of colour like Rotorua, more flower gardens, a mall.		X

Beautification Projects	As for Council works	Seek beautification of town centre, streams and walkways. Cleaning up pollution, rubbish and improving the visual appearance or redeveloping the Mill site was suggested. The community effort in terms of stream planting was applauded by participants.		X
Bylaws	The Rotorua District Council has 18 bylaws, many of them relevant to living in Ngongotaha such as dog control, clean air, signs, Rotorua lakes, speed restriction.	Restrictions on speed sought.	X	
Provision of Information	The Council regularly contributes short articles to the local newspaper in relation to issues such as noise, planning and building requirements, rubbish etc.	Signage welcoming you into Ngongotaha		X
Other Council Plans i.e. reserve management plans	As for Council works.	Not identified but specific park changes were requested: a skatepark with ¼ pipes, ½ pipes, steel pools, pyramids, ½ pipe, grinding poles, clean toilets and shelter as well as a wish list including e.g. swimming pool, mountain biking tracks, tennis courts. Access improved along Waiteti Stream. BBQ area on lake shore reserve.		X
Community Funding	As for Council works.	Improving facilities such as a drop-in centre and recreation facilities, and providing support for youth (e.g. youthworker) were seen as desirable outcomes for participants in the PA exercise.		X
Environmental Management		Purchase land for community purposes, maintain chemical free water, environmental action plan to clean up contaminated sites and chemical dumps, monitor emissions to the air, regular litter clean-ups, inorganic collection and transfer station, recycling station, no more septic tanks, protect kahikateas, no further drainage and infilling of wetlands, security by river (limiting number of fish caught), cleaning of river area weekly.	X	X

Table 2: Quality/District Plan Method/Comment

Quality	District Plan method	Comment
Landscape	Policies Character Areas Protection of features Viewshafts	Reluctance of the Community to accept more rigid design controls to achieve specific landscape outcomes except where landscape values are outstanding or there are high heritage values. Well accepted building controls can play a role in managing the bulk of buildings and the scale of development to control the big picture. Policies then assist when more unusual developments or those of larger scale are assessed as a land use consent.
Special Character	Acknowledgement of a stream, lake edge, local landform feature or Heritage site.	More site specific management measures may be applied and more often than not such protection is most successfully applied through management by a public agency or by a charitable trust. Land use controls can complement such management through buffer controls that retain the integrity of the feature.
Focal Point	Permissive controls to enable Community facilities and commercial activities to aggregate in focal points within a settlement.	Use of zones which permit a range of activities but manage effects through performance standards enable focus points in settlements to function.
Identity	Urban boundaries	The transition from urban Zones to Rural Zones has a clear outcome of defining urban boundaries and settlement identity. It was a feature of the trial that the desire to remain separate from Rotorua and to have a Rural boundary was seen as such a positive feature
Location	Taking physical constraints and landform features into account when managing development rights.	Locational factors are best dealt with in policy formulation as it is much more difficult to mitigate against alterations to the landform for example through earthworks consents or limiting building form. Identify unsuitable areas and constraints early.
Crime	Not managed by District Plans	Indirect relationship may follow through approaches taken to lighting controls and subdivision and development design.
Traffic	On-site parking management, Design of access and subdivision design	There are established engineering standards to manage traffic. Variations arise with local circumstances. The success of such measures can be strongly influenced by road capacity and the ability of a Council to fund its road upgrading programme. Road Designations for new roads or road widening can ensure advance planning for expected traffic increases.
Water	Surface of Water activities, Management of Structures, water based recreation and activities	Management of structures on lakes and rivers and development in riparian zones can be directly managed through district plans but also relies on effective enforcement, which in the case of Rotorua is through its full time and voluntary lakes inspectors. Water quality primarily a regional plan issue.

