



9.0 Implementation of the Carterton South Structure Plan

9.1 Background and Context

The operative or existing Carterton District Plan provides a minimum lot size for almost all of the study area (Low Density Policy Area) of 2000m². When the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan was originally notified (26 August 2006), the zoning regime for all of the Carterton urban area changed to 'Urban Residential'. The proposed provisions for subdivision were: 350m² and 400m² minimum average lot area (for three or more lots).

A number of submissions were subsequently received on the Proposed residential provisions in the PWCDP questioning the appropriateness of the proposed standards as they related to Carterton, and particularly for the southern area of Carterton which constitutes the larger part of the Carterton South Structure Plan Area. A key aspect of the submissions was a concern over the potential loss of character a change to full urban residential would have on the character of the southern part of Carterton.

In March 2008, the decisions on submissions to the Proposed Wairarapa PWCDP were released. In the decisions, the Commissioners decided to return the southern part of the structure plan study area to provisions in line with the existing operative District Plan (described as the Carterton Low Density

Character Area with a minimum lot size of 2000m²), but also identified the need for a structure plan to be developed for this area.

It was apparent to the Commissioners that issues needed to be addressed within this area regarding the lack of internal connections (north-south road links) and the consequent pressure on SH2. Examining this area at that level of detail, they considered, would also enable consideration to be given to whether more intensive development might be appropriate at certain locations within the identified low density area. At the same time, the decisions resulted in land previously within the Low Density Policy Area to the north of Brooklyn Road, remaining 'Urban Residential' but with revised minimum lot size standards.

"Low density" in the context of the Carterton South Study Area is the pattern of residential development that can occur with the minimum lot size being 2000m². This means that sections are larger than typical urban residential sections and therefore over time fewer houses are likely to be built within the study area compared to the other residential areas of Carterton that have a 400m² minimum lot size (with a 500m² min average lot size over the whole subdivision). Overall density has a direct effect on the character and amenity of a residential area. Many residents describe their properties within the low density area as "semi-rural" and this character has been further described in the sections above.

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9.2 Final Draft Carterton South Structure Plan

The idea of a Structure Plan is to visually describe the future physical structure (principally roading and connections in this case) of a community or area, ideally before development occurs which prevents good town planning or urban design outcomes.

The evolution of the Structure Plan for Carterton South between 2007 and 2009 has seen a range of structure plan options proposed, debated and amended to reflect the inputs of landowners and the wider community.

The result is a draft Structure Plan that balances all of these inputs against the project outcomes for the Council. This final Structure Plan is shown below and in Part C Appendices.

9.3 Key Prevailing Characteristics

A fundamental aspect of this project has been the development of a structure plan that facilitates connections within and beyond the Carterton South area. This purpose originated with thinking around the limitations of the existing roading network and the increasing number of subdivisions that were precluding options for future connections. However, the process quickly identified pedestrian and cycle connections as also being key to the success of reinforcing character whilst enabling people and communities to move and function logically.

As a result, the key prevailing characteristic of the structure plan is to facilitate connections and movement within and beyond the Carterton South area.

Other fundamental characteristics raised in consultation included the need to retain or enhance the existing character of the area and the preservation and development of further areas of open space or recreational areas. Making provision for commercial development was, overall, considered to be something that the community felt wasn't a fundamental aspect that needed to be specifically identified within the structure plan.

9.4 Residential Densities

The second thrust of this project has been to examine the principal of residential density (defined primarily through the minimum lot size provisions for residential subdivision in the District Plan, but also linked to urban design and amenity provisions). It is clear from consultation and submissions on the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan and the Structure Plan process that there is a wide range of views on what the residential density should be in this area of Carterton. Many are of the view that this has been thrashed out through the Combined Plan process and that a 2000m² minimum lot size provision is the best way of retaining a character that many describe as being semi-rural, quiet, and spacious.

However, as consultation on the structure plan has evolved, it has been noticeable that there has been some call for reduced minimum lot sizes, particularly in the submissions received in June 2009. Some of these opinions



are based on the scope for servicing improvements, others on the economics of developing land or the perception of ideal residential lot size. Quarter acre sections are referred to as being in line with the 'Kiwi Dream'. It is clear that the backlash to the Proposed Plan provisions to take this area to fully urban residential has had an effect on this process. However, now that many of these issues have been discussed with the Council and between landowners, there would seem to be some scope for thinking around how the structure plan might be a basis upon which residential densities can be revisited. As such, some scenarios for residential density within the study area are outlined later in this section.

