

# Chapter 5: Rural Environment

Proposed Waikato District Plan

Stage I

(Notified version)



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## Chapter 5: Rural Environment

The following objectives and policies apply to the Rural Zone.

Specific policies apply to Hamilton's Urban Expansion Area (Objective 5.5.1 and Policies 5.5.1 and 5.5.2) and the following Specific Areas:

- Agricultural Research Centres (Policy 5.3.16)
- Huntly Power Station Coal and Ash Water (Policy 5.3.17)
- Whaanga Coast Development Areas (Policy 5.3.18)

### 5.1 The Rural Environment

Objective 5.1.1 is the strategic objective for the rural environment and has primacy over all other objectives in Chapter 5.

#### 5.1.1 Objective – The rural environment

- (a) Subdivision, use and development within the rural environment where:
- (i) high class soils are protected for productive rural activities;
  - (ii) productive rural activities are supported, while maintaining or enhancing the rural environment;
  - (iii) urban subdivision, use and development in the rural environment is avoided.

### 5.2 Productive Versatility of Rural Resources

#### 5.2.1 Objective - Rural resources

- (a) Maintain or enhance the:
- (i) Inherent life-supporting capacity and versatility of soils, in particular high class soils;
  - (ii) The health and wellbeing of rural land and natural ecosystems;
  - (iii) The quality of surface fresh water and ground water, including their catchments and connections;
  - (iv) Life-supporting and intrinsic natural characteristics of water bodies and coastal waters and the catchments between them.

#### 5.2.2 Policy - High class soils

- (a) Soils, in particular high class soils, are retained for their primary productive value.
- (b) Ensure the adverse effects of activities do not compromise the physical, chemical and biological properties of high class soils.

#### 5.2.3 Policy - Effects of subdivision and development on soils

- (a) Subdivision, use and development minimises the fragmentation of productive rural land, particularly where high class soils are located.
- (b) Subdivision which provides a range of lifestyle options is directed away from high class soils and/ or where indigenous biodiversity is being protected.

## 5.3 Rural Character and Amenity

### 5.3.1 Objective - Rural character and amenity

- (a) Rural character and amenity are maintained.

### 5.3.2 Policy - Productive rural activities

- (a) Recognise and protect the continued operation of the rural environment as a productive working environment by:
  - (i) Recognising that buildings and structures associated with farming and forestry and other operational structures for productive rural activities contribute to rural character and amenity values;
  - (ii) Ensuring productive rural activities are supported by appropriate rural industries and services;
  - (iii) Providing for lawfully-established rural activities and protecting them from sensitive land uses.

### 5.3.3 Policy – Industrial and commercial activities

- (a) Rural industries and services are managed to ensure they are in keeping with the character of the Rural Zone.
- (b) Avoid locating industrial and commercial activities in rural areas that do not have a genuine functional connection with the rural land or soil resource.

### 5.3.4 Policy - Density of dwellings and buildings within the rural environment

- (a) Retain open spaces to ensure rural character is maintained.
- (b) Additional dwellings support workers' accommodation for large productive rural activities.

### 5.3.5 Policy – Earthworks activities

- (a) Provide for earthworks where they support rural activities including:
  - (i) Ancillary rural earthworks and farm quarries;
  - (ii) The importation of fill material to a site;
  - (iii) Use of cleanfill where it assists the rehabilitation of quarries.
- (b) Manage the effects of earthworks to ensure that:
  - (i) Erosion and sediment loss is avoided or mitigated;
  - (ii) The ground is geotechnically sound and remains safe and stable for the duration of the intended land use;
  - (iii) Changes to natural water flows and established drainage paths are avoided or mitigated;
  - (iv) Adjoining properties and public services are protected.

### 5.3.6 Policy - Intensive farming activities

- (a) Enable intensive farming activities provided they operate in accordance with industry best practice and management of adverse effects both on-site and any neighbouring sites.

