

1A Waikato District Growth Strategy

1A.1 Introduction

The district experiences significant pressure for development. A number of factors drive these growth pressures: the qualities and characteristics of the Waikato landscape including bush and coastal environments, employment opportunities, the proximity of the Auckland and Hamilton urban areas and the convenience of rail and strategic road corridors.

The district population is expected to double by 2061 with a consequent increase in the demand for land, infrastructure, services and amenities. A similar rate of growth is anticipated across the wider sub region consisting of the Waikato District, Waipa District and Hamilton City. A strategic approach is necessary to ensure that this level of development can be accommodated in a sustainable manner.

The Waikato District Growth Strategy has been developed within this context. The strategy seeks to direct the majority of growth into settlements, with the expected significant growth of the larger towns and expansion of existing villages that are supported by services and facilities. Increasing the density of development will ensure that most efficient use is made of infrastructure, services and facilities, will reduce the demand for land, and will reduce the need for travel and the travel distances.

The Waikato District Growth Strategy identifies four broad geographical areas where growth will be focussed into existing settlements: the Northern State Highway 1 corridor from Huntly northwards; the Southern State Highway 1 corridor between Huntly and Horotiu; Raglan and the West Coast, and the villages on the periphery of Hamilton. Each area includes settlements that have their own distinctive character and have variable capacity for accommodating growth. However, the anticipated level of population growth is unlikely to be achieved without an equivalent increase in employment opportunities. Many of these will be created through new industrial and service development within the towns and villages, but the economic mainstay of the district and sub-region is expected to continue to be from productive rural activities such as agriculture, forestry and extraction mineral resources.

A key issue for the district is to ensure that population growth and associated built development is managed in a way that results in efficient and high amenity urban areas and avoids compromising the characteristics of rural areas including the productive capacity of the rural resource. The rural areas also include significant landscapes that need protection in their own right. Future development within these areas requires particularly careful management. Chapter 1A establishes the broad spatial framework for development within the District. Subsequent chapters provide detail and address the specific effects that require management.

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1A.2 Issue - Managing Growth Pressures

Failure to have a strategic framework for growth has adverse effects on the ability to have efficiently organised and integrated urban areas, to appropriately develop land and to sustain productive rural activities.

OBJECTIVES	POLICIES
<p>1A.2.1 Towns, villages and other defined growth areas are the focus of future residential, industrial and commercial development.</p>	<p>1A.2.2 Subdivision, use and development of an urban nature should occur within clearly defined boundaries of towns and villages rather than in rural areas.</p> <p>1A.2.2A Industrial and commercial activities that do not have a genuine functional connection with the rural land or soil resource and that do not require a rural setting should not locate in rural areas.</p> <p>1A.2.3 Subdivision, use and development of a rural-residential nature should occur within defined growth areas where infrastructure and services can be efficiently and economically provided.</p> <p>1A.2.4 New growth areas, including new rural residential areas, should be identified and planned for in conjunction with towns and villages where they support local services and minimise adverse effects on productive rural activities and lawfully established rural-based activities.</p> <p>1A.2.5 Urban development should occur in an integrated manner so that employment and recreation areas are easily accessible from residential areas.</p> <p>1A.2.6 Subdivision, use and development should be managed so that a range of lifestyle choices is available, while ensuring residential development occurs in identified towns, villages and other defined growth areas.</p> <p>1A.2.6A Rural-residential subdivision and development should be at a location and scale that does not detract from the development of high amenity and compact urban areas.</p>
<p>1A.2.7 Maaori are able to establish and maintain their relationship to ancestral land.</p>	<p>1A.2.8 Maaori should be enabled to sustainably use and develop ancestral land, including papakaainga development, according to customs and practices.</p>

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<p>1A.2.9 Rural areas are maintained as a resource for productive rural activities and lawfully established rural-based activities.</p>	<p>1A.2.10 Subdivision, use and development that support productive rural activities in rural areas should be enabled, subject to avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects.</p> <p>1A.2.11 Second and subsequent dwellings in rural areas should be directly associated with productive rural activities.</p> <p>1A.2.12 Subdivision, use and development that is not directly associated with productive rural activities should occur in towns, villages and other defined growth areas.</p> <p>1A.2.13 The potential for reverse sensitivity effects on productive rural activities and lawfully established rural-based activities should be avoided.</p> <p>1A.2.14 Subdivision, use and development should not compromise public use and enjoyment of public open space or significant recreational amenities.</p>
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1A.3 Reasons and Explanations