Implementation of the Structure Plan

Structure Plans are intended to be living documents that are adopted by the community and implemented with reference to how both the community and the Council sees it being achieved. The options are really:

1. For the Carterton District Council to adopt the Structure Plan as a policy tool and work with the community on a non-regulatory basis to achieve the desired outcomes. This option works best when the Council is trying to encourage development rather than require it to happen in a particular way.
2. For the Carterton District Council to adopt the Structure Plan and then recommend that it becomes a regulatory tool in the District Plan. This would have to happen by way of a formal variation to the Combined

District Plan which would involve further public notification and a process of submissions and hearings.

Given the nature of this project, and the expectations of the community, Option 2 is considered the most appropriate route to take to facilitate good development and urban design within the study area. Whilst Option 1 would provide a reference point for the community, it would not provide the certainty that landowners and Council would need to be able to plan for the future in an integrated way.

The implications of taking Option 2 are that a formal Variation would need to be developed and proposed for it to be incorporated into the Combined District Plan. As such, a Variation would need to take into account the following:

- ❑ The need to insert the adopted Carterton South Structure Plan into a new Appendix in Volume 1 of the Combined Plan.
- ❑ That specific lot layouts or building platforms are not a feature of the Structure Plan and therefore specific provisions as per the Greytown Villas and Jellicoe Residential Character Areas would not be necessary.
- ❑ That there are existing provisions within Section 22.1.1 of the Combined Plan already providing assessment criteria that would apply to subdivision within the Structure Plan Area, particularly (xxviii) which includes assessment of the extent to which subdivision is consistent with the Development/Management/Structure Plan for the area, but also other applicable criteria
- ❑ However, in order to achieve the connections identified within the Structure Plan, including road, pedestrian and cycleway connections, it is



recommended that subdivision within the Structure Plan Area be managed as a Discretionary Activity under Section 20.1.5. If a proposal is not consistent with the Structure Plan, then it would then be assessed as a Non-Complying Activity under a new provision in Section 20.1.7. The management of development would be similar in method to the Waingawa Industrial Area Structure Plan.

- That policy 5.3.2(j) may need to be reviewed or a separate policy introduced to provide the context for the particular way in which the Structure Plan gives effect to Objective 5.3.1.

On the basis of the assessment criteria already in the Plan, most subdivision will occur in a regular fashion. It is only where development isn't proposed in accordance with the Structure Plan that subdivision would become a 'non-complying' activity.

Much of the work providing the section 32 RMA rationale for the Variation has been done through the non-statutory structure plan process that has occurred over the last 18 months, and which is summarised in this report.

Conclusion on Structure Plan

The recommendation from the structure plan process is to incorporate the Structure Plan into the Combined District Plan by way of provisions within the Residential and Subdivision chapters. This will require a Variation to the District Plan to be publicly notified. Given some of the strong feelings around character in this area, consideration could be given to the introduction of a residential design guide but some analysis would have to be made as to whether there

would be a universal one for Carterton or a specific one for the Structure Plan Area. This analysis would also need to include a review of how such a design guide might interrelate with New Zealand Standard 4404:2004 Land Development and Subdivision Engineering which is embedded in the plan as an assessment criteria.

In relation to residential densities, given the variation in feedback, a number of scenarios are outlined below for consideration by the Council. These address the project requirement to examine whether more intensive development could or should be provided for within the structure plan study area.

Residential Densities

Scenario 1: Status Quo Residential Density– the Structure Plan is incorporated into the District Plan and integrated with the existing minimum lot size subdivision provisions for the area, being 2000m² in the Carterton Low Density Character Area, and 400m² minimum lot size/500m² average lot size in the remaining 'pockets' to the south (eg along SH2 and within Poletown), and within the northern section of the structure plan area (north of Brooklyn Road).

Rationale: this scenario simply introduces the concept of structure into future subdivision within the study area which would stay at the densities agreed through the Proposed District Plan process.

Advantages/Disadvantages: this scenario is simple and does not complicate the overall approach to residential development within Carterton. However, it



perhaps doesn't reflect more advanced thinking around residential densities as a result of the Structure Plan process.

