

**Specialist input for notable tree related issues, Part7 Heritage of Auckland City District Plan:
Hauraki Gulf Islands Section – Proposed 2006**

Prepared by Peri Buckley, Senior Heritage Officer, Auckland City Council

Thank you for requesting input into the review of the submissions to the Auckland City District Plan: Hauraki Gulf Islands Section – Proposed 2006 (“the Plan”). I have received your memo and the summary of submissions relating to this issue. In making the comments below, I have reviewed the material supplied in addition to the full submissions.

Issue raised:

Clause 7.14

The Plan should state precisely the crucial value of all trees in removing greenhouse gas from our atmosphere and protecting us and future generations from serious climate change

Submission numbers:

1208/1

Comments:

Agreed. It is noted that the specific benefits of trees are not listed in Part 7, clause 7.14 and this should be readdressed.

We should look at including similar text from Part 10, Clause 10.11.1 the Central Area section of the District Plan or Clause 5C.7.3.2, Part 5c of the Isthmus Section of the Plan but to also include reference to climate change in the revised text. Examples from Part 10, clause 10.11.1 of the Central Area Plan which could be added to clause 7.14 of the Plan to strengthen the message about the importance of trees are:

“Trees are amongst the largest living organisms on earth and are an essential part of a complex ecosystem...

Water and air quality are quantifiable indicators of sustainability and both the level of contaminants and the supporting capacity of these resources.

Trees and vegetative cover make a significant contribution towards:

- *safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems*
- *avoiding, remedying or mitigating actual or potential adverse environmental effects through their role as air purifiers, land stabilisers, weather shields and habitat providers*
- *adding to amenity and heritage values.”*

An example from Part 5c of the Isthmus Section of the Plan is the strategy section, Clause 5C.7.3.2:

“Trees have an important ecological, environmental and cultural role. They have an important contribution to make in the sustainable management of natural and physical resources of the Isthmus. Collectively they endow the landscape with distinctive environmental quality and charm.

The environmental or practical relationship between people and trees is fundamental to existence. Without trees and green plants the earth's ecology would be non-existent. In the City this factor is important, because trees play a role in sustaining the ecological balance between nature and technology, between the organic and the inorganic. Trees therefore contribute to the community's health and well-being.

Trees have important environmental functions in the City:

- *Visual amenity - trees introduce a dynamic living element, and a sense of scale, harmony and softness to the man-made environment. They complement the built environment and establish connections between buildings, sites, and the surrounding landscape;*

- Noise buffers - trees may help to reduce noise levels in certain situations;*
- Weather shields - trees may reduce the intensity of wind effects, provide shelter from rain and the sun, provide protection from rising ultraviolet levels and reduce heat created by buildings and road surfaces;*
- Land stabilisers - trees play an integral part in the avoidance of natural hazards, reducing water runoff, preventing flooding, stabilising soils, preventing landslips and reducing erosion;*
- Atmospheric effect - trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and give off oxygen. Their transpiration of moisture helps to control temperatures, and cleanses air of pollutants caused by traffic;*
- Heritage - trees can represent a living sense of continuity between the past, present and future. The continued existence of significant trees is important to our heritage and to the legacy we leave to future generations;*
- Habitat - trees are essential for providing shelter, breeding and nesting sites and food sources for our wildlife.”*

Issue raised:

Clause 7.14

That council create a "conservative" plan for all trees (not just 'scheduled trees') which sets out in detail what is significant in the way every tree protects us from future climate change and "what policies are appropriate to guide" us, firstly, to kill as few trees of any and all species as possible (except toxic weed varieties) and secondly, to plant as many trees as possible to remedy emissions.

Submission numbers:

1208/2

Comments:

I do believe that there is scope in Part 7.14. to elaborate on the specific benefits that trees provide to the community / natural environment. Something along the lines of what is said in Part 10, Clause 10.11.1 the Central Area section of the District Plan or Clause 5C.7.3.2, Part 5c of the Isthmus Section of the Plan. Furthermore, specific reference should be made in the policies section of the Plan, supporting the practice of planting trees given that the “issue” section (clause 7.14.1) asks the question:

“How to address the potential loss of trees and subsequent loss to the general environment and amenity values, health and wellbeing of the community and heritage values of the islands.”

The policies section should refer to continuing the practice of planting trees, especially on public land and road reserves. This is where council can directly contribute to supporting our complex ecosystem.

