

Frequently Asked Questions for Plan Change 8 (Natural Hazards)

1. I may be affected by Plan Change 8, what do I have to do?

You don't have to do anything. You may choose to find out more about Plan Change 8 and you may choose to make a submission on the plan change.

2. Why is Rotorua Lakes Council initiating this plan change?

Rotorua Lakes Council is required to review its District Plan every ten years. There have also been updates to hazard mapping that mean that some hazard maps and rules in the District Plan are now out-of-date.

3. What is the purpose of this plan change?

Plan Change 8 aims to update the District Plan to better manage risks associated with natural hazards. It also aims to ensure that natural hazard management methods are effective and do not impose unnecessary costs.

4. Which natural hazards are covered under this plan change?

Plan Change 8 updates guiding objectives and policies for all natural hazards, but only considers and proposes rule changes for the following natural hazards: flooding, wildfire, active faults, land stability from ground condition hazards (liquefaction and soft soils) and slope stability, and geothermal hazards.

5. What areas are affected by these potential changes in the plan change?

The proposed changes affect how land is developed or built on throughout much of the district, including in the Lakes A Zone, so development on most properties could be affected in some way or another.

The table below lists key proposals and where they apply.

Hazards	Key Proposals in Plan Change 8	Where these changes apply
Flooding	Performance standards for structures and buildings to protect against flooding on neighbouring properties due to compromising overland flowpaths.	Residential Zones, City Centre Zones, Commercial Zones, Industrial Zones, Business and Innovation Zones, Lakes A Zone Settlement Management Area and Bush Settlement Management Area
Flooding	Alignment of the rules in the Lakes A Zone to manage flooding with the rest of the District Plan.	Lakes A Zone.
Flooding and Land Stability	Changes to standards for permitted earthworks	All of the Rotorua District – specific proposals vary depending on the zone.
Flooding and Land Stability	New matters of discretion for natural hazards when resource	Land within 25m of lakes and rivers and streams (check the rules for further details).

	consent is needed for buildings and structures next to waterbodies.	
Fault Rupture	Removing the fault maps from the District Plan, while retaining rules in the District Plan. These rules are also proposed to be extended to the Lakes A Zone.	All zones, including the Lakes A Zone - properties identified as having active faults in the New Zealand Active Fault Database are affected.
Wildfire	Clarifying firefighting water supply requirements for subdivision; and extending firefighting water supply requirements to also apply when developing relevant activities such as residential buildings.	Rural 2 Zone, Rural 3 Zone, Settlement Management Area and Bush Settlement Management Area in the Lakes A Zone.
Geothermal hazards	A new performance standard for most buildings, requiring that an assessment of geothermal hazards and mitigation is submitted at the same time as applying for building consent.	All geothermal systems in the Rotorua District (currently only applies in the Rotorua Geothermal System).

Note: this table does not cover every change proposed. You are encouraged to read the plan change summary document and full Plan Change 8 proposal and evaluation (section 32 report) for more detail about the plan change and where it applies. These documents are available on the Plan Change 8 webpage: rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

6. Where can I go to find out whether my property is in any of these areas?

You can use the following tools to check whether your property is in an area affected by the proposed changes under Plan Change 8:

- [GeyserView](#) – This is Council’s online mapping tools, which includes District Plan zoning maps, geothermal system maps and other hazard mapping.
- GNS Science NZ Active Faults Database – Maps of active faults are available at: www.gns.cri.nz/data-and-resources/new-zealand-active-faults -database/.
- Fault and Western City Flood Viewer – This online tool overlays fault lines from the NZ Active Faults Database over property boundaries. It also includes additional flood modelling for western Rotorua (between the Puarenga Stream and Ngongotaha), which is not yet available on geyserView. This viewer is available on the Plan Change 8 webpage: rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

If you are having trouble accessing this information, email policy.planning@rotorualc.nz.

7. Is existing development affected by these changes?

Generally, no. Existing development is protected by what are known as *existing use rights* under the Resource Management Act 1991. This means that buildings and activities lawfully established before Plan Change 8 takes effect can usually continue, even if they no longer comply with the new rules. However, if you want to modify or redevelop a property in the future, the new rules may apply.

8. Can I have my say on the plan change?

Yes, the community is encouraged to participate through the submission process. Details about how to submit are provided on our webpage for Plan Change 8: rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

9. What happens after I make a submission on the plan change?

All submissions on Plan Change 8 will be summarised and publicly notified, giving people an opportunity to make further submissions (in support or opposition). A hearing will then be held on submissions and submitters can choose to present their views. A final decision will then be made publicly available and served on all parties who made a submission.

10. Will the plan change affect insurance premiums?

We recommend you consult your insurance policy and/or contact your insurance provider to see if there are any implications as the Council cannot provide advice in this area.

11. Will the plan change affect property values?

We recommend you consult a registered valuer and/or real estate agent as the Council cannot provide advice in this area.

12. When will the plan change take effect?

Changes to the objectives and policies proposed by Plan Change 8 have legal effect when publicly notified and can be considered by decision makers on resource consents. However, changes to the rules to manage natural hazards will not have legal effect until Council notifies a decision on the plan change.

An amendment to the Resource Management Act 1991 is currently being considered by Parliament, which would give immediate legal effect to natural hazard rules publicly notified in a plan change for submissions. However, because Plan Change 8 was notified before this amendment becomes law, the proposed rules will only have legal effect once a decision on the plan change is notified.

13. What should I do if I have questions about the plan change?

You can find further information about the plan change, including a summary of the plan change, the full Plan Change 8 proposal and evaluation, and additional FAQs, on the Council's webpage for Plan Change 8: rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

If you still have questions, please email the Council's policy team at policy.planning@rotorualc.nz.