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**To:** Vision Kerikeri (VKK), Our Kerikeri Trust, Kapiro Conservation Trust, Carbon Neutral Trust  
(Collectively, "The Community Groups")

**Subject:** Statement of Evidence for Proposed District Plan (PDP)

## Hearing 14 - Urban Zones

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For executive summary, refer [9. Recommendations](#)

### 1. Introduction

#### Purpose of this document

This Statement of Expert Evidence is prepared for Hearing 14 of the Proposed Far North District Plan (PDP), focusing specifically on the Urban Zones chapter: General Residential Zone (GRZ), Mixed Use Zone (MUZ), and Industrial Zones. This evidence provides a professional commentary based on architectural and master planning expertise, offering observations and recommendations from an urban planning perspective.

I have no conflict of interest to declare. While this statement represents an independent opinion, it is provided to assist Community Groups Vision Kerikeri (VKK), Our Kerikeri Trust, Kapiro Conservation Trust, and Carbon Neutral Trust in achieving their objectives within the PDP Hearing process.

#### About Author

My professional qualifications as a Registered Architect (NZIA) with a Master's degree in Architecture and Urban Planning, coupled with 16 years of experience in residential, commercial, and institutional design and master planning across New Zealand and Europe, inform the assessments contained herein. My expertise in this context includes the "look and feel" of the street, building incorporation and spatial implications, height and bulk, façade massing, CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles, material quality, building articulation, connectivity across sites, and place-making through landscaping and street planning, all of which are highly relevant to urban design outcomes and matters considered under the Resource Management Act (RMA) and district plans.

Living and working within Northland also grants me a practical familiarity with Kerikeri, which is invaluable.

## 2. Methodology

My approach involved: reviewing core planning documents and community submissions; comparing FNDG documents with Community Group objectives; identifying alignment and differences; formulating a strategic approach to meet Community Groups' objectives; outlining necessary changes; and providing further recommendations based on my professional knowledge.

My analysis of the Community Groups' submissions indicates that they share a collective vision for Kerikeri and Waipapa (as separate entities), which includes elements such as:

- Planned and Well-managed Growth & Infrastructure,
- Environmental Protection & Climate Resilience,
- Community Well-being & Character,
- Improved Amenity and
- Integrated Multi-modal Transport & Connectivity

Based on comprehensive community surveys by Our Kerikeri Trust, the groups' vision also includes PDP rules that would **genuinely support a "village feel" or "village character" for Kerikeri**, with careful consideration given to the unique topography of the area. This evidence will connect professional observations and recommendations directly to these shared objectives and the PDP chapter on urban zones.

It is important to note that while Hearing 14 specifically addresses the GRZ, MUZ, and Industrial Zones, the proposed Medium Density Residential Zone (MDRZ) and Town Centre Zone (TCZ), including their boundaries and policies, will be discussed in Hearing 15D. The existing and new zones must be considered and assessed holistically.

### Material reviewed:

Submissions by Community Groups:

- OKK fs 047 Brownlie Bing Kainga Ora etc 09.2023
- VKK 521 climate 10.2022
- VKK 522 urban rural planning submission 10.2022
- VKK 524 active transport cycling 10.2022
- VKK 527 environment biodiversity submission 10.2022

Submissions and materials by others:

- Kainga Ora 561 urban and multi
- Kainga Ora FS 243
- Proposed-District-Plan-Submission-499-Turnstone-Trust
- Proposed-District-Plan-Submission-554-Kiwifresh-Orange-Company-Limited
- Turnstone Draft Concept - Kerikeri Riverside Precinct 18th October 2023

Proposed District Plan 3/2025:

<https://docs.isoplan.co.nz/pdfs/farnorth/1/25Mar2025/merged/fullplan.pdf>

Adopted Spatial Plan (6/2025):

[https://www.fndc.govt.nz/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/42254/7c20325a1437bc62ed2ee7934b0ea346a9477919.pdf](https://www.fndc.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/42254/7c20325a1437bc62ed2ee7934b0ea346a9477919.pdf)

Section 32 Reports:

<https://www.fndc.govt.nz/your-council/district-plan/proposed-district-plan/Related-documents/section-32-reports>

**Section 42A Reports:**

<https://www.fndc.govt.nz/your-council/district-plan/proposed-district-plan/hearing-1/hearing-14-urban-zones>

[https://www.fndc.govt.nz/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/42363/S42A-Report-Urban-Zones.pdf](https://www.fndc.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/42363/S42A-Report-Urban-Zones.pdf)

### 3. Overarching Urban Planning and Design Principles for Kerikeri/Waipapa

The trajectory of urban growth in Kerikeri and Waipapa necessitates a strategic and nuanced approach, balancing housing demands with character preservation and environmental values.

