

4 Objectives and Policies for the District's Towns

4.1 Introduction

Arapuni, Putaruru, Tirau and Tokoroa need to be functional and attractive places for people to live, and offer a range of employment and recreational opportunities, as well as services for surrounding rural areas and visitors. It is important that residential areas have a high standard of visual amenity, quietness, a safe environment, and a high quality and efficient supply of services. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the overall environmental quality of the four towns' residential areas, focusing on encouraging high standards of urban design, landscaping, visual amenity, and adequate noise control.

Tokoroa, Arapuni and parts of Putaruru are located within the catchment of the Waikato River and as such are subject to the policy directions contained within the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River.

The plan manages land use in the towns through town centre, business, residential and industrial zones. Performance Standards have been developed which address potential adverse environmental effects. These standards aim to promote a quality urban environment that affords choice as to the styles of living and employment, and maintains good networks/links for residents to reserves and the town centres.

Pakeha settlement of the district began with the Thames Valley Land Company unsuccessfully promoting settlement at Lichfield during the 1880s. Lichfield was the railhead from Hamilton from 1886 to 1897, when the branch line was removed and Putaruru became the main rail connection to Rotorua. Lichfield was also an important coach link to Rotorua and Taupo around the same period, and was an early dairy farming area.

Putaruru and Tirau were settled in the 1890s to service the then very large native logging industry and farming. Putaruru was originally going to be just a stop on the way to the planned 'city' of Lichfield, but it became an important coach and later railway stop on the way to Rotorua from 1894, and outstripped the growth of Lichfield. Putaruru and Tirau are now service towns for the surrounding rural areas. Arapuni was developed as workers' housing for the adjacent hydro dam, but now is a rural retreat aiming for a "slow town" character.

It was only when pine plantations were planted around Tokoroa from the 1920s onwards, and soil deficiencies affecting pastoral farming were identified in the 1930s, that Tokoroa began to grow as a centre. Pine plantations became the basis for a large wood products and paper industry from 1953 onwards. The rapid expansion of the forestry industry led to the development of the mill at Kinleith and the steady growth of Tokoroa.

This pattern of European settlement and development has resulted in historic heritage along with the relationships of Tangata Whenua and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga. All of this heritage provides a valuable and tangible link to the people, places and events that have shaped the development of the towns and settlements.

Inappropriately managed activities adjacent to or on sites associated with recorded and unrecorded historic heritage can weaken and even destroy these connections to the past. Careful management and informed community decision making is required. In this regard, recognising and providing for the protection of historic heritage is a matter of national importance for the Council to consider under section 6(f) RMA.

Heritage New Zealand has a responsibility to maintain a register of the country's significant historic places and areas, under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. Registration does not in itself confer any legal protection, which is instead left to district plans. It is therefore important that Heritage New Zealand is involved at an early stage with proposals to further develop any historic places and areas, as defined by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 and included within Appendix B Built Heritage Inventory. Heritage New Zealand will be an affected party for works associated with any item in Appendix B, and/or items registered by Heritage New Zealand. The relevant criteria in Appendix F (Criteria for Determining Significance of Heritage Features) will be used in assessing proposals for additional buildings to be listed in Appendix B.

Further, any work that may modify, damage or destroy an archaeological site associated with pre-1900 human activity also requires a separate authority from Heritage New Zealand.

The community is ethnically and culturally diverse with significant numbers of Māori (including from tribal groups other than Raukawa), and Pacific Island residents, particularly from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa and Tonga. Both the Māori and Pacific Island populations are approximately twice the national average as a proportion of the community.

There are also over 30 different ethnicities from all over the world represented in the district. Many newcomers to the district came here during the development of the forest products industry from the 1950s (including Finnish immigrants and their families who were recruited to work at the Kinleith mill, and the Dutch, many of whom remain involved in rural industries).

