

Te Aroturukitanga o te
Mahere ā-Wae ki Tāmaki
Makaurau **Auckland**
Unitary Plan
Resource
Management Act
1991 Section 35
Monitoring:
B4.4 Waitākere
Ranges Heritage
Area

February 2024

Technical Report 2024/3





Auckland Unitary Plan Resource Management Act 1991 Section 35 Monitoring:

B4.4 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area

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Executive summary

The Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) became operative in part in November 2016. This report considers how effective and efficient the objectives, policies, rules and other methods of the AUP have been in meeting the outcomes intended by the Regional Policy Statement – Chapter B4.4 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area (RPS).

The data for the Waitākere Ranges (the ranges) study was sourced from various databases and reports primarily managed by the council and CCOs, covering a date range from 2016 to 2023. The data comprises both quantitative and qualitative types, including consenting data, population statistics, regional and local plan making and qualitative landscape data. The analysis involved organising and filtering data through the council's Plans & Places (P&P) GIS and building consent department databases between 07/01/2016 and 25/06/2021 and comparing findings with previous Waitākere Ranges State of the Environment Reports (SoE). The methodologies employed include reviewing and filtering resource and building consent databases, conducting a landscape assessment in 2023, and utilizing census data from 2018. The data was further enriched by community, commercial, and program funding data collated in the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area State of the Environment report 2017-2022 (SoE 2017-2022), and the Local Economic Overview 2022. General limitations include inconsistencies in recording within and between consenting databases, inadequate sample sizes, and capacity constraints affecting the level of analysis possible within larger datasets. The COVID-19 pandemic also postponed updates to the 2018 Capacity for Growth Study, affecting the measurement of development uptake during the monitoring period.

This monitoring work will contribute to our knowledge base – what is working in the plan and where there may be challenges. This knowledge will help to inform future plan changes and contribute to the policy cycle. Additionally, this report will address the Section 35(2)(b) plan monitoring requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

It is recommended that this report is read in conjunction with its companion technical topic reports, and the summary report. Also recommended is the SoE 2017-2022, which provides a comprehensive overview of the ranges that expands upon many topics outside of the scope of this report.

The Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act of 2008 (the Act) identifies historic and natural heritage values in the Waitākere Ranges of value for their local, regional, and national significance and intrinsic worth. The Act establishes that these heritage features are to be protected in perpetuity. Chapter B4.4 of the Auckland Unitary Plan Regional Policy Statement (RPS) stems from the purpose of the Act and provides a framework for sustainable management of natural and historic heritage features in the ranges.

B4.4.1. Objective (1) states that

The natural and historic resources, including the significant environmental values and heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges, are protected, restored and enhanced for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the community.

The heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area include:

- ecosystems
- landscapes and landforms
- the subservience of the built environment to the area's natural and rural landscape
- the past and present human culture of the heritage area

- opportunities for wilderness experiences and recreation
- the regional park
- the water catchment and supply system.

The RPS and the AUP provisions balance between the protection, restoration and enhancement of these environmental features and enabling living, working, and recreating in the WRHA. Development that integrates the distinct communities of the WRHA and contributes to indigenous biodiversity is enabled. The RPS is especially concerned with managing the cumulative effects of growth that can result from intensification in the ranges.

The AUP manages heritage features in the WRHA through zones, overlays, and precincts. Zones manage the way in which areas of land and the coastal marine area are to be used, developed, or protected. Overlays manage the protection, maintenance, or enhancement of particular values associated with an area or resource. Precincts enable local differences to be recognised by providing detailed place-based provisions which can vary the outcomes sought by the zone or Auckland-wide provisions and can be more restrictive or more enabling.

The measurements, findings, and recommendations for each indicator are laid out below.

Indicator 1: A range of activities are enabled in order for people to work, live, and recreate within the heritage area.

Indicator and measures

The RPS seeks to enable the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of local communities in the WRHA. This indicator is a broad assessment of the success of the plan in enabling a high quality of experience for those who live, work, and visit the WRHA. Protection, restoration, and enhancement of heritage features contributes to the WRHA, and this requires limitations on the proliferation of subdivision, use, and development.

Measures used in this indicator are qualitative assessments of civic and commercial activity and quantitative census and economic outlook.

Findings

A hierarchy of local and neighbourhood centres serve as community focal points in the WRHA, with their size and intensity reflecting the character of the surrounding settlements. As the largest centre in the heritage area Titirangi shows growth in arts, services, and commerce. Settlements are primarily residential, limiting job types and job availability. Many residents commute to urban Auckland for jobs. Despite a slightly higher unemployment rate, possibly due to an older population, the heritage area exhibits above-average income, high homeownership rates, and significant Gross Domestic Product growth. Economic resilience is evident, as seen during the COVID pandemic.

Community groups in the WRHA are actively engaged in environmental, service, and arts initiatives, underpinned by the principles of Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and stewardship. Local culture is celebrated through connections to heritage, whakapapa (Māori and European genealogy), and historical landmarks. Visitor numbers are increasing in the WRHA, with recreational spaces being popular for leisure and sports. Dry track construction addresses the ecological concerns of Kauri Dieback disease, highlighting the balance between the heritage area as a public place and wilderness area. The closure of tracks in response to concerns about the spread of kauri dieback illustrates a commitment to protecting natural heritage, despite the challenges it presents for public access and

recreation. Infrastructure and access limitations in the WRHA may struggle under increasing visitor numbers, necessitating planning and asset based / operational solutions to balance heritage conservation with growing interest in the area.

Recommendations

- At the time of the development of the next Unitary Plan review, council should consider including specific environmental and cultural indicators/measures from a Māori cultural point of view.¹

Indicator 2: The limited capacity of the heritage area to provide for growth is recognised.

Indicator and measures

Cumulative growth effects (such as increased traffic, service, and infrastructure provision) can have an irreversible effect on the heritage features of the ranges. The RPS aims to avoid placing a maximum threshold on development in the WRHA. Through its policies, the RPS aims to protect natural, social, and community features which are reliant on the retention of natural and rural qualities. Therefore, the standards applied through the zoning and overlays within the WRHA allow for more rigorous management of effects in the resource consent application assessment process than what is common in assessment of similar applications located in other rural areas and urban Auckland.

Measures for this indicator are quantitative assessments of resource consent and building consent numbers as compared to previous monitoring periods and consent locations.

Findings

There has been a decrease in resource consent activity during the current monitoring period compared to earlier years and a decrease in resource consent and building consents throughout the monitoring period. This reduction is in line with the approach to limiting growth in the WRHA. The AUP is to be effective in managing growth without imposing overly complicated or restrictive processes and is successfully directing development into areas with existing capacity, such as dwellings built on vacant lots, and areas of less ecological value.

Titirangi, and the villages at Oratia and Piha are experiencing the most development activity. This concentration of development highlights the potential effects on the character and environment of these areas. The AUP aims to manage this by keeping growth potential largely static, with an emphasis on utilising existing capacity.

Recommendations

Carry out economic modelling and on-the-ground assessment of ongoing development outcomes in the WRHA's centres to determine if plan-enabled capacity and provisions are contending with pressures for growth.²

¹ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

² These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

Indicator 3: Subdivision in the heritage area is of an appropriate scale and intensity and complements the character and landscape of the heritage area.

Indicator and measures

The RPS sets out that the character, scale and intensity of subdivision can lead to growth and that there are numerous and sometimes irreversible effects it can pose to heritage features. The AUP does not provide an upper limit on the number of subdivisions which may take place in the WRHA but does manage demand for growth through spatial standards on new lot sizes created. Subdivision Schedules in the Chapter D12 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay are the primary means through which site-specific subdivision is located and standards applied in the WRHA. These schedules direct subdivision into areas of WRHA with the capacity to absorb additional growth and prescribe geographic-specific standards for development.

The measures in this indicator are quantitative assessments of subdivision activities, their intensity, and scale.

Findings

Nineteen consents for fee simple subdivision were approved during the monitoring period, which is a reduction when compared to previous years. These 19 consents created 99 new fee simple lots, a greater average number of lots per consent than earlier years, in part due to a unique subdivision development along Christian Road in Swanson which contained 48 new lots. The activity statuses of subdivision consents do not indicate that consents creating a greater number of additional lots are exceeding AUP standards at a higher rate. The greatest concentration of resource consents was located in the suburb of Oratia. The Chapter D12 Subdivision Schedules are considered to be effective and efficient in directing subdivision to where there is the capacity for growth and identifying opportunities for natural heritage enhancement. Eighty-four per cent of consents for fee simple subdivision during the monitoring period were located within the D12 Subdivision Schedules. Of these, 63 per cent complied with all the standards of the schedule. The most common standard exceeded was enhancement areas not aligning with subdivision schedules. Subdivision activity has led to the creation of esplanade reserves and ecological enhancement and environmental protection. The average lot size within the D12 Schedules, at 1.28ha, is smaller than the minimum lot sizes elsewhere in the WRHA, yet significantly larger than the lot sizes inside the RUB. This indicates the AUP's effectiveness in preserving the rural character through controlling subdivision sizes. Outside the D12 Schedules, the average lot size is larger (3.82ha), further emphasising rural character retention.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations relating to the AUP for Indicator 3.

Indicator 4: The quality and diversity of landscapes in the heritage area identified as having local, regional or national significance are maintained.

Indicator and measures

The RPS recognises that the diversity and quality of the landscapes and landforms in the WRHA are of local, regional, and national significance and should be protected. Due to the varied and extreme topography in WRHA, the visual effects of development on the landscape can be pronounced and disruptive of the natural backdrop, if not managed appropriately.

The effect of development on significant landscapes and landforms is analysed through quantitative consenting data that assessed activities where they do not meet the requirements of AUP overlays that

manage development in landscapes of significance. This is augmented by qualitative observation through a landscape assessment completed in 2023.

Findings

The AUP has been effective in protecting landforms and landscapes of significance in the WRHA. Development within overlays that recognise landscapes and landforms of significance is low compared to total consents, and only a few new developments were identifiable through visual assessment. Where an activity is not provided for by the overlay, broad discretion is given to consent staff to assess the potential for effects on heritage features. Comparisons of photographic “wide shots” taken in 2018 and 2022 show that the overlays effectively minimize or negate the visual effects of development. In cases where new development is visible, conditions on resource consents seek to integrate built and natural forms effectively. The Outstanding Natural Features (ONF) and Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL) overlays in AUP Chapter D10, High Natural Character (HNC) and Outstanding Natural Character (ONC) overlays in AUP Chapter D11, and Ridgeline Protection Overlay (RPO) in AUP Chapter D15 provide tailored responses to various landform and landscape types, recognising different scales and levels of significance, especially in the interface between coastal and terrestrial environments. In areas where overlays intersect, a high-quality integrated response is essential to achieve resource consent approval. The relationship between the activity tables in D10 and D11 ensures a consistent application of assessment criteria for resource consent applications that involve D10 and D11 activities.

The D15 RPO protects prominent ridgelines that contribute to the diverse character and amenity of the region, including in the WRHA. Many ridgelines in the WRHA have roads constructed along them, so development along the ridgeline is expected, especially where development is already prevalent. The landscape assessment did not find any effects on the role of the eastern foothills as a natural visual backdrop to urban Auckland.

Recommendations

- There are no recommendations relating to the AUP for **Indicator 4**.

Indicator 5: Subdivision, use and development in the heritage area is subservient to the natural and rural landscape and character.

Indicator and measures

The RPS encourages adaptability of the built environment to the natural context and development which is responsive to the natural landscape and vegetation. Unique heritage features and characteristics of the existing built and natural environment identified in the Act and the RPS limit development and activity that may overwhelm the natural environment. The plan-making approach in the WRHA enables development and activity where it is not at the expense of the heritage features. Built environments which achieve subservience are commonly described as being “nestled into their surroundings” rather than appearing to be superimposed upon it or overwhelming the landscape. Subservience within the WRHA is dependent on several Unitary Plan zones, precincts, and overlays working together.

The measures used for this indicator consist of a qualitative landscape assessment looking at subservience outcomes generally and a quantitative assessment of the prevalence of consent for subservience-related activities in different zones.

Findings

The AUP largely promotes built environments that integrate with their natural surroundings in the WRHA. Vegetation screening and recessive design elements are effectively utilised to mitigate and obscure the visual impact of new development and integrate it into the landscape. Most new developments observed since the AUP became operative in 2016 have not resulted in large areas of permanent vegetation clearance or occupation of prominent landscape positions.

In the H20 Residential – Waitākere Foothills Zone increasing development pressures are leading to outcomes that conflict with the zone's objectives of mirroring the H19 Rural – Countryside Living Zone and retaining a rural character. These developments are more visible due to lower existing vegetation coverage and the greater capacity for growth intended in the zone. A high proportion (70 per cent) of resource consents in the WRHA where the sites are located in the H1 Residential - Large Lot Zone are for exceeding yard dimension standards, suggesting a loss of subservience. Despite this, landscape assessments show only minor adverse effects on the subservience of development in the Titirangi North area. This discrepancy between actual outcomes and the AUP's objectives, which aim to maintain and enhance the unique settlement pattern and landscape qualities of the Titirangi-Laingholm areas, indicates that the AUP's objectives are not being met.

