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Dear ratepayer / property owner

**Notification of Housing for Everyone: Plan Change 9 to the Rotorua District Plan
Changes to the provisions for Development Areas – Pukehāngi Heights and Wharenui**

We are writing to let you know about a plan change (Housing for Everyone: Plan Change 9) to the Rotorua District Plan and provide you with a copy of the public notice. You may also receive a general letter about this plan change, but here we want to particularly highlight the changes to the provisions for development areas.

Housing for Everyone: Plan Change 9 is a change we are making to our District Plan to enable more housing development and greater housing choice in Rotorua city, as well as more efficient use of urban land. The plan change will enable greater housing choice in Rotorua by amending the current rules. This is an important part of addressing our housing shortage because it enables more houses to be built in areas that have access to jobs, public transport, amenities and other community facilities.

As part of this plan change amendments are proposed to the provisions for the Pukehāngi Heights and Wharenui Development Areas. We have identified that you are a ratepayer or owner of one or more properties inside these Development Areas and, therefore, may be affected by the proposed changes to the provisions.

We want to let you know about the opportunity to make a submission. If you would like to make a submission on any aspect on Plan Change 9 the process for making a submission is set out within the public notice attached to this letter.

Submissions close: 14 October 2022

How to find further information

The attachment provides further information about Plan Change 9, focusing on the proposed changes with respect to the Development Areas.

Full details of the plan change, supporting technical reports and FAQs are available on our website <http://letstalk.rotorualakescouncil.nz>. If you cannot get access to this electronic information or have any questions, please contact the Rotorua Lakes Council at Policy.Planning@rotorualc.nz or on (07) 348 4199.

Yours faithfully

Rotorua Lakes Council, Planning and Development Solutions

Housing for Everyone - Plan Change 9

Further information about the proposal – Pukehāngi Heights and Wharenui Development Areas

Reasons for developing Plan Change 9

Plan Change 9 to the Rotorua District Plan was developed in response to changes to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) (following the enactment of the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021) and the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD), which collectively aim to encourage greater housing supply and choice in New Zealand's cities experiencing high levels of growth.

Rotorua has been identified as an area of acute housing need and therefore is required to apply new Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) in relevant residential zones in Rotorua City including the Residential 1 Zones in Pukehāngi and Wharenui (unless a qualifying matter applies, for example to protect historic heritage or manage the significant risks from natural hazards).

The MDRS sets out the rules that residential units must meet (with respect to matters such as the maximum number of residential units per site, maximum building height and minimum yards) to be permitted without resource consent. These new standards would essentially enable landowners to build up to three houses of up to three storeys on their site as of right (that is, without resource consent) on most sites, unless resource consent is required for another reason.

Additionally, the Council is required to amend the District Plan across all urban zones so that heights and densities of development enabled by the plan are consistent with the NPS-UD. This essentially requires that the heights and densities enabled reflect how close the area is to services and the demand for housing and business in that location.

Amendments to the Rotorua District Plan - Pukehāngi Heights and Wharenui Development Areas

As a response to these requirements, Plan Change 9 proposes the following changes to the provisions for the Pukehāngi Heights and Wharenui Development Areas:

- *Pukehāngi Heights*
 - Partially adopt the MDRS for Residential 1 Zone, but retaining provisions to address qualifying matters for natural hazards, infrastructure, cultural values and landscape values of the Caldera Rim. This includes removal of the specific locations for medium density residential development in the structure plan and corresponding rules.
 - Amendments to standards and policies and principles for Pukehāngi Heights to protect landscape values of the Caldera Rim in the context of the potential for increased development density on the upper terrace. This includes a proposed building limit of 9m for the upper terrace, which is less than what is permitted under the MDRS.
- *Wharenui Development Area*
 - Partially adopt the MDRS for Residential 1 Zone, but retaining some provisions to address qualifying matters for infrastructure, but with amendments.
 - A rule and standard relating to the upgrade of the Eastern Arterial is proposed to be deleted and standards requiring traffic calming and road upgrades are proposed to be amended.

An overview of the full plan change by plan section is provided within the public notice attached to this letter.

Please note that these are only summaries of key points and we encourage you to read the full section 32 report and associated plan change provisions to understand how you may be affected.

Full details of the changes are available in the supporting technical reports on the Council's website: <http://letstalk.rotorualakescouncil.nz>.

Legal Effect

The RMA, as recently amended, provides that rules permitting residential units that comply with the MDRS within the Residential 1 Zone have immediate legal effect from notification of the plan change on 20 August 2022 unless the rule applies to a qualifying matter area (refer to s86BA). The Pukehangi Heights and Wharenui Development Areas have been identified as qualifying matter areas due to the rules that relate to natural hazards, infrastructure, cultural values and landscape values.

It is noted, however, that proposed amendments to objectives and policies in PC9 may still be relevant to the assessment of resource consents.

Plan Change Process

Plan Change 9 is an intensification planning instrument under the RMA and will follow a special process called the Intensification Streamlined Planning Process (ISPP), introduced in the recent RMA changes. Key steps in this process involve notifying the plan change for submissions and a hearing of submissions by independent commissioners, as outlined below.

