

6.3 General Business Activities

Introduction and Issues

There is ongoing growth in car oriented commercial development, a greater diversity of activities within commercial areas and increasing development of large format retail outlets operating either singularly or in commercial parks. The development of this diverse range of business activities has the potential to lower amenity levels both within commercial areas and at their interface with other areas. It also has implications for the safe and efficient operation of the City's transport network.

The principal issues regarding general business activities in Hamilton are:

- **Rapidly developing changes in the nature of commercial activity impact on established commercial areas.** The commercial sector of the City's economy and land use pattern is constantly changing. This can often generate demand for additional land to accommodate such changes and may affect the viability of established commercial areas. Competition has also generated demand for highly visible sites with large amounts of available carparking, convenient access and high impact buildings. If located in established commercial centres such development can conflict with their amenity values. The effects of these trends need to be addressed while enabling the commercial sector to accommodate change and not inhibiting competition.
- **Changes in commercial patterns can generate adverse effects on the amenity values of adjoining activities.** The growing diversity of commercial activity in established commercial nodes is being paralleled by changing hours of operation, increased retail catchments and changes to the character and scale of retail developments. This can significantly alter the amenity of these areas and their impact on adjoining activities, particularly in established localities which may be unable to effectively mitigate these changes.
- **Vehicular activity associated with commercial service activities can have impacts on the roading network and amenity values.** High vehicle dependency and increased vehicular ingress and egress movements can adversely affect the safety and efficiency of the transport network particularly where commercial activities seek to locate on high profile sites adjacent to the City's arterial road network. Increased traffic volumes particularly where associated with longer hours of operation can impact negatively on a locality's amenity values in terms of noise and safety. There are also ongoing issues of pedestrian safety associated with higher levels of on-site vehicle provision and the concentration of crossing points in some localities.
- **The visual dominance of commercial service activities can adversely affect the amenity values of adjoining activities.** The scale and visibility of many commercial service activities can have an impact on the visual amenity of the city. This is significant where such areas are situated close to residential areas and on the principal vehicular entranceways to the City. The use of dominant coloured or illuminated buildings, the large amounts of advertising and the extensive areas of carparking and yard areas, is likely to compound these adverse effects.

- **Established amenity, heritage or open space values can be detrimentally affected by the intensification of business activity in specific localities.** The ongoing intensification of commercial activities in localities close to inner city residential areas or in areas of significant heritage value such as the Southend of the Central Area can detrimentally affect the amenity of such areas. This can occur through the conversion of existing buildings or new developments, which are of an inconsistent scale, intensity or form to the identified values of the locality.

Objective 6.3.1 Provision for Activities

To enable a wide range of commercial service activities to occur where the impacts of their development can be effectively avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Policies

- a) Enable the development of commercial service activities that allow a wide range of commercial and business services to be supplied to the community.
- b) Encourage commercial service development in localities adjacent to the arterial roading network to maintain accessibility and to minimise traffic impacts in surrounding areas.
- c) Accommodate the development of new commercial service areas where these can enable the effective establishment of business activities, where integration with the arterial roading network can be achieved and where the potential conflicts with activities in adjoining areas can be identified and mitigated.
- d) Ensure that the scale, form and visual intrusion of commercial service development and the effects of commercial service activities is controlled where it adjoins residential areas to minimise the potential degradation of the amenity values of adjoining residential properties.
- e) Ensure that residential development in commercial service areas does not compromise the effective development and operation of commercial service activities.

Reasons

Changes in the business sector means that car-oriented development needs to be appropriately accommodated. While car-oriented developments can locate within traditional commercial centres, the generated effects (noise, vehicle and visual) suggest that specific provision for such activities is desirable and that the interrelationship with the City's transport network needs to be recognised.

The development of commercial service areas, particularly any new areas, must focus on minimising the effect of the activities beyond the immediate site. In that regard commercial service developments have the potential to generate negative amenity impacts on surrounding activities. The interface with residential and other areas is therefore controlled to minimise the effects.

Objective 6.3.2 Commercial Service Development

To accommodate commercial service development, while mitigating the impacts on the City's transport network.

Policies

- a) Control ingress and egress to commercial service sites where the volume of vehicles using the site or the location of the site is likely to significantly affect the safety and efficiency of the adjoining transport network.
- b) Ensure that adequate provision is made to accommodate vehicles associated with any commercial service activity to avoid, remedy or mitigate any negative impact on the surrounding neighbourhood and on the transport network.
- c) Ensure that any pedestrian oriented retail activities are developed in a manner that minimises conflicts with vehicles to reduce potential risks to the safety of users.

Reasons

Commercial Service developments are often located adjacent to the arterial roading network to maximise commercial visibility and access. Such activities need to be controlled to maintain the safety and efficiency of the network. Because of the car-oriented nature of many commercial service activities, there are also potential safety conflicts that need to be resolved where individual developments have a pedestrian focus.

Objective 6.3.3 Maintaining Special Values

To maintain and enhance the heritage and open space values of those parts of the City's commercial areas which enjoy a special character.

Policies

- a) Control the scale and intensity of commercial development at the interface with inner city residential areas, to provide a transition between the amenity values of each.
- b) Ensure that in areas where identified environmental, heritage or special character values are present, the character, scale and intensity of commercial development remains compatible with and is integrated with the surroundings.

Reasons

Commercial service activities do occur in areas that have identified values and adjoin areas of high amenity. The policies therefore reflect the need to control development to ensure an appropriate transition of amenity takes place. In particular the historic associations and the extent of green space are seen as imparting a special character and importance to the Southend of the Central Area. In that regard a degree of control over the nature and intensity of development and activities is appropriate to protect the specific amenity values of the locality.

Methods

The General Business Activities objectives and policies will be implemented through the following methods:

District Plan

- **Commercial Service Zone Rules** - will be used to enable development of commercial service areas throughout the city and to manage the effects of development in such areas.
- **City-Wide Standards** - will be used to ensure impacts including vehicle provision, site development, visual amenities, noise, pollution associated with commercial service areas are adequately avoided, remedied or mitigated.
- **Financial and Reserves Contributions** - will be used to help support infrastructural development needed to address impacts on the environment traffic and amenity values.

Other Methods

- **Council Guidelines and other Educational Material** - can be used to encourage appropriate forms of development.
- **Council Works** - can help enhance accessibility and streetscape.

Anticipated Environmental Results

The following environmental results are anticipated:

- Impact of service commercial activities on residential neighbourhoods and high amenity locations minimised.
- Traffic impacts of commercial service activities particularly on the arterial road network adequately managed.
- Changes in the nature of commercial development accommodated without undue conflict or environmental impact.