

**BEFORE WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL HEARING COMMISSIONERS**

**IN THE MATTER**            of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**            of the Waikato District Council Proposed District Plan  
– Rezoning (Hearing 25)

---

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF DONNA MAREE TRACEY**

**On behalf of the**

**Waikato District Council**

---

**17 May 2021**

---

## I Introduction

1. My full name is Donna Maree Tracey.

### I.1 Qualifications and Experience

2. I am the Strategic Planning Team Leader with Waikato District Council (WDC).
3. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Geography from the University of Otago (2008).
4. I have nine years' experience in planning – including planning analysis, policy and sub-regional planning in local government.
5. I am employed by WDC in the Planning and Policy team. My role is primarily to lead the Strategic Planning Team on local and subregional spatial planning.

## 2 Code of Conduct

6. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and that I have complied with it when preparing this evidence. Other than when I state that I am relying on the advice of another person, this evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

## 3 My involvement in the PWDP

7. I was part of the WDC team who reviewed the Operative Waikato District Plan and drafted the content of the Proposed Waikato District Plan (PWDP) and supporting analyses prepared under s32 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).
8. I project-managed both the drafting of the PWDP Infrastructure and Energy chapter and the development of the PWDP planning maps.
9. I have since had limited involvement in the hearings other than providing strategic planning guidance to WDC staff and its consultants preparing the s42A reports for Hearing 25.

## 4 Scope of Evidence

10. I have been asked on behalf of Waikato District Council (WDC) to prepare this evidence highlighting the relevant strategic planning documents that have shaped planning in the district over the last 12 years.

## 5 Structure of Evidence

11. My evidence is structured into two sections. First, I provide an executive summary. Second, I provide in chronological order highlights of the relevant planning frameworks and key documents over the last 12 years.



## 6 Executive Summary

12. The planning documents set out below highlight how each strategy, variation, plan change or process has contributed to the settlement pattern throughout the Waikato District from 2009 to the present.
13. Regional and sub-regional documents are headed in **blue**, whilst district-specific documents are headed in **black**.
14. The strategies and related documents have built on one another as understanding of growth pressures has increased and policy direction has evolved.
15. Some documents are fairly recent (e.g. Waikato 2070), while others (e.g. Future Proof Strategy) are due to be updated. Recent documents share common principles, even if the geographic boundaries of intended growth cells are not yet completely consistent.
16. It is important to note that Future Proof urban limits (2009 and 2017) and Waikato 2070 growth cells are indicative and subject to detailed planning processes such as structure plan or plan change.
17. Broadly speaking, the growth strategies both at a sub-regional and local level have sought to direct growth and development to a more compact and concentrated settlement pattern in and adjacent to existing townships. More recently the Hamilton to Auckland Corridor work with central government, which identifies the sub-region as New Zealand's fastest growing corridor, strengthens the need for a compact settlement with strong linkages, protection of the environment and the provision of public transport connections.
18. The variations and plan changes undertaken over the last 12 years have been in response to the growth pressures experienced in the Waikato District.
19. The PWDP is not the only element of the strategic work programme; it is recognised that the WRPS review, Future Proof Strategy review and potential future WDC plan changes will all be needed to comply with the NPS-UD and up-to-date understanding of demand/supply issues.

## 7 Discussion

### 7.1 Waikato District Growth Strategy, 2009

- The Waikato District Growth Strategy was the first growth strategy for Waikato District Council (WDC).
- It was developed across the same time frame as the Future Proof Growth Strategy 2009.

- It provided clear direction to grow and revitalise the district's towns and villages with a target of 80% of growth to occur in and adjacent to existing towns and villages – this target also appeared in Future Proof 2009.
- It did not set out a land use pattern or identify growth spatially, but listed the following areas for growth:
  - Hampton Downs/Te Kauwhata, Meremere and Huntly
  - Taupiri, Ngaruawahia and Horotiu
  - Gordonton, Tamahere, Tauwhare, Eureka, Newstead, Te Kowhai, Whatawhata, Horsham Downs and Matangi
  - Raglan and the Whaanga Coast.
- It was consulted on publicly and submissions were received and considered.

## **7.2 Te Kauwhata Structure Plan/District Plan Variation, 2009**

- Te Kauwhata was seen as the township in the district with the most growth pressure at the time.
- A comprehensive Structure Plan sought to identify new areas for development.
- The outputs of the Structure Plan resulted in Variation 13 to the Proposed Waikato District Plan, which was notified in 2009.
- It introduced additional residential, reserve, business and industrial land supply.
- It included a comprehensive network of indicative roads, walkways and ecological areas with development contributions established to fund the growth portion of these capital works.
- Some of the proposed residential land supply was identified on an area of existing undeveloped Country Living Zone.
- In conjunction with this, a notice of requirement was lodged for a bypass to remove heavy traffic from the main street of the town.
- It introduced the first provisions to enable mixed use development. This was via a policy overlay allowing for commercial, medium density residential and open space. As at the date of writing, the sites containing the overlay have yet to be developed.
- It became operative in 2012 following an appeal.
- The appeal contested the level of growth Te Kauwhata was projected to receive. The appeal saw a reduction of the extent of residential land proposed in the west, which remained as undeveloped Country Living Zone.
- The total additional lots expected once the zoning is fully realised is approximately 2000.

### 7.3 Future Proof, 2009

- Future Proof, a sub-regional partnership, was formed in 2007 between Ngā Karu Atua o te Waka Waikato-Tainui, Tainui Waka Alliance, Waikato Regional Council, Waipa District Council, Waikato District Council, Hamilton City Council and Waka Kotahi (NZ Transport Agency).
- There was a desire to have a 30-year sub-regional growth strategy to assist the sub-region. The drivers included:
  - Responding to concerns from the community about the lack of collaboration and leadership in the management of growth across the territorial boundaries in the sub-region.
  - Responding to concerns from Waka Kotahi about the lack of integrated land use and transport planning in this area.
  - Future Proof partners were seeking central government investment for the Waikato Expressway and needed to demonstrate cohesive sub-regional planning with a sound land use settlement pattern.
  - An awareness of the need to inform the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (WRPS) and Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan (WRLTP) documents.
  - An increasing recognition of the Waikato region's role in the upper North Island economy, alongside the Auckland and Bay of Plenty regions.
  - Significant growth rates occurring in the sub-region.
- Future Proof developed a strategy which was adopted by partner councils in 2009, following consultation under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA), which included calling for submissions and holding a hearing.
- It defined WDC's growth and development areas spatially for the first time. These areas were the district's four towns (Te Kauwhata, Huntly, Ngaruawahia and Raglan) and various rural villages.
- It mapped these areas with indicative urban limits (*see maps attachment 1*) and these were included in Chapter 6 of the WRPS (*see below*).
- It set out three growth scenarios - the preferred option being a hybrid of a compact and concentrated settlement pattern. It set the directive to reverse the current settlement pattern for WDC that historically saw approximately 80% of additional homes in rural/lifestyle areas and 20% in urban.
- In it (and subsequently WRPS) the population of the Waikato District was projected to increase steadily from 45,400 in 2006 to 86,600 in 2061. These population projections reflected the local territorial boundary of Waikato District at the time (it excluded the former Franklin District portion). Figure 2 on page 41 in Council's Framework report provides updated population projections.

#### **7.4 Waikato Regional Policy Statement and Proposed Change 2, 2009**

- Proposed Change 2 to the WRPS aimed to provide a statutory basis under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) for giving effect to the direction set out in the Future Proof Strategy.
- It saw the introduction of 19 policies in Chapter 6 *Built Environment* to better enable the sub-region to achieve the outcomes sought by the Future Proof partners.
- Specifically, it resulted in the introduction of policies adopting the Future Proof land use pattern, density targets, management of rural-residential development, Chapter 6A development principles and 6.14.3 criteria for alternative land release.
- The population projection tables and industrial land supply that were identified in Future Proof were included in Chapter 6, along with the indicative urban limit map.
- Appeals relevant to WRPS Change 2 covered the industrial land allocation and wording changes to the development principles around water, public transport, taangata whenua and significant industry.
- The Waikato Regional Policy Statement became operative in 2016.

