

Outcomes and Methods for the Rural and Residential Review – Rural Edition

PLAN CHANGE 50 OF THE UPPER HUTT DISTRICT PLAN
2004



September-November 2020 Public Engagement

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About this report

Introduction

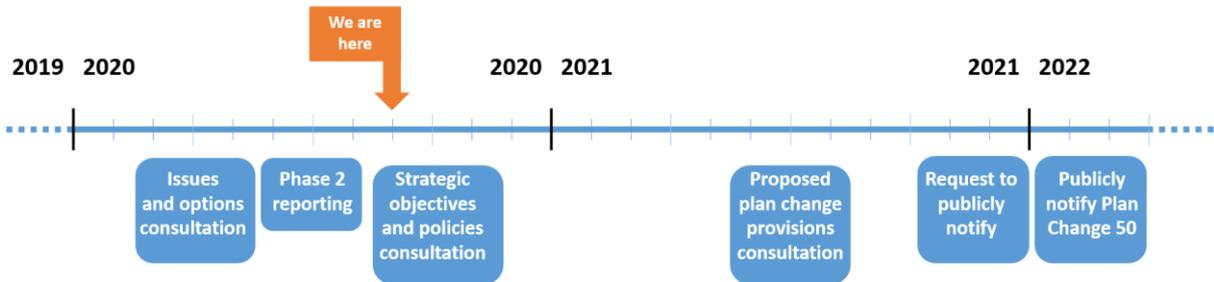
The Rural and Residential Review is an evaluation of our current controls and zoning for rural and residential areas across the Upper Hutt District. It seeks to assess whether District Plan measures are fit for purpose and are able to accommodate predicted growth and provide housing choices for the foreseeable future in a way that reflects our local values. Current rules in the District Plan have a genesis that predates the current 2004 Plan and have not undergone a substantive review since the late 1990s. This review is therefore a significant component to defining the form of Upper Hutt for future generations.

Large scale reporting has been completed in order to identify what issues currently exist and what opportunities may assist us in addressing these issues. In March 2020, we released an overview of the issues and opportunities that were identified, receiving responses from over 270 respondents across engagement platforms. Feedback we received has helped us to conclude the overall long-term outcomes people are seeking for rural and residential areas, and what methods should be used to achieve these.

The following report details the strategic outcomes we have identified for **rural areas** and what methods can be used to achieve them. Our community focus groups and technical working group have helped us better understand outcomes at the local level, whether or not this accurately reflects their understanding of the environment, and what other methods can be used to help achieve these outcomes.

How your feedback sets the agenda

This period of engagement represents the second phase of public engagement. Feedback we receive on this report will help us confirm the desired community outcomes for rural and residential areas and what methods we should use to achieve them.



Setting these outcomes and methods is of particular importance, as this will create the basis for all forthcoming zoning and rule proposals. As detailed above, the next phase of engagement on the project will be on a full draft plan change proposal, and it is therefore important that we establish a clear direction for the plan change provisions at this early stage.

It is currently anticipated that a draft plan change will be publicly released for feedback in mid-2021. Current feedback will influence the final proposed plan change, which is anticipated to be released for

public consultation in early 2022. This will be the formal notification of the plan change under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Layout of this Report

All objectives and policies have been organised into rural and residential themes. This is structured as follows:

- **Objective** – what outcome should be achieved
- **Associated policies** – how we want to achieve the outcome
- **Purpose**
- **What has helped inform this**

This is the **rural edition** of issues and opportunities and only covers rural topics, with all residential topics covered in the residential edition. This edition and all other supporting information is available on the PC50 project webpage (see link below).

How to make a submission

Submissions on the Rural and Residential Review Strategic Objectives and Policies will be open from:

30 September 2020 to 2 November 2020.

Submissions may be made online at: www.upperhuttcity.com/pc50

Submissions may also be made at any public library or at Council offices at 838-842 Fergusson Drive.

In addition, Council will also be operating a number of other means to get engaged which will be advertised locally via our Social Media pages and through the Upper Hutt Leader. This is in a limited form in respect of Covid-19 restrictions and any face to face engagements will reflect current Covid-19 Alert Levels.

