

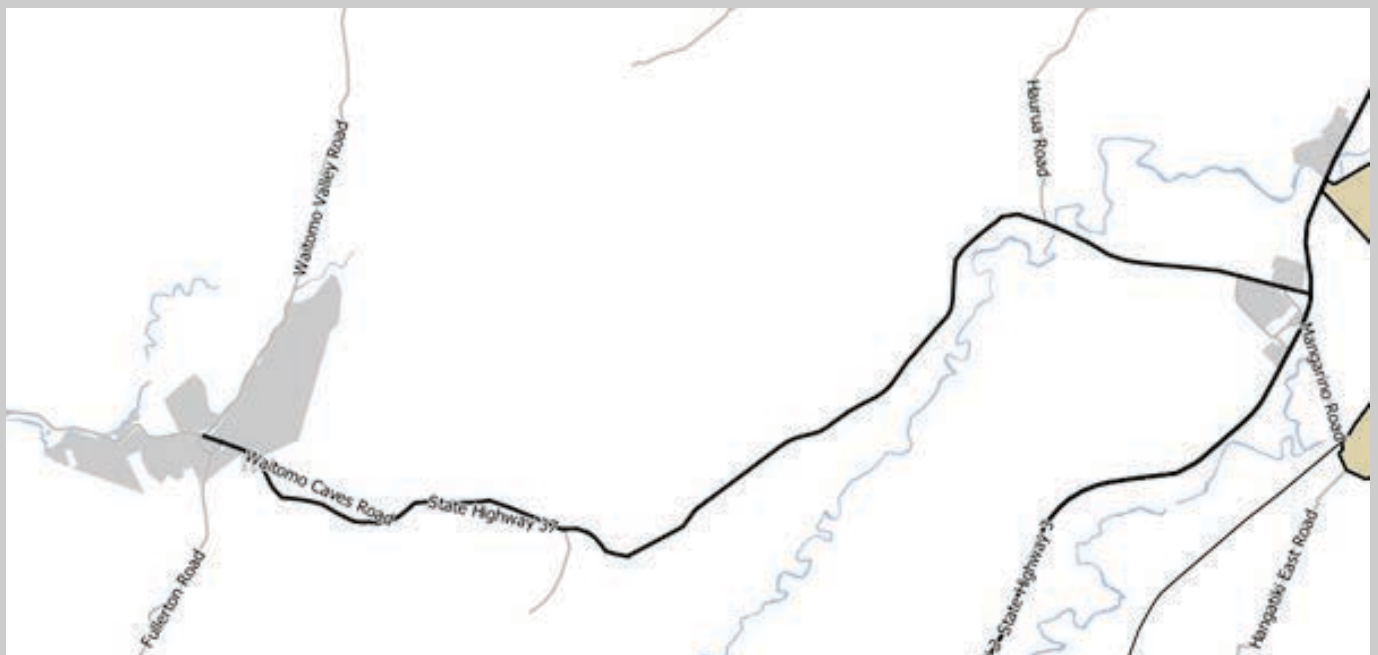
# TOURISM ZONE

This colour identifies the Tourism Zone on the Planning Maps

The Tourism Zone recognises and provides for the unique and special characteristics of the Waitomo Caves Village and the gateway to the Village (Hangatiki). The Waitomo Caves are the most important tourist attraction in our district. The caves were discovered in the late 1800s by local Māori chief Tane Tinorau who owned the land that the caves are located within.

Pre COVID-19, over 500,000 domestic and international visitors visited Waitomo caves each year. The annual tourism spend in the district is estimated to be approximately \$87 million, with \$41 million attributable to the international market (Ministry of Innovation, Business and Employment, 2019).

Over the past few decades, tourism operators have developed different ways of experiencing the caves, with one of the most popular activities being black water rafting. This has attracted a wider range of people to the area. More recently, tourism operators are looking into other tourism experiences and accommodation options. There is also demand for residential accommodation for people working in and around Waitomo Caves and for rural lifestyle development.



## Where is the Tourism Zone located?

There are three tourism zones, two located at Hangatiki to support existing activities and the main area of zoning at Waitomo Caves Village. The tourism zone is shown in grey on the map above:

## How are the draft rules different from the current?

The current district plan does not provide a specific zoning that recognises and provides for the variety of activities that support tourism activities.

The Tourism Zone provides for future, mixed-use development that complements the tourism focus of the Waitomo Caves area, while managing its unique and sensitive environment.

This zone is intended to allow for a wide range of uses, which is a bit different to other zones e.g. residential, rural, industrial etc. It enables a range of tourism activities as well as associated facilities and services, including residential accommodation, needed for people working in the tourism industry.

