

7 January 2008

Submission to the Rotorua District Council

Issues for consideration during the review of the Rotorua District Plan

The Rotorua Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the Rotorua District Council for the opportunity to submit on behalf of the business community the issues that it would like considered during the District Plan Review process.

In compiling this list of issues the Rotorua Chamber of Commerce undertook the following consultation during November and December 2007:

- A meeting with Vision Rotorua – a think tank of business leaders from the Rotorua community
- A meeting with industry representatives of the Tourism Advisory Board
- A web-based survey of the membership of the Rotorua Chamber of Commerce
- Personal interviews with individual Chamber of Commerce members

The following list of issues is not prioritised. Where relevant, commentary from members has been included to background the nature of the issue.

Create a healthy business environment

It is important to provide a healthy and sustainable business environment. A healthy business community creates a healthy social community. More opportunity, more employment, greater individual wealth, fewer social problems.

A 50-year vision

There is a need for the Council to have a long-term sustainable vision of how Rotorua is going to look. Think 50 years out. Plan now for Rotorua to double its current population size.

A process for engagement

Establish a process of engagement with investors and consultants that facilitates the implementation of the plan while recognizing and acknowledging the commercial drivers that underpin large scale development investments.

Certainty of infrastructural requirements

In line with the bigger picture, establish infrastructure corridors and plan the footprint of the future roading development to service identified areas.

Certainty of development

There is a need for certainty in terms of what is allowed in any particular area. A developer/business/entrepreneur should be able to identify a plot in an area and know what they can and cannot do in that area rather than be subject to individual interpretation by RDC and EBoP officers.

Performance standards

Consider the use of performance standards to identify the development objectives rather than establishing sets of rules and regulations. Acknowledge that there may be a variety of methods of achieving a desired outcome. This will allow lateral thinking and entrepreneurial spirit.

Establishment of innovation parks

Identify and zone suitable land. Similar to the successful development of the forestry innovation park at Scion. Identify additional cluster groups.

Availability of commercial and industrial land close to infrastructure

Ensure that sufficient and appropriate land close to the required infrastructure is designated for commercial and industrial use.

Establishment of industrial areas

Identify new industrial areas in the region that lie outside the Rotorua basin and hence would not contribute to or exacerbate some of the environmental challenges. The requirements such as noise levels could be less restrictive. Review consent requirements for industrial areas.

Opportunities for commercial use around airport

In line with the trans-Tasman capability of the airport provide opportunities for alternate land use in surrounding areas.

Tourism distribution infrastructural developments around airport

Change of pattern in NZ Tourism pathways created by internationalisation of airport will require provision for alternative and/or complementary transport, storage, service, depots etc. Consider more industrial B zoned land around airport.

Eastern arterial development

Increased traffic from residential development in the east and increased tourist traffic through airport and using the airport as a distribution hub, will be considerable. Necessary to achieve this roading development sooner than planned. Essential to ensure that zoning along Eastern arterial corridor is compatible with tourism infrastructure and service delivery.

Alternative land use for rural lake fringe properties

Alternative land use opportunities for rural lake fringe areas incorporated into the District plan to contribute to cleaning up the Lakes.

Policy for development and use of land/water interface

Important to work with landowners to gain strong policy and guidance on use of shoreline around the many lakes in Rotorua region. Unlocking this land for complementary use will encourage alternate land use. This will apply particularly to the Lakefront area of Rotorua and enable licensing of activities on the Lakefront for longer periods than currently and facilitate development investment by users. Identify acceptable mitigating requirements

Consider developing a policy on lake surface water usage

Lakes are individual zones. Needs to be developed in consultation with lakebed owners. Could facilitate additional uses.

Lifestyle developments

Identify preferred areas of lifestyle developments as alternate use of rural land. Develop subdivision policies to make it easy and encourage this development. Build in mitigating features to take advantage of current environmental trends.

Broadband development

Improved broadband is essential if Rotorua is going to attract the right kind of new businesses and new residents. Good communication is an imperative.

