16 SIGNS AND LIGHTING

Transitional consenting

Changes to the Resource Management Act 1991 regarding transitional resource consenting arrangements took effect from 30 October 2026. As a result, some provisions within this chapter are affected by section 104(1A) of the Resource Management Act 1991. Text highlighted in grey identifies provisions, or parts of provisions, that have been identified as affected. Explanatory notes are shown in highlighted grey and *italics* to provide further guidance on the effect of the legislative changes.

CONTEXT

Signs have an important function as a communication tool within the District. In addition to advertising goods and services, they provide notice of forthcoming events, warning of hazards, identification of particular sites and premises, and direct and control traffic and pedestrians. However, whilst important, the number, size, location and visual prominence of signs need to be balanced against the potential impact they can have on infrastructure, traffic and pedestrian safety and visual amenity.

Signs on land owned by the Council are controlled by the Council's bylaws.

Outdoor lighting is essential for some recreational activities and for safety purposes. However, such lighting can adversely affect the visual amenity of residential areas and traffic safety on roads and State Highways. This chapter is included in the Plan in order to establish a base level of lighting that is acceptable.

Signs on State Highway reserves are controlled by the New Zealand Transport Agency (**NZTA**) through the Signs on State Highways Bylaw 2010.

16.1 ISSUES

16.1.1 While signs and lighting play an essential role in the community, their size, content, number, location and appearance can adversely affect:

- the visual amenity of buildings, sites or areas where they are displayed; and
- the efficient operation and maintenance of infrastructure.

16.1.2 All signs are intended to attract attention and are therefore potentially distracting and obtrusive, compromising traffic and pedestrian safety.

16.1.3 While outdoor lighting plays an important role in the community, it can also adversely affect amenity, particularly in residential areas, and traffic and pedestrian safety.

16.1.4 The clutter of signs on a site, or at a location, can give rise to adverse cumulative effects.

16.1.5 Historic heritage is vulnerable to physical and visual changes from signs and lighting that may reduce or destroy the qualities, features, and fabric that contribute to the heritage value.

16.2 ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES EXPECTED

16.2.1 Maintenance and enhancement of amenity and heritage values.

16.2.2 Protection of traffic and pedestrian safety and the safe and efficient operation of infrastructure in all areas of the District.

16.2.3 Reduced sign clutter.

16.2.4 Appropriate signs that convey necessary information for the social, economic, and cultural welfare of the District.

16.3 OBJECTIVES

16.3.1 To maintain and enhance amenity and heritage values whilst providing for a wide range of sign and lighting activities in a number of locations.

16.3.2 To ensure that the safe and efficient operation of the road transport and pedestrian network and other infrastructure will not be adversely compromised by sign and lighting activities.

16.3.3 To minimise the clutter of signs.

16.4 POLICIES

16.4.1 That the adverse effects of signs in the District be limited through size, type, duration, number and location controls.

16.4.2 That the consolidation of signs be encouraged to reduce the cumulative effects of sign proliferation and clutter.

16.4.3 That the adverse effects of outdoor lighting in the District be limited through intensity, location, and duration controls.

16.4.4 That sign and lighting activities located on scheduled historic sites, buildings and objects shall be compatible with the heritage values being protected.

16.5 METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION

DISTRICT PLAN

16.5.1 Controls are imposed on outdoor lighting to avoid adverse effects on the amenity of any adjacent residential activities.

16.5.2 Standards for signs on land not owned by the Council are contained within this section of the Plan. Standards for signs on Council owned land are contained within Council's Bylaws.

16.5.3 The Council will retain the discretion to require visual amenity to be improved should an activity create offensive or objectionable visual effects, and may use the enforcement provisions of the Act.

16.5.4 Any sign placed affixed, attached or painted onto an item listed in ***Appendix 1E: Schedule of Historic Sites, Buildings, and Objects*** are subject to the provisions of ***Chapter 12.5 – Heritage***.