#### Kerikeri/Waipapa as a Tier 3 Urban Environment

The Far North District Council (FNDC) now officially considers Kerikeri-Waipapa an "urban environment" under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD), classifying the District as a "Tier 3 local authority." This is based on the Te Pātukurea Spatial Plan, which projects a potential population of 25,000 by 2054. While population projections vary, Kerikeri-Waipapa is likely to meet the 10,000-person threshold for an 'urban environment' within the PDP's 10-15 year timeframe. Tier 3 triggers some of the NPS-UD provisions that encourage greater height and density. The proactive application of these requirements could lead to significant changes to Kerikeri's built form and character before widespread community readiness or full infrastructure capacity, creating tension with community aspirations and potentially resulting in "inappropriate" development.

The future development of Kerikeri and Waipapa, particularly within the urban zones, must be guided by robust planning and design principles that transcend a purely permissive approach. The community's experience highlights the adverse impacts of such a framework, leading to "incompatible land uses and significant adverse effects on rural character, amenity and indigenous biodiversity". A **shift towards a more prescriptive and design-led planning framework** is essential to ensure sustainable and liveable outcomes.

#### The Imperative for a Shift from Permissive to Prescriptive Planning

The Community Groups have consistently advocated for moving away from a permissive, effects-based planning approach, a stance reinforced by the Draft PDP's own acknowledgment that past "permissive approach to development has led to adverse impacts on urban character, amenity and infrastructure provision." The **continued reliance on "discretionary activity" status** with "vague policies open to wide interpretation" remains a significant concern, preventing robust assessment and leading to "ad hoc development" that erodes "character, amenity values" and imposes "untenable cost burden on ratepayers."

To break this cycle and ensure Kerikeri retains a distinctive village character while new developments achieve good architectural quality, the PDP should adopt a **dual approach** that strengthens both the assessment of discretionary activities and the proactive guidance for urban design:

##### A) Enhanced Public Notification for Significant Developments:

While the RMA sets parameters for public notification (RMA Sections 95A-95E), the PDP can ensure community input on developments significantly impacting character and amenity. For restricted discretionary or discretionary activities, public notification is generally precluded for residential activities unless adverse effects are "**more than minor**" (RMA Section 95D). To leverage this, the PDP must:

- **Define "More Than Minor" Effects:** Explicitly state that non-compliance with critical design standards (e.g., height, HIRB, façade massing, material quality, building articulation, street activation) is presumed to result in "more than minor" adverse effects on the "environment" (including "people and communities" and "amenity values" under RMA Section 3). This provides a clear basis for planners to trigger public notification under RMA Section 95D.
- **Mandatory Public Notification Triggers:** For central zones, such as MUZ, any development breaching maximum height or HIRB rules should automatically trigger public notification, ensuring the public has the opportunity to provide input. This aligns directly with the RMA's purpose of promoting the "wellbeing of Communities and People" (RMA Section 5).

## **B) Mandatory Master Plans and Design Guidelines:**

Complementing enhanced notification, a proactive framework for urban design is essential. The Kerikeri-Waipapa Spatial Plan, Te Pātukurea, sets high-level urban design principles. The S42A Report for Hearing 14 acknowledges the Spatial Plan's implementation tasks but states "no Design Guidelines will be included in the PDP at this point in time."

Therefore, it is imperative that the PDP **mandates the adoption of legally binding Master Plans and comprehensive Urban Design Guidelines** for urban zones - particularly between, and including, the town centre and Kerikeri River / Puketotara Stream. These must be legally binding and enforceable, providing clear, objective criteria for design quality. This approach acknowledges the Council's existing strategic direction while advocating for immediate statutory integration.

- **Master Plan Adoption:** The Master Plan should be formally adopted into the District Plan, providing a strategic blueprint for physical development, defining roads, open spaces, and development precincts.
- **Comprehensive Design Guidelines:** These will translate the Master Plan's intent into practical, enforceable urban design responses, covering:
  - **Residential Design Guides:** Ensuring sensitive integration of residential typologies (such as townhouses and walk-up apartments) with active frontages and coherent street activation, avoiding developments that present inactive facades to the street.
  - **Town Centre or Mixed Use Guidelines:** Providing specific controls on façade length, material quality, massing (encouraging split and reduced bulk), façade treatment, glass percentage, and appropriate landscaping at the front.
  - **Streetscape and Open Space Guidelines:** Detailing requirements for public spaces, pedestrian amenity, connectivity and green infrastructure - including native tree planting, urban greenways and blue-green networks.
- **Legal Enforceability:** Non-compliance with these mandatory Master Plans and Design Guidelines should trigger a specific activity status (e.g., restricted discretionary or non-complying) that allows for public notification, ensuring rigorous assessment against established quality benchmarks.

This dual approach provides both a reactive mechanism for public input on non-compliant or impactful developments and a proactive framework to guide high-quality urban design from the outset, ensuring that Kerikeri's unique character and amenity values are genuinely preserved and enhanced.