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Rural Strategic Objectives and Policies

The following section provides an overview of core objectives and policies we have identified across the rural area to date and the various methods to achieve these. The term 'strategic' is used here to note that these are key outcomes to manage rural and residential areas, recognising that additional policies will likely be provided to supplement draft rules once these are developed next year.

Maintain rural character

OBJECTIVE #1

Established rural character and aesthetics are maintained and enhanced by:

- a) *Retaining a sense of openness and privacy;*
- b) *Building in a form and scale reflective of site and surrounds;*
- c) *Prioritising overall utility and self-reliance;*
- d) *Recognising the use of land for productive means; and*
- e) *Recognising the benefits of the natural environment.*

ASSOCIATED POLICIES OF #1

1. *Enable rural production primarily within open valley areas of: Whitemans Valley; Mangaroa Valley; Akatarawa Valley; and Kaitoke Valley.*
2. *When seeking to increase density, ensure that buildings do not dominate the rural environment and seek to occupy the most practical building location within a site.*
3. *Landscaping is used to maintain rural character.*
4. *Any development on rurally-zoned hill areas considers:*
 - a) *Roading accessibility, capacity, integration, and safety;*
 - b) *Limiting the number of new accessways onto Rural Collector Routes or Local Distributor Routes;*
 - c) *Demonstrating three waters servicing and management suitable for sloped sites;*
 - d) *Managing building dominance through controls on density, typology and colour palette;*
 - e) *Landscaping use as mitigation for establishing accessways and building location and scale effects; and*
 - f) *Demands for rural productive use.*
5. *The predominant developed form is largely retained within:*
 - a) *Southern Whitemans Valley;*

- b) Akatarawa Valley;
- c) Kaitoke Valley;
- d) Moonshine Valley;
- e) Cloustonville;
- f) Tararua;
- g) Pakuratahi; and
- h) South-eastern Mangaroa Valley.

#1 PURPOSE

The rural area presents as a unique environment, distinct from its urban counterpart. People living in the rural area can anticipate an overall greater sense of openness, privacy, and a type of living that is defined by the utility of the land and surrounding natural environment. The purpose of this objective is to ensure that such characteristics of the rural environment are maintained in the face of any development pressures, and the clauses contained therein broadly define this state. Associated policies provide detail as to how potential adverse effects shall be mitigated, noting the likes of landscaping and building controls can effect rural aesthetics. The geographic boundaries of areas with particular sensitivity to development have also been defined, as well as specifying development controls within areas of potential prominence, such as hill sites.

What has helped inform this?

Similar to other objectives, this was developed alongside input from the Rural Focus Group. Time was taken to better understand the elements which contribute to producing or defining rural character. The matters described in the objective can be seen as a product of these discussions. Members also noted that character is likely to change over time, so the objective should still capture broad elements of rural character.

Protecting rural production

OBJECTIVE #2

Rural productive land use and associated services remains the dominant land use in flatter open valleys not otherwise described as a rural settlement or rural lifestyle areas.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES OF #2

1. Rural productive areas are recognised and enabled.
2. Enable the sale of goods produced on-site and locally-produced goods where:
 - a. Traffic generation is restricted;
 - b. Hours of operation are limited;
 - c. Any parking provided is appropriately setback and screened from road frontage;

- d. Goods are produced within the Wellington Region;
 - e. Sufficient on-site servicing is provided; and
 - f. Existing accessways are utilised, as far as reasonably practical.
3. Reverse sensitivity issues are managed through the likes of increased development buffers and vegetated boundaries.
 4. Highly productive land including land with soils in the Land Use Classifications 1-3, is prioritised for rural production.

#2 PURPOSE

Rural production is part of what defines the rural area. However, many of the rural areas that have the greatest productive value overlap with, or are adjacent to, rural lifestyle areas. It is for this reason that Objective #2 seeks that productive use be retained across these open valley floor areas. Associated policy also details what is classified as productive areas to provide further clarity. In addition, policies are also introduced to allow for the sale of locally produced goods, subject to qualifying matters. This reflects the growing desire to sell of goods at the ‘farm door’ to support local producers and facilitate local food production.

What has helped inform this?

