

Rural Development Strategy

Subdivision and Land Use: Issues and Options

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The Rural Development Strategy, must consider options to address issues raised in this report, these include both regulatory and non-regulatory actions. It is acknowledged in this report that subdivision and land use in the rural environment will result in a myriad of environmental effects, this report will focus on those issues and the options possible to address subdivision and land use change. Specific effects of land use and activities will be addressed in other Rural Development Strategy, Issues and Options Papers.

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1 Introduction

The Whangarei District covers the lower eastern section of Northland (approximately 284,814.85ha), extending from Bland Bay in the north to Langs Beach in the south and westwards towards Dargaville. Whangarei City is the largest centre providing commercial and community services in Northland. The District contains the major port for the Northland Region at Marsden Point which has recently undergone significant expansion. There are also a number of smaller townships and settlements around the district, many of which are expanding as coastal and rural land is developed. The District covers a large geographical area with varying rural environments, from inland rural valley systems to a diverse rural coast line.

The Whangarei District has a wide range of primary land uses. These include pastoral farming, dairying, forestry, cropping, horticulture and viticulture. Pastoral farming occupies around 37% of the District's land area, dairying 21%, forestry 21%, urban areas and reserves 10%, and lifestyle blocks 10% are the major land use. Horticulture is a minor land use activity covering only 1,869ha or 0.7% of the District. Industrial developments are mainly concentrated in Whangarei City and Marsden Point/Ruakaka area. In the northern, southern and western portions of the district, mountains and hilly areas are predominant, and land uses are primarily forest and pasture.

The Whangarei District experienced significant growth over the period 2001 to 2008. As a consequence of liberal District Plan provisions, a subdivision boom has resulted in the situation today, where there is estimated to be around 6,000 vacant building lots in the District spread across all zonings. As a result of the District's environmental diversity, the nature and effects of rural subdivision are diverse. The demand for rural and coastal lifestyle living has resulted in diversification of rural land and gradual change from pastoral farms dominating the rural environment.

The control of rural subdivision is a key tool for rural areas and will be a key issue for the Rural Strategy to address. More than just lines on a plan, each rural subdivision creates a new set of entitlements and expectations to undertake earthworks, establish an access, build and use land, as well as expectations that the enjoyment and use of that land will be protected from adverse effects of activities on neighbouring sites. Each new subdivision has the potential to alter the traffic environment, to add to problems with wastewater disposal in many areas of the district; and to increase the prominence of houses, accessory buildings, access roads and other development clutter in a landscape.

Changes in rural land use as a result of subdivision development have become commonplace in New Zealand. No one use is necessarily wrong or right, there are competing needs, aspirations and amenity expectations of different people in pursuing their economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

2 Policy Framework

2.1 National Legislation

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is the primary piece of legislation that governs the use, development, and protection of land in New Zealand. District council functions under the RMA include the integrated management and control of the effects of the use, development, or protection of land. Territorial authority functions include controlling the effects of land use relating to natural hazards, hazardous substances, and biodiversity.

A number of other Acts impact on land management. These include:

- Biosecurity Act 1993
- Building Act 2004
- Crown Minerals Act 1991
- Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996
- Historic Places Act 1993
- Local Government Act 2002 (Ministry for the Environment, 2010).

Under Section 9 of the Act, no person may use land in a manner that contravenes a rule in a plan or proposed plan. Therefore, unless a rule in this Plan or a district plan restricts an activity on land, the activity can be undertaken without resource consent.

Section 11 of the Act, "no person may subdivide land, within the meaning of Section 218, unless the subdivision is both, first, expressly allowed by a national environmental standard, a rule in a district plan as

well as a rule in a proposed district plan for the same district (if there is one), or a resource consent and, second, shown on a survey plan.

Under Section 31 of the RMA, district councils are responsible for achieving integrated management of the effects of the use, development or protection of land and associated natural and physical resources of their district. They are also responsible for managing the effects of the subdivision of land and associated land use activities in terms of their location, servicing, effects on natural features and other amenities.

2.2 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

Rural areas and rural land uses of the Whangarei District extend into the coastal environment and it is common for rural activities to be occurring in the coastal environment, and so it is appropriate to consider the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS).

The purpose of the NZCPS is to state policies regarding the management of natural and physical resources in the coastal environment, to achieve the purpose of the Act in relation to the coastal environment of New Zealand. Local authorities are required by the Act to give effect to the NZCPS through their plans and policy statements.

The NZCPS emphasises ‘appropriate’ use of the coastal environment. Objectives focus on for example, the protection of natural character, management of the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Objective 6 in particular recognises the need to enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and their health and safety, through subdivision, use and development of the coastal environment.

Policy 6 of the NZCPS relates to activities in the coastal environment, and specifies matters that must be taken into consideration such as:

- the rate at which building development and the associated public infrastructure should be enabled to provide for reasonably foreseeable needs of population growth
- encourage the consolidation of existing coastal settlements and urban areas where this will contribute to the avoidance or mitigation of sprawling or sporadic patterns of settlement and urban growth
- consider where development that maintains character of the existing built environment should be encouraged, and where development resulting in a change in character would be acceptable.

Policy 7 encourages strategic planning for the coastal environment, stating that consideration of where, how and when to provide for future residential, rural residential, settlement, urban development and identify areas of the coastal environment, where particular activities and forms of subdivision, use and development are inappropriate.

2.3 Regional Policy Statement

Under Section 75 (3)(c) of the RMA, the District Plan must give effect to the regional policy statement. The Regional Policy Statement 1999 (RPS) does not contain policies and objectives specifically relating to rural subdivision and rural amenity, although many of the environmental outcomes such as protection of high class soils, are sought to enhance the rural environment. In regard to land use, the RPS notes the importance of land management, and their protection that:

The future economic, social and culture well-being of Northland depends on retaining the capacity of its soil to support the growth of pasture, trees and other productive crops as well as protective native vegetation. It is essential to maintain soil fertility by minimising erosion, contamination, loss of soil structure, organic matter and other nutrients. The maintenance of healthy soils and prevention of erosion also serve to protect the regions water resources and aquatic habitats.

The RPS contains nine issues relating to erosion, soil structure, contamination of soils, land productivity, the loss of versatile soils through subdivision, pests and vegetation clearance. This section contains 19 individual methods of implementation that flow from the policy direction identified.

Section 20 (c), policy of the RPS, specifies that Northland Regional Council will “*protect soils which are of a highly productive and versatile nature from subdivision and land uses which are likely to result in their loss or permanent removal from primary production*”. Its methods of implementation include:

- 1 *Identify soils of a highly productive and versatile nature and consider the need for strategies for adjacent settlement areas (District Councils with Regional Council assistance, where appropriate);*

- 2 *Include appropriate provisions in District Plans relating to the subdivision and use of soils which are of a highly productive and versatile nature (District Councils).*

The concluding paragraph of the land management section of the RPS 10 Year Review noted that *“land management and soil conservation may be an area that RPS needs to prioritise and provide stronger guidance around in the future. It also emphasised that we need a more coordinated approach to land management and soil conservation between local authorities coupled with a refocused monitoring effort to support a more directive land management regime.”*

October 2010, Northland Regional Council released a “New Regional Policy Statement, Discussion Document 2010” consideration of land use in this document differs considerably from that in the Operative RPS. The chapter “Soil Conservation and Land Management” has been substituted with “Land Management and Rural Productivity” in the new RPS. The Regional Council have specifically pointed out that *“Northland’s land supports a wide variety of productive uses including pastoral farming, horticulture, forestry and mineral extraction. These industries are hugely important to Northland’s economy so it’s important we look after the land they rely on, and minimise the impact residential and lifestyle development can have on them, to enable productive uses of the rural environment.”* The Regional Council want to:

- Increase rural productivity through improved land management practices while maintaining soil health and reducing soil erosion.
- Land use that is the best ‘fit’ for the type/class of land.
- Maintaining the productive capacity of our highly productive land.
- The continued availability and access to high-quality mineral resources to meet present and future needs.

