

Open Meeting

To	Ngaruawahia Community Board
From	Tim Harty General Manager Servie Delivery
Date	12 September 2016
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Chief Executive Approved	Y
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Report Title	Ngaruawahia Closed Landfill Aftercare and Streetscape Planting

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has been progressing the process to obtain resource consent from Waikato Regional Council (WRC) for the Ngaruawahia closed landfill (Te Mana o Te Rangi Reserve). This has been an ongoing process for many years. A revised consent application was submitted by Council in September 2015 and as part of this process, property owners adjacent to the landfill were notified. Through the consent process, a number of these property owners submitted on the consent and Council is currently in discussion with them.

WRC and Council have now reached agreement on the technical matters on a landfill Aftercare Management Plan (AMP). The AMP is a critical aspect of the consent submission and includes a summary of investigations to date, a risk assessment, monitoring and contingency measures and guidelines for future use of the site. The AMP recommends that the site is used as a passive open space.

In parallel with this process, Council has planted part of a line of Japanese Maples (*Acer palmatum Bloodgood*) in the road reserve along the boundary of the landfill (and further south) as part of general streetscape planting in an endeavour to increase amenity of the road corridor. Feedback to both Council and the Community Board has seen some negative responses from the community, questioning the intent and species selection.

The planting has been paused pending further discussion. For the best chance of survival any further planting needs to be completed before the end of September. If completing planting is supported, adjacent landowners will be notified via letterbox drop as per the current policy. Development of the wider reserve site will be discussed with the Community Board next year and will include wide consultation with the Ngaruawahia community and potentially be a placemaking project.

2. RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report from the General Manager Service Delivery be received;

AND THAT the Board supports the continued planting of Japanese Maples along the roadside edge of Te Mana o Te Rangi Reserve to the southern boundary following notification to adjacent landowners on Great South Road.

3. BACKGROUND

Landfill Rehabilitation

To progress the Resource Consent application process for the Ngaruawahia Closed Landfill, WRC and Council agreed on a programme of investigations required. These investigations were carried out through 2014/15. The investigations included a soil stratigraphy survey, soil gas vapour testing and atmospheric gas testing. The Vent Stacks at the site were removed in late 2015 as they were no longer effective in venting any landfill gas.

A revised consent application was submitted to WRC in September 2015. This was notified to adjacent property owners as part of the process. As a result, six submissions opposing the consent were received and discussions with submitters commenced. Turangawaewae Marae withdrew their opposition to the consent during this process and further consultation is underway. The submitters are concerned with the notice that is required to be placed on their LIM regarding the potential presence of landfill gas in the soil below their properties. This LIM notice was implemented by Council once this potential risk was identified and following legal advice.

The AMP has been further developed by Council and WRC experts through this process and the technical requirements are now agreed to by both parties. A key aspect of the AMP is related to planting on the landfill. Planting should avoid significant disturbance of the cap and needs to be designed so the plants have a suitable nutrient source (there is very limited topsoil at the site) and the layout does not lead to additional ponding of water. Critically, planting on the site does not need to wait for the resource consent to be issued as long as the AMP requirements are followed.

Development of the Reserve and Streetscape Plantings

In early 2016 following discussions with local iwi and the Community Board, Council resolved to officially name the site Te Mana o Te Rangi Reserve in line with Reserves Act Management Plan process. The site is designated for recreation which aligns with use of the adjoining dog exercise area.

Japanese Maples were recently planted on the legal boundary between the road reserve and the closed landfill site as part of a wider streetscape planting designed. Whilst Staff contacted the Ngaruawahia Community Board via the Chair to gain approval for the planting and the Board were in agreement, it is acknowledged that policy was not followed in so far as undertaking a letter drop of affected parties. Since the planting occurred, negative feedback has been received from some of Ngaruawahia residents regarding the species selection and concerned that the streetscape plantings indicate the first stages of development of the reserve itself. This is not the case.

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 DISCUSSION

Streetscape and Reserve Planting

Council has a District Tree Policy which was adopted in 2015. The Tree Policy outlines principles, policies and objectives regarding Council's ongoing protection and management of Council owned trees within the District including trees planted as part of the streetscape. The Policy states that Council will undertake consultation prior to any major street tree planting. Beyond the approach to the Community Board Chair further consultation was not considered and this is an oversight. A copy of the Tree Policy is attached (Attachment 1) for the Board's information.

A more appropriate process would have been to present a report to the Community Board to allow further input on the matter, including a discussion around the community engagement required on the planting, especially in light of the landfill process.

Whilst the streetscape plantings are not in the area directly above the refuse, some of the trees could be influenced by landfill gas migration adversely affecting their survival. The street tree planting is not expected to alter the risk of landfill gas migration to the adjacent properties. Access to the closed landfill site for cap maintenance, mowing and further planting is still available.

The streetscape planting is in no way associated or pre-empting the development of the wider reserve. The Parks and Facilities Manager will discuss options for development of the reserve at a Community Board meeting next year. It is expected that this will be a long term project that will involve the need for a holistic community engagement process. Currently no funding is allocated for reserve development so there may be potential for this to be put forward for consideration by the Board to Council's 2018-28 Long Term Plan process.

It is proposed to finish the streetscape planting to the southern boundary of Te Mana o Te Rangi Reserve before the end of September to complete the avenue effect. Attachment 2 shows in red the line of planted trees and in blue the proposed route to continue this to the southern boundary.

5. CONSIDERATION

5.1 FINANCIAL

A budget is available in the 2016/2017 Annual Plan for the work required to obtain the resource consent and associated on-going monitoring.

Current streetscape plantings have been funded through street tree planting budgets. There is no allocated budget for the development of the wider reserve.

5.2 LEGAL

Council must have Resource Consents for the landfill discharges and Waikato Regional Council could take enforcement action if necessary. The street tree planting is not expected to influence the resource consent process.

5.3 STRATEGY, PLANS, POLICY AND PARTNERSHIP ALIGNMENT

The tree policy has been discussed in section 4.

5.4 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Highest levels of engagement	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

State below which external stakeholders have been or will be engaged with:

Planned	In Progress	Complete	
✓			Internal
✓			Community Boards/Community Committees
✓			Waikato-Tainui/Local iwi
✓			Households
✓			Business
			Other Please Specify

It is acknowledged that engagement with site neighbours regarding the selection of the streetscape plantings should have occurred. Development of the wider reserve site will be discussed with the Community Board next year and will require wide consultation with the Ngaruawahia community.

Consultation with parties who submitted to the resource consent application for the Ngaruawahia Closed Landfill is continuing and these parties will be notified of the completion of the planting of the streetscape in September.

6. CONCLUSION

Partial streetscape planting of Japanese Maples along the roadside boundary of Te Mana o Te Rangi Reserve have been undertaken in an effort to enhance the amenity of the southern approach to Ngaruawahia. It is proposed to continue this planting to the southern boundary before the end of September in consultation with adjacent neighbours.

The resource consent process for the Ngaruawahia Closed Landfill is continuing and is not impacted by the streetscape plantings.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Waikato District Tree Policy
- Attachment 2 – Aerial of Te Mana o Te Rangi Reserve

ATTACHMENT 2: AERIAL OF TE MANA O TE RANGI RESERVE



District Tree Policy

Policy Owner	General Manager, Service Delivery
Policy Sponsor	Chief Executive
Approved By:	Policy & Regulatory Committee
Approval Date:	13 April 2015
Resolution Number	WDC 1504/06/1/1/2
Effective Date	14 April 2018
Next Review Date:	April 2018

Introduction

The Waikato District Council District Tree Policy addresses issues relating to the recognition, strategic planning, management and long-term continuity of the tree resource within Waikato District.

The District Tree Policy:

- has an important role in raising the awareness of the community in relation to the benefits of trees, their multiple functions and the ways in which they contribute to improving the condition of our environment;
- applies to individual trees, groups of trees and areas of existing and regenerating bush on Council administered reserves, civic open spaces and other Council owned lands that fall within the jurisdiction of Council's Arborist;
- complements Council's other reserve management plans;
- applies to trees planted within the roading corridor of all roads.

Objectives

Waikato District Council's District Tree Policy specifies those principles, policies and objectives regarding Council's ongoing protection and management of Council owned trees within the District.

The District Tree Policy:

- Outlines the Council's commitment to managing Council trees as a valued asset of the District.
- Outlines Council policy with regard to tree request made to Council.
- Defines the benefits of trees both to the environment and to people.
- Recognises the ecological benefits of remnant and regenerating native vegetation on Council owned lands, as well as exotic plantings.
- Makes a commitment to encouraging widespread planting which defines and enhances the District's unique landscape character.
- Ensures trees are a high priority in the new and changing landscapes of the urban areas.
- Re-affirms the Council's commitment to the protection and management of trees on public land through tree protection provisions in the District Plan.

- Recognises the increasing importance of the public tree resource with increasing urban intensification.
- Provides a mandate for Council's involvement in both the direct management of and indirect advocacy for trees as an integral component of the urban and rural environments which comprise the District.
- Has a key focus on sustainability and self-sufficiency.
- Encourages communication across Council departments to ensure retention of amenity trees and to maximise planting of trees wherever possible during upgrading of any utility/other development projects.
- Recognises the limited life span of many tree species.
- Seeks over time to manage and rationalise tree planting within roading corridors on the majority of rural roads throughout the district.
- Recognises the use of trees in being an effective way of controlling traffic speed especially between the rural and urban interface.
- Encourages the planting of fruit and nut trees across the district where practical.

Definitions

A glossary of definitions is included in Part 6.0.

Application

This policy applies to trees on public lands that are owned and/or administered by Waikato District Council.

Relevant Documents/Legislation

WDC General Policies Reserve Management Plan *(add link when complete)*

WDC Reserve Management Plans (specific)

District Tree Maintenance Contract (2015)

[Tree Work - Approved Code of Practice \(ACOP\) Part 2 Maintenance of Trees Around](#)

[Power Lines](#) (Worksafe New Zealand, 1996)

[Electricity \(Hazards from Trees\) Regulations 2003](#)

[RNZIH Tree Evaluation System \(STEM\)](#)

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as deemed appropriate by the General Manager, Service Delivery, but not less than once every three years.

