

Draft District Plan Review: General Rural and Rural Lifestyle Zones

OVERVIEW: GENERAL RURAL & RURAL LIFESTYLE

This draft chapters has been prepared as part of Council's District Plan Review Project. The structure and layout of these chapters reflects the intended reformatting of the existing District Plan in accordance with the National Planning Standards 2019.

Council is working on reviewing the whole District Plan at present. The following overview is focused on the General Rural Zone of the draft Plan.

As a draft plan change we expect to be making changes to the provisions as we respond to matters raised in feedback, new technical advice received, and any change in national or regional direction. These changes will be made before public notification of the plan change documents under the Resource Management Act 1991 takes place. Public notification of the plan change will enable formal submissions to be lodged which can then be considered as part of a hearing and final decision-making process.

The focus of the Rural Zone review is to update the framework that manages development within the Rural area. At the forefront of the review is maintaining and enabling approach to rural activities within the rural area. We want to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to entry to rural based activities. Notwithstanding this, the District has large areas of versatile soils which are a significant resource for the district. Over time activities, subdivision, and development (including extensions to towns) has resulted in a reduction in the availability of versatile soils. The Plan review provides an opportunity to provide for growth and at the same time, strengthen the protection of this resource. Similar to other parts of the Plan, housing is enabled within these areas however, the primary focus is on enabling farming activities and associated rural industries.

We are also introducing a Rural Lifestyle Zone through this process. As outlined above, we need to protect our versatile soil stocks and a direct impact to this is unplanned and sporadic rural-lifestyle development. The NPS-HPL has made this form of development far more difficult to undertake on productive soils. We recognise that people still wish to obtain this form of living environment and that lifestyle properties still form part of the housing choice continuum. A new zone is the only way to provide for this which will outline specific areas for lifestyle development to occur. The primary focus of this zone is to enable lifestyle development and the continuation of underlying rural activities.

Due to the number of substantive changes and consequential changes proposed, the new General Rural Zone (GRUZ) Chapter and the Rural Lifestyle (RLZ) Chapter, will replace the existing Rural

Management Area chapter in its entirety. The main changes proposed by draft Plan Change, for the GRUZ and RLZ, include:

- Updating the Objectives and Policies to reflect a new approach of enabling rural activities and housing choice, protecting versatile soils and ensuring those in the rural sector can undertake the necessary activities without unnecessary barriers to entry.
- Updating the Rule list to clearly outline what activities are enabled and what activities require a higher level of scrutiny.
- Recognising agriculture as the primary activity in the GRUZ and enabling this, as well as the ancillary activities that occur alongside these activities.
- Updating the bulk and location standards to reflect current best practices for rural development, in particular appropriately managing reverse sensitivity effects.
- Introducing the RLZ to enable lifestyle development to occur in specific areas.
- Providing for rural industry to continue to operate and new activities to establish themselves where necessary.
- Specific provision for Papakainga development.
- Clearer control of intensive rural activities.
- Parallel changes to the Subdivision Chapter to reflect the changes made above, including new objectives and policies, revised matters of discretion, framework, a change to the minimum lot size.

PROVISION-BY-PROVISION SUMMARY OF CHANGES – GENERAL RURAL ZONE

| Provision | Change | Primary reason for change |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Introduction | New text added which provides updated commentary on purpose of the General Rural Zone and what it provides for, including promoting rural activities and enabling housing choice. | To better align the zone description with the National Planning Standards description of a General Rural Zone and to highlight the wider range of rural activities while also continuing to provide for housing choice outcomes now anticipated within the zone. |
| GRUZ-Objectives | Objectives added to include the need to provide for rural activities and protect their viability moving forward. | To better reflect the importance of the rural zone to the District and clearly identify what is to be enabled within this zone. |
| GRUZ-Objectives | Objectives added to include the need for new development to manage the associated effects and impacts on the surrounding environment. | To recognise that some rural activities have the potential to generate adverse effects and to ensure that these are appropriately managed. |
| GRUZ-Policies | Policies added to reinforce the need to allow for rural based activities to | To better reflect the wider range of rural activities already within the GRUZ and the intent to expand |