#### **7.5 District-Wide Growth and Rural Subdivision (PWDP Variation 16), 2010**

- WDC identified the need to reduce the amount of development occurring in rural areas. Policy drivers included the land fragmentation and ribbon development around Hamilton City, the loss of rural productivity, and the Future Proof target of 80% of development occurring in urban areas.
- Variation 16 included a new chapter embedding the Waikato District Growth Strategy (2009) in the PWDP, and included an overhaul of the Rural and Coastal zone rules to restrict subdivision and development in rural areas.
- It was appealed by partner councils and, as a result, the minimum lot size for general rural subdivision increased, to further strengthen the intentions of the variation.
- It was made operative in 2014.

#### **7.6 Local body boundary adjustment, 2010**

- Formation of Auckland Council resulted in a boundary adjustment that impacted the Waikato District.
- Waikato District saw a portion of the former Franklin District fall within its jurisdiction, including the townships of Tuakau and Pokeno.

#### **7.7 Rangitahi Development, Raglan (WDP Private Plan Change 12), 2013**

- Plan Change 12 to the WDP was a privately-initiated plan change which introduced the Rangitahi Peninsula for Residential development.

- It saw a need for additional residential lots to be brought to the market, as there was limited supply of new lots in the township of Raglan.
- It provided for an additional 500 residential lots and a local neighbourhood centre.
- It was made operative in 2016 with no appeals.

### **7.8 Tuakau Structure Plan (WDP Plan Change 16), 2014**

- Pressure from the Tuakau community to have a plan for Tuakau's growth saw the development of the Tuakau Structure Plan. It undertook a comprehensive assessment of the existing township and surrounding landscape.
- With the Whangarata Business Park plan change already undertaken by Franklin District Council in 2010 to address employment land supply, the focus of the structure plan was on providing additional residential land supply, and how this would connect with the existing township and town centre.
- The structure plan provided guidance on the development of the Town Centre, growth cells with staging, and timing for residential and rural residential development.
- It was anticipated to provide for approximately 2670 additional lots (6946 people), seeing the town grow to 11,108 people by 2046.
- Proposed Plan Change 16 to implement Stage One Land Use of the Structure Plan was notified in 2016.
- It was withdrawn in 2017, as the plan change was not delivering on the outcomes identified in the structure plan, and it was thought these would be better achieved through the pending WDP review.

### **7.9 Waikato District Development Strategy, 2015**

- The Waikato District Development Strategy sought to update the 2009 Growth Strategy and incorporate the Franklin District Growth Strategy.
- It highlighted the growth pressures from Auckland and Hamilton and the significant population increases expected.
- It did not explicitly provide demographics for WDC due to the lack of updated statistics at the time (it was reliant on the out-of-date 2013 census).
- Major topics were identified as resilient communities, sustainable environment, governance, transport, three waters and solid waste, and parks and reserves.
- Key urban and rural outcomes were set with a strong aim to direct growth to existing nodes that have infrastructure and that are in accordance with the Future Proof Strategy.
- Maps that spatially identify the growth areas aligned to the Franklin District Growth Strategy (Tuakau and Pokeno), structure plans (Te Kauwhata, Tuakau, and Ngaruawahia and Surrounds) and recent plan changes (Rangitahi).
- Consultation was limited to key stakeholders and partner councils.

### **7.10 Ngaruawahia, Taupiri, Hopuhopu, Horotiu, Te Kowhai and Glen Massey Structure Plan (WDP Plan Change 17), 2017**

- Growth pressure and a shortfall of land supply for residential development saw the development of the Ngaruawahia and Surrounds Structure Plan.
- It undertook a comprehensive assessment of the existing township and surrounding landscape.
- It provided guidance on the development of the town centre, growth cells with staging and timing for residential, business and rural residential development.
- It was anticipated to provide for approximately 1739 additional lots spread across the town and four villages.
- Plan Change 17 to implement Stage One (land use) of the Structure Plan was notified in 2016 before the Structure Plan was adopted.
- It saw additional residential land zoned in Ngaruawahia, Taupiri and Horotiu, Country Living zoning in Te Kowhai and Taupiri, and Business zoning in Ngaruawahia and Horotiu.
- It resulted in no change to zoning in Hopuhopu and Glen Massey.
- It was operative in 2017 with no appeals.

### **7.11 Te Kauwhata Lakeside (WDP Private Plan Change 20), 2017**

- A private plan change to rezone 194 hectares of land predominately for residential development, including a neighbourhood centre.
- It sought medium density (300m<sup>2</sup> average lot size) and high density (200-205m<sup>2</sup>) development which would see the first of these densities in the district.
- It provides for approximately an additional 1600 lots.
- It was made operative in 2018 with no appeals.

### **7.12 Pokeno Graham Block (WDP Private Plan Change 21), 2017**

- A private plan change to include an additional growth area for residential development adjacent to a large growth area already under development.
- It was made operative in 2018 with no appeals.

### **7.13 Future Proof Strategy Update, 2017**

- Strategy update (Phase I) incorporated the northern part of the Waikato District that was once part of the former Franklin District.

- It revised the demographic projections (supply/demand tables).
- It updated the indicative urban limit maps (*See maps attachment 1*) to reflect completed structure plans and plan changes.
- It removed urban limits for some small rural settlements (e.g. Renown, Waikokowai, Rangiriri, Eureka).
- It gave effect to the NPS-UDC 2016.
- It resulted in minimum targets for housing being included in the Operative and Proposed Waikato district plans.

#### **7.14 Hamilton to Auckland Corridor Plan, 2018**

- The initiative to develop a Hamilton to Auckland corridor plan emerged from the Urban Growth Agenda of central government. A partnership was formed between Crown, Iwi and Councils.
- The focus on this corridor was based on the following factors:
  - It being New Zealand's most significant water, road and rail corridor.
  - The corridor connects two of New Zealand's largest and fastest growing urban areas along a corridor with high natural and cultural importance and value.
  - There is significant further housing and employment growth potential, particularly in the Papakura-Pokeno and Hamilton-Waikato metro areas.
  - Existing corridor management issues – such as congestion on the Southern Motorway and water discharge quality.
  - Councils and mana whenua along the corridor have a history of being willing to collaborate on land use and infrastructure planning (Future Proof). It cuts across territorial, iwi and government administrative boundaries, providing opportunities to create new shared insights, strategic thinking and frameworks to test current approaches, build new alliances and partnerships.
- The initiative built on existing planning processes in Auckland and the Waikato, but recognised that to date local government hasn't had all the tools needed to truly transform the corridor.
- Six programme focus areas were developed which were: waters, stronger corridor connections, Papakura-Pokeno, River communities, Hamilton-Waikato Metropolitan Area, new tools and options.
- It helped WDC formalise its relationship with central government, and to facilitate projects like the start-up passenger rail service and North Waikato South Auckland transport connections business case with Waka Kotahi.
- It helped formalise new cross-boundary projects such as strategic water and wastewater planning.
- It was not consulted on.

- It includes high level strategic focus areas but does not include a granular land use pattern.
- It was finalised and the new project partnership was launched in 2018 and endorsed by Cabinet.
- An update was completed in 2020.

