

DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW

DISCUSSION PAPER 11B – POLICY DIRECTION

CITY CENTRE / LAKEFRONT

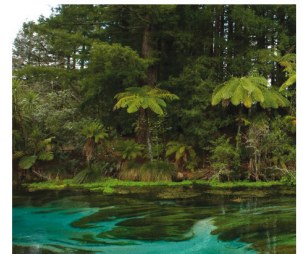


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DESTINATION

ROT@RUA

ROTORUA DISTRICT COUNCIL



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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 present the major issues that need to be considered in the development of objectives, policies and rules for the city centre and lakefront in the proposed District Plan.

Rotorua's population has been growing slowly over the past few years causing lack of activity in the city centre and slow business growth. From the consultation and community engagement undertaken as part of the 'Fresh Ideas' project the key issues for the city centre and lakefront and the district plan are:

- Inappropriate extension to the central business district leading to lack of vitality in the city centre;
- Lack of integration between key features (lakefront and Rotorua Central);
- Defining the character and protecting the heritage values of the city centre and lakefront;
- Defining and setting a southern boundary of the city centre;
- Amenity for residential development within the city centre environment;
- Lack of visitor and inner-city living accommodation in the city centre and lakefront and;
- Effectiveness of the design guide.

The district plan review will aim to draw and retain people to the city centre and address the other issues mentioned. This will be achieved by:

- providing for activity intensification, therefore strengthening existing businesses and providing opportunities for new activities;
- defining precincts that bring unique character to the city centre;
- promoting permanent accommodation in the city centre and tourist accommodation in the lakefront and;
- integrating the management of the Lakefront, city centre and Rotorua Central as a continuum.

The lakefront redevelopment project, the CBD Revitalisation Strategy and the Central City Urban Design Framework are the primary corporate studies commissioned to direct the district plan review in achieving its goals. The issues and options in this paper also reflect the direction given by these documents.

This paper focuses only in the Commercial A, B and B1 of the existing district plan and therefore complements the Commercial Discussion Paper, which analysed all the commercial areas outside the city centre. The policy direction taken for the commercial chapter is attached in Appendix 1.

This paper is structured so that the issues are approached through an understanding of the legislative context and how this has been interpreted at a national, regional and local level. Following an analysis of the existing district plan a discussion of key issues is provided and options for discussion. The paper concludes with the policy direction given by the Councillors on how the CBD and lakefront should be managed in the district plan.

Note: For the purpose of this document, the terms Central Business District (CBD) and City Centre mean the same and are used interchangeably throughout this paper.

2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

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

Table 2.1 Statutory Framework

STATUTE/ DOCUMENT	RELEVANT SECTION	COMMENTARY
NATIONAL LEVEL		
Resource Management Act 1991. (RMA)	<p>5 Purpose <i>To promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.</i></p> <p>6 Matters of national importance <i>all persons... shall recognise and provide for</i> <i>(f) The protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.</i></p>	<p>The CBD is a physical resource that should be managed sustainably under the RMA. The Act also identifies, as a matter of national importance, the protection of historic heritage, and requires that particular regard shall be had to maintaining and enhancing amenity values, and the quality of the environment.</p>
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"> ▪ <i>Access,</i> ▪ <i>Surveillance and sightlines,</i> ▪ <i>Layout;</i> ▪ <i>Activity mix,</i> ▪ <i>Sense of ownership,</i> ▪ <i>Quality environments,</i> ▪ <i>Physical protection.</i> 	<p>Well designed spaces are safe, welcoming and can encourage positive experiences in commercial areas, making them desirable places to carry out commerce.</p> <p>There is a perception that the CBD is unsafe, following CPTED guidelines the district plan will aim to revert this perception.</p>

REGIONAL LEVEL		
<p>BOP RPS and Regional plans</p>	<p><i>13.3.1(b)(iii) To provide for the long-term security of existing physical resources and built environments.</i></p> <p><i>13.3.1(b)(iv) To protect transportation and utility networks, infrastructure and public works from the adverse effects of subdivision and land use.</i></p> <p><i>13.3.1(b)(vi) To avoid or reduce the adverse effects on the environment, relating to the use and development of the built environment and the construction, operation, and decommissioning of physical resources and infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>13.3.1(b)(viii) To discourage uses of land, for example for urban development or settlement growth, which would:</i></p> <p><i>(h) Result in the loss of recognised historic heritage.</i></p> <p>District Councils are encouraged to:</p> <p><i>13.3.1(c)(xi) Promote consolidation of existing urban areas as a means of ensuring efficient use of land and existing infrastructural resources.</i></p>	<p>The RPS provides some general guidance with regard to the management of the built environment. Matters such as the protection of the transportation network, protection of historic heritage, consolidation of urban areas, and the discouragement of ribbon development are useful in developing policy directions.</p> <p>These themes are continued in the proposed RPS.</p>
<p>EW RPS and Regional plans</p>	<p><i>4.3.2... EW will have regard to the following principles:</i></p> <p><i>a) development should support existing urban areas and development nodes, in preference to creating new urban areas and development nodes;</i></p> <p><i>b) development should maintain and enhance the safe, efficient and effective operation of existing infrastructure....;</i></p> <p><i>d) development should minimise energy and carbon use such as by compact urban form, and design and location which minimises the need for private motor vehicle use and maximises opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport;</i></p> <p><i>n) development should maximise opportunities for people to live, work and play within their local area.</i></p>	<p>The RPS provides some general guidance for managing the built environment.</p> <p>The preference to consolidate the urban area before expansion is key to the CBD revitalisation.</p> <p>The RPS also refers to the design of the built environment so it promotes sustainable forms of transport.</p>