## **The Foundational Role of Integrated Spatial Planning and Masterplans**

Spatial planning is recognized as an "essential valuable tool" for providing strategic direction. Its absence has been identified as a "missed opportunity to rectify the historic pattern of ad-hoc development." The recent adoption of a Kerikeri/Waipapa Spatial Plan, Te Pātukurea, is a step forward. It has also identified Kerikeri-Waipapa as an 'urban environment' subject to the specific NPS-UD requirements relevant to Tier 3 and projecting substantial future growth. However, the effectiveness of this non-statutory plan depends on the PDP providing robust "mechanisms to implement such plans promptly." Without this crucial statutory linkage, the Spatial Plan risks remaining aspirational rather than a binding framework, perpetuating "ad hoc" development. The S42A Report acknowledges consistency with urban design principles but lacks explicit mechanisms for genuine character achievement. Therefore, **statutory Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plans for all urban zones (and particularly the denser zones)** are imperative to ensure consistent, high-quality urban design outcomes and allow objective assessment.

### **Core Principles of Good Urban Design**

The PDP should formally "enshrine the principles/design qualities of the Urban Design Protocol" (Context, Character, Choice, Connections, Creativity, Custodianship, and Collaboration). These principles are fundamental to achieving qualitative urban outcomes and extend responsibility to long-term environmental and social sustainability, directly linking design quality to climate resilience and resource efficiency. By advocating for the suitable and detailed application of these principles in the specific context of Kerikeri/Waipapa, the community aims to ensure new development is not only functional but also positively contributes to the "quality of the environment" and "amenity values," as mandated by RMA S7.

## 4. Detailed Review of Proposed Urban Zones

The specific provisions within the General Residential, Mixed Use, and Industrial Zones are critical in shaping Kerikeri's future urban form and functionality. This review highlights areas where the PDP needs strengthening to align with good urban design principles and community aspirations.

### General Residential Zone (GRZ)

The General Residential Zone (GRZ) aims to provide "a variety of densities, housing types and lot sizes that respond to...the amenity and character of the receiving residential environment." However, community concerns persist regarding "inadequate" rules for outdoor space in multi-unit developments, fearing that a drive for higher density will compromise community values and amenity.

The current focus of **GRZ-P3** on "adequacy and capacity of available or programmed development infrastructure" for multi-unit developments, while necessary, is an **insufficient condition for creating truly well-functioning residential environments**. The omission of explicit and robust requirements for *quality* outdoor living space and permeable ground in the GRZ creates a direct causal pathway to undesirable urban outcomes. If the PDP prioritises infrastructure over amenity in its rules, developers will naturally maximise buildable area, resulting in multi-unit developments where "the only outdoor space is the concrete used to move and park cars". This directly compromises the core objectives of the "Far North 2100" vision, particularly "Wellbeing of Communities and People".

Therefore, the current GRZ provisions, focusing on density and infrastructure without sufficient qualitative controls on outdoor space, risk creating high-density areas that do not truly constitute "well-functioning urban environments" as articulated in NPS-UD Policy 1, leading to long-term social and environmental costs.

The Community Groups support well-designed low-level townhouses or walk-up apartments that have high-quality street-facing frontages. To achieve this, the following amendments to GRZ objectives and policies are proposed, drawing inspiration from the principles of good urban design and the intent of MDR zones:

#### Proposed Amendments to GRZ Objectives/Policies:

- **GRZ-O1 (Amended):** The General Residential zone provides a variety of densities, housing types and lot sizes that respond to:
  - a. housing needs and demand;
  - b. the adequacy and capacity of available or programmed development infrastructure;
  - c. the amenity and character of the receiving residential environment, **with particular emphasis on active street frontages, sensitive building articulation, and integration with the public realm;** and
  - d. historic heritage.
- **New GRZ Policy (GRZ-PX - Active Frontages and Street Activation):** To ensure that multi-unit developments and new residential buildings within the General Residential Zone contribute positively to the streetscape and public realm, development shall:

- a. Prioritise active frontages that engage with the street, incorporating features such as windows, doors, and habitable rooms facing the public street.
- b. Avoid designs that present blank walls, garages, or service areas as the primary street frontage.
- c. Ensure building massing and articulation are sensitive to the existing or desired character of the street, avoiding monolithic forms.
- d. Incorporate high-quality materials and architectural detailing that contribute to the visual amenity of the street.
- e. Provide landscaping and permeable areas at the street interface to enhance visual appeal and pedestrian amenity.
- **New GRZ Policy (GRZ-PY - Quality Outdoor Space and Permeability):** To ensure a high quality of life for residents and contribute to environmental resilience, multi-unit developments shall:
  - a. Provide adequate and usable private outdoor living space for each dwelling, with direct access and sufficient sunlight.
  - b. Incorporate shared green spaces and communal amenities that foster social connection and community well-being.
  - c. Maximize permeable surfaces within the site, including landscaped areas and permeable paving, to manage stormwater runoff and enhance green infrastructure.
  - d. Ensure a minimum percentage of site coverage is dedicated to permeable, landscaped areas, with specific controls on total impermeable area.

## Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)

The extension of the Mixed Use Zone (MUZ) is generally supported, and its objectives are acknowledged for considering urban design principles. The PDP's vision includes "commercial shops/cafes/offices on the ground floor with terraced apartments on top up to a maximum of 3 floors (12m)."

