

Nelson Tasman Urban Design Panel

Terms of Reference

2025

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1. Function of the Panel

1.1 The Urban Design Panel will not have statutory decision-making powers but will offer confidential and impartial advice for the applicant and Councils. It will have an independent advisory role, with the following primary functions:

- a) To promote high quality urban design and support the achievement of the Councils' urban design objectives (see section 8.1).
- b) To review development proposals being submitted to the Councils, and capital projects proposed by the Councils, with important urban design implications, early in the design process.
- c) To provide pre-application advice to developers in relation to factors influencing good urban design outcomes.
- d) To provide the Councils with advice to support innovative high quality designs that meet the needs of their communities and customers.
- e) To provide professional urban design advice to the Councils on relevant proposed plan changes.

2. Eligibility for a design review by the Panel

2.1 The Panel may consider projects, where referred by Council, that have important urban design implications, including but not limited to:

- a) Any large development deemed 'transformational'
- b) Large developments near or within commercial centres or mixed-use zones.
- c) Comprehensive housing developments with ten or more units
- d) Mixed-use developments
- e) Development undertaken by a Community Housing Provider or Iwi Trust
- f) Subdivision master plans of 50 or more units
- g) Major capital projects by Council or a Council Controlled Organisation

- h) Major public works by government departments or requiring authorities

3. Appointment of the Panel members

3.1 Panel members will be appointed using the following criteria:

- a) Be a built-environment professional from the core disciplines of Urban Design, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Planning, and Property Development, Ngā Aho or cultural specialist; and
- b) A good understanding of urban design principles and best practice; and
- c) Recognised qualifications, experience and standing in their relevant professions; and
- d) A record of good design in their own projects; and
- e) Previous experience in sitting on urban design panels, or similar; and
- f) A general understanding of the Councils' guidance and policies and the relevant Resource Management Plan; and
- g) An understanding of the interrelationship of arts, heritage and cultural values with urban design; and
- h) A general understanding of the Resource Management Act and National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020.

3.2 Panel member nominations will be sought from, but not limited to, members of the local branches of the following professional bodies:

- a) the Urban Designers Institute Aotearoa
- b) the NZ Institute of Architects; and
- c) the NZ Institute of Landscape Architects; and
- d) the NZ Planning Institute; and
- e) the Urban Design Forum NZ; and
- f) the NZ Property Council;
- g) the NZ Institute of Surveyors; and
- h) Nga Aho (network of Maori design professionals)

- 3.3 A call for nominations will also be sought from the wider community who meet the criteria in 3.1 above, through media releases.
- 3.4 A call for nominations will also be sought from members of the professional bodies listed in 3.2 above, from outside the Nelson-Tasman region.
- 3.5 Panel members will be appointed jointly by the Councils.
- 3.6 A person may be approved for inclusion on the panel for a period of up to five years and may be approved for any one or more periods of up to five years if successful on re-application.
- 3.7 Panel members may resign at any time or not seek re-approval at the end of any five-year period.

4. Panel Process and Procedures

- 4.1 An induction will be provided for all panel members by the Councils at the start of each five-year term.
- 4.2 Three members will usually be required for any one Urban Design Panel meeting chosen in consultation with the Panel Chair from a pool of members. If one of the appointed members has to withdraw, an alternative member may be appointed, or the meeting may continue with two members, depending on circumstances.
- 4.3 The Chair will lead the meeting and deliberations with assistance from Council staff.
- 4.4 The Panel will meet virtually, on a case by case basis, as applications come in.
- 4.5 Appointment of Panel members for each meeting will ensure there is no conflict of interest between Panel members and the development proposal being considered. The membership of the Panel to consider a development proposal will take into account the specific technical input required.
- 4.6 Panel members will be required to:
 - a) Declare conflicts of interest.
 - b) Agree to these Terms of Reference as part of their contract with Council.

5. Payment of Panel Members

- 5.1 Each Panel member will be paid
 - a) \$200 per hour for the chair
 - b) \$175 per hour for regular panel member
- 5.2 Panellists will be paid up to a maximum of three hours per application, inclusive of preparation, design review meetings, and reporting. Site visits and research is not chargeable.
- 5.3 Post meeting deliberations, finalising reports etc., should they extend beyond this time, will be paid by the hourly rate of \$175 for a maximum of one additional hour, at the discretion of Council staff.
- 5.4 For large or complex projects, the number of hours may be increased, at Council officer discretion.

6. Information Required of Applicants

- 6.1 Applicants will be required to provide an electronic version of the following material to the Panel administrator a minimum of ten working days before the date of the meeting:
 - a) A completed (1 x A4 page) Panel Application Form. An aerial (1:1000 min scale) and ground level photographs of the site and surrounding area. Description of access (and distance to) to public facilities such as bus stops, public playgrounds, activity centres.
 - b) A design rationale which explains why the project has been designed in a certain way.
 - c) Context report on how the proposal fits with the operative Resource Management Plan provisions and other Council policies and priorities.
 - d) Plan and description of the development's response to existing and future hazards on the site and sustainable design features proposed.
 - e) Site, floor and elevation plans of the development and proposed landscaping, either as drawings or sketches.
 - f) A plan showing pedestrian and vehicular access into and through the site as well as parking areas.
 - g) A list of main materials, colours, textures and show

landscaping.