Recommendations

- Consider the application of updated spatial planning, including area plans, and growth strategies to all catchments in the Waitākere eastern foothills.³
- Review whether the current standards in the H20 Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone are effective in maintaining the transitional function of the zone.⁴
- Review the efficiency of the H1 Residential - Large Lot Zone in providing for sparse development which has few effects and protects, restores, and enhances heritage features.⁵
- Review the incentives provided by standards and assessment criteria within the Unitary Plan that provide for enhancement of natural heritage features through use and development in areas which have had its vegetation previously cleared.⁶

Indicator 6: The water supply catchments and their related supply functions are protected.

Indicator and measures

The measure mirrors the indicator and seeks to understand if the regulatory protections which sustain the WRHA's role in Auckland's freshwater supply provide for continued operation.

This indicator utilizes a qualitative assessment of Watercare's designations, consents, and ongoing projects in the ranges.

Findings

The AUP includes overlays and designations from previous planning documents to safeguard water supply functionality. These provisions ensure that the ecological health of catchments supplying water

³ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

⁴ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

⁵ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

⁶ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

to reservoirs is maintained, thereby protecting the vitality of upstream sources for Auckland's water supply.

The designations in the WRHA facilitate Watercare Services Limited's ability to conduct maintenance, upgrades, and service operations without requiring additional resource consents. The expansion of Watercare's infrastructure, exemplified by the new water treatment plant in Titirangi, was achieved within the existing designation and AUP guidelines and sought a balance between essential infrastructure provision and heritage feature protection.

Recommendations

- There are no recommendations relating to the AUP for Indicator 6.

Indicator 7: Infrastructure and related activities are enabled, provided that the heritage features of the area are protected.

Indicator and measures

Essential to the RPS's function to enable living, working, and recreation in the WRHA is the provision of infrastructure and transport networks. Requirements for infrastructure in the WRHA are dependent on other factors which contribute to use. These factors include the increased capacity of dwellings through subdivision or the resulting use of transport and underground services. The indicator, and the Chapter D12 Objective that it mirrors, acknowledge the requirement of enabling infrastructure alongside development while accounting for the effects on heritage features that can result from extensive construction.

The measures used for this indicator consists of a qualitative landscape assessment looking at infrastructure outcomes generally and the types of works undertaken.

Findings

Resource consent data reveals that heritage features are carefully considered during infrastructure development and projects requiring vegetation removal and earthworks implement remediation and enhancement actions within their works. While infrastructure provision generally considers heritage features, there are some instances where it fails to integrate into the landscape. Infrastructure which is not consistent with the landscape in its design and implementation can introduce urban character to an environment.

Works on landslips were a recurring activity in infrastructure consents. Landslips can compromise structures and disrupt access to communities. Preventative and reparative work on slips can be complicated and time-consuming, exacerbated by the WRHA's diverse topography and limited access routes. The WRHA faces significant infrastructure challenges related to telecommunications, flooding, and unstable land due to diverse topography and remoteness. Maintenance and development of infrastructure networks are crucial for safety, disaster preparedness, and maintaining vital connections with residents and communities.

Recommendations

Review and develop improved methods of identification of instability in the landscape.⁷

⁷ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

Provide for infrastructure integration standards in E26 specific to the WRHA.⁸

Indicator 8: Natural vegetation cover is enhanced and indigenous vegetation is protected.

Indicator and measures

Vegetation, alongside freshwater supply from above and below ground sources, is one of the most prominent natural resources in the WRHA and is indicative of ecosystem health, along with providing habitat for terrestrial and freshwater species. The human experience of naturalness in the WRHA is largely due to its heavily vegetated landscape. Indigenous vegetation covers around 85 per cent of the WRHA and contributes to the identity of communities, recreation, scientific study, and conservation management.

The measures in this indicator are a quantitative assessment of consents for vegetation in relevant zones and overlays.

Findings

The various protective measures in place for indigenous vegetation in the WRHA has proven effective in safeguarding, restoring, and enhancing native and total vegetation coverage. The multiple layers of protection for native vegetation, which vary based on zone, activity, and overlay, provide a reasonable level of precaution. Assisted and natural regrowth significantly exceeds the rate of vegetation removal. Indigenous biodiversity restoration is frequently achieved through weed removal requirements in resource consent conditions during new subdivisions, uses, and activities. Additionally, enhancement areas established under Chapter D12 Schedules contribute to an overall increase in the protected vegetation area over time.

The Chapter D13 - Notable Trees overlay specifically addresses notable tree works, allowing for the necessary removal of trees while maintaining overall vegetation protection. This overlay ensures that tree removal is carefully considered and balanced with the need to preserve the area's natural environment.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations relating to the AUP for **Indicator 8**.

Conclusion

Overall, the planning provisions applied to the WRHA through the AUP are extensive and utilise different instruments to identify and manage growth. Overall, the AUP is effective and efficient in realising the outcomes set out in RPS Chapter B4.4. Where the observed outcomes of the AUP deviated from the RPS outcomes a commonality is observed. Intensification of the lower foothills, slips caused from extreme weather, and increasing visitor numbers putting pressure on existing infrastructure are all examples of external pressures changing the environment within the WRHA. Amendments made to the AUP provisions at the time of plan review should be aware to the need for the WRHA to be responsive to unpredictable impacts upon its heritage features.

⁸ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

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Abbreviations in this report include:

Abbreviation	Meaning
AUP	Auckland Unitary Plan Operative in Part
the council	Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland Council
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
RPS	Regional Policy Statement
resource consents database	Plans and Places resource consent decision tracking database
building consents database	Building consent decisions database
AT	Auckland Transport
Watercare	Watercare Services Limited
CCO	Council-Controlled-Organisation
Act	Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008
WRHA	Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area
the ranges	The Waitākere Ranges
SoE	State of the Environment report
RPO	Ridgeline Protection Overlay
ONC	Outstanding Natural Character
HNC	High Natural Character
ONL	Outstanding Natural Landscape
ONF	Outstanding Natural Features
CfGS	Capacity for Growth Study
LUC	Land use consent
SUB	Subdivision consent
SEA	Significant Ecological Area

1.0 Introduction

This report considers how effective and efficient the objectives, policies, rules and other methods of the AUP have been in meeting the outcomes intended by the Regional Policy Statement – Chapter B4.4 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area (RPS). The monitoring is in accordance with 35(2)(b) of the RMA.

Section 35(2)(b) specifies that monitoring results are published every five years. The AUP became operative in part in November 2016 and became operative in part for five years in November 2021.

The findings seek to tell a story of what the AUP is achieving and where challenges may be. With monitoring being a key link in the policy development lifecycle, the data can also provide the evidence base for taking appropriate action where necessary.

The terms ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ are not explicitly defined in the RMA. For the purposes of this monitoring report the terms are generally interpreted as⁹:

Effectiveness is the contribution that the provisions make towards achieving the objective, and how successful they are likely to be in solving the problem they were designed to address when compared with alternatives. The difficulty when assessing effectiveness is to be able to answer the question ‘how do we know that implementing the policy, rule or method led or contributed to the outcome?’

Efficiency is an assessment of whether the provisions will be likely to achieve the objectives at the lowest total cost to all, or achieves the highest net benefit relative to cost to all.

The steps undertaken in this monitoring work are briefly summarised in **Figure 1**.

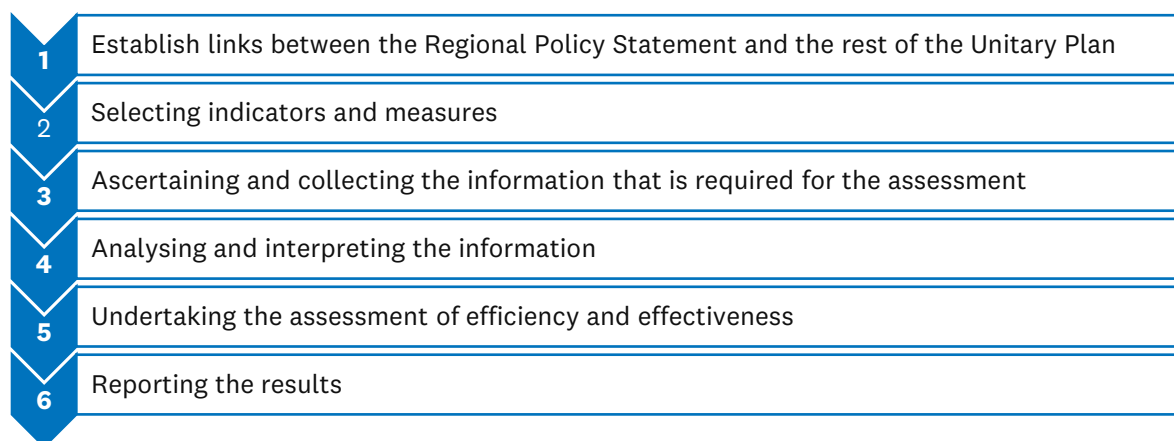


Figure 1 Steps in the monitoring process.

⁹ Auckland Unitary Plan Monitoring Strategy (2018).

1.1 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008

The Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 (the Act) established the Waitākere Ranges (the ranges) as an area with heritage features which are of national, regional, and local significance. The Act promotes the protection and enhancement of its heritage features for present and future generations.

The Act responds to concerns about the effects of development within the area and aims to preserve the unique natural character and cultural heritage of the area.

- The Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area (WRHA) spans approximately 27,700ha of public and private land. The location of the WRHA in the Auckland Region can be seen in **Figure 2** below:

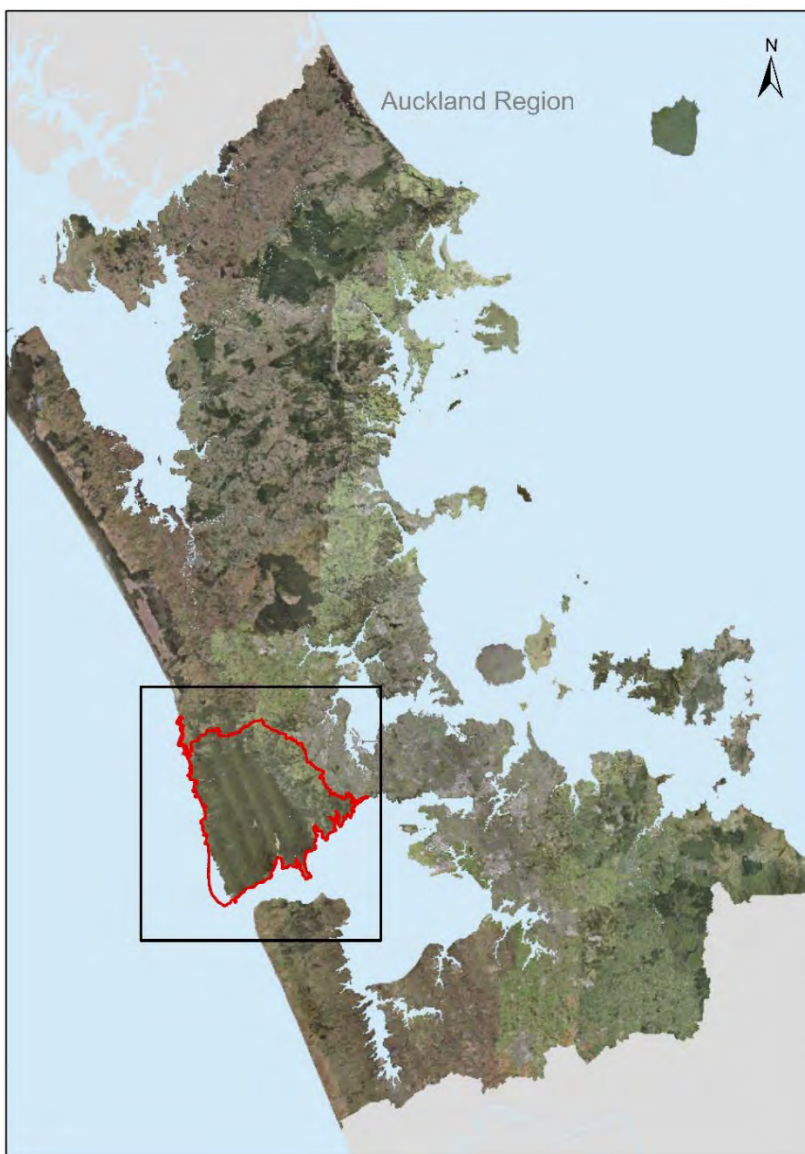


Figure 2 The location of the WRHA in the Auckland Region.

The area includes the Waitākere Ranges, foothills, and coastal areas. The Act recognises the transitional quality of the eastern foothills, the high value indigenous ecosystems and outstanding character of the ranges' landscapes and landforms.

The heritage area is of particular cultural significance to Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Whatua.

Heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area

The heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area as included in the Act are listed below.