OTHER METHODS

16.5.5 The Council will consult with NZTA in developing suitable controls for signs on and adjacent to State Highways.

16.5.6 Providing sign and lighting education, awareness, and assistance to resource users through the preparation of guidelines, codes of practice, or other material developed in conjunction with resource user groups and Council.

COMMENTARY

Outdoor lighting can, depending on its location, intensity and duration, adversely affect the visual amenity of residential areas, State Highway, and local roads. The purpose of the rules in this chapter is therefore to establish a base level of lighting that can be directed to residential sites and State Highways. Light levels in excess of this base level need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

Signs are an important means of advertising and providing information. However, in an uncontrolled situation their number, size, content and visual prominence can increase to the point where they detract from traffic safety, the visual amenity and character of an area, and their intended purpose. The location and height of signs also have the potential to adversely affect the safe and efficient operation and maintenance of existing infrastructure. Rules in this chapter therefore provide for a reasonable minimum standard for signs as a permitted activity, with the ability to assess applications which exceed the standard on a case by case basis.

The purpose of a road reserve is to provide for roads and facilities which are functionally related to the use of the road. While advertising signs may in some circumstances be appropriate, it is not consistent with the purpose and function of a road for advertising signs to be permitted activities. The safety of the motoring public is particularly important. For this reason there is a need to minimise sources of possible distraction of drivers. To this end controls on signs adjacent to State Highways that could distract drivers are subject to strict standards.

The interface between signs on and adjacent to State Highways, and the agencies involved in their consent, is an important component of managing the effects of signs on the roading network. NZTA provides, as an affected party, written approvals to signs adjacent to the State Highway on both Council owned and private land. Council, however, has the final say in providing consent for such signs. In areas where signs are located on the State Highway road reserve, consent will be required by NZTA as per the requirements of the Signs on State Highways Bylaw 2010.

Council's Roading Department play a role similar to NZTA as an interested party where non-complying sign and lighting activities are proposed adjacent to Council roads.

The Council has the ability to control signs on land it owns, such as roads and Council reserves. It exercises that ability through bylaws. Consequently, the rules in this plan do not apply to Council own land.

16.6 RULES

Activities affected by this Section of the Plan must comply not only with the rules in this Section, but also with the relevant standards applying to the zone in which the activity is located (refer to ***Part 2 - Environment Provisions***), and with other relevant standards in ***Part 3 – District Wide Provisions.***

16.6.1 PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

An activity is a permitted activity if:

(a) it complies with the standards for permitted activities set out in ***Rules 16.6.1.1*** to ***16.6.1.5*** below; and

(b) it complies with the relevant standards for permitted activities in the zone in which it is located, set out in ***Part 2 of the Plan - Environment Provisions***; and

(c) it complies with the other relevant standards for permitted activities set out in ***Part 3 of the Plan - District Wide Provisions.***

16.6.1.1 LIGHT SPILL & GLARE

(a) Outdoor lighting used by, or in association with, any activity, including any illuminated sign, shall not exceed the following limits:

(i) between 0700hrs and 2200hrs the use of any outdoor lighting shall not cause an added luminance in excess of 25_{Lux} measured horizontally or vertically at any point on the boundary of any adjacent site zoned Residential, Coastal Residential, Rural Living, Russell Township, South Kerikeri Inlet or Coastal Living;

(ii) between 2200hrs and 0700hrs the following day the use of any outdoor lighting shall not cause an added luminance in excess of 10_{Lux} measured horizontally or vertically at any point 2m within the boundary of any adjacent site zoned Residential, Coastal Residential, Rural Living, Russell Township, South Kerikeri Inlet or Coastal Living.

(b) All outdoor lighting, except street lighting, shall be directed away from roads and any adjacent sites zoned Residential, Coastal Residential, Rural Living, Russell Township, South Kerikeri Inlet or Coastal Living. Street lighting shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the AS/NZS 1158, NZS 4404:2002 "*Land Development and Subdivision Engineering*" and Council's "*Engineering Standards and Guidelines*" (June 2004 – Revised 2009).