With respects to a conservation plan, this is outside the scope of the Plan but there is certainly a need to education the public as to the benefits of trees and why all possible mechanism should be employed to retained them.

Issue raised:

Clause 7.14

That council extend clause 7.14 to recognize the value of all trees and groups of trees, at this time in history, as community assets, which take greenhouse gas out of the atmosphere.

Submission numbers:

1208/3

Comments:

Agreed.

Issue raised:

7.14.2

Retain clause 7.14.2(2)

Submission numbers:

337/5

Comments:

Agreed

Issue raised:

7.14.2

Retain clause 7.14.2(2)

Submission numbers:

338/5

Comments:

Agreed

Issue raised:

7.14.2

That clause 7.14.2 Objective is amended to read:

Recognizing first that all trees significantly contribute to the islands' and the earth's future well-being through these trees' absorption of carbon dioxide/greenhouse gases and consequently that they mitigate the causes of future climate change. Secondly, the Plan recognizes and 'schedules' specific trees and groups of trees which significantly contribute to the islands' and arboricultural, community, amenity and historic values.

Submission numbers:

1208/4

Comments:

Disagree. I believe that the correct place to state the importance of trees in terms of absorption of carbon dioxide/greenhouse gases etc is in clause 7.14.

The objectives of each part of the Plan indicate the desired end result that the Council wishes to achieve. The policies identify the proposed action of the Council in administering the Plan to achieve those objectives. The rules are the precise planning controls, which govern the use and development of resources.

Issue raised:

7.14.2

That the clause 7.14.2 heading, "Policies" be expanded to read: "7.14.2 Policies for the conservation, retention and replanting of all trees, as well as for the "scheduled" protection of specific trees and groups of trees"

Submission numbers:

1208/5

Comments:

Do not agree that the heading "policies" be amended but I would support the fleshing out of clause 7.14 to specifically state the benefits that trees provide and amend the policies section to include replanting, as a proposed action.

Issue raised:

7.14.2

Insert new Policy 4 in clause 7.14.2 : "By requiring that for every tree removed for any reason by public or private owners, five new trees would be planted elsewhere and maintained by said owners"

Submission numbers:

1208/6

Comments:

In my experience, it is council practice that any consent granted for a tree removal is mitigated by replacement planting. I agree with the requirement for replanting becoming a proposed action in the policies section and a rule to govern the use and development of resources.

Within the rules section 7.14.4, the Plan should contain a section on consent conditions that Council could impose on applications and replacement planting should be addressed here also.

Issue raised:

7.14.2

Insert new Policy 5 in clause 7.14.2 : " By requiring that all vehicles operated by ACC and its contractors have their entire annual emissions of carbon dioxide calculated, with this carbon "debt" offset annually by council's planting and maintaining of the number of trees required to neutralize that carbon debt.

Submission numbers:

1208/7

Comments:

This is outside the scope of the Plan.

Issue raised:

7.14.2

Insert new Policy 6 in clause 7.14.2: "By ensuring that live Christmas trees (either native, fruit, or exotic species) be available to the public at the lowest available price and encouraging all Aucklanders to buy these live trees, which would be picked up by council trucks after Christmas and planted/maintained by council staff or contractors or local service organizations".

Submission numbers:

1208/8

Comments:

This is outside the scope of the Plan.

Issue raised:

7.14.2

Retain clause 7.14.2

Submission numbers:

2641/60

Comments:

Agree.

Issue raised:

7.14.3

Amend clause 7.14.3 Criteria for scheduling trees, by adding the following wording at the end of the fourth paragraph:

‘The council uses a scoring system to rank trees against the evaluation criteria. Under this scoring system, trees which rank highly enough to warrant scheduling are given a category A or B status as follows:

- category A - 50 points and over
- category B - 40-49 points.’

Submission numbers:

2091/18

Comments:

Agree.

Issue raised:

7.14.4.1

Change clause 7.14.4.1 to: "The minimal trimming or maintenance of any scheduled tree undertaken with hand-operated secateurs, or with advice and assistance from a council approved arborist."

Submission numbers:

337/6

Comments:

Disagree. There should be no reference to "or with advice and assistance from a council approved arborist". The use of hand-held secateurs limits the size of a branch / limb that can be removed. The main thrust of this is to ensure that any pruning works to the tree are very minimal with less damage likely to the tree's health and longevity.