~~Housing growth has been minimal in the towns over recent years, and population projections are for modest or static growth in the future. There is already sufficient land zoned and serviced to cater for urban needs, and a policy of containing the towns within their current boundaries has been adopted.~~

The Putaruru Growth Plan 2017 adopted by Council reflects that the town has recently been experiencing population growth and there is a need to rezone greenfield areas to provide for residential and business activities.

4.2 Objectives for the District's Towns

- 4.2.1 To have attractive, functional, safe and thriving townships built on the unique qualities of their people, industries, history and natural strengths.
- 4.2.2 To identify and retain historic heritage so as to contribute to the heritage, character and amenity of the towns and settlements.
- 4.2.3 To establish a range of housing styles, cultural facilities and recreational activities that cater for changing lifestyles, an aging population and the diverse ethnicity of the towns' populations.
- 4.2.4 To enable the town centres in Putaruru, Tokoroa and Tirau to provide distinctive, attractive, safe and easily accessible environments with a concentration of commercial businesses and cultural activities providing a wide range of services and facilities for residents and passing travellers, and with minimum adverse effects on the safe and sustainable functioning of State Highway 1.
- 4.2.5 To allow adequate opportunities for businesses and industries to provide a range of employment opportunities for the District's residents, in a manner consistent with the towns' existing amenity values without any unnecessary barriers to economic advancement.
- 4.2.6 To recognise the importance of the industrial estates within Tokoroa, Putaruru and Tirau, and of the dairy processing facility at Tirau to the townships' people and the District's economy.
- 4.2.7 ~~To contain urban development within the existing town boundaries.~~ *To provide for outward expansion of existing townships where the new areas can be efficiently serviced with network utilities and infrastructure including provision for cycling and pedestrians, and where funding provision has been made consistent with the level of projected demand for new building sites for houses and businesses.*
- 4.2.8 To identify and address possible effects from urban activities on the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and its catchments during decision making.
- 4.2.9 To minimise the potential for adverse effects in connection with the use, development and subdivision of contaminated and potentially contaminated land, so as to avoid or mitigate the risk of adverse effects on human health and the environment.
- 4.2.10 *To ensure that new urban development is efficiently serviced and integrated to mitigate adverse effects on existing network utilities and infrastructure, and the health, safety and wellbeing of people and communities.* (Submission 3.2, FENZ)
- 4.2.11 *To ensure that staged subdivision or development in the Putaruru Growth Cells does not compromise the future urban use of those areas.*

4.3 Policies

- 4.3.1 Enable home occupations and a range of non-residential activities in residential areas where the effects of these businesses are consistent with maintaining the character and amenity of the residential neighbourhoods and do not adversely affect the vitality of the town centres.
- 4.3.2 Enable the provision and expansion of the network utilities and infrastructure and industrial facilities, that are necessary to underpin the operation and prosperity of the District's urban areas while managing new subdivision and land uses that may potentially conflict with, restrict or compromise the existing operation of the District's key industrial sites.
- 4.3.3 Consolidate new residential development in the existing vacant, zoned and serviced land, and in the Putaruru Growth Cells identified by this Plan, in order to achieve the efficient use of existing network utilities and infrastructure.
- 4.3.4 Improve air quality in the Tokoroa and Putaruru airsheds for health and environmental reasons by helping to minimise PM10 emissions.
- 4.3.5 Establish and manage a network of well maintained public reserves that serve neighbourhood, town and district-wide needs for active and passive recreation and biodiversity corridors, including linked parks and walkways along the urban streams.
- 4.3.6 Preserve and enhance the historic values of our towns through ensuring subdivision, use and development of sites containing heritage items, including the unique stone houses in Putaruru and Tokoroa, is compatible with those values.
- 4.3.7 Encourage buildings that contribute to the historic heritage of the towns to be restored, conserved and adaptively re-used where possible, with any alterations and additions being of a scale, detailing, style and character consistent with their heritage values.
- 4.3.8 Ensure that development minimises risks to people, properties and the environment from hazardous substances and natural hazards.
- 4.3.9 Encourage the sustainable development of marae and other facilities required for the cultural needs of Tangata Whenua.
- 4.3.10 Retain the distinctive low-density nature and village character of the built form of Arapuni and Tirau.
- 4.3.11 Promote affordable, safe, integrated, sustainable and responsive transport networks within and through the towns, with safe pedestrian and cycleway connections linking residential neighbourhoods with public reserves, schools and the town centres.
- 4.3.12 Promote energy efficiency and the production of renewable energy through micro-generation at a household and community scale.
- 4.3.13 Promote a high standard of urban design for new development, including reflecting the town's past and the locality's Raukawa heritage, and consideration of community safety and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- 4.3.14 Safeguard the operational performance, maintenance and minor upgrade of electricity transmission, sub-transmission and distribution lines in urban areas by managing the adverse effects of neighbouring activities.
- 4.3.15 To achieve the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River by managing subdivision and land use within the district's towns located within the River catchment in a way that restores and protects the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River, including by:

- a) controlling hazardous substances use and storage
 - b) including standards for earthworks, silt and stormwater control
 - c) managing activities in towns
 - d) requiring esplanades reserves or strips.
- 4.3.16** Enable emergency service facilities to establish and operate throughout the district by implementing appropriate development controls.
- 4.3.17** Where the National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health Regulations 2011 are relevant, manage the activity to ensure that any contamination is appropriate to any proposed future use of the piece of land and avoids, remedies or mitigates potential adverse effect on human health.
- 4.3.18** Land within the Putaruru Growth Cells will not be developed for urban use until the provision of network utilities and infrastructure to service the land is secured through private developer agreements or other appropriate legal mechanisms.
- 4.3.19** Each Putaruru Growth Cell shall be developed and serviced to provide sufficient capacity in network utilities and infrastructure for the scale and density of residential and or business development anticipated for the entire Growth Cell.
- 4.3.20** Ensure that new subdivisions within Putaruru Growth Cells do not compromise their efficient servicing, or their integration with the existing urban area as new neighbourhoods.
- 4.3.21** Ensure that new activities within Putaruru Growth Cell 4 do not cause adverse traffic safety, efficiency or capacity effects on the operation of the SH1/Princes St intersection.

4.4 Methods to Achieve Objectives and Policies

The objectives and policies in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 above will be implemented through the following methods:

4.4.1 District Plan Methods

- Town Centre zone provisions that provide for thriving, attractive and functional town centres
- Zone rules that provide for employment opportunities in selected locations, as well as home occupations and other limited commercial activities within Residential zones
- Residential zone provisions that provide for parks, reserves and community facilities
- Esplanade reserves and strips created at subdivision stage under Rule 10.10
- Specific rules for Putaruru Growth Cells, including Development Concept Plan requirements, traffic safety thresholds, and water and wastewater limitations, that promote integration of growth areas with the town's existing neighbourhoods and with network utilities and infrastructure.
- Rules for building bulk and location that maximise solar energy/gain to residential sites and neighbouring properties
- Specific provision for Network Utilities throughout the District in Chapter 13
- Industrial and Business zone rules that provide maximum practical flexibility for businesses within townships
- Rules in Appendix B to preserve the heritage values of the towns' important buildings
- Subdivision provisions in Chapter 10 that aim to enable further residential development on existing properties whilst maintaining amenity and character of neighbourhoods
- Specific provision for micro-generation of energy at a community and household scale

- Provision for marae and related papakāinga development throughout rural and residential zones
- A Neighbourhood Retail Zone for suburban shops in Tokoroa to manage the provision of these services whilst maintaining the residential amenity of the neighbourhoods concerned
- Hazardous Substances Rules in Appendix G
- Setbacks from state highways, transmission lines and gas lines (shown on planning maps)
- Controls on subdivision near electricity sub-transmission lines
- Mitigating natural hazard risks through resource consent conditions
- Provisions that recognise the positive effects and limited detrimental environmental effects of temporary activities in the district's towns
- Adoption of CPTED principles in assessment criteria requiring consideration of these principles during the resource consent process.