2.4 Regional Plans

Under Section 75 (4)(b) of the RMA, the District Plan must not be inconsistent with a regional plan. There are a number of Regional Plans for Northland that have been developed under the Act. These include the Regional Water and Soil Plan, Air Quality Plan and the Coastal Plan.

The Regional Water and Soil Plan provisions control a number of rural land use activities, methods, policies, objectives and environmental outcomes canvas themes such as:

- Minimisation of soil losses from rural land use activities, and land disturbance;
- Promotion of streamside management and riparian margin enhancement and retirement;
- Sustainable surface and groundwater resource management;
- Integrated land management;
- Protection and enhancement of natural biodiversity.

Objective 1, Section 12 Land Management of the RWSP seeks to protect the soil resources including soil quality and soil quantity, from degradation or loss as a result of unsustainable land use and land use practices. The RWSP has policy guidance to achieve this objective, being policies 12.6.1:

“To promote soil conservation as an integral part of all land use and development activities by:

- a *Encouraging sustainable land use practices*
- b *Addressing on-site and off-site water and soil problems*
- c *Addressing actual and potential erosion problems*
- d *Maintaining soil quality (depth, structure, water holding capacity, organic matter and fertility) as far as practicable.*

The Coastal Plan, is focused on protection of the coastal marine area, but does seek to prevent inappropriate subdivision, use and development in the coastal area, including objectives and policies seeking the preservation of the natural character of Northland’s coastal marine area.

2.5 District Policy

Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP)

Council is required to prepare a long-term plan LTP, under the Local Government Act 2002. Any non-regulatory methods (e.g. education, further research or studies) should be included in the long-term plan so that funding is made available for them to be successfully implemented. LTCCP 2009 – 2019 identifies

community outcomes, and how Council's activities will contribute to furthering these outcomes. Community outcome 1 is relevant to subdivision:

A sustainable, environmentally responsible District which values its natural uniqueness

Community interpretations (include but is not limited to the following):

- *Our unique environment is preserved, protected and enhanced.*
- *The biodiversity of our District is recognised as an important aspect of our natural values.*
- *Development is achieved in a responsible and sustainable manner.*

Strategies

Council has prepared and adopted various strategies, Coastal Management, Urban Growth, and Structure Plans to provide direction for District policy planning. These are described in more detail in Appendix 1.

2.6 Whangarei District Plan

The Whangarei District Plan is intended to reflect overarching strategies and achieve sustainable outcomes sought through management of development and natural resources. Land use and subdivision activities are controlled following a simple cascading structure, consistent with Section 104 of the Resource Management Act. Several district plan Environments (zones) cover the rural environment, Countryside and Coastal Countryside Environments particularly cover those rural and coastal landscapes.

Chapter 5, Amenity Values, of the Operative District Plan outlines the characteristics that influence and enhance people's appreciation of a particular area. The plan provides an outline of the 'amenity values' specific to the rural environment contained within the Countryside and Coastal Countryside Environments:

Countryside Environment tends to be used predominantly for primary production, but is also used for low-density residential purposes. When choosing to live in a rural area, people must expect and accept a certain level of odour, noise and other effects which are characteristic of primary production, recognising the scale and intensity of these activities which contribute to rural character. Rural areas do, however, tend to have high amenity values, due primarily to the following characteristics:

- *The intermittent nature of most agricultural activities*
- *Open landscapes and views*
- *A low intensity of development*
- *Feelings of remoteness and community*
- *Low noise levels, particularly at night*
- *A high degree of privacy*
- *Daylight and sunlight access*
- *Low levels of vehicular traffic*
- *Green 'unspoiled' landscape with indigenous vegetation.*

The Countryside Environment is sensitive to activities which have continuous or ongoing effects, or that are located in close proximity to other land uses such as residential units. The Coastal Countryside Environment has similar values and qualities as the Countryside Environment, in addition to those particular values of the coastal environment.

Chapter 8 of the Operative District Plan is dedicated to Subdivision and Development. It outlines the District Wide issues, objectives and policies in relation to subdivision and development. Objective 8.3.7 seeks subdivision and development that provides for comprehensive development of land with a range of allotment sizes and is appropriate to the character of the Environment in which it is located. Policies in chapter 8, promote design and development that is appropriate to the surrounding environment and zoning.

Subdivision provisions are located in Part F of the Operative District Plan. The subdivision rules apply to all proposals for subdivision in the District and resource consent is required for every subdivision. Provisions impose minimum allotment size, number of allotments, minimum built area and servicing controls.

Land use provisions are located in Parts D and E of the Operative District Plan. Environmental standards and specific assessment criteria are applied to Environments (zones) with scheduling of sites/areas of significance e.g. heritage items/sites, landscapes, indigenous vegetation/habitats.

2.7 Rolling Review of the Operative District Plan

Under the Act Council is required to monitor the effectiveness of the District Plan and complete a review of all District Plan provisions within any 10 year time period. Monitoring of the Whangarei District Council Operative District Plan has identified areas of inconsistency and ineffectiveness, and has examined what new issues have emerged since the District Plan was first devised.

The District Plan will become a live document, as council staff will review chapters of the plan every year, in what is called a “rolling review”. The rolling review examines whether the current objectives, policies and methods in the plan are consistent with legislation, and are working the way the community needs and wants them to.

The review updates the District Plan to recognise the role different areas of the District will play in the district in future, given the population changes and estimated economic growth over the next 10 years. These tie in with Council’s long-term planning project Whangarei District Growth Strategy: Sustainable Futures 30/50.

2.8 Iwi Management Plans

Three iwi management plans have been prepared by iwi of the Whangarei District all of which have relevance to rural subdivision and land use.

Patuharakeke Te Iwi discusses the impacts of land use on the environment:

*The biological creatures of the harbour and its inlets, once prominent and plentiful, are sparse if not devastated by the effects of waste from the quarrying industry, the airline industry, the agricultural industry, the shipping industry, and the recreational industry. In other words, the presence of people and their activities have impacted adversely on the traditional food ‘basket’; and the harbour and its waterways is a diminishing source of healthy, mouth-watering seafood and curative waters. Places once covered in native bush, then cleared for **Kauri** logs and gum, have been planted in grass while native bush clings to the hills called **Pukekauri** and **Takahiwai**.*

And recommends the following (but is not limited to):

That a stronger enforcement structure to protect Te Rerenga Parāoa, its estuaries, the surrounding land, the air and all people from the potential and extant pollution generated by dust such as fertiliser dust, dioxins, radioactive and other hazardous waste generated by heavy industry located (and to be located) at Te Poupouwhenua must be set up.

Te Iwi o Ngatiwai and Ngati Hine identify many environmental issues, which may be occurring as a result of subdivision and land use activities, but structure their environmental policy according to resources, water, soil, minerals, air, indigenous flora and fauna and our heritage. Both iwi recognise the need to be actively involved with the sustainable management of their ancestral taonga, including participating in RMA processes.

3 Current Issues

The varied and changeable nature of Rural Areas in the Whangarei District has been well documented.

- Rural production activities have to change to meet changing markets and to stay economically competitive.
- Subdivision means new people, ideas and activities.
- People’s values about the rural environment are changing rural amenity conflicts often occur where there is:
 - a high rate of land use change
 - an influx of newcomers to an area
 - small block size with people living close to each other
 - a high rate of turnover of households in an area
- Conflicts arise not only between new rural residential dwellers and rural production activities – but also between different rural producers.

The loss of rural character and the increasing presence of buildings within the rural landscape, structures on hilltops, effects of power lines and increased signage are identified by the Ministry for the Environment as one of the amenity issues that most often cause conflicts in rural environments. The chances of conflicts between activities in the rural environment are significantly increased where subdivision results in an

increase in the number of small blocks located close together and where the pattern of settlement intensifies as a result.

