Tauranga is one of the fastest growing cities in New Zealand. This growth in population and urban expansion brings challenges and opportunities. The key opportunity for urban development is to build on the positive physical attributes of the city that make it such a great place to live, work and play.

Development and redevelopment of our City depends on land, materials, energy and other limited resources. Through well considered design and more compact growth, Tauranga can develop in a more sustainable way. Urban areas need well-designed places and spaces for people to interact and enjoy.

Design guides are a tool to promote high quality urban design and create a better built environment. These guides present urban design principles, tools, ideas and solutions relevant to the Tauranga environment. They are intended to assist everyone interested in building a great city with great design, from the general public to decision makers.

These design guides consider a range of social, economic, cultural and environmental factors which need to be balanced for any one site or building. Successful developments are designed specifically for their site and the immediate community.

The Development Guide is a non-statutory document that will be useful in pre-application discussions prior to Resource Consent application, and as an ‘other matter’ under Section 104 of the Resource Management Act. The guides will also be used to assist in the design of public spaces and facilities through Council-led projects.

Aspects of the guidelines may be incorporated into the Tauranga District Plan through its review, beginning in 2008. The review of the District Plan will include public consultation.

The Development Guide is intended as a series of separate guides. The Introduction and Site Design Guide can be applied to all developments. The Medium Density Housing Guide and Mixed Use Guide apply to these specific building types. Future design guides may include subdivision, sustainable building, commercial and industrial development, town centre and lifetime design. Please contact the Council for the latest list of design guides.

The Council welcomes feedback on current content or suggestions for future guides.
Through public consultation for ‘Tauranga Tomorrow,’ and subsequent strategies, people identified what they wanted for the future of the city.

The community desires a city that is easy to move around in, built to fit the hills, harbour and coast. They want a clean, green environment with vibrant diverse communities of actively involved residents. Every development should contribute to these qualities, building on the identity and distinctiveness of its place.

Tauranga is built on five peninsulas, around Te Awanui (the Harbour) and the surf beach, and surrounded by the Papamoa Hills and Kaimai Ranges. Mauao (Mt Maunganui) is a unique, strongly identifiable landmark steeped in local history and mythology. The City is known for its natural environment and enjoyable outdoor lifestyle.

Tauranga is a city of historical importance. Tauranga was the landing place for four waka connected to the area – Takatimu, Te Arawa, Tainui and Mataatua. Later, contact between Tangata Whenua and European settlers resulted in a distinct and varied history, of which remnants and references can be found throughout the area and embedded in its whanaugatanga - relationships.

The SmartGrowth Strategy, the sub regional growth strategy, provides guidance on Tauranga’s future urban development that will best deliver good health, wellbeing, and prosperity for the community. It focuses on creating easy to use, attractive, and safe built environments that support the way they want to live, work, and play, while managing resources for future generations.

SmartGrowth promotes a defined urban area with walkable re-development of existing urban areas and town centres, and high quality green field development incorporating a range of housing including medium density housing around new town or neighbourhood centres.
The Guides, irrespective of what particular type of development is considered, are underpinned by a number of design principles. The principles relate to qualities that are exhibited by successful urban environments. Well considered design adds value and quality to development.

These principles of good design are further explained in Tauranga’s ‘Urban Design Strategy’. Good design does not need to cost more and can add substantial economic, social, cultural and environmental value to the City.

**WELL DESIGNED URBAN AREAS:**

- **Have a sense of place** by reflecting and enhancing the unique identity of Tauranga Moana.
- **Protect and reflect the local context** by understanding the local topography, climate, vegetation, history, culture and built environment.
- **Create safe, lively and comfortable places** where people want to be, and which support the activities they want to do.
- **Connect people, places and spaces** with safe accessible links by a variety of means – foot, bicycle, mobility scooter, bus or car.
- **Enhance environmental quality** by taking a sustainable approach to conserve and protect the natural environment, and develop networks of open space.
- **Use resources efficiently and effectively**, taking into account lifecycle costs, embodied energy, recycling, and the use of renewable resources.
- **Promote choice and diversity** by the mix of compatible land uses, public and private space, site sizes and building types designed for adaptability.
- **Protect and enhance people’s health** by providing housing, services and facilities within easy, walking distance, and a network of open spaces for passive enjoyment or active exercise; by using clean energy and minimising health hazards.
Design is a collaborative process in which stakeholders can have input and provide feedback, creating the best solutions for specific sites.