- h) Perspective(s) at key surrounding streets or public spaces which show the proposal in its neighbourhood context (simple sketches or wire frames are acceptable).
 - i) Information on cultural significance of the site or any artwork planned to enhance the site, and how the design responds to this.
- 6.2 Applicants will be required to give notice to the Panel administrator a minimum of 15 working days before a proposed meeting of their intention of appearing before the Panel. This is to give the Panel administrator sufficient time to book a meeting and inform panellists.
- 6.3 A checklist of information (consistent with 6.1 above) to be provided to the Panel by the applicant is attached as Appendix A.

7. Cost to Applicants

Tasman District Council

- 7.1 There is no charge for the use of the Panel if the development is considered by the Panel prior to a resource consent or building consent being lodged. The Panel costs of considering presentations made after lodging a resource consent or building consent will be the responsibility of the applicant.
- 7.2 The Urban Design Panel report will be released to the applicant within five (5) working days after the meeting.

Nelson City Council

- 7.3 There is a charge for the use of the Panel and the applicant will be charged for the costs associated with the panellist's time. Applicants will not be charged for Council staff advice or administration associated with the Panel.
- 7.4 The Urban Design Panel report will be released to the applicant once the invoice has been paid.

8. Design Assessment Criteria

- 8.1 When considering a development proposal, the Panel shall consider any opportunities and weaknesses that may have been missed, best urban design practice, the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and the relevant urban design objectives, policies and guidelines as

outlined in the Nelson City Council's Urban Design objectives and policies (Appendix C) and the Tasman District Council's Resource Management Plan (Appendix D) (or any replacement documents to the above), and other Council policies and priorities (such as LTP priorities, climate change policies and strategies).

- 8.2 An updated list of relevant materials and documents will be provided to Panel members, and referred to in publicity material promoting the Panel.

9. Urban Design Panel Code of Conduct

- 9.1 This Code applies to all members of the Urban Design Panel. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide guidance and support to Panel members.

- 9.2 Panel members shall:

- a) be adequately prepared for each meeting and form an understanding of the scheme's background context;
- b) not attend a Panel meeting where there is a potential conflict of interest between the interest of the applicant and their own private interest or interest of their clients;
- c) keep all information provided to them in their role confidential, and not disclose it to any third party;
- d) not provide statements to the media unless authorised to do so by the Chair of the Panel in consultation with the Councils and the applicant;
- e) comply with the Councils' Health and Safety requirements.

10. Reporting Requirements

- 10.1 Following each meeting of the Urban Design Panel, a designated Council officer will prepare a report, which will be signed off by the Chair of the Panel meeting. Appendix B contains the suggested report template.

- 10.2 The report will be clear and succinct, provide recommendations on how the urban design outcomes of the development proposal can be improved. The report will seek further information or support or oppose with reasons how the proposal impacts on the outcomes sought by Plan objectives and policies identified in Appendices C and D.

- 10.3 All reasonable efforts will be made for the Panel's report to be provided to the developer (or project manager for Council initiated projects) within five working days of the date of the Panel's meeting; otherwise the Panel chair and administrator will ensure timescales are communicated to the developer.
- 10.4 The report will be circulated to all members of the Panel and will be held by both Councils' panel administrators.

11. Meeting Schedules and Administration

- 11.1 Panel meetings will be arranged on an 'as needed' basis.
- 11.2 Administration will be the responsibility of the Council hosting the meeting.
- 11.3 Meetings will be facilitated by the Chair who will also sign off the final Panel Report.
- 11.4 Meetings will not be publicly notified or held in public so the commercial interest of the applicant is not prejudiced.
- 11.5 Formal minutes will not be kept, but a designated Council officer will keep detailed notes for the purposes of preparing the Panel Report.
- 11.6 Recommendations will be drafted at the meeting. The Panel will be required to reach a consensus on all recommendations during its deliberations.
- 11.7 A standard report template may be used for Panel Reports (see Appendix B).
- 11.8 All information held by Council is subject to the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA). It is recognised by the Ombudsman that information generated through the Urban Design Panel process may be withheld where it is subject to an obligation of confidence and/or promotes the free and frank exchange of opinions.

12. Monitoring

- 12.1 A standard monitoring form (see Appendix E) may be sent to applicants with the Panel's report to obtain feedback about process as well as whether urban design objectives are being achieved. Responses will inform regular Council reviews.
- 12.2 The Council will review these Terms of Reference on a five-year

cycle.