1A.3.1 The Focus on Growth

The district has experienced significant growth in recent years, and this is projected to continue. A strategic approach to growth is needed to ensure that critical resources are managed effectively, that infrastructure and services are provided in a timely and economical manner and that growth establishes patterns of development that will be sustainable over the long term. A range of lifestyle opportunities should be available so that people can select the lifestyle they consider most appropriate for themselves. This choice contributes towards their wellbeing, which is one part of sustainable management. Opportunities range from urban, through rural-residential and rural lifestyle to rural. A limited amount of lifestyle development opportunity that involves small-scale rural land uses should be available in the Rural and Coastal Zones, as these cannot be provided for elsewhere. Access to lifestyle choices needs to be balanced against other parts of sustainable management. For instance, excessive rural-residential development in rural areas can have a number of adverse effects that need to be avoided or mitigated. These effects include the loss of rural amenity, decreased rural production, potential for reverse sensitivity conflicts, demands for improved rural infrastructure and services that are difficult to provide economically, and reduced growth in urban areas which affects the prosperity of urban areas.

Urban forms of residential, industrial and commercial growth will be focused primarily into towns and villages. Non-rural industrial and commercial activities should only locate in rural areas if there is a functional need for a rural location. For example, a small-scale shop or social venue which services the local community could be appropriate.

Some future growth will be located in other defined growth areas, such as Hampton Downs Motorsport Park. Country Living zones, where infrastructure and services can be efficiently and economically provided, will be the focus for rural residential development. Defined growth areas

should be located in close proximity to towns and villages where development can support local infrastructure, services and other facilities, while at the same time minimising adverse effects on productive rural activities. Defined growth areas will be identified as required over time through processes such as the development of structure plans and subsequent changes to the district plan.

Focusing urban forms of growth primarily into towns and villages, and encouraging a compact form of urban development, provides opportunity for residents to "live, work and play" in their local area, minimises the necessity to travel, and supports public transport opportunities, public facilities and services. An integrated approach to growth will have significant benefits in terms of planning for infrastructure, services, transport and facilities. It will ensure that provision is made when and where it will support the health and well being of the wider community, and will provide certainty to landowners, developers and service providers for long term investment decisions. A deliberate approach to the location and distribution of development will assist in safeguarding rural resources for productive use and the ability to accommodate rural activities that require a rural location.

1A.3.2 Maaori Ancestral Land

Enabling Maaori to establish and maintain their relationship, cultures and traditions with their ancestral lands is a matter of national importance. Providing that such activity is consistent with the environmental capacity of the area to sustainably use ancestral land for such purposes that will promote the economic, cultural and social health and well being of the Maaori community.

1A.3.3 Rural Areas

The district benefits from an extensive rural area which contains a range of attributes necessary for productive rural activities including a variety of soils, mineral resources and landscapes that are able to sustain a diverse range of economic activities. A productive rural area is important to the economic health of the district and wider sub-region, and needs to be recognised as a productive resource. Productive rural activities are those activities that use rural resources for economic gain and which cannot be carried out easily or appropriately in an urban setting. They include energy generation, access to and extraction of mineral resources including extractive industry, soil-based production and the processing of primary products. Other rural-based activities that do not use rural resources directly include rural service industries and major facilities that require a rural setting such as Hamilton International Airport, the Mystery Creek Events Centre and the major commercial activities at Hampton Downs. Recreational use of the rural environment is also important (eg. hunting, fishing, tramping, cycling). Productive rural activities, lawfully established rural-based activities and rural recreational amenities should be protected from reverse sensitivity effects, particularly those associated with rural-residential subdivision and development.

The safeguarding of rural areas for activities that genuinely require a rural location will ensure that opportunities remain available for accommodating such activities and that more efficient use is made of transport infrastructure and services within settlements by discouraging the dispersal of urban activities to the rural areas. For example, second and subsequent dwellings on land contained within a certificate of title in rural areas should be directly associated with productive rural activities, such as housing for farm staff.