While subdivision is simply a process for effecting change in land ownership, it gives rise to consequences. New owners of land can introduce changed land use practices (different stock, different crops). All of these changes can give rise to changed effects on the environment, including changes in amenity conditions (changed visual character, new demand for water, additional or changed noise sources, new juxtaposition of buildings on adjoining properties).

There is a strong presumption by purchasers of rural land in New Zealand that subsequent occupation and development will be permitted and the market, therefore, values subdivided allotments accordingly. Subdivision in itself may bring about very few physical or visual changes to the rural environment. It is the catalyst for subsequent development and a range of potential effects.

3.1 Types of Rural Subdivision in Whangarei District

Different types of subdivision have resulted in varying effects to the rural environment in the Whangarei District.

Rural Lifestyle Blocks

In 2004, a total of 7,000 properties within the Whangarei District were identified as lifestyle blocks covering 25,519.52ha, with a mean area of 3.65ha per allotment (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2009). Based on Council's Property Database and Rating Assessment 2009, lifestyle blocks cover 28,107.67ha of the district. This represents an increase of 10 percent from the recorded land areas in 2004. As shown in Figure 1, lifestyle blocks are scattering throughout the District, particularly in areas around the urban fringes (e.g. Glenbervie, Three Mile Bush, Maunu and Maungatapere/Maungakaramea), along the coast (e.g. Matapouri and Parua Bay) and along transit corridors.

In recent years, large areas of the District's best agricultural and horticultural land (class 1, 2 and 3 soils) has been subdivided into lifestyle blocks and for urban development. In most cases, subdivision renders the property size commercially unviable for horticultural and agricultural land uses. Subdivision and associated development also has the potential to stifle quarrying and mining opportunities. If smaller titles and more residential dwellings are allowed in areas with mineral and aggregate potential, it will make it difficult if not impossible to establish a quarry or mine.

Coastal Subdivision

Whangarei's coastal environment has undergone significant residential and rural lifestyle development and there is perceived to be a high level of on-going demand for growth and expansion into rural landscapes. The growth of residential and recreational activities in the coastal environment has the potential to impact on (and conversely be impacted by) rural land use activities. Furthermore, rural activities have the potential to generate both positive and potentially adverse impact on those resources in the coastal environment that warrant protection.

Peri-Urban Subdivision

Demand for small rural allotments in close proximity to urban centres and the pattern and density of rural settlement on the fringes of urban centres, intensifies the potential for amenity conflicts in these areas. The potential for conflict about amenity effects (noise, odour, night time lights, traffic movements) arising from the pre-existing activity is enormous. These patterns of residential development in some instances have resulted in pressure for Council to extend existing services. In certain areas with high landscape values, residential development has had an impact on the character of rural environments.

Another significant issue for rural producers located at the fringes of urban centres, is the effect that demand for rural residential properties can have in inflating land values above what would be considered their production-based value. This can create financial pressure on producers, for example by increasing value-based rates paid to councils, higher land values that inhibit land acquisition for expanded operations, and erode their viability relative to cropping the land for rural residential allotments.

The Whangarei Growth Strategy, Sustainable Futures 30/50, landuse background report highlights the risk to highly versatile and productive soils from rural residential and lifestyle development. For example, many of the elite soils in Maunu have experienced subdivision activity as larger blocks are turned into small titles for urban land use and rural lifestyle blocks. In addition, rural residential development in these areas increases the occurrence of reverse sensitivity issues with established farming activities, which in turn may limit the use of productive farmland.

Papakainga Development

The Whangarei District contains 11,000ha, 950 land parcels, of Maori land which equates to 4.25% of the total area of the Whangarei District (source: WDC's rating database). A significant portion of Maori land is located in the rural environment. Development of Maori land may result in land use change, which in turn impacts on the amenity and landscape of the rural environment.

Maori land has its own unique attributes that require it to be looked at separately from other freehold land. Papakainga is a form of housing development which can occur on ancestral Maori land. The Operative Whangarei District Plan contained no provisions relating to papakainga, and in the wider context agencies lack resources to support the development of papakainga on ancestral Maori land. Plan Change 94 Papakainga Housing was undertaken by Council to introduce objectives and policies into the District Plan to support the development of papakainga housing throughout the Whangarei District.

Experience has shown that the uptake of papakainga is slow, but this is expected to increase throughout New Zealand. The approach taken by Whangarei District Council is to be as liberal as possible, using case studies to help develop the future standards and guidelines for papakainga housing (phase two of this project).

3.2 Types of Rural Land Use in the Whangarei District

The rural environment is constantly under pressure to be used for many different reasons. Whangarei District's rural environment is used for a multitude of uses such as, dairying, forestry, conservation, lifestyle, mineral extraction. Each type of rural land use requires different natural and physical resources, and results in different effects on the rural environment (such matters have been considered in separate issues and options reports).

Land use change and intensification will place increasing pressure on natural resources in the rural environment, e.g. soil and water resources. The visual impact of rural lifestyle developments can be particularly noticeable in the District's Coastal Areas. These areas are often characterised by prominent rural landscapes and the formation of new dwellings, garages, access roads, lighting and amenity plantings associated with new residential subdivisions, can have a significant impact on rural landscapes.

Ministry for the Environment (2000) have found that amenity conflicts are most prevalent where there is a high rate of land use change, and particularly where:

- The population of an area is increasing or rapidly changing, and when the people coming into the area from outside hold different values and expectations, and wish to pursue different lifestyles from those already there
- People arriving into the area establish a diverse range of activities and land use practices which are different from those formerly undertaken in the area
- The pattern of land subdivision means that people are settling in relatively close to each other.

An indirect effect of an increasing residential density in the rural area is that of 'reverse sensitivity' (reverse sensitivity is specifically focused on in a separate issues and options report). Reverse sensitivity occurs when a lawfully established and pre-existing land use adversely affects a new more sensitive land use. The issues arise from the incompatibility of uses, although both may be legally established e.g. lifestyle subdivision located on the perimeter of a quarry, then reverse sensitivity effects will occur. There is potential for reverse sensitivity issues to arise in these resource areas particularly through the development of rural/residential 'lifestyle' properties in working rural landscapes. Odour and noise issues, the erection and use of farm buildings and structures and the operation of machinery could all potentially give rise to nuisance complaints.

3.3 Whangarei District Growth Strategy: Sustainable Futures 30/50 and Background Papers

The Whangarei District Growth Strategy: Sustainable Futures 30/50 notes that since notification of the first District Plan (1998) under the RMA, successive councils have pursued enabling, market-orientated policies in regard to the land development. Land regulation in the form of zoning and minimum lot sizes has been extremely permissive – based upon a largely laissez-faire approach to land development. Liberal zoning and housing density provisions (a 350m² to 3ha minimum lot size across the whole district) reflected this approach. As a consequence, the district experienced a

subdivision boom resulting in a situation today where there is estimated to be around 6,000 vacant building lots in the District spread across all zonings.

A background report on land use drew information from the Land Resource Information System Spatial Data Layers, Whangarei District Council's Rating Assessment Land Use Category 2009, and New Zealand Land Cover Database Version 1 and Version 2 from the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory (NZLR1) database maintained by Landcare Research NZ Ltd. The report has found present land use within the District aligns broadly with land use capability. Concluding that with the provision for environmental and cultural effects to be adequately dealt with, there appears to be some potential for increased production and increased economic outcomes for the District, either through a change in land use and/or intensification of existing land use:

- Limited ability to increase pastoral use, with limited potential for an expansion in land area, however there is some potential for intensification of use and more potential for diversification or change of livestock produced
- Limited potential for the expansion of dairying in the District and there may be some potential for increased stocking rates
- Considerable potential for expansion in forestry production in the District. There is also potential for diversification of tree species harvested, including the commercial production of native species
- Horticulture and orcharding (and possibly viticulture) appear to hold the most promise for increased primary production in the district over the long term. There is considerable potential for diversification of crops grown on these soils.