### 5.3.7 Policy - Reverse sensitivity effects

- (a) Recognise the following features are typical of the rural environment and the effects are accepted and able to be managed:
  - (i) Large numbers of animals being farmed, extensive areas of plants, vines or fruit crops, plantation forests and farm forests;
  - (ii) Noise, odour, dust, traffic and visual effects associated with the use of land for farming, horticulture, forestry, farm quarries;
  - (iii) Existing mineral extraction and processing activities;
  - (iv) Minor dwellings;

- (v) Papakainga housing developments within Maaori Freehold land.
- (b) Avoid adverse effects outside the site and where those effects cannot be avoided, they are to be mitigated.
- (c) Mitigate the adverse effects of reverse sensitivity through the use of setbacks and the design of subdivisions and development.
- (d) The scale, intensity, timing and duration of activities are managed to ensure compatibility with the amenity and character of the rural environment.
- (e) Enable the use of artificial outdoor lighting for night time work.
- (f) Ensure glare and light spill from artificial lighting in the rural environment does not:
  - (i) Compromise the safe operation of the road transport network; and
  - (ii) Detract from the amenity of other sites within the surrounding environment.
- (g) Frost fans are located and operated to ensure adverse effects on the surrounding environment are minimised.
- (h) Provide for intensive farming activities, recognising the potential adverse effects that need to be managed, including noise, visual amenity, rural character or landscape effects, and odour.

### **5.3.8 Policy - Effects on rural character and amenity from rural subdivision**

- (a) Protect productive rural areas by directing urban forms of subdivision, use, and development to within the boundaries of towns and villages.
- (b) Ensure development does not compromise the predominant open space, character and amenity of rural areas.
- (c) Ensure subdivision, use and development minimise the effects of ribbon development.
- (d) Rural hamlet subdivision and boundary relocations ensure the following:
  - (i) Protection of rural land for productive purposes;
  - (ii) Maintenance of the rural character and amenity of the surrounding rural environment;
  - (iii) Minimisation of cumulative effects.
- (e) Subdivision, use and development opportunities ensure that rural character and amenity values are maintained.
- (f) Subdivision, use and development ensures the effects on public infrastructure are minimised.

### **5.3.9 Policy - Non-rural activities**

- (a) Manage any non-rural activities, including equestrian centres, horse training centres, forestry and rural industries, to achieve a character, scale, intensity and location that are in keeping with rural character and amenity values.
- (b) Avoid buildings and structures dominating land on adjoining properties, public reserves, the coast or waterbodies.

### **5.3.10 Policy - Temporary events**

- (a) Enable temporary events and associated structures, provided any adverse effects on the rural environment are managed by:
  - (i) limiting the timing, and duration of any temporary event;
  - (ii) ensuring noise generated by the temporary events meets the permitted noise limits for the zone.

### **5.3.11 Policy - Home occupations**

- (a) Support any home occupation to enable flexibility for people to work from their homes, provided that it is of a scale that is consistent with the character and amenity of the rural environment.

### **5.3.12 Policy - Meremere Dragway**

- (a) Support the ongoing operation and activities at the Meremere Dragway.

### **5.3.13 Policy - Waste management activities**

- (a) Provide for the rehabilitation of existing quarry sites, including landfill and cleanfill activities, where there is an environmental gain.
- (b) Waste management facilities are appropriately located to ensure compatibility with the surrounding rural environment.
- (c) Waste management facilities within the following areas are undertaken in a manner that protects the natural values of:
  - (i) An Outstanding Natural Landscape;
  - (ii) An Outstanding Natural Feature;
  - (iii) An Outstanding Natural Character Area;
  - (iv) A High Natural Character Area.

### **5.3.14 Policy - Signs**

- (a) The scale, location, appearance and number of signs are managed to ensure they do not detract from the visual amenity of the rural environment.
- (b) Ensure signage directed at traffic does not distract, confuse or obstruct motorists, pedestrians and other road users.
- (c) Limit the duration of temporary signage.
- (d) Recognise that public information signs provide value to the wider community.
- (e) Provide for signage on heritage items, notable trees and Maaori Sites of Significance for the purpose of identification and interpretation.

### **5.3.15 Policy – Noise and vibration**

- (a) Adverse effects of noise and vibration are minimised by:
  - (i) Ensuring that the maximum sound levels are compatible with the surrounding environment;
  - (ii) Limiting the timing and duration of noise-generating activities;
  - (iii) Maintaining appropriate buffers between high noise environments and noise sensitive activities;
  - (iv) Ensuring frost fans are located and operated to minimise the adverse noise effects on other sites.
  - (v) Managing the location of sensitive land uses, particularly in relation to lawfully-established activities;
  - (vi) Requiring acoustic insulation where sensitive activities are located within high noise environments, including the Airport Noise Outer Control Boundary, Huntly Power Station, the Gun Club Noise Control Boundary.
  - (vii) Ensuring the adverse effects of vibration are managed by limiting the timing and duration of blasting activities and maintaining sufficient setback distances between aggregate extraction activities and dwellings or identified building platforms on another site.
  - (viii) Manage noise to protect existing adjacent activities sensitive to noise effects.

