



## **UTF Raises Red Flags over Infrastructure Decisions at Tauranga City Council**

**TAURANGA, 18 April 2023:** Tauranga's Urban Task Force have presented a report which raises concerns with changes to the city council's Infrastructure Development Code (IDC) highlighting the adverse effects of these changes on the environment.

The report was tabled in response to mounting frustration with frequent changes to the IDC.

UTF Chairman, Scott Adams, says the rules set out in the IDC appear to pay little heed to both the environmental impact of infrastructure and the cost to the local economy.

“In the last 10 years alone, developers who have constructed over 70kms of new roads in Tauranga have been required to transport the specific aggregate types needed from the western side of the Kaimais to the city despite the availability of local options. This has a huge logistical and environmental cost,” he says.

“The IDC also includes a move away from official Standards New Zealand conditions. This imposes changes to the overall design, inspection and compliance of a roading project, doubles the cost and causes all kinds of engineering and running contractual issues,” says Adams.

“Multiply the environmental costs and the increased expense by the amount of roading that developers are forecast to construct in the Western Bay over the next 30 years, and you can see why we are concerned at the arbitrary specifications set by the IDC.”

The report notes that the IDC is an internal Tauranga City Council (TCC) document which is not subject to external review. Any changes to the IDC are made by Council staff.

“Frequent changes to the IDC significantly increase construction costs, time and risk without any evidence that TCC has considered the social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of these changes,” says Adams.

“UTF would like to see a balanced and fair approach to all IDC decision-making. This should include an opportunity for better visibility, collaboration on additions/variations to the IDC document, or changes via submissions to be heard and for oversight by either a Commissioner or a panel of experts,” says Adams.

The UTF report was presented to the city's Commissioners and the Council's Chief Executive Officer, Marty Grenfell.

“We've asked the city's leaders to consider the significant uncertainty that the IDC creates for the development community. We'd like TCC to follow the example of other local authority's and restrict reviews of the IDC to a five-year cycle.”

UTF have formed a sub-committee chaired by Steve Cutfield of Classic Group to work alongside Council staff and address the issues raised in the IDC report and move towards a better system for implementing acceptable changes to the IDC document.

“The development community understands the IDC is an evolving document, so the UTF is pleased that the work we have put into our report has resulted in this opportunity to work alongside the Council and provide our perspective on the changes needed to the IDC,” says Cutfield.

“Through its recently announced creation of a Climate Plan, TCC has the chance to reconsider the environmental impacts of key documents like the IDC. UTF support these critical decisions which will lead to better environmental, economic, cultural and social outcomes for the ratepayers of Tauranga.”

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