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1A.4 Issue - Sustainable Settlements

Uncoordinated growth can adversely affect the quality, character and vitality of urban environments and undermine the efficient provision and utilisation of infrastructure and services.

OBJECTIVES	POLICIES
<p>1A.4.1 Residential and rural residential areas achieve and maintain high amenity values.</p>	<p>1A.4.2 Subdivision, use and development in towns and villages should be sympathetic to their existing character.</p> <p>1A.4.3 Subdivision, use and development in towns, villages and new defined growth areas should occur in accordance with a structure plan for the area and promote high quality living environments.</p> <p>1A.4.4 The expansion of towns and villages should be managed to ensure that choice and variety in housing type is provided.</p>
<p>1A.4.5 Development patterns support the cost-effective maintenance, provision and efficient use of both existing and new infrastructure and services.</p>	<p>1A.4.6 The location, type and density of subdivision, use and development should ensure infrastructure and services can be provided economically and used efficiently, and facilitate the safe, efficient and effective operation of infrastructure.</p> <p>1A.4.7 Subdivision, use and development should be located, designed and staged to ensure that it is adequately supported by existing or planned infrastructure, community facilities and local services.</p> <p>1A.4.8 Structure plans for towns, villages and defined growth areas should take account of the wider infrastructure networks they connect with.</p> <p>1A.4.9 Subdivision, use and development should be located, designed and staged to ensure that it does not adversely affect the adequacy, safety or efficiency of infrastructure, community facilities and services in the region.</p> <p>1A.4.10 Subdivision, use and development must avoid adverse effects, including reverse sensitivity effects, upon regionally and nationally significant infrastructure to ensure the ongoing safe and efficient development, operation and maintenance of that infrastructure.</p> <p>1A.4.11 Rural-residential subdivision and development should be at a location and scale that does not adversely affect the efficiency or provision of urban infrastructure, including transport and community facilities in Hamilton.</p>

1A.5 Reasons and Explanations

1A.5.1 Urban Amenity and Character

Local identity and character promotes a sense of belonging and is important to the social health and well being of communities. Recognising significant character elements or characteristics and promoting growth of settlements which is sympathetic to these elements will provide a strong environment and context for continued investment by the community itself, developers and service providers. Significant growth of a settlement inevitably results in changes to its character. Development should be managed so that emphasis is placed on achieving high amenity standards, while retaining existing valued characteristics as far as practicable. Development which occurs in accordance with a structure plan developed in consultation with the local community is one way of ensuring valued elements of local character are respected as growth occurs. Ensuring that the planned expansion of towns and villages provides for a variety of housing types promotes social well being.

1A.5.2 Infrastructure and Service Provision

Infrastructure and services are costly to provide, and the cost of their continued maintenance and renewal is often borne by the wider community. Development patterns that promote the efficient use of new and existing infrastructure and services can contribute significantly to the health and wellbeing of communities and safeguard the environment. Inappropriate subdivision, use and development of land can adversely affect the efficient provision and use of existing and planned infrastructure and services due to unanticipated demands arising and reverse sensitivity issues. Costs can be minimised, and better performance of infrastructure and services achieved, where infrastructure provision is timely in relation to demand, and optimally sized and located. This may mean staging of infrastructure provision relative to the growth in demand is necessary. Costs and inefficiencies can increase significantly where development patterns are dispersed. For example, unplanned development which increases vehicle traffic may reduce roading efficiency and road safety, compromise rail operations and result in unplanned roading upgrades becoming necessary.

There are key transmission lines located in the District. The lines are critical for ensuring an efficient and secure supply of electricity throughout the District and beyond. In accordance with the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008 and the Regional Policy Statement the Council is required to manage development to ensure that any third party development in the transmission corridor does not affect the ongoing operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of the line or result in any incompatibility or reverse sensitivity effects. It is important that Council manages third party activities in the vicinity of these lines as there could be significant impact on the reliability of electricity supply for the whole District and beyond if lines are damaged or their operation or ability to upgrade to meet demand is inappropriately constrained. Refer to the objectives and policies in [Chapter 6](#) and the specific rules of this District Plan for more details.

1A.6 Issue - Rural Resources

The continued viability and versatility of the rural resource for productive rural activities can be adversely affected by non-rural activities, land fragmentation and the proximity of sensitive receiving environments.