The objectives of establishing and maintaining the heritage area are—

- (a) *to protect, restore, and enhance the area and its heritage features:*
- (b) *to ensure that impacts on the area as a whole are considered when decisions are made affecting any part of it:*
- (c) *to adopt the following approach when considering decisions that threaten serious or irreversible damage to a heritage feature:*
 - (i) *carefully consider the risks and uncertainties associated with any particular course of action; and*
 - (ii) *take into account the best information available; and*
 - (iii) *endeavour to protect the heritage feature:*
- (d) *to recognise and avoid adverse potential, or adverse cumulative, effects of activities on the area's environment (including its amenity) or its heritage features:*
- (e) *to recognise that, in protecting the heritage features, the area has little capacity to absorb further subdivision:*
- (f) *to ensure that any subdivision or development in the area, of itself or in respect of its cumulative effect,—*
 - (i) *is of an appropriate character, scale, and intensity; and*
 - (ii) *does not adversely affect the heritage features; and*
 - (iii) *does not contribute to urban sprawl:*
- (g) *to maintain the quality and diversity of landscapes in the area by—*
 - (i) *protecting landscapes of local, regional, or national significance; and*
 - (ii) *restoring and enhancing degraded landscapes; and*
 - (iii) *managing change within a landscape in an integrated way, including managing change in a rural landscape to retain a rural character:*
- (h) *to manage aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems in the area to protect and enhance indigenous habitat values, landscape values, and amenity values:*
 - (i) *to recognise that people live and work in the area in distinct communities, and to enable those people to provide for their social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being:*
- (j) *to provide for future uses of rural land in order to retain a rural character in the area:*
- (k) *to protect those features of the area that relate to its water catchment and supply functions:*
- (l) *to protect in perpetuity the natural and historic resources of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the people and communities of the Auckland region and New Zealand.*



Figure 3 Map of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area.

1.2 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area State of the Environment Report 2017-2022

The Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area State of the Environment Report (SoE) is a monitoring report required to be produced every five years by Section 34 of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area 2008 Act. The report summarises the state of the environment of the heritage area, the progress made towards achieving the objectives of the Act and the funding impact from activities to be undertaken to give effect to the Act. Environmental, planning, community, economic and public consultation data is used to provide a holistic assessment of activity within the ranges. Three State of the Environment reports have been produced in 2013, 2018 and 2023 (2017-2022). The resource and building consent databases utilised for this monitoring report also contributed to the observations of Topic 3: Landforms, Landscapes and Landuse in the 2017-2022 SoE. While this report provides technical assessment of planning outcomes through the AUP monitoring program the SoE reports expand on the relationships between planning outcomes and other topics in the ranges. See **Section 3.1.3** for more detail on the use of the SoE reports for this monitoring report. The full SoE 2017-2022 can be found [here](#).

1.3 Auckland Context

The Waitākere Ranges form an important natural backdrop to metropolitan Auckland and are outstanding for their terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. The extent of the WRHA and relationship to Auckland's urban environment can be seen **Figure 3** above. The landscape has significance to mana whenua and has highly regarded cultural and spiritual values. Development is generally sparse, does not dominate the natural environment and should continue to reflect the heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges. Resource management issues in the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area include:

- **Biodiversity and conservation:** The Waitākere Ranges provide a habitat for a wide array of native flora and fauna, including various endemic and endangered species. The area's diverse ecosystems, such as kauri forests, wetlands, and coastal ecosystems, contribute to New Zealand's overall biodiversity. The ranges also serve as a critical corridor for wildlife movement, fostering genetic diversity and promoting species resilience. The Waitākere Ranges Regional Park makes up approximately 17,000 hectares of protected native rainforest and coastline. It is one of the region's most important reservoirs of biodiversity (Waitakere Ranges Local Board, 2018).

Kauri dieback is a significant threat to the Waitākere Ranges, as it has the potential to severely impact the native kauri forests and the ecosystems they support. The disease is a fungus-type pathogen which damages the tree's root system. It reduces the tree's ability to take water and nutrients from the soil and transport it throughout the plant. Disturbance of soil around the roots of a tree, such as through foot traffic, can spread kauri dieback (Department of Conservation, 2023). Loss of kauri trees leads to an overall loss of biodiversity. Kauri trees also hold immense cultural importance for Māori, who have used them for various purposes, such as building waka (canoes), carving and traditional medicine. The loss of kauri trees due to dieback could negatively impact the cultural heritage and practices associated with these trees.

- **Recreational infrastructure:** The Waitākere Ranges Regional Park encompasses an extensive network of walking and hiking tracks. These tracks are maintained and managed according to best practices in recreational management, ensuring sustainable and safe use for both visitors and the environment. The coastal areas are a popular location for fishing and surfing. Tourism visits to the recreational and coastal areas of the ranges are also a source of economic and commercial vitality in the area (Auckland Council, 2023).

Many walking tracks in the ranges have been closed temporarily or permanently to limit the spread of kauri dieback by human activity. Cleaning stations have been installed at the entrance and exit points of several tracks that remain open, where visitors are required to clean their footwear and gear to prevent the spread of the pathogen (Auckland Council, 2023).

- **Cultural heritage preservation:** The ranges hold significant cultural value for local Māori iwi (tribes), with numerous sites representing historical, spiritual, and ancestral connections. Conservation efforts include collaborating with iwi representatives to preserve and protect these sites, ensuring the long-term preservation of Māori heritage (Auckland Council, 2023).
- **Historical context:** The ranges serve as a repository of historical information related to early European settlement, logging, gum digging and flax milling industries. The preservation of historical artifacts and remnants within the park allows researchers to study the region's past and its impact on the environment (Auckland Council, 2023).
- **Hydrological resources:** The ranges play a crucial role in providing fresh water to the Auckland region. The Huia, Upper Nihotupu and Lower Nihotupu reservoirs, among others, are situated within the park, supplying a significant portion of Auckland's water. The area's hydrological systems are subject to stringent monitoring and management practices to maintain water quality and ensure sustainable resource use (Auckland Council, 2023).
- **Landscape ecology:** The ranges exhibit a diverse range of landscapes, from rainforests and waterfalls to rugged coastlines. Landscape ecology studies within the park can help identify patterns and processes that influence the distribution of ecosystems and species, enabling better management and conservation strategies. Several areas in the ranges are set aside as conservation reserves.

The ranges have many landforms and landscapes recognised for their local, regional, and national significance. These natural features are sensitive to cumulative and inappropriate development, use and subdivision.

- **Community:** The ranges is home to unique communities and an internationally renowned art scene. Conservation and community programs contribute to a strong sense of pride among the ranges' residents. The heavily vegetated rural and sparse settlement patterns in the ranges are unlike any other region in Auckland.

The locality and heritage values of communities in the ranges is sensitive to urban settlement patterns and pressure from development. The eastern foothills are at the greatest risk from loss of rural land uses, introduction of urban elements and visually intrusive development into the rural landscapes that would undermine both the rural character and the transition from urban to vegetated forest in these areas.

1.4 Auckland Plan 2050

The Auckland Plan 2050 was adopted by the council in June 2018. It is a long-term spatial plan which considers how Auckland will address key challenges and opportunities over the next 30 years. These include high population growth, shared prosperity, and environmental degradation. Environmental and Cultural Heritage is identified as one of six outcomes in the plan with several directions and focus areas related to the WRHA.

The activity in the WRHA is relevant to the Environmental and Cultural Heritage Outcome. The relevant directions and focus areas in this outcome are:

- **Direction 1:** Ensure Auckland’s natural and environment and cultural heritage is valued and cared for.
 - The ranges are valued for their own sake and worth and for the role they play in the identity and wellbeing of Auckland and its peoples. Physical resources, such as the water supply from the range’s reservoirs and income from the tourism economy benefit the region. Care, maintenance, and sustainable use in the WRHA is integral to ensure these benefits last into the future.
- **Direction 3:** Use, growth, and development to protect and enhance Auckland’s natural environment.
 - The AUP provides direction on the type and scale of development growth in the WRHA. Guidelines on growth limit the proliferation of the urban landscape overtaking the natural environment and foster contextual responses of built form to the natural environment. Non-statutory guides such as the *Waitākere Ranges Foothills Design Guide and Building in the bush design guide* encourage methods of development and construction which reduce impact on and are subservient to the landscape of the ranges (Melean Absolum LTD., 2018; Auckland Council Plans and Places, 2017).
- **Focus area 2:** Focus on restoring environments as Auckland grows.
 - Zoning and overlays in the WRHA recognise the need to protect, restore and enhance the natural environment through the provision of new development. Often construction provides an opportunity for the removal of pest plants and revegetation of indigenous growth, promoting biodiversity.

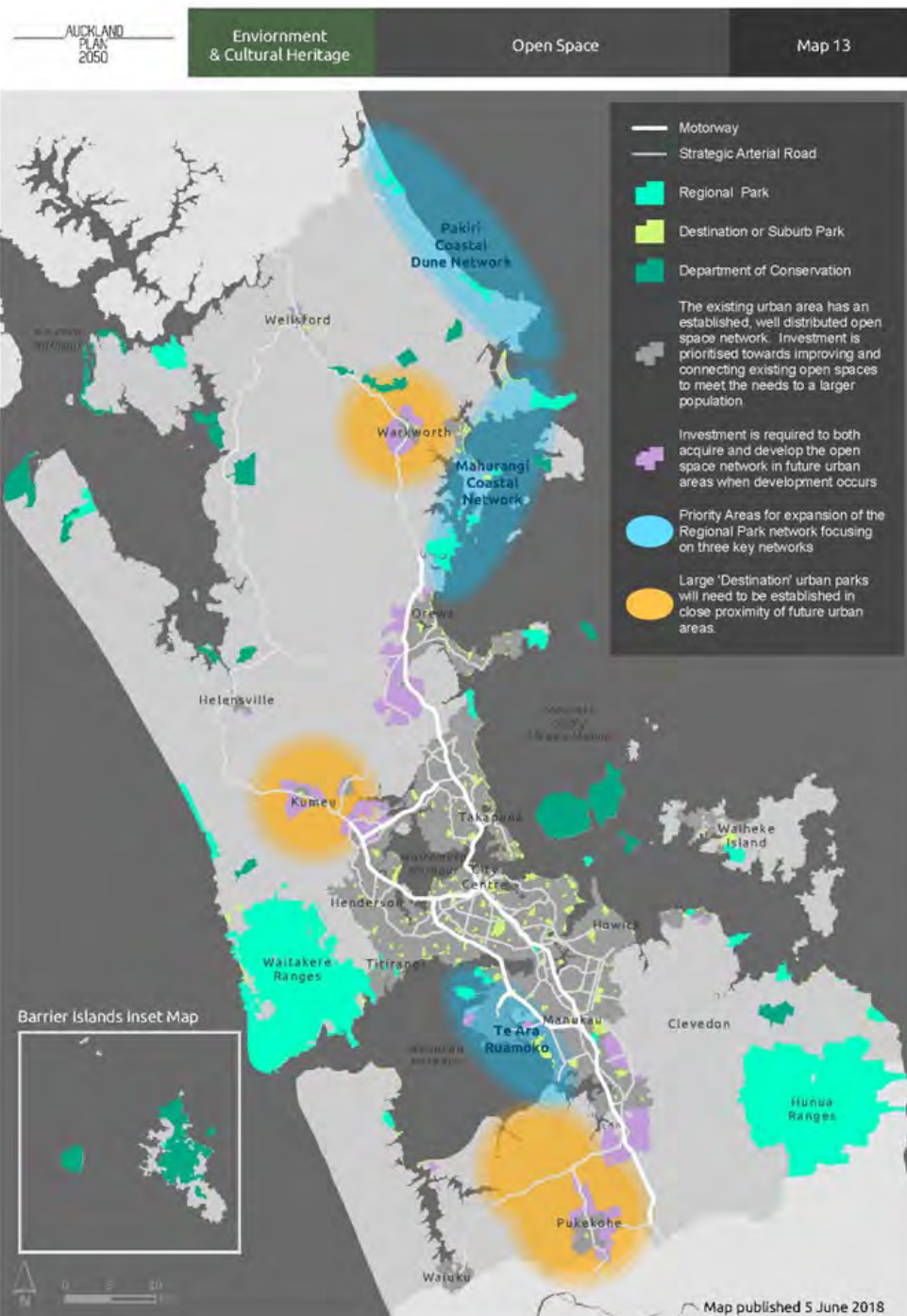


Figure 4: Urban expansion, existing reserves and planned future open space networks.

- **Focus Area 3:** Account fully for the past and future impacts of growth.
 - Growth in the WRHA is primarily provided for in established population centres. Sparse settlement patterns are maintained in the more heavily vegetated parts of the ranges. In the eastern foothills where the pressure for growth is significant, subdivision controls and unique zoning types limit the expansion of urban development towards the regional park. **Figure 4** shows areas of intensification and expansion identified around Auckland in the 2050 Plan.

- **Focus Area 4:** Protect Auckland’s significant natural environments and cultural heritage from further loss.
 - Significant landscape and cultural values of significance are recognised in the WRHA. Protection of significant landscapes, cultural sites and biodiversity is enabled through planning protections, monitoring, and cooperation with local stakeholders. Trade-offs can be required to protect significant values, such as closing hiking trails to reduce the spread of kauri dieback. Identified sites of significance can be seen within the WRHA and the Auckland Region can be seen in **Figure 5** below.