Policy Statements

Policy statements are included in Part 4.0 of this policy document.

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WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL DISTRICT TREE POLICY

COMPOSITION OF THE DISTRICT TREE POLICY

The District Tree Policy is in two parts:

The **District Tree Policy - Part I** is a public policy document, specifying those principles, policies and objectives which guide the Council's ongoing protection and management of the District's publicly owned tree resources.

The **District Tree Policy - Part II Appendices** contains additional information to support the policies defined in the District Tree Policy - Part I.

FORMAT FOR DISTRICT TREE POLICY - PART I

The District Tree Policy comprises six sections:

Section **1.0 POLICY GUIDE** explains the layout and format of the Waikato District Council District Tree Policy.

Section **2.0 TREES - A VALUABLE ASSET** discusses aspects of tree management which the Council considers to be important. It covers:

- 2.1 Council's Guardianship Role
- 2.2 Trees in the Landscape
- 2.3 The Benefits Derived from Trees
- 2.4 The Difficulties with trees in the Urban Environment.
- 2.5 The Relationship between the District Plan and District Tree Policy

Section **3.0 TO 5.0 OBJECTIVES AND POLICY STATEMENTS** set out all the Council policies in relation to tree management. It covers:

- 3.1 Tree Planting
- 3.2 Maintenance of Trees
- 3.3 Tree Removal
- 3.4 Consultation
- 3.5 Reserve Neighbours
- 3.6 Promotion and Education
- 3.7 Tree Evaluation and Assessment
- 3.8 Subdivision, Development and the District Plan
- 3.9 Unauthorised Removal of Trees
- 4.0 Commemorative Trees
- 5.0 Succession Planting

Section **6.0 GLOSSARY** provides easily understood definitions of the technical or specific terms used in this document.

Section **7.0 APPENDIX** contains appendices which support and clarify the policy text.

1.0 POLICY GUIDE

Each paragraph throughout sections **2.0 TREES - A VALUABLE ASSET** is numbered, for ease of reference.

A standard format has been adopted throughout section **3.0 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES** of the District Tree Policy text, using the following framework:

TITLE OF SECTION

This text indicates the general topic

Objective subtitle

This text indicates the particular subject the objective covers

Objective number

This text defines the management aim (or goal) the Council seeks to achieve

Policy

This text clarifies the way in which the Council will achieve its management aims or which policies it will follow

Explanation

This text outlines why the Council considers the objectives and policies are necessary

2.0 TREES – A VALUABLE ASSET

2.1 Council's Guardianship Role

- 2.1.1 Waikato District Council, as guardian and steward of the District's public urban tree resource, currently maintains some 2500 urban street trees and a similar number of specimen trees in parks, reserves and on other Council-owned lands. It is apparent that Council has the added responsibility for all trees planted within the rural roading network road corridor, the majority of which were not planted by the Council or its predecessors but by adjacent land owners. The scope of this responsibility is an unknown one in terms of both cost and size of the resource.

The Council where considered appropriate takes a proactive approach, by regularly planting new trees on public land - primarily to maintain and replenish the numbers of street trees, native habitat and specimen trees in parks and reserves. Council's Parks and Facilities Department covers the care and maintenance of trees in the public domain, including contracting in arboricultural works related to the clearance of trees in close proximity to power lines and electrical assets and other structural features.

- 2.1.2 Waikato District Council also provides for the protection of trees on public and private land through tree protection rules and provisions within its District Plan. A tree(s) can be protected:
- as a notable tree that is listed in the District Plan schedule
 - as assessed by the RNZIH Standard Tree Evaluation Method (STEM)
- 2.1.3 Succession planting is required to be managed in a proactive way when possible. However there will be times when trees have reached the end of their useful lives and will need to be replaced. This is particularly so throughout the rural roading network where there is possibly a significant numbers of trees now in senescence. This resource is yet to be assessed and quantified. All tree planting and removals will be carried out in accordance with this policy.

2.2 Trees in the Landscape

- 2.2.1 Trees are an essential distinctive component within the landscape. Their dynamic, organic nature gives them an ephemeral character when considered against the overall long-term life of the District. The living nature of trees - and the need for continuity - makes the processes of replacement planting and ongoing planned renewal a critically important aspect of landscape management. Large areas of forest and wetland once covered the Waikato District. Much of the upland forests, though modified by timber extraction still exist but the wetlands and forests of the low lying ground have almost disappeared. These natural areas are valuable and require protection.
- 2.2.2 Whilst protecting trees is paramount to the principle of maintaining the quality of the present day landscape it should be recognised that trees are not everlasting permanent features. It is suspected that this district has a large number of trees in senescence phase particularly in the rural roading corridor and that their removal will be inevitable in the short to medium term. This will result in a significant change to landscape appearances in some areas of the district.
- 2.2.3 Tree planting and management in urban streets, parks, reserves and Council-owned land throughout the District is vital to counterbalance the continuous changes occurring every day as a result of urban intensification, building development and roading improvements. Without such a cycle of replacement and renewal the incremental loss of trees will create temporary gaps and/or serious long-term reductions in tree cover. Such circumstances inevitably lead to the degradation of landscapes.
- 2.2.4 Planting and replenishment of trees by private citizens can be valuable, with opportunities for constantly changing and improving private landscapes. The District's existing private property tree resource should be seen as a partner to Council organised tree planting on public lands to maintain the appearance of Waikato District Council's urban and rural landscapes. A significant benefit in broad scale landscape improvements arises from well planned and co-ordinated public /private planting. Public and private plantings together combine to create tangible and enduring environmental and amenity benefits for the District. This policy specifically encourages appropriate subdivision and greenfield development plantings, that take into account appropriate views, opens spaces and shading, along with encouraging and providing advice on appropriate trees to plant in the vicinity of any road to ensure the road and road users future safety won't be compromised over time by trees as they mature.
- 2.2.5 Urban trees require specialised ongoing management in order to assist their survival in the highly-modified built environment. Urban environments are often high stress environments for trees, which have generally evolved in the more conducive natural growing environments of the forest, wetland or open plains. Trees under stress - be it from water deficit, soil compaction, low nutrient levels, air pollution, elevated air temperatures, altered light levels or physical damage - are more susceptible to pests and diseases and will frequently exhibit a shortened life span. As a significant asset of the Council the costs associated with maintaining an existing

mature urban tree in healthy condition are economically preferable when compared to those of establishing new trees in the same location.

- 2.2.6 Trees planted within the rural landscape particularly those in public ownership also require specialist ongoing maintenance which in the past has been almost non-existent or reactionary at best. They are also subject to the issues outlined in 2.2.5 above. In the rural area Councils focus will be on reducing over time its exposure to tree risks and maintenance liabilities within the rural road corridor where appropriate.

2.3 The Benefits Derived from Trees

- 2.3.1 Trees provide multiple benefits. These are generally summarised as aesthetic, environmental, climatologically, ecological, economic and social factors. Trees can be used in our urban and rural landscapes to achieve substantial positive outcomes for the community and visitors alike.
- 2.3.2 The ability of trees to re-enforce the local identity and character of a place and to provide visual unity, softening the often harsh and sometimes visually chaotic built character of our urban environments, makes them an important tool in the urban design. In addition the natural and cultural heritage values of significant old trees, provides an important depth of meaning and history within the landscape.
- 2.3.3 Trees also assist in modifying and ameliorating some of the less desirable aspects of urban environments - such as air pollution, noise, degraded water quality, water run-off, convected or reflected heat and wind exposure, and erosion.
- 2.3.4 Trees provide substantial benefits in relation to the ecological health and sustainability of our urban built environments. They provide habitat for our important indigenous flora and fauna. The air, water and nutrient exchange processes undertaken by trees are fundamental to human existence and the continuity of the food web which supports all life on earth. Urban trees improve the environment by absorbing, filtering and purifying the basic elements of air and water. Their continuous metabolic processes ameliorate the adverse effects of sun, wind, rain, dust, noise and pollution - softening the harshness of the urban environment, providing shade and reducing the energy needs and material consumption of the town.
- 2.3.5 Trees also potentially pose a risk to the public particularly if they are not well maintained and this risk factor needs to be balanced against the benefits listed above.

2.4 The Difficulties with Trees in the Urban Environment

- 2.4.1 Trees may sometimes be seen as incompatible with the structural elements of the District, particularly the urban environment and can be considered to cause 'more trouble than they are worth'. Such opinions generally place little weight on the wide ranging values and benefits of urban trees, being more concerned with potential restrictions or constraints on infrastructure construction or property development.
- 2.4.2 It is undeniable that trees in urban locations can create problems of a physical nature, most commonly seen in the limitation of development potential, interference with underground and overhead services, disruption to foundations, difficulty of access, leaf fall blocking drains and storm water channels, traffic safety issues related to reduced visibility, excessive shading and obstruction of views. Additionally, problems more of a social nature, such as safety at night and disputes between neighbours are also issues related to the effects of urban trees. In such circumstances it will be necessary to explore ways in which people and plants can co-exist. It is also well known that some species of trees such as Betula (Silver Birch), Alnus (Alder), Privet (Ligustrum) can trigger attacks such as asthma at certain times of the year for those predisposed to the condition.

- 2.4.3 Occasionally, trees in close association with buildings and services can cause genuine difficulties. However, with good planning, creative development design and the selection of appropriate species these perceived 'problems' are largely avoidable. Usually many of the adverse effects generated by trees are more than mitigated by the substantial environmental and aesthetic benefits they provide.
- 2.4.4 Waikato District Council's approach to street trees along roadsides has become one of rationalisation. Wherever street trees exist, or are proposed, the potential conflict with utilities and roading assets is assessed prior to any decision to retain, maintain or remove.
- 2.4.5 Strong community interest in environmental issues, preservation of historic character and general support for the provision of green residential and urban amenity means that, more than ever, Waikato District Council must strike the appropriate balance between the management and protection of valuable vegetation and the avoidance of real and perceived detrimental effects associated with trees. This includes a danger to life and property.

2.5 The relationship between the District Plan and District Tree Policy

The **DISTRICT PLAN** provides the statutory mechanism for the protection of district trees, as directed by the Resource Management Act (1991). The provisions in the District Plan apply to public and private lands.