LOCAL LEVEL, INCLUDING RDC CORPORATE DOCUMENTS	
10 Year Plan 2009-2019	<p>The Ten Year Plan contains three key themes. These are: <i>(1) economic growth,</i> <i>(2) sustainability, and</i> <i>(3) affordability.</i></p> <p>The economic growth theme has several directions that are relevant to the City Centre. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attracting inwards investment and wealth creation initiatives ▪ CBD Revitalisation, Urban Design Framework and lakefront development integration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - finalisation of Lakefront Concept Plan and commencement of lakefront redevelopment works during the first three years; - the completion of stage 1 lakefront during year four to ten; - the implementation of the streetscape aspects of the plan, in accordance with existing budgets during years one to ten and; - the development and implementation of the CBD strategy during years one to ten. ▪ Grow Rotorua Development Fund
CBD Revitalisation Strategy, Urban Design Framework	<p>Council has adopted the priority action points of the CBD Revitalisation Strategy which makes recommendations on the way the CBD should look and function. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a management partnership; - Promote the CBD as a destination; - Structure the CBD to encourage movement and vibrancy and; - Provide facilitation and support for private enterprise to 'run with vision' <p>The Urban Design Framework (UDF) is a document that describes the overarching vision and intended outcome for an entire urban area and gives direction to subsequent policies and site specific initiatives within that area. The UDF will be used together with the CBD Revitalisation Strategy to achieve the best outcome for the CBD and lakefront district plan review.</p>
Lakefront Concept Plan	<p>Council has adopted the plan after undertaking consultation and has committed funding for the development of Stage 1 of the project. This stage will consider improving and enhancing the commercial components of the waterfront (development of the pier), improving tourist facilities, and making Tutaneikai Street a destination from the City.</p>
Built heritage study	<p>This study identifies and assesses elements of built heritage throughout the CBD.</p>
a) Rotorua Urban Transportation Strategy (RUTS) b) Rotorua Transport Demand Strategy c) Victoria Street Arterial and Lake Road four lanes extension	<p>a) The purpose of the RUTS is to ensure that the Rotorua community has effective ways to manage the impact of roads and traffic on adjacent land uses and road users.</p> <p>b) The guiding principles of the Rotorua Transport Demand Strategy are to identify measures and means to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle in Rotorua. A direct consequence of this strategy is the Travel Demand Management / Parking Policy Proposal recently presented to Council.</p> <p>c) Victoria Street Arterial will mark the southern boundary for the city centre as well as providing one of the main access points to the city centre. Lake Road will also become one of the main access points to the lakefront and city centre.</p>

<p>Crime Prevention Plan</p>	<p>Crime prevention activities in the plan include the development and implementation of CPTED assessments for crime prone areas such as the CBD.</p>
<p>Operative Rotorua District Plan</p>	<p>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. Part eight identifies nine commercial zones. These will be reviewed to separate the management of commercial zones from those within the city centre.</p>
<p>Other district councils</p>	<p>Many Councils are in the process of revitalising their CBDs and are introducing a range of objectives and policies into district plans to manage core CBD form, function, and vitality. A summary is provided in Appendix 2.</p>

3. EXISTING DISTRICT PLAN ADEQUACY (RAID ASSESSMENT)

Section 8 of the operative district plan provides the policy direction for all of the commercial areas. A RAID technique was applied (detail in table below) to assess the existing issues objectives and policies.

	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 issues in the existing plan that are still current and relevant. Many have been identified as part of previous papers, including the paper on urban design.

Table 3.1 Assessment of issues relevant to the City Centre 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	The issue is current.
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	The issue is current.
Commercial activities may threaten the amenity of neighbouring residential and other areas.	8	Remain	This issue is current and should remain but should be reworded.
Some activities can threaten the amenity of existing commercial centres.	8	Amend	This issue is current but could be merged with the one above.

3.2 Objectives

There are three relevant objectives in the existing plan that relate to, or directly reference the CBD.

Table 3.2 Assessment of objectives relevant to the City Centre in the Operative District Plan

Objectives	Plan part	RAID Assess	Reason
Commercial activities which do not adversely affect the amenity values and environmental quality of neighbouring areas, particularly in those areas where people reside.	8	Remain	The objective is relevant, but may benefit from some re-wording to make it more specific to activities the community want in the CBD.
Protection, maintenance and enhancement of amenity values in centres of commercial activity	8	Remain	This objective is appropriate, but could be re-worded to closer focus on the City Centre. It should be more specific.
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	Amend	While relevant, this objective needs to identify a clearer priority in terms of noise in the CBD, that is created as a part of a vibrant business and entertainment centre, or that provides suitable levels for residential accommodation.

3.3 Policies

The following table identifies all the relevant policies in the current district plan.

