



Information Summary

**OF PROPOSED PLAN CHANGES
TO THE WHANGAREI DISTRICT PLAN**



What this is & why we are doing it

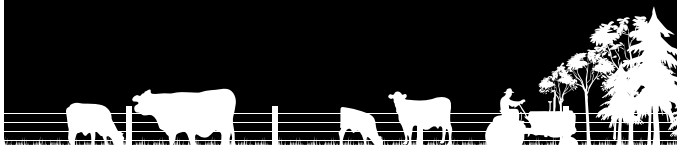
Whangarei District Council is notifying 10 proposed Plan Changes to the Whangarei District Plan as part of the Plan's rolling review. This brochure provides a summary of the proposed Plan Changes, full details are available to view on Council's website at www.wdc.govt.nz/planchanges.

Council must notify a Plan Change when Council proposes to change how the District Plan may affect your property. You have the opportunity to make a submission and a further submission on the proposed Plan Change, outlining your support or opposition and reasons why.

Council will then hold a hearing on the proposal and the submissions received. All submitters who indicated they wished to be heard will be advised of the dates, times and places of the hearing. Any person who makes a submission may lodge an appeal to the Environment Court on the Council's decision.

What is the District Plan?

The District Plan is the 'rule book' that manages land use and subdivision in the District. To keep our District Plan up to date we ensure every part of it is reviewed at least every 10 years. This process is required under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and helps to ensure the Plan keeps pace with changing community expectations and values, legislation and technology. This process is called a rolling review.





What Plan Changes are Council proposing?

The proposed Plan Changes propose the following new Environments (zones) and Resource Areas (overlays) with associated objectives, policies and provisions:


RURAL PLAN CHANGES

- PC85 Rural Area
- PC85A Rural Production Environment
- PC85B Strategic Rural Industry Environment
- PC85C Rural Village Environment
- PC85D Rural Living Environment
- PC86A Rural (Urban Expansion) Environment
- PC86B Rural (Urban Expansion) Living Environment Zoning

OTHER PLAN CHANGES

- PC87 Coastal Area
- PC114 Landscapes
- PC102 Minerals

Each proposed Plan Change will include specific changes to the District Plan text and maps. In summary these include:

- new District Plan Resource Area Chapters, with objectives, policies and rules
 - new District Plan Environment Chapters, with objectives, policies and rules
 - new Coastal Area Map series
 - changes to the Resource Area and Environment Map series
 - new definitions and consequential changes to Chapter 4 Meaning of Words
 - consequential changes to the District Plan text as required.
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What is a Plan Change?

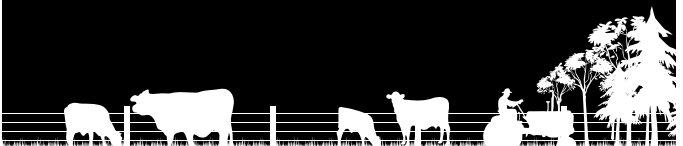
A Plan Change is when a council changes an existing District Plan that is already being used (an 'operative' plan). Councils decide when to make Plan Changes; individuals can also request that the council makes a Plan Change. Whangarei District Council is proposing 10 Plan Changes to the Operative Whangarei District Plan as part of the rolling review.

What is an Environment?

Environments (zones) are a planning tool used in the District Plan. Each property within the District is identified as an Environment which typically specifies the scale and type of activities that may take place within an area. For example the Living 1 Environment provides for medium density residential activities where as the Business 4 Environment provides for heavy industrial activities. Each Environment has rules to ensure that activities, development and subdivision are appropriate to the surrounding environment.

What is a Resource Area?

Resource Areas (overlays) are a tool in the District Plan which applies to areas within the District that have special features, characteristics or requirements that need to have specific protection or provision for. Resource Areas are mapped based upon the boundary of the feature and not property boundary. Each Resource Area has rules to ensure appropriate protection.



Rural Plan Changes

SETTING THE DIRECTION FOR OUR RURAL LAND

Council reviewed the existing District Plan provisions and adopted a Rural Development Strategy (RDS) in March 2013. The RDS set the direction for the future character, use and development of rural land. The proposed Plan Changes seek to introduce new rural zones that will protect the viability of primary production in our District, reduce reverse sensitivity caused by “city dwellers” moving to the country, recognise existing lifestyle blocks and provide rural living opportunities in the most appropriate places and consolidate commercial, residential and community facilities/ activities within a rural village setting.