### **7.15 Hamilton-Waikato Metropolitan Spatial Plan (MSP), 2019**

- This project was a programme focus area identified in the Hamilton to Auckland corridor plan.
- It is a tool to shape how Hamilton City and the neighbouring communities within Waipa and Waikato districts grow and develop in the long-term.
- It will help WDC address the current and future challenges faced by the metro area from declining water quality in the Waikato River and its major tributary the Waipa River, to environmental deterioration, increasing housing costs, and demands placed on our infrastructure, including from the number of cars on our roads to our public transport options.
- It identified Ngaruawahia/Hopuhopu/Taupiri area as a priority development area for urban growth, and Horotiu Freight Hub as a location for growing jobs and contributing to the economic corridor.
- It uses a growth scenario where the population of the metropolitan area is expected to double to 500,000 people. With 30% of this growth expected in the Waikato and Waipa district townships (Ngaruawahia and Taupiri) and, of that 30%, 50% be provided through infill and intensification of existing urban areas.
- It was not consulted on.
- It includes high-level strategic focus areas but does not include a granular land use pattern.
- It was approved by the Future Proof and endorsed by Cabinet in 2020. [s](#)

### **7.16 Waikato 2070 (Waikato District Growth and Economic Development Strategy), 2020**

- Waikato 2070 provides a long-term, 50-year plan to achieve WDC's vision of creating liveable, thriving and connected communities.
- It is based around four key themes which are:
  - Grow Our Communities
  - Build Our Businesses
  - Embrace Our Identity
  - Empower Our People.



- It identifies spatially, with some detail, future growth areas over the short, medium and long term.
- The spatial land use pattern is in response to the issues such as where the towns are growing and where should future employment areas be located.
- It has development plans for each of the identified growth towns and villages. The development plans set out land use by identifying growth cells, building typology and density, as well as the development time frame.
- The identification and location of growth cells were informed by all previous planning processes mentioned above.
- It was the first time WDC had a detailed spatial plan that articulates where growth will be located within each town.
- There are some growth cells identified in Waikato 2070 that were not identified in the Hamilton to Auckland Corridor Plan for various reasons.
- The development plans identify areas that are both within the Proposed Waikato District Plan (but in some instances the density is different) and beyond what was intended in the proposed plan, as it takes a longer-term view.
- Key points of difference between Waikato 2070 and the proposed plan are the identification of a Medium Density Zone located around existing town centres and future transportation hubs for bus and rail. Town centres are areas where retail is envisioned on ground floors and a mix of commercial and residential located on subsequent floors.
- It identifies substantial growth areas for employment land throughout the district, whereas, historically, planning in the district had focused on residential land supply.
- It was prepared using the Special Consultative Procedure of the Local Government Act 2002 which included district-wide consultation and a hearing.

### **7.17 Strategic Boundary Agreement between Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council, 2020**

- This agreement updated a previous agreement which was signed in 2005.
- Both councils agreed that the triggers set out in the 2005 agreement for the defined areas to transfer were no longer fit for purpose, because the timing of the transfers in the 2005 agreement was predicated on the construction of the Waikato Expressway. The completion of the Waikato Expressway will be much sooner than originally thought at the time of writing the 2005 agreement.
- The timing of transfer requests is now flexible and at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive of Hamilton City Council.

### **7.18 Future Proof, 2019-2021**

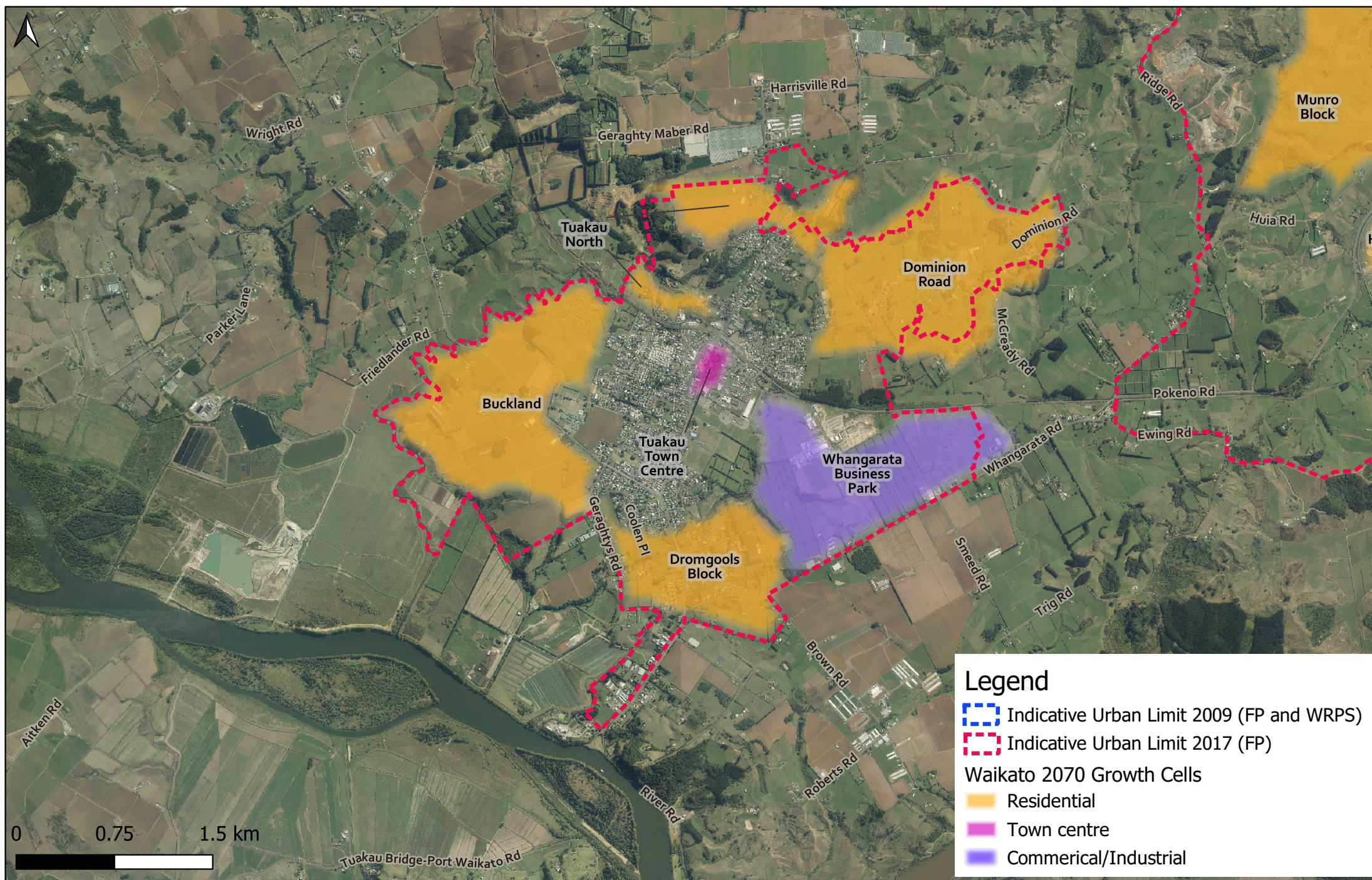
- In 2019 the membership of Future Proof was revised as a result of the Hamilton to Auckland corridor work. It now, in addition to existing members, includes Central Government, Mana Whenua Kaitiaki Forum, Auckland Council and the Waikato District Health Board.
- The Future Proof Strategy document is currently under review for updating; this will incorporate the Hamilton to Auckland Corridor Plan and the Hamilton-Waikato Metropolitan Spatial Plan.
- It will also seek to implement some of the objectives and policies of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD), but Future Proof acknowledges that a further update will be required prior to the 2024 Long Term Plan cycle to ensure that the strategy meets the NPS-UD requirements of a Future Development Strategy.