The Strategy concludes that the process of urbanisation of highly productive agricultural land, is likely to continue with the consequent loss of the potential for increased economic output and employment opportunities in the future. This is not considered a sustainable use of this limited and valuable land resource.

Investigation and preparation of the Implementation Plan for the 30/50 Strategy has identified that many properties are rated for a certain use that does not match the intended District Plan zoning e.g.

- There are over 400 properties zoned Living 1 Environment that are rated as commercial properties
- There are also over 80 properties zoned Countryside Environment that are also rated as commercial properties
- There are over 9,000 properties zoned Countryside Environment that are rated either lifestyle or residential properties.

3.4 Stakeholder Consultation

Meetings with key stakeholders were held in December 2010 and January 2011. These have included meetings with NRC, DoC, NZ Historic Places Trust, NZ Archaeological Association, MAF, Winstone Aggregates, Quarry and Aggregate Association, Fonterra and NZTA. The following points summarise those of relevance to land use and subdivision in the rural environment:

- Conflicts between public and private use of rural land was identified, for example development next to public land poses a potential fire hazard
- Dairying is often dependant on the economic climate, and in particular, pricing. Farms are often seen as a retirement fund for farmers. Northland milk supply expected to stay static
- Resource availability (not just land) is a major concern for dairying, for example dairy farming is a high water use industry
- Subdivision is the mechanism for identifying and affording protection to archaeological and heritage sites
- As there are limited requirements for consents for horticultural and agricultural land use, heritage matters are not considered as an issue and can result in the destruction of archaeological sites – especially from stream channelling and earthworks and planting on riparian margins
- Most forests in Northland are pre 1990 and will continue to be managed for timber production as they are now. New forests will earn revenue from carbon credits – this will encourage longer rotations and different species

- There are opportunities for landowners to make agreements to lease land to foresters who will plant and manage the forest, collecting carbon credits
- There may be opportunities for retiring marginal land and letting it revert back to indigenous land. This will start producing returns in 50-100 years
- Quarry operators/owners do not want intensification around the quarry but accept that development will occur. This needs to be compatible with their operation. Light industrial may be appropriate
- There is a residential expectation that it is a local roading function in Rural Areas to provide uninhabited access. NZTA wants to assist with economic development but considers it important to manage the traffic effect. If industry wants to locate to rural areas, provision must be made for the traffic effects.

3.5 Environment Monitoring

Northland Regional Council Monitoring

Subdivision is not a topic or an environmental issue in the State of Environment Report 2007, the Annual Environmental Monitoring Report 2009 – 2010, and the New Regional Policy Statement Background and Discussion Reports. Subdivision is a method of development that has the potential to change land use and adversely affect the environment. All of the Regional Council monitoring reports have identified increasing subdivision, particularly in the rural and coastal environments, as placing pressure on environmental issues.

The cumulative effects of coastal development, including subdivision have the potential to place many pressures on the coastal environment, including:

- Sediment run-off, if not well managed and contamination of stormwater run-off
- Sewage discharges as many are in areas without municipal wastewater systems
- Loss of wetland habitats and riparian vegetation
- Demand for boating facilities
- Damage to natural dune systems and demand for protection against natural hazards.

The State of Environment Report 2007 also confirms the impact of subdivision on prime soils for agriculture and horticultural use; subdivision has the potential to threaten indigenous biodiversity habitat.

The Operative NRPS has good guidelines for promoting the preservation of rural land activities in the rural production environment. However, existing rules have not been very effective with approximately 10% of Northland's highly productive soils being subdivided into lifestyle and residential allotments between 2001 and 2007. In 2001, the Regional Council participated in the national '500 Soils Project', which involved soil samples being taken from 25 sites around Northland. Around half the sites showed some signs of compaction particularly on pasture grazed by dairy and dry stock. The original 25 sites were re-sampled in 2007 and results showed that many sites had become more compacted as a result of more intensive farming practices.

Whangarei District Council Monitoring

The Resource Consents and Complaints Monitoring Report primarily monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the District Plan. Consent numbers and distribution provide a good indication of land use and subdivision activity throughout the District.

Council's Resource Consents and Complaints Monitoring Report 2005/2006, confirm a concentration of development activity occurring along the coast and in the city, with scattered development in the rural areas. The spatial distribution of subdivision consents are illustrated in the report. Kamo, Regent and Ngunguru/Tutukaka appear to have a high concentration of subdivisions occurring in small areas. The same is observed with Onerahi, Waipu and Langs Cove, although subdivisions do not appear as intense. The 2005/2006 report also illustrates the spatial distribution of land use consents are primarily clustered in areas of high development. During this financial year, land use development seems to be concentrated in and around the City area, with some development occurring in Maungatapere and along the coast, including the North Harbour edge. The spatial distribution of building consents has not changed much from previous years. There are continued concentrations of building activity along the coast, particularly in the Matapouri/Tutukaka/Ngunguru, Bream Bay and Harbour fringe areas, the City/Kauri area, and the Maungatapere/Maunu area, with some scattered throughout the rural District.

Council's Policy and Monitoring Team has commenced preliminary research and analysis of data for the 2007/2010 Resource Consents and Complaints Monitoring Report. The map in Appendix 2 illustrates the spatial distribution of subdivision consents, illustrating the continued scattering of development throughout the rural areas. Tables in Appendix 3 confirm that the number of subdivision consents and approved allotments in the Rural Area continue to be significantly higher than those in Living or Business Areas.

4 Best Practice

Ministry for the Environment (2000) have examined three broad policy approaches:

- Effects-driven intervention – managing the effects of activities using effects based standards applied at site boundaries to avoid, remedy or mitigate conflicts over effects
- Indirect intervention – using proxy standards such as controls on the location of activities or controls on the intensity of subdivision to avoid, remedy or mitigate conflicts over effects
- Conflict resolution – pursuing dialogue to resolve conflicts once they have occurred.

Many councils experience pressure to allow for subdivision in rural areas, particularly in locations close to existing urban areas or in coastal areas. In areas where the density of dwellings is an issue, then the district plan will need to state why dwelling density needs to be controlled through subdivision. Consideration should also be given to wider regional or district planning concerns such as urban consolidation strategies that seek to limit development in rural areas or areas with special rural characteristics. The following are noted as key factors for consideration by the New Zealand Quality Planning Website:

- It is important to provide a clear and consistent framework for managing rural dwelling and subdivision densities, particularly with regard to reverse sensitivity issues
- Consideration should be given to aligning subdivision with land management and catchment management issues, such as providing for ecological corridors and managing surface and ground water
- Subdivision and the resulting potential development rights that may be provided should be used to promote outcomes such as environmental enhancement, natural and cultural heritage protection, catchment management and public access.

A District Plan should clearly identify which issues are to be managed through land use controls, which are to be controlled through subdivision controls, or which will be managed through a combination of these (including where issues are intended to be managed in conjunction with regional council controls). Many councils use supporting components for subdivision and landuse provisions in District Plans, these include

- Engineering requirements, a set or code of engineering standards covering such matters as servicing and infrastructure standards, road widths, earthworks, New Zealand Standards, etc.
- National codes and standards, published New Zealand Standards that can be referred to within the District Plan are, e.g. New Zealand Standard - NZS 4404:2004 - Land Development Subdivision and Engineering.
- Design guides, can provide assistance to applicants in interpreting assessment criteria. They are non-prescriptive and may form part of, or sit alongside, the district plan. A design guide could include:
 - Illustrations of recommended site and road layout and ways in which effects, for instance on landscape or character, can be avoided or mitigated
 - Illustrations of recommended planting, earthworks, infrastructure and maintaining ecological values
 - References to provisions in the district plan such as objectives, policies or rules relevant to a particular area.