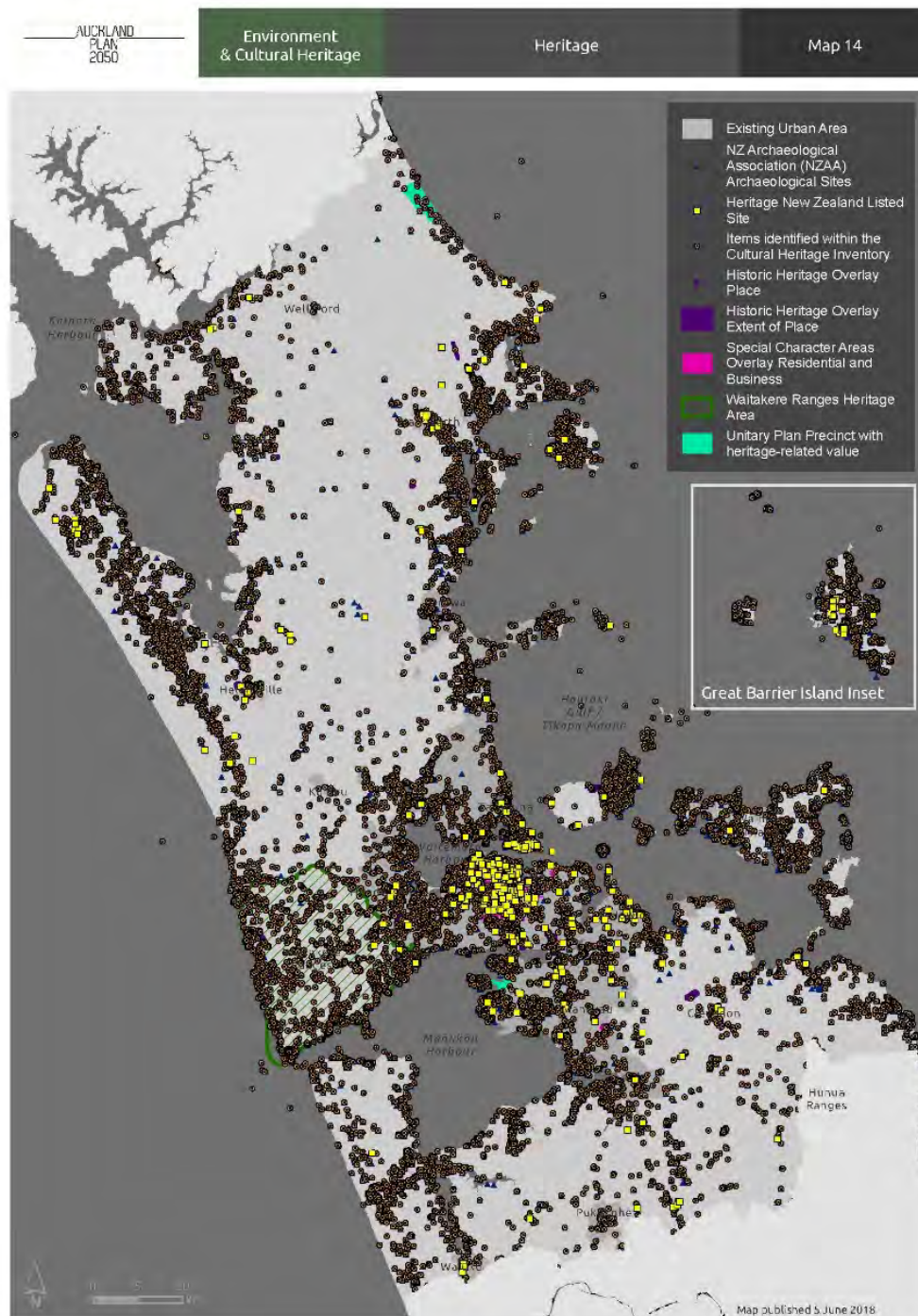


Figure 5 Identified Sites of Environmental and Cultural Heritage Significance.

- **Focus Area 5:** Adapt to a changing water future.
 - The five reservoirs in the Waitākere Ranges provide around 20 per cent of Auckland’s water supply (Watercare, 2023). The supply can be affected by changes in the water quality arising from pollution and sedimentation. Protection of the watersheds, aquifers and tributaries is important to the sustainability of Auckland’s water supply.

1.5 Regional Policy Statement

1.5.1 RPS Chapter B4 overview

The Regional Policy Statement (RPS) Chapter B4 – Natural Heritage outlines objectives and policies relating to protection of Auckland’s natural character and environmental quality from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

Chapter B4 specifies that the Waitākere Ranges form an important natural backdrop to metropolitan Auckland and are outstanding for their terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. The landscape has significance to mana whenua and has highly regarded cultural and spiritual values. Development is generally sparse, does not dominate the natural environment and should continue to reflect the heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges.

Resource management issues in the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area include:

- managing the pressure to accommodate further development in the Waitākere Ranges and their foothills.
- managing the cumulative effects of development on the landscape and the desired future character and amenity values of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area and its natural environment.
- enabling the social and economic well-being of local communities in the area, including infrastructure necessary to service those communities.

1.5.2 B4.4 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area

Chapter B4.4 of the RPS and its underlying policy cascade in the AUP (see Appendix 1: B4.4 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Policy Cascade) seek to ensure the natural and historic resources, including the significant environmental values and heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges, are protected, restored, and enhanced for the benefit, use and enjoyment of Auckland’s future community.

The protection, restoration and enhancement of the values and heritage features of the ranges helps to:

- Retain the rural character of the ranges and the transitional function of the foothills.
- Protect the Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Landforms which contribute to the character of the ranges.
- Provide for development and subdivision of a scale and intensity which recognises and is sympathetic to the heritage qualities of the Waitākere Ranges
- Avoid cumulative effects on the environment from activity and use.

The chapter identifies several outcomes within its objectives and policies:

- Protect and maintain resources which are of significance to the spiritual dimension and mauri of mana whenua’s kaitiaki role in the Waitākere Ranges.
- Development which recognises and is sympathetic to the qualities, character and natural features of the Waitākere Ranges and the complex mixed landscapes of the foothill.
- Environmental values and natural heritage features are protected restored and enhanced in perpetuity for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the community.
- The social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of the people that live and work in the area is enabled.
- The water supply catchments and related functions are protected.

1.6 Auckland Unitary Plan

1.6.1 Zoning

Zones manage the way in which areas of land and the coastal marine area are to be used, developed, or protected. The spatial application of zones generally identifies where similar uses and activities are anticipated. The operative AUP zones within the AUP can be seen in **Figure 6** below.

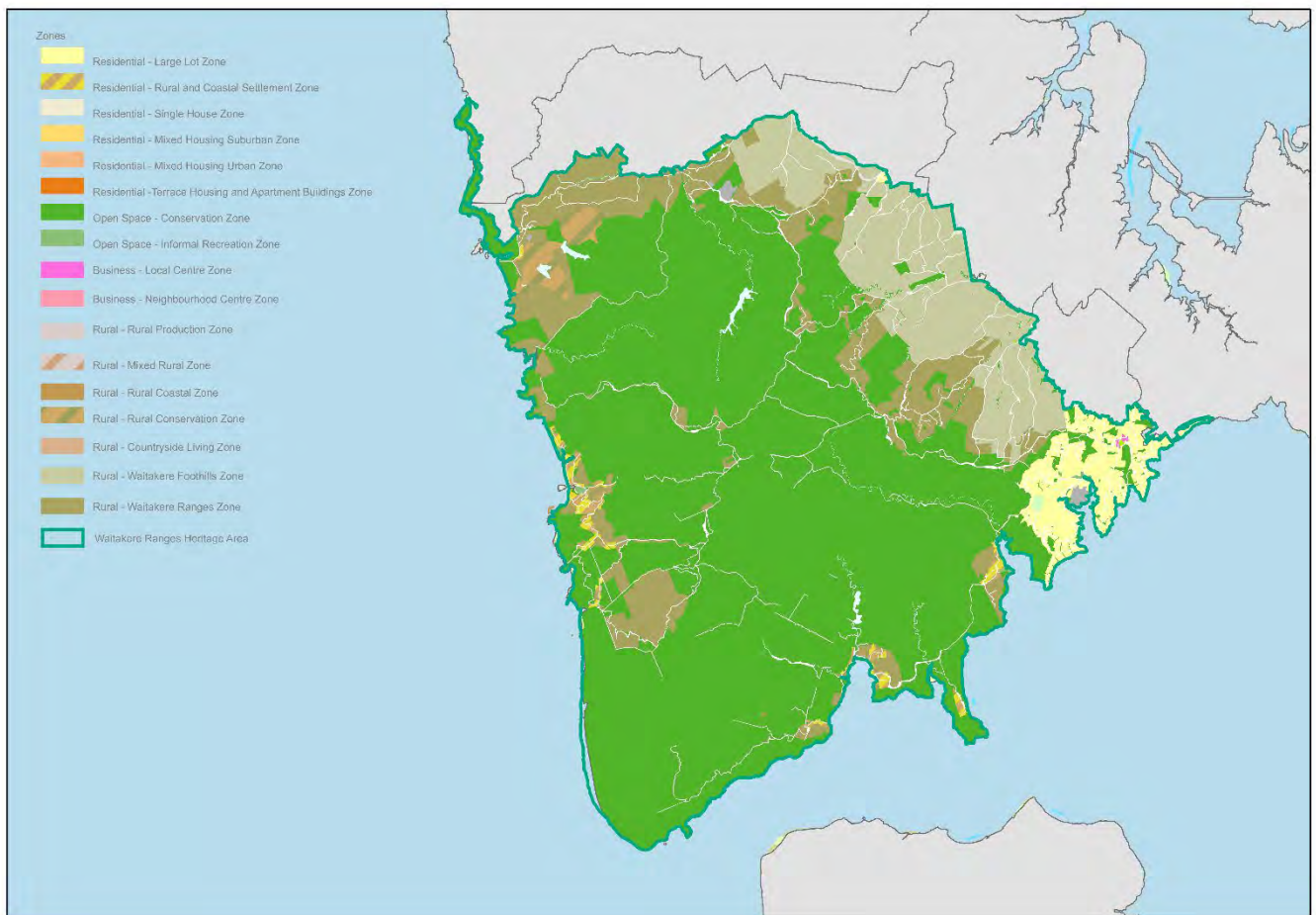


Figure 6 Auckland Unitary Plan zoning within the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area

- **H1 Residential – Large Lot Zone** is non-specific to the WRHA. It covers the south-eastern part of the WRHA around Titirangi and Laingholm. Background on the zone can be found [here](#).
- **H2 Residential – Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone** is non-specific to the WRHA. It covers parts of the southern and western coast of the WRHA which have been developed. Background on the zone can be found [here](#).
- **H5 Residential – Mixed Housing Urban Zone** is non-specific to the WRHA. This zone only covers one property on the edge of the WRHA in Swanson. The development of this property is the subject of a case study in **Indicator 3**. Background on the zone can be found [here](#).
- **H11 Business – Local Centre Zone** is non-specific to the WRHA. It only covers Titirangi Village and allows for the greatest concentration of development in the ranges. It reflects Titirangi’s prominence as the largest centre in the WRHA. Background on the zone can be found [here](#).
- **H12 Business – Neighbourhood Centre Zone** is non-specific to the WRHA. It covers several smaller centres in the WRHA and provides for some of the more remote settlements in the WRHA. Background on the zone can be found [here](#).
- **H20 Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone** is specific to the WRHA. It runs along the eastern border of the WRHA and covers the lower rise of the eastern foothills. The zone is intended to provide for transition from intensified development in Urban Auckland to rural settlement further within the WRHA. Background on the zone can be found [here](#).
- **H21 Rural – Waitākere Ranges Zone** is specific to the WRHA. It is located in the interior regions of the WRHA and mainly borders the regional park. The zone is intended to provide for sparse, heavily vegetated settlement around the regional park. Background on it can be found on it [here](#).
- **H3 Residential – Single House Zone and H4 Residential – Mixed Housing Suburban Zone**, are also recorded in resource consent databases with four total resource consent entries. These are parcels which share a border with the WRHA where part of the property falls inside the WRHA, and the standards of the D12 Overlay apply. More information on H3 can be found [here](#) and more information on H4 can be found [here](#).

Some areas in the ranges are covered by H7 Open Space zones, F2. Coastal – General Coastal Marine Zone and F8. Coastal – Coastal Transition Zone.

- **H7 Open Space** includes five zones with related functions. All of them are present within the WRHA. The conservation zone covers the regional park and areas of protected vegetation throughout the WRHA. Open Space zones can fill different functions, including ecological conservation, sports facilities and community gathering and event spaces. Further information on Open Space zones can be found [here](#).
 - Open Space – Conservation Zone;
 - Open Space – Informal Recreation Zone;
 - Open Space – Sports and Active Recreation Zone;
 - Open Space – Civic Spaces Zone; and
 - Open Space – Community Zone.
- **F2 Coastal – General Coastal Marine Zone** enables use and protects coastal zones from harm. This zoning applies to properties on or near the coastline. More information on F2 can be found [here](#).
- **F8 Coastal – Coastal Transition Zone** is administrative and applies to land immediately above mean high-water springs. This zone enables zoning standards to be applied. More information

on F8 can be found [here](#). These zones have no direct effect on the monitoring findings in this report.

1.6.2 Overlays

Overlays manage the protection, maintenance or enhancement of particular values associated with an area or resource.