---

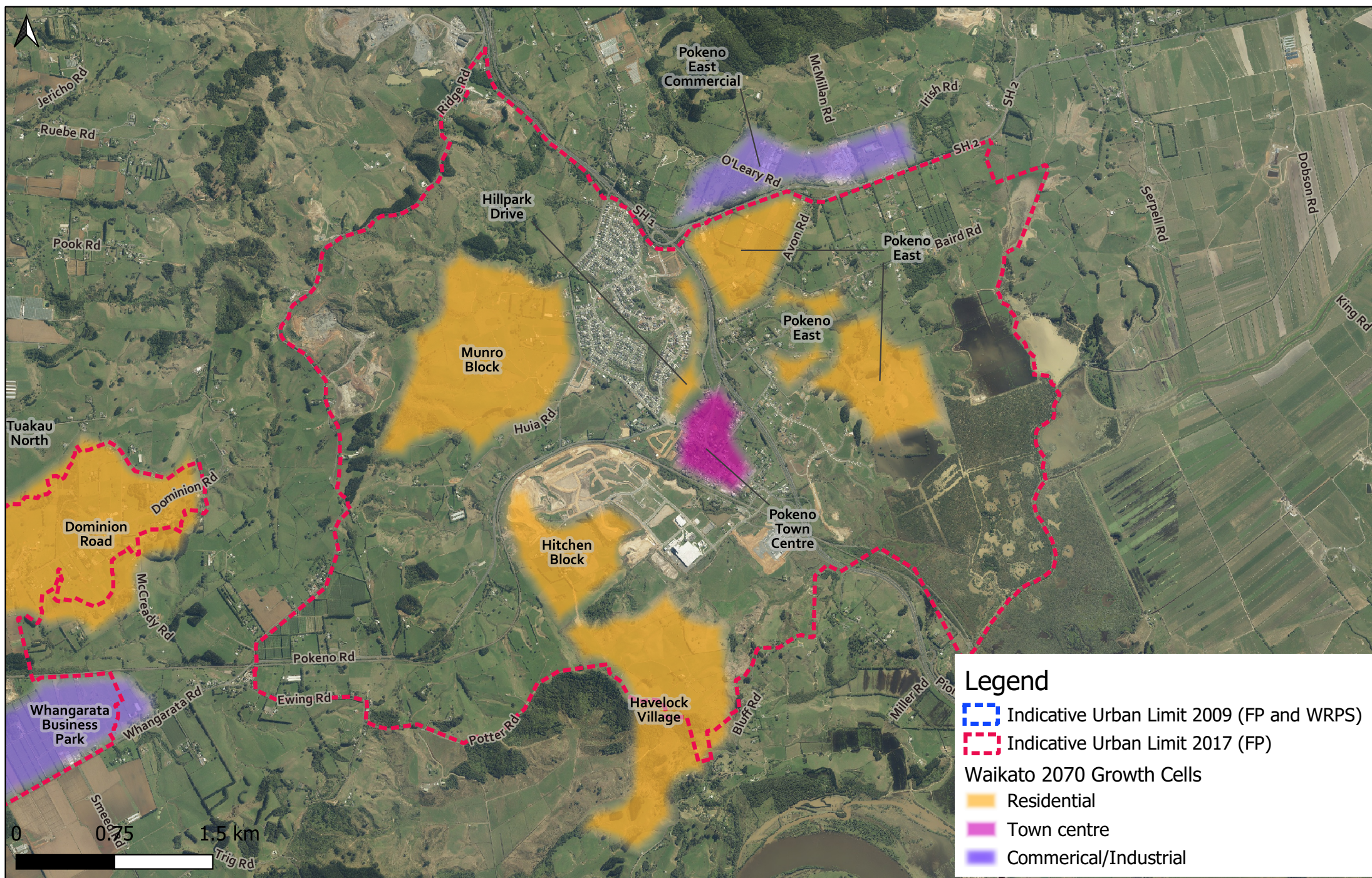
**DONNA MAREE TRACEY**

**18 MAY 2021**









## Legend

  Indicative Urban Limit 2009 (FP and WRPS)

  Indicative Urban Limit 2017 (FP)