5 Options for Whangarei District

5.1 Whangarei District Growth Strategy - Sustainable Futures 30/50

Whangarei District Growth Strategy - Sustainable Futures 30/50 was adopted by Council in September 2010. After assessing a number of different growth strategy options, a consolidated future

development pattern was chosen and adopted by Council. This will guide future decision making on infrastructure and the spatial arrangement of development across the District.

The growth strategy concludes that if highly versatile and productive land resource is to be retained for primary production, strong planning provisions are required. Many of the elite soils have experienced subdivision activity as larger blocks are turned into small titles for urban land use and rural lifestyle blocks. The retention of this scarce land resource for primary production for the foreseeable needs of future generations is a valid land use issue. If highly versatile land is not protected from residential and lifestyle development, this valuable resource will be lost within a relatively short space of time.

The District Plan will be one of the tools used to implement the growth strategy adopted through the Sustainable Futures project.

The background paper on land use prepared for Sustainable Futures 30/50 was discussed in Section 3.1 of this report.

5.2 What are the Resource Management Issues?

Subdivision

- 1 Rural production is being compromised by subdivision for rural lifestyle.
- 2 Sprawling subdivision is reducing the amenity of the rural environment.
- 3 All landowners have a perceived right to subdivide, e.g. farmers right to create retirement blocks.
- 4 There is pressure to increase the opportunity to subdivide in the rural environment by decreasing the minimum allotment size.

Land Use

- 1 Conflicts occur as a result of incompatible land use in the rural environment.
- 2 Residential development and urban sprawl in the rural environment are degrading the District's high class soils.
- 3 Significant changes in land use are resulting in changes to resource needs and use.
- 4 Changes to land use in the rural environment, changes the 'ruralness' and sense of place associated with the rural environment. People's perception of what is rural is degraded.

5.3 Options for Implementing the Rural Development Strategy

Protecting rural environment through description and policies areas

Whangarei District has an extremely varied rural environment. As previously discussed the District Plan does not provide adequate description and policy for the rural environment. This option considers the increase of description about the rural environment in the District Plan. Policy areas could be introduced to afford description, outcomes and provisions to specific areas in the rural environment.

Protecting the rural environment by increasing zones

The operative District Plan essentially has three zones for the rural environment, two of the zones cover specific areas, Coastal Countryside Environment covers the coastal areas of the rural environment and Open Space Environment covers the conservation and public open areas of the rural environment. Countryside Environment covers the remainder of the rural environment.

New zones, with corresponding provisions could be introduced to the District Plan to zone rural productive areas, rural villages, and rural lifestyle areas. Provisions could be tailored to provide for appropriate uses in each zone.

Protecting high class soils from urban development – Northland Regional Council to define

This policy option is designed to protect high class soils from urban and residential development. It relies on Northland Regional Council to define high class soils and territorial authorities to map them individually. The Growth Strategy has identified the need to protect and manage the high class soil resource for primary production.

The intended outcome of this Strategy would be that development is avoided on high class soils, with specific reference to the availability of these soils for primary production. Activities would be identified that restrict the versatility of high class soils, and direction would be provided for district plans in the form of mapped information on the location of soils. In the short term, territorial authorities would be required to identify where high class soils are and direct development away from them. This would mean that high class soils continue to be available for a range of primary production and there are no irreversible effects on the soils. It is assumed that territorial authorities can deploy sufficient resources to identify high class soils effectively, and that a significant proportion, if not all, of the mapping costs would be recovered from developers.

Protecting high class soils from development with provisions

As an alternative option to mapping in the District Plan, provisions could be inserted into the Plan to afford protection to high class soils. Rather than Council mapping high class soils, assessment of soil types could be triggered on a site by site basis when subdivision, development or change in use is proposed. Criteria specifying the type of assessment would need to be inserted into the District Plan, with corresponding provisions that may vary from prohibiting any form of intensification on high class soils, to requiring built development to be located on the least productive soils on site.

Protecting rural amenity from change in land use with provisions

This option considers the introduction of provisions into the District Plan that control changes in land use activities in the rural environment. Land use change, impacts of the rural landscape, rural amenity and sense of place of the rural environment. Provisions could trigger the requirement to apply for land use consent from Council, where a proposal seeks to change the land use activity that will utilise more than a certain area of land e.g. 1ha.

Controlling rural density with provisions

There is a specific need to include some form of density control on subdivision which are necessary to:

- Preserve and protect rural amenity and the District's rural landscapes
- Ensure that the unique rural character of the rural environment is retained
- Help control residential development in the rural fringes of the Districts urban areas
- Ensure that rural land is not fragmented into smaller properties which can have implications for their ongoing viability and use as productive farmland.

This option is the definition or establishment of specific rural areas, to cater for higher density rural lifestyle development. The establishment of resource areas or zones, in these areas, could cater for this type of development while more stringent density requirements could be adopted for other parts of the District in order to discourage 'lifestyle' development. This could help ensure that high value soils elsewhere in the District are retained as productive farmland.

Alternative subdivision methods

The Operative District Plan uses the traditional method of minimum allotment sizes to provide for subdivision. This option considers the use of alternative methods, individually or in combination to provide for subdivision and achieve environmental outcomes. Alternative methods for consideration are:

- Clustering
- Management Plan Technique
- Transferable Development Rights
- Environmental Enhancement Incentives
- Overlay approach and Transferable Planting Rights.

Transferable Development Rights	Subdivision rights are provided when a natural feature of a certain size is legally protected. The subdivision right can be exercised on the same site where the protected feature is located, or can be transferred to another site within a specified zone.
Environmental Benefit Lots	Provides subdivision rights in exchange for perpetual physical/legal protection of natural features. In other words, allotments can only be created through subdivision in exchange for the permanent protection of

	vegetation and maintenance of a certain area of native vegetation, habitat or reserve.
Management Plan Subdivision	Provides the opportunity to design a subdivision layout or development activity, site specifically without being 'constrained' by the District Plan minimum or average lot size or bulk and location rules. Applicants must consider the environmental outcomes of their proposed development, and design the development appropriately considering allotment and built development layout, establishment, mitigation and on-going monitoring.
Overlay approach	The overlay approach requires identification of areas suitable for development, sensitive environments, outstanding landscapes, natural flora and fauna and protection of these areas by overlaid areas under the District Plan. District Plan objectives and policy would direct development and set environmental outcomes sought in each overlay area.

Control urban sprawl with an urban limit – Whangarei District Council

Subdivision, use and development for residential and business purposes are extending and sprawling into the rural environment. This option considers the introduction of an urban limit surrounding Whangarei City, providing a strict boundary beyond which residential and business development should not extend. To implement this option, the boundary must be mapped in the District Plan, with appropriate provisions.

Education, guidance and advice

In a resource management context, the purpose of guidelines, education and advice is to explain what environmentally appropriate practice is and how it is best achieved. The result is that all involved are made aware of expected standards of practice, so that they may act to achieve them.

Non-regulatory development guideline booklets could be developed for the rural environment. These guidelines could focus on specific characteristics of each of these communities and provide design guidance and information on issues that are of particular concern to each township.

Creation of information packs that act as background information resources and provide guidance for certain activities in the rural environment. The purpose of the packs is to provide all the relevant District Council information relating to the different approvals that are normally required for these activities.

Economic instruments

An economic instrument is simply a financial incentive for behavioural change. This may be positive as when rates relief is provided in exchange for protecting areas of wetlands or upland vegetation, or negative as when financial penalties prevent certain behaviours. The scope and effectiveness of economic instruments is limited by resources available for administration and the ability to observe or measure an effect.