- **D1 High-use Aquifer Management Areas Overlay** manages aquifers which have been subject to high usage rates. Most proposals to take or use groundwater from these aquifers will be subject to resource consent to ensure that user needs, and natural water sourcing needs are met. Background on the overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D2 Quality-sensitive Aquifer Management Areas Overlay** protects aquifers which are shallow and unconfined and therefore subject to contaminants. Background on the overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D4 Natural Stream Management Areas Overlay** protects rivers and streams with high levels of ecological and biodiversity values from use and development. Background on the overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D5 Natural Lake Management Areas Overlay** protects lakes and their 50m riparian zones in rural areas. Water quality, natural character and ecological values are all considered when approving activity, development, and recreation activities. Background on the overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D7 Water Supply Management Areas Overlay** protects water catchments which supply fresh water to Auckland's municipal water supply dams and for the maintenance of supply infrastructure. The water supply infrastructure such as the pipe network and pumping stations fall under the management of this overlay. This overlay enables Watercare to provide for and upgrade the system which supplies Auckland with fresh water. Background on the overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D8 Wetland Management Areas Overlay** protects significant wetlands and their ecological functions from adverse effects of use and development, including the introduction of contaminants. Background on the overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D9 Significant Ecological Areas Overlay (SEA)** protects and provides for areas of significant indigenous biodiversity, flora, and fauna, from proliferation of development and activity in accordance with B7.2 Indigenous Biodiversity. As 85 per cent of the vegetation in the WRHA is indigenous the SEA covers large extents of the area (Auckland Council, 2023). This overlay covers terrestrial and marine areas. Background on the overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D10 Outstanding Natural Features Overlay (ONF) and Outstanding Natural Landscapes Overlay (ONL)** gives effect to Policy 15(a) of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, and the Regional Policy Statement objectives and policies in B4.2 Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes. Despite being related to the Coastal Policy Statement these overlays cover inland areas as well as areas in coastal proximity. D10 Contains two separate overlays which are interrelated but identified through separate criteria. The criteria used to define these overlays are located in **Table 1** below. Background information on this AUP chapter can be found [here](#).
- **D11 Outstanding Natural Character (ONC) and High Natural Character Overlay (HNC)** gives effect to Policy 13 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, and to the Regional Policy Statement objectives and policies in B8.2 Natural character. The two overlays in D11 are related to the protection of natural heritage in proximity to the coastline. The criteria used to define these overlays are located in **Table 1** below. Background information on this AUP chapter can be found [here](#).

Table 1: Selection criteria for the D10 and D11 overlays.

Overlay	Criteria of selection
Outstanding Natural Features	<p>B4.2.2. Policies</p> <p><i>(4) Identify and evaluate a place as an outstanding natural feature considering the following factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(a) the extent to which the landform, feature or geological site contributes to the understanding of the geology or evolution of the biota in the region, New Zealand or the earth, including type localities of rock formations, minerals and fossils;</i> <i>(b) the rarity or unusual nature of the site or feature;</i> <i>(c) the extent to which the feature is an outstanding representative example of the diversity of Auckland's natural landforms and geological features;</i> <i>(d) the extent to which the landform, geological feature or site is part of a recognisable group of features;</i> <i>(e) the extent to which the landform, geological feature or site contributes to the value of the wider landscape;</i> <i>(f) the extent of community association with, or public appreciation of, the values of the feature or site;</i> <i>(g) the potential value of the feature or site for public education;</i> <i>(h) the potential value of the feature or site to provide additional understanding of the geological or biotic history;</i> <i>(i) the state of preservation of the feature or site;</i> <i>(j) the extent to which a feature or site is associated with an historically important natural event, geologically related industry, or individual involved in earth science research;</i> <i>(k) the importance of the feature or site to mana whenua.</i>
Outstanding Natural Landscapes	<p>B4.2.2. Policies</p> <p><i>(1) Identify and evaluate a place as an outstanding natural landscape considering the following factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(a) natural science factors: geology, topography, hydrology, vegetation cover, ecology and natural processes;</i> <i>(b) expressiveness/legibility: including the degree to which the landscape reveals its formative processes;</i> <i>(c) aesthetic values and memorability: including landmarks and significant views;</i> <i>(d) perceptions of naturalness: related to human influences, the presence of buildings and structures or landform modification;</i> <i>(e) transient landscape values: including those related to natural processes, such as seasonal change and the presence of wildlife;</i> <i>(f) shared and recognised values: including the public profile and recognition of particular landscapes;</i> <i>(g) mana whenua: the value of the landscape to mana whenua;</i> <i>(h) historical: the landscape's known historical associations.</i>

<p>Outstanding Natural Character & High Natural Character</p>	<p>B8.2.2. Policies</p> <p><i>(1) Identify and evaluate areas of outstanding natural character or high natural character considering the following factors:</i></p> <p><i>(a) natural elements, processes and patterns;</i></p> <p><i>(b) biophysical, ecological, geological and geomorphological aspects;</i></p> <p><i>(c) natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, freshwater springs and surf breaks;</i></p> <p><i>(d) the natural movement of water and sediment;</i></p> <p><i>(e) the natural darkness of the night sky;</i></p> <p><i>(f) places or areas that are wild or scenic; and</i></p> <p><i>(g) experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea, and their context or setting.</i></p>
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- **D12 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay** covers the entire WRHA. This overlay sits directly below the B4.4 RPS in the policy cascade (see Appendix 1: B4.4 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Policy Cascade) and its provisions apply to all activity taking place in the WRHA. The activities in this overlay primarily controls subdivision with some controls for minor dwellings and commercial filming. Background on the overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D13 Notable Trees Overlay** is to protect notable trees and notable groups of trees from danger or destruction resulting from development. Individual trees and groups of trees that have been scheduled as notable trees are considered to be among the most significant trees in Auckland. These trees have been specifically identified to ensure that the benefits they provide are retained for future generations. Background on the overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D15 Ridgeline Protection Overlay (RPO)** protects prominent ridgelines which contribute to the diverse character and amenity of the region. Ridgelines are differentiated into either natural ridgelines, those with minimal or no vegetation removal, and modified ridgelines, which have more development activity but retain their contribution through what vegetation remains. The WRHA has many of the prominent ridgelines in Auckland and site size, massing of buildings and vegetation retention activities have conditions which protect the integrity of the ridgelines. Background information on this overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D17 Historic Heritage Overlay** manages the protection, conservation, maintenance, modification, relocation, use and development of scheduled historic heritage places in accordance with Chapter B5.2. Historic heritage sites can be single locations or areas, including cultural landscapes, buildings, structures, monuments, gardens and plantings, archaeological sites and features, traditional sites, sacred places, townscapes, streetscapes, and settlements. Background information on this overlay can be found [here](#).
- **D21. Sites and Places of Significance to Mana Whenua Overlay** provides for the protection of sites and places of significance which have tangible and intangible cultural values in association with historic events, occupation, and cultural activities to mana whenua. Efforts are being made to expand this overlay through the identification of new sites of significance. Some of the sites and places identified in this overlay overlap with Historic Heritage identified in D17. Background information on this overlay can be found [here](#).

1.6.3 Precincts

Precincts enable local differences to be recognised by providing detailed place-based provisions which can vary the outcomes sought by the zone or Auckland-wide provisions and can be more restrictive or more enabling.

I601 Bethells Precinct covers a large coastal site at Te Henga – Bethells Beach. The precinct adjoins the Te Henga Precinct and the Wainamu Precinct. The purpose of the Bethells Precinct is to provide for a range of existing and proposed activities in the modified north-western sector of the area. The provisions arise from a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the precinct’s natural and heritage features and provide for a limited range of development and activities in a manner that enhances and protects the environment. It also reflects the specific ways in which the land use activities have historically been undertaken. The zoning of land within the Bethells Precinct is Rural – Rural Conservation Zone and the precinct is also subject to the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay. This precinct borrows activity standards from **H19 Rural – Rural Conservation Zone** and takes a more precautionary approach than what is applied in the WRHA’s other zones.

I608 Oratia Village Precinct is centred on the primary school on West Coast Road, Oratia. The school and surrounding area is a valued place in the community, providing a centre for local facilities, meeting, and socialising. The views north from the village to the forested escarpment, with open rural land in the foreground, make an important contribution to the rural character of Oratia Village. The precinct provides for the protection and enhancement of the rural character of the village and the services it provides for the local community. The zoning of land within this precinct is the Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone and the Open Space – Community Zone. The precinct is also subject to the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay.

I612 Te Henga Precinct covers a large coastal site at Te Henga – Bethells Beach. The precinct adjoins the Bethells Precinct and the Wainamu Precinct. The purpose of the Te Henga Precinct is to recognise and provide for the unique cultural, historic, and ecological value of this area. In a limited number of instances, the precinct provisions will take precedence over certain provisions in the Natural Heritage overlays. Environmental assessments of this precinct have provided detailed information on which to base individual management plans for the property. The subdivision and development provisions have been tailored to the unique circumstances of the property, taking into account existing and past use of the property and the opportunities to achieve net environmental benefits. The zoning of land within this precinct is Rural – Rural Coastal Zone and the precinct is also subject to the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay, the Outstanding Natural Character Overlay, High Natural Character Overlay, Outstanding Natural Landscape Overlay and the Ridgeline Protection Overlay.

I614 Wainamu Precinct covers a large site located at 32A-C and 34A-C Te Aute Ridge Road, Bethells in the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area, as defined by the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008. Environmental assessment of the site has provided detailed information for the precinct’s management plans. The subdivision and development provisions have been tailored to its unique circumstances, taking into account existing and past use of the area and the opportunities to achieve net environmental benefits. The provisions reflect a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the precinct’s natural and heritage features that provide for a limited range of development and activities in a manner that enhances and protects the environment. In a limited number of instances, the precinct provisions will take precedence over certain provisions in the Natural Heritage overlays. The underlying zoning of land within this precinct is Rural – Rural Conservation Zone and the precinct is

also subject to the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay, the Ridgeline Protection Overlay and the Outstanding Natural Landscapes Overlay.

2.0 Indicators

Indicators and measures have been developed to assess the progress toward achieving the objectives and outcomes intended by the RPS. They are qualitative or quantitative gauges that assess changes and help diagnose potential issues.

An **indicator** (for the purposes of this report) is a qualitative or quantitative gauge that displays degrees of progress to determine whether or not the AUP is moving in the right direction toward meeting its objectives. An indicator should be used to assess the condition of the environment, to identify changes to that condition, to diagnose problems and then to guide future changes to objectives, policies, or methods (via plan change or plan review).

A **measure** is the selected information that enables evaluation of the indicator. Methods of measurement will differ depending on the indicator.

The selected indicators for this topic have been shaped by limitations. It was not possible to develop a set of indicators which encompassed all facets of the topic – this is due to constraints on time, resource and data availability.

2.1 B4.4 indicators and measures

Table 2 Indicators and relevant RPS Objectives, Policies, and Matters.

Indicator		RPS objectives and policies	Other relevant RPS matters
Indicator 1	A range of activities are enabled in order for people to work, live and recreate within the heritage area.	Objective B4.4.1 (1) (7) (9) B4.2.2 Policy (5), (6)	
Indicator 2	The limited capacity of the heritage area to provide for growth is recognised.	Objective B4.4.1 (4) (5) B4.2.2 Policy (1) (5)	B9
Indicator 3	Subdivision in the heritage area is of an appropriate scale and intensity and complements the character and landscape of the heritage area.	Objective B4.4.1 (4) (5) B4.2.2 Policy (1) (5) (7)	B9.2 B9.4
Indicator 4	The quality and diversity of landscapes in the heritage area identified as having local, regional or national significance are maintained.	Objective B4.4.1 (6)	B4.2. B4.3 B8.2

		B4.2.2 Policy (5) (6) (7)	
Indicator 5	Subdivision, use and development in the heritage area is subservient to the natural and rural landscape and character.	Objective B4.4.1 (1) (3) B4.2.2 Policy (1) (2) (4) (5)	B9.4
Indicator 6	The water supply catchments and their related supply functions are protected.	Objective B4.4.1 (8) B4.2.2 Policy (4)	B7.3
Indicator 7	Infrastructure and related activities are enabled, provided that the heritage features of the area are protected.	Objective B4.4.1 (1) (6) B4.2.2 Policy (3) (4) (6)	B3.2 B3.3 B10.2
Indicator 8	Natural vegetation cover is enhanced and indigenous vegetation is protected.	Objective B4.4.1 (1) (9) B4.2.2 Policy (1) (7)	B4.5 B7.2

A series of questions were formulated in order to develop appropriate indicators and measures for this topic. Each indicator corresponds to an objective and its related policies. Every indicator has one or several ‘measures’ which break down what the indicator is intended to show. The eight indicators in this report mirror the AUP Chapter D12 Objectives. This method was chosen to bridge the RPS, AUP, and practical findings from research. Effectiveness and efficiency in an indicator interrogate the D12 Objectives and policies which sit under the RPS in the AUP and are intended to give effect to it.

2.1.1 Chapter B11 monitoring and environmental results anticipated

Chapter B11 in the AUP sets out the monitoring and environmental results anticipated (ERA) of a regional policy statement. B11 is not exhaustive, an ERA is not listed for every objective in the RPS. More information on Chapter B11 can be found [here](#).

The B11 indicators relevant to B4.4 are outlined in **Table 3** below:

Table 3 B11.3 Natural Heritage Objective and Indicators for the WRHA in B.4.4.1.

Reference	Objective	Indicators
B.4.4.1(1)	The natural and historic resources, including the significant environmental values and heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges, are protected, restored and	The total area of habitat restored in the Waitākere Ranges does not decrease over time.

	enhanced for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the community.	The total area of land in the Waitākere Ranges under active management for plant and animal pests does not decrease over time.
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Use of the indicators in B4.4.1 (1) for monitoring purposes has been excluded from this report due to their inherent difficulties in quantification and measurement, rendering them inadequate for providing a comprehensive understanding of the achievement of Objective B4.4 (1). Additionally, it is pertinent to note that the objective encompasses the wider scope of restoring and enhancing heritage features, while the indicators solely address retention. Aspects of the measurements are relevant to **Indicator 8**, but a quantification of total restored habitat is outside the scope of this report. Detailed information on conservation management of plants and animals is also reliant on scientific monitoring not directly relevant to the AUP. Further information on conservation monitoring can be found in the SoE 2017-2022.