The **DISTRICT TREE POLICY** only applies to trees on **public lands** that are **owned** and/or administered by the Waikato District Council. The District Tree Policy provides policies and guidelines for the management of trees on council land, but these do not carry the weight of law. The policy cannot override the statutory responsibilities in the District Plan or Acts and Regulations under New Zealand law. Council has a number of Reserve Management plans prepared under the Reserves Act 1977. As these plans are a statutory obligation any specific clauses relating to trees within those plans will take precedence over this policy.

The **DISTRICT TREE POLICY** advocates for the protection of trees through education, advice and promotional activities but does not apply additional policy for the management of trees that are protected under the District Plan.

Figure 1 summarises the relationship between the District Plan and District Tree Policy.

DISTRICT PLAN	DISTRICT TREE POLICY
<p>PURPOSE Regulatory and non-regulatory provisions for the protection and maintenance of trees on <u>private</u> and <u>public</u> lands, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of Notable Trees in a schedule in the District Plan. • Applying standards in the District Plan to Notable and Amenity Trees and Significant Natural Areas. • Placing conditions on resource consents, and • Education and advice to landowners <p>ADMINISTERED BY: Council Planning and Strategy Team in conjunction with the Council Arborist</p>	<p>PURPOSE Recognition, strategic planning, management and long-term continuity of the tree resource on public lands <u>owned</u> and/or administered by the Waikato District Council.</p> <p>With particular emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual and groups of trees on council reserves and public open spaces. • Trees on urban and rural road reserves. • Identification of Amenity Trees within the WDC area. • Education and advice to landowners <p>ADMINISTERED BY: Parks and Facilities Department Waikato District Council</p>

Figure 1. Relationship between the District Plan and District Tree Policy

Notable Trees are protected under the *Resource Management Act* due to their significance for historic, botanical, landscape, amenity or cultural reasons. Notable trees can be on public or private property. Rules in the District Plan apply to the maintenance or removal of notable trees and activities within the drip line area.

3.0 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MANAGEMENT OF TREES

3.1 TREE PLANTING

This section contains policies relating to tree planting principles and specific policies regarding Council tree planting on urban streets and for bush remnants. It applies to all trees planted on all reserves held by Council under the Reserves Act 1977, civic open space and other Council land including rural roads and urban streets.

3.1.1 Tree Planting Principles

Objective 3.1.1.1

Council tree planting will where practicable ensure the existing distinctive landscape characters of the District are re-enforced, by primarily using species considered appropriate for the area by the WDC.

Tree planting within the road corridor will not be undertaken by Council except in areas where sufficient space is available. This will generally be but not limited to a roading intersection "node".

Policy 3.1.1.1 (a)

*Existing district-wide planting themes established for the various urban areas of the District shall be implemented. The long-term cost impacts associated with ongoing maintenance shall be considered. Trees with invasive roots, prone to branch drop or disease prone such as Plane trees *Platanus* species, (Anthracnose) *Robinia*, *Gleditsia*, *Eucalyptus* species are to be avoided. As are those with limited or known life expectancy such as Lombardy Poplar (*Populus nigra Italica*).*

The planting of Trees with the potential of invasive growth, or any plants designated pests by the Waikato Regional Council or with the propensity to become a wilding tree will be avoided.

Policy 3.1.1.1(b)

An emphasis shall be placed on ensuring a diversity of species suitable for the particular area, with consideration given to avoiding planting trees that may have a detrimental effect on people's health in areas where visitor density is high. Particularly with regard to trees proven to activate the onset of Asthma

including, Alnus, (Alders) Betula, (Silver Birch), Acacia (Wattle), Ligustrum, (Privet) Japanese Chestnut (Aesculus turbinata).

Policy 3.1.1.1(c)

Local character species shall be used to provide a backdrop and framework for the planting of a range of selected species, while enhancing open space retaining views and where appropriate provide shade opportunities.

Explanation

Within the District there are distinctive landscape character areas that are reflected by the nature of their vegetation. District wide planting themes have been established for the urban areas of the District. This can be reflected by the native species present in particular location or by trees planted that reflect the areas human history. Appropriate plant selection will build on these unique identities by using the most appropriate plant associations for the site.

Council considers no private planting within the road reserve boundaries will be permitted unless prior approval is granted by Council. Council is keen to reclaim the full width of the road reserve boundary, particularly in line with its additions to walkways, bridle trails and other programmes. Issues of shading and root disturbance of pavements and water table issues are also an issue in these areas. The exception to this is where existing amenity values exist. It is in these areas where replanting would be permitted rather than creating new plantings in other places.

It has also become apparent that many trees are in the long term not sustainable due to ongoing maintenance issues including Eucalyptus, Platanus, Betula.

Shade is important in picnic and other amenity areas where people congregate during summer months.

Objective 3.1.1.2

The existing botanical diversity resulting from the mix of trees shall be preserved and enhanced for educational, local and visitor interest.

Policy 3.1.1.2(a)

Botanical collections shall be continuously developed through planting to form the basis of a district wide arboretum.

Explanation

Parks and reserves should be seen as an extension to broadening the vegetation gene pool and allowing a wider use and monitoring of new species. There are already developed tree collections and the opportunity exists to extend these further.

Objective 3.1.1.3

A long term tree framework of substance and value shall be maintained throughout the District, including local native species where appropriate, to promote the multiple gains described in 2.3 The Benefits Derived from Trees. Including developing community educational awareness of the long term benefits derived from trees particularly focussing on Schools.

Policy 3.1.1.3(a)

Council shall plant potentially large trees wherever space permits, except in floodplains and where there is a potential risk to safety or adverse effects on open space, the roading network, views and neighbours.

Policy 3.1.1.3(b)

Council shall plant trees of longevity and heritage value incorporating, where possible, nursery stock material specially propagated from existing notable and/or character trees.

Explanation

There is a trend towards smaller residential lots as a result of infill subdivision and cross leasing. This has resulted in a reduction in large trees in urban areas of the District, as residential sections are not large enough to contain substantial trees. Therefore, trees which grow to ultimately large proportions will be planted, wherever space permits, to ensure that the urban areas still contain substantial trees of long term value.

Objective 3.1.1.4

To provide distinctive landscapes of mature trees throughout urban areas (other than in areas specifically acknowledged as tree-less open space landscapes).

Policy 3.1.1.4(a)

Urban tree collections or native re-vegetation shall be established on reserves that are difficult to maintain through traditional grazing or mowing methods.

Policy 3.1.1.4(b)

Council shall develop tree collections, with an emphasis on factors such as:

- ***Longevity***
- ***Heritage value (natural and built)***
- ***Local character (natural and built)***
- ***Low maintenance***
- ***Fast establishing species***

- **Wildlife habitat**
- **Sustainability**
- **Fruit and Nut production**
- **Non invasive species**

Explanation

Currently, the Council has some reserve areas that are maintained by grazing or irregular mowing. Many are difficult to manage this way and those suited to planting will be scheduled for conversion to urban tree collections and native habitat creation. A strategy will be developed that identifies priorities, funding and ensures local consultation. Opportunities exist to develop these sites by integrating a high value tree framework with open space to create the potential for passive recreational values in the future. Those particular open space areas deemed to be characterised as primarily tree-less landscapes will not be considered for tree planting.

Objective 3.1.1.5

To reduce the necessity for intensive maintenance of trees.

Policy 3.1.1.5(a)

Council shall give preference to planting species that:

- **Are pest and disease resistant.**
- **Provide maximum environmental/ecological benefits.**
- **Have a proven track record for establishment and sustainability within the local environment.**
- **Require less maintenance.**
- **Are not pest plants.**

Policy 3.1.1.5(b)

The Council shall ensure that:

- **Quality plant stock is used.**
- **Standardised specifications and techniques and practises are used to plant and maintain trees covered by this policy.**
- **The correct species is chosen in relation to the limitations of the site.**

Explanation

Choosing the most appropriate species for the conditions and particular aspects of the site can reduce long term maintenance problems. By using quality plant stocks, planted effectively and appropriately for the site, many long term maintenance liabilities can be avoided.

Objective 3.1.1.6

To increase the awareness and use of local native plants and locally developed plant selections, both native and exotic.

Policy 3.1.1.6a

Local native species and locally developed plant selections and cultivars shall be featured where there is opportunity to do this well. The preferred approach will be to integrate native and exotic plantings, as seasonal colour form and textures created by this mix is seen as an important feature in amenity plantings in communities across the district.

Explanation

The Waikato district contains many reputable private and public gardens and has also been associated with several notable plant breeders. Opportunities exist to promote the use of local native species and developed plant selections and their cultivars and, in particular, to feature these during promotions and festivals.

Objective 3.1.1.7

To ensure that design, planning, safety and cost impacts are considered prior to planting.

Policy 3.1.1.7(a)

The designs for new tree planting shall be based on:

- **The relationship of trees with their surroundings in terms of character, form, amenity and ecological value**
- **The foreseeable effects of trees in relation to shade, views, services and potential damage to built structures and their effect on the wider landscape**
- **The scale of trees in terms of built structures in relation to potential size and numbers of trees used in the design**
- **The outcome, where applicable, of any request for service relating to street tree planting which is accepted by Council's Arborist**
- **The cost of successfully establishing new planted areas and the ongoing costs associated with sustainable maintenance.**
- **Potential impacts on road and pedestrian safety.**

Explanation

Trees are dynamic - they naturally change and develop over time. There are a many inter-related factors which must be considered for all plantings. The design and planning of plantings creates a range of opportunities to address the constantly changing characteristics of plantings and the needs of potential new planting sites.

3.1.2 Street Tree Planting

Objective 3.1.2.1

Council considers urban streetscapes throughout the district will be enhanced by appropriate tree planting (including in car parks).