13. Relationship with the Concept Development Team

(applicable to NCC only)

- 13.1 In order to avoid confusion within Council and in the community, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the relationship between the Urban Design Panel and the Concept Development Team.
- 13.2 The Concept Development Team is a Council voice (composed of Council officers) and it is important that the Panel is an independent voice (composed of experts with urban design expertise from outside Council).
- 13.3 The Urban Design Panel's objective is to promote high quality urban design as outlined in the Council's Urban Design objectives and policies section of the Resource Management Plan. The Urban Design Panel provides independent urban design expertise that is lacking within Council. The Concept Development Team's purpose is to promote a more efficient and effective processing of applications and to assist in the design and construction of Council infrastructure and community facilities by allowing for one set of Council advice on a major project from all relevant Council staff. Therefore, the Panel complements the Concept Development Team.
- 13.4 It is envisaged that the Concept Development Team will deal with a wider range and number of developments while the Urban Design Panel will deal with fewer developments and those with significant urban design issues.
- 13.5 There will be instances where a development proposal will go to both the Urban Design Panel and the Concept Development Team.

14. Status of Panel Recommendations

- 14.1 It is voluntary for applicants to request the advice of the Panel. The Panel does not have statutory decision-making powers; rather it has an independent advisory role. It is therefore up to the applicant whether the recommendations of the Panel are followed through in any final design lodged with Council for consideration.
- 14.2 If a resource consent application is lodged with the relevant Council the recommendations from the Panel are also provided to the processing planner and will be available for use in the officer's report on the application where relevant.

APPENDIX A: Checklist for Applicants

Introduction

In order to ensure the Urban Design Panel process runs as smoothly as possible and you gain the greatest benefit from the advice on offer, we request the provision of certain information. This should be information you will already have as part of the design of your buildings or spaces, but may be information you would not usually submit for a resource consent application.

General issues to cover in presentation to panel

A presentation to the Urban Design Panel should alert the Panel to how the design of the development achieves quality urban design outcomes, and should cover the following general issues:

1. Introduction to the site in its context
2. Alert the panel to any issues connected with the design
3. Promotion of the strengths of the design
4. Provision of a rationale for the design choices that have been made
5. Identifying constraints

Specific information required from applicant

Applicants will be required to give notice to the Panel administrator a minimum of 15 working days before a proposed meeting of their intention to appear before the Panel.

Applicants will be required to provide an electronic version of the following material to the Panel administrator a minimum of ten working days before the date of the meeting:

1. A completed (1 x A4 page) Panel Application Form
2. An aerial (1:1000 min scale) and ground level photographs of the site and surrounding area
3. Context report on how the proposal fits with the operative Resource Management Plan provisions
4. Site, floor and elevation plans of the development and proposed landscaping (at sketch plan stage is acceptable)
5. A plan showing pedestrian and vehicular access into and through the site as well as parking areas are acceptable.
6. A list of main materials, colours, textures and show landscaping
7. Perspective(s) at key surrounding streets or public spaces which show the proposal in its neighbourhood context (simple sketches or wire frames are acceptable).
8. A design rationale which explains why the project has been designed in a certain way.

APPENDIX B: Suggested Report Template

Application Name:

Project Address:

Project Description:

Meeting Date:

Members Present:

Consents Planner:

1. Overview and overarching statement of appropriateness
2. Massing and site layout
(Include review of transport options/opportunities for occupants. Consider proximity to activity centres and future growth in the area.)
3. Building design and character
(Include review of internal/unit amenity; passive surveillance opportunities to street, mailboxes and communal areas; screening of bins, plant equipment and utilities)
4. Streetscape and landscape amenity
(Include review of public/private interface; streetscape amenity; climate appropriate landscape which provides large canopy trees within the boundary where reasonable; reduction in heat island effect and maintenance/creation of permeable land or landscaped retention features where possible.)
5. Other matters for consideration
(Include considerations of built form's adaptability and mitigation strategies for climate change and future proofing. For example inclusion of charging stations, solar power access and storage for e-mobility devices.)
6. Further information required

APPENDIX C: Nelson City Council Urban Design Objectives and Policies

Nelson Resource Management Plan - relevant sections include [urban design](#), [subdivision and development](#), and [peripheral urban expansion](#). Council planners will provide updates resulting from potential plan changes at the time of a panel.

Other relevant documents:

- [Te Ara ō Whakatū](#) – Nelson's City Centre Spatial Plan
- [Nelson Tasman Future Development Strategy](#)

APPENDIX D: Tasman District Council Urban Design Objectives, Policies and Guidance

Urban Design Guide is in [Part II: Appendix 2 of the TRMP](#).

Coastal Tasman Area Subdivision and Development Design Guide is in [Part II: Appendix 3 of the TRMP](#).

Other relevant TRMP provisions will be communicated to the applicant, and the panel members,

APPENDIX E: Monitoring Survey

Panel Report approved by _____ (Panel Chair)

1. Was the process for submitting your development proposal to the Panel clear?
2. Do you have any comments on the activities that should be considered by the Panel?
3. Was communication between you and the Council clear in regard to Panel meeting times, procedures, and information required of you?
4. Was the Panel meeting professionally conducted?
5. Did you receive the report of the Panel on time?
6. Were the recommendations of the Panel useful and did they add value to your project?
7. Do you plan to implement the Panel's recommendations, and if not, why not?
8. Do you have any suggestions that may improve the Panel's processes and outcomes?