2.2 Outcomes not being monitored

Some outcomes of the WRHA are not monitored as part of this report due to established monitoring timeframes, capacity for data analysis, and scope of the report’s monitoring framework. These outcomes are outlined below:

- The Waitākere Ranges Regional Park was not subject to monitoring in this report outside of recreational trail management consents, measures of the operation of the water supply function of the ranges’ water catchments, and infrastructure provision. The regional park’s consenting activity is limited to public infrastructure, such as walking trail upgrades. The ecology, vegetation and biodiversity in the regional park is subject to further monitoring in the SoE 2017-2022.
- Intensification within the urban environment through proposed PC78 is likely to have an effect on development pressure on the Rural Urban Boundary (RUB). As PC78 has not been finalised and its practical effects are not yet observable it is not the subject of measurement or speculation in this report.
- The destructive rainfall and storm events of January and February 2023 had a considerable effect on the landscape and communities of the WRHA. The data monitoring period for this report excludes consideration of these events and their effect on the ranges. However, the implications of these events on critical infrastructure are explored through analysis of less recent events in a case study in **Indicator 7**.
- Aside from two consents (one in the Wainamu precinct and one in the Te Henga Precinct), the five precincts in the WRHA have no resource consenting activity. This largely precludes these precincts from measurement through resource consenting data.
- Objectives in AUP Chapter D12 are mirrored in this monitoring report. *D12.2. Objective (7) Risks and uncertainties associated with subdivision, use and development that could threaten serious or irreversible damage to a heritage feature of the heritage area are recognised and considered* is not directly included in this monitoring period. This is because other indicators separately attend to the concerns of this objective.

- Mana whenua values have not been monitored as part of this report. No consenting activity was recorded in the D21. Overlay, Sites and Places of Significance to Mana Whenua. Another report on RPS Chapter B6 Mana Whenua will be produced by council as part of the Section 35 AUP monitoring programme. This report makes a recommendation as part of **Indicator 1** that measures specific to the Waitākere Ranges be developed in conjunction with mana whenua to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the AUP in regard to RPS Objective B4.4.1 (2).

3.0 Data and information

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Types of data collected

The data collected for the Waitākere Ranges topic is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative information. Quantitative data allows a larger set of data to be collected and studied and provides the ability for broad generalisations on the efficiency and effectiveness of plan provisions to be drawn from wider patterns, themes, and trends. Quantitative data is easily accessed and objective but can be limited in its depth. To gain a more detailed understanding of the quantitative data, and to consider various complex issues more closely, qualitative data has also been sourced and analysed to paint a more complete picture of the progress the AUP is making toward meeting its objectives in Chapter B4.4.

Percentage measurements are rounded to the nearest whole number, except where otherwise noted.

3.1.2 Data sources

Most data referred to in this report is sourced from the council and CCOs. It includes consenting data, population statistics, regional and local plan-making, and qualitative landscape data. Resource and building consent datasets were organised using the council's Plans & Places (P&P) GIS and building consent department databases. Data collected from the 2013, 2018, and 2017-2022 SoE reports contribute to the analysis in this report and enable comparison of the AUP processes with previous planning regimes.

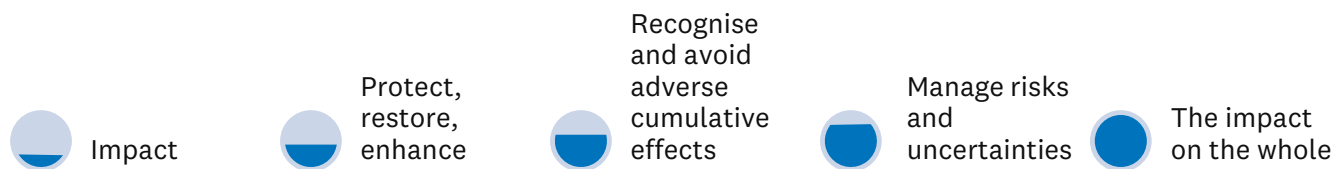
The following data sources have been relied upon to measure outcomes against the indicators:

- building consent database for consents issued in the WRHA between January 2016 - June 2021, filtered by building type/code, AUP zoning and date
- resource consent database for consents issued in the WRHA between January 2016 - June 2021, filtered by AUP zoning, overlays, reasons for consent, standards, activity status and outcome
- population statistics from the 2018 census filtered by geographical areas within the WRHA and immediately beyond its borders
- a landscape assessment of the WRHA completed in 2023 which documented changes since the previous landscape report in 2018, prepared by Kensington Planning and Landscape Consultants Limited
- development capacity index within the WRHA developed through the 2018 Capacity for Growth Study, prepared by RIMU
- consent and qualitative landscape data from the SoE 2013, 2018 and 2017-2022
- community, commercial, and program funding data collated in the SoE 2017-2022

3.1.3 Methods

Resource consents

Resource consent information is the primary quantitative measure in this report. Resource consent applications are needed when an applicant is looking to undertake an activity specified as non-permitted in the AUP activity table chapters. Land use consents (LUC) are a category of resource consent relating to national environmental standards, and regional and district rules under s9 of the RMA including activities of vegetation removal, earthworks, the construction of new buildings and infrastructure provision. Other resource consent types include Subdivision (SUB) resource consents for subdivision of land under s11 of the RMA, Tree Works (TRE) for applications relating to tree works only (but excluding works to or within the rootzone of notable trees) under s9 of the RMA, Coastal Permit (CST) relate to works, occupation and activities undertaken within the coastal marine area under s12 of the RMA, Streamworks (LUS) resource consents relate to works involving disturbance, structures, reclamation and deposition to the stream/ lake or river bed under s13 of the RMA, Water Permit (WAT) relate to the taking, use, damming and diversion of water under s14 of the RMA (including open coastal water) and Discharge (DIS) consents relate to either stormwater permits under s14 of the RMA for diversion of stormwater or discharge permits under s15 of the RMA for the discharge of contaminants or stormwater into air or onto land. Additionally, there are some other types of consents, such as a Certificate of Compliance (CER), which can be issued where works are permitted or have existing use rights under s10 of the RMA, a variation or cancellation of consent notice (VCN) under s221 of the RMA, a cancellation of easement (CAE) under s243(e) of the RMA and extension of time (EXT) under s125 of the RMA. The application process for resource consents involves preparing and submitting an Assessment of Environmental Effects in accordance with Schedule 4 of the RMA as well as under Chapter C General Rules of the AUP, this includes documentation explaining the environmental effects of the intended activity, a recent certificate of title and plans or drawings. The discretion council has is dependent on the activity status the activity falls under. An application for a discretionary or non-complying activity resource consent means that council are not restricted in their discretion when assessing the activity whilst an application for a controlled or restricted discretionary activity limits the matters of control or discretion for council and any assessment must relate only to those matters. If a property is inside the heritage area, the council asks applicants to provide an assessment of their proposal against the Act and where within its control or discretion or for discretionary or non-complying activities can apply conditions on a consent that relate to one or more of the following where enabled by s108 or s220 of the RMA:



Resource consent database

Two resource consenting datasets were used in drafting this research, associated maps, and tables. These tables were filtered from the range of dates 07/01/2016 – 25/06/2021 in the council’s P&P GIS database. The Land Use Consent Table and Resource Consent Table were filtered by date of decision. All of these tables have been reviewed and duplicates and erroneous entries removed. It has been

recorded in each table, indicator, and map which dataset/s were used. The process and filters applied to these datasets for individual measurements are recorded in their indicator sections.

Please note the following:

The Resource Consent Table contains Land Use (LUC), Subdivision (SUB), Tree Removal (TRE), Streamworks (LUS), Coastal Permit (CST), Water Permit (WAT) and Discharge Permit (DIS) consents as well as Consent Notice Variation or Cancellation (VCN) and Cancellation of Easement (CAE). This table contains detailed information on which AUP activities are triggered, which overlays are relevant to the consent, addresses, consent identification numbers and zoning. This table only contains granted consents.

The Land Use Consent Table contains all consents with a LUC identification number which have been granted, lapsed, and withdrawn. It contains a short description of the works undertaken, addresses, zoning, and consent ID's. Classification of activity type (dwelling, earthworks, vegetation removal) is recorded for some consents but is inconsistent throughout the table due to inconsistent recording in the database.

When applying the same parameters to the Resource Consent and Land Use Consent Table there remains a discrepancy in the number of consents recorded. The Land Use Consent Table records the largest number of consents, but each table contains its own unique records. The different details recorded in each table make them applicable to different tables and types of research. Therefore, both have been used in this document. Effort has been taken to ensure the figures and observations are consistent.

Building consent database

A building consent database, filtered by date of issue using the same timeframe as the above resource consent database (07/01/2016 – 25/06/2021), provides a quantitative and qualitative understanding of development proceeding in the WRHA. New structures, demolition of structures and internal or external additions to existing structures require a building consent under the Building Code 2004. The database contains the typology, location, and short description of the works sought by the applicant. Building consents are needed before beginning work on a structure and include a Code Compliance Certificate (CCC), which is a final sign off for a building's safety once construction is complete. Construction which is not classed as a permitted activity under the relevant AUP standards will require both a resource consent and a building consent whereas permitted works will only require a building consent.

2023 Landscape Assessment

A landscape assessment, prepared in late 2022 and completed early 2023 by Peter Kensington Landscape Architects for the purposes of the 2017-2022 SoE, forms the primary source of qualitative data for this report. This landscape assessment builds upon the previous landscape assessments completed in 2013 and 2018 by Melean Absolum Landscape Architects to supplement the previous SoEs. The assessments categorise change spatially through identifying distinct landscape units in the WRHA and recording the change in each catchment since the previous landscape report on a spectrum from 'Major Negative' to 'Major Positive'. 'Neutral/No Change' can also indicate a lack of or negligible difference in character. The 2023 assessment simplified the 71 landscape units used in the

2018 report down to 23. The new landscape units are based on catchment boundaries (ridgelines). Changes in the landscape units were recorded through photographic record. All 256 landscape photographs from the 2018 assessment were revisited and updated for the 2023 assessment. Some additional photos were added to illustrate development activity not captured from the previous photo points. Comparison of the 2018 photos with the 2023 photos illustrates the visual and landscape impact of new development and land use.

Census data

The 2018 census population and demographic statistics are used in this report. They show the areas of population growth and allow comparison with development during the monitoring period. Occupation statistics also allow observation of the prevalence of industry and employment opportunity for those living and working within the WRHA. The administrative boundaries of census units do not adhere to the boundaries of the WRHA, which complicates measurement. Several maps and tables aggregating census data have been created by RIMU from those available measurements which most closely adhere to the boundaries of the WRHA. The results are suitably accurate for the purposes of this report and are categorised to different geographical areas in the ranges.

WRHA State of the Environment Reports 2013, 2018 and 2017-2022

These reports synthesise the preceding 15 years of activity in the ranges. They contain data on consenting activity, ecology, and community developments. The landscape and consenting data contained within the 2018 and 2013 report form the primary comparative measure to analyse the effectiveness and efficiency of the AUP. Several of the graphics and tables in this report are updates to those featured in the 2018 and 2013 reports. Many of the datapoints aggregated for this report contribute to Topic 2: Landforms, Landscapes and Landuse contained in the 2017-2022 report. Additionally, data from other chapters pertaining to community, public, and commercial activity in the WRHA is relevant to this report and is detailed in the indicator sections in which it is used.

The 2018 State of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area also collated data from the 2018 Capacity for Growth Study (CfGS). This study measured the development capacity provided by vacant lots and those vacant lots which could potentially be created through subdivision. Updates to the CfGS have been postponed due to the COVID pandemic. Therefore, this report will measure the development uptake over the course of the current monitoring period in order to understand the current development capacity in the WRHA.

Waitākere Ranges: Local Economic Overview 2022

The Local Economic Overview is produced by Tātaki Auckland Unlimited for the Waitākere Ranges Local Board periodically. It records statistics related to employment, industry, and commuting patterns. The report's recording period is from 2016-2021, aligning it with the resource consent data.

The Waitākere Ranges Local Board extends beyond the borders of the WRHA and includes Glen Eden. Therefore, the data will only be used to draw broad conclusions about the state of the economy of the WRHA, except where specific geographic areas are identified. Several of the graphs and tables in the overview are repurposed for this report and are especially useful for **Indicator 1**.

4.0 Findings and analysis

This section reports on the data findings, and considers how effective and efficient the objectives, policies, rules, and other methods of the AUP have been in meeting the outcomes intended by the Regional Policy Statement. Where appropriate, recommendations are also provided.

4.1 Indicator 1 A range of activities are enabled in order for people to work, live and recreate within the heritage area.