6 References/Sources

- Beca Planning a Division of Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd, 2002, Whangarei Coastal Management Strategy Technical Paper 7: Rural Landuse and Subdivision
- Ministry for the Environment 2000, Managing Rural Amenity Conflicts, Wellington
- Ministry for the Environment 2000, The impact of rural subdivision and development on landscape values, Wellington
- Northland Regional Council 1999, Regional Policy Statement
- Northland Regional Council 2009, Regional Policy Statement Monitoring and Review Report,
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- Whangarei District Council 2003, Coastal Management Strategy
- Whangarei District Council 2003, Urban Growth Strategy
- Whangarei District Council 2007, Resource Consents and Complaints Monitoring Report 2005/2006
- Whangarei District Council 2008, Whangarei Growth Model
- Whangarei District Council 2009, Long Term Council Community Plan 2009 – 2019
- Whangarei District Council 2010, Whangarei District Growth Strategy, Sustainable Futures 30/50
- www.qp.org.nz – Sourced 17 February 2011

Appendix 1 – Policy Framework

The Whangarei District Plan sits within a layered policy framework, which incorporates the National Policy Statements, National Environmental Standards, Iwi Management Plans, the Regional Policy Statement for Northland, Regional Plans, Structure Plans and Long Term Community Council Plans. Each of these policy documents and plans has been considered in accordance with the Act.

The RMA promotes the sustainable management of natural and physical resources, including land. Section 5 of the RMA is intended to be enabling, so that people and communities can manage resources in a way or a rate that provides for their economic well being, while achieving other things: sustaining the potential of resources to meet the needs of future generations, safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems, and addressing adverse effects on the environment. Section 5(2)(c) requires that development avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.

Section 6 lists matters of national importance that are to be recognised and provided for in achieving section 5. Section 6 requires the protection and preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment, outstanding natural features and landscapes, significant indigenous vegetation and fauna, and tangata whenua values.

Section 7 includes additional matters that particular regard must be given to, including the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources; the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values; maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment and the intrinsic values of ecosystems.

1 National Environmental Standards

National Environmental Standards are regulations issued under the Act. They prescribe technical standards, methods and other requirements for environmental matters. Local and regional councils must enforce these standards (or if the standards allow, councils can enforce stricter standards). In this way, National Environmental Standards ensure consistent minimum standards are maintained throughout all New Zealand's regions and districts. The following standards are in force as regulations:

- Air quality standard (under review as of 10 June 2009)
- Sources of human drinking water standard (effective from 20 June 2008)
- Telecommunications facilities (effective from 9 October 2008)
- Electrical transmission (effective from 14 January 2010).

No National Environmental Standards (NES) have been adopted or are in preparation for subdivision.

2 Coastal Management Strategy 2003

Whangarei District Council adopted the Coastal Management Strategy in 2003. The core purpose of the Whangarei Coastal Management Strategy is to 'establish a strategic, integrated framework for managing the protection, use and development of the coastal environment within the Whangarei District'. The strategy seeks to identify a common vision for the future of our coastal environment and establish a 'way forward' to achieve this vision over the next 20 to 50 years. A comprehensive approach to the issues in the Coastal environment was undertaken, including background technical reports, community consultation, and structure plans.

The Coastal Management Strategy acknowledges that rural development and activities are located in the Coastal environment. The study attempts to establish a good basis for infrastructure planning based on growth, community aspirations for management and growth, and generating action lists to link back to the LTCCP process.

A technical paper for the Coastal Management Strategy was completed on Rural Landuse and Subdivision (2002), concluding that rural land use and development is predominant in the coastal environment. The Coastal Management Strategy sets a clear objective to "accommodate a diversity of rural land uses and development in a manner that delivers economic benefit, sustains the environment and enhances the sense of place and special character of the Whangarei Coast". Several objectives and policies have been created to direct and control future rural development in the coastal environment:

Objective

- To accommodate a diversity of rural land uses and development in a manner that delivers economic benefit, sustains the environment and enhances the sense of place and special character of the Whangarei coast.

Policies

- To sustain viable farming community along the Whangarei coast by maintaining opportunities for a diversity of rural land uses, without significant interference from adjacent residential, lifestyle, or rural-residential activities
- To carefully manage the interface between rural areas and adjacent residential or rural-residential areas, and between rural land and the conservation estate
- To advocate the benefits of voluntary protection and natural area enhancement to the rural community and to offer incentives for voluntary protection of bush remnants, sensitive ecosystems, riparian and coastal margins, and wetland areas.

Section 6 of the Coastal Management Strategy outlines District Wide methods to implement the strategy. Many of these are focused upon management of subdivision:

Regulatory

- Promote a Plan Change to “down zone” any areas currently in the Living Environment which as a result of the Strategy are no longer considered appropriate for development
- Clearly signal long term urban “fences” as part of the Structure Planning process and reinforce this through appropriate land management (e.g. rural buffers and open space zoning or reserves development)
- Promote a Plan Change to introduce controls and performance standards aimed at carefully managing the effects of development activity in coastal margins
- Promote a Plan Change to better recognise the natural character of coastal countryside area as distinct to other general countryside environments in the District. This may warrant more onerous subdivision and development controls and the introduction of specific controls for earthworks, land clearance and site development and the location of building developments within the coastal environment
- Promote a Plan Change as necessary to direct coastal lifestyle and rural-residential demand to appropriate locations (zones) adjacent to existing centres and to restrict sporadic development throughout the coastal countryside.

3 Urban Growth Strategy

The Whangarei Urban Growth Strategy (adopted October 2003), provides a medium term (20 year) vision for the future urban areas of Whangarei. It identifies issues associated with existing urban areas and associated future growth, and provides means of addressing these issues so that the vision may be achieved. The interface between urban and rural areas is addressed in the Strategy. The need for a new ‘zone’ in the urban fringe, then termed Rural Residential Environment (RRE), was established based on previous research. The rural residential theme occupied a large section in the Issues and Options Paper (2002) circulated for public comment:

Innovative subdivision design and environmentally responsive approaches are needed for rural residential areas. The traditional uniform subdivision approach with 2-5 or 10 hectare blocks is not sufficient to address the range of rural residential values. A minimum limit is a blunt planning tool that does not provide for sound environmental outcomes. A range of sizes and shapes is needed in recognition of the particular landform and landscape.

The Urban Growth Strategy separated the entire urban area of Whangarei City into sections for assessment:

- City Centre and City Port
- Morningside, Avenues and Riverside
- Kensington, Mairtown, Otangarei and Regent
- Vinegar Hill, Tikipunga and Glenbervie
- Kamo, Three Mile Bush, Whau Valley and Springs Flat
- Maunu and Horahora
- Toetoe, Otaika and Raumanga
- Portland

- Onerahi, Parahaki, Awaroa Creek and Sherwood Rise
- Hikurangi.

Extensive consultation was undertaken to guide the identification of potential areas suitable for future development. The final Urban Growth Strategy Report was adopted by Council in October 2003. The report included very specific methods and implementation directives:

Method

Create a new rural residential environment, amend District Planning Maps (by way of Plan Change) to show new rural residential environment, and add relevant objectives, policies and rules to the District Plan (by way of Plan Change) to manage land use and subdivision in the new rural residential environment (Policies 1.2.1, 9.2.1, 9.2.2, 9.2.3, 10.2.1, 10.2.2).

Implementation

Of these areas, the four areas facing rural residential development issues and the City Port area which is facing redevelopment issues have been identified as highest priority. Therefore, the first Structure Plans to be prepared will encompass:

- Vinegar Hill, Tikipunga and Glenbervie
- Kamo, Three Mile Bush, Whau Valley and Springs Flat
- Maunu and Horahora
- Onerahi, Parahaki, Awaroa Creek and Sherwood Rise
- City Port.

The Structure Plans will contain more detailed planning for each area and will address many of the identified district wide issues (e.g. loss of productive soils) and those issues specific to the area (e.g. traffic management).

