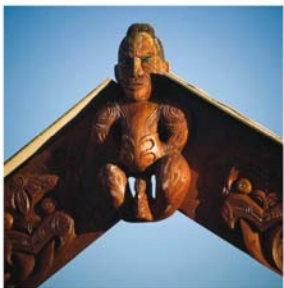


DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW

DISCUSSION PAPER 3B – POLICY DIRECTIONS

URBAN DESIGN

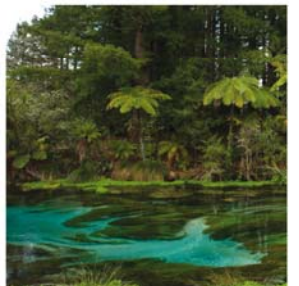


MAY 2009

DESTINATION

ROT@RUA

ROTORUA DISTRICT COUNCIL



DISCUSSION PAPER 3B - POLICY DIRECTION URBAN DESIGN

MAY 2009

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	STATUTORY FRAMEWORK	2
3.	EXISTING DISTRICT PLAN ADEQUACY (RAID ASSESSMENT)	5
4.	ISSUE IDENTIFICATION	8
5.	STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE – POLICY OPTIONS	9
6.	RECOMMENDATIONS	11
7.	POLICY DISCUSSION	12
8.	POLICY DIRECTION	15

Doc.No: RDC-126908, Web version
File No: 65-17-036

This document has been produced for discussion purposes to assist with the review of the Operative Rotorua District plan.

The views expressed in this paper do not represent a policy decision of Council, nor do they represent the views of Planning Services.

None of the recommendation and resulting decisions hold any statutory weight.

This document remains a discussion paper only.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to make recommendations on the role that urban design could have in the proposed District plan.

While 'urban design' as a concept is relatively new, this paper will demonstrate that it is town planning by another name. There is a possibility that urban design may obtain legal recognition through the second phase of RMA reforms being considered by Government.

Urban design is a catch-all term for a range of measures that aim for proactive rather than reactive solutions to the management of environmental effects.

There are seven main principles of urban design. These include:

- Consolidation and dispersal
- Integration and connectivity
- Diversity and adaptability
- Legibility and identity
- Integrated decision making
- Local context and character
- Environmental responsiveness.

Many Council activities touch on urban design, and putting these principles in a Rotorua context will be provided at the workshop. Many Councils have developed, or are in the process of developing urban design approaches and these are summarised in Section 2 of this paper, as are the other relevant statutes. Following consideration of the legislative context, an analysis of the existing District plan and issues that arose during community consultation is provided.

The paper concludes with a number of options for consideration that will influence the way in which urban design may be integrated into the proposed District plan. These options are deliberately pitched at a broad strategic level, with application to specific zones for later workshops.

2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

The following table overviews the key national, regional, and local government statutory framework that provides guidance for key issues raised. Key issues to note:

- Urban design is not a term used or defined in the RMA.
- In 2008 MfE released a draft scope for a National Policy Statement (NPS) on urban design. It is not yet clear whether it will proceed as such, or be incorporated through the phase 2 RMA reforms.
- The local Government Act has a role to play in urban design as evidenced by references to it in Council's draft ten year plan.