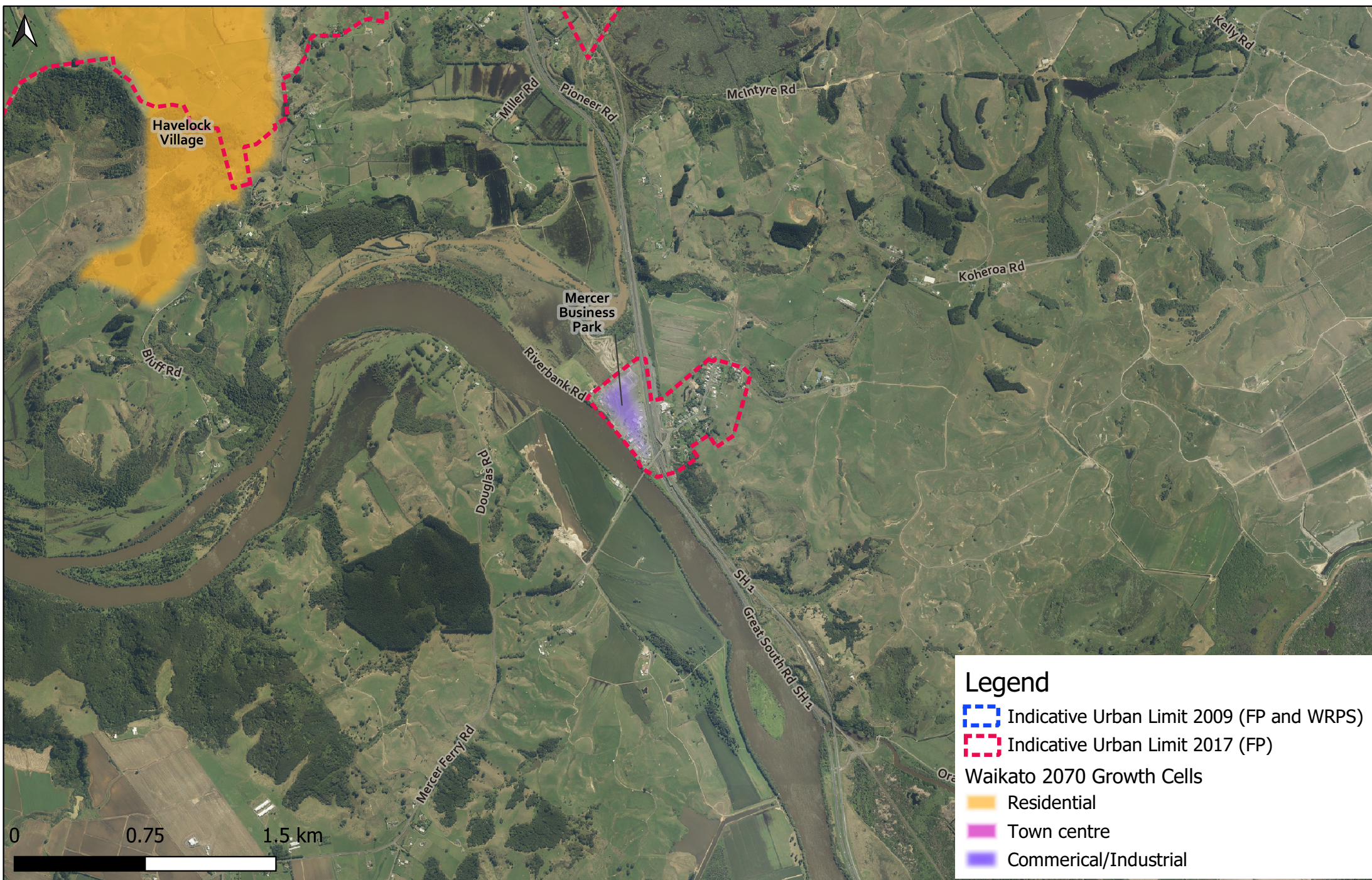
Waikato 2070 Growth Cells

Residential

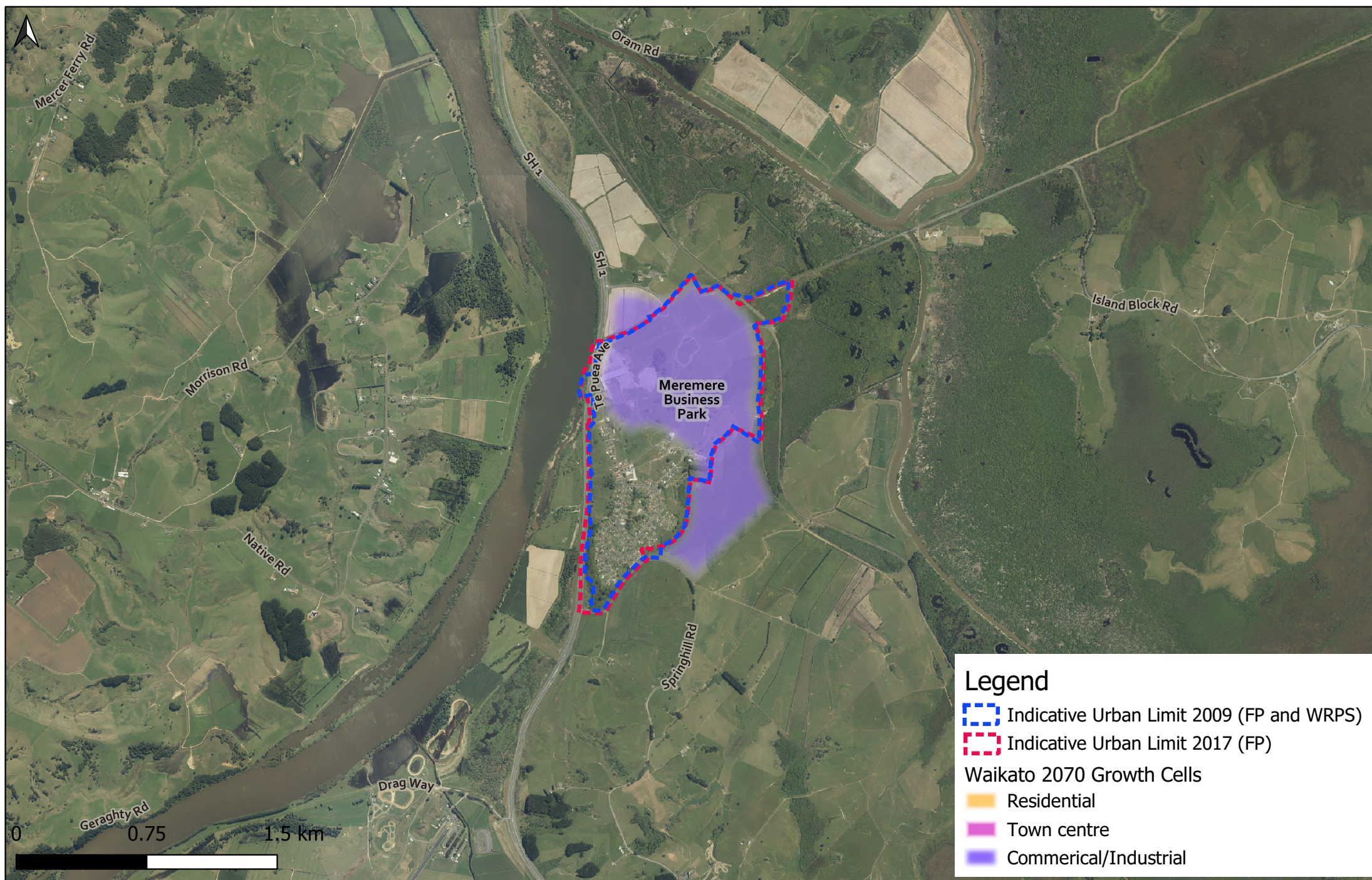
Town centre

Commercial/Industrial

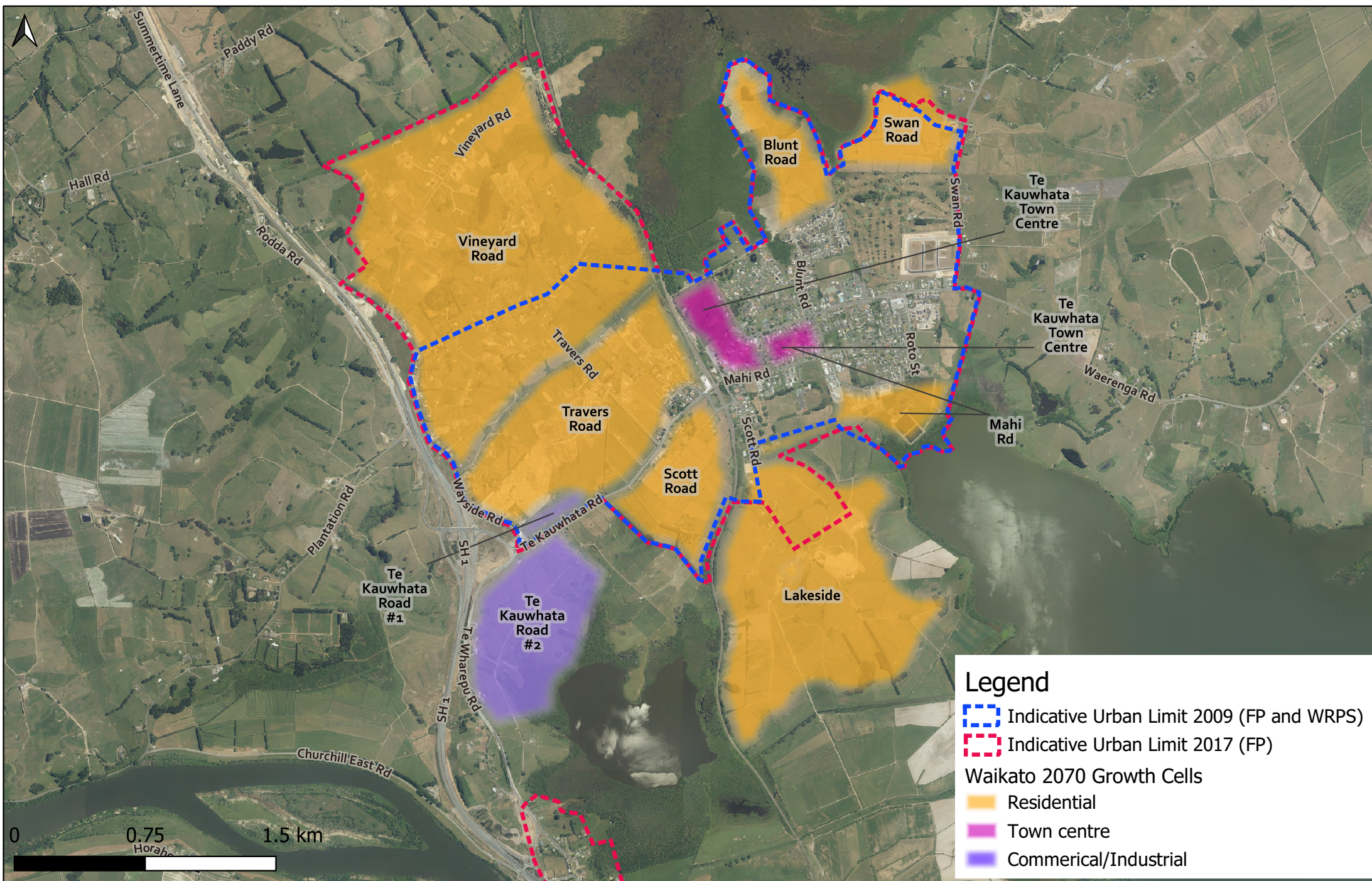