Land	Aesthetic appeal. Building controls, such as maximum height, daylighting, site coverage Second hand dwellings	Surveys of building design in New Zealand reveal that there are historical fashions in building design that have developed from individual choice and building industry influence. District Plan building controls have not limited design to the extent that there is a range of designs that have been used within the commonly applied building footprint formulas applied. However increases in residential density have lead to more international design solutions for medium and high density housing. In this trial we looked principally at low density housing and this was the preferred housing choice. Departure from the norm can be managed through consent processes that involve neighbours. Maori land owners expressed concern about affordability and having a building control regime that facilitated the provision of housing for multiple-owned hapu land.
Air	Managed primarily through regional plans	
Noise	Performance Standards for noise applicable to different environments according to the sensitivity of predominant land uses to noise.	Noise controls are measurable and able to be managed and enforced. Mobile sources of noise such as transport related sources are more difficult to manage. Noise can substantially alter the level of amenity enjoyed and was confirmed as one of the amenity issues in this trial.
Choice	Can be facilitated or inhibited by plan controls depending upon the rigidity of activity lists or performance standards.	
Accessible	Zoning and Subdivision design that keeps important linkages in place and limits the degree of severance.	
Quality of Services	Requirements of developers and subdividers to install services to the standard specified in the District Plan or resource consent conditions.	Debated as to whether the District Plan or Local Government Act is the most appropriate delivery method. When enforced through the District Plan can deliver a good quality of service for incumbent and future land owners, occupiers and the public (in terms of roads, pedestrian facilities reserves etc)
Included	Public participation processes in the course of developing a District Plan	Public participation processes can both include and exclude people and is the source of extensive research.
Wellbeing		

Table 3: Desired Outcomes/Methods/Within Control of District Plan?

SECTION 5: Monitoring Urban Amenity

Table 3: Qualities/Key Components/Attributes/Indicators/Methodology

Urban amenity values in Ngongotaha were defined by the community. The qualities identified were translated into *Key Components* and *Attributes* so that potential indicators could be established. There is a degree of overlap with some attributes appearing for different key components. At this stage of the process, identifying any and all possible indicators was seen as the objective. Those indicators identified will require reconsideration and refinement.

QUALITIES	KEY COMPONENTS	ATTRIBUTES	INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY	
Quality 1: Sense Of Place	Landscape	Lake, Mt Ngongotaha, Streams	Access to natural features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of Lake Access Points ▪ Area of accessible reserve land around Lake, Streams and Mt Ngongotaha 	Any changes affecting access to main features	
	People	Friendliness	Community Perception of friendliness	Community perception survey	
	Atmosphere/ character	Village feeling (Ability to cross the road in the village – the two sides of the road feel linked)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Perception ▪ Traffic volume on main village road ▪ Number of pedestrian crossings ▪ Frequency of shopping visits ▪ Number of road crossings (people) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Perception ▪ Traffic volume on main village road ▪ Number of pedestrian crossings ▪ Frequency of shopping visits ▪ Number of road crossings (people) 	Community perception survey Road traffic counts
		Key services (Commercial and community services)	Number of Key services within the township i.e. Grocery, Post Office, Doctor, Banking	Survey change in provision of Key services	
		Sense of Community	Community Perception - Positive feelings about the sense of community	Community perception survey	
	Focal Point	Key service premises are grouped together	Walkability (distance) between Key services - radius within which Key services are grouped	Mapping and measurement	
	Own Identity	Defined Entrances and Exits	Proportion of boundary around town site zoned as rural	Mapping and measurement	
	Location	Situation with respect to Lake Rotorua, Mt Ngongotaha and Streams	?	?	