4 Urban and Coastal Structure Plans

Implementation of the Coastal Management and Urban Growth Strategies includes the creation of structure plans. These structure plans are centred upon the urban areas of the city and coastal villages such as Waipu. The structure plans have a medium term planning horizon (20 years) and their implementation depends on their subsequent incorporation into statutory planning documents such as the District Plan and the LTCCP.

Appendix 2 - Whangarei District Plan Subdivision Provisions

1 Background

Draft and Proposed District Plans under the Act, resulted in the introduction of subdivision rules providing for a minimum lot size of 1ha in the Countryside Environment. Resource Management process led to the introduction of a 4 ha minimum lot size and ultimately an increase to a 20 ha minimum lot size.

Variation 5 of the District Plan was centred upon subdivision in the Coastal Countryside Environment, the Environment Court provided clear guidance with regard to the direction Council must taken in respect to the rural environment and subdivision:

The approach taken by Council did not meet the purpose of the Act by a considerable margin:

- The s32 studies were totally inadequate
- The solutions offered in V5 were broad-brush, even crude, and the relief sought by the parties almost equally so
- We were advised by the council that studies are on-going and that V5 is merely intended as some sort of a stop-gap and for 'administration convenience'
- Council considered it quite urgent that it make a proposed district plan operative, and it would be loath to initiate a further variation. (A024/2006)

"...these matters in our mind, go to questions such as the CCE minimum lot size, the CCE zone boundaries and whether there is a sufficient range of zones in the plan." (paragraph 73)

The need to provide for more zones in the plan is clear, increasing the range in the rural and coastal environments.

"...minima (allotment) are something of a blunt instrument and said he would prefer all subdivision and development to be founded on "...a comprehensive design-based approach in order to tailor a more fitted and site-specific result". We are favourably disposed to that proposition in a general sense. (paragraph 79)

"This will (20ha minimum lot size) provide a platform, if a rather crude one, that will keep the environment reasonably safe from harm until the council can conclude its current studies and initiate plan change(s) that encapsulate approaches to subdivision in these sensitive areas that better address the purpose and principles of the Act, for instance through design-based or integrated catchment analysis/management techniques" (paragraph 84).

Retention of subdivision provisions as a 20ha minimum lot size is clearly unacceptable and the Council must now consider alternative methods to provide subdivision opportunities while protecting sensitive areas.

2 Operative District Plan

The Whangarei District Plan is intended to reflect overarching strategies and achieve sustainable outcomes sought through management of development and natural resources. Land use and subdivision activities are controlled following a simple cascading structure, consistent with Section 104 of the Resource Management Act. Several District Plan Environments (zones) cover the rural environment, Countryside and Coastal Countryside Environments particularly cover those rural and coastal landscapes.

Chapter 5, Amenity Values, of the Operative District Plan outlines the characteristics that influence and enhance people's appreciation of a particular area. The plan provides an outline of the 'amenity values' specific to the rural environment contained within the Countryside and Coastal Countryside Environments:

Countryside Environment tends to be used predominantly for primary production, but is also used for low-density residential purposes. When choosing to live in a rural area, people must expect and accept a certain level of odour, noise and other effects which are characteristic of primary production, recognising the scale and intensity of these activities which contribute to rural character. Rural areas do, however, tend to have high amenity values, due primarily to the following characteristics:

- The intermittent nature of most agricultural activities
- Open landscapes and views
- A low intensity of development
- Feelings of remoteness and community
- Low noise levels, particularly at night

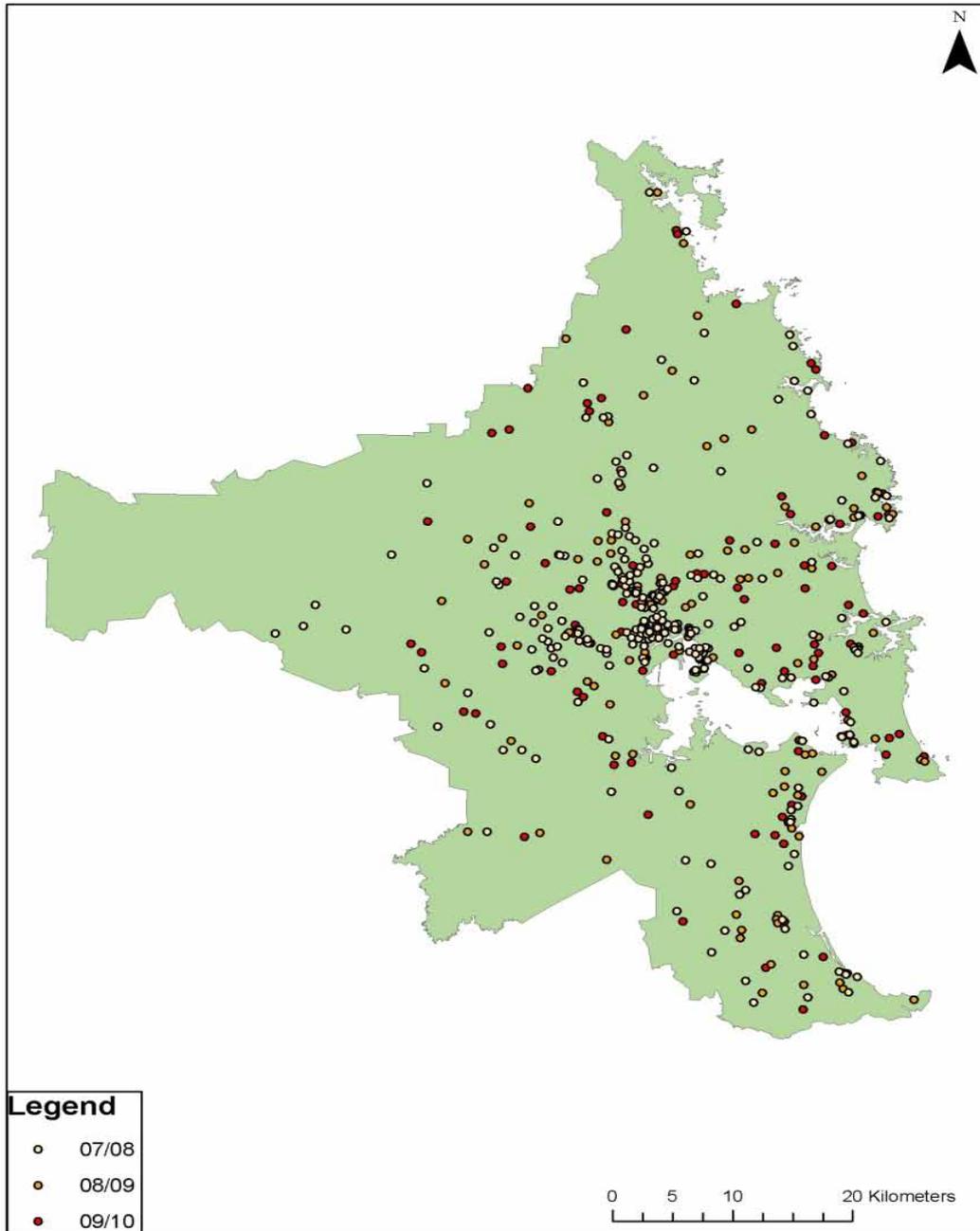
- A high degree of privacy
- Daylight and sunlight access
- Low levels of vehicular traffic
- Green 'unspoiled' landscape with indigenous vegetation.

The Countryside Environment is sensitive to activities which have continuous or ongoing effects, or that are located in close proximity to other land uses such as residential units. The Coastal Countryside Environment has similar values and qualities as the Countryside Environment, in addition to those particular values of the coastal environment.