Table 3.3 Assessment of Policies relevant to the City Centre in the Operative District Plan

Policies in the Operative District Plan	Plan Part	RAID Assess	Reason
Commercial activities will be restricted in those areas outside existing centres of commercial activity where the amenity values and environmental quality are less resilient, unless any adverse effects on amenity values and environmental quality are minor.	8	Remain	Commercial expansion is evident in the areas in and around the CBD and outlying commercial areas. A stronger direction restricting commercial activities outside CBD should be given.
To strengthen pedestrian links throughout the CBD.	8	Remain	The policy is appropriate, but can not be dealt with entirely by the district plan alone.
To avoid, remedy or mitigate potential conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, including the provision of adequate car parking.	8	Remain	This policy is relevant.
To encourage the improvement of the visual design and appearance of the CBD including both the public and private realms.	8	Remain	The policy is appropriate.
To ensure that new development or redevelopment is appropriate to Rotorua and to the particular environs or streetscape.	8	Remain	This policy is still relevant but could be more specific in the wording. (change word "appropriate")
To safeguard the heritage value of buildings in the CBD.	8	Amend	This policy is appropriate but should be placed in the heritage chapter.

To improve legibility within the city with particular consideration of its function as a tourist centre.	8	Remain	This policy is relevant and appropriate.
Commercial activities shall be required to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the amenity and environmental quality of the centres of commercial activity in which they are located.	8	Amend	This policy is appropriate, but may benefit by specifically identifying what amenity qualities are appropriate for each type of commercial centre.
To facilitate entertainment and vibrancy in the Commercial A Zone.	8	Remain	This policy is appropriate.
To avoid, remedy or mitigate the effect of noise through improved design of tourist and residential accommodation in the CBD.	8	Amend	This policy is appropriate but needs to establish a priority between activities.
To ensure future residential and tourist accommodation in the Commercial A, B and B1 Zones is well insulated against noise or otherwise encouraged to locate in the Resort or Residential Zones provided.	8	Amend	This policy is appropriate, but duplicates the intent of the above policy. Merge with policy above.
To enhance the amenity of reserves adjacent to the CBD through the design of buildings which are in accord with Rotorua's theme.	11	Delete	This policy is relevant, but it belongs to the reserves and recreation chapter.
To pursue and adopt measures to reduce traffic growth in the District and to reduce the need to travel.	12	Remain	This policy is appropriate and may benefit from being introduced in some manner into the commercial zone along with reference to the Rotorua Urban Transportation Strategy.
To actively pursue the acquisition, formation, and control of the Central Business District service lane network.	12	Remain	This policy is appropriate and should remain, particularly if Council wishes to turn its mind to pedestrian focused streets.

3.4 Summary of district plan evaluation

The existing district plan identifies a number of relevant issues that are still current. However, some new issues have arisen during the past 10 -15 years, which need to be included in the new district plan. Overall, the objectives provide good direction, but do not comprehensively address or provide a solution for the issues identified. Many of the policies attempt to address the issues, but do not relate to any objective directly and sometime contradict each other. The review of the district plan will provide the opportunity to form strong linkages between issues, objectives and policies. While the focus of the existing commercial chapter appears to relate to the CBD, its role and desired outcome as a centre is not well defined, protected, nor enhanced. As a result, there continues to be a policy disjoint between Rotorua central mall, the CBD and the lakefront.

Table 3.4 Summary outcomes from district plan evaluation

Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise wording to improve clarity ▪ Broaden the scope of the issues ▪ Insert statements that address developing issues identified through consultation and discussion
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove ambiguity and improve clarity ▪ Adjust wording of objectives to simplify and reflect outcomes of discussion ▪ Insert objectives that have been identified as a result of consultation and discussion

Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve clarity of the policies so that they provide more constructive guidance for assessing and deciding on consent applications in relation to identified objectives ▪ Amend policies to promote better integration between the lakefront, CBD, and Rotorua central mall. ▪ Link policies to the revised policy statements and objectives.
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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 the City Centre and Lakefront chapter. Commercial leakage and sprawl is a very important issue affecting the vitality and vibrancy of the CBD. This major issue has been already raised in the Commercial chapter but due to its relevance to CBD it has also been included in this discussion paper.

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 a number of issues of particular relevance to the city centre 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	
Commercial leakage, sprawl and conflicts of uses	X		X		Commercial leakage and sprawl outside the CBD has been identified as a contributing factor to the perceived lack of vitality. Commercial sprawl can weaken the efficient function and operation of the CBD and can have subsequent amenity effects.
Defining the character and function of the CBD and protecting the heritage values and tourism character of the CBD.	X		X	X	The CBD is the commercial, cultural, and retail focal point of the district, but these roles are currently not protected well enough by the plan. The CBD design guidelines will provide guidance to maintain and improve these roles.
Inappropriate extension to the CBD and therefore poor / lack of vitality in the CBD	X		X	X	Many stakeholders identified a perceived lack of vitality in the central city area. The CBD requires more activity. The district plan could facilitate this by providing for apartments for residential living.
Lack of integration with key features (lakefront, Rotorua central)	X		X	X	There is a lack of integration between the lakefront, CBD and Rotorua Central. Poor integration of the CBD and the lakefront sees the lakefront not used to its potential as a focal point for activity and key asset of the district.

Defining and setting a southern boundary to the CBD	X				The lack of a defined boundary to the South has prevented the containment of commercial activities within the CBD.
Amenity for residential development within the CBD and lakefront	X				Sometimes the values associated with a lively CBD conflict with the values of residential living, especially in terms of amenity such as lighting, glare and noise.
Lack of visitor and inner-city living accommodation in the CBD and lakefront	X		X		Motels and other accommodation facilities have located in areas outside the city centre. This has reduced the number of visitors who have easy walking access to experience the lakefront and CBD which would increase the vitality of these areas. There is the perception that the provision of car parking in the CBD has been an impediment to activity and location of motels in the CBD. Other issues such as reverse sensitivity may arise so accommodation in the CBD should be carefully planned and managed.
Effectiveness of the design guide (Appendix AA)	X		X		While providing a starting platform, the existing design guide is not achieving the desired outcomes, it is dated, and seen as a barrier to re-development. The revised design guideline report provide the opportunity to improve the amenity of the CBD and will consider the heritage character and location of buildings.

