

Rural Zones

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



How much is changing?



Little

A lot

The rural environment represents a significant proportion of Lower Hutt's land area. It comprises rural lifestyle areas surrounding the urban area of Wainuiomata and on the western hills, and much larger blocks of coastal land and hill country south of Wainuiomata and Eastbourne.

There are a range of activities occurring in our rural areas including farming, forestry, recreation and the rural residential lifestyle areas.

There are two proposed zones – currently called activity areas – for managing land use and development in our rural areas:

- ➔ **The General Rural Zone (GRZ)** seeks to maintain rural character, provides for rural activities and permits residential development but at a very low density of one house per 15 hectares. Rural and recreational activities are permitted, as are buildings and structures for rural activities (like barns and sheds).
- ➔ **The Rural Lifestyle Zone (RLZ)** provides for a mix of residential and small-scale rural activities, a low level of built development and lot sizes of at least 1 hectare.



Understanding our District Plan review

What are we proposing?

- There are new provisions proposed to limit subdivision and development of Highly Productive Land in the General Rural Zone.
- Some additional residential development is proposed in the Rural Lifestyle Zone. The current District Plan limits new houses and subdivision to a minimum lot size of 2 hectares. We're proposing to reduce this to 1 hectare and allow for an additional small dwelling on a site, such as a granny flat.
- The total area of the General Rural Zone is smaller than the General Rural Activity Area in the current District Plan. This is due to the large areas of regional park being changed from a rural to an open space zoning.
- Provisions relating to forestry have been removed from the Rural Zones in the draft District Plan. This is because forestry is now managed outside of the District Plan by the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry.

FAQs

Does the draft District Plan anticipate more greenfield development in the Upper Fitzherbert/Wainuiomata North area?

Not at this stage. The 2023 Housing and Business Assessment shows that we have housing capacity within our existing urban areas for the next 30 years without the need to re-zone the Upper Fitzherbert/Wainuiomata North area.

There would also need to be significant investment in upgrades to transport and three-waters infrastructure to support more intensive residential development in this area. Given the costs for developers to fund these upgrades, such development is unlikely to be feasible at this time.

Why is Council proposing to introduce stricter controls on subdivision and development of Highly Productive Land?

The National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land (2022) requires us to protect highly productive rural land and ensure it remains available for food production.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council is responsible for mapping highly productive land and will include this mapping in the Regional Policy Statement by 2025. In the interim, rural land that is identified in the Land Resource Inventory as land use capacity classes 1, 2 and 3 must be mapped as Highly Productive Land.

We're keen to hear from you

Go to hutt.city/DPSurvey or drop off your submission at any Hutt City Council neighbourhood hub.

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