Table 2.1 Statutory Framework

STATUTE/ DOCUMENT	RELEVANT SECTION	COMMENTARY
NATIONAL LEVEL		
Resource Management Act 1991. (RMA)	s. 5. Purpose: To promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. s.7. Other matters ...all persons ...shall have particular regard to – (c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values; (d) Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.	The RMA currently does not contain any specific reference to urban design. Matters such as amenity values, and the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment generally relate to urban design outcomes.
National Policy Statement on Urban Design Scope Scoping	Impending policy direction.	MfE has sought feedback on a NPS on Urban Design. Government has indicated that a second round of reforms to the RMA will include measures to implement urban design in some way.
Urban Design Protocol 2005	Vision – Making New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design. Key Urban Design Qualities Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character • Choice • Connections • Creativity • Custodianship • Collaboration 	The Protocol was prepared by MfE. While there is no statutory weight placed on the Protocol it is seen as the guiding document for urban design in New Zealand. RDC is currently not a signatory.
Local Government Act 2002	s.14. Principles relating to local authorities ...a local authority must act in accordance with the following principles: (h) in taking a sustainable development approach, a local authority should take into account —	Promotes a balanced approach to development that maintains resource quality, protects resource availability for the future, ensures that the environment is not degraded, and considers community wellbeing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the social, economic, and cultural well-being of people and communities; and (ii) the need to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment; and (iii) the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations. 	
National Guidelines for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in New Zealand (CPTED)	<p>The seven qualities for well-designed, safer places are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access: Safe movement and connections • Surveillance and sightlines: See and be seen • Layout: Clear and logical orientation • Activity mix: Eyes on the street • Sense of ownership: Showing a space is cared for • Quality environments: Well-designed, managed and maintained environments • Physical protection: Using active security measures 	CPTED principles are closely linked with urban design practice. This document is the principal guideline for implementing design based crime management approaches.
REGIONAL LEVEL		
EBOP RPS and Regional plans	<p>13.3.1(b)(vii) To promote urban and small settlement form and design which minimises adverse effects on the environment.</p> <p>17A.3.1(b)(viii) Local authorities shall demonstrate adherence to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (March 2005) Key Urban Design Qualities. In achieving this territorial authorities shall include appropriate policies, methods and other techniques in their District plans and strategies. (Proposed Change No. 2 to the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement (Growth Management)).</p>	Proposed Plan Change 2 requires Territorial Authorities to 'adhere' to the key 'Urban Design Qualities' stated in the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. When operative this gives Council a strong policy direction to 'give effect to' in its plan.
EW RPS and Regional plans	Currently no specific policy or objectives.	Sub-regional development plans are being developed that will include urban design matters.

LOCAL LEVEL, INCLUDING RDC CORPORATE DOCUMENTS	
Draft 10 Year Plan 2009-2019	Identifies sustainability or sustainable actions as core elements of all the wellbeing areas: environmental, economic, cultural and social . Relevant 'aspects' of wellbeing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social 'connectedness' • Community safety • High standard of living • Wholesale and retail • Open spaces • Urban design and amenity • Sustainable infrastructure • Cultural associations and open space planning.
Crime Prevention Plan	Crime prevention activities in the plan include the development and implementation for CPTED assessments for crime prone areas.
CBD Revitalisation Strategy	Council has adopted the <u>principles</u> of the strategy which examines and makes recommendations on the way the CBD should look and function.
Operative Rotorua District plan	The Operative Rotorua District plan includes provisions for the maintenance and enhancement of character and amenity, and includes a Design Guide (Appendix AA) to manage development in the CBD.
Other district councils	Several councils have now introduced policies and rules into District plans that encourage or require features to improve subdivision and housing efficiency. A summary is provided in Table 2.2 .

Table 2.2 Summary of District plan Provisions that encourage or require urban design

Design Features - Council	Topic / Comment
North Shore City Council	A recent plan change provides for the insertion of an Urban Design Code directly into the plan to address quality design issues. It only relates to commercial areas.
Tauranga City Council	The existing and proposed District plan contains numerous policies and objectives addressing urban design matters. Tauriko/Pyes Pa area has been established with a strong urban design focus with extensive structure planning, service sequencing, connectivity, streetscape designs, mixed uses, landmark features, entry treatments, building appearance, and urban design plans. A development guide has also been produced that is used as a non-regulatory method to encourage urban design for new mixed use and medium density residential development.
Western Bay District Council	The proposed District plan introduces development standards for medium and higher density comprehensive developments, and identifies that improved urban design is to manage growth and intensification. Built Environment Strategies/Town Centre Plans are brought into the District plan to guide and direct centre development, compliance with these plans is required.