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.

The following issues are listed in order of priority for the Rotorua community.

Table 5.1 Topics to be addressed

Action points	DP Evaluation (Section 3)	Consultation Theme (Section 4)
<p>Commercial leakage and sprawl and the CBD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consolidation of commercial activity within the CBD where possible to reinforce its function and vitality. ▪ Managing existing areas of sprawl and provision of strong policy direction to reduce continual commercial leakage from the CBD. 	X	X
<p>Lack of vitality and visitor accommodation in the city centre and lakefront</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rezone lakefront resort areas to promote motel development. ▪ Provide for apartment accommodation within the CBD to achieve vibrancy. ▪ Manage reverse sensitivity issues when providing for accommodation in the CBD. 	X	X
<p>Lack of integration with key features (lakefront, Rotorua Central)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The management of the CBD, Rotorua Central and Lakefront needs to be integrated. ▪ Need a strong connection and pedestrian linkage between Rotorua Central and Lakefront. 	X	X
<p>Defining the character and function of the CBD and protecting the heritage values and tourist character of the CBD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of the character and function of CBD to provide for a variety of retail activities suited to a lively CBD. ▪ Protect and enhance activity precincts. ▪ Support the role of the CBD as the commercial, social, cultural and tourist heart of the district. ▪ Maintenance and protection of built and historic heritage in the CBD. 	X	X
<p>Defining CBD boundaries and restricting retail activities to this area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consolidation of core city centre and outlying commercial areas within the boundaries of Victoria Street Arterial to the south, Lakefront to the North, Government Gardens to the east and Kuirau Park to the west. ▪ Restricting location of commercial, office and retail activities outside the city centre proposed boundaries. 		
<p>Amenity for residential development within the CBD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Balancing effective amenity controls without being a barrier to development. ▪ Promoting good quality design buildings that enhance the character and feel of the CBD. ▪ The provision of car parking without detracting from streetscape amenity. 	X	X

5.1 Commercial leakage and sprawl and the CBD

- Consolidation of commercial activity within the CBD where possible to reinforce its function and vitality.
- Managing existing areas of sprawl and provision of strong policy direction to reduce continual commercial leakage from the CBD.

Response

Through the late 1990's and early 2000, a number of central government agencies consolidated office locations outside of Rotorua leaving considerable office space and reducing the presence of day to day people in the CBD. This and other factors such as poor integration with Rotorua Central have resulted in a CBD area that is perceived to be too large and therefore empty or lacking life.

Further to this, there is a number of specific areas in the district, particularly in the residential areas around significant transport routes' that have experienced a significant cumulative encroachment from commercial activities. This can place considerable pressure on the ability of the CBD to perform its various roles as a cultural, commercial, retail, and community heart.

Where little can be done for areas where there is already considerable consolidated sprawl and ribbon development, if the CBD is to retain its vitality and particular role it plays in the community, retail development will have to be encouraged to locate within the CBD. New areas of commercial development should be discouraged where location in or close to the CBD is more practical.

5.2. Lack of vitality and visitor accommodation in the central city and lakefront

- *Rezone lakefront resort areas to promote motel development.*
- *Promotion of inner city living and accommodation to encourage vitality and improve safety.*

Response

Bringing visitor accommodation back into the central city and increasing tourism activities in the lakefront makes the CBD and lakefront experience more accessible to visitors and injects vitality to these areas. The development of the Pier and Tutanekai Square and the potential future redevelopment opportunities for the Queen Elizabeth hospital site to an international hotel provide the ability to bring visitors to the lakefront within close proximity to the city centre.

Mixed used development is seen as a sustainable response to the 'live, work, play' philosophy, in particular by reducing the need for carbon producing transport. Increasing the number of people permanently staying in the CBD will improve its vitality by increasing people movement on the streets and recreating in the city centre area. This in turn improves safety with more passive surveillance from residents. While there are clear benefits from this approach, caution should be placed in managing future reverse sensitivity issues that may arise.

The district plan has a role to play in solving this issue at a macro level by managing the zoning for the lakefront and city centre. It also has a role at a micro level by allowing only certain activities in some zones. Depending on the issues and objectives for each zone the activity table for the lakefront and city centre will be developed.

5.3 Lack of integration between key features (lakefront, Rotorua Central)

- *The management of the CBD, Rotorua Central and Lakefront need to be integrated.*
- *Need a strong connection and pedestrian linkage between Rotorua Central and Lakefront.*

Response

There is a view that the lack of integration of Rotorua Central and the CBD has resulted in a perceived conflict between the two destinations. Despite being adjacent, the Central Mall and CBD are seen as two separate destinations. The two destinations are not integrated, particularly with regard to pedestrian movement.

The result of this lack of integration is that the CBD and Rotorua Central essentially compete against each other in isolation, rather than operating as a coherent city. This draws the pedestrian traffic, being a key factor in vitality, between one destination or the other. A strong determinant in segregating pedestrian traffic, apart from the physical layout where the mall and CBD interface, is the four-lane Amohau Street (currently State Highway 30A). However, the construction of the Victoria Street Arterial, if approved, will help to enable the reduction of the barriers between physical separation along Amohau Street.