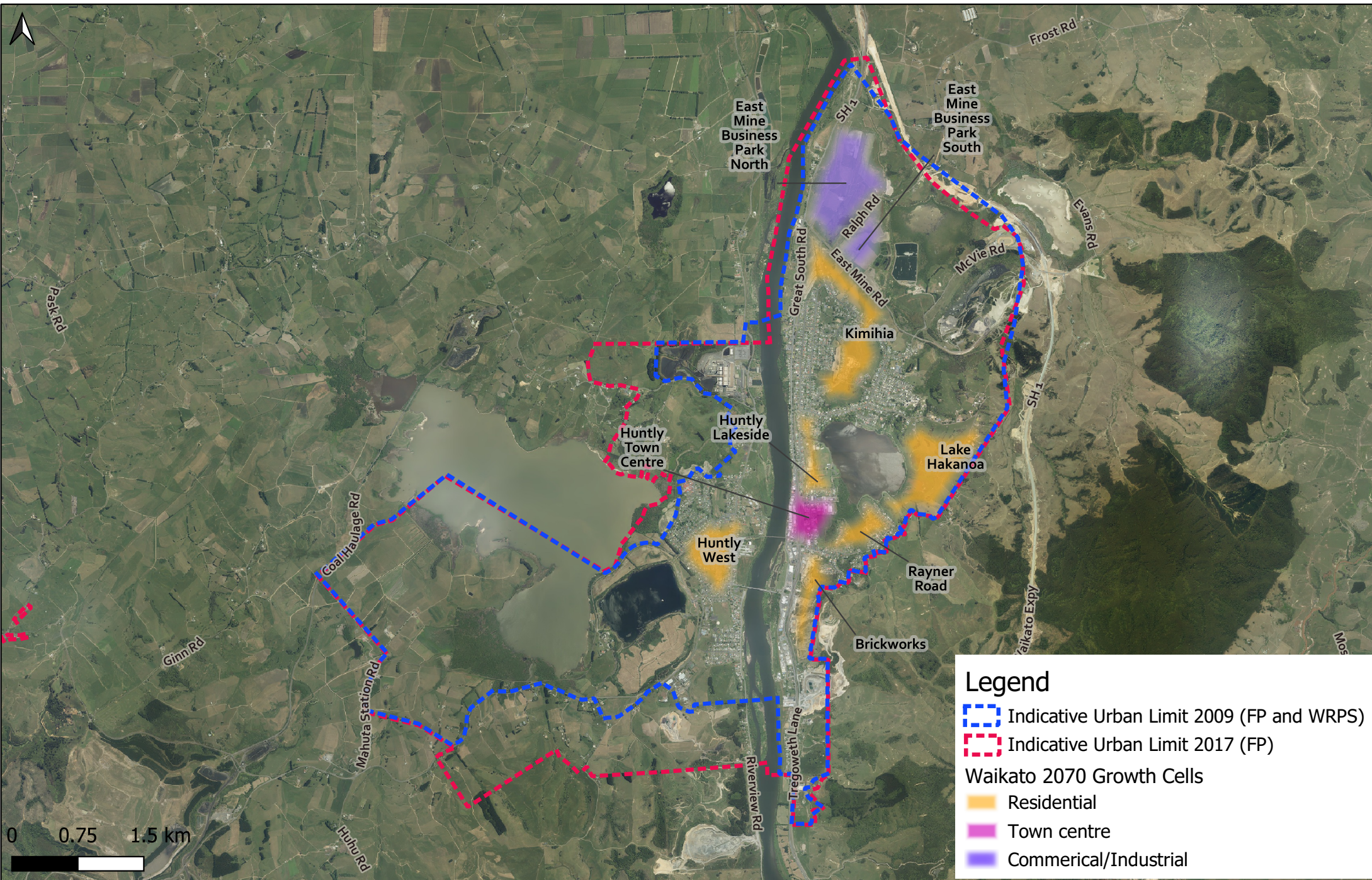












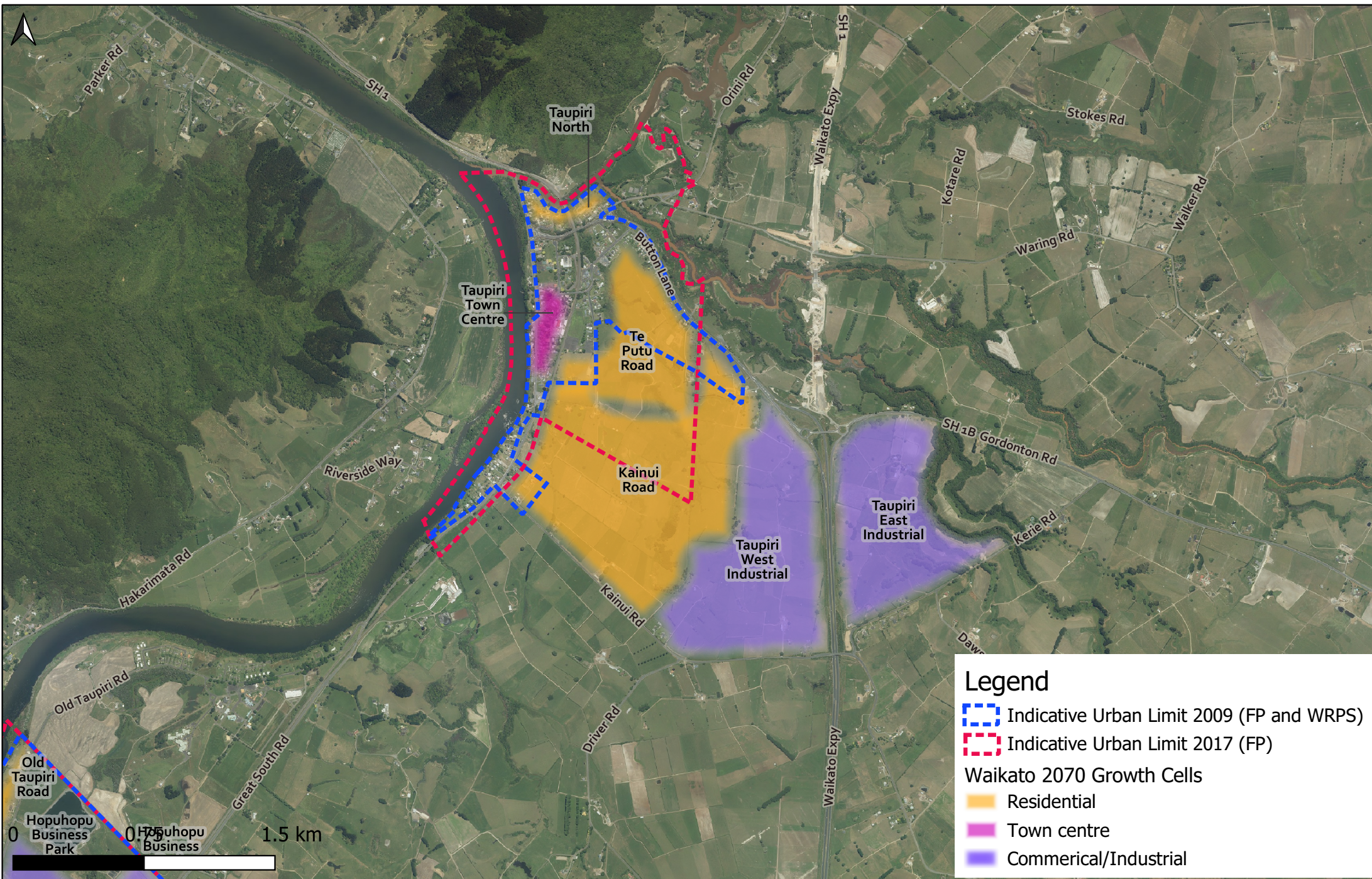
**Legend**

- Indicative Urban Limit 2009 (FP and WRPS)
- Indicative Urban Limit 2017 (FP)