Policy 3.1.2.1(a)

Future tree plantings shall be concentrated in urban streets where:

- ***There is sufficient space to accommodate root zone development (the minimum requirement is 1.2m wide)***
- ***Street trees are unlikely to cause significant long term management problems (such as potential conflict with overhead wires, underground services, traffic visibility and alternative road plans).***
- ***All new subdivision works shall submit to Council as part of the consent approval process a street tree planting plan detailing species, size, location, irrigation plans and planned on-going maintenance regimes.***
- ***Where appropriate street and park trees planted shall be provided with an appropriate irrigation system approved by Council's Arborist. Typically this system must have a design life of minimum five years.***

Policy 3.1.2.1(b)

The actual placement of individual street trees shall be based on the following matters:

- ***The overall design of the street planting***
- ***The proximity to and likely effect on overhead wires***
- ***The proximity to and likely effect on underground services***
- ***The effect on vehicular and pedestrian access and visibility***
- ***The possibility of alternative roading plans such as road widening and intersection improvements***
- ***The consideration of enhancing shade opportunities***
- ***The likelihood of and need for protection from vandalism.***

Policy 3.1.2.1(c)

Consultation with local residents and property owners will be undertaken, wherever this is appropriate, before any major street tree planting is undertaken. In commercial areas wider public consultation, with affected building owners and occupiers will be undertaken.

Consideration will be given to written requests from residents not to have a street tree outside their property, and a decision will be based on how critical the tree is to the overall design for the street and possible alternative sites.

Policy 3.1.2.1(d)

Where street or road planting is impractical or inappropriate Council shall encourage residents to plant appropriate trees on private land adjoining the street or road frontage by providing suitable plant material and advice. The responsibility for the maintenance of these trees remains with the landowner.

Policy 3.1.2.1(e)

Street trees plantings shall be regularly reviewed, through standard contract management procedures and programmed inspections. All tree plantings and after-care maintenance must be undertaken in accordance with the WDC Arboriculture Tree Operations policies.

Policy 3.1.2.1(f)

The Consents / Roading teams shall consult with Council's Arborist at a project's scoping phase with regard to creation of tree planting opportunities and retention of existing trees during any subdivision or road project process.

Prior to removal of any existing trees, consideration will include provision for:

- **centre islands or median strips wide enough for tree planting**
- **wider grass berms**
- **variations in road alignment**
- **the use of "set backs", especially in commercial zones**
- **maintaining road safety and activity clearance**
- **Consideration of New Zealand Standard SNZHB 44:2001 Subdivision for People and the Environment may also be required in some situations**
- **Mitigating the effects of large car parking areas using trees to screen cars and provide shade**
- **WDC Infrastructure Code of Practice shall have regard to this policy document.**

Policy 3.1.2.1(g)

Unauthorised planting of trees by residents on urban street or rural road berms is not permitted. Council reserves the right to have such plantings removed.

Explanation

While street trees can significantly contribute to the improvement of the urban environment and enhance residential development they are also the cause of regular public objection and may be expensive to maintain. It is essential to only carry out new plantings where there is sufficient local support and then to ensure that trees are chosen and placed where there is a high chance of success with limited long term management problems.

The current trend of rationalising low value high maintenance trees and redirecting the funding to developing high value low maintenance plantings will be a priority.

Council will also seek to enhance streetscapes through liaising with developers to create improved planting opportunities through alternative street designs.

3.2 MAINTENANCE OF TREES

This section covers general tree maintenance policies and specific policies regarding maintenance of trees growing upon lands as defined in section 2.3

3.2.1 Acceptable pruning and maintenance practices

Objective 3.2.1.1

To promote maintenance of trees in a safe, healthy and natural form.

Policy 3.2.1.1(a)

The Council shall generally not carry out topping of trees. Council also intends to actively work with the appropriate lines Companies to have overhead wires placed underground. The areas of highest priority will be given to those where significant tree issues arise with the wires.

Exemptions

There are circumstances where it shall be necessary to remove the top growth of trees in the following circumstances:

- (a) Where trees are near power lines in preference to removing the trees altogether. (However, if identified as low value and high maintenance consideration may be given to removal)*
- (b) Where trees are considered a safety hazard and removal of the upper crown is deemed acceptable in order to alleviate the hazard and retain the tree(s)*
- (c) Where trees interfere with shipping navigation, radio or telecommunications facilities*
- (d) Where trees are undermining a flood protection or erosion control structure*
- (e) Where a group of trees constitutes a shelterbelt or hedge*

Policy 3.2.1.1(b)

Acceptable pruning methods, such as natural target pruning, crown lifting and crown thinning shall be used to maintain trees in as natural a form as possible and to maintain and enhance their amenity values.

Policy 3.2.1.1(c)

Work on trees shall be carried out to recognised and accepted contemporary arboricultural standards, confirming current industry practices and NZAA and /or ISA guidelines.

Policy 3.2.1.1(d)

Only approved arborists shall be contracted to carry out tree maintenance work on Council trees in order to maintain industry acceptable standards of workmanship.

Policy 3.2.1.1(e)

Plant pest and disease control measures shall focus on known aggressive decay organisms which have the capacity to debilitate or kill trees.

Policy 3.2.1.1(f)

Poor tree health shall be minimised by the application of sound arboricultural practices and appropriate care strategies to prevent pest and disease establishment.

Policy 3.2.1.1(g)

Priority for work shall be based on:

- (a) health and structural safety of the tree.**
- (b) essential service clearance.**
- (c) form pruning for desirable clearance and amenity effects.**
- (d) Safety of the general public**
- (e) Statutory requirements**

Explanation

The Council will maintain trees in accordance with internationally recognised standards. Appropriate tree care maintenance programmes and strategies will be applied wherever necessary.

All pruning operations will be undertaken using principles defined as CODIT, (Compartmentalisation of Decay in Trees), Natural Target Pruning and other recognised pruning methods.

Topping is internationally recognised as unsound arboricultural practice for the following reasons:

- (a) Vigorous re-growth from adventitious shoots at the site of each pruning cut results in a denser canopy developing in a short space of time. This causes excessive shading, often greater than that previously experienced.**
- (b) The points of attachment of new sucker growth have an inherent weakness and, therefore, a tendency to "break out" as they develop in size. A safety issue is created through this type of pruning.**
- (c) Topping cuts are more prone to decay forming at the wound site. This significantly reduces the health, stability and longevity of the tree.**

Only Council contracted arborists shall be used to ensure that all maintenance work on trees is carried out to recognised arboricultural standards. This approach will promote the health and natural form of trees.

3.2.2 Interference of Trees to Property and Services

Objective 3.2.2.1

To maintain council trees so as to avoid potential damage to property or services.

Policy 3.2.2.1.1 (a)

When notified of damage caused by a public tree to property or services, practical steps shall be taken to confirm and mitigate those effects.

Policy 3.2.2.1.2 (b)

Where council trees are overhanging private property, appropriate pruning shall be carried out by the council to remove the encroachment, as far as practicably possible without destroying the form and integrity of the tree.

Policy 3.2.2.1.3 (c)

Trees on arterial routes shall be pruned or removed to provide adequate visibility where they impede or obstruct access for pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Policy 3.2.2.1.4 (d)

All reasonable effort shall be taken to clear street lights and reserve lights and minimise any reduction in light penetration resulting from obstruction by trees.

Where trees are obstructing a street light and accepted arboricultural practices, such as pruning, cannot be used to resolve the problem, the council will investigate options to maintain safety standards, such as relocating the street light or the tree or installing a new light.

Policy 3.2.2.1.5 (e)

A programme shall be initiated to ensure that tree growth is maintained away from electrical wires and electrical assets, in accordance with the requirements of the Approved Code Of Practice For Safety And Health In Tree Work, Part 2: Maintenance Of Trees Around Power Lines (MPI).

Policy 3.2.2.1.6 (f)

Pruning in the vicinity of overhead wires shall only be carried out by contractors approved by the council to undertake this work. The contractor shall consult with service line owners prior to undertaking work of this nature.

Policy 3.2.2.1.7 (g)

The council will remove or commission the removal of unsustainable trees (i.e. trees having potential for ongoing interference with surrounding activities, services, assets, properties and infrastructure) after informing affected neighbours.

Policy 3.2.2.1.8 (h)

Trees which compromise and/or conflict with shipping navigation aids or radio and telecommunications operations shall be pruned and/or removed as deemed necessary to maintain safety and essential services.

Explanation

These policies seek to avoid potential damage to property and services. Particularly within the street environments there will always be ongoing commitments to ensure that trees do not conflict with services such as wiring, drainage systems, footpaths, kerbing, vehicle and pedestrian movement and property security.

Trees planted beside or under power lines will be trimmed in order to comply with the safe clearance requirements of the approved Code of Practice and local power supplier. Wherever possible, directional pruning methods will be used to remove branches growing towards power lines and to promote growth away from the lines.

Trees considered a safety hazard, or interfering with shipping or aircraft navigation, radio and/or telecommunications facilities, or undermining a flood protection or erosion control structure will be pruned or removed as deemed necessary.

3.3 TREE REMOVAL

This section covers general tree removal policies and specific tree removal policies regarding shading and loss of views and applies to all trees located on recreation reserves, civic open space and other Council land including roadways (except those areas identified in the exclusions) at the discretion of Councils Arborist, or his/her representative.

Additionally over time Council may wish to reclaim the full width of certain road corridors where appropriate, not only for road safety issues but also for additional transport modes such

as walkways, bridle ways and the likes. Trees in many areas are inhibiting this.

Many roads and streets contain trees in senescence that requires removal for safety reasons. Public safety will not be compromised by retention of unsound trees for any reason.

3.3.1 General Tree Removal

Objective 3.3.1.1

To ensure that consistent criteria are applied when considering the removal or maintenance of Council trees in response to a request for service from a member of the public.

Policy 3.3.1.2 (a)

The initial response by Council to a request for service from a property owner concerning tree related problems, such as loss of views, loss of sunlight, or excessive leaf litter, will be to evaluate and attempt to resolve the problem prior to considering tree removal. Examples could include the careful placement of new trees, the ongoing maintenance/pruning of trees and the removal of secondary trees. All works will be according to accepted arboricultural practice.

Policy 3.3.1.2 (b)

Where a tree or treescape that has been specifically planted by Council for amenity or other value exists prior to the transfer of ownership of an adjoining property, there is no requirement on the Council to either remove or prune the tree(s) for views or shade on request. The tree(s) is defined as a pre-existing condition before the most recent landowner's purchase of the property.