Similarly the Lakefront does not integrate well with the northern end of the CBD. There is too much separation between commercial areas and the physical features. The district plan can only deal with this issue at the macro level by developing appropriate zoning for these areas. However, Council is currently undertaking a redevelopment project on the lakefront with connectivity as a key objective of the design.

5.4 Defining the character and function of CBD and protecting the heritage values and tourist character of the CBD and lakefront

- *Identification of the character and function of the CBD to provide for a variety of retail activities suited to a lively CBD.*
- *Protect and enhance activity precincts.*
- *Support the role of the CBD as commercial, social, cultural and tourist heart of the district.*
- *Maintenance and protection of built and historic heritage in the CBD.*
- *Integrate Lake Rotorua as an Outstanding Natural Feature Landscape (ONFL)*

Response

The CBD performs a range of roles and functions to the broader district. The CBD is the cultural, commercial, retail, and community heart of the district. It can provide a sense of identity for the community, as well as provide an experience and a sense of place rather than just a space where people go to shop.

Notably, the CBD has Tutanekai Street, acting as a spine reaching from the Lake to Rotorua Central. This is the key focus for main street type retail in the district. Consideration should be given to retaining this focus, while improving integration with Rotorua Central, the lake, and also the peripheral areas which support Tutanekai Street. Also Lake Rotorua should be given adequate management as an identified outstanding landscape of value to the district.

The activities within the CBD have evolved naturally to form precincts. The most notable being the collection of food and entertainment facilities in and around 'Eat Street'. While largely a result of market forces supported by Council in a non-regulatory manner, the precinct provides life and character to the CBD, particularly during the evening. Council through the district plan will aim to strengthen this character from inappropriate activities and support the development of new unique precincts. The district plan will manage these areas at the micro level by using rules and assessment criteria for each precinct and the urban design guidelines when new developments arise.

The CBD also has a range of building styles and iconic buildings that contribute and enhance the character of the CBD. The district plan will aim to maintain and enhance this character by providing design guidelines. However, strict adherence to the guidelines can be perceived as a barrier to redevelopment so a balanced approach will be required.

5.5 Defining CBD boundaries and restricting retail activities to this area

- *Consolidation of core city centre and outlying commercial areas within the boundaries of Victoria Street Arterial to the south, Lakefront to the North, Government Gardens to the east and Kuirau Park to the west.*
- *Restricting location of commercial, office and retail activities outside the city centre proposed boundaries.*

Response

Council has identified the importance of using the natural boundaries already in place in Rotorua to define and promote commercial activities in the CBD. These existing boundaries are the lake to the north, the Government Gardens to the east, Kuirau Park to the west and to some extent the Rotorua Central to the south. The southern edge of the CBD will be contained once the Victoria Street Arterial is built providing a clear boundary to the southern edge.

The lack of definition the CBD has experienced to date has been an important contributor to the commercial sprawl to suburban areas and consequent lack of vitality experienced in the CBD. The containment of the CBD as a commercial heart of the District will bring activity and vibrancy drawing people to experience the retail and entertainment experience offered by the CBD and lakefront.

This issue will be dealt by the district plan at a macro and micro level. The boundary definition will be achieved by adequate zoning and the retail activities will be dealt at a precinct level through the use of rules and the development of the activity tables.

5.6 Amenity for residential development within the CBD

- *Balancing effective amenity controls without being a barrier to development.*
- *Promoting good quality design buildings that enhance the character and feel of the CBD.*
- *The provision of car parking without detracting from streetscape amenity*

Response

The current design guide (Appendix AA of the operative district plan) is the first document attempting to manage commercial amenity in the district. The guide identifies the main design elements and features from Rotorua's heritage and history and tries to integrate it into the redevelopment of the built environment. Included are specific features to be considered and a recommended colour palette. While the design guide has been beneficial in that it requires building managers and developers to take into account design in their developments, it is also seen as both ineffective and potentially a barrier to development.

Due to the geothermal ground condition in Rotorua, car parking cannot be based underground and therefore is provided at ground level. This has created a break in continuous retail frontages and therefore detracts from streetscape amenity. The design guidelines propose some alternatives to ground level car parking that minimises the adverse effects in amenity.

The district plan provision for car parking has been perceived to be an impediment to accommodation development within the CBD. The revised district plan will take a more flexible approach to car parking as an incentive to attract tourist and residential accommodation throughout the CBD.

Amenity elements such as noise, glare and lighting in the CBD should be sustainably managed by the district plan to accommodate all the land use activities occurring in that zone. The district plan will address this issue at a macro level by identifying the objectives for each zone and therefore effectively managing reverse sensitivity issues. It will also implement micro level management by using rules and assessment criteria for the activities taking place in the different zones.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations and options will provide the basis for discussion, and subsequent direction from Members. 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.

The options in bold below are the ones that Councillors have already supported through the Urban Design Framework.

6.1 Commercial leakage and sprawl and the CBD

- *Consolidation of commercial activity within the CBD where possible to reinforce its function and vitality.*
- *Managing existing areas of sprawl and provision of strong policy direction to reduce continual commercial leakage from the CBD.*

Options

- Retain the current situation, no management of commercial and retail activities leaking from the CBD.
- Provide policies and objectives to reduce leakage and consolidate retail activity in the CBD.**
- Provide policies that identify the northern edge of the Victoria Street Arterial as the southern edge of the CBD.
- Require active frontages along the Victoria Street boundary on the northern side.

