

Natural Features, Landscapes & Notable Trees

Our vision for Lower Hutt is to create a city where everyone thrives.

To do this, we need to protect and improve our natural environment and grow our city in a way that is sustainable and meets the needs of all of us who call Lower Hutt home. One of the ways we do this is through the District Plan, which sets the rules for how we use land and develop our city.

The District Plan is going through a top-to-bottom review. How do we protect what we love and provide what we need as a city? That's where you come in – feedback on the draft plan is open until 15 December 2023. Following that, we'll have a statutory submission process on a proposed plan in 2024.

From protecting the environment to managing natural hazards and preserving our built heritage, there's a lot to consider. The District Plan is an important document that influences the future of our city, so find out more and have your say!

Find out more at
hutt.city/dpreview

A number of outstanding natural features and landscapes have been identified for protection in the draft District Plan, based on criteria in Policy 25 of the Greater Wellington Regional Policy Statement.

They represent exceptional and highly valued natural features or landscapes with minimal human influence.

Notable trees are an attractive addition to an area, act as landmarks or connect communities to their past. The draft District Plan identifies and protects trees with recognised values.

The rules allow for some trimming and maintenance of notable trees where the work is undertaken by Council for the health of the tree or to safeguard life or property. Other work requires resource consent.

Notable trees are listed in the District Plan only with the permission of the property owner.



How much is changing?



Little

A lot

What are we proposing?

The proposed identification and protection of Outstanding Natural Features (ONF) and Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL) is a new addition to the District Plan, while the approach to protecting notable trees is unchanged.

The following have been identified in the draft District Plan:

- 1 Turakirae Head (ONF)
- 2 Baring Head/Ōrua-Pouanui (ONF)
- 3 Parangārahu Lakes (Lake Kohangapiripiri & Lake Kohangatera) (ONF)
- 4 Mākaro/Ward Island (ONF)
- 5 Remutaka Range (ONL)
- 6 Matiu/Somes Island (ONL)
- 7 South Coast (ONL)

The proposed approach is to protect the identified values of these features and landscapes by limiting the activities that can occur within them, such as requiring resource consent for additional buildings or earthworks.

Notable trees in the draft District Plan have been identified through an assessment against the Standard Tree Evaluation Method (STEM). STEM assesses qualities such as the size, age, condition and form of the tree, as well as its historical and cultural significance.

FAQs

Can I propose other trees to be included as notable trees?

Yes, at hutt.city/dpsurvey you can put forward other trees to be assessed. However, any nominated trees will only be assessed with the agreement of the tree owner.

Do I get any assistance from Council if I have a notable tree on my property?

Yes, Council policy is to take responsibility for the trimming and maintenance of notable trees on both private and public land to protect the health of the trees and people and property.

Why have potential Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) not been included in the draft District Plan?

The National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB) provides the key directions on how Council should identify and protect areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna (or SNAs).

The NPS-IB was released in July 2023 and there has not been sufficient time for Council to identify and provide protection for SNAs in the draft District Plan. We will be getting in touch with landowners of potential SNAs next year as part of the District Plan review process.