

## **RPE.1 Rural Production Environment (RPE)**

### ***RPE.1.1 Description & Expectations***

The Rural Production Environment (RPE) encompasses a large area of the Whangarei District. The Environment hosts a wide range of rural land use activities covering a varied array of landforms. The purpose of the RPE is to manage land use and subdivision activities in order to sustain, protect and promote rural production activities. The RPE is, in most but not all locations characterised by a working environment, with the noises, smells and visual effects associated with a wide range of farming, horticultural, forestry and mineral extraction purposes. There is an expectation that rural production activities will be able to continue to operate without onerous or restrictive intervention in the RPE.

Rural production activities such as dairy farming, horticulture and forestry are important contributors to the local and Northland economy. The RPE includes many of the rural land areas of the District. It is important that these areas are not compromised. It is expected that a diverse range of productive rural land use activities will continue to operate and new activities will establish in the RPE. Changing demands for existing produce and new markets establishing mean that the provisions for the Environment need to be flexible to accommodate current and future production needs.

Conflicting land use and reverse sensitivity effects must be carefully managed where this Environment interfaces with living environments, business or industrial environments and the coastal environment. Where the RPE is traversed by existing major infrastructure services, reverse sensitivity conflicts must be managed. Parts of the RPE are located within the coastal environment. The coastal environment values of these areas will be managed by way of an overlay provision in the District Plan. Where the RPE abuts the urban extent of Whangarei City land use and subdivision development is spatially managed to maintain options for the continued growth of the city.

Throughout the Environment there are also rural lifestyle activities occurring. In some instances rural lifestyle activities occur in clusters. Clusters of significant density and suitability for lifestyle development have been identified as the Rural Living Environment (RLE) as a method of managing the actual and potential reverse sensitivity effects associated with rural living activities occurring in close proximity to rural production activities. The RPE will not support lifestyle development. Lifestyle development should be contained in identified rural villages or the RLE to protect the productivity of the RPE. Urban styles of development can erode the viability of rural productivity and can create reverse sensitivity impacts on productive uses through the visual effect of large scale buildings and ancillary structures, increased traffic generation, and loss of amenity including privacy, rural outlook, spaciousness, and quietness.

The interplay of historical land use and values has resulted in the environmental character that exists today. It is important that the ecological and landscape values of the RPE are recognised and where possible protected. These values contribute significantly to the rural character and distinctiveness of Whangarei District.

**RPE.1.2 Objectives**

1. Protect rural land resources for a diverse range of productive rural land use activities.
2. Recognise, maintain and protect the rural character of the RPE, acknowledging that character is formed through a combination of values such as ecology values, openness, topography and heritage.
3. Lifestyle development in production areas is discouraged.
4. Support the range of amenity values associated with the RPE.
5. Promote allotment sizes that facilitate productive rural land use.
6. Enable a wide range of productive rural land use activities to establish and operate to contribute to the District's economy.

**RPE.1.3 Policies**

1. To identify 'buffers' between the RPE and sensitive living environments (Living 1, 2 and 3 Environments, UTE, RLE, RVRE):
  - a. To avoid areas required for future urban growth.
  - b. To avoid reverse sensitivity impacts.
2. To protect the distinctive character and amenity values of the RPE including but not limited to:
  - A working rural environment.
  - Seasonal activities.
  - A low intensity of development, involving a combination of domestic and rural buildings.
  - Low levels of noise particularly at night, especially in areas remote from strategic traffic routes.
  - A high degree of privacy.
  - Ample access to daylight and sunlight.
  - Odours typical of rural activities.
  - Generally low levels of vehicle traffic with seasonal fluctuations.
  - Proximity to Strategic Transportation Routes.
3. To protect the productive function of the Rural Production Environment while providing for a range of productive land uses by:
  - Not directly regulating outdoor agricultural and horticultural activities, excluding Intensive Farming.
  - Permitting Small Scale Rural Industries.
  - Discouraging Commercial and Industrial activities and lifestyle development.
  - Encouraging larger allotments sizes to retain productive rural options.
4. To preserve rural character and amenity by considering the extent to which proposed land use and subdivision activities relate to the stated Expectations for the Rural Production Environment.

