

# Subdivision Design Guide

---

## Table of Contents

### INTRODUCTION

- *Application*
- *Intentions*
- *Interpretation*

### 1 Activity location

- *Distribution, intensity and mix of activity*
- *Design for diversity*
- *Locating parks and other open spaces*
- *Orientation of lots*

### 2 Access and interconnection

- *Connection to neighbouring areas and facilities*
- *Internal connectivity*

### 3 Sense of place

- *Distinctiveness and memorability*
- *Authenticity*
- *Orientation and wayfinding*

### 4 Landform and natural features

- *Relation to landform*
- *Streams, watercourses and storm water runoff*
- *Mature trees and established vegetation*

### 5 Public space design

- *Street trees and landscaping*
- *Walkability*
- *Safety*
- *Providing for recreation*
- *Storm water treatment*

### 6 Individual lot design

- *Shaping the lot*
- *Useable outdoor space*
- *Access to the lot*
- *Landscaping*
- *Privacy, sun and outlook for neighbours*

# INTRODUCTION

## Application

This Guide provides design assessment criteria for subdivision consent applications. It provides guidance to give effect to the Council's *Urban Development Strategy*, *Environmental Strategy*, and the *Northern Growth Management Framework*.

This design guidance should be read with any structure plan prepared for the area. The structure plan will provide strategic guidance on a number of the issues identified in this design guide including activity location, access and interconnection and landform and natural features.

Technical and engineering criteria relating to the implementation of development are contained in the separate Code of Practice for Land Development.

This Guide applies primarily to new 'greenfield' subdivision, but many of its objectives and policies may also apply to significant as well as subdivisions within the existing urban footprint, on either 'infill' sites (undeveloped land within the existing urban footprint) or 'brownfield' sites (previously developed land). While this Guide provides some guidance on where these provisions might apply outside of greenfields, allowance is made for flexibility and judgment by Council in considering the applicability to infill and brownfield sites. In general, provisions of this Guide are more applicable to larger infill or brownfield subdivisions that extend the roading network (e.g. cul de sac extensions or creation of new legal road) or that would support additional public space (e.g. a neighbourhood park or neighbourhood centre), than to smaller subdivisions.

In terms of scale, the Guide generally applies to greenfield subdivision of any size for which consent is required. Specific objectives and guidelines, however, may be less relevant to smaller subdivisions (e.g. less than 20 lots) than to larger subdivisions. Examples include provision for parks and open spaces, neighbourhood centres, and street connections, which may not be required in smaller subdivisions. Again, flexibility and judgment by Council is permitted on where the Guide's objectives and policies are relevant. The guidelines for Individual Lot Design will apply equally to individual lots within larger subdivisions through to small scale subdivision applications creating just one lot.

Besides this Guide, other design guides like the Multi-Unit Design Guide and Central City Design Guide may also be applicable to subdivisions. Relevant District Plan rules for

*The (proposed) Development Contributions Policy defines "Greenfield development" as "a proposal that creates new residential or rural residential areas, and...includes residential or rural residential development on land that was zoned Rural, or Open Space." It also includes land that was zoned Residential within the land areas referred to in appendices 12 to 14 and 16 to 22 to chapter five of the operative District Plan as at 1 July 2005. That definition can be considered applicable to this Guide as well, with the added inclusion of non-residential development.*

the underlying zoning will also apply.

## **6 Individual Lot Design**

*This section requires the potential development achievable on each lot to be planned so that the lot and its subsequent building development will offer a high level of amenity and not unduly compromise the amenity of neighbours or character of the wider neighbourhood. These guidelines apply to both Greenfield development and infill subdivision, but are particularly applicable to small-scale infill within established neighbourhoods.*

### **Objectives**

- O6.1 To create acceptable qualities of amenity on each new lot.
- O6.2 To maintain the amenity of neighbouring properties.

### **Guidelines**

#### *Shaping the lot*

- G6.1 Shape lots to be generally compact and regular in shape, allowing for outdoor areas to be accessible from proposed dwelling sites.

*Random and arbitrary lot shapes, particularly those extensions or shapes that contribute nothing to the usability and amenity of the lot are not acceptable.*

*This is because the random alignment of dwellings and boundary fences that results, will often create odd, unusable or inaccessible spaces on the lot, and have a detrimental effect on neighbourhood character, particularly in neighbourhoods with a relatively regular lot layout.*

*Long linear extensions of lots are acceptable only when they are part of a shared accessway, or there can be seen to be a compelling character, open space amenity or landscape reason for that shape.*

*Deviations from this guideline may be justifiable only where this is to preserve a significant landscape or building feature.*

*Lots should be shaped to avoid unnecessary earthworks, and major and sudden changes in the contours of a site should be avoided. Where necessary, such changes should be used to separate lots, rather than occur within a lot.*

#### *Useable outdoor space*

- G6.2 Plan for building footprints that allow for at least one primary outdoor space of reasonable size with northerly exposure on each lot.