OBJECTIVES	POLICIES
<p>1A.6.1 The capacity of rural areas to support productive rural activities and lawfully established rural-based activities is maintained.</p>	<p>1A.6.2 Rural resources should be managed so that opportunities to use them for productive rural activities or lawfully established rural-based activities are retained.</p> <p>1A.6.3 Activities that are not related to productive rural activities should not locate in rural areas unless there is a demonstrable functional need and they will not constrain existing lawfully established productive rural activities, lawfully established rural-based activities or compromise access to and the extraction of mineral resources from Coal Mining Policy Areas.</p> <p>1A.6.4 Productive rural activities, and appropriate rural-based activities directly associated with rural production, should be able to establish and operate efficiently in rural areas, subject to avoiding, remedying or mitigating their adverse effects on the environment.</p> <p>1A.6.5 Opportunities to use small land holdings for productive rural activities should be retained, particularly where multiple titles can be managed together.</p> <p>1A.6.6 Boundary relocations should enhance opportunities for productive rural activities to occur rather than create unlimited rural-residential lifestyle opportunities in rural areas.</p> <p>1A.6.7 Mineral extraction activities are of a different scale and intensity, and where appropriate should be accommodated.</p>

1A.7 Reasons and Explanations

1A.7.1 Rural Production

Productive rural activities are those activities that use rural resources for economic gain and which cannot be easily or appropriately carried out in an urban setting. They include energy generation, mineral production, soil-based production and the processing of primary products. Some productive rural activities, such as mineral extraction, are of a different scale and intensity to other rural land uses, and where appropriate, given the location of the resource, these activities should be accommodated. Other rural-based activities that do not use rural resources directly include rural service industries and major facilities that require a rural setting such as Hamilton International Airport, the Mystery Creek Events Centre and the major commercial activities at Hampton Downs.

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The continued use of rural areas for productive rural activities and other land and soil resource dependent rural-based activities as well as for access to and the extraction of mineral resources are important to the economic health and well being of the district and wider sub region. The use of Rural, and some Coastal, zoned areas for activities that are more appropriately located elsewhere reduces the availability of the resource and can increase pressures on existing rural activities through reverse sensitivity effects. Rural areas are vulnerable to small scale change that, cumulatively, can have a profound effect on their efficient use for rural production and other rural activities. A key focus is to ensure that the resource does not become so fragmented that its attraction for activities that require a rural setting is diminished. It is also important to ensure that the ongoing operation of legally established rural activities is not unduly constrained by new activities establishing close by that are sensitive to the effects of the existing activity. Boundary relocations that result in a rationalisation of land holdings to better reflect topography or farming operation requirements can maintain or enhance productive rural activities, and such relocations should be facilitated. Boundary relocations that create a cluster of more than 5 lots are contrary to the objectives and should not be provided for.

1A.8 Issue - Rural Character and Amenity Values

The continued modification of the rural environment through subdivision, use and development can adversely affect their natural and physical qualities and character. These qualities and character are important in maintaining investment in rural activities and providing a context for the development of towns and villages.

OBJECTIVES	POLICIES
<p>1A.8.1 Landscape, character and amenity values of rural areas are maintained.</p>	<p>1A.8.2 Activities that do not have a functional need to establish in rural areas should be accommodated in towns, villages and defined growth areas.</p> <p>1A.8.3 The expansion of towns, villages and defined growth areas should occur in a manner that minimises the potential for conflicts with the surrounding rural area.</p> <p>1A.8.4 Provision should be made for limited subdivision where this protects and manages in perpetuity land or features of ecological, cultural, heritage, recreational, access or landscape value to the wider community.</p> <p>1A.8.5 Subdivision, use and development in rural areas should be managed so that a range of lifestyle choices is available while ensuring that rural landscapes and rural character are retained.</p> <p>1A.8.6 Subdivision, use and development in rural areas that have been modified through development should be managed to ensure that cumulative adverse effects do not compromise rural landscapes and rural character.</p> <p>1A.8.7 Rural landscapes, rural character and associated amenity values should be retained by ensuring allotments are of sufficient size for rural land uses to predominate in rural areas.</p>

1A.9 Reasons and Explanations

1A.9.1 Rural Character and Amenity

Rural parts of the district are valued for their landscape, character and amenity values and these values should be retained. This should occur through limiting the extent to which non-rural activities are able to establish in the Rural and Coastal Zones. Non-rural activities should occur in towns, villages and defined growth areas, and the expansion of such areas should be managed so that adverse effects on rural areas are minimised.