6.2 Lack of vitality and visitor accommodation in the central city and lakefront

- *Rezone lakefront resort areas to promote motel development.*
- *Promotion of inner city living and accommodation to encourage vitality and improve safety*

Options

- Retain the current situation, no changes to the zoning of the lakefront areas and retain small scale accommodation in the CBD.
- Rezone the lakefront areas and require good design of motel developments.
- Promote premium and large size visitor accommodation in the lakefront and CBD areas only.**
- Promote inner city living such as medium size motels and backpackers with increased reverse sensitivity controls.**

6.3 Lack of integration between key features (lakefront, Rotorua Central Mall)

- *The management of the CBD, Rotorua Central and lakefront need to be integrated.*
- *Need a strong connection and pedestrian linkage between Rotorua Central and lakefront.*

Options

- Retain the current situation, where the CBD, Rotorua Central and the lakefront are managed separately.
- Promote integration of the CBD, Rotorua Central and the lakefront by increasing amenity and pedestrian flow from one end to the other.**
- Establish a zone including the CBD, Rotorua Central and the lakefront and manage these areas together.
- Develop overarching objectives for the CBD and lakefront in the district plan but have a specific set of policies for each location precinct.

6.4 Defining the character and function of the CBD and protecting the heritage values and tourist character of the CBD and lakefront

- *Identification of the character and function of the CBD to provide for a variety of retail activities suited to a lively CBD.*
- *Protect and enhance activity precincts.*
- *Support the role of the CBD as commercial, social, cultural heart of the district.*

Options

- A. Retain the current situation, no special zoning for the CBD area, no consideration of the role of the CBD as the City heart.
- B. **Manage the city centre as the city heart for commercial, cultural and retail activities by developing objectives and policies to protect its role and character.**
- C. Protect and enhance activity precincts in the CBD but do not force their establishment by using regulatory means.
- D. **Promote urban design in the CBD area that maintain and enhance the existing built character and features of the district.**

6.5 Defining CBD boundaries and restricting retail activities to this area

- *Consolidation of core city centre and outlying commercial areas within the boundaries of Victoria Street Arterial to the south, Lakefront to the north, Government Gardens to the east and Kuirau Park to the west.*
- *Restricting location of commercial, office and retail activities outside the city centre proposed boundaries.*

Options

- A. Keep CBD as it currently is without clear definition or boundary.
- B. **Use the natural boundaries and Victoria Street Arterial to contain the CBD as the heart of Rotorua.**
- C. Promote retail and precinct activity mainly within the proposed CBD boundaries to attract people and vitality to the CBD.

6.6 Amenity for residential development within the CBD

- *Balancing effective amenity controls without being a barrier to development.*
- *Promoting good quality design buildings that enhance the character and feel of the CBD.*
- *The provision of car parking without detracting from streetscape amenity*

Options

- A. Retain the current situation, no changes to content within Appendix AA.
- B. Delete Appendix AA.
- C. **Review the design guidelines for the CBD and strengthen them to achieve the desired improvements in amenity and character.**
- D. Adopt new policies in the district plan that deal with amenity elements in a way that is compatible with all land use activities in the CBD.
- E. Not allowing car parking in the front yard on the pedestrian oriented streets as proposed in the district plan design guidelines.

7. POLICY DISCUSSION

This section of the paper records Members feedback from Workshop 34 (14 July 2010).

The discussion on each issues is recorded below as well as the prefer policy option for managing the lakefront and CBD in the district plan.

7.1 Commercial leakage and sprawl and the CBD

Issue:

- *Consolidation of commercial activity within the CBD where possible to reinforce its function and vitality.*
- *Managing existing areas of sprawl and provision of strong policy direction to reduce continual commercial leakage from the CBD.*

Recommended policy direction:

Combined options B, C and D

- B. Provide policies and objectives to reduce leakage and consolidate retail activity in the CBD.**
- C. Provide policies that identify the northern edge of the Victoria Street Arterial as the southern edge of the CBD.**
- D. Require active frontages along the Victoria Street boundary on the northern side.**

Key discussion points:

- 7.1.1 Active frontages explained.
- 7.1.2 Concerns about Victoria Street Arterial have been voiced at the statutory hearing process.
- 7.1.3 To provide active frontages on northern side of Victoria Street is actually southern side of buildings, so it is in the shade. Look for other options.
- 7.1.4 Active frontage is a technical name term requiring clear definition.

7.2 Lack of vitality and visitor accommodation in the central city and lakefront

Issue:

- *Rezone lakefront resort areas to promote motel development.*
- *Promotion of inner city living and accommodation to encourage vitality and improve safety*

Recommended policy direction:

Combined options B, C and D

- B. Promote integration of the CBD, Rotorua Central and the lakefront by increasing amenity and pedestrian flow from one end to the other.**
- C. Establish a zone including the CBD, Rotorua Central and the lakefront and manage these areas together.**
- D. Develop overarching objectives for the CBD and lakefront in the district plan but have a specific set of policies for each location precinct.**

Key discussion points

- 7.2.1 Most tourist accommodation too far away from the CBD and prime lakefront areas.
- 7.2.2 Changes in parking provision will possibly promote tourist accommodation.
- 7.2.3 Are we promoting tourist accommodation in one end and retail in the other? Yes but in an integrated approach.
- 7.2.4 Keep the premium areas available for international hotel chains and small boutique accommodation somewhere else.
- 7.2.5 Keep accommodation off ground floor, keep retail on ground floor on pedestrian-oriented streets.