Read more about the Tourism Zone on the next page



### What kind of activities are allowed in the tourism zone?

- Tourism facilities
- Cafes, restaurants, clubrooms and licensed premises, coffee carts and food trucks
- Hire of motorised and non-motorised vehicles and recreational equipment
- Retail activities including pop up shops, but not large format retail and outdoor retail activities
- Commercial services
- Indoor fitness centres
- Educational facilities and community facilities, libraries and museums
- Visitor accommodation, camping grounds and staff accommodation associated with a tourism facility
- A wide range of housing types including minor residential units, duplex dwellings, co-housing, papakāinga and tiny house developments
- Emergency services facilities

Please note that tourism activities, commercial activities, education facilities and community facilities are limited to a maximum floor space of 250m<sup>2</sup>, although this rule does not apply to sites in the Waitomo Caves. Village.

### What are “tourism facilities”?

Means land and/or buildings used for the commercial organisation and operation of activities that cater to tourists including those relating to natural features and attractions, agritourism and tourist establishments (e.g. information centres and visitor centres), but excludes visitor accommodation.

### What about other activities?

Other activities less suited for tourists may be able to be established, but they will need a resource consent. Examples of these activities are drive through takeaway food outlets, retirement villages, and motor vehicle repair garages.

### Wasn't a structure plan developed for this area?

Yes, in 2014 the Tere Waitomo Structure Plan was developed, and Council incorporated this work into the Waitomo Caves Village Town Concept Plan in 2018. [Click here to read the town concept plan.](#)

The 2018 Waitomo Caves Village Town Concept Plan identifies key existing features of the village, present issues and future opportunities. It sets out a plan for future development in the village that has been summarised into four key directions:

1. Strengthen the visitor experience for Waitomo Caves Village
2. Establish a distinct character for Waitomo Caves Village that differentiates it from the wider Waitomo district
3. Identify the future land uses and their character to ensure future developments meet the needs of the village as well as reinforcing the identity of the village

4. Improve the pedestrian connectivity within the village to enable safer and more legible connections between activities
5. The establishment of a Tourism Zone is one of the main ways we can make the Waitomo Caves Village Town Concept Plan happen.

### Where can I build on my property in this zone?

There are a number of controls about where you place your building on your property. Buildings must be set back at least 5m from the road boundary, and this is increased to 30m if your property is adjacent to a state highway.

For other boundaries, buildings must be set back 1.5m from the boundary. There needs to be enough room for driveways and access to the property. If you are building a deck more than 1.5m in height then that will need to be setback 3m from the boundary.

### This is an important zone, do I need to do anything special to the front of my site?

This area is the gateway to our district, so looks and design are important. If your site adjoins a road the front 2m of the site must be landscaped with either grass and/or a combination of groundcovers, shrubs and/or trees. However, this does not apply to your driveway.

For tourism activities, commercial activities, education facilities, and community facilities, the main public entrance into a building must face the road. This is so that the entranceway can be easily seen by visitors.

### This zone is near a state highway, does this mean I need to do anything special?

Yes, vehicles using the state highway can create noise and there are some activities which are affected by noise, such as houses, schools and hospitals. For this reason, additional acoustic insulation will be needed to make sure that the inside of the building is quiet.

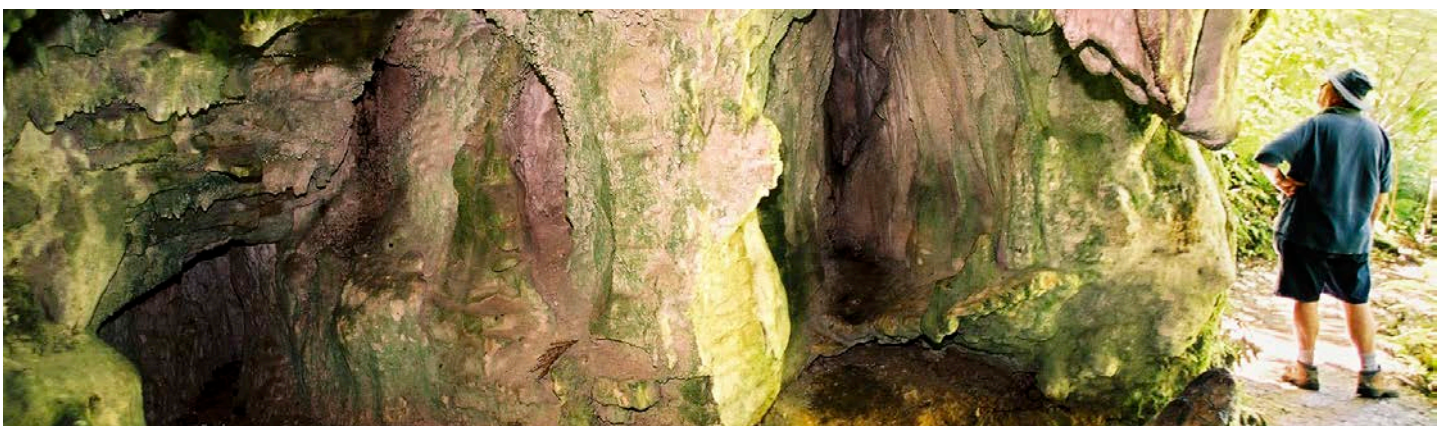
These requirements apply to new buildings for noise sensitive activities:

- State Highway 3: 40 m where the posted speed limit is equal to or less than 70km/hour and 80m where it is greater than 70km/hour; and

State Highway 37: 20m where the posted speed limit is equal to or less than 70km/hour and 40m where it is greater than 70km/hour

### The caves are pretty special, can tourism operators alter them?

The Draft PDP strongly discourages establishment of structures in, artificial entrances to, or other modification that causes loss of cave features, or change to cave processes.



## Can I build a house?

- The Tourism Zone allows a wide variety of different forms of residential accommodation for residents as well as visitors.

Houses	<p>Sites that are serviced for reticulated wastewater:</p> <p>One residential unit per site where the site has a minimum net site area of 450m<sup>2</sup> plus one tiny house or one minor residential unit</p> <p>Other housing options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One set of duplex dwellings per 800m<sup>2</sup> of net site area; OR</li> <li>● Co-housing developments of no more than 6 household units where 400m<sup>2</sup> of net site area is provided per residential unit; OR</li> <li>● A tiny house development comprising of no more than 6 tiny houses where 200m<sup>2</sup> of net site area is provided per tiny house; OR</li> <li>● A papakāinga development comprising of no more than 6 papakāinga units where 200m<sup>2</sup> of net site area is provided per unit.</li> </ul>
	<p>Sites that are not serviced for reticulated wastewater</p> <p>One residential unit per 2500m<sup>2</sup> of net site area plus one tiny house or one minor residential unit.</p> <p>Other housing options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One set of duplex dwellings per 2500m<sup>2</sup> of net site area; OR</li> <li>● Co-housing developments, papakāinga developments and tiny house developments of no more than 6 residential units/tiny houses respectively</li> </ul> <p>The site must be big enough to contain the treatment and disposal of wastewater and stormwater resulting from any development within the site boundaries however.</p>
Residential based visitor accommodation	Maximum ten guests at any one time; and Maximum ten staff members at any one time
Staff accommodation associated with a tourism facility	Maximum ten guests at any one time; and Maximum ten staff members at any one time
Boarding houses	Resource consent needed
Retirement villages	Resource consent needed

## What kind of signs can I put up?

Signs attached to or painted on fences, walls or building facades	The maximum sign area is 15% of the area of the building façade, fence or wall or 5m <sup>2</sup> - whichever is the lesser (applies to the area the business or tenancy occupies) and; the maximum area of digital signs: 1m <sup>2</sup> per business.
Signs attached to or painted on verandahs	1 sign under the verandah or within the verandah fascia, except where the premises has 2 road frontages in which case signs are limited to a maximum of 2 and; signs affixed under verandahs must be at least 2.5m above the level of the footpath or veranda deck as applicable.
Fixed freestanding signs	1 sign per road frontage with a maximum sign area of 3m <sup>2</sup> visible in any one direction, with a maximum total area of 6m <sup>2</sup> and; a maximum height of 5m measured from ground level.
Artificial illumination of signs and digital signs	No sign may exceed a luminance of 800cd/m <sup>2</sup> between dusk and dawn; and the spill of light from artificial lighting on to any adjacent site or road must not exceed 3 lux (horizontal and vertical) when measured or calculated at points 1.5m within the boundary of any other site, and; Any external lighting must be directed towards the sign and not create a nuisance and; Lighting must be designed to reduce any glare or direct view of the light source when viewed by an observer at ground level or within an adjacent building.

Please note that with regard to existing signs - where a sign has been erected that does not meet the criteria for an existing use under the Act, Waitomo District Council may require the removal of the sign

**Please note this factsheet is a summary and does not include the full set of rules. You can read the full set of rules [here](#)**