## **RPE.2 LANDUSE**

### ***RPE 2.1 Eligibility Rules***

1. Commercial and Industrial Activities are non-complying activities.
2. Intensive Farming activities that are closer than 500m to a habitable building on a separate site shall be non-complying activities.
3. Small Scale Rural Industries are permitted activities.
4. Any other activity not requiring consent as a discretionary or non-complying activity shall be a permitted activity.

### ***RPE2.2 Discretionary Activities***

1. Construction or alteration of a Residential Unit:
  - a. Within 500m of a Mineral Extraction Area, a Strategic Rural Industry Environment or a Business Environment.
  - b. Within 100m of a State Highway, a Strategic Forestry Route, or an unsealed metal road.
  - c. Within 30m of Production Forestry.
2. Construction or location of an additional residential unit with a density exceeding more than one residential unit per 40ha of net site area.
3. Construction of non-habitable buildings within 30m of a living environment (Living 1, 2 and 3 Environments, UTE, RLE, RVRE).
4. Construction or alteration of any building:
  - a. That exceeds a height of 10m.
  - b. Within 8m of the site boundary.
  - c. That results in a site coverage exceeding 5% of the net site area.
  - d. Within 27 metres of Mean High Water Springs, excluding bridges, culverts and Structures.
  - e. Within 27 metres of the top of the bank of any river that has a width exceeding 3 metres, excluding bridges, culverts and Structures.
5. Establishment of any access, roading and/or parking spaces or associated facility which fails to comply with the Environmental Engineering Standards 2010.
6. Any activity generating more than 60 traffic movements per site, per day.
7. Any activity that will damage, modify, or remove any heritage building, site or object, stone wall or Site of Significance to Maori as identified in the District Plan.
8. Any Intensive Farming activity:
  - a. Within 500m of a habitable building on a separate site.

9. Afforestation that:
  - a. Is located within 30m of an existing residential unit on a separate site.
  - b. Is located within 30m of a living environment (Living 1, 2 and 3 Environments, UTE, RLE, RVRE).
  - c. Is located within 27 metres of any waterway.

### ***RPE.2.3 Requisite Policies***

1. To protect rural character and amenity by preventing the operation of Commercial and Industrial Activities.
2. To protect rural character and amenity and avoid adverse and cumulative effects on the road network by limiting the number of traffic movements to 60 per day for any activity and any site.

### ***RPE.2.4 General Policies***

1. To manage reverse sensitivity effects by avoiding the establishment of habitable buildings within close proximity to mineral extraction activities, Strategic Rural Industries or other activities that are legally established where adverse effects are not contained within site boundaries.
2. To avoid reverse sensitivity effects and potential health risks by requiring a minimum separation for residential units from State Highways, Strategic Forestry Routes and unsealed roads.
3. To maintain rural amenity, privacy, openness and rural character by ensuring that all new buildings and rural land uses:
  - a. Are of a scale and character appropriate to the rural environment.
  - b. Are sited in a location sufficiently setback from site boundaries to enable privacy, the retention of openness and access to sunlight.
  - c. Avoid adverse effects on ecology values, water quality, rural productivity, openness, heritage values and landform.
4. To preserve openness, rural character and amenity by limiting the density of residential units.
5. To maintain rural amenity and the efficiency and safety of the road network by managing the Afforestation of Forestry.
6. To manage the effects of stormwater runoff by limiting the extent of impermeable surfaces and implementing the best practicable option in terms of managing additional stormwater flows to ensure that new development and land use activities are hydrologically neutral.
7. To manage the effects of wastewater discharge by requiring site specific design and any other evidence and / or mitigation measures necessary to demonstrate that the effects of wastewater disposal can be adequately addressed.