3. EXISTING DISTRICT PLAN ADEQUACY (RAID ASSESSMENT)

The operative District plan makes no specific reference to 'urban design'. The District plan contains a CBD Design Guide (Appendix AA) but it too makes no specific reference to urban design as a concept. However, there many issues, objectives and policies in the plan that are broadly related to urban design and a snapshot of these are provided below to demonstrate that, while the existing District plan may pre-date the use of the term 'urban design', the principles have been around for some time and are in many respects already part of the existing policy framework.

A RAID technique was applied (detail in table below) to the 'snapshot' and provided below.

	Recommendation	What it Means
R	REMAIN	The wording and intent of the issue, objective or policy is still relevant and should be included in the next District plan, as it appears in the existing plan
A	AMEND	The intent or purpose of the issue, objective or policy is still valid, but the wording requires amendment to align it with current best practice
I	INCLUDE	The issue, objective or policy does not currently exist in the District plan and needs to be incorporated
D	DELETE	The issue, objective or policy no longer has relevance and should not be reflected in the next District plan.

3.1 Issues

There are many relevant issues in the plan that are still considered to be current and are areas where urban application of design principles could help to improve management.

Table 3.1 Assessment of issues relevant to Urban Design in the Operative District plan

Issues	Plan part	RAID Assess	Reason
Inappropriate extensions to the central business district may result in a loss of amenity arising from fragmentation and loss of integration.	4	Remain	Relevant urban design principles: Integration and connectivity; Local Context and Character.
Activities may threaten the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values in the central business district relating to its character, in particular, a pedestrian environment, tourism resort identity, links with geothermal features and Lake Rotorua, and the aesthetic coherence of these and other features.	4	Remain	As above.
Activities may downgrade existing amenity values relating to its character including Maori heritage.	4	Remain	Relevant urban design principle: Local Context and Character.
Activities, changes in land use, and subdivision can adversely affect	4	Remain	This issue is current but needs updating to

amenity.			link to the principles of urban design
Residential activity and sustainable use of natural and physical resources.	7	Amend	The issue appears confused in meaning and appears to address the potential effects of residential activities on natural and physical resources.
Increasing housing density and preservation of amenity, and range of residential opportunities to suit the life styles of Rotorua residents.	7	Remain	Relevant urban design principle: Diversity and Adaptability.
Some activities can threaten the amenity of existing commercial centres.	8	Remain	Relevant urban design principle: Local context and Character.
Activities such as subdivision and development may have adverse effects on amenity and heritage values in the district.	16	Remain	As above.

3.2 Objectives

There are five relevant objectives in the existing plan. The objectives are generally consistent with the principles of urban design.

Table 3.2 Assessment of objectives relevant to urban design in the Operative District plan

Objectives	Plan part	RAID Assess	Reason
An urban environment in which natural and cultural heritage, urban amenity, access to the countryside and outstanding landscapes are maintained and which does not result in the loss of rural character or land with high productive potential.	7	Remain	Reflects the urban design principles of Consolidation and Dispersal; Integration and Connectivity; and Environmental Responsiveness.
The amenity values and environmental quality of residential areas are maintained and enhanced and not unacceptably affected by higher density residential activity.	7	Remain	Reflects the urban design principles of Local Context and Character; Consolidation and Dispersal; Integration and Connectivity; and Environmental Responsiveness.
Protection, maintenance and enhancement of amenity values in centres of commercial activity.	8	Remain	Reflects the urban design principles of Local Context and Character; and legibility and identity.
To manage noise levels in the Commercial A, B and B1 Zones to achieve a vibrant business and entertainment centre, whilst reducing noise conflict with future residential development or tourist accommodation.	8	Remain	Reflects the urban design principles of local context and character, and Legibility and Identity.

3.3 Policies

There are many policies that are relevant and the following table provides a snapshot in the current District plan. While most have elements of what urban design are trying to achieve, none reference urban design principles directly.