QUALITIES	KEY COMPONENTS	ATTRIBUTES	INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
Quality 2: Understandable	Clearly defined boundaries	Defined Entrances and Exits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land area around town-site zoned as rural ▪ Recognition of sign-posted entrances and exits 	<p>Mapping and measurement</p> <p>Perception survey</p>
		Physical separation from Rotorua	Distance between Rotorua and Ngongotaha boundaries	Measure distance between defined boundaries
Quality 3: Comfortable and Safe	Protection from crime	Perception of Crime	Police Presence - Police Hours (number of staff)	Number of police hours
		Crime rate	Number of Burglaries/Assaults/Robberies	Police Crime Statistics
			Visibility of graffiti/vandalism	Visual survey of graffiti
	Protection from traffic danger	Speed of traffic	Average traffic speed	Measurements of car speed
			Number of accidents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involving cars ▪ Involving pedestrians 	Police Statistics - Number of accidents
			Change in speed of traffic	Changes in speed restrictions and/or roundabouts/lights
			Volume of Traffic	Number of Vehicles per day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By vehicle type
			Traffic noise level	Traffic noise level measurement
		Pedestrian safety	Pedestrian separation from traffic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presence of barriers, crossings, safety zones ▪ Number of pedestrian accidents 	<p>Survey of pedestrian area</p> <p>Police Statistics - Number of accidents</p>
			Quality of walking surfaces	Survey of quality of footpaths

QUALITIES	KEY COMPONENTS	ATTRIBUTES	INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
Quality 4: A Healthy Environment	Water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lake Rotorua ▪ Waiteti Stream ▪ Ngongotaha Stream 	Water Quality	Water Quality Parameters	Physical measurements of water quality
		Fish habitat	Macro Invertebrate Indices (MCI)	MCI
		Aesthetic appeal	Community perception of water quality	Community perception survey
	Land	Aesthetic appeal	Occurrence of illegal rubbish dumping	Observation record and complaints register
			Number of covenanted native vegetation areas	Rotorua District Council and Department of Conservation database
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality perception of key parks and reserves (passive and active) ▪ Usage of key parks and reserves ▪ \$ spending on key parks and reserves (per annum) 	Rotorua District Council Parks and Reserves
		Old Mill Site	Number of potentially contaminated sites (PCS)	EBOP Database Rotorua District Council Investigations
		Levels of timber mill contaminants – OP's, CCA, DDT, PCP, Chlordane, Boric fluid, Fuel stored etc PCS Database	Soil and groundwater measurements	
	Air	Odour	Number of registered complaints	Environment Bay of Plenty complaints database
			Peak traffic CO and NO _x levels	EBOP study
			Licenses for air emissions issued by EBOP	EBOP Records
		Visibility	Number of registered complaints	Rotorua District Council Complaints database
		Noise	Number of registered complaints	Rotorua District Council Complaints database

QUALITIES	KEY COMPONENTS	ATTRIBUTES	INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
Quality 5: Choice	Services	Presence of services	Number of services provided for which there is a choice	Survey presence of services (and availability/hours)
Quality 6: Ability to Adapt	District Plan	Appropriately zoned and located land for desired residential/ commercial/ industrial outcomes	Number of subdivision applications Number of house applications	Rotorua District Council database
Quality 7: Accessible	Location of shops	Perception of convenience of shopping area	Community perception of shopping convenience including distance, routes and parking	Perception survey
Quality 8: Quality of Services	Public Services	Roads, Footpaths, Sewerage, Water Service, Public Toilets, Community Services	Community perception of public and community services	Perception survey
	Private Services	Friendliness	Community perception of private services	Perception survey
Quality 9: Included	Sense of Community	Community involvement	Community perception	Perception survey
			Number of community project initiatives	Record of council involvement
		Community residency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Length of residency ▪ Resident generation 	Census Household survey
			Proportion renting versus owning	Census
Quality 10: Well Being	Feeling of Ngongotaha		Community perception	Perception survey

Table 4: Indicator Selection Criteria

Potential indicators were checked to meet the five criteria listed in the table. Comments regarding the criteria are included following the table.