PLAN CHANGE 85 (PC85) - RURAL AREA

PC85 proposes to introduce new policy direction for the rural environment in the District Plan with a new Rural Area Chapter. The District Plan does not have a chapter dedicated to the rural environment, nor does it have strong outcomes or policy direction for rural development and subdivision of rural resources. PC85 seeks to infill this missing layer of rural area policy in the District Plan.

The proposed Rural Area applies to all land outside of the urban location of Whangarei City and Ruakaka. The Rural Area policy will apply over the proposed Rural Environments (zones) addressing the zone boundary issues and any policy matters that appropriately apply across all proposed rural zones. A strong policy direction has been established from the RDS and the Rural Area seeks to implement this.



PLAN CHANGE 85A (PC85A) - RURAL PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT

The Rural Production Environment proposes to replace the existing Coastal Countryside Environment and Countryside Environment. PC85A provides primarily for the productive use and development of rural land and resources. The main objective is to sustain, protect and promote rural production in the District. The Environment is intended to be an active, productive area rather than a passive area where little change occurs over time. Residential, commercial and industrial land use and development is expected to be secondary to productive uses.

Why?

The existing Countryside Environment provisions do not actively promote the protection of productive uses, resulting in fragmentation of the rural area by scattered subdivision. Reverse sensitivity impacts are arising from the ad hoc location of rural living activities throughout the rural areas of the District. These impacts can affect the economic viability of rural production activities through increases in rateable values, compliance costs and the differing expectations of residents in terms of noise, odour, dust, etc.

Where?

On the proposed Environment Maps, the Rural Production Environment is displayed as white (the same as Countryside Environment in the District Plan). The Rural Production Environment applies to all rural areas that have not been identified as another zone. It relies upon the entire proposed Rural Plan Change package through which locations have been identified that are more suited to be rezoned for a specific purpose such as Strategic Rural Industry, Rural Urban Expansion or Rural Living Environments.



What are the key features proposed?

- Secure productive land for production through the management of:
 - » commercial and industrial activities.
 - » residential density
 - » rural residential and rural living subdivision, use and development within the RPE
- Increasing separation distances between conflicting land use activities.
- Maintaining the minimum allotment size of 20ha for subdivision as a controlled activity.
- Providing for subdivision around existing residential units to provide for retiring producers as a discretionary activity.

PLAN CHANGE 85B (PC85B) – STRATEGIC RURAL INDUSTRY ENVIRONMENT

PC85B proposes a new Strategic Rural Industry Environment to recognise and provide for the retention and managed expansion of established industries of strategic significance located in rural areas. PC85B proposes to rezone three locations in particular that have existing rural industry operating under the heavy industry zone (Business 4) with site specific provisions contained in individual scheduled activities, those being:

- the Fonterra Dairy Factory at Kauri
- the Croft Timber Company Limited at Kauri
- the Golden Bay Cement Works at Portland.

Why?

Strategic Rural Industries are currently zoned Business 4 Environment, which is the same as industry within Whangarei City. Exemptions to particular rules have been included in the District Plan through scheduled activities to provide for the rural industry needs. A new zone provides improved clarity of rule interpretation and provides for the operational needs of the Strategic Rural Industries.

What are the key features proposed?

- Limited changes to bulk and location rules.
- Removal of traffic movement limitations.
- Introduction of a noise contour and buffer from the Fonterra Dairy Factory at Kauri.

PLAN CHANGE 85C (PC85C) - RURAL VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT

The Rural Village Environment proposes to replace the existing city zonings in Whangarei's 'rural villages'. The Rural Village Environment is comprised of three Sub-Environments: the Rural Village Residential, Rural Village Centre and Rural Village Industry Sub-Environments. The Rural Village Environment aims to provide for a range of activities which support village communities, while also protecting the amenity values within each Sub-Environment.

Why?

The Whangarei District Growth Strategy – Sustainable Futures 30/50 identified the following categories of rural villages within Whangarei:

- growth villages – e.g. Hikurangi, Parua Bay and Waipu
- large villages – e.g. Maungatapere, Tutukaka and Ngunguru
- small villages – e.g. Bland Bay, Mangapai, Ocean Beach, Portland and Whananaki.

The present provisions of the city zonings applying to the villages do not recognise the different outcomes required to maintain the viability and sense of community of the villages.

Where?

