

## 6.4 Drive-Through Services

### Introduction and Issues

Car based retail services are a growing sector of the business market. The traditional service station has increasingly become the hub of a range of convenience services that are specifically geared to vehicle based trips. Their development reflects the continued importance of the car as the basic means of travel and the continued move to fewer, but larger more centralised outlets.

These drive-through services therefore have the potential to generate significant effects on the community. They are major vehicle attractors and have an impact on the safety and efficiency of the transport network. These effects need to be addressed.

Hamilton also has a large number of traditional service stations scattered throughout the city, often in residential environments. The changing nature of the uses associated with these, which can include expansion, intensification or redundancy, can generate a wide range of environmental effects on adjoining properties which need to be addressed.

The principal issues regarding drive-through services in Hamilton are:

- **The increasing diversity of activities in relation to drive-through services on single sites can result in conflicts.** Sites catering for drive-through services are increasingly developing as multi purpose operations, often with a series of stand alone operators on the site. This increases the potential for a range of adverse effects to be generated between different activities and can also impact on the safety of pedestrians.
- **The location of drive-through services in relation to major and minor arterial roads can cause adverse impacts on the transport network and peoples' safety.** Service stations and other similar convenience services are reliant on passing traffic. Ready access to the arterial roading network is needed in convenient locations throughout the city to meet people's needs. However, this can conflict with the amenity values associated with such routes and ingress and egress can compromise traffic safety and efficiency.
- **The nature of drive-through services is likely to result in significant impacts on neighbourhood amenity values.** The various activities involved in drive-through service facilities can give rise to a range of nuisances including noise, glare and odour which can detract from neighbourhood amenity values particularly in residential areas. The attraction of vehicles in significant numbers onto the site results in increased noise and other disturbances for neighbours, particularly where extended hours are involved. The scale, design and advertising associated with these activities also has the ability to impact negatively on the visual amenity of adjoining sites.
- **Drive-through services involve activities which give rise to adverse environmental impacts particularly in relation to hazardous substances.** Drive-through services can incorporate the on-site storage and supply of a range of hazardous substances. The use and management of these

substances requires particular attention because of the inherent risks associated with them and the possible scale of effect, to the site, adjoining activities and the environment should failure or an accident occur.

### **Objective 6.4.1 Siting of Drive-Through Services**

To facilitate drive-through services where they are able to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on the environment, including established amenity values, and the safe and efficient functioning of the roading network.

#### **Policies**

- a) Ensure that the location of drive-through services does not unreasonably affect the safe and efficient operation of the transport network.
- b) Encourage drive-through services to locate in those areas where compatibility with established amenity values can be maintained.
- c) Encourage drive-through services to locate on large sites peripheral to suburban centres to minimise conflicts with other commercial activities particularly in relation to pedestrian safety, shopping convenience, possible risks from hazardous substances, and traffic safety and efficiency.
- d) Discourage drive-through services in residential areas to avoid impacts on the environment, traffic safety and local amenity values.
- e) Ensure that service stations are located to reduce the risks from motor fuels and other hazardous substances on the neighbourhood, and the wider environment including ecological systems and that any potentially adverse effects are mitigated.

#### **Reasons**

Drive-through services attract and generate high volumes of traffic. The arterial roading network is best placed to manage both the volume of traffic and amenity impacts associated with them. However the high movement of vehicles to and from the site, particularly close to major intersections may still negatively impact on the arterial roading network.

Drive-through services in residential areas have severe amenity impact, even on major traffic routes and are recognised as being inherently incompatible with residential environments. Council monitoring has shown noise, disturbance and smell to be persistent sources of complaint in relation to many drive-through services. Accordingly, such activities may have difficulty achieving high enough levels of mitigation to be accommodated in a residential locality. There is opportunity for drive-through services to locate in commercial and industrial areas where amenity expectations are more consistent with the effects arising from these activities. Even within these areas the effect of high vehicle movements to and from sites needs to be addressed to avoid adverse effects on adjoining commercial or industrial activities.

For service stations, the quantities of motor fuels involved pose a potential risk both to the surrounding locality in terms of fire and explosion, and to the environment in terms of ecotoxic discharges. The mature nature of the industry means that generally these risks are adequately managed and district plan controls can be based on best practice. Nevertheless the degree of risk is still seen as high in residential areas and in environmentally sensitive locations (Refer Policy 6.6 Hazardous Substances).

### **Objective 6.4.2 Drive-Through Services Management**

To ensure that the development and operation of drive-through services minimises adverse effects on the environment, including amenity values, traffic and pedestrian safety, and hazardous substance use.

#### **Policies**

- a) Encourage the coordinated development of the site to enable drive-through services and associated commercial activities to be accommodated in a compatible manner and to minimise potential on-site conflicts.
- b) Control the location and design of vehicular access to and from any drive-through service to ensure traffic safety and efficiency especially on arterial roads.
- c) Minimise potential on-site conflicts between cars, pedestrians, cyclists and heavy vehicles and subsequent impacts on safety and convenience.
- d) Ensure that adverse effects arising from drive-through service on the local environment and amenity values in particular are adequately mitigated especially on sites within residential areas.

#### **Reasons**

With a greater diversification of activities there is a need to ensure that the development of any drive-through service is carried out in an integrated manner to help minimise on-site conflicts between activities. The greater variety of customers being attracted also needs to be considered in relation to parking needs and pedestrian access.

Frequent access/egress movements associated with drive-through service can adversely affect the safety and free flow of traffic particularly on arterial roads, unless the location and design of access/egress is adequately addressed.

Where drive-through services need to be located in residential areas then suitable additional mitigation measures and other controls need to be applied to reduce the impact on neighbours and on residential amenity values.

#### **Methods**

The Drive-Through Services objectives and policies will be implemented through the following methods:

**District Plan**

- **Activity Based Rules under Zoning** - will be used to facilitate drive-through services in acceptable locations where impacts can be easily minimised, principally within the Commercial Service and Industrial zones.
- **Vehicle Service Area** - will be applied to specific sites within the Suburban Centre Zone to facilitate the establishment of drive-through services.
- **City-Wide Standards** - will be used to ensure impacts including vehicle provision, site development, visual amenities, noise and pollution associated with drive-through services are adequately dealt with.
- **Hazardous Facilities Rules** - will control the use of hazardous substances including the dispensing and associated storage of motor fuels.

**Other Methods**

- **Codes of Practice and Guidelines** - prepared by industry and other regulatory authorities will be used to help in assessing proposals and imposing conditions of consent.

**Anticipated Environmental Results**

The following environmental results are anticipated:

- Potential risks from hazardous substances kept to a level acceptable to the local situation.
- Traffic generated specifically by drive-through services passing through local residential streets avoided.
- Safer vehicular and pedestrian movement within and near drive-through service facilities.
- Free flow of traffic on arterial roads maintained.
- Appearance of drive-through service facilities in keeping with local amenity values.
- Environmental impacts due to establishment and operation of drive-through services minimised.