By providing an "or with advice and assistance from a council approved arborist" provision in the clause, the size and degree of pruning is unlimited and in some situations the work may cause irreversible damage and destruction of the tree. The requirement for a resource consent where minimal pruning by hand-held secateurs cannot be achieved means that the applicant must provide a higher level of validation and any application has to undergo stronger scrutiny by Council. Such provisions allow for a stronger emphasis on protection and retention of the heritage item without compromising its value.

This clause affords the scheduled tree the appropriate protection based on its heritage values.

Issue raised:

7.14.4.1

Change clause 7.14.4.1 to:

"The minimal trimming or maintenance of any scheduled tree undertaken with hand operated secateurs, or with advice and assistance from a council approved arborist."

Submission numbers:

338/6

Comments:

Disagree. There should be no reference to "or with advice and assistance from a council approved arborist". The use of hand-held secateurs limits the size of a branch / limb that can be removed. The main thrust of this is to ensure that any pruning works to the tree are very minimal with less damage likely to the tree's health and longevity.

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This clause affords the scheduled tree the appropriate protection based on its heritage values.

Issue raised:

7.14.4.2

Include a fourth matter of discretion in clause 7.14.4.2 as follows:

"How the proposed works affect/prevent other activities on the site".

Submission numbers:

337/8

Comments:

Disagree. A stricter assessment criterion, via a discretionary resource consent, where the Council has the ability to decline or notify an application, allows Council to be satisfied that any works proposed do not detract from or alter the valued heritage characteristics of the tree. Furthermore, the control of the actual or potential effects in this context is achieved through the resource consent process, where a higher level of validation by the applicant and stronger scrutiny by Council is required, as warranted for notable trees. This enables the Council to be satisfied that any future works proposed to any scheduled feature do not detract from or destroy its heritage characteristics

Issue raised:

7.14.4.2

As well as the necessity for carrying out works identified in clause 7.14.4.2, the practicalities of the trimming should be considered.

Submission numbers:

337/9, 338/9

Comments:

Disagree. A stricter assessment criterion, via a discretionary resource consent, where the Council has the ability to decline or notify an application, allows Council to be satisfied that any works proposed do not detract from or alter the valued heritage characteristics of the tree. Furthermore, the control of the actual or potential effects in this context is achieved through the resource consent process, where a higher level of validation by the applicant and stronger scrutiny by Council is required, as warranted for notable trees. This enables the Council to be satisfied that any future works proposed to any scheduled feature do not detract from or destroy its heritage characteristics

Issue raised:

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“How the proposed works affect/prevent other activities on the site”.

Submission numbers:

338/8

Comments:

Disagree. A stricter assessment criterion, via a discretionary resource consent, where the Council has the ability to decline or notify an application, allows Council to be satisfied that any works proposed do not detract from or alter the valued heritage characteristics of the tree. Furthermore, the control of the actual or potential effects in this context is achieved through the resource consent process, where a higher level of validation by the applicant and stronger scrutiny by Council is required, as warranted for notable trees. This enables the Council to be satisfied that any future works proposed to any scheduled feature do not detract from or destroy its heritage characteristics

Issue raised:

7.14.4.3

Make clause 7.14.4.3(1) and (2) restricted discretionary activities.

Submission numbers:

337/7, 338/7

Comments:

Disagree. A stricter assessment criterion, via a discretionary resource consent, where the Council has the ability to decline or notify an application, allows Council to be satisfied that any works proposed do

not detract from or alter the valued heritage characteristics of the tree. Furthermore, the control of the actual or potential effects in this context is achieved through the resource consent process, where a higher level of validation by the applicant and stronger scrutiny by Council is required, as warranted for notable trees. This enables the Council to be satisfied that any future works proposed to any scheduled feature do not detract from or destroy its heritage characteristics

Note:

There are a large number of submissions that apply to two or more heritage disciplines. These have not been addressed by this report. The submissions addressed here are solely for the "Tree" discipline.

Both the heritage manager, Nicola Short and the Isthmus manager, Megan Tyler are aware of this and will be expecting the consultant planner preparing the submission report, Richard Osborne, to address them and contact any of the heritage leads as required.

Refer to G:\Planning\City Planning\data\District Plan Islands\HGI 1st Review\Background (hearing) reports\Parts 1-14\Part 7 - Heritage\Trees\HGIsubsTREES.xls