

PLANTING AND VEGETATION GUIDANCE - CIVIC SPACE ENVIRONMENTS

Civic spaces have an important part to play as community focal points and places where events are held. Vegetation in these spaces can provide many important qualities that contribute towards the success, comfort and expression of culture, heritage and identity.

Key outcomes:

- shade and protection from wind and cooling of the space
- define and celebrate the character and heritage of the space
- provide areas of respite and relief from traffic effects
- provide seasonal colour and visual interest to the built environment
- reduce stormwater runoff volumes
- urban ecology – biodiversity, green corridor, heat sink, Co² removal

Typical issues:

- unmaintained or unsuitable vegetation causing unsafe spaces by obstructing sightlines
- unsuitable selection of vegetation for the scale and structure of the space
- non hardy species
- evergreen species over shading the space
- deciduous species causing leaf litter problems
- inadequate growing conditions for large trees, including compacted soil and small planter pits resulting in stunted growth
- vandalism
- insufficient maintenance budget to maintain planting to a high quality, including sweeping autumn leaves, which can block cesspits
- missed opportunity to provide seasonal interest through plant varieties
- conflicts between planting and buildings, particularly structures and infrastructure, as plants grow over time

Key considerations:

- **Integrate existing large specimen trees.** Where possible incorporate existing specimen trees as they can provide shade, vertical structure and heritage value. Engage an arborist to provide an assessment of large existing trees
- **Provide the necessities.** Design planting areas in detail with sufficient soil volume and good quality soil mixtures. Consider the use of structural cells where paved areas need to run close to tree pits.
- **Incorporate a mix of natives and exotics.** Native species should be considered in the first instance, but exotics can be used where natives are unlikely to thrive. Select a diverse range of species to create interest and distinctiveness. Research the use of uncommon and unusual species to avoid monotonous, boring city environments. Both exotics and natives may be appropriate outside heritage buildings, while some native plants may not be suited to the highly modified environments of civic spaces
- **Design to celebrate diversity and seasonal change.** Seasons are particularly important in an urban setting where static built form dominates the environment. Planting adds a dynamic element to the space. Deciduous trees suit civic places

particularly well by providing shade in summer and allowing light into these spaces in winter.

- **Minimise planting over public infrastructure.** Care should be taken to minimise planting over public infrastructure, particularly species that can damage infrastructure or could impede access to it.

Other considerations:

- the planting scale should be relevant to the scale of the space
- avoid species with negative effects, for instance female Gingko and chestnut trees create pungent smells
- select flowering species to attract birds and bees into the city
- select multi stemmed trees where space allows. These trees create sculptural form and provide for climbing and park activity
- consider placement in relation to overhead services, verandas and other city structures
- retain sight lines for drivers

Tags

Civic space, surface finishes, seasonal, shade, biodiversity, maintenance, diversity



space. Garden Place, Hamilton.

Garden Place, Hamilton. Large trees have been successfully integrated into this redeveloped town centre and provide huge amenity and function in this

Cashel Mall, Christchurch and Garden Place, Hamilton.

Large movable planters provide seasonal colour and can be rearranged to enable a number of activities and events to take place in the space. Cashel Mall, Christchurch & Garden Place, Hamilton.





Aotea Square, Auckland. Native specimen trees have been limbed up to 1.2m in this space to provide clear sightlines and increase safety and the perception of safety in this civic space. Aotea Square, Auckland.