



Key changes in the Proposed Lower Hutt District Plan

We're making changes to the District Plan – the city's rule book on what you can do where. This is done every ten years as the city evolves and will shape how commercial and industrial developments happen in the future. You can submit feedback until **4 April 2025**.

This Proposed District Plan includes input from across the city as we have worked through each chapter in the last few years. After submissions and decisions most of the new rules will likely kick in by late 2026 or 2027. Some like heritage protections and sites of significance to Māori are already in effect.

See more about the timelines on feedback process and when it's likely to come into effect [here](#).

It's now easier to understand using our online tool

The [e-Plan combines text and maps](#), making it simpler to see what proposed rules could apply to any property – just type in an address. If you've worked with planning rules in Wellington or Porirua, this format should feel familiar.

What are the key changes?

Infrastructure, transport & water management

- **Enhanced stormwater rules**—new commercial buildings may need detention tanks to help manage stormwater runoff.
- **New transport impact assessments** for major developments outside main commercial hubs to assess the impact of traffic from your activity or property. You'll likely need a transport consultant.
- **Stricter rules for new vehicle crossings on key streets** like High Street in the city centre and Jackson Street in Petone to keep these areas pedestrian-friendly and allow for events to be held these streets.
- You'll need to **supply more cycle parking and facilities** (like showers) for some new commercial buildings.
- There will be **loading and rubbish storage** requirements for multi-unit developments.

Natural hazards and climate change considerations

The council has mapped out risks from sea level rise, flooding, earthquakes and more. Depending on your location:

- You may need **resource consent** for developments in high-risk areas (tsunami, coastal flooding, river and rainfall flooding, major fault lines).
- Subdivisions will need a geotechnical assessment for **landslide risk** which is now detailed in the plan.
- **Liquefaction risk?** Only affects highly sensitive buildings (e.g., hospitals, childcare centres).

Heritage and culture

- More **heritage buildings and notable trees** are protected, though some others have been removed. If your property is affected, you should've received a notice.
- **New Māori heritage sites** mean:
 - small sites like burial grounds will have proposed development restrictions on or around them.
 - consultation with mana whenua at larger sites that have been identified as being of significance to **Māori**, including some sites in Petone and the city centre

Environment and general rules

- Some **new restrictions on cutting down native vegetation** in residential and rural zones.
- **New noise and lighting standards.**
- **Better noise insulation will be required** in apartments near the city's hospitality areas.
- **Updated sign regulations**, including that you will now need a resource consent for digital signs.

New commercial zoning system

Commercial areas are being renamed or reorganised:

- **City Centre Zone will be** the current "Central Commercial" zone.
- **Metropolitan Centre Zone** will cover Petone's commercial areas, including Jackson Street.
- **Local and Neighbourhood Centres** covers everything from larger suburban hubs (like Wainuiomata) to small clusters of shops.
- **New Mixed Use Zone** includes specific areas like Alicetown and parts of High Street to provide flexibility for growth and enable shops closer to high density growth areas.

Key changes:

- **easier to open supermarkets**, with fewer resource consent hurdles.
- **restrictions for drive-throughs, service stations and automotive businesses** to manage traffic better
- new **active frontage** design rules for key streets to improve the appearance of shopfronts.
- a **streamlined urban design guides** with clearer rules.

Industrial zone changes

- We're moving from two to three industrial categories: **Light, General, and Heavy Industrial.**
- The goal is to **keep industrial areas focused on industrial activities**—standalone offices and retail might face restrictions if they could be located in commercial zones instead.
- Supermarkets get an exception to aid finding suitable sites.
- Some urban design rules apply, but mostly for non-industrial activities.

Residential zone changes

- High Density and Medium Density Residential Zones and provisions are largely carried over from the current District Plan and will apply in generally the same areas. In these zones three residential units are permitted on a site.
- A new Large Lot Residential Zone is introduced, which applies largely to areas on the urban fringe where there are development constraints (e.g. lack of public infrastructure).
- Approach to commercial and non-residential activities in these zones is similar to the current plan – where resource consent is required except for small-scale commercial activities (e.g. a small-scale home business)

What this means for you

If you own or plan to develop a property in Lower Hutt, these changes could impact your plans. If you want to give input for or against any of these proposed changes, now's the time to **have your say before 4 April 2025!**