

Rural Production Environment

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RPE.1.1 Description and 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 and a varied array of landforms. The purpose of the RPE is to sustainably manage the natural and physical resources of the Rural Area in order to sustain, protect and promote rural production activities. The RPE is mostly characterised by a working environment, with the noises, odours and visual effects associated with a wide range of farming, horticultural, forestry and mineral extraction activities. 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 Whangarei and Northland economy. The RPE includes most of the rural land areas of the District. It is important that these areas are not compromised for rural production. 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 RPE need to be flexible to accommodate current and future production needs.

Conflicting land use and reverse sensitivity effects must be carefully managed where the RPE interfaces with Living, Business and Industrial Environments. Where the RPE is traversed by existing major infrastructure services land use conflicts must be managed. Parts of the RPE are located within the coastal environment. The values of these areas will be managed by way of the Coastal Area in the District Plan. Mineral Extraction Areas apply over the RPE and Strategic Rural Industry Environments are surrounded by the RPE. Providing for mineral extraction activities and strategic rural industries to occur and avoidance of conflicting land use activities is important for their on-going operation.

A history of varied subdivision density and rural living development has resulted in inconsistent allotment size and a scattered pattern of development across the Rural Area. Where the Rural Area abuts Whangarei City RPE will apply, areas for future urban growth, land use and subdivision development is spatially managed by the Rural (Urban Expansion) Environment to maintain options for the continued growth of the City. Where rural living clusters have reached significant density they have been identified as the Rural Living Environment to manage the actual and potential reverse

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sensitivity effects associated with rural living activities occurring in close proximity to rural production activities.

The RPE will not support an increased level of rural living development. Consistent with a consolidated pattern of development residential, rural residential and rural living activities should be contained in identified rural villages, the Rural (Urban Expansion) Environment or the Rural Living Environment to protect the productivity of the RPE. Urban type 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 in the RPE 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. Identify and protect rural land resources for a diverse range of productive rural land use activities.
2. Recognise, maintain and where appropriate 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. Avoid adverse effects from rural living land use and development in the RPE.
4. Support the range of amenity values associated with the RPE.
5. Minimise fragmentation of rural land and 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.
7. Provide for rural production activities that are compatible with the Coastal Area.

RPE.1.3 Policies

1. To protect rural character and amenity and to encourage consolidation of activities within Whangarei City by preventing the operation of commercial and industrial activities in the RPE.
2. To manage reverse sensitivity effects by avoiding the establishment of sensitive activities within close proximity to Mineral Extraction Areas, strategic rural industries, intensive farming activities or other activities that are legally established where adverse effects are not contained within site boundaries.
3. To reduce the potential of exposure to noise, dust and health risks by requiring a minimum separation for residential units from unsealed roads.
4. 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 RPE.
 - b. Are sited in a location sufficiently set back from site boundaries to enable privacy, the retention of openness and access to sunlight.
 - c. Avoid ribbon development.

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5. To preserve openness, rural character and amenity by limiting the density of residential units.
6. To avoid subdivision and development in areas required for future urban growth by identifying 'setback buffers' between the RPE and living environments (Living 1, 2 and 3 Environments, Urban Transition Environment, Rural Urban Interface Environment, Rural Living Environment and Rural Village Residential Sub-Environment).
7. To protect the distinctive character and amenity values of the RPE including but not limited to:
 - a. A working rural environment.
 - b. Seasonal activities.
 - c. A low intensity of development, involving a combination of domestic and rural buildings.
 - d. Varying levels of noise associated with seasonal and intermittent rural production activities.
 - e. A high degree of privacy.
 - f. Sufficient access to daylight and sunlight.
 - g. Odours, noise and dust typical of rural activities.
 - h. Generally low levels of vehicle traffic with seasonal fluctuations.
8. To protect the productive function of the RPE while providing for a range of productive land uses by:
 - a. Not directly regulating outdoor agricultural and horticultural activities, excluding intensive farming.
 - b. Permitting farming and activities ancillary to farming.
 - c. Discouraging commercial and industrial activities and rural living development.
 - d. Requiring larger allotments sizes to retain productive rural options.
9. To enable the subdivision of rural land into allotments of 20ha or more, where the following has been provided for:
 - a. Efficient and effective on-site servicing.
 - b. Avoidance of erosion, subsidence, slippage, flooding or inundation from any source.
 - c. Stability of land and its suitability to provide a foundation for the erection of buildings, vehicle access and parking areas.
10. To avoid the subdivision of land into allotments less than 20ha unless it is demonstrated that:
 - a. The subdivision of rural land and associated buildings is for the purpose of supporting an existing farm, forestry or horticultural enterprise associated with rural production.
 - b. The size, shape and arrangement of allotments is a practical size for rural land use activities and does not restrict the range of options for the use of production land.
 - c. The existing farm, forestry or horticultural enterprise can continue to operate efficiently at the subdivided scale.
 - d. The subdivision and subsequent development will not result in significant adverse effects on the operation and viability of any adjoining farm, forestry or horticultural activity.
 - e. The land and buildings have greater potential for the production of primary products, forestry or crops as a result of the subdivision.

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- f. The subdivision and subsequent development will not require connection to the District's reticulated sewer or an extension or upgrading of any service or road, except where it is in the economic interest of the District and will not compromise the efficient functioning of the District's infrastructure network.
11. To provide for limited subdivision of rural land creating a new allotment for a surplus residential unit where the area and dimensions of the new allotment can accommodate the existing onsite services and provide for efficient access.
12. 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:
 - a. Designing subdivisions to respond to the topography and characteristics of the land being developed.
 - b. Identifying building platforms that respond to site topography and environmental characteristics.
 - c. Locating access ways, services, utilities and building platforms where these can be provided without the need for significant earthworks, retaining, benching or site contouring.
 - d. Locating access ways, services, utilities and building platforms where the location is sensitive to and responds to environmental features of the site.
 - e. Ensuring that the subdivision will not create reverse sensitivity effects with respect to existing lawfully established activities.
13. To design subdivision and development to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects to ensure that subdivision and development is compatible with the Coastal Area.

