

7 SIGNS

7.1 RESOURCES, ACTIVITIES AND VALUES

The purpose of signs and other forms of outdoor advertising is to provide information to the general public. The nature of information which is conveyed includes: availability of goods and services, notice of forthcoming events, directions to traffic and pedestrians, and identification of particular sites or premises. Signs are essential throughout the District for the information they provide, adding vibrancy and colour to an area and contributing indirectly to its economic viability. However, there is the possibility that signs and other forms of outdoor advertising may have adverse environmental effects, particularly on visual amenities, and may conflict with traffic and pedestrian safety in the District.

The standards of visual amenities vary between different parts of the District, and are generally defined by the range and nature of land uses in an area. Those areas which are perceived as having a consistent and uncluttered visual amenity, such as the residential, rural or historical areas of Waitaki, are more susceptible to the potential adverse effects of signage. In contrast in areas where the visual amenity is more diverse, such as commercial or industrial areas, the potential adverse effects of signs are limited by the existing mix of visual amenity. In addition, different areas of the District have variable needs for signs. In commercial and industrial areas signs are necessary and accepted features, as they attract customers to the business, and allow the easy identification of a site. Because of the range in needs and the visual sensitivity of different parts of the District, consideration needs to be given to different standards for signage in different areas.

7.2 ISSUE 1 - Safety and Environmental Effects

The display of signs can result in adverse effects on traffic safety and visual amenity.

7.2.1 Explanation

The potential adverse effects of signs or outdoor advertising on traffic safety include:

- driver distraction due to the inappropriate location, design, size, or type of sign;
- poor location or design of sign causing impulsive driver action, such as stopping or sudden turning movements without giving adequate warning signals.

These effects have their greatest impact on the State Highway and the collector roads where the potential for accidents is greater. The District Plan controls all signs on or adjacent to the road reserve to promote traffic safety. The only exception is the State Highway road reserve which is subject to Transit New Zealand Bylaws.

The need for controls on signs within the District is also important to ensure that the potential visual effects of signs do not adversely affect the amenities of the District. Because of their different characteristics, residential and rural areas are more susceptible than commercial and industrial areas to the potential impacts of signs. Therefore different forms of control are required to maintain and enhance the visual amenities of different areas.

7.2.2 Objective 1

Signs which convey necessary information, while avoiding or mitigating any adverse effects on public safety, convenience and access or on the visual amenities in the District.

7.2.3 Policies

- 1 *To recognise the right of property owners to erect on-site signage for activities on that particular site in a manner which does not compromise the character, attractive appearance and visual amenity of the different areas of the District.*
- 2 *To ensure that the display of signs does not adversely affect traffic safety by causing confusion or distraction to motorists, or obstruct their views.*
- 3 *To ensure all signs are constructed and placed in a manner which does not pose a danger to property or people.*
- 4 *To limit signs in or over public places or attached to utilities, community facilities or public reserves, other than in business areas, to signs necessary for direction, public information or public safety.*
- 5 *To enable the display of a wide range of signs, limited only by public safety and access needs and consistency with the overall character of the area.*
- 6 *To encourage the consolidation of information signs in order to reduce the effects of such signs on visual amenity and traffic safety.*
- 7 *To ensure that signs are maintained in good order and do not deteriorate to the point where their original purpose cannot be fulfilled.*

7.2.4 Implementation Methods

To achieve policies 1 - 7 through:

- 1 The provision of rules to control the location, number, size and type of outdoor advertising signs in all zones;
- 2 The exercise of control as owner and designating authority for all roads in the district, other than state highways.
- 3 Supporting the establishment of information signs for the district's larger settlements and for sites of historical and natural interest.

7.2.5 Explanation and Reasons

Because signs provide information and can add colour and vibrancy to places it is desirable to limit signs throughout the District only to the extent that this is compatible with public safety, convenience, access and the maintenance and enhancement of amenity in certain areas. In particular the amenity of areas with a predominantly residential character or natural character can be compromised by a clutter of signs or signs of an inappropriate character.

7.3 ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS ANTICIPATED

- Adequate signage to convey the information necessary for the social, economic and cultural welfare of the community.
- Minimal adverse effects of signs on traffic and pedestrian safety.
- Maintenance and enhancement of the visual amenities of the residential and rural areas of the District.
- A variety of signage within the business areas and townships of the District.