(c) Any activity which involves lighting and is situated on a site adjacent to a State Highway and within 50m of the carriageway is permitted provided that all exterior lighting on properties adjacent to State Highways is in accordance with *Australian Standard No. 4282-1997 "Control of Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting"*.

16.6.1.2 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL SIGNS

(a) The maximum height of any sign, including its support structure, on any site shall not exceed 4m, except:

(i) That in the Commercial and Industrial Zones the maximum height of any signs attached to, or displayed on a building or veranda may exceed 4m but shall not exceed the height of the building; or

(ii) Otherwise provided for in **Rules 16.6.1.4** and **16.6.1.5**.

(b) The maximum sign area per site for any sign type, excluding **Rule 16.6.1.4** is that shown in **Rule 16.6.1.3 Maximum Sign Area Per Site**.

(c) For double sided and v-shaped signs (provided that the internal angle of the 'v' does not exceed 90°) the maximum sign area shall be calculated from one side only.

(d) No sign shall:

(i) use reflective materials that may interfere with a road user's vision; or

(ii) use flashing or revolving lights or be animated in any way.

(e) The maximum number of freestanding signs on a site shall not exceed 1 per site frontage except:

(i) That in the Commercial and Industrial Zone there are no limits on the number of freestanding signs; or

(ii) Otherwise restricted or provided for in **Rules 16.6.1.4** and **16.6.1.5**.

(f) No sign shall be erected or allowed to remain on or near a road which will:

(i) obstruct the line of sight of any corner, bend, intersection or vehicle crossing;
(ii) obstruct, obscure or impair the view of any traffic sign or signal;
(iii) resemble or be likely to be confused with any traffic sign or signal.

16.6.1.3 MAXIMUM SIGN AREA PER SITE

(a) Freestanding signs and signs attached to or displayed on buildings or other objects located in the following zones/locations are subject to the following requirements.

Zone/Location	Maximum Area Per Site
Residential, Coastal Residential, Russell Township.	0.5m^2
Rural Living, Coastal Living, South Kerikeri Inlet, Point Veronica, Waimate North.	1.5m^2
Rural Production, Minerals, General Coastal, Horticultural Processing, Kauri Cliffs, Conservation, Recreational Activities.	3m^2
Commercial, Industrial.	For each road frontage: Less than 24m: 6m^2; Greater than 24m: 0.25m^2 for every 1m of road frontage, up to 12m^2.
Watea Structure Plan, Wellington Street Heritage Precinct, Christ Church Heritage Precinct, Mangonui Heritage Precinct, Kohukohu Heritage Precinct; Rawene Heritage Precinct, Te Waimate Heritage Precinct, Pouerua (Pakaraka) Heritage Precinct, Paihia Mission Heritage Area.	Refer to underlying Zone above.
Carrington Estate.	Refer to **Rule 18.6.6.1.6**
Orongo Bay.	Refer to **Rule 18.8.6.1.3(d)**
Quail Ridge.	Refer to **Rule 18.9.6.1.3**
The Strand Heritage Precinct, Kerikeri Basin Heritage Precinct.	Refer to **Rule 12.5A.6.1.2**
Moturoa Island.	n/a

16.6.1.4 SIGNS EXCLUDED FROM MAXIMUM AREA PER SITE THRESHOLDS

Sign Type	Location	Maximum Number	Maximum Area Per Sign	Placement	Other Requirements
(a) Shared Freestanding Sign	Commercial; Industrial	1 per site frontage	12m^2	n/a	(i) One planned arrangement of a shared freestanding sign is permitted where more than one rear site shares a common accessway.
(b) Service Station Sign	Commercial; Industrial	n/a	29m^2 per site frontage	On site	(i) A freestanding sign shall not exceed 9m in height; (ii) A sign may be attached to the roof, form part of the forecourt, or any building on site, provided that they do not exceed a height of 0.5m above the roof, forecourt, or building.
(c) Directional and Health and Safety Signs	All Zones	No Limit	1m	On site	n/a
(d) Real Estate Signs and Flags	All Zones	1 of each per agency involved	Signs: 3m^2 Flags: 1.8m^2	On site	(i) May remain in place until the property or building of concern is sold, leased or otherwise. (ii) If a flag, have maximum dimensions of 2m (h)

					x 0.9m (w).
(e) Construction and Redevelopment Signs	All Zones	1 per business involved	3m^2 per sign	On site	(i) May remain in place until the project(s) is complete.