8. To maintain rural character, amenity values and a sense of openness by ensuring that new built development is set back from road boundaries and that mitigation is used to avoid the appearance of ribbon development.
9. To preserve rural character and amenity by limiting the establishment of activities that will generate high levels of traffic movements.

## **RPE.3 SUBDIVISION**

### ***RPE 3.1 Eligibility Rule***

1. Subdivision of a Minor Residential Unit from a principal residential unit is a prohibited activity.
2. Activities not requiring consent as a controlled or discretionary activity shall be a non-complying activity.

### ***RPE.3.2 Controlled Activities***

1. Subdivision where every proposed allotment:
  - a. Has a minimum net title area of 80ha or greater in size.
  - b. Identifies a buildable area of 100m<sup>2</sup> 100m or greater from a State Highway, Strategic Forestry Route or an unsealed metal road.
  - c. Is provided with a connection to an electrical supply system at the boundary of the site.
  - d. Results in no more than 8 allotments having shared access to the road.
  - e. Can accommodate a 100m<sup>2</sup> buildable area free of hazards.
  - f. Demonstrates that management of stormwater and wastewater can be achieved within the proposed allotments in accordance with the Whangarei District Council Environmental Engineering Standards 2010.
2. Boundary Relocation Subdivision that does not:
  - a. Result in an increase of the number of allotments.
  - b. Create additional allotment/s less than 4ha in net site area.
  - c. Result in additional vehicle accesses.
  - d. Result in the ability to construct or locate residential units exceeding current existing rights.
3. When assessing RPE3.2.1 and REP3.2.2 control is reserved over the following matters :
  - i. The design, size, shape, gradient and location of any allotment.
  - ii. The location of vehicle crossings, access or rights-of-way and proposed allotment boundaries so as to avoid ribbon development.
  - iii. Location of existing buildings, access, and manoeuvring and private open space.
  - iv. The location of proposed allotment boundaries and building areas so as to avoid potential conflicts between incompatible land use activities, including of reverse sensitivity effects.

- v. The location of proposed allotment boundaries, building areas and access ways or rights-of-way so as to avoid sites of historic heritage including Sites of Significance to Maori.
- vi. The provision, location, design, capacity, connection, upgrading, staging and integration of infrastructure.
- vii. Reserves, including esplanade reserves and strips.
- viii. Avoidance or mitigation of natural or man-made hazards.

### ***RPE 3.3 Discretionary Activities***

1. Boundary Relocation Subdivision that:
  - a. Does not result in an increase of the number of titles.
  - b. Creates additional allotments less than 4ha in net site area.
  - c. Identifies a buildable area of 100m<sup>2</sup> within 100m of a State Highway, Strategic Forestry Route or an unsealed metal road.
  - d. Results in the ability to construct or locate residential units within the proposed allotments in addition to those permitted within the existing allotments.
  
2. Subdivision that:
  - a. Creates allotments equal to or greater than 20 hectares in net site area.
  - b. Identifies a buildable area of 100m<sup>2</sup> closer than 100m to a State Highway, Strategic Forestry Route or an unsealed metal road.
  
3. Subdivision around existing lawfully established residential units:
  - a. With a net site area of 2,000m<sup>2</sup> or less that are able to accommodate onsite servicing of effluent disposal in accordance with the EES 2010.
  - b. Resulting in no more than one additional title from the parent title within any 10 year period.
  - c. With a balance allotment equal to or greater than 80 hectares in net site area.
  
4. Subdivision where allotments:
  - a. Are not provided with a connection to an electrical supply system at the boundary of the site.
  - b. Result in more than 8 allotments having shared access to the road.
  - c. Do not have the ability to accommodate a 100m<sup>2</sup> buildable area free of hazards.
  - d. Do not demonstrate that management of stormwater, and wastewater can be achieved within the proposed allotments in accordance with the Whangarei District Council Environmental Engineering Standards 2010.

