

Property Council New Zealand

Submission on Plan Change 33

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For more information and further queries, please contact

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Plan Change 33

1. Recommendations Summary

1.1. Property Council New Zealand (“Property Council”) welcomes an opportunity to provide feedback on Plan Change 33. While we support the majority of the changes, we recommend that Tauranga City Council (“the Council”):

- Adopt the proposed walkable catchments but do not impose a building height maximum of eight storeys within 1.5km of the City Centre and in and around other commercial centres;
- Take a more flexible approach to development heights within the 1.5km walkable catchment to the City Centre to better encourage residential development;
- Engage with owners and developers to understand the practical implications of Plan Change 27 and the proposed qualifying matter; and
- Do not change the activity status of residential activities in the commercial zone from a ‘permitted activity’ to a ‘restricted discretionary activity’.

2. Introduction

2.1 Property Council is the leading not-for-profit advocate for New Zealand’s most significant industry, property. Our organisational purpose is, “Together, shaping cities where communities thrive”.

2.2 The property sector shapes New Zealand’s social, economic and environmental fabric. Property Council advocates for the creation and retention of a well-designed, functional and sustainable built environment, in order to contribute to the overall prosperity and well-being of New Zealand.

2.3 Property is the largest industry in the Bay of Plenty. There are around \$97.4 billion in property assets across the Bay of Plenty, with property providing a direct contribution to GDP of \$2 billion (13 percent) and employment for 11,730 Bay of Plenty residents.

2.4 Property Council is the collective voice of the property industry. We connect property professionals and represent the interests of 72 Bay of Plenty based member companies across the private, public and charitable sectors.

2.5 This document provides Property Council’s feedback on [Plan Change 33](#). Comments and recommendations are provided on issues relevant to Property Council’s members.

3. Proposed approach to Housing Intensification.

3.1 Under the requirements of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (“NPS-UD”), the Council must significantly up zone large portions of Tauranga. The Council is also required to enable developments of at least six storeys in walkable catchments around the City Centre, Metropolitan Centres and Rapid Transit Stations, unless there is a qualifying matter. The NPS-UD also requires additional intensification to occur around suburban centres. The RMA

Amendment Act requires the Council to adopt the new Medium Density Residential Standards (“MRDS”) across the rest of urban Tauranga unless there is a qualifying matter.

- 3.2 The Council has proposed to create two Residential Zones: A Medium Residential Zone and a High Density Residential Zone. The Medium Residential Zone will combine the Suburban Residential Zone, Large Lot Residential Zone and Wairakei Residential Zone. This will give effect to the MDRS (Medium Density Residential Standards) except where a qualifying matter is present. The MDRS will allow people to building up to three dwellings of up to three storeys (11 metre height) on most sections in residential zones as a ‘permitted activity’. Property Council supports the Council’s proposed approach to create the Medium Residential Zone and recommends their adoption.
- 3.3 The High Density Residential Zone will combine the City Living Mixed Use Zone, City Living Residential Zone, High Density Zone and parts of the Suburban Centre Zone and Wairakei Residential Zone adjacent to an identified centre.
- 3.4 In essence, the Council is proposing:
- Building heights of up to eight storeys (27 metres) within 1.5km (15 minutes’ walk) of the city centre;
 - Building heights of up to 48.7 metres above sea level (approx. 13 storeys) within the city centre;
 - Building heights of up to eight storeys (27 metres) along Cameron Road in the Te Papa peninsula; and
 - Building heights between four and six storeys (16 metres to 21 metres) in areas within five to 10 minutes’ walk (400 metres to 800 metres) of some of the city’s commercial centres.
- 3.5 We support the Council’s proposed walkable catchment of 1.5km around the City Centre and the proposal between 400 and 800 metres in and around commercial centres. While we are pleased that the Council is proposing building heights of up to 13 storeys in the City Centre, we are concerned that building heights within 1.5km of the City Centre have been capped at eight storeys. We do not support this proposal.
- 3.6 Enabling greater density in these areas would better allow more people to live closer to the central city, and get benefits from, public amenities and transport links. It would also reduce pressure for housing in other parts of the city and result in positive environmental outcomes and reduced carbon emissions through transport travel.
- 3.7 Having residential intensification within and around the City Centre is particularly important given that the Council has invested in the civic precinct – Te Manawa Taki o Te Papa. The development of a range of community facilities, a town plaza and various waterfront amenities will be particularly attractive if people are closer to these amenities or have better access to the CBD. Additionally, intensification within the CBD helps create a vibrant space where people can live, work, play and shop. A revitalised city centre will serve as a vibrant community, providing access to high quality modern living opportunities for the people of Tauranga.