16.6.1.5 SIGNS TO COMPLY WITH MAXIMUM AREA PER SITE THRESHOLDS

Sign Type	Location	Maximum Number	Maximum Area Per Sign	Placement	Other Requirements
(a) Sandwich Boards and Flags	All Zones	1 per business	Sandwich Board: 0.54m^2 Flag: 1.8m^2	On site	(i) Sandwich board maximum dimensions: 0.9m (h) x 0.6m (w) (ii) Sandwich board maximum base spread: 0.6m. (iii) Flag maximum dimensions: 2m (h) x 0.9m (w) (iv) Flag to be flown from a safe and stable flagpole structure.
(b)Community Information Signs	All Zones	1 per site	1.5m^2 per sign	n/a	n/a
(c) Election Signs	All Zones	1 per site	3m^2 per sign	n/a	(i) Erected no sooner than 8 weeks prior to, and removed no later than the close of day before, polling day. (ii) Are consistent with Electoral (Advertisements of a Specific Kind) Regulations 2005 if visible from a State Highway or local road.
(d) Temporary Events and Statutory Government Function Signs	All Zones	1 per site	3m^2 per sign	n/a	(i) Shall not exceed a maximum duration period of 3 months in any calendar year.
(e) Signs on State Highways and Local Roads	All Zones	n/a	n/a	n/a	(i) Official signs erected by NZTA or the local roading authority providing information for the guidance and control of road users are permitted.
(f) Signs Adjacent to State Highways	All Zones	1 visible from State Highway per site (if located on a site where posted speed limit is 70km/h or greater).	Refer to **16.6.1.2**	Signs must relate to the activities occurring on site where the posted speed limit is 70km/h or greater.	Signs within 50m of the State Highway carriageway (excluding those located in the State Highway road reserve) must: (i) have a minimum lettering height of 120mm where the speed limit is less than 70km/h, 160mm

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<td>If located on a site where posted speed limit is less than 70km/h, refer to underlying zone or specific sign type provisions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Where the posted speed limit is less than 70km/h, refer to underlying zone or specific sign type provisions.</td>
<td>where the limit is 70km/h or greater, and uses a font which complies with NZTA standards.

(ii) not have more than six words and/or symbols, nor more than 40 characters.

(iii) outside of the Commercial and Industrial Zones, be located at least the distance specified in the table below in any direction away from an official sign or traffic signal.

<table>
<tr><th>Speed (km/h)</th><th>Separation Distance (m)</th></tr>
<tr><td>50</td><td>30</td></tr>
<tr><td>60</td><td>36</td></tr>
<tr><td>70</td><td>42</td></tr>
<tr><td>80</td><td>48</td></tr>
<tr><td>100</td><td>60</td></tr>
</table>

(iv) if located at an access way, comply with the access standards, or if adjoining a State Highway, be setback at least 5m from the edge of the carriageway.

(v) be positioned at a right angle to the State Highway.

(vi) provide an unrestricted view to the motorist for a minimum distance of 180m where the posted speed limit is 70km/h or greater.

(vii) if located within 10m of the carriageway, have supports which are frangible.
(viii) Signs must be placed at least 100m from a State Highway intersection, on both State Highway and local road approaches, within a 100km/h speed</td>
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					limit area.
(g) Signs in Close Proximity to the National Grid	All Zones	Refer to **16.6.1.3**	Refer to **16.6.1.3**	On site	(i) Within 12m of the centreline of a National Grid line or 12m from the visible outer edge of a National Grid support structure, the maximum height of any sign shall not exceed 2.5m. (ii) No sign shall be erected or constructed which will restrict or prevent access to the National Grid asset.