Table 3.3 Assessment of Policies relevant to urban design in the Operative District plan

Policies in the Operative District plan	Plan Part	RAID Assess	Reason
To promote residential consolidation within the Rotorua Urban Area where such consolidation will not cause unacceptable adverse effects to the community.	7	Remain	While the wording would benefit from clarification and an update, it reflects the urban design principles of local context and character, environmental responsiveness, consolidation and dispersal, and legibility and identity.
To encourage the improvement of the visual design and appearance of the CBD including both the public and private realms.	8	Remain	While the wording would benefit from an update, it reflects the urban design principles of local context and character, integrated decision making, legibility and identity, and environmental responsiveness.
To ensure that new development or redevelopment is appropriate to Rotorua and to the particular environs or streetscape.	8	Remain	While the wording would benefit from an update, it reflects the urban design principles of local context and character, environmental responsiveness and legibility and identity.
To improve legibility within the city with particular consideration of its function as a tourist centre.	8	Remain	While the wording would benefit from an update, it reflects the urban design principles of local context and character, environmental responsiveness and legibility and identity.
To ensure that subdivision and development design maintains and promotes the amenity values of the existing neighbourhoods and localities.	16	Remain	While the wording would benefit from an update, it reflects the urban design principles of local context and character, environmental responsiveness, and legibility and identity.

3.4 Summary of District plan evaluation

The existing District plan does a good job of aiming to give effect to urban design principles, without ever once mentioning the term. The words will no doubt be refreshed but the key message from the RAID is that the existing policy framework is reasonably sound from an urban design perspective.

4. ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Consideration of the issues raised by the community and the review of the strengths and perceived weaknesses of the existing District plan, will lay the platform for the review of the issues in relation to urban design.

The 'Towards a New District plan Issues Paper' consolidates all of the issues from the Fresh Ideas community engagement process, including issues from technical feedback, community meetings, elected members input, and from Iwi. The following section identifies five issues of particular relevance to this theme and provides focus on key issues in contention.

Table 4.1. Issues raised during consultation.

ISSUES RAISED DURING CONSULTATION	TYPE/ORIGIN				SUMMARY NOTES FROM CONSULTATION
	Technical	Iwi	Community	Elected Members	
District plan framework	X		X		Submitters identified urban design as key to sustainably developing Rotorua, but noted a lack of effective provisions in the current plan. It was felt that the existing design guide on its own did not achieve positive outcomes.
CBD	X		X	X	The community identified a perceived lack of vitality.
Residential intensification	X		X	X	Perception that urban in-fill and/or intensification based on general minimum site sizes can result in loss of character and amenity.
Community safety	X		X	X	Perceptions of safety can be improved by better design (CPTED) of private and public areas.
Lack of integration of the Lake front and Rotorua Central with the CBD	X		X	X	Has left the lakefront under-utilised as an attraction, and made the CBD fragmented.

5. STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE – POLICY OPTIONS

The major issues described in Sections 3 (District plan analysis) and 4 (community consultation) were consolidated into the following topics, some containing multiple issues. The topics are summarised below, followed by a short discussion of salient points.

Table 5.1. Topics to be addressed

Action points	DP Evaluation (Section 3)	Consultation Theme (Section 4)
District plan Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urban design a key to sustainably developing Rotorua, but a perceived lack of effective provisions in the current plan: the CBD design guide on its own did not achieve positive outcomes. 	X	X
CBD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perceived lack of vitality ▪ The CBD, Rotorua Central and lakefront need to be integrated. 	X	X
Residential intensification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poorly managed urban in-fill and/or intensification. 	X	X
Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote the consideration of CPTED principles for both private and public sector development. 	X	X

5.1 District plan Framework

- *Urban design a key to sustainably developing Rotorua, but a perceived lack of effective provisions in the current plan: the CBD design guide on its own did not achieve positive outcomes.*

Response

The issues, objectives and policies in the existing District plan are based on urban design principles. The words and terminology would benefit from an update.

Whether the performance standards and assessment criteria that flow from this framework are effective from an urban design perspective will be considered by the policy team in coming months. This extends to the CBD Design Guide (Appendix AA of the District plan).

Urban design crosses a whole range of chapters of the plan. Therefore, it is not considered necessary that a standalone chapter be dedicated to the concept. Statements about urban design may be incorporated within the introductory chapter dealing with significant issues and the statutory framework chapter.

