

Tēnā koutou

Rotorua Lakes Council is seeking the views of Whakarewarewa Village on whether there should be changes to the District Plan rules on the types of houses that can be built in Whakarewarewa Village.

Why are we consulting on this issue?

There is a significant lack of housing in Rotorua, which is contributing to a housing crisis. The Government and the Council have agreed that one way to increase the amount of housing is to make changes to the Rotorua District Plan to allow “Medium Density” housing in all residential areas.

As a result, the government has directed the Council to make changes by 20 August 2022 to the District Plan to implement new Medium Density Residential Standards. From August onwards, the Medium Density rules will apply across the whole of the Rotorua urban area.

Medium Density

Basically, “Medium Density” means property owners will be allowed to build up to 3 housing units on their section, up to 3 storeys high. Compared to the existing rules, section sizes can be smaller and houses can be closer to the boundary.

Whakarewarewa Village

We are consulting the residents of Whakarewarewa Village to ask whether these changes should also be applied to the Village.

Included in this letter is background information on what the Rotorua District Plan currently says (including maps from the District Plan) and the options for Whakarewarewa Village. Please send your feedback to us by 8 April 2022 by:

- Dropping it off at Rotorua Lakes Council, at 1061 Haupapa Street (attention: Anna Bindon)
- Sending an email with your response to anna.bindon@rotorualc.nz.

Any related comments are also welcome.

Before 8 April, if you have any questions, please get in touch with us, or we can organize a Zoom hui for the Whakarewarewa community to explain the Medium Density changes and answer your questions.

[Sign off]

APPENDIX ONE: BACKGROUND

The Rotorua District Plan – What are the current rules for housing?

The Rotorua District Plan contains rules to manage the type of new housing that can be built in the Rotorua district. It does this by setting out limits for things like:

- separation of buildings from boundaries,
- maximum building height,
- how much of a site can be covered by buildings, and
- how many houses can be built on a site.

If an owner wants to develop their land outside these limits, they need to apply for a resource consent.

The District Plan also contains rules to manage other aspects of our environment, for example, natural hazards and the protection of cultural sites. These issues may also restrict what can be built on a site.

The District Plan and Whakarewarewa Village

Whakarewarewa, Ōhinemutu and Ngāpuna are currently treated differently than other residential areas in the District Plan with a unique zone ('Residential 3 Zone'). The purpose of the Residential 3 Zone is to help recognise the special cultural and historic importance of these Villages, and to protect their qualities and characteristics such as marae being dominant features, the abundance of geothermal taonga, and allowing narrow streets and low-rise homes that are built in clusters or very close to property boundaries.

The new legislation

The government has introduced new legislation (the [Enabling Housing Supply Amendment Act](#) 2021, which amends the Resource Management Act 1991), which requires council to change our District Plan to allow Medium Density housing. We have the option to not apply the Medium Density standards to areas with special historic and Māori cultural values (such as Whakarewarewa).

Medium Density residential standards – What would they mean for Whakarewarewa Village?

The table compares the current standards for Whakarewarewa to the new Medium Density standards in more detail.

	Current District Plan Standards	Medium Density Standards
Maximum Building Height	5m	11m with an allowance for the peak of the roof to extend an additional 1m.
Density	1 house per 250m ²	3 houses per site
Minimum distance from house to front yard	3m	1.5m
Minimum distance from house to side and Rear	2.5m	1m

Height envelope	3m +45 degrees	4m + 60 degrees
Maximum amount of site that can be covered by buildings	50%	50%
Glazing, landscaping, outlook space	No controls	Controls

Natural hazards – geothermal and flooding risk

It is important to note that even if we change the rules (to allow Medium Density housing within Whakarewarewa), there are other technical constraints in Whakarewarewa that need to be addressed under the Building Act, notably geotechnical constraints associated with the geothermal hazards .

APPENDIX TWO: Our Questions

We would greatly appreciate your views on the following questions:

1. Whakarewarewa is an ancestral kāinga for Tūhourangi Ngāti Wahiao. The Puarenga river and an abundance of geothermal features throughout the village create a focus for its special historic and cultural nature, and shape the identity of the people. Te Pakira marae is a dominant feature and an expression of the belonging, identity, kawa and tikanga of Tūhourangi Ngāti Wahiao. It is the focus for a strong and vibrant hapū and iwi life. Whakarewarewa is also the setting for historic guiding activities that Tūhourangi Ngāti Wahiao began in the late 1880s and continue to practice today, epitomising manaakitanga and rangatiratanga. Today Whakarewarewa is characterised as having narrow streets and one-storey buildings built relatively closely together (compared to the rest of the district). Most of the buildings are wooden, weatherboard, and buildings can be clustered together, reflecting a close-knit community. The Village is Māori land so homes in the Village are passed down through wider whānau, reflecting the continued whakapapa connections of the residents.

We know this is a very simplified description of Whakarewarewa, and that it does not capture all of its important aspects. What is missing? What are the other aspects of the Village that help contribute to its special historic and cultural values?

2. Do you think new buildings in the Village should look similar to what's there now? Or do you think people should be allowed to construct new buildings that are quite different, with contemporary styles and different types of materials?
3. What aspects of the building style in Whakarewarewa are important to the heritage or cultural values of the village?
4. Do you think the current rules for new buildings in Whakarewarewa are about right? Or do you think the current rules should be changed?
5. Do you think the Medium Density residential standards should be applied to Whakarewarewa Village? For **each row** in the table, please **circle your preference** between the current standard or the Medium Density standard (i.e. in the first row, do you prefer 5m height limit or 11m)?

	Current District Plan Standards	Medium Density Standards
Maximum Building Height	5m (about one storey)	11m with an allowance for the peak of the roof to extend an additional 1m. (about 3 stories)
Density	1 house per 250m ²	3 houses per site
Minimum distance from house to front yard	3m	1.5m
Minimum distance from house to side and Rear	2.5m	1m
Height envelope	3m +45 degrees	4m + 60 degrees
Maximum amount of site that can be covered by buildings	50%	50%

Glazing, landscaping, outlook space	No controls	Controls
--	-------------	----------