Forthcoming changes to national regulations via the [National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land](#) (NPS-HPL) seek to protect productive soils, being class 1-3. High level mapping of the Upper Hutt area indicates most of the flatter open valley floor areas as Class 3 soils, meeting the productive criteria. Supplementary to this, Landscape Sensitivity reporting has also identified the risks in developing across these open expanses, due to the potential to reduce overall rural character and appeal. It is for these reasons that such an approach has been undertaken.

Focus group members had mixed views on this matter, with some stating that local sustainable production was a must, and others noting that commercial productive use in rural areas has been dwindling over a period of time and should be prioritised for rural lifestyle purposes.

Balancing rural living, rural character, and the environment

OBJECTIVE #3

Rural-residential intensification and lifestyle development is enabled within select areas and does not seek to develop across valley floor areas.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES OF #3

1. Rural-residential intensification is centred in the following broad areas:
 - a) Maymorn and Parkes Line Roads intersection;
 - b) The eastern end of Colletts Road;

- c) *Around the Wallaceville Church (500 metre perimeter around 34 Mangaroa Valley Road);*
- d) *Northern Whitemans Valley, east of Whitemans Valley Road; and*
- e) *The Bulls Run and Moonshine Hill Roads intersection.*

#3 PURPOSE

Working in conjunction with Objective #2, this objective specifies those areas where further rural-residential intensification is enabled. This means that the parameters of both production areas and areas where development is anticipated are set. Development within these areas is anticipated to range from rural lifestyle to rural-residential settlement areas, with potential options for select local businesses or community facilities to be developed.

What has helped inform this?

Feedback received from focus group members in developing this stated that a degree of pragmatism was needed to be incorporated within development areas. This should reflect that there may be different intended uses and should cater for different needs (see “Creating flexibility in subdivision” for more on this). In addition, it was important that the policy direction was specific in terms of where development was anticipated and where it was not anticipated.

OBJECTIVE #4

Identified rural-residential settlement or rural lifestyle areas create resilient communities (by design), by recognising the current and future effects of climate change.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES OF #4

1. *Rural-residential intensification is located in near proximity to the established urban area and any measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are enabled.*
2. *Renewable, alternative, or supplementary energy sources are enabled.*
3. *On-site servicing for drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater are available for any allotment over 2,000m².*

#4 PURPOSE

While providing for lifestyle and settlement areas, resilience to current and future effects of climate change is also important to consider. For rural communities, this means that any new rural allotment is able to easily provide on-site services, and should not be limited by local ground conditions or topography. In addition, measures to be more self-sufficient through renewable energy solutions should also be supported. Policies here seek to recognise that rural communities may wish to collaborate together to provide communal renewable energy services as a means to reduce both dependence and entry costs. Lastly, the policy recognises that large-scale fossil fuel dependence will mean that the further away development areas are from local services or employment, the greater the emissions. Therefore any rural-residential intensification should be seen to be in a near proximity to the urban area, with any proposed additional measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions being supported.

Mapping is available on the [PC50 project webpage](#) showing the spatial extent of proposed policies.

What has helped inform this?

Recent changes to the Resource Management Act now mean that Council is able to give consideration to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In discussions with our rural focus group, we also found that there was a desire to recognise communal or community efforts to provide for renewable energy solutions in a collaborative way.

Members also noted that Climate Change can have positive effects, so all effects, not just adverse effects, should be considered. Clarity was also needed to better articulate the level of service expected for new allotments to provide for on-site servicing.

Creating flexibility in subdivision

OBJECTIVE #5

New subdivision creates parcels which respond to surrounds, current and future land use and create practical allotments that are able to be serviced and accessed.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES OF #5

1. *Permit flexibility within subdivision and allotment sizes in response to:
 - a. *site topography;*
 - b. *established infrastructure; and*
 - c. *indigenous vegetation;*by enabling the averaging of allotment sizes through subdivision.*
2. *Rural allotment sizes reflect current and future use and provide adequate space for on-site servicing where no suitable reticulated service is available.*

#5 PURPOSE

A significant proportion of feedback to date has highlighted the need to allow for greater flexibility with subdivision controls, noting the current rigidity in the district plan. The objective here seeks to introduce a practical approach to subdivision controls, allowing for the ability to adjust controls based on local site-specific parameters. Here, policies seek to detail the qualifiers of introducing such flexibility and does so by allowing an average broad density to be achieved, rather than a specific minimum allotment size. In practice this is likely to mean that a smaller minimum allotment size may be introduced, seeking a larger allotment size, on average. The intention is that more practicable and efficient utilisation of sites can be achieved.