The effectiveness of the MUZ in achieving its full potential is contingent on the explicit integration of comprehensive urban design guidelines into the PDP's policies and rules. Community groups specifically seek additional provisions in **MUZ-P5** to ensure "consistency with the scale, density, design, amenity and character of the surrounding mixed use environment, and with the urban design guidelines". Without such detailed and enforceable guidance, the "consideration of urban design principals" may remain subjective, leading to inconsistent development outcomes that fail to "foster a seamless blend of living, working, and leisure spaces" and undermine the desired "vibrant village feel".

The following changes to the Mixed Use Zone provisions are proposed:

- **MUZ-P5 (Amended):** This policy should be redrafted to reflect amended activity types and statuses, and to explicitly restrict activities that are likely to have an adverse effect on the function, role, sense of place, and amenity of the Mixed Use zone. This includes, for example:
  - Restrictions on visitor accommodation activities located on the ground floor of buildings, except where a site adjoins an Open Space zone.
  - Light or heavy industrial activity.
  - Storage and warehousing.
  - Large format retail activity over 400 m<sup>2</sup>.



- Waste management activity.

*Rationale:* This amendment aligns with the S42A recommendation to redraft MUZ-P5 and addresses the community's concern about inappropriate activities impacting the zone's character.

- **MUZ-P7 (Amended):** This policy should be amended to include consideration of reverse sensitivity effects when assessing applications for residential, early childhood, retirement, and education facilities.

*Rationale:* This aligns with the S42A recommendation to add reverse sensitivity to MUZ-P7, ensuring that sensitive activities are appropriately designed to manage potential conflicts with lawfully established non-residential activities.

- **New Policy (MUZ-PXX - Avoidance of Incompatible Activities):** A new policy should be added to explicitly avoid the establishment of:
  - Residential activity, visitor accommodation, or supported residential care on the ground floor of buildings within the pedestrian frontage overlay.
  - Industrial and offensive trade activities and landfill.
  - Primary production and rural industry.

*Rationale:* This aligns with the S42A recommendation for a new avoidance policy, providing clearer direction on activities deemed incompatible with the MUZ's intended function and character, particularly at street level.

## Commercial and Industrial Zones (Light and Heavy Industrial)

A significant concern arises from the PDP's statement that the Light Industrial zone "is not required to focus on pedestrian access or amenity or provide public spaces." The example of Mill Lane in Kerikeri is cited, being "very close to schools, kohanga reos, childcare centres, and links to Hall Road," where "safe pedestrian and cycling access" is critically important.

This PDP position is strongly disputed by community groups, particularly given that Light Industrial zones may be located adjacent to residential or mixed-use areas and that the **RMA Section 7(c)** states that "all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall have particular regard to... the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values." It is argued that "**Connectivity and amenity should be considered in all zones**, while public spaces should be considered for the majority of zones where people live or work".

The following changes to the Light Industrial Zone (LIZ) and Heavy Industrial Zone (HIZ) provisions are proposed:

- **LIZ Overview (Amended):** The LIZ Overview should be amended to remove any reference stating that the zone is not required to focus on pedestrian access, amenity, or public spaces. It should also be amended to provide consistency with the recommended definition for 'Light Industrial activity,' specifically clarifying that such activities do not generate objectionable odour, dust, or noise, or elevated risk to people's health and safety.

*Rationale:* This aligns with the S42A recommendation to amend the LIZ Overview , ensuring that the zone's description reflects a more integrated approach to urban planning where all zones contribute to overall amenity and safety.

- **LIZ-P3 (Amended):** This policy should be amended to clarify that activities are only to be avoided where they are not ancillary to a Light Industrial activity. It should also specify that education facilities are only to be avoided where they are not classified as trades training, which may have a functional and/or operational need to operate in industrial zones. A consequential amendment to include reference to offensive trade (excluding waste management facility) is also recommended.

*Rationale:* This aligns with the S42A recommendation to amend LIZ-P3 , providing greater flexibility for compatible activities while maintaining appropriate controls.

- **New Policies/Rules for Pedestrian Access and Amenity:** The PDP should introduce new policies and rules within the LIZ and HIZ chapters that explicitly require consideration of pedestrian access, amenity, and public spaces, particularly at zone interfaces with residential or mixed-use areas. This could include requirements for:
  - Minimum pedestrian pathway widths (e.g., 3m for shared paths).
  - Landscaping and screening along boundaries adjoining sensitive zones.
  - Design elements that promote safety and visual appeal for pedestrians and cyclists.

*Rationale:* This addresses the core community concern that industrial zones should not act as barriers to connectivity and amenity, promoting a holistic urban fabric.

## 5. Key Urban Design and Amenity Considerations

### Building Height and Density

Kerikeri's existing built environment is largely characterized by low-rise buildings, predominantly one or two levels. This contributes significantly to its "village character". The trajectory of urban growth in Kerikeri and Waipapa necessitates a strategic and nuanced approach, balancing the demands for housing and economic development with the preservation of this local character and environmental values. The official classification of Kerikeri-Waipapa as an 'urban environment' and a 'Tier 3 local authority' under the NPS-UD immediately triggers provisions that encourage enabling greater height and density (although not to the same extent as Tier 1 & 2).

