

1 Waikato district resources and pressures

1.1 Introduction

The Waikato District Plan promotes the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the Waikato District, primarily through strategic management of growth and by managing the effects of land use on the environment. The effects are managed differently around the district to reflect the local environmental issues. The plan responds to the issues in terms of community needs and aspirations. If those needs and aspirations change, then plan changes may be needed.

1.2 Context of District

The plan applies to the whole of the Waikato District. The district covers an area of 3,188 square kilometres, extending from Miranda in the north-east to the Aotea Harbour in the south-west. It is located within the greater Waikato region and has several rural territorial authorities on its boundary. The district is located between two large urban centres - Auckland, with a population of over 1 million people lies to the north, and Hamilton with a population of over 110,000 lies to the south. These population centres have both positive and negative influences on the district.

1.3 Tangata Whenua

The plan uses an holistic cultural and ethical approach to resource management and takes into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, in particular the idea of active involvement. Partnership is approached through the recognition of iwi plans and an ongoing process of consultation. The Waikato River, Raglan (Whaingaroa) and Aotea Harbours, Miranda coast, along with the Hapuakohe, Taupiri and Hakarimata ranges and mounts Pirongia and Karioi are all significant culturally, and important landmarks for Tainui. The Waikato River is regarded as of great cultural significance to tangata whenua. This relationship is evident in many whakatauki and waiata, and in oral histories. Oral histories record the association of tangata whenua with physical and natural resources in the district.

The plan does not have a tangata whenua section. This was one of the key points raised in discussions held with the Waikato Raupatu Lands Trust and representatives of Waikato-Tainui management committees. It is their desire to integrate tangata whenua interests throughout all of the plan's policies and strategies, rather than have a separate section. The goal is to promote a wider involvement and inclusiveness between the Waikato-Tainui tangata whenua, local government and the community.

1.3A The River Settlement Acts

The Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010, the Ngaati Tuwharetoa, Raukawa and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010 and the Nga Wai o Maniapoto (Waipa River) Act 2012 - collectively called "the River Settlement Acts" are statutes which are unique to the Waikato River and its catchment. The River Settlement Acts directly insert the Vision and Strategy (Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato) into the Operative Waikato Regional Policy Statement without the use of the First Schedule in the Resource Management Act 1991 and reflect a required comprehensive 'whole of river' approach by all territorial authorities.

1.3B Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010

On 17 December 2009 Waikato-Tainui and the Crown signed the Deed of Settlement in relation to the Waikato River. The overarching purpose of the settlement (as stated in [s3]) is to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for future generations. Section 4(g) of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 (the Settlement Act) heralded

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a new era of co-management arrangements for the Waikato River. Following the settlement, Waikato-Tainui and Waikato District Council entered into a Joint Management Agreement on the 23 March 2010 to address co-management of the Waikato River. The objectives and policies of the District Plan reflect the principles within the Deed of Settlement and the Joint Management Agreement.

1.4 Land Use Pressures

The large nearby populations of Auckland and Hamilton make increasing demands on the Waikato District for the development of transport corridors, water supply, waste disposal, forestry and mineral extraction. People from Auckland and Hamilton use the district for holiday homes, lifestyle blocks and recreation. Urban expansion, land subdivision, rural lifestyle demands and soil erosion can compromise access to versatile soil and mineral resources that are of economic importance to the district and the region, as well as contribute to the loss of cultural and heritage values. Rural residential uses can be sensitive to the effects of mining, farming and horticulture operations and other significant activities including major community facilities such the Mystery Creek Events Centre and Hamilton International Airport. Therefore rural residential uses should be focused into Country Living Zones to ensure that reverse sensitivity effects on these other activities are avoided. Provision is also made for residential development in the Pa Zone and Papakaainga Policy Area.

1.5 Rural Land

Farming activities, including dairy, dry stock, horticulture, pig and poultry, mining, and forestry are all significant industries in economic terms. Opportunities for productive rural activities such as these need to be retained in rural areas, as these zones are the only place these activities can take place. This plan promotes the sustainable management of soil resources, which includes securing the long-term availability of high quality soil.