7.3 Lack of integration between key features (lakefront, Rotorua Central Mall)

Issue:

- *The management of the CBD, Rotorua Central and lakefront need to be integrated.*
- *Need a strong connection and pedestrian linkage between Rotorua Central and lakefront.*

Recommended policy direction:

Combined options B and D

- B. Promote integration of the CBD, Rotorua Central and the lakefront by increasing amenity and pedestrian flow from one end to the other.**
- D. Develop overarching objectives for the CBD and lakefront in the district plan but have a specific set of policies for each location precinct.**

Key discussion points:

- 7.3.1 Lack of integration has been well canvassed through the urban design framework.
- 7.3.2 Victoria Street Arterial, if it proceeds, should remove Amohau Street as a barrier between CBD and Rotorua Central.
- 7.3.3 The use of the term precinct is preferred to zone because it encompasses a holistic approach to an area.
- 7.3.4 Option C was briefly discussed but the Councillors recognised the difficulty in achieving this concept.

7.4 Defining the character and function of the CBD and protecting the heritage values and tourist character of the CBD and lakefront

Issue:

- *Identification of the character and function of the CBD to provide for a variety of retail activities suited to a lively CBD.*
- *Protect and enhance activity precincts.*
- *Support the role of the CBD as commercial, social, cultural heart of the district.*

Recommended policy direction:

Combined options B and D

- B. Manage the city centre as the city heart for commercial, cultural and retail activities by developing objectives and policies to protect its role and character.**
- D. Promote urban design in the CBD area that maintain and enhance the existing built character and features of the district.**

Key discussion points:

- 7.4.1 CBD built heritage study report has identified a broad range of sites, the district plan will focus on the most significant ones.
- 7.4.2 No real support for protecting the government theme or precinct around the Court house.
- 7.4.3 The study made many recommendations - do we have to follow them all? We have some flexibility but whatever decisions we make it has to be defensible in the Environment Court.
- 7.4.4 There has been some significant financial investment in some of the key government buildings therefore the Maori Land Court and Court House are reluctant to move or change.
- 7.4.5 Do not want to use strong regulatory approach to locate precincts, let the market decide where they go.

7.5 Defining CBD boundaries and restricting retail activities to this area

Issue:

- *Consolidation of core city centre and outlying commercial areas within the boundaries of Victoria Street Arterial to the south, Lakefront to the north, Government Gardens to the east and Kuirau Park to the west.*
- *Restricting location of commercial, office and retail activities outside the city centre proposed boundaries.*

Recommended policy direction:

Option B

B. Use the natural boundaries and Victoria Street Arterial to contain the CBD as the heart of Rotorua.

Key discussion points:

- 7.5.1 City Centre 4 will still retain the residential office mix. It would be ideal if it was located in City Centre 2 but we cannot change it now. We do not want City Centre 4 to expand.
- 7.5.2 What policy/rules are we going to use for keeping small offices out of residential areas? This will become clearer when the residential chapter is presented on 19 July.
- 7.5.3 The CBD is too big. Are we going to say this is the true retail heart as opposed to offices?. The key is to have retail shops on ground floor.
- 7.5.4 There are some activities we will look to discourage from the "High St" (e.g. churches, etc)
- 7.5.5 The district plan cannot achieve everything, parks and rates should also contribute to the solutions. For example, we can look at landscaping measures for Victoria Street. This has been included in the design.

7.6 Amenity for residential development within the CBD

Issue:

- *Balancing effective amenity controls without being a barrier to development.*
- *Promoting good quality design buildings that enhance the character and feel of the CBD.*
- *The provision of car parking without detracting from streetscape amenity*

Recommended policy direction:

Option C

C. Review the design guidelines for the CBD and strengthen them to achieve the desired improvements in amenity and character.

Key discussion points:

- 7.6.1 No major discussion, since this issue has already been discussed throughout previous workshops.

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 the city centre and lakefront in the district plan.

ISSUE	POLICY DIRECTION
Commercial leakage and sprawl and the CBD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide policies and objectives to reduce leakage and consolidate retail activity in the CBD. 2. Provide policies that identify the northern edge of the Victoria Street Arterial as the southern edge of the CBD. 3. Require active frontages along the Victoria Street boundary on the northern side.
Lack of vitality and visitor accommodation in the central city and lakefront	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Promote integration of the CBD, Rotorua Central and the lakefront by increasing amenity and pedestrian flow from one end to the other. 5. Establish a zone including the CBD, Rotorua Central and the lakefront and manage these areas together. 6. Develop overarching objectives for the CBD and lakefront in the district plan but have a specific set of policies for each location precinct.
Lack of integration between key features (lakefront, Rotorua Central Mall)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Promote integration of the CBD, Rotorua Central and the lakefront by increasing amenity and pedestrian flow from one end to the other. 8. Develop overarching objectives for the CBD and lakefront in the district plan but have a specific set of policies for each location precinct.
Defining the character and function of the CBD and protecting the heritage values and tourist character of the CBD and lakefront	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Manage the city centre as the city heart for commercial, cultural and retail activities by developing objectives and policies to protect its role and character. 10. Promote urban design in the CBD area that maintain and enhance the existing built character and features of the district.
Defining CBD boundaries and restricting retail activities to this area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Use the natural boundaries and Victoria Street Arterial to contain the CBD as the heart of Rotorua.
Amenity for residential development within the CBD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Review the design guidelines for the CBD and strengthen them to achieve the desired improvements in amenity and character.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of policy direction from Commercial Paper

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 commercial activities in the district plan.