5.2 CBD

- *Perceived lack of vitality*
- *The CBD, Rotorua Central and lakefront need to be integrated.*

Response

The existing District plan has a robust policy framework around these issues. The District plan is not the catch-all solution to these issues, but is an important part of a broader suite of tools that Council and the community can use.

Integration and better coordination of the precincts making up the broader CBD requires a corporate rather than District plan, response. Put another way, the proposed District plan can have objectives that aspire to integration and coordination, but there are few or no rules that will deliver or give effect to it.

Urban design will be discussed at a later workshop in relation to its implications to the CBD and other commercial centres.

For these reasons the CBD does not feature as a topic for policy recommendation in later sections of this paper. However, it does raise the issue of the extent and scope that urban design principles should flavour the proposed District plan, and recommendations on these broader issues are tabled in later sections.

5.3 Residential intensification

- *Poorly managed urban in-fill and/or intensification.*

Response

The consultation undertaken by Council highlighted some level of community dissatisfaction with the quality of residential intensification, and urban infill in particular. Consultation also identified that urban infill is necessary and here to stay. The existing District plan promotes residential infill, and also acknowledges the potential for amenity effects in particular. It promotes it because it makes good planning sense to have growth around existing 'nodes', services and infrastructure.

Good quality intensification can compliment or enhance amenity values and can avoid negative health effects. By using urban design principles more suitable areas can be identified and/or more appropriate subdivision/building design can be specified such as location in relation to transport nodes, outdoor recreation space, and appropriate visual design relative to the existing neighbourhood.

In developing a policy direction care must be taken to examine what is appropriate in a Rotorua context. It will be a focus in the residential paper; no detail is required at this stage and as such wont feature as a recommendation.

Urban design will be discussed at a later workshop in relation to its implications to the urban area and suburbs. For these reasons it does not feature as a topic for policy recommendation in later sections of this paper.

5.4 Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)

- *Promote the consideration of CPTED principles for both private and public sector development.*

Response

Places and spaces can promote opportunities for crime, or make the user feel vulnerable to crime. This can create avoidance behaviour, or reduce the amount of time people spend in places. By using CPTED techniques in the design of both public and private spaces Rotorua can be a safer, more enjoyable, and more energetic place to live, work and play.

While 'Public Safety' is an assessment criteria for many activities identified in the existing District plan requiring a resource consent, there is little detail on methods of achievement. The CBD Design Guide would also benefit from amendments that aim to articulate what can be done to design for public safety.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendation and options that will provide the basis for discussion, and subsequent direction from Members. As discussed above the options are prepared on the understanding that the application of urban design principles in the residential zone and city centre will be discussed in detail at later workshops. The recommendations draw together information presented in the paper and propose a way forward for the District plan.

In some instances there may only be one option, but most will have a number of options. Members may wish some of the options to be reported on in more detail, and this will be done once initial reaction and direction has been gauged.

6.1 District plan Framework

- *Urban design a key to sustainably developing Rotorua, but a perceived lack of effective provisions in the current plan: the CBD design guide on its own did not achieve positive outcomes.*

Options

- A. Retain the current situation, where general matters related to urban design are identified in the District plan including Appendix AA.
- B. Amend existing objectives and policies to more strongly reflect the principles of urban design.
- C. Planning staff to review the performance standards and assessment criteria of the zone chapters with regard to urban design principles.
- D. Planning staff to review the CBD Design Guide with regard to urban design principles.

It is anticipated that Members may wish to select more than one of the above options.

6.2 District plan Scope

- Issues raised about the CBD also raise the issue of the extent to which urban design principles should be incorporated in the proposed District plan.

Options

- A. Retain the current situation, where general matters related to urban design are identified throughout the District plan including Appendix AA.
- B. Limit urban design consideration to the CBD and other retail centres.
- C. Limit to CBD and areas within the Urban Fence.
- D. All of district approach.

