

8. REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF POLICY REGARDING ELECTION PROMOTIONS AND SIGNS

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The purpose of this report is to provide information for discussion and seek Council review of its policy relating to the siting of election promotions and signs.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting in June, the Council considered a report relating to the Council's current policies permitting signs and hoardings for election purposes, both local and general elections. This report was in response to a request for a report from the Chairperson of the Shirley/Papanui Community Board. As this issue was a metropolitan issue the report went to the Finance and Strategy Committee. The Council adopted the recommendation that no change be made to the current policies.

The reason for requesting a review of the Christchurch City Council policy is the belief that if the Council permitted signs on some Council owned land, for example, road berms, verges, parks, river banks, etc all signs would be better controlled.

INFORMATION FROM FOUR OTHER COUNCILS

The report and the Council's decision were reported to the Board's July meeting where the Board decided that the Chairperson write a report using photos and examples from other cities, and present it to the Board for further discussion.

Information was sought from four North Island Council's where it was known different policies operated.

Information from Wellington City, Waitakere City, Taupo District; Tauranga District, is as follows:

WELLINGTON CITY

Has set aside Council owned election hoarding sites for candidates in general and local body elections to use. To be eligible to use the sites all candidates or parties must register by paying a refundable bond of \$200 and supplying the name and contact numbers of persons responsible for their hoardings during the campaign. An officer monitors all election hoarding sites daily, and the contact person is advised if signs are damaged, fall over, or need any attention. The officer also advises candidates of helpful hints to keep the signs complying and in good condition throughout the process. Once the \$200 bond is paid candidates may use any of the scheduled sites without any further approach to the Council subject to their complying with the conditions. The Council retains the bond to meet any costs it does incur in relation to the signs.

Other conditions include:

- Hoardings must be soundly constructed, not exceed 1.2 x 2.4m.
- Road signs and street nameplates must not be obscured.
- Signs must be sited so as not to distract or obstruct driver or pedestrian visibility.
- Must not be placed closer than 6 metres from an intersection and must be placed at a greater distance if visibility for pedestrians or drivers is obscured.
- Unless otherwise stated signs may not be placed closer than 1.5m from the edge of the carriageway and must be clear of all pedestrian routes and accessways.
- Signs and hoardings must not be erected earlier than 6 weeks (42 days) prior to election day, and must be removed from all sites the day prior to the election.
- Should any sign or hoarding suffer damage it must be repaired immediately or removed from the site.

Other conditions covered by the City Plan and By-laws are also imposed.

A schedule of sites approved for election signs and hoardings is issued.

WAITAKERE CITY

The Council will allow election signs anywhere, subject to compliance with the following standards:

- Signs are not to be erected prior to 6 weeks before the election and removed not later than the day prior.
- Signs are not permitted within 50m of major intersections controlled by traffic lights, a roundabout or railway level crossing.
- Signs are not to be attached to traffic control or street name signs.
- Signs are not to obstruct footpaths or motorists sight lines.
- Signs are not to exceed 3m² in area.

Signs are permitted in road berms, grass verges, road reserves, except median strips. No signs are to be visible from the north western motorway. Signs erected on State Highways where the speed limit is 70kph or less must comply with Transit New Zealand requirements.

A schedule of locations where signs are not permitted is provided.

TAURANGA CITY

Election signs may be displayed on public streets throughout the Tauranga District, including in those locations set aside for charitable and non-commercial event signage, subject to:

Signs may be displayed no sooner than six weeks prior to the election. In the case of local authority election signs shall be removed no later than 24 hours after election day. Authorised officers of the Council may without notice, remove any sign that in the sole opinion of that officer, is placed in such a location as to cause a traffic hazard, or a risk to public safety, or such other location as those officers may with proper cause require.

No sign may be placed in the following locations:

- Within the minimum distance from an intersection specified in the Street Use Bylaw, ie, within 6 metres of an intersection as measured from the intersecting road boundaries.
- Road median strips or roundabouts.
- Within any 70, 80 or 100 kph speed restriction zone on a State Highway.
- Harbour Bridge and approaches from Tasman Quay.
- Waikareao Expressway and routes J and K and overbridges.
- Any Council land (except roads), recreational reserve or buildings.

The maximum size of election signs is 1.5 square metres in area.

The District Plan allows for signs on private residential property as follows:

- One per site.
- Maximum height 4.0 metres.
- Maximum sign area – 1.0 square metre.
- Outside these parameters a Resource Consent is required.

TAUPO DISTRICT

Taupo has a split policy, there are four wards, one of which has a Community Board. In three of the wards no election signs are permitted on any Council administered land, this includes road berms, reserves, footpaths, etc.

In the other ward, the Community Board does permit signs on Council administered land.

Where signs are permitted, Council and private, the following policy is in place relevant to the management thereof:

- Signs are to comply with the District Plan ordinances and building requirements.
- Only one sign can be erected on any one site per candidate/party.
- The maximum permitted size of the sign is 2.2m.
- All signs must be removed by midnight on the Friday before election day.
- The siting of all signs must be to the satisfaction of Council's Parks & Recreation Manager (Council land only).

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

The report to Strategy and Finance stated:

'The current policy on Parliamentary and local body election campaigning – requirements for promotions and erection of advertising signs arose from a review undertaken in 1999 and was adopted by the Council at its meeting on the 22 July 1999 (the full policy is attached). The appropriate clause in the policy is as follows:

2. Advertising signs (including placards, posters and banners on or adjacent to roads)

c) No advertising signs are permitted on any road structure such as poles or cabinets, trees or on parks and reserves, footpaths, roads, road reserves or other land owned or controlled by the Council.

In addition to the Council's policy there are restrictions in relation to State Highways passing through Christchurch that come under the control of Transit New Zealand.

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO CHRISTCHURCH POLICY

The purpose of this report is to raise possible options for discussion and consideration for Christchurch City in relation to allowing election signs and hoardings on Council owned land.

For instance the following locations are identified as examples for discussion and to demonstrate where changes could be made to allow signs:

- Wide grass verges, in specific places, QEII Drive/Grimseys Road area.
- Cranford Street – wide grass verge in rural part.
- Around river sides – Kerrs Reach – selected areas.
- Selected areas around the Estuary.
- Grass berm outside Westminster Street former Council yard.
- Lower Styx Road – selected areas.
- Yaldhurst Road – selected areas.
- North Avon/Whitmore Street.
- Marshland Road (parts).
- Parts of Waimairi, Grahams Road.
- Curletts Road – selected areas.
- Wigram/Halswell selected areas.
- Some small Neighbourhood Parks.

\$200 bond per candidate – refundable if no Council costs incurred. Six weeks for signs, not three months. One sign per candidate, per site Size – 0.5 metre; only in areas of 50, 60, or 80 kph speed restrictions.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Council reconsider its decision on where election signs are permitted, with a view to extending permission to cover some Council owned land, subject to appropriate conditions and payment of a bond.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That an elected member seminar take place to discuss this proposal.