Indicator	Policy Relevant	Measurable	Analytically Valid	Cost Effective	Understandable
Community perceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Friendliness ▪ Village feeling ▪ Sense of community ▪ Water quality ▪ Shopping convenience - distance, routes and parking ▪ Public and private services ▪ Well being ▪ Water quality ▪ Recognition of sign-posted entrances and exits 	-	x	x	✓	-
Number of Lake Access Points	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Area of accessible reserve land around Lake, Streams and Mt Ngongotaha	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Traffic volume on main village road	✓	✓	✓	?	✓
Number of pedestrian crossings per m of main shopping/pedestrian area	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of Key services* within the township	x	✓	x	✓	✓
Radius within which Key services* are grouped	x	✓	x	✓	✓
Proportion of boundary around town site zoned as rural	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of sign-posted entrances and exits	x	✓	x	✓	✓
Distance between Rotorua and Ngongotaha boundaries	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Police Presence - Police Hours (number of staff)	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of Burglaries/Assaults/Robberies	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Visibility of graffiti/vandalism	x	-	-	-	-
Occurrence of illegal rubbish dumping	x	-	-	-	✓
Average traffic speed	✓	✓	✓	?	?
Number of accidents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involving cars ▪ Involving pedestrians 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Change in average speed of traffic	✓	✓	✓	?	?
Number of Vehicles per day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By vehicle type 	✓	✓	✓	?	✓

Indicator	Policy Relevant	Measurable	Analytically Valid	Cost Effective	Understandable
Pedestrian separation from traffic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presence of barriers, crossings, safety zones ▪ Number of pedestrian accidents 	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Quality of walking surfaces	-	-	-	✓	-
Water Quality Parameters	✓	✓	✓	x	-
Macro Invertebrate Indices (MCI)	✓	✓	✓	x	-
Number of covenanted native vegetation areas	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Area/Number of parks and reserves	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of potentially contaminated sites (PCS)	x	✓	-	x	-
Levels of timber mill contaminants – OP's, CCA, DDT, PCP, Chlordane, Boric fluid, Fuel stored etc PCS Database	x	✓	✓	x	-
Number of registered complaints – Odour, Visibility, Noise	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peak traffic CO and NO _x levels	✓	✓	✓	x	-
Licenses for air emissions issued by EBOP	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Number of services provided for which there is a choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of subdivision applications ▪ Number of house applications 	x	✓	-	✓	✓
Number of community project initiatives	x	-	-	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Length of residency ▪ Resident generation 	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proportion renting versus owning	x	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Key services – defined by the community i.e. what is the norm. What services does the community expect a town the size and structure of Ngongotaha to provide?

Analysis of Indicators

Are the selection criteria helpful and relevant ?

Policy relevance is a good starting point for all indicators. The definition of some of the other selection criteria needs to be clearer. Measurable – everything is measurable in some form or the other. Are we really measuring something when we define our own reference points or classifications and the bounds within which the indicator must fall? Does analytically valid mean that an analysis can be carried out on the indicator and comparisons made with other urban environments, taking into account community characteristics? Cost effective with regard to other options or just cheap and easy to do? Understandable for whom – managers, end-users, the communities for which understanding of the indicators is important?

For the indicators selected, when will they need to be reviewed ?

Most indicators will need to be reviewed as soon as they begin providing data, especially those of a more subjective nature. Some of the indicators listed in the table above meet all of Ministry for the Environment's selection criteria – they are policy relevant, simple and robust e.g. number of subdivision resource consent applications. Indicators such as these would probably only require reviewing every 2 years or more.

Is it possible to set thresholds below which indicate when action is required with respect to the indicator selected ?

An 'action threshold' could be attached to 'policy-relevant' indicators i.e. where there is a response mechanism.

Where there is a defined limit an 'action threshold' could be attached to an indicator. Defined limits may be set by:

- Known carrying capacities e.g. number of subdivisions
- Environmental health regulations e.g. Peak traffic CO and NO_x levels
- District plan rules
- Other regulations defining limits

SECTION 6: Overall Comments about the Framework for Urban Amenity

I think the framework is just that – a way in which to categorise elements of urban amenity.

It does not provide a way to assess urban amenity overall or compare between different suburbs. For example, it is known that traffic is going to increase and it is also known that Council will be spending money on managing this traffic through traffic calming and speed restrictions, will the overall effect be positive, negative or neutral ? Or if an increase in traffic has resulted in adverse effects due to noise, accessibility, odour, safety, convenience but Council has attempted mainstreet works which enhance visual coherence, understandability, aesthetic appeal, footpath safety, the overall effect on urban amenity needs to be considered. The question is partly whether the situation should be compared with the previous norm (low traffic) or the new norm (high traffic). The ability of the community to accept change is a factor and over what time period do new norms (e.g. high traffic) become accepted.