4.4.2 Other Methods

- Advocacy, advice and education for the community and developers to adopt urban design standards, local Raukawa design elements, historically-appropriate names for new streets etc, and sustainable building features
- Facilitate greater public awareness of Tangata Whenua historical and cultural heritage, in association with Raukawa
- Funding set aside in the Long Term Plan for transport network improvements and townscape enhancement such as street upgrades and beautification
- Local Action Plan on Climate Change, and Council's Energy Plan
- South Waikato District Land Transport Strategy
- Hazards Register and actions under Health Act, Building Act, and other legislation
- Standards under Code of Subdivision and Development, including for urban earthworks
- Warm Homes Clean Air Project
- Working in partnership with Raukawa, especially to deliver more sustainable and affordable housing and better community outcomes
- Bylaw requirements, including for managing activities and signage in public places
- Council funding and underwriting of new recreational and entertainment facilities
- *The "Putaruru Growth Plan 2017" developed in collaboration with the Putaruru Moving Forward group, and further such Plans yet to be developed for the District's other towns.*
- *Water efficiency requirements in Council's Water Supply and other Bylaws and the Regional Infrastructure Technical Specifications (July 2018).*

4.5 Reasons

A lot of what makes functional and enjoyable towns cannot be achieved only through district plan methods. For example addressing the current urban air quality problems in terms of the RMA is a Regional Council responsibility. Urban enhancement therefore needs to be furthered through a variety of other works undertaken by Council and other stakeholders, especially Raukawa, as noted in Chapter 3.

The plan's provisions have sought to generate better urban design outcomes through a more flexible approach (in the way activity lists are used) and a more targeted approach (in the performance standards that are applied). An example of this flexibility is the broad range of permitted activities within residential areas of the towns – which will add interest and help to revitalise these areas. ~~The zoning reflects the low growth projections by not~~

~~providing for greenfield development. Instead the focus is more about re-using and redeveloping existing properties.~~

Four areas shown on the Planning Maps have been newly- zoned for "greenfield" residential and business development in Putaruru. The size and location of these Growth Cells reflects the Council's latest growth projections, and more than caters for the additional demand for houses and businesses over the 2020-2030 period.

The Planning Maps also indicate boundaries where additional measures should be taken to mitigate potential 'reverse sensitivity' effects from future ~~residents occupants~~ of the Growth Cells on existing and future Business or Rural activities on adjoining sites. (Submission 4.2, KiwiRail)

Possible future growth areas to cater for demand in Putaruru beyond the District Plan's 10 year timeframe have also been identified in the Putaruru Growth Plan 2017, and will be considered as part of future District Plan reviews once servicing upgrades have been programmed. Similar growth planning exercises are planned for the District's other towns.

In some circumstances, the Council could enter into Private Developer Agreements to record the level of commitment between the Council and developers to provide for an efficient and integrated network of infrastructure services for each of the Growth Cells.

Private Developer Agreements are expected to:

- Set out the agreed list of works (staging, timing, priority) required to support existing and new urban development in the selected growth cell;
- Confirm the timing and cost apportionment associated with these works to serve existing and proposed new urban development in the growth cell; and
- Set out the circumstances under which the developer can implement development earlier than programmed, if a greater funding contribution is available or Council is unable to confirm long term funding /budget allocations for the necessary infrastructure.

Fairly liberal subdivision provisions have been retained for all the urban areas in order to encourage re-development. An example of a targeted approach is the plan's parking provisions, where no on-site requirements apply to town centre parking, with more parking or cash-in-lieu required on-site in the business and industrial zones.