6.3 Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)

- *Promote the consideration of CPTED principles for both private and public sector development.*

Options

- A. Retain current situation (limited reference to public safety in some assessment criteria).
- B. Planning staff to review the performance standards and assessment criteria of the zone chapters with regard to CPTED.
- C. Planning staff to review the CBD Design Guide with regard to CPTED.

7 POLICY DISCUSSION

This section of the paper records Members feedback from Workshop A and includes discussion points from the Workshop. The discussion points from the internal working group (staff members were provided with the Version A document at the same time as Elected Members) are also referenced where relevant.

A key point of note in the workshop was that the discussion was about the District plan response, not the broader corporate response that was being formulated for urban design, including the decision to become a signatory to the urban design protocol.

Elected members were adamant that any approaches using urban design must consist of guiding principles, not be overly prescriptive, and be more about a way that they want the district to be, rather than a stringent set of rules.

7.1 District plan framework

Issue

- *Urban design a key to sustainably developing Rotorua, but a perceived lack of effective provisions in the current plan: the CBD design guide on its own did not achieve positive outcomes.*

Recommended policy direction:

Modified option B and C

- B. Amend existing objectives and policies to more strongly reflect the principles of urban design.**
- C. Undertake a review the performance standards and assessment criteria of the zone chapters with regard to urban design principles to strengthen the direction for those using the plan.**

Key discussion points:

- 7.1.1 Comments have been made by the Chamber of Commerce that the CBD guide does not link everything together, perhaps it should do this better.
- 7.1.2 Options B and C was favoured, with a review of the performance standards so that the principles of good urban design are bedded into the District plan. Important that the profile of urban design is raised throughout the district.

7.2 District plan Scope

Issue

- *Issues raised about the CBD also raise the issue of the extent to which urban design principles should be incorporated in the proposed District plan.*

Recommended policy direction

No decision made at this stage

Members agreed that more work is needed to be undertaken at a corporate level, prior to Members making a decision as to how urban design will fit into the District plan.

Key discussion points:

- 7.2.1 Focus for compliance with the design guide is on the CBD, perhaps there is a need to look further afield into the suburban centres, and also Ngongotaha.
- 7.2.2 Mindful that if urban design principles and outcomes spread too thinly throughout the plan then they may become diluted and not have impact – need to be wary of this.
- 7.2.3 There needs to be further discussion on what exactly 'good' urban design is, what it means for the community, and how this can be implemented through not only the District plan.
- 7.2.4 Members noted that the 'jury was still out', in that Council had not decided what it wanted with respect to urban design.

7.3 CPTED Crime Prevention through environmental design

Issue

- *Promote the consideration of CPTED principles for both private and public sector development.*

Recommended policy direction:

New Option D

- D. That the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design be incorporated into the reviewed design guidelines and brought back as a draft for Members consideration and discussion.**

Key discussion points:

- 7.3.1 There is going to be changed activity throughout the CBD within the life of the District plan, and we need to make sure that this does not encourage bad behaviour; a well planned city will make people feel safe.
- 7.3.2 CPTED principles are preventative and not reactive, the more that these principles can be bedded down in the District plan and inform development, the better the city will be.
- 7.3.3 Acknowledgement that whilst there can be an acceptance of the CPTED principles the District plan should also provide direction for developments.
- 7.3.4 CPTED initiatives and guidelines should be a critical component of the District plan review.

8 POLICY DIRECTION

The policy directions provided by Members at the Workshop at which Policy Options were discussed are summarised below, and will provide the platform for development of the issues, objectives and policies in relation to urban design in the District plan.

Table 8.1

ISSUE	POLICY DIRECTION
8.1 District plan Framework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend existing objectives and policies to more strongly reflect the principles of urban design. 2. Undertake a review of the performance standards and assessment criteria of the zone chapters with regard to urban design principles to strengthen the direction for those using the plan.
8.2 District plan Scope	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. No decision made at this stage 4. Members agreed that more work is needed to be undertaken at a corporate level, prior to Members making a decision as to how urban design will fit into the District plan.
8.3 CPTED Crime Prevention through environmental design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. That the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design be incorporated into the reviewed design guidelines and brought back as a draft for Members consideration and discussion.