

PROPERTY COUNCIL NEW ZEALAND

2008 URBAN SUSTAINABILITY POLICY FRAMEWORK

URBAN STRATEGY

VISION

To promote urban sustainability through the active governance and management of the urban environment; and developments that enable the long-term utility of the built environment.

BACKGROUND

Sustainability is a concept that has gained increasing currency amongst politicians, media groups, researchers, and the general public. Yet the actual meaning of the word remains vague. There is a vast amount of literature which gives varying definitions of urban sustainability, and how this concept might be effectively deployed by central and local government, and by the private sector.

In this policy framework sustainability is defined as:

'The ability to provide for the needs of the world's current population without damaging the ability future generations to provide for themselves. When a process is sustainable, it can be carried out over and over without negative environmental effects or impossibly high costs to anyone involved'.¹

Historically, sustainability has been used when referring to natural resources. It can be confused with conservation. Conservation involves the preservation, maintenance, restoration and enhancement of the environment and natural resources, but does not specifically provide for utility and consumption.

Sustainability, on the other hand, enables the utilisation of goods and services, but not beyond a level that compromises the ability to replace what has been consumed.

Urban sustainability, therefore, is the process of actively governing and managing the urban environment and future urban developments in a way that enables the long-term utility of the built environment.

This policy on urban sustainability will be used by the Property Council as a tool for measuring whether or not our existing and future policies enable the long-term utility of the built environment.

The Ministry for the Environment identifies the following areas as key reference points when considering urban sustainability. We have used these categories to structure our policy framework.

- Urban design, landscape and form
- Sustainable building
- Social aspects
- Environmental quality
- Resource management
- Urban economics
- Transport
- Risk management

¹ www.sustainabletable.org/intro/dictionary

- Governance; and
- Measuring progress.²

1. Urban Design, Landscape and Form

1.1	Sustainable Urban Design should provide intergenerational equity of urban land use, the ability to replenish land for the purpose of development, and the ability to use natural resources within that environment
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2. Sustainable Building

2.1	A sustainable building should be economically viable to enable reinvestment back in to management of that asset.
2.2	Sustainable building construction meets current building needs, while minimising adverse affects on occupants and the environment, and reducing impacts on future generations.
2.3	A sustainable urban environment should encourage the construction of buildings that are energy and resource efficient, have minimal adverse impact on local infrastructure, and minimal adverse impact on the natural environment.

3. Social Aspects

3.1	A sustainable urban environment should provide for facilities that support the social needs of groups and communities from a variety of economic, social and ethnic backgrounds.
3.2	A sustainable urban environment should encourage and support economic, social, cultural and spatial equality, eliminate division, and provide for the equitable provision of infrastructure and services (for current and future users).

4. Environmental Quality

4.1	The environmental quality of a sustainable urban environment should be considered against a suitable benchmark, which takes into account the natural and human environment; reduces the ecological footprint of humans and property; and reduces or eliminates carbon emissions.
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5. Resource Management

5.1	A sustainable urban environment should manage the consumption of resources and services to enable productivity-driven economic growth, affordable communities (residential and commercial spaces), and allow for individuals and groups (current and future) maintain a quality standard of living.
5.2	Resource management should support the efficient utilisation and consumption of resources, minimise waste (including trade waste), and encourage investment in new technology (particularly in relation to renewable energy).

6. Urban Economics

6.1	<p>Sustainable urban economics provides for the application of the four factors of production (land, labour, capital and entrepreneurial investment) to be utilised, but not exhausted, over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land: sustainable urban economics must provide for the availability of land in the long-term to meet the market demand. ▪ Labour: sustainable urban economics must provide for both a wage and salary level and the availability of sufficiently affordable housing in order to maintain a sustainable skilled work force. ▪ Capital: sustainable urban economics must provide a public policy agenda, supported by all levels of government, which minimises the cost of capital flowing within the urban economy.
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² *Urban Sustainability in New Zealand: An Information Resource for Urban Practitioners*, Ministry for the Environment, 2003, p.6.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Entrepreneurial investment: sustainable urban economics supports new investment and reinvestment opportunities by minimising compliance costs levied by all levels of government.
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7. Transport

7.1	Sustainable transport should consider the life-time cost of funding transport infrastructure.
7.2	Sustainable transport allows the benefit of new transport assets to be shared by future as well as current ratepayers and businesses.
7.3	The alternatives, benefits and costs of public infrastructure should also be considered to ensure that public transport is best suited to the built environment.

8. Risk Management

8.1	Risk management should provide for the health and safety of humans, the controlled management of hazards and contaminated sites, and emergency management. It should encourage outcomes that are advantageous to community development and renewal.
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9. Governance

9.1	A sustainable government should provide policies that deliver services, goods and infrastructure that allow for the continued use of those services, goods and infrastructure for current and future generations.
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10. Measuring Progress

10.1	A sustainable urban environment should be measured by economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes. The success or otherwise of projects and initiatives should be measured by all four of these performance indicators.
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