Policy 3.3.1.2 (c)

In response to CRMs (Customer Request Management), the Council shall only consider carrying out tree removal (or pruning work that exceeds regular maintenance requirements), where the applicant can clearly demonstrate that the adverse effects of the tree on the applicant's reasonable enjoyment of their land outweighs the benefits of the tree to other residents and to the wider community. Decisions on these matters shall be made by Council.

The following matters will be considered when assessing a request for tree removal (or pruning work that exceeds regular maintenance requirements):

- *The interests of the public in the maintenance of an aesthetically pleasing environment,*
- *The desirability of conserving public reserves containing trees,*

- The value of the tree as a public amenity or habitat,
- The historical, cultural, conservation value or scientific significance (if any) of the tree,
- The botanical significance of the tree,
- Whether the tree or treescape contributes to a landscape of regional or national significance and/or landscape designed with public consultation,
- The contribution of the tree(s) to the medium to long term vision of a reserve management plan or streetscape, and whether the requested works constitute good arboricultural practice,
- The Council's obligations under any applicable statute or management plan,
- The health and safety of the tree,
- The tree being part of a roading corridor that Council wishes to reclaim.

All costs relating to the applications and if approved subsequent tree, stump or tree debris removal will be borne by the applicant.

Policy 3.3.1.2 (d)

Requests for trees to be significantly altered or removed to accommodate specialist activities such as building removal activities, will be assessed against the tree modification/removal criteria outlined in this Policy. In general, a tree modification or removal will not be approved where it will compromise the landscape character of the treescape.

Costs for any work carried out beyond normal maintenance to accommodate such activities shall be recovered from the applicant. This will include the cost of tree debris, stump removal, tree replacement and initial maintenance.

Policy 3.3.1.2 (e)

Requests for tree works will only be considered after consultation, the level of which will be commensurate with the level of significance of the tree and landscape (see Section 3.4: Consultation). Requested tree removals involving previously consulted design tree plantings will require a full public consultation process involving the wider community.

Policy 3.3.1.2 (f)

"Tradeoffs" that provide for long term quality replacement trees at the expense of more short term or lower value trees are to be encouraged, where such action will resolve tree related issues. Trade offs may include replacement trees elsewhere on the site or on a different site, at the agreement of the WDC authorised officer.

Explanation

Council staff regularly receive requests from the public to remove trees due to perceived nuisance created by trees. As far as practicably possible, acceptable arboricultural pruning work may be carried out to mitigate the loss of views, shade and leaf litter experienced by adjoining property owners, provided that the health and value of the tree is not compromised.

In managing its tree assets on public lands, the Council takes a “good neighbour” approach. At the same time, Council has the additional responsibility of conducting its affairs to promote the well-being of all of the people in the district. To this end, the council seeks a reasonable approach to tree management that effectively balances the interests of individual landowners with those of the wider community.

This is not always a straightforward task and the policies in this document aim to provide a transparent and consistent guide to planning and decision making on tree related issues.

In general, if an individual makes a request to prune or remove a healthy tree that has been planted with previous consultation, the Council will work with the applicant and the community to determine measures, within the provisions of the District Tree Policy, to alleviate the matter. If not satisfied with the Council’s decision on a tree matter, the applicant has recourse to pursue the matter through the Infrastructure Committee.

The Council is not inclined to act upon requests for tree removal to provide views where a treescape is already established at the time the property is purchased. That is because the treescape was a ‘pre-existing condition’ at the time of purchasing the property. In particular, the Council will not be required to act upon request for modification to treescapes that have been developed with public consultation.

Explanation

The Council Arborist receives requests from time to time to remove trees due to perceived nuisance created by trees. These policies provide a set of criteria that will be applied when requests for tree removal are received or tree removal is considered. Leaf litter will always be a problem, inherent with any trees in the urban landscape, but is not sufficient reason for the removal of a tree. However, as far as practicably possible, acceptable arboricultural pruning work may be carried out to mitigate the loss of views, shade and leaf litter experienced by adjoining property owners, provided that the health and value of the tree is not compromised.

The cost of this is to be borne by the applicant. This will include stump and tree debris removal. Such works will only be undertaken under Council supervision using Council nominated contractors.

3.3.2 Removal of those Council trees growing on Council property deemed to be causing substantial shading or loss of views

Objective 3.3.2.1

To ensure Council trees which result in shading or loss of views are only removed in circumstances where it can be demonstrated that planting occurred after the dwelling was developed and all reasonable efforts to mitigate these effects of the tree have been unsuccessful.

Policy 3.3.2.1(a)

Where Council trees are planted which, subsequently, unreasonably affect the views of a long term resident or significantly shade their property the Council shall:

- *Manage the planting to reduce its impact on views and solar access but without compromising the value or integrity of the planting.*
- *Refer all costs associated with removal applications or subsequent removal to the applicant unless the tree is found to be in an unhealthy state.*

Exclusions

The following trees are excluded from Policy:

- *Trees that fall into the category of Notable Trees in the District Plan.*
- *Habitat creation or conservation plantings*
- *Mitigation plantings*
- *Plantings undertaken by 3rd parties in agreement with Council*
- *Grant funded plantings*
- *Trees identified in a Reserve Management Plan for retention as they represent an integral part of the reserve.*
- *Trees with a value equivalent to Category 1 Notable Tree (public consultation required) but not listed as a Notable Tree under the District Plan.*
- *Trees protected by a condition of Resource Consent.*

Policy 3.3.2.1(b)

Where a mature tree, or stand of mature trees, exists prior to the arrival of a new resident in an adjoining property there is no requirement on Council to either remove or prune the tree(s) for views or shade on request. The tree(s) was a pre-existing condition before the new resident's occupation of the property.

Policy 3.3.2.1(c)

The Council shall only carry out pruning work beyond the growth that has occurred during the resident's occupation, or to remove the tree if deemed appropriate, where the resident can clearly demonstrate "loss of enjoyment." In this circumstance, if the resident accordingly derives some added value to their property, the resident shall contribute to the cost of the agreed pruning or removal work.

Explanation

As with leaf litter, reductions in views and shading may be outcomes associated with maturing tree plantings. Council's challenge is to manage these issues consistently and fairly, without compromising the District's tree resource, environmental values or existing agreements. Approaches such as the careful plant placement of new trees, the ongoing maintenance pruning of trees and the consideration of removal of secondary trees may be carried out to attempt to resolve effects of shading and loss of views.

3.4 CONSULTATION

This section covers the Council's approach to consultation relating to tree management and maintenance, together with the process for handling enquiries regarding appeals concerning decisions relating to Council Trees. It outlines the mechanisms that Council shall use to address enquiries and the process for resolving appeals.

Exclusion

The following trees are excluded from Policy 3.4 below:

- *Trees that are protected through District Plan provisions.*

Objective 3.4.1.1

Council shall consult with affected parties with regard to proposed tree planting.

Policy 3.4.1.1(a)

Consultation with local residents and affected owners and occupiers will be undertaken before any major street tree or reserve planting is undertaken. Refer to policy 3.1.1.7 (a).

Objective 3.4.1.2

Council shall consult with affected parties with regard to proposed tree removal.

Policy 3.4.1.2(a)

Consultation with local residents and affected owners and occupiers will be undertaken before any major tree removal is undertaken.

Objective 3.4.1.3

Council shall ensure that consultation and observance of cultural protocols is undertaken where directed by tangata whenua on sites that contain waahi tapu.

Policy 3.4.1.3(a)

Waahi tapu sites include those sites identified in the District Plan. Additional sites on land within the scope of this policy that are identified as waahi tapu by the appropriate hapu or iwi are included in the policy.

Objective 3.4.1.4

Enquiries and appeals concerning trees will be dealt with through established processes that are consistently applied.

Policy 3.4.1.4(a)

All external enquiries relating to trees under the Council's jurisdiction shall be directed to the Council's Customer Services Centre. The specific processes for dealing with any enquiry are given in the Appendices.

Policy 3.4.1.4(b)

Contractors undertaking works for the Parks and Facilities Department are not authorised to directly represent the Council for public enquiries relating to trees, unless specifically delegated to do so by the Council Arborist or his/her representative.

Policy 3.4.1.4(c)

The process by which a resident can appeal a decision concerning the maintenance of trees under Parks and Facilities Department's jurisdiction is:

The resident should raise the matter, in writing, with the Council Arborist. Where tree maintenance issues involve significant local or community interest the Council will enter into a consultation process to ensure that the wider community interest is considered

Explanation

There will always be differences of opinion when dealing with tree issues - between those who support and enjoy the benefits of trees and those who do

not. This policy provides a consistent approach to dealing with such issues and allows for the provision of a high value tree resource. Consultation with individuals and/or groups in the community will be undertaken wherever it is required, in order to provide information, advice and an opportunity to comment or participate. Where tree planting or removal will have a major effect on a local area then local residents will be contacted by letter. Where the effect is considered to be major beyond the immediate surroundings then the appropriate public notices will be undertaken. This consultation may include a public meeting.

The observance of cultural protocols relating to trees on waahi tapu sites enable local tangata whenua to determine appropriate actions and responses by Council officers.

Processes for dealing with tree issues are outlined, and in some instances applications for service delivery may be declined where they are inconsistent with approved policy.

3.5 RESERVE NEIGHBOURS

Objective 3.5.1.1

To minimise the adverse effects generated by trees on reserves on the amenity of adjacent properties.

Policy 3.5.1.1(a)

Council shall take all reasonable steps to maintain a good neighbour relationship with adjacent landowners. However, where appropriate, the demands of neighbours shall not take precedence over the desires of the local community, reserve development, management plans and overall community landscape amenity.

Policy 3.5.1.1(b)

To obtain a clearer local picture of significant issues, local opinion will be canvassed before the Council Arborist makes the final decision on a course of action.

Explanation

Neighbouring property owners often raise issues regarding adverse effects of trees in reserves. Council seeks to maintain good neighbour relationships with landowners by minimising adverse effects of trees in reserves on neighbours. However, a wider public consultation process will be undertaken if deemed necessary by Council.

3.6 PROMOTION AND EDUCATION

Objective 3.6.1.1

To foster public interest, awareness and guardianship of the value of trees in reserves and on private land.

Policy 3.6.1.1(a)

Encourage the community to become involved in tree planting and maintenance of selected reserves, through consultation.