Notwithstanding, a limited amount of lifestyle development opportunity involving small-scale rural land

uses should be available in rural areas, as lifestyle choice contributes towards people's wellbeing. These opportunities can only be accommodated in the Rural and Coastal Zones. Subdivision, use and development of this type must be managed to ensure the rural landscape, character and amenity values, which attract people to these areas, are not lost. This can be achieved by ensuring subdivision and development are of a density and scale that results in rural land uses continuing to predominate within these areas. Rural land uses, which may or may not be productive rural activities in economic terms, require allotments that are large enough to support them. Allotments should be large enough for rural land uses to occur over the clear majority of the land within each of them, including in areas where land is composed primarily of small land holdings. Allotments too small to support rural land uses such as livestock grazing and horticulture detract from rural character and are not appropriate in the Rural and Coastal zones. Development that is predominantly residential in nature and which has little or no rural land use component is provided for in the Country Living zone.

1A.9.2 Conservation and Reserve Areas

Some features of the rural landscape such as remnant bush, heritage features, water bodies or public open space for recreation or access may be of significant value to the wider community and can generate indirect economic benefits in terms of attracting visitors. The ability to safeguard and promote the management of these limited resources is capable of being reconciled with the wider protection of the rural landscape and in the case of Maori cultural features the views of the Maori landowners.

1A.10 Methods of Implementation

1A.10.1 Regulatory Methods

- (a) Rules that define settlements and provide opportunities for development.
- (b) Rules that control the nature, scale and location of activities by reference to the following zones:
 - Living
 - Pa
 - Business
 - Industrial – Heavy and Light
 - Rural
 - Coastal
 - Country Living
 - Recreation
- (c) Rules that regulate subdivision, use and development to enable a variety of development opportunities in towns and villages and safeguard rural resources for rural activities.
- (d) Policy Areas that identify important rural resources.
- (e) Structure Plans that provide a clear context and framework for decisions regarding infrastructure and service provision.
- (f) Design Guides that indicate preferred forms of development that ensure efficient use of physical resources.

1A.10.2 Council Works and Services

- (a) The development of proposals within the context of the Long Term Council Community Plan and Waikato District Growth Strategy to support population growth within towns and villages.
- (b) Infrastructure and service provision to enable land release consistent with projected levels of growth.

1A.10.3 Information, Education and Advisory

- (a) Liaison with partner councils and other organisations within the sub region to monitor, review and implement the Waikato District Growth Strategy and the sub-regional growth strategy and implementation plan, FutureProof.
- (b) Support for the development of Community Plans to articulate community opinion and inform future decisions regarding the growth of towns and villages.

1A.11 Reasons for Methods

1A.11.1 Regulatory Methods

Regulatory methods are necessary to provide certainty regarding the scale and location of future development and to protect the productive value of rural resources. The development of Structure Plans and Design Guides provides support to landowners, developers and service providers in their future investment decisions.

1A.11.2 Council Works and Services

A strategic, coordinated approach to growth must be supported by a clear long term strategy and financial provision for a programme of works that will support development in key locations.

1A.11.3 Information, Education and Advocacy

A long-term strategy must be kept under review to ensure that it remains relevant to community aspirations, actual trends and patterns of development. Without continued monitoring, implementation of the strategy could lose focus or could miss opportunities for innovation.

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1A.12 Anticipated Environmental Results

ISSUES	ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS
<p>1A.12.1 Sustainable district growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Residential, commercial and industrial growth in towns, villages and defined growth areas. (b) Rural resources safeguarded for productive rural activities. (c) Tangata whenua enabled to make productive and sustainable use of ancestral lands. (d) Efficient provision and use of infrastructure. (e) Subdivision and development that results in high quality urban environments. (f) Limited subdivision in Rural and Coastal zoned areas to support rural productive activities, housing choice or to protect land or features of ecological, cultural, heritage, recreational, access or landscape value. (g) Rural residential development growth predominantly in the Country Living zone. (h) Minimal conflicts between land uses. (i) Maintenance of rural character.

1A.13 Objective National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity Minimum Targets