

# Proposed Opotiki District Plan (September 2016)

SUBMISSION – I WISH TO BE HEARD IN RESPECT TO THIS

Brendan Hickey, 11 View Road, Opotiki

I would like to make a few comments with respect to the Proposed District Plan, in particular as it relates to the future growth of Opotiki Retail within the Town Centre

Our family has operated a successful retail store in Opotiki for 81 years. I have myself lived & breathed the main street in the business for the last 27 years and so have experience in understanding the dynamics of sustainable business both within our own small town community as well as being familiar with trends in retailing nationally.

Our business is currently on the market for sale as it is time for retirement so I have no vested interest in anything other than the future growth of our town.

Opotiki is at an exciting stage of its development. The District Plan provides the blue-print to grow the retail business community in a cohesive and orderly way for the future sustainability of our town.

There are three Zones I wish to comment on :

**1. Section 3 & 4 : Town Centre & Mixed Activity Zones.**

- Change zoning of two blocks along St John Street to Town Centre.
- Tighten Rules for retail activity in Mix Activity Zoned areas

**2. Section 5 : Marine Services Zone**

Support for this

**3. Section 7 : Harbour Industrial Zone**

Removal of all retail activity from this zone, except for products manufactured within this zone or for trade-related business sales.

SECTION 3 & 4 : TOWN CENTRE & MIXED ACTIVITY ZONES.

Consideration needs to be given to enlarging the Town Centre Zone to cater for future retail growth & in particular to accommodate larger format stores of say at least 500 sq metres(nominal). At the moment, opportunity to establish such stores as a Permitted Activity close to the CBD is very limited. Furthermore, as the earthquake legislation takes effect, the need for such land will become even more evident.

I would propose:

- That the Town Centre Zone be extended to include all properties currently zoned “Mixed Activity” along the western side of St John Street between Richard and Kelly Streets. Currently retailing in this area is a Controlled Activity. If necessary re-zone as Town Centre A (or Town Centre B?)
- That the Rules relating to retailing in the Mixed Activity Zone be tightened and removed as a controlled activity within that zone.

My Reasons are :

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1. There is insufficient land available for larger format retail stores in the current Town Centre Zone;
2. If more land is not made available, there is the potential for retailing in Opotiki to be located anywhere within the Town Centre or Mixed Activity zones (subject to RC) between Bridge Street and Kelly Street leading to the fragmentation of our town; resulting in unsustainable businesses.
3. The future focus and growth of the retail sector of Opotiki will be around the proposed Marine Services Zone. The Town Centre will feed into and off activity generated by this new MS zone;
4. The subject land along St John St is in close proximity to Town Centre CBD and will provide the extra critical mass needed to help build a viable and cohesive retail business community. The presence of large and small retailers located close to each other within the same Town Centre zone is vital for the success and promotion of a small town business community like Opotiki;
5. By re-zoning this land, most retail activity would be located within the five main blocks of the Town Centre, forming a “cosy” cluster which by its nature will generate its own “retail pulling power”;
6. There are large sectors of land within these blocks along St John St which are under-utilised, or used for semi-industrial purposes. These could potentially be relocated to other zones without impacting on the successful operation of those businesses. (This would of course be contingent on current owners’ intentions);
7. There is already a large retail store (Mitre 10) operating in this zone fronting St John St and would be complemented by other retail businesses;
8. The eastern end of King Street (also zoned MA) already has retail service businesses which could in future be transformed into full retail activity; the northern side properties potentially linking into the CBD carpark;
9. The development of retail stores along this sector of St John St would provide a visible connection with the rest of the town centre for vehicles travelling along that portion of SH35. Currently the CBD is “by-passed” by much of this traffic because it is not “seen”; a more homogenous & attractive streetscape would also result;
10. This section of St John St is one of the widest streets in town so traffic movement, parking etc would not be compromised;
11. There would be no need to go through the lengthy, and sometimes expensive, consent process to establish retail businesses in this part of town (as opposed to MAZ) as it would be a permitted activity; making the establishment of new businesses easier & in a more timely fashion;
12. There would be clarity for developers and prospective business investors as to where mainstream retail activity may be established in Opotiki.

**Footnote 1** : There are too many instances throughout the country where the heart of CBDs have been decimated by developers establishing satellite retail precincts well away from established town centres. Through this new District plan, Opotiki has the opportunity to cater for the future retail needs of the district and develop a cohesive, sustainable and vibrant retail business community. Zoning sufficient & appropriate land will go a long way to achieving this aspiration, the process being control by the community rather than by developers as has happened elsewhere. The Hub at Whakatane is a classic example.

**Footnote 2** : Historically there has been factions and tensions within the Opotiki business community over attempts to establish mainstream retail operations along Bridge Street, and most recently on what was once the “Moore’s Concrete” property on St John St opposite the Primary School. A clearly defined plan will future-proof the retail needs & location in our town as a cohesive business community.

#### SECTION 5 : MARINE SERVICES ZONE

I strongly support the establishment of this new zone which will transform this sector of the town into Opotiki as a vibrant Marine Village, connecting Town to Sea.

- The emphasis primarily as a recreational destination centred around a future marina precinct from which to go fishing, walking, sightseeing, cafe-culture, along with associated marine related industries will also provide connectivity & enhance the vibrancy of the CBD.
- Apartment living around this marine precinct would also vitalise the resident town community. That would ideally be located on the northern side of Kelly & Wharf Road, rather than retail development.
- Issues relating to the previous use of this MSZ area as a landfill may need to be addressed.

#### SECTION 7 : HARBOUR INDUSTRIAL ZONE

I support the establishment of this zone to service the industrial aspects of aquaculture, fishing and marine industries.

- The provision for recreational boat ramp & parking facilities would allow for any over-flow from that also located in the Marine Services Zone (which may be restricted in space for trailer parking).
- Any retail activity in the HIZ needs to be restricted to trade-based businesses that service the various industries & commercial aspects of aquaculture, fishing & marine.
- Retail boat and marine sales yards (7.3.2.1 (6) )should be completely excluded from this zone as a permitted activity unless they are manufactured within the HIZ. Such sales can be located in Mixed Activity or Marine Services Zones. It is out of place and unnecessary given provision elsewhere.
  - a. **Reason 1** : Modern retail boat yard dealers now offer an extension range of retail product including not only boats but also fishing tackle, outdoor gear, boating chandlery, kayaks, paddleboards etc . Traditionally, boat yards restricted their activity mainly to the sale of boats with maybe a small range of chandlery. This has now changed.
  - b. **Reason 2** : The focus on this zone is INDUSTRIAL and therefore retail traffic movement should be discouraged from this type of activity in this area (even from a health & safety perspective)
  - c. **Reason 3** : Exclusion of this type of business(retail boat shops) from this Harbour Industrial Zone will further strengthen the viability & cohesion of the other Zones located closer to the Town Centre which already cater for such retail trade.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Plan. 17 November 2016