Policy 3.6.1.1(b)

Promote the benefits of trees and the added importance of "the right tree planted in the right place".

Policy 3.6.1.1(c)

Develop, maintain and promote a register of tree collections throughout the district.

Policy 3.6.1.1(d)

Promote the Council's trees during regional and national events.

Explanation

The value of the Council's tree resource is often taken for granted by those who are routinely amidst it. However, it is a very significant landscape feature which gives an immediate impression to visitors to the District. A healthy and well maintained treescape is a reflection of a caring community. It is also a natural asset which is easily lost through poor management and lack of appropriate policy.

Many of the issues related to people's dissatisfaction with trees are attributable to a lack of awareness regarding the overall value of trees and their benefits. Policies that educate and inform the public about the positive attributes of trees are an important component of Council's policies.

3.7 TREE EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Objective 3.7.1.1

Consistent standards will be used to evaluate the health, condition and to a lesser extent monetary value of trees, or any potential hazards.

Policy 3.7.1.1(a)

The RNZIH Tree Evaluation System (STEM) shall be used as the standard for assessing the health, condition and if required monetary value of trees, unless superseded by a more appropriate method.

Explanation

There are situations where it is necessary to attribute a monetary value to a tree. These situations usually arise when the removal of a tree is proposed. It is important that in these situations the monetary value of the tree is assessed using a consistent evaluation system. The RNZIH Tree Evaluation System (STEM) is currently the nationally recognised assessment system used by Council

Where trees are considered unsafe and represent a hazard to people or property a formal evaluation will be carried out by a suitably qualified arborist.

3.8 SUBDIVISION, DEVELOPMENT AND THE DISTRICT PLAN

Objective 3.8.1.1

Waikato District Council provides for the management and protection of trees on public and private land through tree protection rules and provisions within its District Plan. A tree(s) can be protected:

- **Through the permitted standards in the District Plan.**
- **As a notable tree that is listed in the District Plan schedule.**
- **As part of a project agreed to by Council**
- **As a natural resource**

Policy 3.8.1.1(a)

The Planning and Roading Departments and Contractors shall liaise with the Council Arborist with regard to the protection of significant trees during the resource consent process.

Policy 3.8.1.1(b)

Trees on reserves and roadways shall be listed as Notable Trees in the Waikato District Plan where they meet the Notable Tree criteria, and where they:

- **are considered at risk due to potential threats from development nearby**
- **are deemed to be particularly significant.**

Explanation

There are a number of provisions for the protection of trees within the District Plan.

The subdivision and consent process within the District Plan provides opportunity to assess vegetation on development sites and to attempt to

retain or work around trees identified to be of significance. In many cases an assessment will identify vegetation of little significance that may be removed in exchange for retention of any significant trees on the site or mitigation by replacement trees. The intention is not to place unrealistic expectations on the developer to retain vegetation of little value, but to provide assistance on how best to integrate the development and any significant vegetation on the site.

Currently Council provides assistance for Notable Trees on private and public land to promote health and safety of those trees, at the discretion of the Council Arborist.

3.9 UNAUTHORISED REMOVAL OF TREES

Objective 3.9.1

- **To actively encourage criminal proceedings against any person(s) found deliberately damaging or destroying any Council owned tree**
- **To actively seek all costs associated with damage or destruction of Council owned trees by way of 'accident' e.g. out of control vehicle damages tree.**
- **Trees protected under the District Plan, if deliberately damaged will be dealt with under the terms and conditions set out in the Resource Management Act 1991.**

Objective 3.9.1.1

To respond in a consistent manner to the wilful damage of Council trees, in order to deter future offences of this nature and to take appropriate action according to New Zealand law.

Policy 3.9.1.1(a)

The Council will assess and, where appropriate, replace trees on Council lands that have been wilfully killed, removed or damaged.

Policy 3.9.1.3(b)

The Council will refer incidents of wilful tree damage, theft or death to the police. The Council will request an investigation proceed into the matter and it will be Council's intention to prosecute if at all possible.

Policy 3.9.1.4(c)

The Council may use incentives, such as reward offers, for information leading to the arrest of individuals responsible for damage to or theft of Council trees as well as seeking costs for replacement and ongoing maintenance from those found responsible for the damage.

Explanation

There have been several instances in recent years of members of the public stealing or wilfully damaging Council trees, including deliberately killing trees. This type of activity is an offence under a number of New Zealand statutes. It also represents a wasteful squandering of public resources. The Council will respond strongly to any incidence of wilful damage to Council trees.

4.0 COMMEMORATIVE TREES

Trees have been planted on public lands throughout the district to commemorate specific people and events. Commemorative plantings are often undertaken in the memory of someone who has recently passed away. Visiting dignitaries may plant a tree to provide a lasting memento of their visit. Trees have also been donated by groups and organisations as a contribution to the district. The Council regularly receives requests for new plantings. Commemorative trees hold a special significance to people and their management is, therefore, particularly sensitive. In addition to managing the physical needs of the tree, the history of the tree also needs to be recorded and preserved.

Council's General Policies Reserve Management Plan deals with how Council will deal all applications for Commemorative Trees.

Once planted, commemorative trees become a Council asset and are maintained to council standards. As with all Council managed trees, plantings need to be appropriate to the site and area, maintenance must be according to best arboricultural practice, and tree removals may be necessary on occasion.

Objective 4.1

To identify, map and maintain existing donated and commemorative trees, recognising their special significance.

Policy 4.1.1

An up-to-date record of commemorative trees in the District shall be maintained. The purpose of the planting and sponsoring individuals or groups will be included in the record.

Policy 4.1.2

Commemorative trees shall be maintained to Council standards.

Policy 4.1.3

Relocation or removal of a commemorative tree may be undertaken where necessary, based on an assessment of the value of the tree, the ability to relocate or replace to another site, and the costs and benefits to community well-being of various tree management options.

Policy 4.1.4

Where practicable, commemorative trees that have died or need to be removed may be replaced, although a more suitable species and/or site may be selected for the replacement tree.

Policy 4.1.5

Where appropriate and feasible, the sponsors of a commemorative planting will be informed if a tree(s) needs to be removed or relocated.

Objective 4.2

To strategically plan and manage the location and species of future commemorative plantings.

Policy 4.2.1

Council has a finite land inventory and the planting of trees purely for commemorative purposes in particular reserves often causes problems, such as overcrowding, inappropriate species, wrong location etc. Council's General Policies Reserve Management Plan gives guidance for such applications. Should an application fall outside that policy's brief the Council's Infrastructure Committee will assess applications on a case by case basis.

Council will undertake to identify strategic sites in each of its communities for the planting of suitable tree species that in future will become the focus for enhancing community festivals such as Christmas and Autumn festivals.

Explanation

Commemorative plantings are a special category in that they have a special meaning for some individuals and their history is important. Where possible, Council will provide suitable locations for future plantings e.g., commemorative tree parks especially in cemeteries. It should be noted that species to be planted will be approved by Council and that criteria for acceptance of donated / commemorative trees is via Council's General Policies Reserve Management Plan or by an Infrastructure Committee decision.

5.0 SUCCESSION PLANTING

To ensure that as trees age and become a hazard there are replacement trees in place to ensure where appropriate there is a continuity of urban and rural landscapes.

Policy 5.1

Long term plans shall be part of or appendices to Management plans of reserves and other open spaces controlled by the WDC. In

this way, regardless of personnel changes, these plans endure so that replacement trees minimise the impact of the removal of trees that because of their age are in danger of falling, or are diseased, or storm damaged beyond repair.

Policy 5.2

Where appropriate Road, River and Lakeside trees shall be replaced on a long term rotation basis so that the iconic landscape features are always present.

Explanation

The Waikato District has many introduced trees which were planted by early settlers and now form an integral part of the landscape.

In many cases it has been found that replacing like tree with like is no longer appropriate due to many factors including increased urbanisation, increased traffic volumes, adjacent utility services, negative landscape and environmental impacts and safety.

It is more appropriate in many cases, especially along rural roads for trees not to be replaced within the roading corridor but planting to be encouraged on adjacent private land where appropriate.

6.0 GLOSSARY

The following definitions are given for words and terms found within the texts and appendices of the District Tree Policy.

Adventitious (adventive)	Growth that arises from (normally) suppressed buds, or from those plants which invade or inhabit a site first.
Amenity value	Provides positive features and qualities in the landscape.
Approved arborist	A suitably qualified person who can demonstrate proven experience, competency and ability in the field of arboriculture.
Arboriculture	The planting and care of trees.
Arterial routes	Route or road of regional or district strategic importance as identified on the WDC District Plan Maps.
Bollards	Post of fixture that serves to protect trees from vehicle and environmental damage.
Branch collar	The raised rim of bark tissue at the connection point between a branch or stem.
Cambium zone	The area of dividing tissue within a tree found between the outer bark and the woody stem.
Canopy	The extent of the foliage cover of any tree or plant.

Carriageway	Area designated for vehicular movement.
Circumferential	The area within a circumference.
Climax vegetation	Vegetation which will ultimately form the canopy of the forest area or final stage of succession.
CODIT	An acronym for the term Compartmentalisation Of Decay In Trees, meaning a two part descriptive model on the process of decay in trees.
Co-dominant stems	Stems of similar size originating from the same position on the main stem.
Compaction	Ground that has hardened/compressed as a result of constant wear by environmental or mechanical means.
Containerised plants	Plants that have been grown in pots or receptacles in a nursery environment.
Covenant	Legal mechanism that provides agreement to protect a feature.
Crown lifting	Removing the lower branches of a tree to provide clearance for buildings, vehicles, pedestrians, services and vistas. Lifting is carried out to no greater extent than 1/3 the overall height of the tree in proportion to the tree's canopy.
Crown thinning	Removal of dead, declining and secondary growth to increase air movement and light through the crown. Thinning is carried out to no greater extent than 20% of the canopy in proportion to its size.
Cultivar	Variations of plant species specifically selected and produced by people.
Directional pruning	Removal of branches at the stem to encourage overall growth away from a feature or fixture.
Ecological	Modes of life, habits and relationships of living organisms and their environment.
Ecosourcing	Replanting with only locally occurring natural genetic plants materials.
Encroachment	A situation where the public recreational use or appreciation of the reserve is reduced or obstructed by the private use of the reserve. Alternatively when roots or branches of a tree grow over or into neighbouring property.
Endemic	Refers to a plant found only in a particular area.
Environment	The physical and biological factors within a given site.
Exotic	Plant or animal introduced from another country.
Formative pruning	Pruning a tree to enhance the branch structure in relation to a tree's long term shape and structural strength.
Gro-tubes	Tree shelter designed to protect plants from stock.