4.1.1 RPS approach

RPS objectives and policies

B4.4.1 Objective (1) *The natural and historic resources, including the significant environmental values and heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges, are protected, restored, and enhanced for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the community.*

B4.4.1 Objective (7) *Enable social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of people that live and work in the area.*

B4.4.1 Objective (9) *The natural and historic resources of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park are protected in perpetuity for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the people and communities of Auckland and New Zealand.*

B4.2.2 Policy (5) *Require the type and density of settlements to avoid degrading the character of natural landscape features.*

B4.2.2 Policy (6) *Avoid non-residential activities:*

- (a) that are unrelated to the productive use of rural land;*
- (b) that require substantial earthworks or vegetation removal; or*
- (c) that are industrial and unrelated to rural activities.*

The RPS seeks to enable the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of local communities which live and work in the area. In the Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel 075 Waitākere Ranges recommendations, the panel, addressing the need for balance between enabling people and communities and protecting the environment, acknowledged that the planning provisions in the WRHA should provide more opportunities for landowners to support themselves and their land in a way that sustains heritage features (Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel, 2016).

4.1.2 Measures

The measures adopted are:

1. Distribution and hierarchy of centres and accompanying facilities support the low-density residential settlement patterns present in the ranges.
2. Economic wellbeing in the ranges is provided through a variety of means.
3. Recreational opportunities are enhanced through appropriate provision and maintenance.
4. Public and community facilities and programs support the valued communities present in the heritage area.

What can the indicator and measures tell us?

This indicator is a broad assessment of the success of the plan in enabling a high quality of experience for those who live, work, and visit the WRHA. This indicator is unique among those selected for this monitoring report as it seeks to understand whether the plan enables a prosperous economic and social environment. Further indicators measure how growth and land use in the ranges manages effects on character and the environment. Protection, restoration, and enhancement of heritage features contributes to the prosperity and amenity in the WRHA, but also requires limitations on the proliferation of subdivision, use and development. The four measures have been adopted for this indicator because:

- distribution and hierarchy of centres and accompanying facilities supports the low-density residential settlement patterns present in the ranges.
- economic well-being is essential to vitality in the ranges.
- recreation is a driver of visitation in the ranges and provides amenity for residents of the whole of Auckland.
- the distribution and diversity of public and civic facilities in the WRHA contributes to the strength of local community groups.

4.1.3 Data sources and limitations

Multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data were used in this indicator, including the Resource Consents Table and the Building Consent Table,

- Resource Consents Table is filtered by:
 - Commercial consents
 - Consents for recreation activities
- Building Consent Table are filtered by:
 - Typology of structure
 - Location

as well as:

- Waitākere Ranges Local Economic Overview 2022
- Community study data from the SoE 2017-2022
 - Engagement and consultation
 - Extent of council facilities/ programs in the area
- AUP Zoning
 - Distribution and hierarchy of centre zones
 - Distribution and purpose of Open Space zones

- Census Data
 - Filtered by suburbs

Limitations

Rural production falls under a large number of resource consenting activities categories in each zone. For example, there are close to 30 separate categories for different types of rural production activities in H20. This number of activity categories makes measurement too complex to provide meaningful analysis.

4.1.4 Findings

Distribution and hierarchy of centres and accompanying facilities support the low-density residential settlement patterns present in the WRHA (Measure 1).

The Business – Local Centre Zone and Business – Neighbourhood Centre Zone are the two centre zones present in the WRHA. These zones are sparse and distant from each other in the WRHA, but for many who live and visit the area, this is part of the WRHA’s appeal. The limited distribution of centres in the ranges is designed to support a rural settlement pattern, noting that the eastern foothills of the WRHA are often only a short distance (less than five kilometres) from urban centres inside the RUB. Engagement and consultation undertaken for the 2017-2022 SoE did not observe any complaints about the lack of access to centres.

Titirangi and the Business - Local Centre Zone

Titirangi is the busiest centre in the WRHA, and its centre is the only example of Business – Local Centre zone in the ranges. This zoning creates an opportunity for business and service provision for the surrounding area. The proximity of Titirangi to urban Auckland, surrounding beaches, and as a place to stop when travelling out to the West Coast has led to it becoming a popular local and destination hub. The interconnected Lopdell House and Te Uru Contemporary Art Gallery are some of the largest structures in the WRHA contributing to a scale of development unique within WRHA. Along with the smaller Treasure House, originally a museum, these three structures now make up the Lopdell Precinct, a major arts and community hub in the Waitākere Ranges and West Auckland. Lopdell House, formerly Hotel Titirangi, supports several cafes, office tenancies, a movie theatre and local artists displays. Te Uru features national and international displays of contemporary art, including ceramic and sculpture works. The building was recognised as a Category 1 Historic Place by Heritage New Zealand in 2020. It is also scheduled in the AUP as a category A* historic heritage place. The building is currently undergoing renovation of an outdoor set of stairs located on the corner of Huia and Titirangi roads to increase pedestrian safety.

Community facilities offered in Titirangi include a public library, RSA, war memorial and primary school. In the library, a new deck which was recently installed allows visitors to overlook the Manukau Harbour. For travellers looking to visit the West Coast beaches Titirangi is the last spot at which to visit the range of retail goods and services before entering the more remote parts of the WRHA. It is not surprising that Titirangi has been a hotspot for commercial development in the WRHA during the past five years. Several new developments have been consented and completed in Titirangi which provide new amenity and business opportunity in the centre of town.

The most prominent development named ‘The Rise’ is a new Mixed-Use structure located at the intersection of Titirangi and South Titirangi roads. A new food hall (Street Feast), offices, and retail tenancies are included in the structure. The development’s layout takes advantage of the downward slope to its rear to provide for a basement carparking which does not contribute to an increased scale of built form as viewed from the street level. The outdoor area, associated with Street Feast also takes advantage of the slope of Huia Road to provide a raised dining deck with views of the surrounding streetscape and forest. The first-floor level provides for commercial offices. The development illustrates the possibility of contemporary structures being able to retain and enhance the environmental heritage and landscape qualities of the ranges. The building responds to the scale of Lopdell House, located across the road, by drawing from its architectural style. The corner tower element, vertical window orientation, and dark materials used in construction combine elements of heritage and modern architecture to create a lively new landmark on the Titirangi Village main street. The relationship between the two buildings from street level can be seen in **Figure 7** below.



Figure 7 Looking past Lopdell House to ‘The Rise’, a new mixed-use development at the intersection of Titirangi and South Titirangi Road.

Another addition made to the Titirangi Town Centre is a new public toilet block and water fountain located at 400 Titirangi Road. This new facility responds to the removal of the previous public toilet in Titirangi which was located at 490 Titirangi Road prior to the site being sold by council into private ownership. The toilet block is designed to be located in an accessible position for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and motorists, close to public parking, a bus stop and local businesses. This facility is also accessible at extended hours. A prominent Rimu tree, being a notable tree under the AUP, which the toilet block backs onto was given careful consideration to avoid damaging effects on its growth and amenity value. Visual impact assessments and submissions from local stakeholders informed the orientation of the toilet block at an angle to the road which avoids direct interaction with surrounding hospitality. Additionally, the roof style of the toilet matches that of the adjacent bus shelter. New plantings installed along with the toilet soften the visual impact. The dark green colour and design of the toilets is intended to complement the surrounding natural and built elements of Titirangi without standing out. **Figure 8** below shows the toilet block under construction in late 2022. Construction has since been completed.



Figure 8 New public toilet block in Titirangi township under construction in late 2022 (Kensington, 2023).

The fact that only a handful of new commercial and public developments have been progressed in Titirangi in the last five years indicates the precautionary approach the AUP takes in managing the effects of growth in the WRHA. Retention of rural character requires careful consideration of where to provide for growth and respond to the needs of communities for increased services.

Business – Neighbourhood Centre Zone

The Business – Neighbourhood Centre Zone is applied to the Huia Store and the two commercial properties at Piha. This is in accordance with the purpose of the zone to provide for corner stores and small shopping strips in residential neighbourhoods. These commercial shops provide for basic needs

in more remote communities. There have been no resource consents during the monitoring period in this zone.

There are quite a number of other retail activities located throughout the WRHA. These have the relevant residential zone rather than a centre zone applied to their site. The Oratia Village Precinct can also be understood as a neighbourhood centre area that has a residential or Waitākere foothills Zone which supports the existing adjacent service station and minor associated businesses in proximity to the local primary school.

Community services and facilities

Employment, shopping, community services, and schools are for many residents located outside the heritage area. **Table 4** is an overview of services and amenities provided within a community's geographic area.

Table 4 Services and amenities offered in community areas in the ranges (Auckland Council, 2023).

Service	Bethells Te Henga	Huia	Karekare	Laingholm	Oratia	Piha	Titirangi	Waiaatarua	Waitākere
Art gallery/s			✓			✓	✓		
Beach	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Bus service				✓			✓		✓
Café / restaurant		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Campground		✓	✓			✓			
Church				✓	✓		✓	✓	
Community Hall / House		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Doctor							✓		
Fire Station	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Library						✓	✓	✓	
Playground		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Pharmacy							✓		
Marae									
Market		✓		✓		✓	✓		
Public toilet	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓

School			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Preschool	✓					✓	✓	✓	
Sports field				✓		✓			✓
Surf club/s	✓		✓			✓			
Supermarket / store		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Economic wellbeing in the ranges is provided through a variety of means (Measure 2).

The following is a summary of the findings of the Waitākere Ranges Local Board Economic Overview 2022. This includes some areas outside of the WRHA, most notably Glen Eden, but is broadly representative of the Heritage Area.

Summary of Local Board Economic Overview 2022

The local economy in the Waitākere Ranges is primarily driven by the construction, real estate, education, and healthcare sectors. Home ownership rates and household incomes in the area are notably higher compared to the wider Auckland region. However, there is a lack of job opportunities in knowledge-intensive industries. Demographically, the Waitākere Ranges population exhibits lower growth rates and an older median age compared to the Auckland region as a whole. The majority of the population identifies as being of European ethnicity. Although unemployment rates are slightly higher than the regional average, individual income levels and home ownership rates surpass regional figures (Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, 2023).

The key sectors generating income in the Waitākere Ranges economy include real estate services, construction, and healthcare. The area has experienced higher GDP growth compared to the wider Auckland region between 2016 and 2021, and its resilience was demonstrated by a lesser decline in GDP growth during the COVID-19 pandemic than the regional average. Additionally, employment growth in the area exceeded that of the Auckland region. In terms of employment, the education sector, particularly preschool and primary education, is more concentrated in the ranges than in the wider Auckland region. The sub-sector of social assistance services also exhibits a high concentration of employment, indicative of the significant number of local jobs in this healthcare field (Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, 2023).

The most common occupations located in the ranges are shown in in **Table 5**.

Table 5 Occupations located in the Waitākere Ranges Local Board area

Rank	Occupation	Jobs (2021)	Share of Waitākere Ranges Total
1	Education Professionals	842	9.1%
2	Specialist Managers	772	8.3%
3	Construction Trades Workers	535	5.8%

4	Carers and Aides	487	5.3%
5	Sports and Personal Service Workers	436	4.7%
6	Chief Execs, General Managers, Legislators	331	3.6%
7	Sales Assistants & Salespersons	324	3.5%
8	Road & Rail Drivers	323	3.5%
9	Business, HR, & Marketing Professionals	317	3.4%
10	Hospitality, Retail & Service Managers	315	3.4%
	Sub-total of top 10 occupations	4,682	50.6
	Total Jobs	9,267	100%

(Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, 2023)

Commuting patterns from 2018 reveal that only 20 per cent of the labour force live and work in the area. The most popular destinations for commuting to work include Waitemata Local Board/City Centre (21 per cent) and Henderson-Massey Local Board (14 per cent). Employment in the Waitākere Ranges Local Board is focused in the town centres of Glen Eden and Titirangi, which host a variety of retail and hospitality businesses, as well as professional services. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns created challenges on the region's retail centres yet spending growth in Waitākere Ranges remained above the Auckland regional average. The area did, however, experience declines in spending during the lockdown periods from March 2020 to May 2020 and August 2021 to October 2021. This followed a similar pattern to the wider region (Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, 2023). The spending patterns in recorded in Titirangi over the monitoring period can be seen in **Figure 9** below.

Waitākere has also been a large filming hub for many years. Its good filming reputation and filming pedigree makes providers in the region sought-after for other work. High profile shows such as *Lord of the Rings: Rings of Power* and Australian TV drama *800 Words* were filmed in the area and contribute to tourism interest (New Zealand Film Commission, n.d.; Our Auckland, 2016).