The Environment boundaries (and Sub-Environment boundaries) have been identified through a two stage process using rigorous criteria. The first stage involved rezoning the existing Living and Business Environments within the villages and smaller adjacent areas of Countryside or Coastal Countryside Environment that more accurately reflect residential use rather than rural production use. The second stage involved an assessment of the supply and demand of residential and commercial land within the villages to determine where shortfalls might exist.



What are the key features proposed?

- Throughout the proposed Rural Village Environment:
 - » improved policy direction through new objectives and policies
 - » generally maintain status quo for bulk and location provisions (e.g. setbacks, building height).
- Within the proposed Rural Village Centre Sub-Environment:
 - » prohibiting industrial activities
 - » permitting rural centre service/commercial activities
 - » permitting mixed use development and residential units.
- Within the proposed Rural Village Residential Sub-Environment:
 - » prohibiting industrial activities
 - » providing for commercial activities as non-complying activities
 - » permitting a higher residential density where reticulated sewerage is available
 - » implementing specific home occupation provisions.
- Within the proposed Rural Village Industry Sub-Environment:
 - » prohibiting sensitive activities
 - » providing for activities operating outside the hours of 0600 – 2200 as discretionary activities.



PLAN CHANGE 85D (PC85D) - RURAL LIVING ENVIRONMENT

The Rural Living Environment seeks to provide for rural residential development in areas that were previously zoned Countryside, or Coastal Countryside Environment. It seeks to provide opportunities for the on-going development of land for rural living activities in locations that have an existing density compatible with lifestyle development.

Why?

There is a demand for rural living options in the Whangarei District. The existing Countryside Environment does not specifically provide for rural lifestyle development and does not have the flexibility in existing rules to allow for a living density suitable for lifestylers. Consolidating lifestyle activities reduces the risk of land use conflicts. Rural living opportunities need to be provided in a way that provides for the efficient utilisation of the rural land resource and optimises the historic land fragmentation that has occurred in parts of the rural environment of the District.

Where?

The Rural Living Environment is identified where there are existing clusters of rural lifestyle development with site sizes in the range of 1 to 4 hectares, land is free of major constraints and meets a range of criteria. The table lists the proposed Rural Living Environment areas.



Proposed Rural Living Environment Areas

Description	Area (ha)
Whakapara	32.5
Apotu/Crane Rd	577.5
Matarau	107.0
Glenbervie	162.1
Whareora	112.7
Kara Road North	36.8
Kara Road South	110.9
Newton Road	19.9
Whatatitiri	77.8
Snooks Rd	46.2
Te Rongo Road	119.7
Prescott Road	75.0
Mountfield Road	57.5
Cullen Road	29.6
	1565.2

What are the key features proposed?

- Industrial Activities and Mineral Extraction are prohibited.
- Commercial Activities are non-complying.
- Provision for residential units and minor residential units as permitted activities.
- Residential unit setbacks apply to reduce the risk of exposure to effects such as noise, dust, odour, vibration, and avoid reverse sensitivity effects.
- Providing for subdivision as a controlled activity where there is an average lot size of 2ha with a minimum lot size of 4,000m².



PLAN CHANGE 86 (PC86) - RURAL (URBAN EXPANSION) ENVIRONMENT

PC86 forms part of the proposed Rural Plan Change package which is proposing to change the zoning and provisions applying to land in rural areas. PC86 proposes to rezone some areas of land on the fringe of Whangarei City which fall within the five Urban Structure Plans (adopted by Council in 2009) which were prepared under the Urban Growth Strategy (2003).

PC86 consists of PC86A, which includes the introduction of a new rural residential zone called Rural (Urban Expansion) Environment (RUEE) and PC86B which involves the rezoning of land as Living 1 or Living 3 Environment.

PC86A RUEE

Why?

The RUEE covers areas that are characterised by rural residential development and are no longer predominately rural production land use. These areas, shown in the table below, are contiguous with urban development, and will for the most part, provide for the future urban growth of Whangarei City.

Where?

Description	Area (ha)
Tikipunga Area (Vinegar Hill Rd)	307
Kamo Area (Three Mile Bush and Whau Valley Rd)	168
Onerahi (Abbey Caves Rd)	114
Otaika (Toe Toe Rd)	26
Maunu Area (Austin Rd)	192
Total	807

The RUEE is expected to provide a transition between urban and rural areas, with a minimum lot size of 1 hectare that falls between Living Environments and proposed Rural Living Environment. In two areas (Toe Toe Road and Whau Valley Road) where significant constraints to development exist, the zoning is to recognise and provide for the existing level of development without providing for a future higher level of urban development.

What are the key features proposed?