Taking the initiative.

Any development starts with the idea of a new use or design for a site. The initiative may come from a private developer, the local community, Council or others, individually or in partnership. It is important to identify all the parties who may have an interest in the development. Early and open consultation may reveal opportunities or problems which may redefine the project.

Getting started.

Check which Council strategies or plans provide direction or identify the expectations of stakeholders in the area. Obtain detailed information specific to the site, including existing access routes and neighbouring amenities, micro-climate, soil tests, available water, waste and stormwater services to develop the project parameters.

Engage expertise that has a proven track record and the ability to be flexible in developing solutions. Develop a project brief that can be adapted and fine-tuned through the design process - better briefs lead to better outcomes.

Investigate the broad area to understand the opportunities and constraints of the area and the site. Gather information on the physical nature of the land, soils, waterways, social and historical context, cultural values, and nature of existing communities. Refer to the District Plan and other guidance Council may have. This will identify the fit and appropriateness of the type of development in that area of Tauranga.

Developing design solutions.

Only when information has been gathered and understood can the design options for the development site be explored. Successful design concepts incorporate the principles of good urban design.

Urban design is a collaborative process involving all stakeholders and professionals with different expertise working together. The design process is a balancing act, and for particular sites different principles and needs will have priority over others. There is no one solution but discovering the best solution involves developing the brief and refining the design concept through consultation and feedback.

The clarity of vision and direction will determine the success of a development.

Implementation.

The design is progressed from the initial concept through developed design to construction documentation prior to any physical work. There needs to be flexibility in the design process to be able to modify aspects of the project if necessary, so long as it continues to meet the overall objectives.

Evaluation.

Review of the completed project after it has been occupied is an important stage of the design process. It identifies what works well and what can be improved and thus contributes to the knowledge of best practice for urban development in the Tauranga context.
Tauranga City Council, with community consultation, has developed a number of strategies to guide urban development. These need to be considered in a development proposal because they articulate the community’s vision for the city’s future:

- Tauranga Tomorrow
- SmartGrowth Strategy
- Urban Design Strategy
- City Centre Strategy
- Vegetation Strategy
- Open Space Strategy
- Best Practice Guide for Open Space
- Sport and Active Living Strategy
- Integrated Transport Strategy

The Tauranga District Plan manages land use and subdivision within the city supported by documents such as the Code of Practice for Development, which focuses on engineering standards. The Resource Consent process allows further flexibility to consider different ways to develop sites other than those permitted in the District Plan and Code of Practice.

When considering development of an area or site, meeting with Council staff before starting the design process can save time and money, particularly if the big issues can be resolved early on. The Council has a range of policy, urban design, building, sustainable design, transport and engineering expertise to provide guidance through the development process from pre-application, to resource consent and finally the implementation of the project.

Engaging in a pre-application process enables concepts to be evaluated prior to any detailed and costly design work being undertaken. At that stage matters such as the overall design, infrastructure requirements and levels of service can be discussed. Developers are encouraged to use this process.

Identify and discuss with stakeholders earlier rather than later. Tauranga City Council can provide guidance as to the appropriate forum to discuss the issues. For large developments, public consultation and workshops can help identify issues and best options.

In addition to the resource consent process, Plan Changes to the District Plan are another option, particularly for large scale developments or where a comprehensive approach is required.

Developers are welcome to contact the Council at any time to discuss which of the above approaches is best for any given development proposal.