*This space is to provide for short-range outlook from the dwellings, and private recreation and service space.*

## APPENDIX TWO SUBDIVISION DESIGN GUIDE

*Open spaces on lots should be close to and readily accessible from the dwelling. They should be located to the north, east or west of and connected to the anticipated main living floor of indicative future dwellings on the lots.*

- G6.3 Where possible, co-locate the primary open spaces associated with new lots to give outlook both for new dwellings and neighbours, and allow the integration of large trees.

*Where it is achievable, an open space that connects with others on neighbouring lots can provide a pleasing sense of openness within an intensively developed area. It also allows the large trees that are often not possible within smaller enclosed spaces.*

### Access to the lot

- G6.4 Provide for vehicle access and future garaging in a location and configuration that minimises earthworks and does not dominate either the streetscape or the interior of the development.

*Street edges and other open spaces will be poor if dominated by garage doors, or hard paving, retaining walls and fences. Careful placement of accessways and garaging so they are not visually dominant should be considered first, followed by landscaping to mitigate adverse effects.*

- G6.5 Offset or otherwise articulate long vehicle accessways to reduce vehicle speeds, and to landscape them to make them visually attractive.

*Avoid long narrow lanes or expanses of asphalt that are unrelieved by landscape elements. Space should be provided for landscape treatments along their length that will enhance their appearance for both users and neighbours, and Enhance the visual appearance of these spaces for users and neighbours with landscaping or other design elements. This will also help to minimise the impact on neighbouring lots of passing cars.*

- G6.6 Where possible, combine accessways to rear lots to minimise the visual impact of these and associated kerb crossings on the neighbourhood.

*Use of shared accessways minimises the amount of land required for access and by reducing the number and width of accessways at the street edge also reduces conflict with pedestrians.*

*Where opportunities exist, consideration might be given to providing access to the rear of sites with shared rear or side accessways, thereby maximising potential for buildings to front the primary street.*

### Landscaping

- G6.7 Retain significant large trees and vegetation on new lots.

*Retaining mature vegetation gives a sense of the*

## APPENDIX TWO SUBDIVISION DESIGN GUIDE

development being well-established, allows new dwellings to assimilate into the neighbourhood, thereby helping to maintain the character of the neighbourhood.

- G6.8 Provide planting within new development that is suitable for situation, wind and sun exposure and soil type, placing this to enhance amenity.

Well placed trees and planting provide benefits of visual interest, privacy, shelter and shade for both dwellings and associated outdoor areas. Planting with a scale and growing habit appropriate to site and situation is required to provide any necessary screening within any subdivision and for neighbours while allowing reasonable sun and daylight to dwellings and open spaces. In order to achieve visual integration, consideration should be given to species that extend the planting and landscape patterns of the wider setting.

- G6.9 Design any necessary retaining walls to be both integrated into the development and not visually intrusive.

The most effective approach is to minimise earthworks and need for retaining walls by planning the lot so that it is in harmony with the landform.

Retaining structures are often utilitarian and unsightly, and can be prominent in views across a neighbourhood, particularly where these replace areas of dense planting. These also impact on the outlook from the dwelling they serve. Their quality of construction and appearance is important.

Where retaining walls will not be entirely screened by future buildings, their appearance should be mitigated with measures that might include screening planting, subdivision into modules of dimensions that can be perceived from distant views, and fine texture that is perceived in close range views.

- G6.10 Incorporate on-site water quality treatment measures where practicable.

This may involve retention swales, soak pits and permeable surfacing for driveways and areas of on-site carparking. The nature and stability of sub-terrain conditions should be assessed to determine if such measures are practicable.

Privacy, sun and outlook for neighbours

- G6.11 Provide for placement of buildings where they may avoid unreasonable compromises to privacy, sun and outlook for neighbours as well as, where these are significant, reflecting established neighbourhood patterns.

If the potential to place buildings and the relation of these to neighbouring dwellings is considered at the lot layout stage, there is often potential to mitigate the amenity effects of infill. In many cases only subtle shifts

## APPENDIX TWO SUBDIVISION DESIGN GUIDE

in building location or orientation can address cross-boundary issues.

It is likely that subdivision to create infill at the rear of lots will lead to situations where people in new buildings will be able to look down into existing rear yards. To address this, the location of buildings, open spaces and planting on the new lot to contribute to privacy should be considered. In such situations it is not expected that existing levels of privacy will be maintained, however consideration should be given to providing privacy to parts of neighbouring existing lots that are connected to the dwelling.

If neighbouring properties enjoy a significant outlook, consideration should be given to placing building footprints where at least part of that view is retained.