- Buffers between rural and residential development to address reverse sensitivity.
- Industrial and commercial activities are not provided for.
- Provision for home occupations certain criteria being met, to ensure the scale and nature of the activity is appropriate.
- Requirement to set aside land to accommodate these services, through the subdivision process and building setback provisions.
- Provision of development to an urban level where Council provided reticulated services are available.

PC86B LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Why?

The five Urban Structure Plans contain land use proposals for rezoning sufficient residential, rural residential and business land to allow for the future development of the Whangarei City. PC86B proposes to rezone areas of Countryside Environment to a Living Environment (shown in the table below) where residential capacity is needed, servicing is available, and there are no major constraints (such as flooding).

Where?

Description	Living 1 Env. (ha)	Living 3 Env. (ha)	TOTALS
Maunu Area		88	88
Tikipunga Area	115	81	196
Kamo Area	71	20	91
TOTALS	186	189	375

What is not covered by PC86?

Land on the fringe of Whangarei City which is proposed to be rezoned as Rural Production Environment or Rural Living Environment is covered by PC85A Rural Production Environment or PC85D Rural Living Environment. PC86 does not propose to rezone any land currently zoned as Business or Living Environments.

Other Plan Changes

The following Plan Changes propose to change Resource Area provisions and maps of the District Plan. Each proposed Plan Change is stand alone.

PLAN CHANGE 87 (PC87) - COASTAL AREA

PC87 proposes to protect the values of the coastal environment through a new resource area overlay in the District Plan (referred to as the “Coastal Area”). The boundary of the Coastal Area was identified by Northland Regional Council (NRC) as part of the Regional Policy Statement 2016 (RPS). The overlay will contain objectives and policies and rules that will apply to subdivision and land use resource consents. The Coastal Area rules replace the existing Coastal Countryside Environment Rules and will apply in addition to the rules for the underlying Environment.

The NRC has also identified parts of the Coastal Area as High and Outstanding Natural Character Areas. These areas require a higher level of protection than the rest of the Coastal Area under legislation and higher order planning documents.

Why?

Whangarei’s coastal environment is a valuable resource contributing to the economic, environmental social and cultural wellbeing of residents and visitors to the District. Along with primary production activities it is an important area for recreation and tourism and needs careful management to ensure the values that make it attractive are not lost to inappropriate development. Council is also required to ensure that the District Plan is consistent with higher order planning documents. This proposed Plan Change implements provisions contained in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) and the RPS.



Where?

The coastal environment was defined by NRC using natural topographical features such as the first ridgeline back from the coast, rather than property boundaries. High and Outstanding Natural Character Areas have also been identified by the NRC. These areas have been identified based on their land cover (ie indigenous vegetation) the level of modification of natural landforms and water systems, the management of the land (zoning, pest control programs, covenants), and the presence of man made features (buildings).

The new Coastal Area will result in a significant reduction of the area afforded coastal protection in the District Plan, although some people that are currently zoned Countryside Environment will be included, particularly around estuaries. The existing Coastal Countryside Environment covers 21,853 ha. The new Coastal Area covers approximately 16,828 ha, which is around 6.2% of the District's land area. Within the Coastal Area 3,823 ha are identified as High Natural Character and 1,863 ha are identified as Outstanding Natural Character. These areas make up 1.4% and 0.7% of the District's land area respectively.

What are the key features proposed?

The land use rules for the Coastal Area apply in addition to the underlying Environment Rules. They will provide extra protection for coastal areas by managing buildings, vegetation clearance, and earthworks. Rules for parts of the coast noted as High and Outstanding Natural Character Areas are more restrictive than the remainder of the Coastal Area. One of the main changes proposed is removing the requirements for resource consent for residential units (outside natural character areas), provided that permitted activity standards relating to exterior colours and building heights are met.

The subdivision rules for the underlying Environment are proposed to apply, however under the draft provisions, applications for subdivision within a High or Outstanding Natural Character area will be assessed under a higher activity status, allowing Council more discretion to decline applications or place conditions on approved resource consents.

PLAN CHANGE 114 (PC114) - LANDSCAPES

PC114 proposes to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes through a resource area overlay in the District Plan.

What and where are Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes?

Natural features are distinct geographic and/or geological landforms or other features that were formed by natural processes as opposed to being man-made. These include mountains, hills, valleys, lakes, streams, wetlands, native forests, sand dunes and beaches.

Natural landscapes are more than the physical landscape or 'a view or scene' encompassing one or more natural features. Natural landscapes are about the natural and physical attributes of land together with air and water which change over time and the relationship between people and place.