However, a significant concern arises from the stark divergence in proposed height limits, particularly between Kainga Ora's (KO) proposals and the community's vision. KO's proposals for 22m (approximately 6 storeys) for the Town Centre Zone (TCZ) are derived from "larger cities" and driven by NPS-UD intensification directives, representing a rapid, **transformative shift that directly threatens the valued "village character"**. **High-rise development fundamentally changes the scale and perception of a town**, impacting microclimate (sunlight, wind), pedestrian comfort, and visual dominance. While FNDC's expert, Jane Rennie, offers a compromise of 15-16m for TCZ, even this height is a significant departure from the current context and the community's vision for a lower-rise, more human-scaled environment. This tension highlights where national policy, interpreted through a lens of maximum density, clashes with community aspirations for amenity and character.

To prevent urban sprawl, the Community Groups recognize and support the need for appropriate forms of intensification. They support the mixed-use developments as long as they exhibit high-quality street-facing frontages and sensitively activate the public realm, avoiding inward-facing developments that present inactive facades to the street. In principle, this applies to GRZ, MDRZ, MUZ, and TCZ. To achieve this "balanced look and feel" and sensitive **incorporation of height and bulk**, as depicted on [Fig. 1](#), **the following Height in Relation to Boundary (HIRB) rules and architectural treatments are proposed for central zones, with public notification for breaches:**

The Community Groups recognize the need for intensification to avoid urban sprawl and they are in support of appropriate forms of intensification. They support the mixed-use developments as long as they exhibit high-quality street-facing frontages and sensitively activate the public realm, avoiding inward-facing developments that present inactive facades to the street. In principle, this applies to all urban residential or commercial zones. To achieve this "balanced look and feel" and sensitive **incorporation of height and bulk**, **improved Height in Relation to Boundary (HIRB) rules**, as depicted on [Fig. 1](#), **and architectural treatments need to be adopted, with public notification for breaches.**

#### MUZ (Mixed Use Zone):

- **Maximum Height:** 12m.
- **Height in Relation to Boundary (HIRB):** No control between MUZ sites (as per PDP: MUZ-S2). However, for facades facing a public street (frontage), for example, a 60-degree recession plane at 8m above ground level should be introduced. This allows for taller buildings but requires upper levels to be set back, reducing perceived bulk at street level.
- **Setback:** 3m from residential or open space zones only (as per PDP: MUZ-S3).

*Note: Refer below for [Pedestrian Space in Central Zones](#).*

- **Architectural Treatment:** A significant degree of glazed facade and architectural treatment (e.g., varied materials, articulation, and detailing) should be mandated to ensure visual interest and quality at street level. Tool of control: Master Plans and Design Guidelines

#### **TCZ (Town Centre Zone)**

*- to be discussed in Hearing 15D*

**MDRZ (Medium Density Residential Zone) - For consideration in Hearing 15D, but drafted for comparison:**

- **Maximum Height:** 11m + 1m for roof.
- **Height in Relation to Boundary (HIRB):** 4m height then a 60-degree recession plane at 1m boundary setback (as per MDRS default in S42A). This helps manage bulk and overshadowing on adjacent properties.
- **Setback:** Front: 1.5m; Side: 1m; Rear: 1m (typical MDRS as per S42A). *Note: Wider footpaths / front setback to be discussed in Hearing 14.*
- **Planting:** All zones, particularly MDRZ, should demand a degree of planting to enhance amenity and green infrastructure.
- **Architectural Treatment:** Same with GRZ. Tool of control: Master Plans and Design Guidelines

## **Pedestrian Space in Central Zones & Setbacks**

Community groups have rightly pointed out that many footpaths in our central zones are too narrow. This makes it difficult for pedestrians to move freely and limits opportunities for activities like outdoor dining.

The Proposed District Plan aims to maintain a pedestrian-friendly environment by focusing on the relationship between buildings and public spaces, using concepts like "pedestrian frontage," "verandahs," and "setbacks."

### **Why Setbacks Aren't the Answer**

While community groups have suggested using setbacks (the distance a building is set back from the property line) to widen footpaths, this isn't the most effective solution for central zones. In fact, zero or minimal setbacks are often preferred as they allow the footpath to directly meet the building, creating a continuous and vibrant "active edge" that encourages pedestrian activity. Introducing setbacks in the Mixed Use Zone (MUZ), for instance, could lead to:

- Misalignment between new and existing buildings.
- Dilution of the active edge, making the area less engaging.
- Potentially messy or unsafe corners.

### **Alternative Solutions for Wider Footpaths**

Instead of relying on setbacks, I urge the Council to consider alternative methods for creating more spacious and functional pedestrian areas. These could include:

- Revising the Council's Engineering Standards specifically for central zones to mandate wider footpaths.
- Transforming town centers into pedestrian-only paved areas (precedents - various examples of Jan Gehl's transformation of cities), with trafficable surfaces only for deliveries
- Implementing footpath changes through master plans and associated documents, ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated approach.