Growth points	The position from which growth occurs.
Guardianship	Providing for the fostering and care of a feature or entity.
Hazardous tree	A tree which has physical, structural and/or biological defects that has been identified or evaluated as representing danger to life or property.
Indigenous	Plant or animal that occurs naturally to an area.
ISA	International Society of Arboriculture. A world-wide organisation representing professional arborists.
ISA Tree Hazard Evaluation Method	Standard evaluation method that identifies the hazard rating of trees.
Landscape values	Those features of the land that make up the wider visual appreciation of an area when viewed as a whole, such as trees, vegetation, water, landform.
Local Character species	Those species that define the local character of the district, through either being a dominant native species or significant cultural/historical species.
Local pioneer species	Plants that establish easily and provide the first tree cover, occurring naturally in the District.
Long term value	Providing positive and useful effects over a long period. Usually over 50 years.
Loss of enjoyment	Term of the Property Law Act 2007 that refers to an adverse effect on property and enjoyment of it.
Mitigate	Moderate or neutralise the effects of an activity.
Mulch	The woody debris arising from the chipping of trees and plants, that can be used to suppress weed growth and enhance nutrient and micro organism activity around desirable plantings.
Non endemic native plants	Native plants that are not found naturally in the Waikato Ecological Region.
Notable tree	A tree or group of trees that are considered significant for their historical, botanical, landscape, amenity or cultural values and are identified as such in the Waikato District Plan and includes a Heritage tree or Protected Tree listed in that Plan.
Arboricultural Operations Manual	The operational instruction manual that sets out the standard method for contractors to follow when commissioned to carry out arboricultural work.
NTP	An abbreviation for the term Natural Target Pruning - a model demonstrating the proper position and sequence of cuts to be made when pruning.
NZAA	New Zealand Arboricultural Association. A national organisation representing professional arborists.

Photosynthate	A substance (usually sugars and carbohydrates) derived from photosynthesis - the complex process of conversion of light energy to chemical energy.
Pioneer species	One of the first naturally arising plant species to appear on any landscape.
Pollarding	A pruning method of training branches, used on some large-growing trees, where the tree is pruned to the same growth points (annually or regularly), to maintain the crown to a particular size.
Proactive	Activity carried out before it becomes a necessity.
Protected trees	A protected tree is a notable tree that is listed in the District Plan schedule.
Reactive	Activity that is carried out in direct response to an enquiry or observation.
Reduction pruning	The shortening and/or removal of select branches within a tree to reduce the overall size of the tree canopy.
Regenerative pruning	The removal and/or pruning of branches or stems to encourage a plant's recovery from damage or stress.
Remedial pruning	Pruning to correct imbalances or deformities in tree shape and form, to reduce duplication in branch formations, to remove damaged tissue (includes deadwood).
Remnant	The natural vegetation remaining from an original tree stand or plant colony which has been modified.
RNZIH evaluation method	A national standard (compiled by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture) used to assess the contribution of a tree(s) within the landscape, using a points system to determine health, condition and monetary value.
Root ball	The mass of roots surrounding and from a tree or plant, usually x10-12 the trunk diameter (measured outwards from the trunk) and to a depth determined by root density.
Root grafting	The inter-connected growth of roots from two or more trees, that allows potential sharing of water and nutrients.
Root zone	The area covered by the full extent to which roots spread from a tree(s)
Rural road	Rural roads consist of local roads whose primary function is to provide access to adjacent properties and arterial routes
Rural Road Reserve	Is the entire surveyed legal length and width of a road regardless of where existing fence boundaries are located, including formed carriageway and unformed road verges.

Secondary growth branches	All growth arising within a plant or tree that is secondary to the main branch/stem framework.
Senescence	Senescence or biological aging is the change in the biology of an organism as it ages after its maturity. Such changes range from those affecting its cells and their function to that of the whole organism
Short term value	The limited contribution, in terms of lifespan and/or beneficial attributes, of a tree or plant within any landscape. The time scale is usually less than 50 years duration.
Significant tree	A tree identified as having long term life expectancy and/or high amenity value.
Soil conditioners	Additives (synthetic or organic) that increase the capacity of soils to function as a healthy medium for plant growth.
Soil pan	A layer(s) within the soil which is impervious, inhibiting the movement of water and air.
Solar access	The availability or penetration of sunlight.
Structural safety	The inherent capacity of a tree or plant, observed by examination of its structure, shape and form, to withstand wind loading and/or other physical force in order to resist failure, breakage or collapse.
Sucker growth	Fleshy shoots and growth arising from below a graft union or from the base of a tree or plant.
Suppressed growth/branches	Branches or stems under severe stress due to competition for light or nutrient. Usually these branches or stems will die in the short term.
Sustainability	The capacity of a tree to survive and thrive within the environment it is planted in without intensive maintenance or management.
Topping	A lay person's term meaning the removal of the head or top most section of a tree or plant. Topping is not an accepted professional arboricultural practice.
Trade-off	A negotiated outcome that provides benefit to all parties and may mean limited compromise.
Tree	Tree means a perennial woody plant at least 6 metres in height at maturity, having an erect stem/s or trunk/s and a well-developed crown or leaf canopy.
Trees isolation systems	Built structures or manufactured products that isolate a tree from potential damage (such as a protective cage or ground-level surround that prevent damage from stock or mechanical damage.
Urban tree collection	A formal planting of specialised botanical or feature interest. Usually designed, recorded and maintained as a long term permanent asset.
Vista	A view, view shaft or framed view point.

7.0 APPENDICES

This section contains appendices which support and clarify the District Tree Policy Part I text.

Appendix IA: Request for Service: District Tree Policy - Trees other than Protected Trees

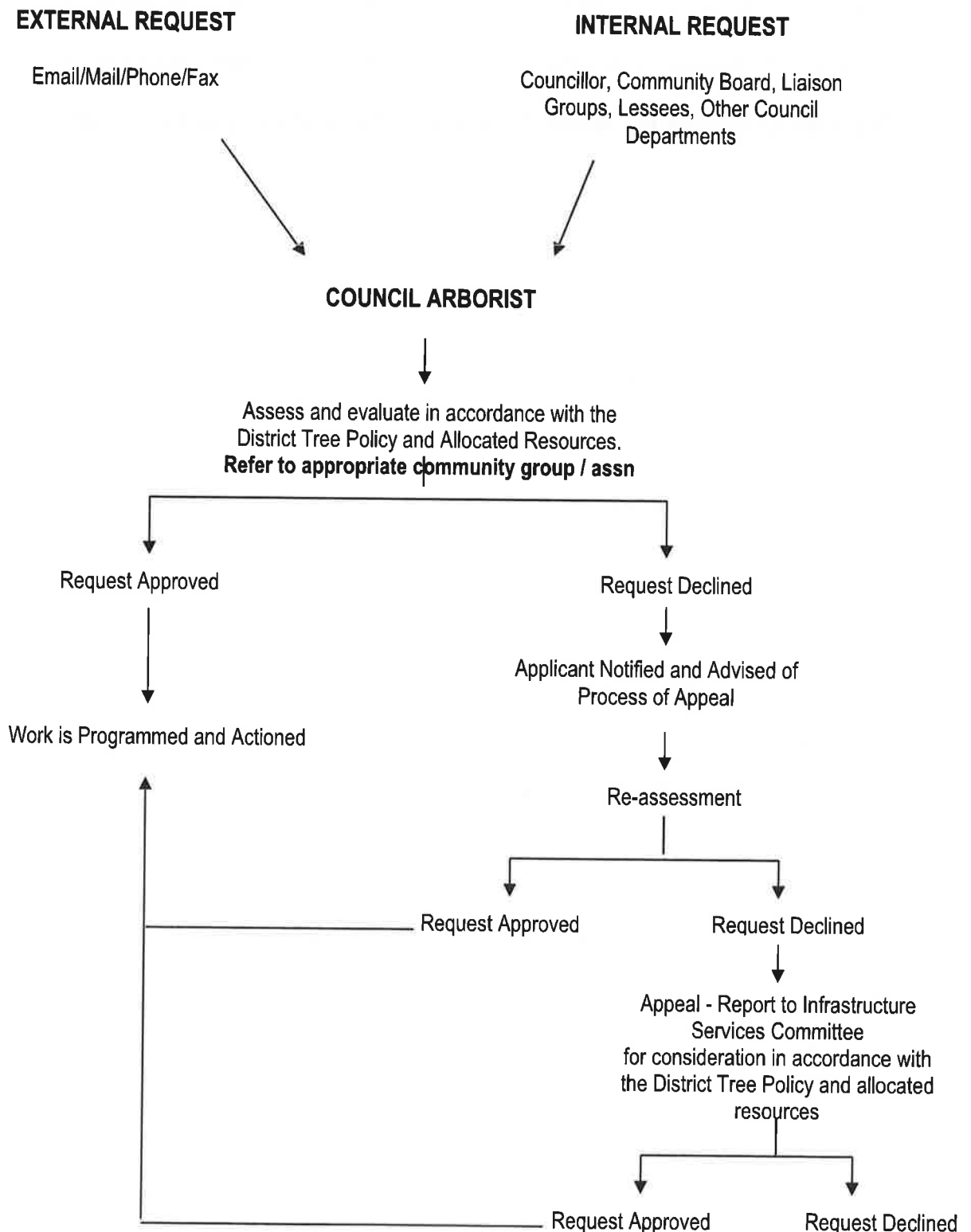
Appendix IB: Request for Service: District Plan - Protected Trees - All Enquiries

Appendix IC: Request for Service: District Plan - Protected Trees - New Listing

Appendix ID: Request for Service: District Tree Policy - Planting of Street Trees