Issue	Policy direction
Character and context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish objectives and policies to identify commercial areas by the specific character and context and to promote the specific character and context of each particular area. 2. Investigation into the establishment of design guides for all areas of commercial activity. 3. Incentives for redevelopment in appropriate locations.
Commercial leakage, sprawl and conflict of uses	4. No policy direction provided as further discussion is needed. [Further discussion needed]
CPTED	5. Amend existing planning framework for commercial areas to take account of CPTED principles.
Ngongotaha	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Establish objectives and policies to promote the specific village character and context of the Ngongotaha commercial area. 7. Develop specific design guide criteria that reinforce the perception of the village feel of the village.
Traffic, Parking, turning, loading and accessibility	8. Review parking, turning, loading and accessibility standards on a district wide level.
Managing the balance of providing for signage	No policy direction provided as a separate district wide workshop is to be held.
Availability of suitable land	9. Acknowledge that this is a market function and is best left to the market to determine, provided the district plan provides a degree of flexibility for those wishing to establish commercial activities.

APPENDIX 2

Summary of other District plan provisions to manage city centres

Council approaches to CBD management	Topic / Comment
Hamilton City Council (Variation 21)	<p>The establishment of a Large Format Retail (LFR) development (The Base) has created a perceived lack of vitality in the city centre. Variation 21 has been introduced by Hamilton City Council in order to address the decline in the central city.</p> <p>The plan changes align the objectives and directions from Future Proof, a sub regional growth strategy similar to SmartGrowth to allocate resources for efficient growth and development. The Hamilton CBD is identified as the cultural, commercial, retail, and community heart of the sub region. Consolidation of commercial activity is promoted strongly. Particularly, controls around the location of business activities have been developed to avoid conflicts with industrial activities, and to support the vitality of the CBD.</p> <p>Ease of pedestrian movement and efficiency of infrastructure use such as roading and parking are key focal points for maintaining amenity and improving the quality of the 'sense of place' while in the CBD.</p>
Hastings District Council	<p>The Hastings District Plan has a centres type approach that seeks to protect the specific amenity and heritage factors within each commercial centre type. This includes the CBD centre, heritage precinct areas, a LFR centre, commercial service centres, and suburban commercial centres. Clear priority is given to the role of the CBD as both a focus of retail activity and the community.</p> <p>Specific provisions for development and redevelopment in character areas seek to retain, where possible the existing character/heritage buildings, or for new buildings, enable redevelopment to be compatible with existing development.</p> <p>While not discussed in the planning provisions, a design panel has been established to help assess new buildings and substantial redevelopment. Further to this, Council provides paint (of appropriate colours) to building owners in the CBD free of charge in order to promote vibrant buildings and compatible colour schemes.</p>
Christchurch City Council	<p>The Christchurch City Plan identifies three commercial zone types, central city, suburban centres, and low density retail parks (LFR). The focus of management appears to be on the maintenance of the form and function of the central commercial area and the maintenance and enhancement of the amenity of the areas surrounding other commercial centres, and maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of the transport network. This includes consideration of cumulative effects.</p>
Napier City Council	<p>The Napier District Plan also wishes to protect the role of the central city, and in so doing, also protect the heritage values of the CBD by encouraging investment in the existing CBD.</p> <p>Clear priority is given in the plan to commercial uses, but provision is made for residential activities, subject to the acceptance of the surrounding amenity.</p> <p>Specific policies are in place to encourage residential development on second level of CBD buildings where commercial activities do not traditionally locate in Napier.</p>

Papakura City Council	<p>The objectives and policies of the Papakura Plan highlight issues such as visual/building design and pedestrian integration. The plan also focuses on consolidating and supporting the existing town centres recognising their value as focal points and as a mean of identity for locals and visitors alike.</p>
<p>Tauranga City Council (Proposed plan)</p>	<p>The direction in the proposed plan favours the enhancement of the CBD (City Centre Zone) as the principle retail, commercial, entertainment, and cultural centre of the city.</p> <p>This approach goes hand in hand with a redevelopment project that created a range of quality places and spaces that supports entertainment facilities close to the water frontage of the CBD and the integration of the sea with the CBD. This area is then supported by a network of satellite commercial areas, including areas of large format retail and mixed uses.</p> <p>Transport efficiency and accessibility, and urban design qualities are key features in achieving the above.</p>
Taupo District Council	<p>The Taupo district plan has two main focus areas in its management framework. The first is around infrastructure and pedestrians. The plan identifies that the CBD is quite a unique environment where servicing such as stormwater management and parking occur largely off-site. Further to this, the effective functioning of the CBD relies on effective, safe, and efficient traffic and pedestrian movement. As such, the CBD is managed on a two tier basis; a pedestrian precinct and a traffic oriented precinct.</p> <p>The maintenance of the amenity and character of the CBD, mainly through the control of bulk and location, is a key consideration.</p> <p>The district plan is supported by the Taupo Urban Commercial and Industrial Structure Plan (Taupo District 2050) which takes a strategic overview of the management of growth in these areas. At this point no significant expansion of commercial areas has been deemed necessary.</p>