These solutions would allow the Council to drive the improvements directly, rather than placing the burden of responsibility and control on individual property owners through setback requirements.

## Topography when Considering Height Restrictions (and Rezoning)

Kerikeri's unique topography presents a significant challenge and opportunity for urban planning.

Unlike most town centres situated at their lowest point near a river bank or sea, Kerikeri's CBD is built along a ridgeline, with land dropping dozens of metres down to the Puketotara Stream & Kerikeri River on the northwestern side, and Wairoa Stream on the South-East. The current Spatial Plan indicates the highest density (Commercial / Mixed Use) on the ridgeline, followed by MDRZ and GRZ as the town continues towards the streams/river. The Community Groups express concern that a height of 15 or 16m within the newly proposed Town Centre Zone, recommended in s42 reports, will destroy the existing village character of predominantly low-level buildings.

While achieving the "opposite" height distribution (lower in the centre, gradually higher along the river) such as Ridgeline Protection / Scenic Viewplane Management would be difficult to define, a strategic re-mapping of zones could achieve the desired outcomes of character preservation and greater density, as well as other benefits. For example (leveraging Kevin Lynch's urban design elements) the following approaches should be taken into account when considering height restrictions and rezoning:

- **Lower the proposed central zones along the street**  
Preserve a village character at the town's core by maintaining a lower, more human-scaled built form along the ridgeline at the building frontage, defined by HIRB.  
Priority level: CRITICAL
- **Capitalizing on Topography: Lower Elevations Support Taller Structures**  
Areas that are currently less developed and topographically lower than the proposed town centre ridgeline present opportunities for development of greater height and density without negatively impacting the established town centre character.
- **Shift the boundary of central zones closer to the Kerikeri River**  
Extend commercial activities between the CBD and Kerikeri River, fostering a more continuous urban fabric and activating the riverfront. This approach also allows for greater height and density between the CBD and river, providing additional activities and amenities and activating the riverfront as a 'destination' for both residents and tourists, similar to the successful Whangarei Town Basin.

## Image of City to inform Master Plan

This PDP vision is grounded in **Kevin Lynch's** influential urban design elements from "The Image of the City" (1960), still very applicable to modern towns, which define how we perceive and navigate urban environments: Paths, Edges, Districts, Nodes, and Landmarks.

These elements should be identified early, and applied to the **legally binding Master Plans and comprehensive Urban Design Guidelines**.

This holistic approach could inform Kerikeri on how to accommodate growth and intensification while preserving its unique character and activating its natural assets, creating a more legible, vibrant, and well-functioning urban environment.

More will be discussed in Hearing 15D.

## Outdoor Space and Public Realm

The quality and provision of outdoor space, both private and public, are fundamental to the liveability of urban environments as outlined in "Wellbeing of Communities and People" and "Connecting People place and Communities" objectives of the "Far North 2100" vision.

Community groups express significant concern that existing rules for outdoor space in multi-unit developments are "inadequate". This deficiency raises fears that the pursuit of higher density could compromise the overall objective of preserving amenity. The PDP must strengthen provisions for quality outdoor space, both private and public, to ensure liveability and community well-being.

The community emphasizes these qualitative aspects to promote genuine forms of placemaking. This includes **strengthening and expanding existing provisions**, such as building setbacks on key roads, improved restrictions on signage, and **retaining green and open public spaces** with requirements for landscaping and tree canopy areas. Without explicit controls on the "types, qualities and quantity of buildings," there is a risk of a "sensible design aesthetic" being lost in the pursuit of development, eroding the distinctive characteristics that communities value. This also relates to fencing and outdoor space, outlook, and amenities. The PDP must ensure that these elements contribute positively to the overall visual and functional quality from an external perspective, ensuring privacy, access to sunlight, and a high quality of amenity for all residents.

## Water-sensitive Design

The integration of water-sensitive design (WSD) and comprehensive stormwater management is crucial in urban zones for resilient, healthy, and sustainable communities. WSD moves beyond traditional stormwater disposal by treating the urban water cycle as an integral part of urban planning and design. Its importance stems from:

- **Mitigating Urban Flooding:** By using permeable surfaces, green roofs, rain gardens, and other methods of on-site detention, WSD reduces stormwater runoff, lessening flood risk.
- **Improving Water Quality:** WSD systems filter pollutants from urban runoff, protecting waterways in line with the objectives of the **National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM)**, which aims to improve and maintain freshwater quality.
- **Enhancing Ecological Health and Amenity:** Integrating green infrastructure and connected blue-green networks supports urban biodiversity and enhances the liveability, aesthetic appeal of urban spaces and human wellbeing.
- **Building Climate Resilience:** WSD offers adaptive solutions for managing both excess water and scarcity, crucial for urban areas facing climate change impacts.