Activities affecting landscape, historic and amenity values including rural character, recreational activities, high quality soils, significant mineral resources and ecological values need to be managed to avoid adverse effects on the environment, including cumulative effects. There is potential for conflict between rural activities and other land uses including residential activities on lifestyle blocks. It is necessary to ensure that the continued, effective operations of farming activities or productive rural activities are not adversely affected by lifestyle activities. Urban forms of residential, industrial and commercial development will therefore be focused primarily into towns and village with rural residential development occurring in Country Living Zones.

1.5A Minerals

The district contains a number of regionally and nationally significant mineral resources (see Map iv). Various coalfields collectively contain over 1.5 billion tonnes of coal representing one of the country's most strategically important energy resources. The coal resources are also potential reservoirs for much of the country's coal seam gas resource. On-shore beach and dune titanomagnetite iron sand deposits along the western coastline contain over 50 million tonnes of concentrate. Other resources include limestone, and hard rock aggregate, sand and gravel, which are needed for construction and infrastructure development. Access to, and utilisation of, these resources needs to be managed to enable the community to provide for its social and economic wellbeing.

1.6 Towns and Villages

The vision for the future of the towns and villages of the district is that:

- (a) the amenity, quality of life and wellbeing of the residents and their communities will be maintained and improved
- (b) the environment will be safeguarded as development proceeds
- (c) urban forms of growth will be focused into existing towns and villages which will be consolidated in preference to new towns being created.
- (d) services will be provided for new residential development
- (e) a sense of place will be fostered, with urban design that complements both human scale and physical setting
- (f) business, industrial, and residential uses will be separated, except occupations that are carried out from home, which have acceptable effects on residential amenity
- (g) town centres will retain their social and commercial focus
- (h) historic heritage is protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development

1.6.1 Raglan

Raglan will retain its seaside village character as it grows, while protecting the harbour. A sense of place will be fostered with architecture and landscaping that complements both human scale and coastal setting. Any growth on the Rangitahi Peninsula is managed under the Rangitahi Peninsula Structure Plan (see [Chapter 15B](#)). Industrial developments will be positioned to integrate with the topography so as to reduce the visibility of buildings and storage areas.

The town centre will expand to accommodate an increased range of shops and services in Bankart Street, Bow Street and Wallis Street. A [design guideline](#) will promote a 'Raglan look' for buildings in the town centre.

1.6.2 Ngaruawahia

Ngaruawahia will keep its sense of spaciousness and heritage as a town with a predominantly residential function. Passive and active recreation facilities, including picnic areas, will be promoted. Development will be consistent with, and enhance, the existing streetscape, including the wide streets with grass berms and large trees. Residential development will require large sections with houses well set back on all sides from boundaries. A two-storey height maximum will apply. Low-density residential development will be favoured over infill. Maori culture will continue to add an important dimension to the town.

1.6.3 Huntly

Huntly will consolidate and improve its amenity, while protecting its mining heritage and Maori culture. The riverside setting of Huntly will be emphasised and enhanced. Further development of recreation facilities around Lake Weavers and Lake Hakanoa is envisaged.

1.6.4 Te Kauwhata

Significant growth is expected at Te Kauwhata. This is managed under the Te Kauwhata Structure Plan. See [Chapter 15A](#).

1.6.5 Rural Villages

The villages will be managed as part of the surrounding countryside. Limited provision is made for growth in business or industrial uses in most villages. An increase in residential use in key villages

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near Hamilton is promoted as a way of meeting some of the demand for larger residential allotments, while addressing the potential adverse effects of rural subdivision. Industry is expected to expand at Horotiu.

Development of the Waikato Expressway will affect several towns and villages that are currently on State Highway 1. The diversion of traffic onto the expressway is expected to improve the residential amenity of some of these towns and villages and will contribute to the economic and social growth of the Waikato. It may mean some adverse economic effects on businesses within the district that cater to travellers.

The development of villages will be supported to enhance heritage and character

1.7 Conservation

Conservation issues addressed in the plan (as part of sustainable management) relate to preserving:

- significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna
- existing ecological linkages along the Waipa and Waikato river catchments
- hill country bush between Miranda and Aotea Harbour (including the Hapuakohe, Taupiri and Hakarimata ranges and mounts Pirongia and Karioi)
- lakes and wetlands, including "Ramsar" wetlands. (The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an international treaty adopted by the New Zealand Government, to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands. There are five Ramsar sites in New Zealand, including Whangamarino and Firth of Thames wetlands within the Waikato District.)