16.6.2 RESTRICTED DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES

An activity is a restricted discretionary activity if:

(a) it does not comply with on or more of the standards for permitted activities as set out under ***Rule 16.6.1***; but

(b) it complies with ***Rules 16.6.2.1 Signs, 16.6.2.2 Signs on/and Adjacent to State Highways,*** *and* ***Rule 16.6.2.3 Consolidated Signs*** below; and

(c) it complies with the relevant standards for permitted, controlled or restricted discretionary activities in the zone in which it is located, set out in ***Part 2 of the Plan - Environment Provisions***; and

(d) it complies with the other relevant standards for permitted, controlled or restricted discretionary activities set out in ***Part 3 of the Plan - District Wide Provisions***; but

(e) is a non-complying activity if it does not comply with ***Rule 16.6.1.5(g) Signs in Proximity to the National Grid***.

The Council may approve or refuse an application for a restricted discretionary activity, and it may impose conditions on any consent.

Where an application is made for a sign adjacent to a State Highway the New Zealand Transport Agency may be considered an affected party. Similarly where an application is made for a sign located adjacent to a local road, Council's roading department may be considered an affected party.

In assessing an application for a restricted discretionary activity, the Council will restrict the exercise of its discretion to the matters specified in the relevant rule. The Council will, where appropriate, take account of the Assessment Criteria applicable in the relevant zone and in ***Section 16.7***.

16.6.2.1 SIGNS

(a) No signs on any site shall be internally or externally illuminated by intermittent or flashing light sources except where the site is within the Commercial or Industrial Zones.

(b) No sign on any site shall involve movement or apparent movement of any of its parts or messages except where the site is within the Commercial or Industrial Zones.

(c) Where a sign is fixed to the face of any building, the maximum distance it may project from that building shall not exceed 1.5m from that face.

16.6.2.2 SIGNS ON/AND ADJACENT TO STATE HIGHWAYS

The following signs are restricted discretionary activities:

(a) All flashing, moving, tri-vision and aerial "advertising signs" located on or above land adjoining a State Highway with a posted speed limit less than 70km/h.

(b) All freestanding "advertising signs" which are situated within the boundaries of a State Highway with a posted speed restriction of 50km/h or less.

(c) Advance warning signs located on land adjoining the State Highway.

16.6.2.3 CONSOLIDATED SIGNS

(a) There are no other signs on site.

(b) For double sided and v-shaped signs (provided that the internal angle of the 'v' does not exceed 90°) the area shall be calculated from one side only.

(c) The sign is not animated, uses reflective materials, or illuminated through intermittent or flashing light sources.

(d) The sign has a maximum height limit of 4m.

Location	Maximum Number	Maximum Area Per Site	Placement
Rural Production; General Coastal; Conservation; Recreational Activities.	1	$6m^2$	n/a

16.6.3 DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES

An activity is a discretionary activity if:

(a) it does not comply with one or more of the standards of ***Rule 16.6.1*** and ***Rule 16.6.2***; but

(b) it complies with the relevant standards for permitted, controlled, restricted discretionary or discretionary activities in the zone in which it is located, set out in ***Part 2 of the Plan - Environment Provisions***; and

(c) it complies with the other relevant standards for permitted, controlled, restricted discretionary or discretionary activities set out in ***Part 3 of the Plan - District Wide Provisions***; but

(d) is a non-complying activity if it does not comply with ***Rule 16.6.1.5(g) Signs in Proximity to the National Grid***.

The Council may impose conditions of consent on a discretionary activity or it may refuse consent to the application. When considering a discretionary activity application, the Council will have regard to the assessment criteria set out under ***Section 16.7***.