What has helped inform this?

As above, consultation in various forms to date has helped define this. Feedback received noted that the current approach leads to inefficient outcomes, with potential development opportunities forgone due to fixed minimum allotment sizes, where a sense of rural appeal could still have been achieved. Feedback

stated that this captured more of a moment in time, rather than reflecting changing and dynamic land use practices.

Focus group members were also supportive of such flexibility. Members note that subdivision should also consider hazards, food security, and adequate provision for onsite servicing.

Management of rural settlement and rural lifestyle areas

OBJECTIVE #6

Identified rural-residential settlement and rural lifestyle areas are well defined by clearly detailing how areas are intended to be developed, and integrated with any existing roading or infrastructure.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES OF #6

- 1. Roading design recognises multiple road users, active transport, and integrates with existing road layout in a manner that recognises capacity constraints and road safety.*
- 2. Ensure adequate power, telecommunications, and three waters capacity is provided for development, where it is available.*
- 3. Where connections to the three waters network is not available, ensure there is appropriate soil conditions on site for servicing of the development.*

OBJECTIVE #7

The Maymorn area is developed in a form that provides for a combination of rural production, rural-residential living, and rural lifestyle options, while retaining rural amenity values, through:

- a) Rural-residential settlement centred in close proximity to the Maymorn Railway Station, which includes appropriate community facilities, local commerce and greenspace;*
- b) Denser Rural lifestyle living over the Gabites Block, transitioning to rural-residential settlement near the Maymorn Railway Station;*
- c) Rural-residential settlement around Old School Road, located to align with settlement development around the Maymorn Railway Station;*
- d) Rural lifestyle along the western foothills between Parkes Line Road and Colletts Road;*
- e) Denser, transitional, productive land surrounding Maclaren Street and extending to a settlement area around Old School Road;*
- f) Production areas south of the transitional area, towards Colletts Road; and*
- g) Remaining areas along the Parkes Line Road and Maymorn Road axis used predominantly for rural lifestyle living.*

ASSOCIATED POLICIES OF #7

1. *The development pattern in the Maymorn area is transitional in nature, scaling from denser areas like the established urban area on Maymorn Road and rural-residential settlement area around the Maymorn Railway Station, generally extending outwards to establish low-density rural allotments for productive means.*
2. *A development plan is established for Gabites Block and Maymorn area (either together or separately), which will define:*
 - a. *General roading layout, including active transport integration;*
 - b. *Any allocation for public greenspace;*
 - c. *Intended densities;*
 - d. *Location for any small scale business activities; and*
 - e. *Any proposed landscaping or design treatments.*
3. *Increased rural-residential density surrounding Maymorn Railway Station is enabled to provide for a rural-residential settlement area, and provide a small area for community facilities, and local commerce.*
4. *Densities transition from denser, rural-residential settlement, to more open production and general production areas.*
5. *Reverse sensitivity is managed by implementing larger setbacks between potential conflict areas and requiring vegetation control buffers at the time of subdivision.*
6. *Principles within the urban design guide are adopted for development within any business and community area.*

#6 & #7 PURPOSE:

Due to the variety of potential development options that exist within rural areas, it is important to specify what limits are anticipated to these rural-residential settlement and rural lifestyle areas. Objective #6 seeks to describe how these areas will be defined, with development plans seen to be the best means to provide clarity. This is because development plans, rather than zoning, are able to detail intended outcomes at a more granular level. Associated policies therefore detail what matters should be expressed in development plans, ensuring that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, while illustrating expected densities. It is important to note that development plans can be used in both urban and rural settings, and can provide a clear framework to manage development at any scale.

The Maymorn area is broadly seen as a location with the most opportunity to update its overall development form. The area has a history of various development proposals, but feedback to date has demonstrated a strong desire to retain a sense of rural scale and amenity, and to avoid urban development. A specific objective has therefore been introduced that clearly specifies the types of densities that are anticipated and where. This development form seeks to retain the rural feel of this area, likely delivering a maximum yield of an additional 150 allotments over that which currently exists in the Maymorn area.