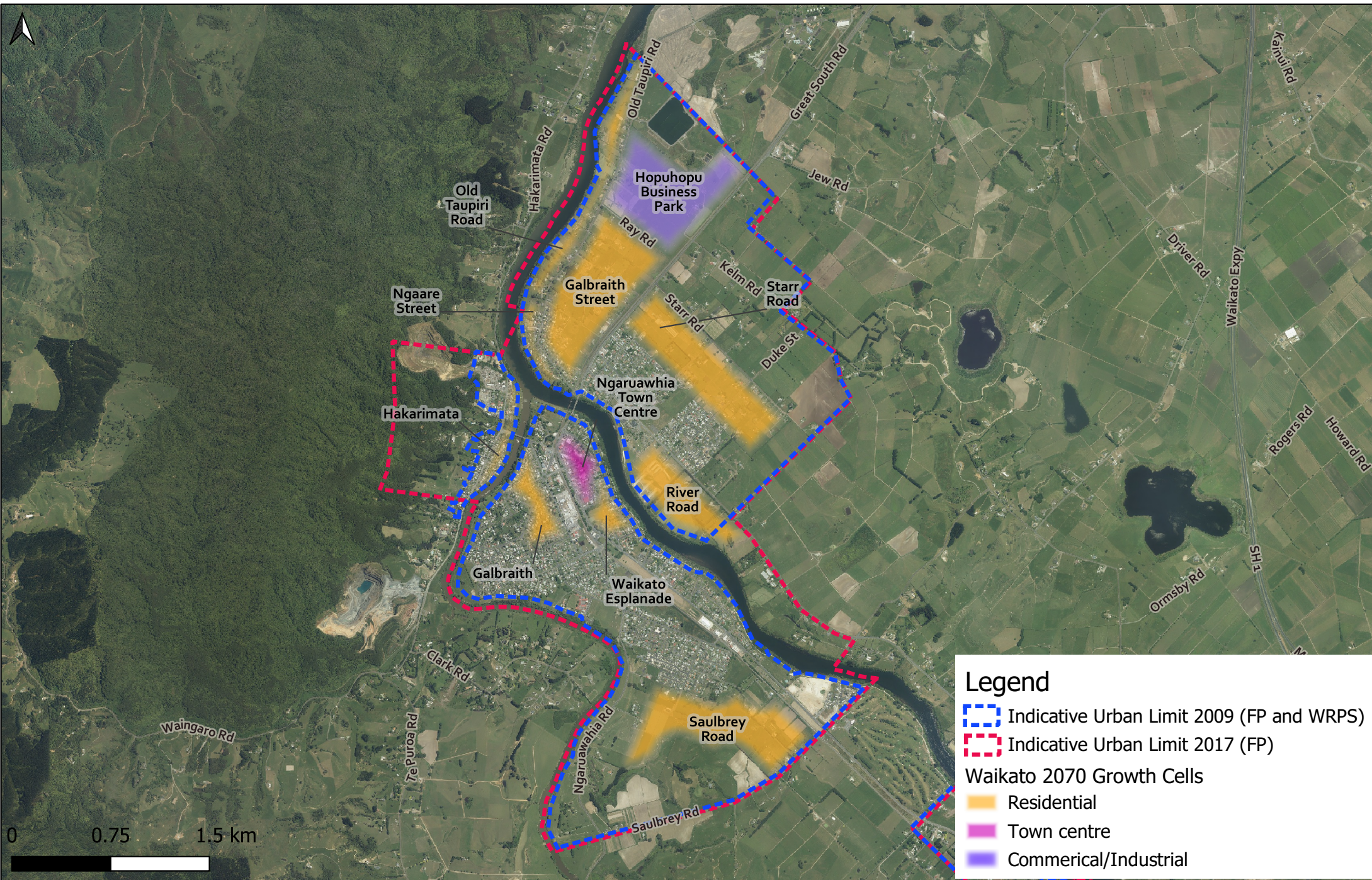
**Waikato 2070 Growth Cells**

- Residential
- Town centre
- Commerical/Industrial









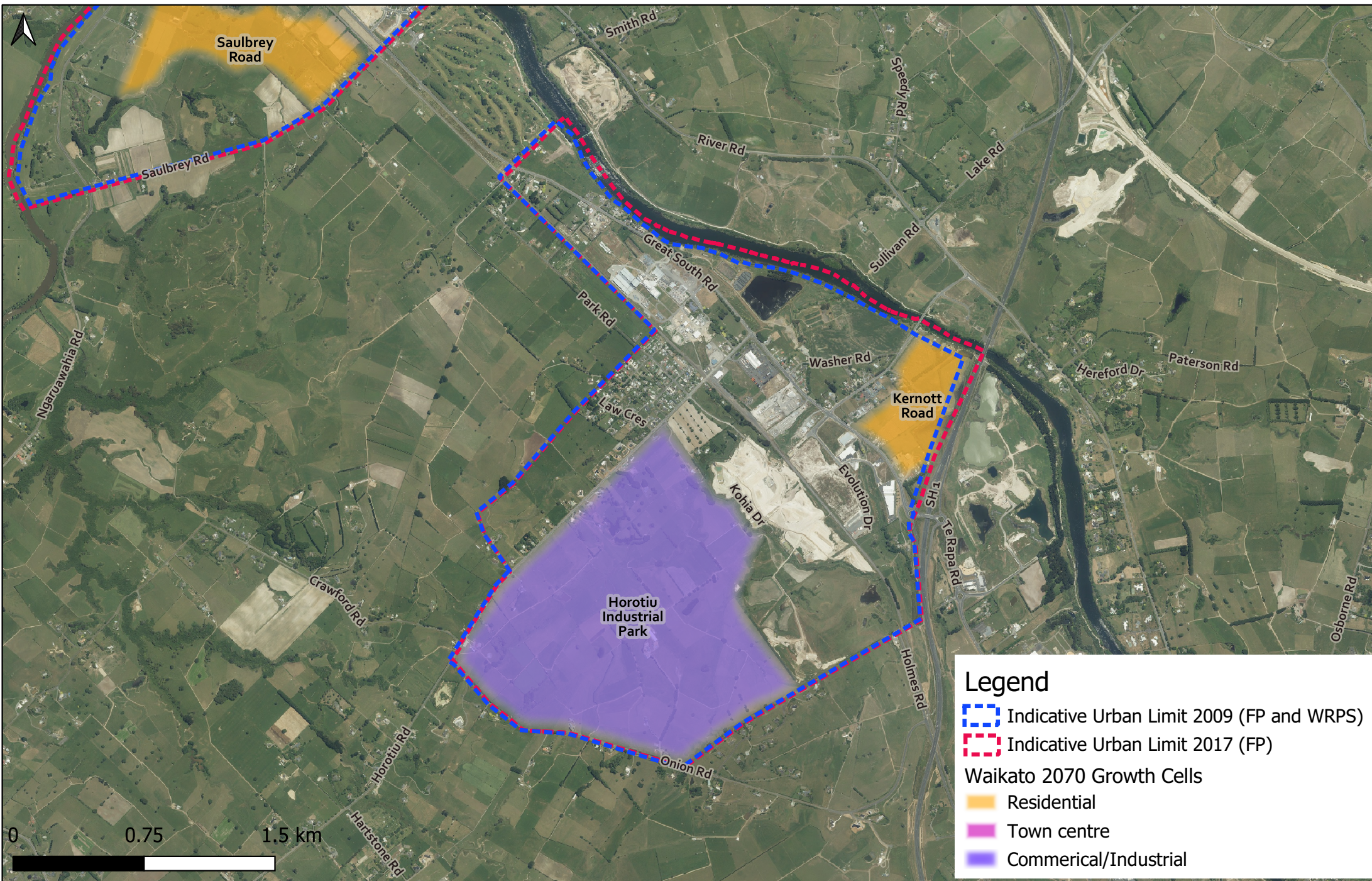
**Legend**

- Indicative Urban Limit 2009 (FP and WRPS)
- Indicative Urban Limit 2017 (FP)

