



Release of draft district plan for comment

Why a draft district plan?

The district plan review started late in 2007. Since then we have done a lot of work and the Council has decided to release a DRAFT district plan for discussion with the community before going through the more formal legal process.

One of the guiding principles of the review has been identification and discussion of issues before the formal notification process starts. The draft will provide an opportunity for the community to have its say in an open and interactive way rather than a process restricted by legislative requirements.

The draft district plan has absolutely no legal weight at this stage, and is effectively a large discussion document to gauge opinion on policy directions and rules that the Council thinks it has got right, and those where more work is required. The draft plan also fulfils councillors wishes to ensure there is a 'no surprises' approach.

This means that the community will be able to see what direction Council is moving in, and will be able to say whether they agree or otherwise. Most importantly, the release of a draft plan provides for a plain-English test drive with the community.

What is different in the draft plan?

The draft plan is thinner and less complicated than the present plan. The tone of the plan is more proactive, positive and enabling. Colour maps with detailed information mean people using the maps will be able to find their property more easily, particularly in the rural area. There are also a series of 'special maps' that consolidate key information onto one map for ease of reference. An example is the city centre, which covers four standard-size zoning maps. Most of the zones have been retained from the existing plan, redundant chapters have been removed, and there are some new chapters.

Top issues that the draft plan addresses

- Helping improve lake water quality by enabling land use change
- Enabling sustainable economic growth
- Increasing the cohesion and vitality of the city centre
- Facilitating development opportunities on Maori land
- Maintaining urban residential amenity
- Encouraging good quality design in subdivisions



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Encouraging sustainable economic growth

The draft plan maintains and improves the quality of the Rotorua environment and recognises the need to provide for economic growth. The plan keeps to a minimum the triggers for resource consent in the commercial and industrial zones of the district. It provides for temporary activities

and events as permitted activities, which means resource consents are not required. The permissive rural zone provides for landuse change where it helps improve lake water quality. There are a number of zone changes to enable growth, such as the Lake Road commercial rezoning.

The research supporting the draft

To develop the science to support the draft plan Council commissioned a number of specialist reports. These research reports will also be posted on the web at the same time as the draft plan. The research reports cover the following topics:

- Lake Rotorua Basin structure plan.
- Landscapes assessments.
- Natural heritage, flora and fauna, of the district.
- Built heritage in the City Centre.
- Noise provisions.
- Signage.
- A number of natural hazards studies.



The Lakes A Zone question

As previously communicated the Lakes A zone (the area around the Tarawera and Okareka catchments) is not being reviewed as part of the draft plan process. At the start of the district plan review process the Lakes A zone had only been operative for two years, has not been thoroughly tested yet, and still

awaits direction from regional plans and statements. A Lakes A zone five yearly report will be produced later this year and will provide the platform for review. Councillors and Council's management team have signalled that a review of the Lakes A zone will begin once the district plan is formally notified.

Are there any specific key issues for feedback focus?

There are a couple of issues where Councillors are expressly interested in your views:

Retail and commercial activity in the residential zones

A key issue is the concentration of retail and commercial activity in the city centre. In order to do this, the draft plan suggests that non-residential activities in the residential zones should be restricted. The draft includes provisions that ensure non-residential activities, such as commercial and retail, are encouraged to locate in the city centre. There are strong policies that seek to achieve this outcome, Councillors would like to know how the community feels about this.

Landscaping requirements for the industrial zones

Another issue we would like feedback on is landscaping requirements in the industrial zones. Industrial zones are commonly the 'working' areas in the urban environment. Most industrial zones are located on major arterial routes into and through the city centre. Landscaping requirements need to strike a balance between providing a pleasant setting for the busy industrial environment, but not requiring too much landscaping making it too hard for site owners to comply with the plan. Councillors are keen to know where you think the priorities should sit for landscaping in the industrial zones.

Next steps

The draft district plan is out for comment from 16 April 2011 until 27 May 2011. All of the text, maps and research will be available on the fresh ideas website. Feedback received will then be analysed and placed before Councillors for their review. Councillors will deliberate over points raised and will direct staff to make amendments where necessary. Once the amendments and a final legal review are completed the district plan will be notified and formal submissions called for.

Join us at our open days.
9 and 16 May at Te Runanga Tearooms, Government Gardens.

Look out for public meetings

Throughout the submission period a number of public meetings will be scheduled, and two public open days are also planned. These meetings will provide the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments to the team charged with developing the draft plan. **The open days will be at the Te Runanga Tea Rooms on Hinemaru Street on 9 May and 16 May.** Specific times and other public meetings will be advertised in the Daily Post and Rotorua Review.