| Provision | Change | Primary reason for change |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| | be able to establish in the zone and limit activities that can result in an inefficient use of rural land. | on the range provided for within the zone in the future. |
| GRUZ-Policies | Policies added to include clear direction on the key matters to be maintained and addressed for new development within the zone. | To clearly outline the key design outcomes sought for the zone and to articulate the matters that are to be addressed for new development before it can occur. We want to ensure that the Plan contains enough regulatory control to achieve the desired outcomes but at the same time not inhibit new development from occurring. |
| GRUZ-Rules | Updates to convert the old rule structure into the new National Planning Standards format. | To align what is provided for within the zone with the National Planning Standards. |
| GRUZ-Rules | Updates to ensure that the list of activities provided for within the zone area clear and concise. | To clearly outline that the zone is primarily for rural activities and to prevent incompatible activities from occurring. Farming, rural industry, housing and intensive activities are all provided for. Standalone commercial and industrial activities are not provided for here. |
| GRUZ-Rules | New Rule added to specifically provide for Papakāinga Development. | To allow for papakāinga development to occur within the GRZ but to ensure that it is located and undertaken in an appropriate manner. The intent is to make is clear what the parameters are for this development typology. |
| GRUZ-Matters of Discretion | Additional (and updated) matters of discretion added to allow for careful consideration of resource consent applications. | To require careful consideration of the outcomes of new proposals including explicit direction around protecting the rural environment. Also, to enable Council to achieve the desired outcomes through the consenting process. |
| GRUZ-Standards | Additional (and updated) Standards added to reflect current best practice for managing rural development including density controls and reverse sensitivity controls. | The way in which the rural environment is to be managed has remained constant over time. The need for standards is limited to ensuring adequate setbacks between buildings and activities and ensure appropriate servicing arrangements are out in place. |
| SUB-Consequential Changes | Amendments added to the standards of Subdivision Chapter to align the minimum lot sizes to current best practice. | To align the subdivision chapter with the direction taken in the GRUZ. |

PROVISION-BY-PROVISION SUMMARY OF CHANGES – RURAL LIFESTYLE ZONE

| Provision | Change | Primary reason for change |
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| Introduction | New text added which provides updated commentary on purpose of the Rural Lifestyle Zone and what it provides for, including promoting rural activities and enabling housing choice. | To better align the zone description with the National Planning Standards description of a Rural Lifestyle Zone and to highlight the wider range of rural activities while also continuing to provide for housing choice outcomes now anticipated within the zone |
| RLZ-Objectives | Objectives added to include the need for housing choice to be provided and to reflect an intent to provide for lifestyle development in locations where this is appropriate while also continuing to provide for the underlying rural activities. | To better reflect the wider range of living environments already within rural areas and the intent to expand on the range of housing choice provided for within the zone in the future. |
| RLZ-Objectives | Objectives added to include the need for new development to achieve good design outcomes that enhance existing character and amenity values. | To recognize that character and amenity are going to change over time and recognize that this is not automatically an adverse outcome. The purpose of the zone is to enable new development. It is recognized that the existing housing stock of the district is dated and that any change is going to be significantly different to what currently exists. |
| RLZ-Policies | Policies added to include the need for housing choice to be provided and to reflect an intent to provide for intensification in locations where this is appropriate. | To better reflect the wider range of living environments already within the rural area and the intent to expand on the range of housing choice provided for within the zone in the future. Also, to ensure that careful context analysis is undertaken for new development and that good design outcomes are promoted in new development. |
| RLZ-Policies | Policies added to include clear direction on the key matters to be maintained and addressed for new development within the zone. | To clearly outline the key design outcomes sought for the zone and to articulate the matters that are to be addressed for new development before it can occur. We want to ensure that the Plan contains enough regulatory control to achieve the desired outcomes but at the same time not inhibit new development from occurring. |
| RLZ-Policies | Policies added to include the need for servicing to be a key consideration for any new developments. | We recognize that the management of stormwater and wastewater in this area is going to be a key consideration moving forward. New development will increase the level of impervious surfaces and impact upon natural overland flow paths. New development needs to be considered and suitable |

| Provision | Change | Primary reason for change |
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| | | solutions presented and assessed before development can take place. |
| RLZ-Rules | New Rule added to specifically provide for Rural Lifestyle Development. | To allow for rural lifestyle development to occur within rural areas but to ensure that it is located and undertaken in an appropriate manner. The intent is to make is clear what the parameters are for this development typology. |
| RLZ-Rules | New Rule added to specifically provide for Papakāinga Development. | To allow for papakāinga development to occur within the GRZ but to ensure that it is located and undertaken in an appropriate manner. The intent is to make is clear what the parameters are for this development typology. |
| RLZ-Rules | New Rule added to specifically provide for Rural Activities to continue within the zone. | To recognise that the underlying environment is rural in nature and to continue to allow for rural based activities to occur and establish within this zone. |
| RLZ-Matters of Discretion | Additional (and updated) matters of discretion added to allow for careful consideration of resource consent applications. | To require careful consideration of the outcomes of new proposals including explicit direction around protecting the rural environment. Also, to enable Council to achieve the desired outcomes through the consenting process. |
| RLZ-Standards | Additional (and updated) Standards added to reflect current best practice for managing rural and rural lifestyle development including density controls and reverse sensitivity controls. | The way in which the rural environment is to be managed has remained constant over time. The need for standards is limited to ensuring adequate setbacks between buildings and activities and ensure appropriate servicing arrangements are out in place. Reverse sensitivity provisions are also necessary to manage the interface between housing and rural activities. |
| SUB-Consequential Changes | Amendments added to the standards of Subdivision Chapter to align the minimum lot sizes to current best practice. | To align the subdivision chapter with the direction taken in the RLZ. |