### **5.3.16 Policy – Specific area - Agricultural research centres**

- (a) Recognise and protect the continued operation of Agricultural Research Centres that are an integral part of the agricultural sector.
- (b) Provide for a range of rural activities and agricultural research activities that complement each other.

### **5.3.17 Policy – Specific area - Huntly Power Station – Coal and ash water**

- (a) Recognise and protect facilities that are integral to energy production at Huntly Power Station.
- (b) Provide for specific facilities that include the handling and haulage of coal and the disposal of coal ash water within identified areas in close proximity to Huntly Power Station.

### **5.3.18 Policy – Specific area - Whaanga Coast Development Areas**

- (a) Provide for a bulk and scale of land use and development to enable papakainga housing in the Whaanga Coast Development Areas.

## **5.4 Minerals and Extractive Industries**

### **5.4.1 Objective – Minerals and extractive industries**

- (a) Mineral resource use provides economic, social and environmental benefits to the district.

### **5.4.2 Policy – Access to minerals and extractive industries**

- (a) Enable extractive industries provided that adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.
- (b) Protect access to, and extraction of, mineral resources by:
  - (i) Identifying lawfully established extractive industries in Aggregate Extraction Areas and Coal Mining Areas on planning maps;
  - (ii) Identifying the site of a potential extractive industry within an Aggregate Resource Area on planning maps;
- (c) Ensure that lawfully established extractive industries are not compromised by new subdivision, use or development;
- (d) Avoid the location of any sensitive land use within specified buffer areas which otherwise risks the effective operation of a lawfully established extractive industry.

## **5.5 Hamilton’s Urban Expansion Area**

### **5.5.1 Objective – Hamilton’s Urban Expansion Area**

- (a) Protect land within Hamilton’s Urban Expansion Area for future urban development.

### **5.5.2 Policy – Activities within Hamilton’s Urban Expansion Area**

- (a) Manage subdivision, use and development within Hamilton’s Urban Expansion Area to ensure that future urban development is not compromised.

## **5.6 Country Living Zone**

### **5.6.1 Objective – Country Living Zone**

- (a) Subdivision, use and development in the Country Living Zone maintains or enhances the character and amenity values of the zone.

### **5.6.2 Policy – Country Living character**

- (a) Any building and activity within the Country Living Zone are designed, located, scaled and serviced in a manner that does not detract from the character of the area by:
  - (i) Maintaining the open space character;
  - (ii) Maintaining low density residential development;
  - (iii) Recognising the absence of Council wastewater services and lower levels of other infrastructure.
- (b) Maintain views and vistas of the rural hinterland beyond, including, where applicable, Waikato River, wetlands, lakes, and the coast.
- (c) Maintain a road pattern that follows the natural contour of the landform.

- (d) Ensures that the scale and design of any non-residential activities maintains the open rural character and addresses site specific issues such as on-site servicing, and transport related effects.
- (e) Requires activities within the Country Living Zone to be self-sufficient in the provision of water supply, wastewater and stormwater disposal, unless a reticulated supply is available.

### **5.6.3 Policy – Subdivision within the Country Living Zone**

- (a) Subdivision, building and development within the Country Living Zone ensures that:
  - (i) The creation of undersized lots is avoided where character and amenity are compromised;
  - (ii) new lots are of a size and shape to enable sufficient building setbacks from any boundary;
  - (iii) building platforms are sited to maintain the character of the Country Living Zone and are appropriately-positioned to enable future development;
  - (iv) existing infrastructure is not compromised;
  - (v) existing lawfully-established activities are protected from reverse sensitivity effects.

### **5.6.4 Policy – Building setbacks**

- (a) Maintain the existing spaciousness between buildings with adjoining sites.