CDB residential living

Provision within the plan to enable a greater level of inner CBD apartment living. Bringing residential life into the city centre may positively impact on the perceived lack of safety and security. Residents will develop ownership of CBD as a suburb. Do the conditions of use, density of occupancy, noise considerations and parking requirements need to be reviewed to encourage such development?

Healthy, vibrant CBD

Too many rules. Commercial drivers should underpin the development. There should be a mix of residential, shops and offices. There is too much creep in the size of the CBD. It's becoming too large and the character of the fringe area is changing. Businesses moving further out because the rules in the city are too restrictive.

Develop and zone for a Transport Hub

A centre for both intercity and local transport. Move local buses away from Pukuatua Street. Current Tourism Centre will become too small. Separate out current tourism information service. Possible development of Haupapa carpark site, bottom floor transport hub, upper floors public/contracted parking.

Location of the District / High Court building

Work with the Justice department to see if some relocation of the Court building is possible. Does such a move require any plan change or is it just a commitment within the Annual Plan process?

Progress of the CBD Revitalisation concept

Plan changes to enable CBD to move towards the vision included in the Opus Report on CBD revitalisation.

Pedestrian precincting of Tutanekai Street

Create foot traffic. People, not cars, spend money. Sails concept, better weather protection. Better environment for shopping. Too much of current parking used by retail outlet staff.

Designated parks and green areas in CBD

Grand avenues and village green

Development of pavement use for CBD food and beverage outlets

Permit food and beverage outlets to utilise pavements. Single set of rules covering all food and/or beverage establishments.

Parking requirements in CBD

Development of Haupapa Street. Better utilization of Pukuatua Street building. Location of worker parking on fringe of CBD.

Create a special tourism/retail zone for Tutanekai Street and the Lakefront

Enable coordinated development. Encouragement of designated types of activities, exclusion of others. Specific conditions for development. Incorporate extended tourism information services throughout zone. Enable incentivising of development within a specific zone. Current conflict of church congregation parking at high restaurant use periods.

Different requirements for different developments within the CBD

Recognise different activities within the CBD and requirements such as parking. Example: Treks Backpackers and current demand for unnecessary parking space.

Lakefront Development

Integration to CBD revitalisation. Commercial development on lakefront.

Cycle routes

Designated network of cycle lanes. Connecting key features like CBD, lakefront and Whakarewarewa Forest. Designated secure bike parking areas.

Subdivision requirements

The trend is for some residents to move to smaller properties on easy care sections. The average occupancy per residential unit has been reducing over time. This trend is projected to continue. Reconsider average sub-division size and minimum plot size to better reflect demand. Review requirements of residential zones.

Signage requirements for commercial and industrial operators

Appropriate signage requirements appropriate for the CBD and other commercial areas.

Urban Design of Rotorua

Planning for new areas such as the Victoria Street by-pass road. Plan now for preferred development. Future designation of Amohau Street

Definitions applying to retail outlets in Rotorua Central

Retention of current criteria for styles and types of outlets. Allowing the CBD to develop before allowing for further smaller units in the Rotorua Central area.

Facilitation of the action plans on the Clean Air Working Party

Facilitate the actions plans of the Clean Air Advisory Group; plan for funding for conversions to clean air heating systems. Western Heights – new development rules. Possibly change industrial zoning to commercial to reduce pollution.

Level of Built Heritage recognition in CBD

Restriction on development. Preserving unsound, questionable value buildings.

Helicopter landing rights within residential zones in Rotorua

To facilitate the quality of service to the up-market lodges that are an important component of the tourism industry.

The Rotorua Chamber of Commerce has been pleased with the level of participation of its members in this consultation process. It acknowledges that there are some issues that have different levels of support even within its own membership. However, it is important that these issues are raised to facilitate discussion and consultation.

We request that as an organization we are kept involved in the discussion and consultation over these issues and look forward to working closely with the elected and appointed representatives of the Rotorua District Council towards developing a District Plan that will enable a strong and vibrant community

Yours sincerely

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