The urban amenity framework works best at a local level. While some living environments in NZ may be very similar at a suburban level in terms of noise, traffic, type of housing, layout etc, townships often have very unique characteristics that differentiate one town from another.

Community tolerance of aspects such as noise, dogs, traffic volumes, design will vary enormously from community to community depending on the base levels of these things (e.g. how much noise is existing) and accepted level (e.g. in a very quiet rural area, any additional noise may be unacceptable).

The priority given to particular characteristics is place specific.

APPENDIX 1: Characteristics of the Community

PA Exercise:

Description of Characteristic	Characteristic of Community	Characteristics of people who were engaged in defining Urban Amenity
Age (proportion in different age groups)	26.5% < 15 yrs 14% - 15-24 yrs 32% - 25-44 yrs 20% - 45-64 yrs 7.5% > 64 yrs (Refer fig. 1)	37.5% < 15 yrs 10% - 15-24 yrs 20.5% - 25-44 yrs 22.5% - 45-64 9.5% > 64 yrs
Gender (Proportion of males and females)	50% Male 50% Female (Refer fig. 2)	47% Male 53% Female
Ethnicity (Proportion of people in different ethnic groups)	65% European 29% NZ Maori 1 % Pacific Islander 5% Other (Refer fig. 3)	59% European 37% NZ Maori 1% Pacific Islander 3% Other
Literacy (Proportion of people who are considered literate)	Not Surveyed	Not Surveyed
Employment Status (Proportion of people in different employment groups)	Unemployed 7.8% Ngongotaha North 5.7% Ngongotaha South (Refer fig. 4)	Not Surveyed

Hui:

Approx 20 persons, 35+, approx 80% Maori

Focus Group:

4 persons, 1 - 25-44 yo age group, 3 - 45 – 64 age group

Charts on following pages relate to PA Exercise.