The PDP must therefore explicitly mandate robust policies and rules for WSD principles and integrated stormwater management solutions across all urban zones, including requirements for green infrastructure and on-site stormwater retention and treatment.

## Connectivity, Active Transport, and CPTED: Integrated Design for Safer Communities

Integrated urban design within the Proposed District Plan must fully address the interconnected roles of connectivity, active transport, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to foster vibrant, safe, and efficient communities.

The Plan's policies must mitigate the cumulative impacts of motorised traffic, allowing for the rejection of development proposals that compromise safety. Crucially, the PDP should enable a double function in its design: promoting accessible and safe active modes that simultaneously enhance community safety through CPTED principles. This includes:

- robust requirements for **connected walkways and cycleways**, ideally **greenways with wide paths designed in ways that would encourage substantial numbers of people to use walking and/or cycling as a regular mode of transport**.
- **disincentivizing cul-de-sacs** due to their poor urban design and hindrance to natural surveillance.

By integrating CPTED principles like natural surveillance and access control, alongside quality environments, the Plan ensures design features contribute directly to reducing crime and enhancing safety for all users, aligning with the RMA's purpose of sustainable management and community wellbeing.

## Essential Infrastructure Provision and Funding

The presence of relevant infrastructure should be a prerequisite for future development. The provision of necessary infrastructure must be a high priority within PDP policies and rules. Given existing Council funding constraints, there is a strong argument that developers should typically be required to provide necessary infrastructure, including elements such as on-site community wastewater systems. The past elimination of most development contribution requirements has led to adverse effects.



## 6. Recommendations

The analysis of the Proposed District Plan's Urban Zones chapter, viewed through the lens of architectural and master planning expertise and the collective vision of the Community Groups, reveals several critical areas requiring stronger provisions to align with good urban design and community aspirations.

### Key Recommendations:

- **Shift from Permissive to Prescriptive Planning:** Move away from a permissive, effects-based approach to a more prescriptive, design-led framework for sustainable urban outcomes.
- **Mandatory Master Plans and Design Guidelines:** Implement legally binding Master Plans and comprehensive Urban Design Guidelines for all urban zones to ensure consistent, high-quality design.
- **Enhanced Public Notification:** Define "more than minor" adverse effects to trigger public notification for significant developments, particularly in central zones.
- **Quality Outdoor Space and Permeability:** Strengthen urban zone provisions for adequate and usable private and shared outdoor living spaces, maximizing permeable surfaces and specifying minimum landscaped areas.
- **Active Frontages and Street Activation:** Introduce policies requiring public open spaces, active frontages, sensitive building articulation, and high-quality materials to contribute positively to the streetscape.
- **Integrated Transport and Connectivity:** Implement robust policies for integrated transport networks, including safe, separated active transport options (preferably 3m wide shared paths connecting strategic locations), and effective management of cumulative traffic impacts.
- **Frontage HIRB:** Apply HIRB to street frontage in relevant urban zones to reduce building bulk & retain a "village character"
- **Strategic use of topography:** When considering height restrictions and rezoning, apply a holistic approach that uses topography strategically in order to balance growth and character issues.
- **Public spaces, Amenity and Landscaping:** Ensure amenity and community well-being are supported by the provision of important elements such as new public open spaces and appropriate landscaping.
- **Light Industrial Zone Amenity:** Ensure Light Industrial zones contribute to overall amenity and safety, introducing policies for pedestrian access.

### Alignment with S42A Report Recommendations and Proposed Further Changes

This section outlines the expert evidence's position on the recommendations presented in the Section 42A Report for Hearing 14, identifying areas of agreement and proposing further changes to the District Plan where necessary to better align with the Community Groups' objectives.

### Areas of Agreement with S42A Report Recommendations:

The expert evidence generally supports the following key recommendations from the S42A Report , as they align with the objectives of managed growth, character preservation, and well-functioning urban environments:

- **Consequential Amendments to GRZ-R9:** Agreement with the consequential removal of specific multi-unit residential provision GRZ-R9 as it relates to Kerikeri. This would ensure that medium density development is appropriately concentrated in the new MDRZ closer to the town centre, establishing a clear hierarchy between residential zones.
- **Amendments to Objectives and Policies for "Planned" Character and "Well-Functioning Urban Environment":** Agreement with amendments to objectives and policies throughout the urban zones framework to refer to "planned" character and make reference to "well-functioning urban environment". This aligns with the NPS-UD and provides a clearer direction for future development.
- **Consideration of Reverse Sensitivity:** Agreement with the inclusion of consideration for reverse sensitivity effects in relevant policies. This is important for managing potential conflicts between different land uses.
- **Alternative Telecommunications Options:** Agreement with allowing consideration of alternative telecommunications options in relevant policies. This acknowledges evolving infrastructure solutions.
- **New Rules for "Light Industrial Activity":** Agreement with the addition of new rules for "light industrial activity". This provides greater clarity and control over the types of industrial activities permitted.
- **Amendments to Landscaping Requirements for Industrial Zones:** Agreement with amendments to simplify and clarify landscaping requirements on road boundaries for the Industrial Zones. This contributes to visual amenity.
- **Consequential Amendments for Clarity and Consistency:** Agreement with consequential amendments throughout the urban zones framework for clarity and consistency between terms and provisions.