- 3.8 Similarly, having intensification within a five to 10 minute walk of some of the city’s commercial centres is also critically important and align with supporting the Government’s Zero Carbon ambitions. Residential intensification near commercial centres better aligns with environmental outcomes of having people reside within a close proximity to town centres which often have good public transport routes.

Feasibility and impact on skyline

- 3.9 Feasibility is incredibly important for residential development to occur. We question whether the Council has worked with developers to understand what building heights would be feasible within the current market. For example, if feasibility for residential development stacks up at nine storeys, capping the building height to eight storeys may jeopardise significant development in Tauranga.
- 3.10 We recommend the Council take a more flexible approach to development within 1.5km of the City Centre by removing the proposed eight storey cap which could restrict or discourage future development. We ask that the Council works closely with the sector to understand feasibility constraints and viability of residential developments.
- 3.11 We are also concerned with the unintended consequences that may result in relation to this proposal. Limiting building height to between six and eight storeys could result in unintended uniform design consequences for the entire city. Property Council is of the view that healthy cities should have a varied skyline, where the greatest density can be found closest to the city centre. Under the current proposals by the Council, there is a risk that Tauranga develops a uniform-built environment (all between six and eight storeys) without the variation in height found in a healthy skyline.
- 3.12 We encourage the Council to work closely with residential developers to encourage incentives for a wide range of development density and designs, including providing for flexibility to support developments that are above eight storeys in height where appropriate to result in a varied skyline across Tauranga.
- 3.13 In summary, we support the Council’s walkable catchment within the City Centre but wish to see more flexibility around residential height limits within 1.5km of the City Centre to ensure that unintended consequences such as; limited or no development occurs and/or all residential development across the city becomes a uniformed height.

4. General comment on Urban Design

- 4.1 We are glad to see that our recommendation to establish an urban design advisory panel was adopted and an independent Urban Design Panel will become operative in early 2023. This will play a key role in improving the quality of the built environment across the Tauranga region, help contribute to functional, safe and attractive spaces and places as well as help discourage the negative stigma associated with urban intensification.

4 Qualifying Matters

- 4.1 Many of the qualifying matters are already identified in the current Tauranga City Plan and remain the same. However, the Council is proposing to add three new qualifying matters

including areas prone to flooding from intense rainfall. We previously submitted on Plan Change 27 which introduces new rules to manage the effects of flooding in intense rainfall events on people, properties, and infrastructure. While we support the intent behind Plan Change 27 and the proposed qualifying matter, we are concerned that inaccurate flood mapping has been used, which will have a damaging effect on property values. As this matter is currently being challenged in the Environment Court, we recommend that the Council use this time to engage with owners and developers to understand the practical implications of imposing the proposed qualifying matter in the affected areas.

5 Residential activities in the commercial zone

5.1 The Council has proposed to change the activity status of residential activities in the commercial zone from a 'permitted activity' to a 'restricted discretionary activity'. This means that people will have to apply for a resource consent to building apartments in commercial areas. The Council believes this will ensure that urban design outcomes will be considered, and that residential development does not unreasonably restrict commercial opportunities or constrain the operation of legitimate commercial activities within the centres. Further to this, the Council has also proposed some rules around what residential activities in the commercial zone should look like, and what elements they should include (e.g. residential activities must be located above the ground floor).

5.2 We do not agree with the proposed change in activity status. It will only increase red tape, and hinder development in the commercial zone. We challenge the Council's thinking behind the proposal as there is a disconnect with encouraging residential intensification within a walking distance of commercial centres, including the CBD, and giving residential activities within the commercial zone, a 'restricted discretionary' status. This seems to suggest that the development of residential buildings is good, given that they are in areas defined by the Council but are not within the commercial centres themselves.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Property Council would like to thank the Council for an opportunity to provide feedback on Plan Change 33. While we support the intent of Plan Change 33, as it would enable much needed intensification opportunities, there are a number of concerns that need to be addressed which significantly affect the property owners and developers in Tauranga.

6.2 For any further queries please contact Sandamali Gunawardena, Advocacy Advisor, via email: sandamali@propertynz.co.nz or cell 0210459871.

6.3

Yours sincerely,



Brian Squair
Central Committee Chair
Property Council New Zealand