### ***RPE.3.4 Requisite Policies***

1. To protect rural productivity and maintain rural amenity and character by requiring subdivision to result in allotments with a minimum net site area of 20 hectares, excluding subdivisions that meet RPE 3.3.3.
  
2. To allow the creation of additional titles around existing lawfully established residential units, with a maximum net site area of 2,000m<sup>2</sup>, once every 10 years or more, with a balance area of 80 hectares or

more, to ensure maximisation of the productive use of land while providing lifestyle choices in rural areas.

### **RPE.3.5 General Policies**

1. To avoid reverse sensitivity effects and potential health risks by requiring allotments to provide adequate separation between buildable areas and State Highways, Strategic Forestry Routes and unsealed roads.
2. To locate and design subdivision and associated land development to avoid urban form and character, maintain rural character and amenity values and protect and enhance environmental features by:
  - Designing subdivisions to respond to the topography and characteristics of the land being developed.
  - Identifying building platforms that respond to site topography and environmental characteristics.
  - Locating access ways, services, utilities and building platforms where these can be provided without the need for significant earthworks, retaining, benching or site contouring.
  - Locating access ways, services, utilities and building platforms where the location is sensitive to, and responds to environmental features of the site.
3. To avoid adverse effects on the sustainable provision of infrastructure by ensuring that all subdivision undertakes necessary physical works in accordance with the Whangarei District Environmental Engineering Standards 2010.
4. To manage the effects of stormwater runoff by utilizing the principles of low impact design and ensuring that additional stormwater flows arising from the proposed development are managed so that they will be hydrologically neutral in accordance with the Environmental Engineering Standards 2010.
5. To manage the effects of wastewater discharge by requiring site specific design and any other evidence and / or mitigation measures necessary to demonstrate that the effects of wastewater disposal can be adequately addressed in accordance with the Environmental Engineering Standards 2010.

## **Consequential Amendments:**

### **Chapter 4 Meaning of Words:**

#### ***Existing - Intensive Livestock Farming***

*means any intensive farming of animals or and includes fungi (mushrooms), dependent on a high input of food or fertiliser from beyond the site and which is predominantly carried out in buildings or outdoor enclosures where the stocking density precludes the maintenance of pasture or ground cover and includes pig farming and cattle feedlots. Poultry farming is excluded if it is considered free range in accordance with the relevant minimum standards outlined in the MAF Animal Welfare (Layer Hens) Code of Welfare 2005.*

**Revised - Intensive Farming**

means any intensive farming of animals including pig and poultry farming and cattle feedlots or fungi (mushrooms), which is predominantly carried out in buildings or outdoor enclosures where the stocking density does not allow pasture growth.

**New - Afforestation**

means the planting or regeneration of trees for Forestry on a site or sites not previously planted for Forestry purposes.

**Existing – Forestry**

*means the ongoing management of trees or stands of trees, for the production of timber or timber related products, and includes planting, pruning, felling, and removal of trees from the site but does not involve the processing of timber. A production forest is considered to be forestry or plantation forestry.*

**New - Small Scale Rural Industries**

means small scale rural and tourist related commercial or industrial operations that:

- a. do not produce noise or odour effects outside of the boundaries of the site they are located on.
- b. if goods are offered for sale, they are grown or produced on-site.
- c. have retail or industrial areas no greater than 40m<sup>2</sup> in GFA.
- d. provide sleeping accommodation for no more than 6 paying guests accommodated for a period of no more than one month.
- e. in addition to the principal operator have no more than two other persons engaged in the activity.
- f. have a total area of signage no greater than 2m<sup>2</sup>, per site.
- g. provide parking and vehicle manoeuvring areas on site in accordance with the EES 2010 to accommodate any visitors or workers associated with the activity.
- h. are not located on a Strategic Transport Route, as identified in the District Plan.
- i. do not have illuminated or moving signage.