This proposed development layout creates a denser rural-residential settlement area (with anticipated lot sizes of around 2,000m²) constrained to within close proximity of the train station. Density generally

reduces from this area, transitioning to rural production areas (with lot sizes averaging around 2-4 hectares) to the south-west. Some lifestyle areas are established along the western hills between Parkes Line Road and Colletts Road. The land area known as the Gabites Block has denser form of rural lifestyle (with lot sizes averaging around 3-4,000m²), with the lifestyle zone between the Parkes Line Road and Maymorn Road being retained as a lifestyle zone.

What has helped inform this?

Following the close of engagement on PC50 issues and opportunities, Council sought to evaluate the required servicing areas needed within rural allotments for onsite servicing as a means to test theoretical minimum allotment areas. This report **is available on the PC50 project webpage**. Reporting found that taking a conservative approach, providing an area of at least 1,000m² within an allotment on any soil type or grade would provide an adequate onsite servicing area. Smaller areas may also be possible under suitable soil and grade conditions. Broadly speaking, providing an additional 1,000m² for the likes of housing, access, accessory buildings, and gardening, results in a minimum rural allotment size in the order of 2,000m². When evaluating densities for the Maymorn area, 2,000m² is therefore the minimum size we have assumed for rural-residential settlement areas. Other areas a density similar to current requirements is proposed, but we have used a slightly reduced scale and incorporated averaging, as per the policy direction of Objective #5.

Regarding the general management of rural intensification areas, Focus Group members expressed support for providing clarity, but stressed that roading and water infrastructure should be considered as a requirement.

Due to the complexities that exist with the Maymorn area, several sessions were held with members to better define outcomes and sensitivities. Overall, members were supportive of the idea of introducing a transitional density over the Gabites Block. Measures should be used to retain a rural or country feel through the use of landscaping and/or larger allotments along road boundaries. Some smaller rural-residential settlement properties, close to the station could be reasonable. However, they highlighted that any increased density needs to factor in potential conflicts with surrounding rural uses. Focus group members saw an opportunity for small scale businesses and community activities such as a café, pub, some shops and a playground, would be reasonable around the Maymorn Railway Station.

An exercise was undertaken with focus group members to identify the geographic extent of various densities across the area. The description provided in Objective #7 seeks to adopt principles of feedback provided to better articulate the intended future development form.

Rural business

OBJECTIVE #8

Rural business is established to support the local community and economy, with support provided to rural businesses who utilise benefits from the natural environment.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES OF #8

1. *Rural business is enabled at a scale commensurate with current and anticipated future levels of activity.*
2. *Visitor Accommodation is provided for within a residential building in the rural environment when:*
 - a) *It is ancillary to existing occupation;*
 - b) *Traffic generation is limited and utilises existing accessways; and*
 - c) *Weekly turnover of visitors is limited.*

#8 PURPOSE

The purpose of this objective and associated policy is to reflect demands within rural areas to establish associated rural businesses within rural areas. The objective seeks to set an intended outcome where businesses provide goods and services to the local community, stimulating the local economy, as well as anticipating that some businesses will choose to utilise the benefits of the natural environment (eg, ecotourism). Qualifying matters have also been introduced to ensure that a rural scale of activity is generated, avoiding the urbanisation of areas that establish local commerce.

What has helped inform this?

Focus group members noted that this objective should seek to provide for more than just visitor accommodation and rural tourism (though supported), by reflecting the wide variety of potential business uses available within the rural area, and include aspects of the natural environment. Feedback provided also stated that the likes of roading capacity and traffic generation should be actively considered, due to the likely location of rural businesses and the use of private vehicles to reach these. In terms of their location, the Technical Working Group also noted that rural businesses should not be limited to within certain zones, but provided generally, subject to meeting appropriate standards.

Have we captured everything?

The above represents the conclusions from the Issues and Opportunities engagement most recently completed by Council, feedback received from our community focus groups, and supplementary reporting. We want your feedback on these intended outcomes, but also to know whether there are any prominent objectives that you feel should be addressed through the review.

To make a submission:

- see our webpage: www.upperhuttcity.com/pc50
- come to your local library or Council office to make a submission
- see us in your local community

Submission are open until **2 November 2020**.