### **5.6.5 Policy – Scale and intensity of development**

- (a) Minimise the adverse effects of development created by excessive building scale, overshadowing, building bulk, excessive site coverage or loss of privacy.

### **5.6.6 Policy – Height of buildings**

- (a) Ensure building height does not result in loss of privacy or cause overshadowing on adjoining sites or detract from the amenity of the area.

### **5.6.7 Policies - Earthworks**

- (a) Manage the effects of earthworks to ensure that:
  - (i) Erosion and sediment loss is avoided or mitigated;
  - (ii) The ground is geotechnically sound and remains safe and stable for the duration of the intended land use;
  - (iii) Changes to natural water flows and established drainage paths is avoided or mitigated.
- (b) Manage the importation of fill material to a site.
- (c) Appropriately manage the importation of cleanfill to a site.
- (d) Manage the amount of land being disturbed at any one time to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse construction noise, vibration, odour, dust, lighting and traffic effects.
- (e) Subdivision and development occurs in a manner that maintains shape, contour and landscape characteristics.

### **5.6.8 Policy – Non-residential activities**

- (a) Limit the establishment of commercial or industrial activities within the Country Living Zone unless they:
  - (i) Have a functional need to locate within the Country Living Zone; and
  - (ii) Provide for the health and well-being of the community.

### **5.6.9 Policy – Existing non-residential activities**

- (a) Enable existing non-residential activities to continue and support their redevelopment and expansion, provided they do not have a significant adverse effect on the character and amenity of the Country Living Zone.

#### **5.6.10 Policy – Home occupations**

- (a) Provide for home occupations to allow flexibility for people to work from their homes.
- (b) Manage the adverse effects on residential amenity through limiting home occupations to a scale that is compatible with the level of amenity anticipated in the Country Living Zone.

#### **5.6.11 Policy - Temporary events**

- (a) Enable temporary events and associated temporary structures, provided any adverse effects on the residential environment are managed by:
  - (i) Limits on the timing, number and duration of events;
  - (ii) Meeting the permitted noise limits for the zone.

#### **5.6.12 Policy - Signs**

- (a) Signage contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of communities by:
  - (i) Supporting infrastructure and commercial and community activities;
  - (ii) Providing information, including for public safety;
  - (iii) Identifying places.

#### **5.6.13 Policy – Enabling signage**

- (a) Provide for the establishment of signs where they are directly associated with the activity carried out on the site on which they are located;
- (b) Recognise that public information signs provide a benefit to community well-being;
- (c) Provide for temporary signage subject to meeting limits on duration.

#### **5.6.14 Policy – Managing the adverse effects of signs**

- (a) The location, colour, content, and appearance of signs directed at traffic is controlled to ensure signs do not distract, confuse or obstruct motorists, pedestrians and other road users.
- (b) Maintain the visual amenity and character of the Country Living Zone through controls on the size, location, appearance and number of signs.
- (c) Avoid signs that generate adverse effects from illumination, light spill, flashing or reflection.

#### **5.6.15 Policy – Artificial outdoor lighting**

- (a) Provide for artificial outdoor lighting to enable night time work, farming activities, recreation activities, outdoor living, transport and security.
- (b) Control the intensity and direction of artificial lighting to avoid significant glare and light spill to adjacent sites.
- (c) Ensure artificial outdoor lighting is installed and operated so that light spill does not compromise the safe operation of the transport network.

#### **5.6.16 Policy – Noise**

- (a) The adverse effects of noise on the character and amenity of the Country Living Zone are minimised by:
  - (i) Ensuring that the maximum sound levels are compatible with the surrounding land uses;
  - (ii) Limiting the timing and duration of noise-generating activities, including construction and demolition activities;
  - (iii) Maintaining appropriate setback distances between high noise environments and sensitive land uses;
  - (iv) Managing the location of sensitive land uses, particularly in relation to lawfully-established high noise-generating activities;
  - (v) Requiring acoustic insulation where sensitive activities are located within high noise environments.

**5.6.17 Policy – Outdoor storage**

- (a) The adverse visual effects of outdoor storage are managed through screening or landscaping.

**5.6.18 Policy – Objectionable odour**

- (a) Ensure that the effects of objectionable odour do not detract from the amenity on other sites.
- (b) Maintain appropriate setback distances between new sensitive land uses and existing lawfully-established activities that generate objectionable odour.