Chapter 8 of the Operative District Plan is dedicated to Subdivision and Development. It outlines the District Wide issues, objectives and policies in relation to subdivision and development. Objective 8.3.7 seeks subdivision and development that provides for comprehensive development of land with a range of allotment sizes and is appropriate to the character of the Environment in which it is located. Policies in chapter 8, promote design and development that is appropriate to the surrounding environment and zoning.

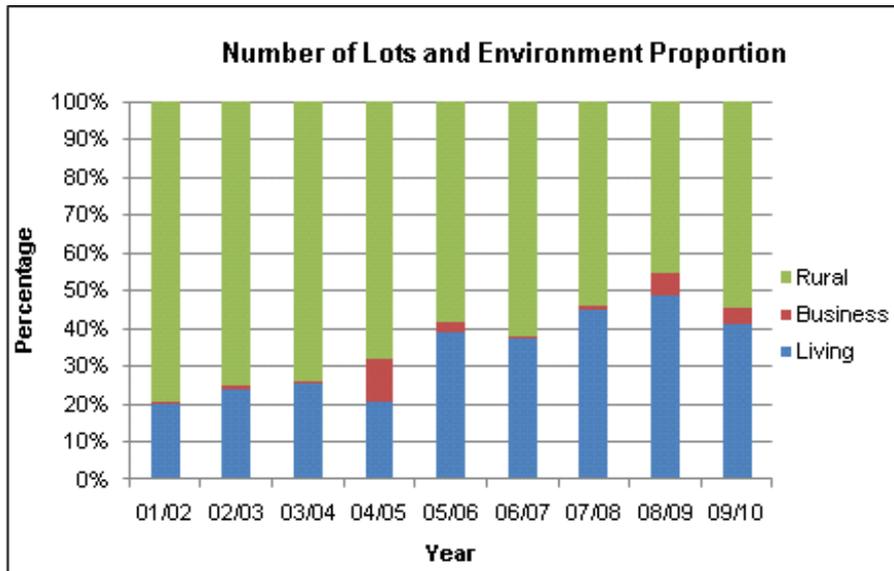
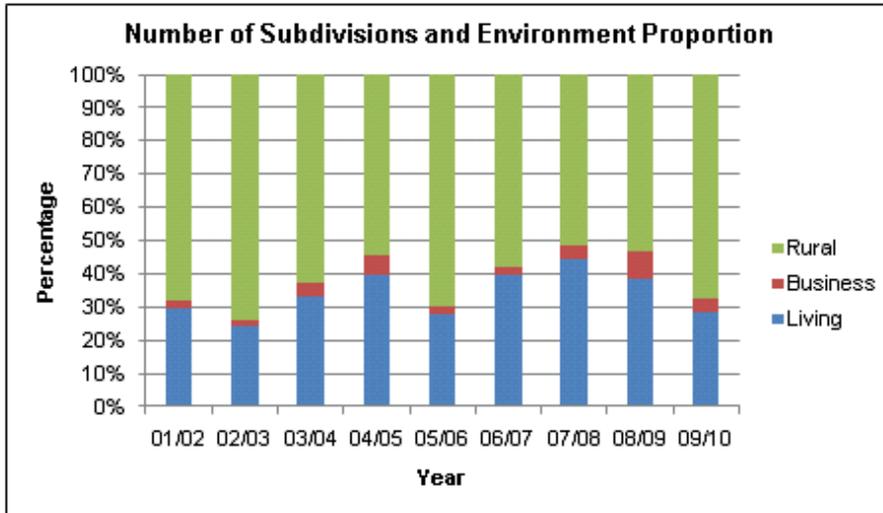
Subdivision provisions are located in Part F of the Operative District Plan. The subdivision rules apply to all proposals for subdivision in the District and resource consent is required for every subdivision. Provisions impose minimum allotment size, number of allotments, minimum built area and servicing controls

Appendix 3 Subdivision Consents

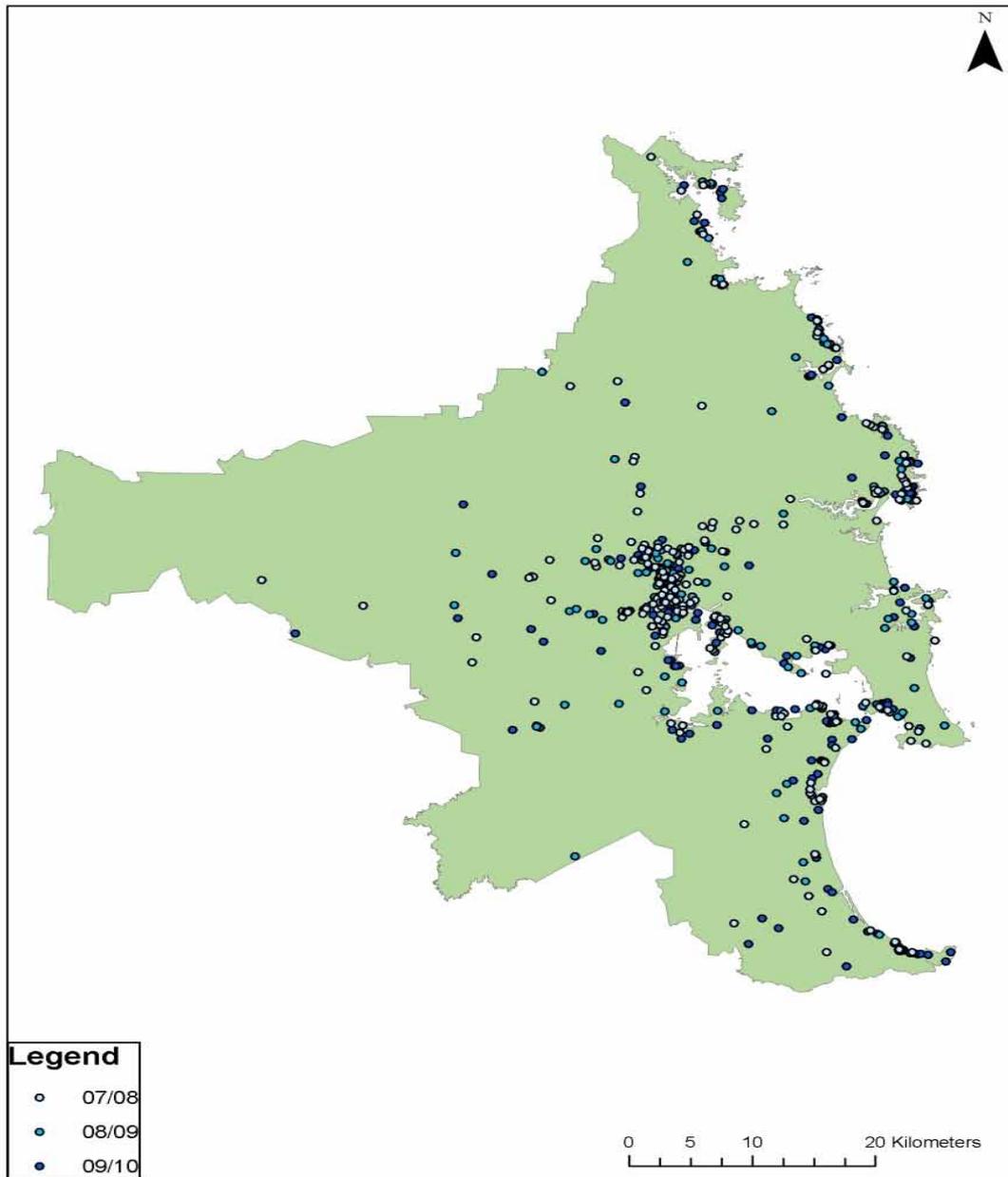


Appendix 4 Numbers of Subdivisions

Rural Grouped Countryside, Coastal Countryside, Open Space.
 Business Grouped Business 1,2,3,4.
 Living Grouped Living 1,2,3.



Appendix 5 Landuse Consents



Appendix 6 Distribution of Lifestyle Blocks in the Whangarei District