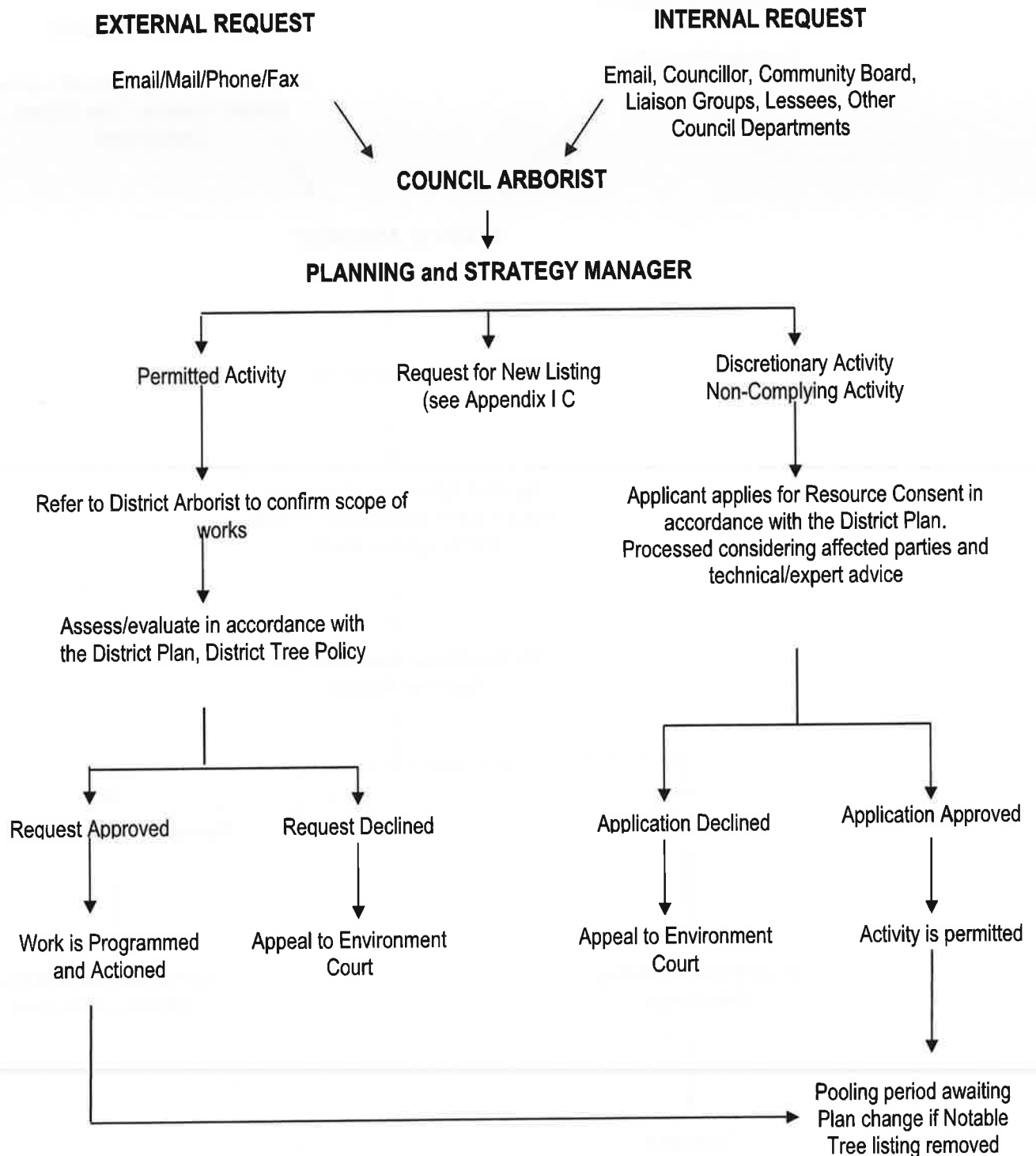
APPENDIX IA

REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR DISTRICT TREE POLICY TREES OTHER THAN PROTECTED TREES_s



APPENDIX I B

REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR DISTRICT PLAN NOTABLE TREES - ALL ENQUIRIES



APPENDIX I C

REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR DISTRICT PLAN PROTECTED TREES - NEW LISTING

EXTERNAL REQUEST

Email/Mail/Phone/Fax

INTERNAL REQUEST

Councillor, Community Board, Liaison
Groups, Lessees, Other Council
Departments

COUNCIL ARBORIST

PLANNING and STRATEGY TEAM

Standard forms to be filled out by
property owner and returned to WDC
Planning Department

Evaluation and Assessment by
Approved Arborist

Tree meets criteria

Tree does not meet criteria

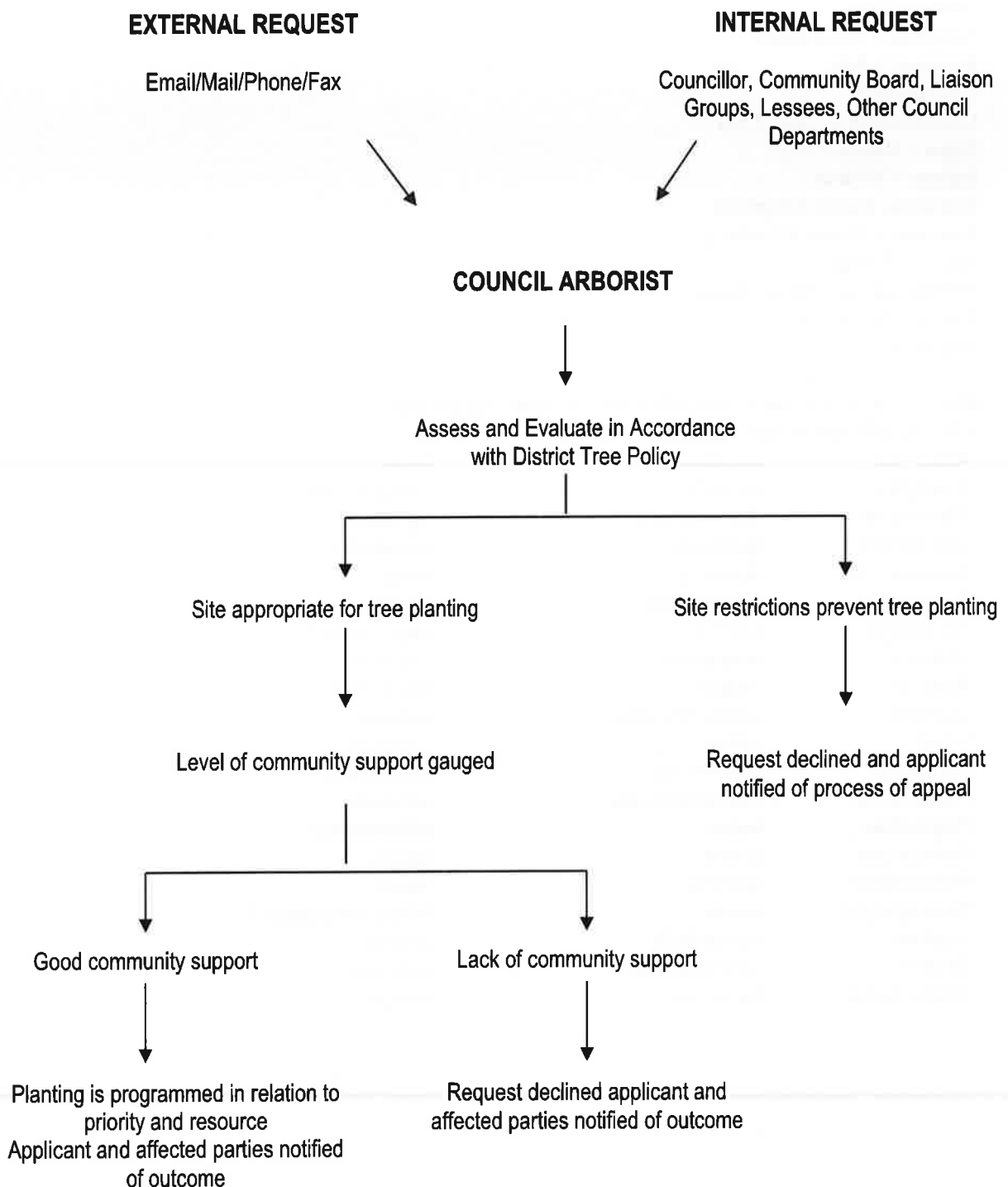
Pooling period awaiting
Plan change

Owner/applicant informed
requested is declined

Tree listed

APPENDIX I D

REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR DISTRICT TREE POLICY - PLANTING STREET TREES



Examples of Suitable SPECIES for amenity planting in RURAL AREAS ONLY – Note this list is not exhaustive or limiting.

Quercus – Oak
 Sorbus – Rowan
 Prunus - Cherry
 Malus – Apple
 Acer – Maple
 Populus – Poplar
 Ulmus – Elm
 Carpinus - Horn beam
 Fraxinus – Ash
 Liquidamber
 Liriodendron – Tulip Tree
 Fagus – Beech
 Juglans – Walnut
 Castanea- Sweet Chestnut
 Aesculus – Horse Chestnut
 Nyssa – Tulepo
 Metrosideros – Pohutukawa
 Cercis – Judas tree
 Magnolia

**Examples of native trees suitable for amenity planting
– Note this list is not exhaustive or limiting.**

Alectryon	excelsus	var. excelsus	titoki
Cordyline	australis		cabbage tree
Dacrycarpus	dacrydioides		kahikatea
Dysoxylum	spectabile		kohekohe
Elaeocarpus	dentatus		hinau
Elaeocarpus	hookerianus		pokaka
Hedycarya	arborea		pigeonwood
Hoheria	sexstylosa		houhere
Knightia	excelsa		rewarewa
Laurelia	novae-zelandiae		pukatea
Litsea	calicaris		mangeao
Pennantia	corymbosa		kaikomako
Phyllocladus	trichomanoides		tanekaha
Plagianthus	regius		ribbonwood
Podocarpus	totara		totara
Prumnopitys	taxifolia		matai
Rhopalostylis	sapida		Nikau small-leaved
Sophora	microphylla		kowhai
Streblus	heterophyllus		milk tree
Weinmannia	racemosa		kamahi