Attention will be given to managing the biodiversity of remaining indigenous vegetation, including wetlands and gullies.

The sustainable management process in the plan follows the lead of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy, the Draft National Policy Statement on Biodiversity, and the Waikato District Conservation Strategy.

1.8 Coastal Land

Development will be managed to protect landscape and ecological values throughout the coastal environment.

The west coast is a wild and scenic coastline and limited road access has restricted development in the past. However, increasing demand for development is expected. Raglan Harbour (Whaingaroa) and Aotea Harbour are more sheltered and are ecologically and culturally important.

In the east of the district, the Miranda coast has a low-lying more sheltered character, is important to tangata whenua and is an internationally significant habitat for migratory birds.

1.9 Energy

The plan recognises the national and regional importance of existing energy resources and infrastructure, which includes coal fields, coal mines, Huntly Power Station, gas, electricity transmission, and coal conveyance facilities, as well as renewable energy. The plan addresses the positive and adverse effects of energy infrastructure and development.

1.10 Transport Network

The central geographic location of the district means that it acts as a significant transport network based on road, rail and air.

Several state highways traverse the district. The major routes are State Highway 1, which runs north to south through the district, and State Highway 2, which travels west to east across the Hauraki Plains to Tauranga and beyond. These highways provide for transportation needs in the district, including farming, forestry and mineral extraction. The highways also carry large daily traffic volumes, and significant numbers of heavy vehicles for the movement of people, goods and services to the main centres of Auckland, Hamilton and the Port of Tauranga and throughout the North Island. The Waikato District Council's roads complete the road network.

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Walkways and cycle routes supplement vehicle transport routes and provide recreational opportunities, especially by road through-routes and walkway shortcuts. The concept of a national walkway will be supported and supplemented by a number of local walkways.

Public passenger transport will be supported by urban subdivision designs that promote efficient transport routes.

The main trunk railway runs parallel to State Highway 1 north to south, and the Tauranga branch line passes east from Hamilton. Hamilton International Airport, located just outside the district, provides national and international passenger and freight services.

1.11 Other Issues

Chapter 1A provides the broad spatial framework for development within the district.

The plan also addresses issues relating to:

- (a) outstanding landforms and natural features
- (b) natural resources including high quality soil, land and minerals
- (c) natural hazards
- (d) development form including utilities and transport
- (e) contaminated land
- (f) solid waste
- (g) hazardous substances
- (h) social, cultural and economic wellbeing
- (i) historic heritage
- (j) amenity values
- (k) recreation and reserves

1.12 Monitoring Procedures

Monitoring of the plan is part of a comprehensive monitoring requirement for the Waikato District Council specified in section 35 of the Resource Management Act. The act requires the plan to state the procedures used to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies, rules or other methods contained within it.

There are two main questions that need to be addressed concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of the plan. The first question is: Are we hitting the target we're aiming at? The environmental results actually achieved through implementing the plan need to be compared with what it intended to achieve. The second aspect of efficiency and effectiveness relates to the question: Are there better ways of doing things? While the methods being used may be achieving the right results, it may be that other methods may produce the same results more easily.

1.12.1 Monitoring Strategy

A monitoring strategy has been developed in a separate document from the district plan. The strategy states what is to be monitored and will indicate priority issues. It will also indicate how monitoring will be undertaken. Annual monitoring programmes will then be carried out in accordance with the strategy. Plan monitoring will be closely linked with the other monitoring which the Council is required to do under the Resource Management Act, including state of the environment monitoring and resource consent monitoring.

In time, the Council will gather information on all issues relevant to the working of the plan. Information will be gathered with reference to the environmental outcomes that the Council is seeking to achieve through the plan. Reviews of the results of plan monitoring will be published every 5 years.

Various methods are available to monitor these issues, and it is important to maximise the information gained from the monitoring undertaken. The Council will seek to work closely with organisations that hold relevant information. Such organisations may include central government agencies, other local government agencies, and business and community groups. Consultation with Tainui will continue to be important, including the effectiveness of monitoring methods and plan provisions.