#### **Proposed Further Changes to the District Plan:**

While supporting many of the S42A recommendations, the expert evidence proposes further changes to the District Plan to more fully achieve the Community Groups' objectives, particularly regarding character preservation, design quality, and community input.

- **Outdoor Living Space (GRZ-S6):**
  - **S42A Recommendation:** Decreasing the outdoor living space to 40m<sup>2</sup> (from 50m<sup>2</sup>).
  - **Proposed Further Change:** The expert evidence **disagrees** with reducing the outdoor living space standard. Community Groups have consistently raised concerns about "inadequate" rules for outdoor space in multi-unit developments and the risk of "the only outdoor space is the concrete used to move and park cars". To ensure liveability and foster community well-being, the PDP should
  - **retain or increase** the minimum outdoor living space requirements, ensuring adequate and usable private and shared green spaces.
- **Public Notification for Significant Developments (RMA Sections 95A-95E):**
  - **S42A Position:** The S42A Report acknowledges the issue of discretionary activities but does not explicitly recommend mandatory public notification for developments exceeding two levels or breaching HIRB rules in central zones.
  - **Proposed Further Change:** As detailed in Section 2.2.1, the PDP must be amended to explicitly state that non-compliance with critical design standards (including height and HIRB rules) in central urban zones is presumed to result in "more than minor" adverse effects on character and amenity, thereby triggering **mandatory public**

**notification under RMA Section 95D.** This is crucial for ensuring public input and oversight on developments that significantly impact the "look and feel" of the town.

- **Mandatory Master Plans and Design Guidelines:**

- **S42A Position:** The S42A Report acknowledges that the Kerikeri-Waipapa Spatial Plan sets high-level urban design principles and that design guidance "can be incorporated into the Plan" when developed. However, it states that "no Design Guidelines will be included in the PDP at this point in time".
- **Proposed Further Change:** The expert evidence strongly recommends that the PDP **mandates the adoption of Master Plans and comprehensive Urban Design Guidelines** for the town centre and any areas between the town centre and Kerikeri River. These documents must be formally adopted into the District Plan and be legally binding. Non-compliance with these mandatory guidelines should trigger a specific activity status (e.g., restricted discretionary or non-complying) that allows for public notification. These guidelines should cover Residential Design Guides, Guidelines for all commercial & mixed-use zones, and Streetscape and Open Space Guidelines, ensuring sensitive incorporation of building bulk, material quality, façade treatment, and landscaping. This proactive approach is essential for achieving the desired "village character" and high architectural quality.

This set of recommendations aims to strengthen the Proposed District Plan and guides Kerikeri's urban development towards a future that is both sustainable and respectful of its unique character and community aspirations.

## 7. References

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## 8. FIGURES:

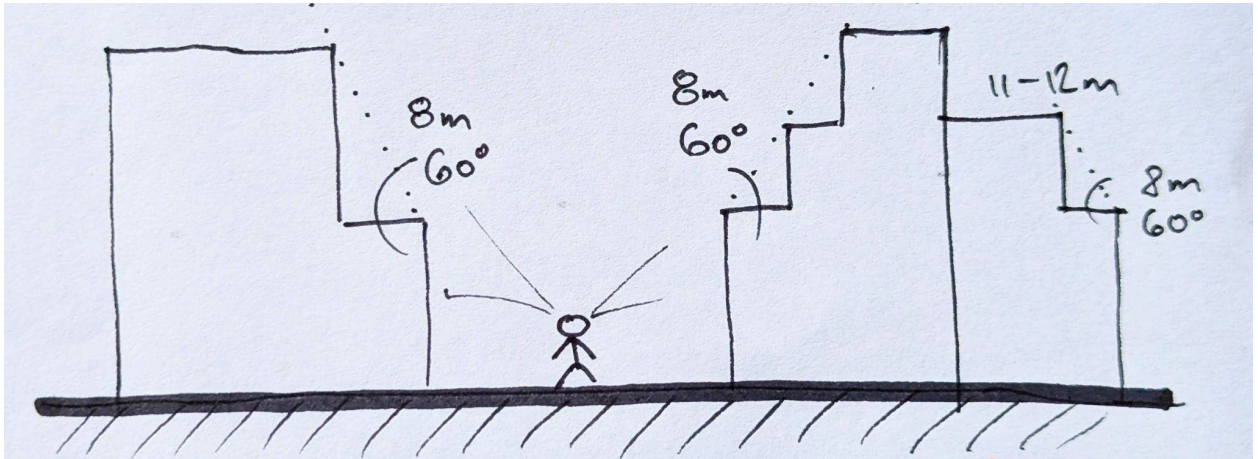


Fig. 1: Bulk & HIRB. Street section to illustrate the general concept of Height in relation to Boundary (HIRB) - example for several urban zones, as viewed from street level