Scenario 2: Uniform Change to Residential Density – the Structure Plan is incorporated into the District Plan along with a universal minimum lot size change to 1000m² for the whole of the Carterton Low Density Character Area. This scenario was rejected by the Proposed Combined District Plan Hearing Committee as an option for addressing the original submissions on the Proposed Plan. Instead, the split between urban and low density residential development remained more in line with the operative provisions. However, now that these issues have been explored in more depth, there may be a greater level of acceptance and understanding as to the reasons for residential densities to be able to be intensified at a medium level.

Rationale: This option mainly responds to the balance that needs to be achieved between residential character and efficient and sustainable development of land. Some of the responses in consultation raised the issue that land is difficult to develop economically if minimum lot sizes are too large. There is also some rationale for the minimum lot size being consistent with existing development, such as the Poletown area where there is a large area of development at this density.

Advantages/Disadvantages: this scenario would probably be an unpopular one given the history of feedback from the wider community. However, there is definitely a view amongst some property developers that, to be economically viable, they need to be able to be able to subdivide to at least 1000m². This is a reasonable consideration given that subdivision and subsequent development

does need to be sustainable. However, a universal change to 1000m² minimum lot size provisions may not be as responsive to the character and urban form of the study area as described by the community.

Scenario 3: Partial Change to Residential Density – the Structure Plan is incorporated into the District Plan but is supported in its outcomes by some intensification around the central spine of Carterton. This intensification would be at a medium density level, consistent with many of the responses in submissions received. Thus, part of the Structure Plan Area within a boundary defined by Brooklyn Road, SH2, Road 12, Hilton Road, SH2, Charles Street, and Endelave Way/Road 20 could go to a residential density of say 800m² or 1000m² size sections, whilst the remainder of the Carterton Low Density Character Area stayed at 2000m² lot sizes. This potential 'medium density' area is shown below on Page 66.

Rationale: given the outcomes described in the decision reports in 2008, and the inputs made to the structure plan process, it would be consistent of the Council to determine some intensification close to the main spine of Carterton is appropriate and supportive of sustainable urban development. Such a pattern of development would consolidate development close to the existing infrastructure. It is also worth noting that the idea of 'nodal' intensification was not readily adopted in consultation – i.e. increasing residential densities around the originally proposed park and commercial area in the centre of the study area. Instead, there appears to be more of an appreciation for the value in intensifying more generally around existing roading and infrastructure.



Advantages/Disadvantages: this scenario attempts to reflect a balance between achieving development that is consistent with the existing urban form and infrastructure of Carterton, whilst acknowledging a desire within the community to retain a semi-rural environment in the south of Carterton. One disadvantage is that, once developed as 1000m² sections, further urban subdivision some way into the future may be restricted. Having another 'tier' of residential development is also not desirable from a planning point of view unless there are specific resource management issues to address by creating 'spot zone' type areas.

Scenario 4: Balanced Intensification – A more direct response to the issues raised through the Proposed Plan process and the Structure Plan process is perhaps closer to that originally proposed in the Combined Plan. However, instead of very intensive urban development relative to the existing character, development could be encouraged at intensities that have been well vetted by the wider Carterton community and consistent with the town's other residential areas. As such, a compromise might be to rezone the area described above in Scenario 3 as 'Urban Residential' which could be developed as per other areas to the north, and the already existing 'Urban Residential' land it adjoins (along SH2, Poletown). Thus section sizes would be consistent with the 400m²/500m² provisions within the area around the central spine of Carterton. In the areas further away from the central spine, and to the south, the minimum lot size could be either 1000m² or 2000m² depending on the prevailing view on retention of a 2000m² low density area.

Rationale: This option looks specifically at the potential of the existing urban area to absorb future development, whilst recognising lower density development is appropriate and desirable in areas away from the central spine. Full urban

residential development is best directed at areas close to roads, schools, commercial and amenity areas, and where connections are well defined through the existing network and Structure Plan.

Advantages/Disadvantages: The concept of utilising existing urban resources and infrastructure in a way that supports efficient and sustainable urban growth was a founding principal of the original rationale for the Proposed Combined Plan provisions. Now that many in the community have participated in the structure plan process, more comments have been made about the value of reinforcing character but also understanding the value of how residential development can happen in a coordinated way that does not undermine the character and amenity values of the area. There does appear to be more of an understanding around how urban design and character are not simply achieved through lot size. However, although there is a compelling argument for such a scenario, it may not receive widespread support within the community.