Where an application is made for a sign adjacent to a State Highway the New Zealand Transport Agency may be considered an affected party. Similarly where an application is made for a sign located adjacent to a local road, Council's roading department may be considered an affected party.

If an activity does not comply with the standards for a discretionary activity, it will be a non-complying activity.

16.6.4 NON-COMPLYING ACTIVITIES

An activity is a non-complying activity if;

(a) it does not comply with ***Rule 16.6.1.5(g)***.

The Council may impose conditions of consent on a non complying activity or it may refuse consent to the application. When considering a non complying activity application, the Council will have regard to the assessment criteria set out under ***Section 16.7***.

Where an application is made to erect or construct a sign exceeding 2.5m in height and is proposed to be located within 12m of the centreline of a National Grid line or 12m from the visible outer edge of a National Grid support structure, or restricts access to a National Grid asset, Transpower New Zealand Limited will be considered as an affected party under the Act.

16.7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The matters set out in s104 and s105, and in Part II of the Act, apply to the consideration of all resource consents for land use activities.

In addition to these matters, the Council shall also apply the relevant assessment matters set out below.

16.7.1 LIGHT SPILL

(a) The location, position and size of the light source.

(b) The likely effects of illumination on residential properties and users of State Highways, particularly at night, and the extent to which lighting could reduce amenity and disrupt sleep.

(c) The type of the lighting, and its effect on traffic generally.

(d) Whether flashing or moving lights are directed away from residential areas and roads.

(e) Whether any measures are proposed to be taken to control the direction and spill of lighting, including screening.

16.7.2 SIGNS

(a) The visual amenities and characteristics of the surrounding environment and the extent to which the signs will be compatible with the existing environment.

(b) The degree of visibility of the sign, its dimensions, scale, colour, content, construction, or illumination, in relation to the building or site on which it is to be displayed, and the visual amenities of the immediate environment, including the heritage values of the Heritage Precincts and sites, buildings and objects listed in ***Appendix 1E***.

(c) the height relative to the area of the sign, and the extent to which it may project from the face of any building so as to be visible from the street.

(d) The number, location and scale of existing signs on the building or site or in the immediate vicinity.

(e) Where the sign is temporary, the duration of the display period.

(f) The effect on vehicle manoeuvring and access.

(g) Visibility in respect of the roading network and the potential for distraction to motorists or conflict with vehicular or pedestrian movement.

(h) The frequency and intensity of intermittent or flashing light sources and the proposed periods of illumination and the likely effects of the illumination on neighbouring properties.

(i) The extent to which signs not directly related to the activity on the site have potential benefits in:

  (i) enabling businesses which have agreements over shared access or other facilities on adjacent or jointly developed sites to erect co-branded or directional identification signs;

  (ii) providing site identification to the travelling public who may be unfamiliar with the inter-relationship between adjacent sites;

  (iii) promoting a smaller number of larger signs, thus minimising the potential for visual clutter.

(j) Whether the area of the sign is in scale with the activities or building development with which it is associated.

(k) Whether, in respect of freestanding signs, they have positive effects in identifying the activity and contributing to the vitality of the streetscape, having regard to the nature of the activity and the traffic environment in which the site is located.

(l) Whether larger signs are warranted for a vehicle-orientated activity.

(m) The location and height of signs and support structures relative to the effect on the safe and efficient operation, maintenance, development and upgrade of existing infrastructure.

16.7.3 VISUAL EFFECTS

(a) The visual amenities and characteristics of the surrounding environment within and external to the site and the extent to which the activity is compatible.

(b) The degree of visibility of the activity to neighbours and the public generally.

(c) The extent to which the adverse effects can reasonably be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

(d) The anticipated time-frame for the activity creating the adverse effects.

(e) The cumulative effects of signs on properties with a frontage with Kerikeri Road between its intersection with SH10 and Cannon Drive.

(f) The visual effects of additional signs on properties with a frontage with Kerikeri Road between its intersection with SH10 and Cannon Drive.