RPE.1.4 Guidance Note

1. The following shall form the basis for resource consent application in the RPE:
 - a. The objectives, policies and provisions for the Rural Area in the District Plan.
 - b. The objectives, policies and provisions for Resource Areas in the District Plan.
 - c. The District Wide objectives, policies and provisions in the District Plan.

Landuse

RPE.2.1 Eligibility Rules

1. Commercial and industrial activities are non-complying activities.
2. Mineral extraction activities within the Mining Area of a Mineral Extraction Area are exempt from RPE.2.1.3, RPE.2.3.3 (a) and (b) and will be assessed by applying the Mineral Extraction Area Chapter.
3. Mineral extraction activities is a non-complying activity if the activity:
 - a. Extracts over 5,000m³ in any 12 month period on the site.
 - b. Undertakes blasting.
 - c. Establishes within 500m of an existing sensitive activity on an adjacent site.
4. Intensive livestock activities that are closer than 250m to the boundary of a separate site containing a sensitive activity are non-complying activities.
5. Any activity ancillary to farming or plantation forestry that operates within a building with a GFA and/or from an outdoor area larger than 500m² is a non-complying activity.
6. Any other activity not requiring consent as a discretionary or non-complying activity is a permitted activity.

RPE.2.2 Notification Rules

1. All land use activities are subject to the notification tests of the RMA.

RPE.2.3 Discretionary Activities

1. Any sensitive activity (excluding non-habitable buildings):
 - a. Within 500m of:
 - i. The Mining Area of a Mineral Extraction Area,
 - ii. A Strategic Rural Industry Environment or a Business Environment.
 - b. Within 100m of an unsealed metal road.
 - c. Within 30m of an existing production forestry on a separate site.
 - d. Within 250m of:
 - i. An existing intensive livestock activity on a separate site.
 - ii. An existing activity ancillary to farming or plantation forestry on a separate site.
2. Any residential unit resulting in more than 1 residential unit per 20ha of net site area.
3. Any building:
 - a. That exceeds a maximum height of 10m.
 - b. Within 8m of a site boundary.
 - c. That results in site coverage exceeding 20% of the net site area.
 - d. Within 27m of mean high water springs (excluding bridges, culverts and fences).
 - e. Within 27m of the top of the bank of any river that has a width exceeding 3m (excluding bridges, culverts and fences).

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4. The destruction of any indigenous wetland.
5. The destruction or clearance of an area exceeding 500m² of predominately indigenous vegetation that forms a contiguous area of 1ha or more.
6. Any activity ancillary to farming or plantation forestry that operates within 250m of an existing sensitive activity on a separate site.
7. Any place of assembly.
8. Any emergency service.

Note: Refer to RA.4.2 for Assessment of Discretionary Activities.

Subdivision

RPE.3.1 Eligibility Rule

1. Subdivision of a minor residential unit from a principal residential unit is a prohibited activity.
2. Any activity not requiring consent as a controlled or discretionary activity is a non-complying activity.

RPE.3.2 Notification Rules

1. All land use activities are subject to the notification tests of the RMA.

RPE.3.3 Controlled Activities

1. Subdivision where every proposed allotment:
 - a. Has a minimum net site area of 20ha.
 - b. Can accommodate a minimum 100m² building area on which a sensitive activity can be built so that there is compliance as a permitted activity with the relevant rules in the District Plan.
 - c. Demonstrates that management of water supply, stormwater and wastewater can be achieved within the proposed allotments in accordance with Whangarei District Council's Environmental Engineering Standards 2010.
2. Boundary relocation subdivision of sites which are existing at **[Operative Date]** that:
 - a. Results in the same number of allotments.
 - b. Creates no new allotment/s with a new site area less than 4ha.
 - c. Results in no additional vehicle accesses.
 - d. Results in every proposed allotment being able to accommodate a minimum 100m² building area on which a sensitive activity can be built so that there is compliance as a permitted activity with the relevant rules in the District Plan.
 - d. Demonstrate that management of water supply, stormwater and wastewater can be achieved within the proposed allotments in accordance with Whangarei District Council's Environmental Engineering Standards 2010.
 - e. Results in the ability to construct or locate residential units not exceeding a density of 1 residential unit per net site area of 20ha.

Note: Refer to RA.4.1 for Matters of Control.

RPE.3.4 Discretionary Activities

1. Boundary relocation subdivision that does not comply with any standard in RPE.3.3.2.
2. Subdivision of existing lawfully established residential units:
 - a. With a minimum net site area of 2,000m² or less that are able to accommodate onsite servicing of wastewater disposal in accordance with Whangarei District Council's Environmental Engineering Standards 2010.
 - b. Resulting in no more than one additional title from the parent title within any 10 year period.
 - c. Providing a balance allotment equal to or greater than 80ha in net site area.

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3. Subdivision where any proposed allotment is unable to accommodate a minimum 100m² building area on which a sensitive activity can be built so that there is compliance as a permitted activity with the relevant rules in this Plan.

Note: Refer to RA.4.2 for Assessment of Discretionary Activities.

Revision and Sign-off Sheet

Date Approved	Editor	Paragraph	Change Reference	Decision Date	Approved By

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