Determining what is an "outstanding" natural feature or landscape requires an objective assessment process that:

- identifies the characteristics and qualities of the feature or landscape; and
- determines whether the sum of these characteristics and qualities equates to the feature or landscape being considered "conspicuous" or "eminent" – standing out from the rest.

Why?

The RMA classes 'the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development' as a matter of national importance (section 6(b)). Whangarei District is also required to ensure that the District Plan is consistent with higher order planning documents. This proposed Plan Change implements provisions contained in the NZCPS and the RPS.



What are the key features proposed?

- Updating of objectives.
- Stronger policy direction to clearly bring the RPS mapping information in to the District Plan, differentiation between coastal and non-coastal outstanding natural features and landscapes and strengthened policies emphasizing avoidance of adverse effects on identified ONFs and ONLs.
- Rules provide extra protection for landscapes by managing buildings, vegetation clearance, and earthworks. Rules for parts of the landscapes that are in the Coastal Area are more restrictive than outside of the Coastal Area.
- Applications for subdivision within an outstanding natural feature or landscape area will be assessed under a discretionary activity status, allowing Council more discretion to assess the applications or place conditions on approved resource consents.



PLAN CHANGE 102 (PC102) MINERALS

Background to minerals in the District Plan

The District Plan essentially takes a two-pronged approach to the management of mineral resources. Firstly to avoid, remedy and mitigate adverse effects on the environment from mineral extraction, and secondly to protect significant mineral resources from constraints by conflicting land use. Unlike many other issues which the District Plan addresses, mining and extraction must locate at the point that the resources occur, therefore there is no location flexibility.

The District Plan contains District-wide policy for minerals and has differing rules for mineral extraction and earthworks depending on the zone. Nationally and regionally significant mineral resources are identified as a resource area called Mineral Extraction Areas. There are associated rules and a setback for potentially conflicting development.

Why?

PC102 is being proposed so it is notified at the same time as the proposed Rural Plan Changes, as most mineral extraction takes place in the rural area and this allows us to ensure consistency between provisions.

What is PC102 about?

PC102 proposes no major changes to the policy or provisions for minerals and Mineral Extraction Areas currently in the District Plan. However, it proposes to require a cultural impact assessment for all resource consent applications for mineral extraction within sites of significance to Maori. This will take into account Iwi and Hapu Plans in accordance with the RMA.

The first part of PC102 covers policy for mineral extraction at a District-wide level. The rules for triggering consents are different for each Environment and Resource Area. Changes to the rules for mineral extraction and earthworks in the rural areas are proposed through the Rural Plan Changes (PC85, 86, 87).

The second part of PC102 covers nationally and regionally significant mineral resources. Those currently being extracted through quarrying are identified as Mineral Extraction Areas. This gives effect to the RPS in accordance with the RMA.

The nine identified Mineral Extraction Areas currently in the District Plan will be retained.

Where?

PC102 applies across the District wherever new or existing mineral extraction activity occurs and also applies to the nine Mineral Extraction Areas in the District.

What are the key features proposed?

- Additional policy applying to minerals.
- Requiring a cultural impact assessment with all mineral extraction resource consents within sites of significance to Maori.
- New mapping of mineral extraction areas showing mining and buffer areas.
- Reducing the 500 metre setback where the mineral extraction area already contains a buffer.



Making a Submission:

You have the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed plan changes, outlining your support or opposition and reasons why. The Ministry for the Environment have a series of 15 “Everyday Guides to the RMA” on their website. The following guide deals with making a submission on a proposed plan change and may be helpful: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/rma/everyday-guide-rma-making-submission-about-proposed-plan-or-plan-change>.

Submissions need to follow the format of Form 5 under the RMA. Submission forms can be found online at www.wdc.govt.nz/planchanges, these can be logged electronically online, emailed to mailroom@wdc.govt.nz or posted to Whangarei District Council, Private Bag 9023, Whangarei 0148.

More Information:

Full copies of all plan changes can be viewed online at www.wdc.govt.nz/planchanges



WHANGAREI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Private Bag 9023, Whangarei 0148
Forum North Building, Rust Ave, Whangarei
Ruakaka Service Centre, Takutai Place, Ruakaka
Phone: +64 9 430 4200 | Fax: +64 9 438 7632
Email: mailroom@wdc.govt.nz
Website: www.wdc.govt.nz
Facebook and Twitter: WhangareiDC