Figure 1 - Age Group as a Proportion of General Population & Participants

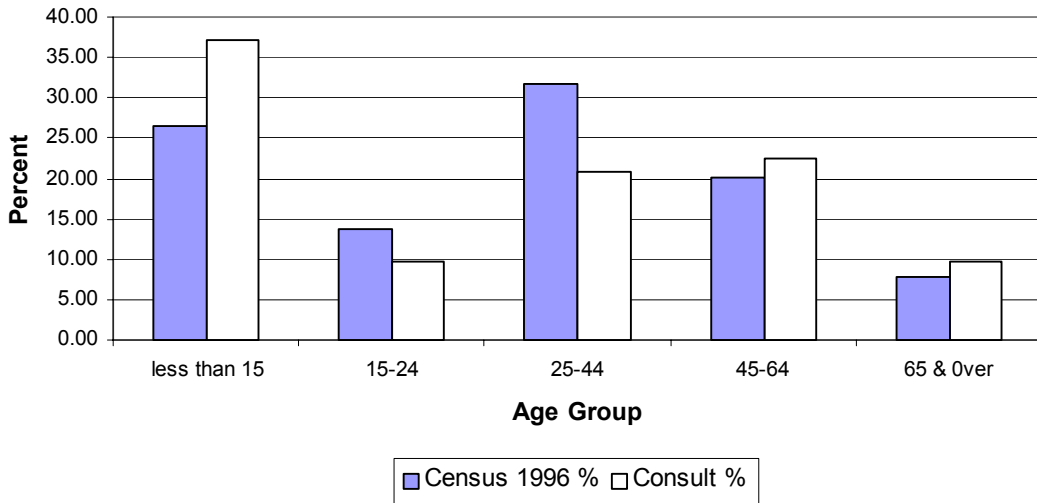
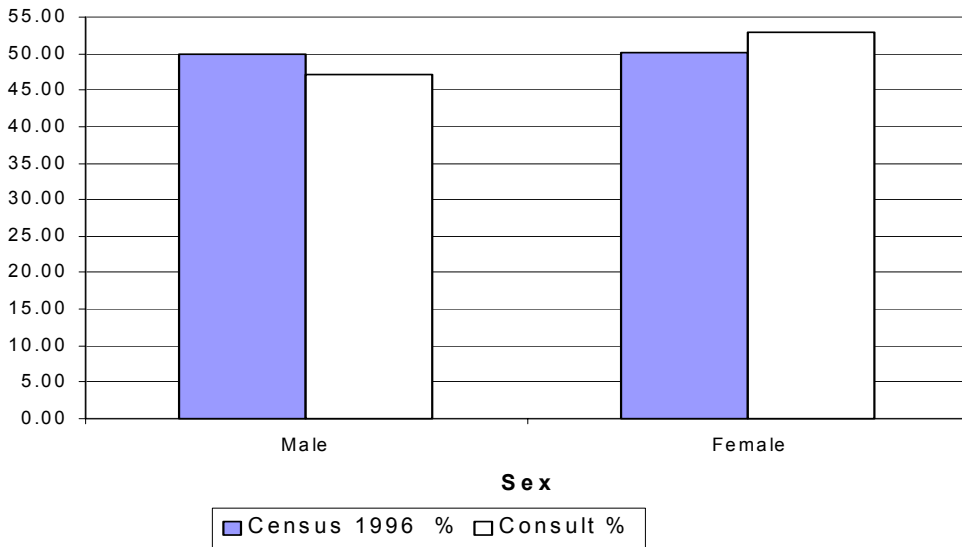
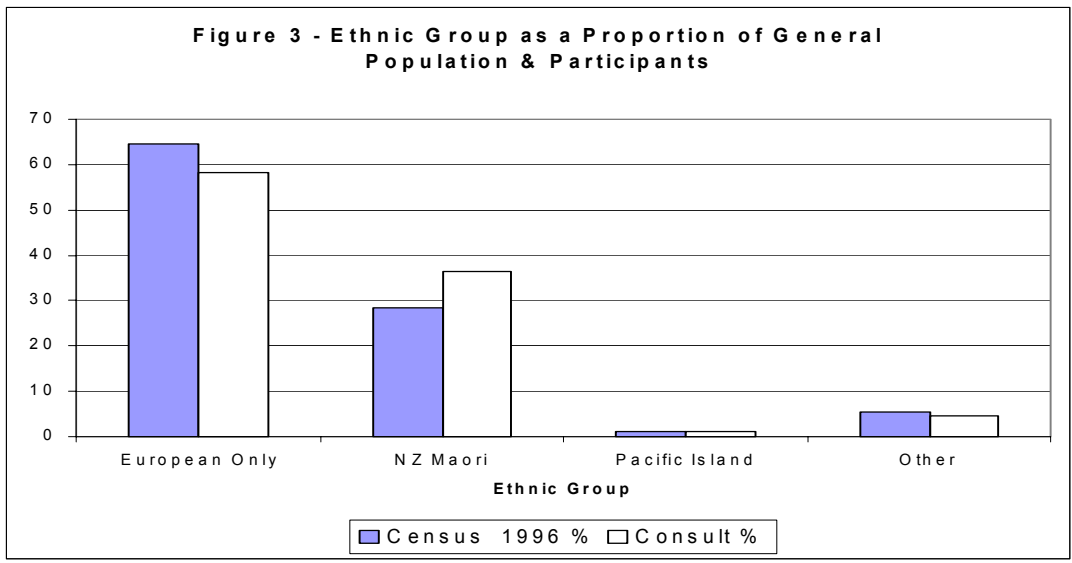


Figure 2 - Gender as a Proportion of General Population & Participants





NB/ The demographics for the census population include Ngongotaha South, Ngongotaha North, Hamurana, Mamaku, Aruhiwi, Waiwhero.