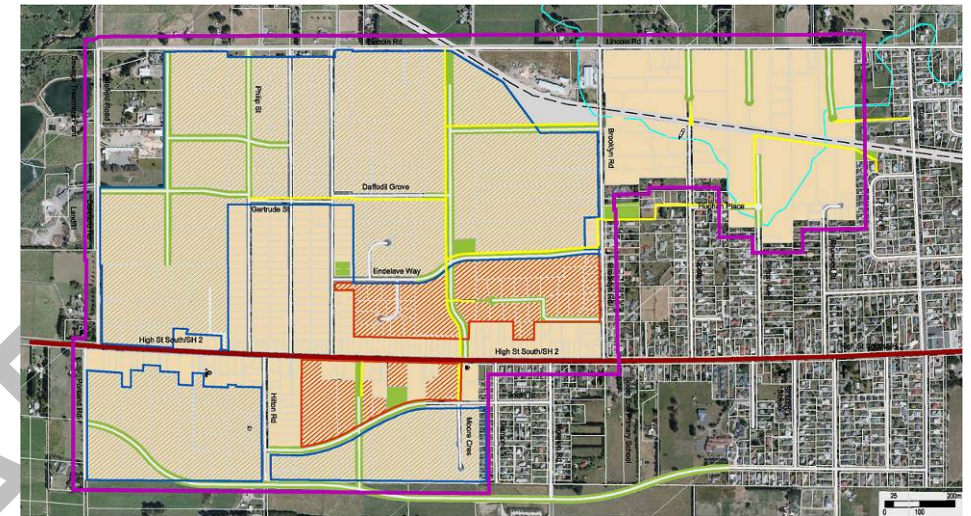
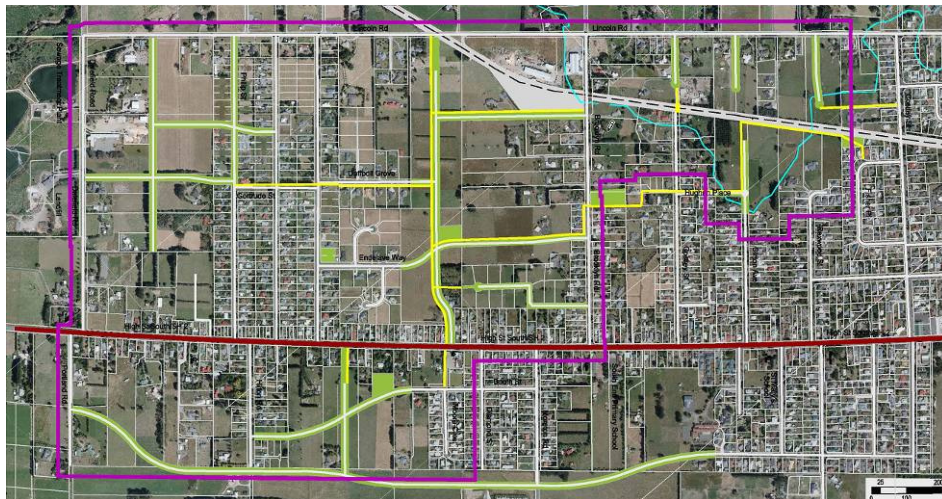
Conclusion on Residential Density

Although the Council should give some consideration to all of the scenarios identified above, the option that is likely to receive most support and constitute a balance of all of the comments provided on this process is **Scenario 3**. In giving consideration to this scenario, further evaluation of what 'medium density' minimum lot sizes actually are in the Carterton context will need to be done (eg is medium 800m² or 1000m²?). This scenario is therefore recommended to take forward into a Variation, not necessarily as it may be the most popular, but perhaps because it most accurately reflects where the community is currently at in terms of defining the future urban form of this area of Carterton.

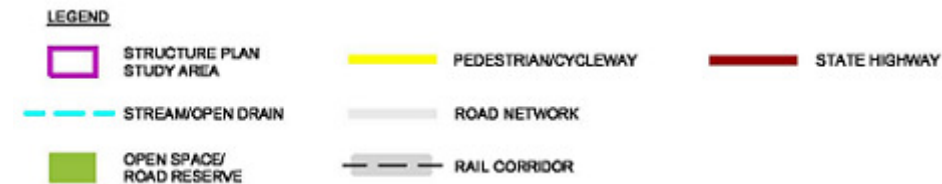
Carterton District South Carterton Structure Plan August 2009



The main challenge will be to make this meaningful in a planning sense in respect of introducing another 'tier' of residential density development into the District Plan.



Carterton South Structure Plan – Housing Densities



Carterton South Structure Plan



Urban Design Protocol