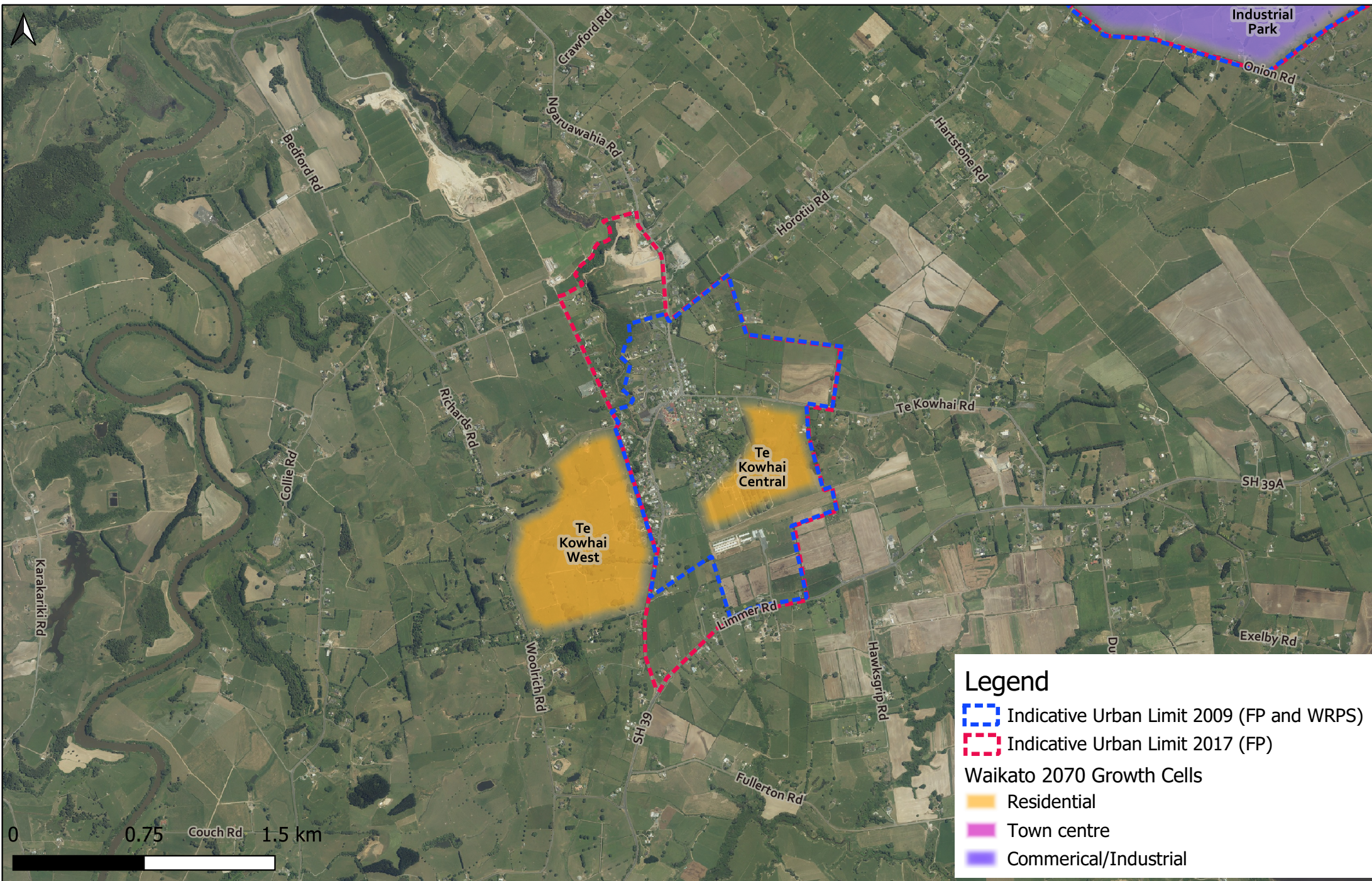
**Waikato 2070 Growth Cells**

- Residential
- Town centre
- Commercial/Industrial

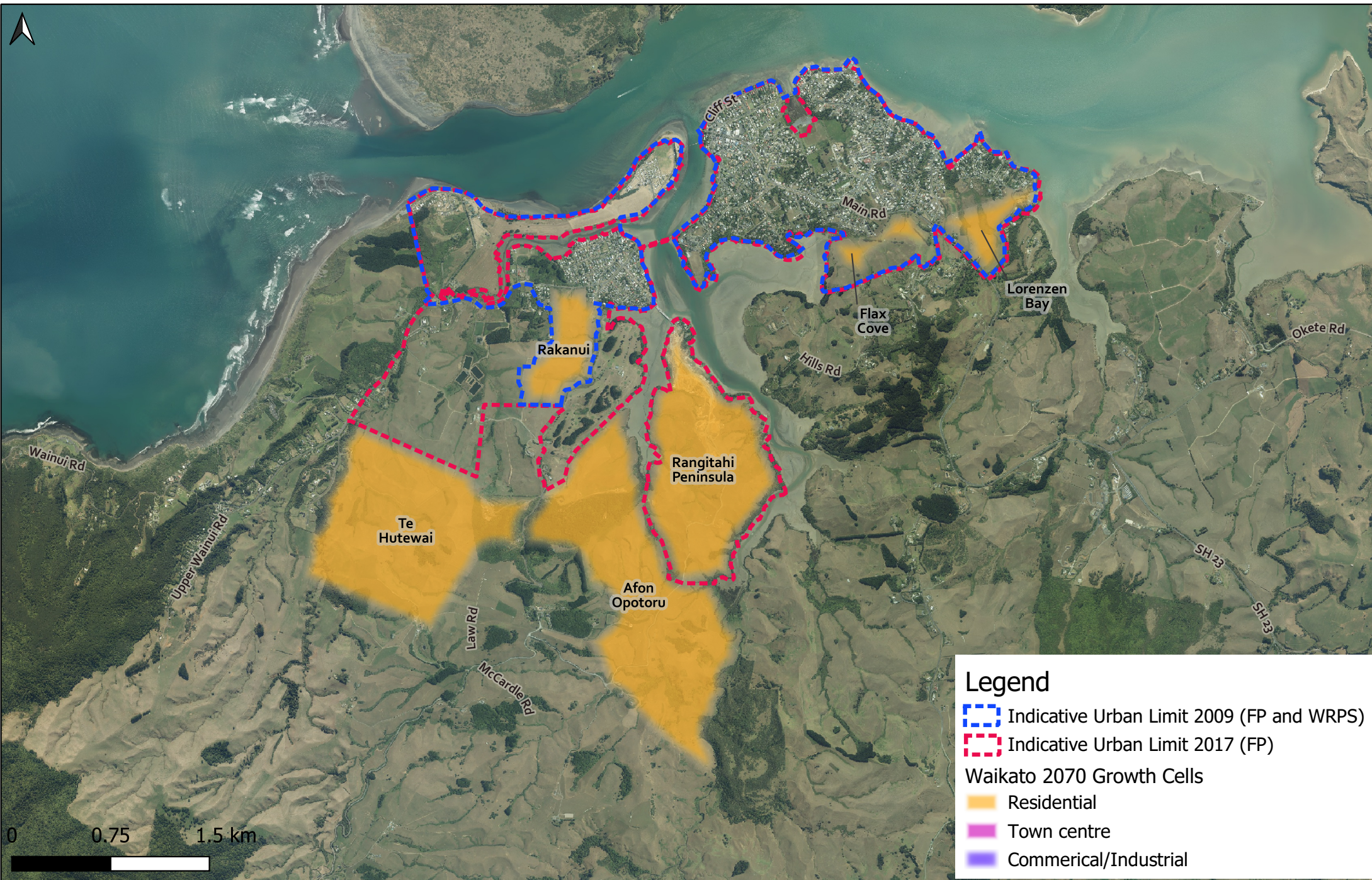












**Legend**

- Indicative Urban Limit 2009 (FP and WRPS)
- Indicative Urban Limit 2017 (FP)

**Waikato 2070 Growth Cells**

- Residential
- Town centre
- Commercial/Industrial