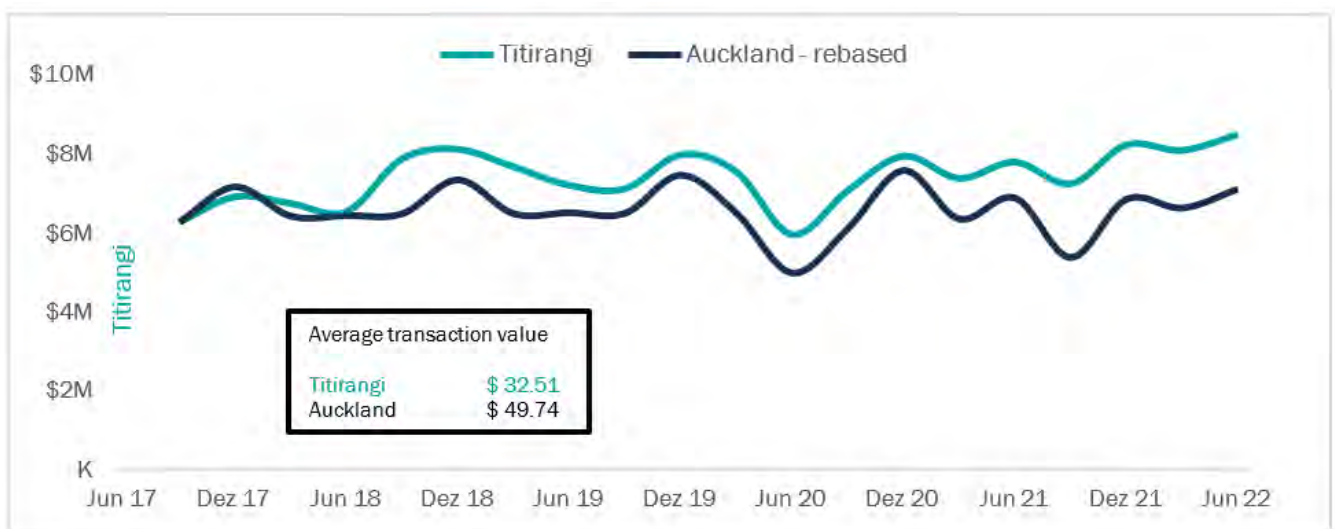


Figure 9 Titirangi spend and average transaction value 2017-2022 (Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, 2023).

Consents for commercial activities are primarily located through the southern and eastern foothills. There is a concentration of activity in Titirangi/Laingholm and Oratia. Only a few commercial consenting activities are present along the northern boundary of the heritage area and in the west coast settlements.

Commercial consenting activity is primarily focused in hospitality, service, and accommodation activities. A handful of building and resource consents are for farming, industrial, or factory activities and pertain to the construction of new barns, sheds, and greenhouses for processing and storing materials. Most commercial consents are for upgrading or refurbishing existing facilities rather than applying to build new structures. A lack of consents for new structures indicates the willingness of businesses organisations in the ranges to invest and upgrade the existing facilities available to them rather than increase the capacity of business in the zone.

Businesses based in homes (referred to as home occupations in AUP activity tables) are also popular in the WRHA. Home occupations which already exist are difficult to quantify. Their identification relies on roadside signs or online directories. Home occupations that comply with the standards outlined in H1, H2, H20, and H21, which encompass aspects such as managing vehicle access, daily vehicle movements, and the count of employees, are permitted activities and do not necessitate consent. The Waitākere Ranges has the highest rates of self-employment in Auckland and observation from the 2023 Landscape Assessment is of frequent signage advertising home-based businesses, suggesting their proliferation throughout the WRHA. However, as home occupations which do not exceed standards do not necessitate consent, this report does not include a measurement of their amount or distribution.

Recreation (Measure 3)

Visitor pressure on the park has significantly increased, with total visitor count rising from 491,000 in 2011/12 to 1.282 million in 2021/22 (Auckland Council, 2023). Managing the park sustainably is critical due to its proximity to Auckland's growing urban areas. Various key parks and facilities, such as Arataki Visitors Centre, Cornwallis, Cascades Kauri, Huia Domain, Te Henga (Bethells Beach), Lake Wainamu, Fairy Falls, and Spragg Bush, offer diverse recreational opportunities, including swimming, picnicking, golf, camping, and walking. These parks also have unique ecosystems, cultural and historical sites, and play a role in Auckland's water supply. A 2019 survey revealed that 73 per cent of respondents visited local 'destination' parks such as Titirangi Beach, Piha Domain, and Bethells Domain, with the majority spending 30 minutes to three hours at these locations (Auckland Council, 2023). The regional park faces various challenges, including capacity issues, parking, littering, and overcrowding during the summer, as well as the ongoing impact of kauri dieback on park access and conservation efforts. The Waitākere Ranges Regional Park is a popular place for tramping and has hundreds of kilometres of trails. In May 2018 a large amount of the regional park was closed as a response to kauri dieback. Many trails remain closed at the time of writing, although staged reopening's are planned over the coming years (Auckland Council, 2019).

There have been several quality-of-life upgrades to popular walking tracks, mainly around centres and on the coast, such as: Opanuku Pipeline (new connection to Mountain Road), Zig Zag Track (upgrading and revegetation), the Mercer Bay Loop Track (new track section), Karamatura Falls (new toilet). One global resource consent was issued to approve construction to bring 35 tracks up to dry track standards to combat the spread of kauri dieback. This includes raised boardwalk pathways and boxed steps. The work process is timed to take place out of birding season, not introduce new soil to the trail environments and avoid the removal of mature vegetation. The resulting pathways are

designed to have less effects on the sensitive ecological conditions in the area. Monitoring of the tracks by Auckland Council's Compliance department finds full compliance with environmental standards. Works have been underway and will continue as upgraded trails reopen to the public.

Public and community facilities and organisations (Measure 4)

Information in this section is taken from the WRHA SoE 2017-2022.

A table of the community organisations can be seen in **Figure 11** below.

In the heritage area, local communities embody the aspirational values delineated in the Act, both pre- and post-2008, with concepts such as 'kaitiakitanga' and 'stewardship' prevalent in diverse community expressions. Despite ongoing rapid social change in Auckland, the heritage area's population growth has remained stable and low, with approximately 76 per cent, 21,000 residents, residing in the foothills. Piha is the second largest settlement, housing around 950 residents.

Demographically, the heritage area's population is comparatively affluent, older, and primarily concentrated in the foothills. Challenges arise due to the impacts of extreme weather events, resulting in occasional loss of life and property damage since 2017. The area boasts an array of community groups, exhibiting strong local leadership in environmental, community service, and arts sectors. Identified risks and opportunities require further evaluation.

Diverse community organisations function as hubs around which many stewardship and social activities take place.

The arts

The arts are well represented. Established galleries and events are run by not-for-profit organisations, and receive ongoing funding from council, primarily in support of operational costs.

Council's most significant funding relationship is with Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery Inc., enabling it to operate as a destination arts facility which develops and attracts exhibitions of local and regional significance. The wider Lopdell Precinct also receives operating expenditure to provide spaces for community arts partners to rent, and to deliver a series of community activations.

Shadbolt House, the former home of writer Maurice Shadbolt, was in August 2022 transferred from council to the Going West Trust, and the land leased to the Trust to create a residency. At the point of transfer, the buildings required significant repairs for which the Going West Trust is now responsible. Once the work has been completed, building ownership will transfer to the Trust concurrently with the trust being granted a 10-year lease, and the house can be turned into a writer's retreat.

The McCahon House Artists' Residency offers three residencies a year to professional artists, who live and work in the purpose-built French Bay house with an attached studio.

Open Studios Waitākere is an established event which showcases the local creative economy through advertising, event organisation and marketing. Artists can open their studios to the public to increase their visibility and should they wish, sales. Eighty artists and 40 studios including sculptors, painters, jewellers, illustrators, ceramic artists, and photographers participated, most of whom were from the heritage area. The event was cancelled in 2021 and returned in 2022 for a seventh year.

Heritage

A variety of groups focus on local heritage. Some run their own small museums and events.

The West Auckland Heritage Conference has run since 2016. It provides an opportunity for local experts in history and iwi to share their knowledge of the cultural heritage of the heritage area and West Auckland.

Arataki Visitors Centre is the gateway to the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park and the wider Auckland regional parks network. The 11m kauri pou which welcomes visitors to the centre depicts the ancestors of iwi Te Kawerau ā Maki and reaffirms their mana and guardianship of the 'Great Forest of Tiriwā'. The centre fulfils an educational function, with opportunities for visitors to learn about the heritage area's cultural and ecological landscapes, as well as to enjoy nature activities and art exhibitions. The Friends of Arataki fundraise for volunteer activities such as an annual kids' day.

The Waitākere Ranges Protection Society received a local board grant to publish a history of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act to mark the 10th anniversary of the passing of the Act in April 2018.

Environmental monitoring

Volunteering groups are active in pest plant and animal control. Management of introduced plants and animals protects indigenous biodiversity. Volunteer groups are organised around geographical areas and have highly localised knowledge of the natural character and environment of the area. Groups may have a variety of goals for the revitalisation of an area, including expanding habitat for indigenous fauna, reintroducing endangered populations, and removing threats, or educating residents on pest management solutions. Some groups focus on the management and monitoring of a single at-risk species or protecting indigenous flora such as kauri trees. Many of the groups are built on partnerships between the local community, iwi, public, and private organisations. A map of the areas these conservation organisations manage can be seen in **Figure 10** below.

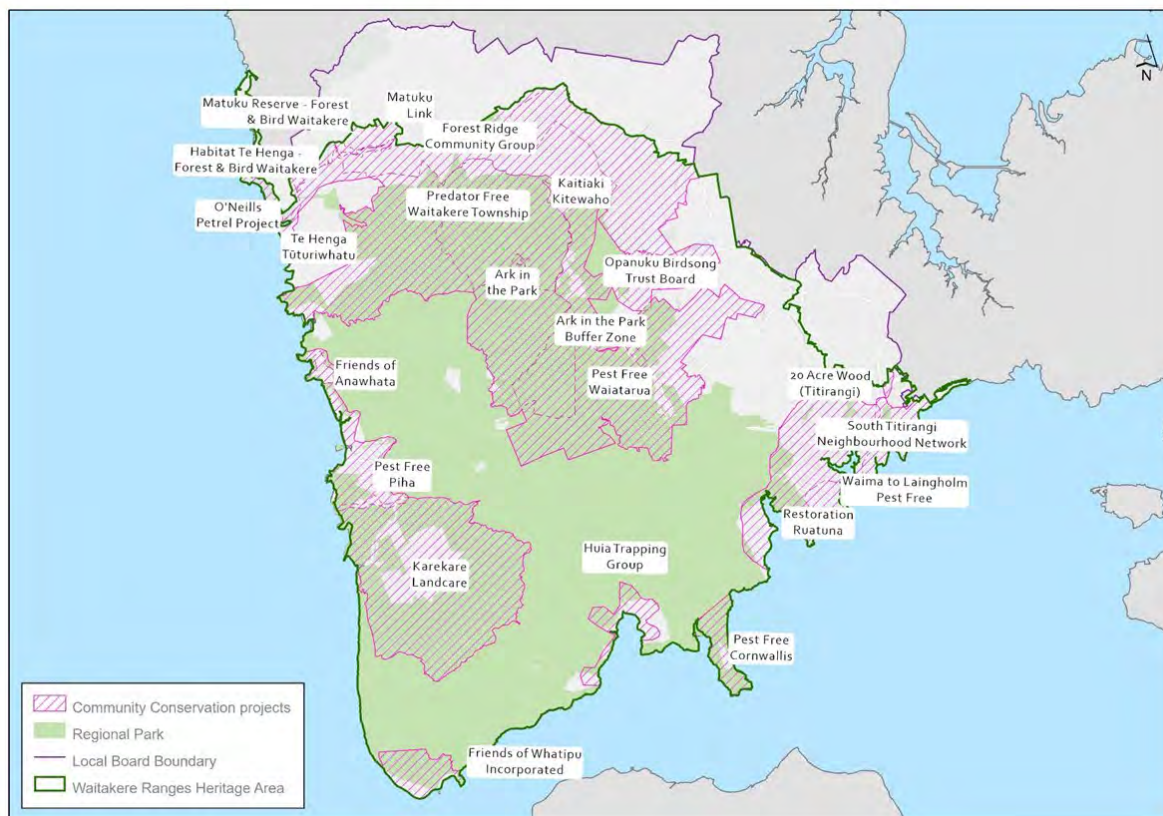


Figure 10 Community conservation activities in the heritage area.

Emergency response

Driving distances to parts of the heritage area extend the response times of ambulances and other emergency services coming from urban Auckland. A network of volunteer-run fire stations responds to a variety of local emergencies, including fires, medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, search and rescue, civil defence, and natural disaster responses. West Coast surf clubs and small community halls are also run by volunteers.

Fire Stations

Of these, Titirangi Fire Station has paid staff from Monday to Friday 7 am to 5.30 pm.

Surf lifesaving

West coast beaches are popular, and potentially dangerous, swimming destinations. In small communities along the coast, four surf lifesaving clubs are operated and maintained by volunteers. These communities have been impacted by flash flooding and coastal erosion and have also observed increasing visitor numbers. Three have been planning the replacement of their facilities for several years. There are surf lifesaving facilities in Bethells Beach, Karekare, Piha and North Piha. The new Te Pae surf lifesaving tower at North Piha is the subject of a case study in **Indicator 4**.

Waiatarua/Oratia/Henderson Valley Community Patrol (known as Waiatarua Community Patrol)

The Waiatarua Community Patrol is a group of volunteers working in the community to help keep it safe and prevent crime.

The Waiatarua Community Patrol Charitable Trust is affiliated with CPNZ (Community Patrols of NZ) whose purpose is to empower communities to prevent crime and create safer environments through the utilisation of trained and equipped volunteer patrols.

Waiatarua patrol is responsible primarily for the Waiatarua, Oratia and Henderson Valley areas patrolling neighbourhoods and providing high visibility within the community. Patrols operate day and night, weekdays, and weekends.

Changes to council-owned facilities

There have been no significant changes to council-owned or run community facilities since 2017, other than internal refurbishments and maintenance. This is done by the council through its agents Auckland Transport, regional parks, the Waitākere Ranges Local Board and Watercare Services Limited.

This is augmented by the efforts and initiatives undertaken by individual volunteers, landowners and other organisations and groups.

Volunteer and community-run groups, facilities, and events:

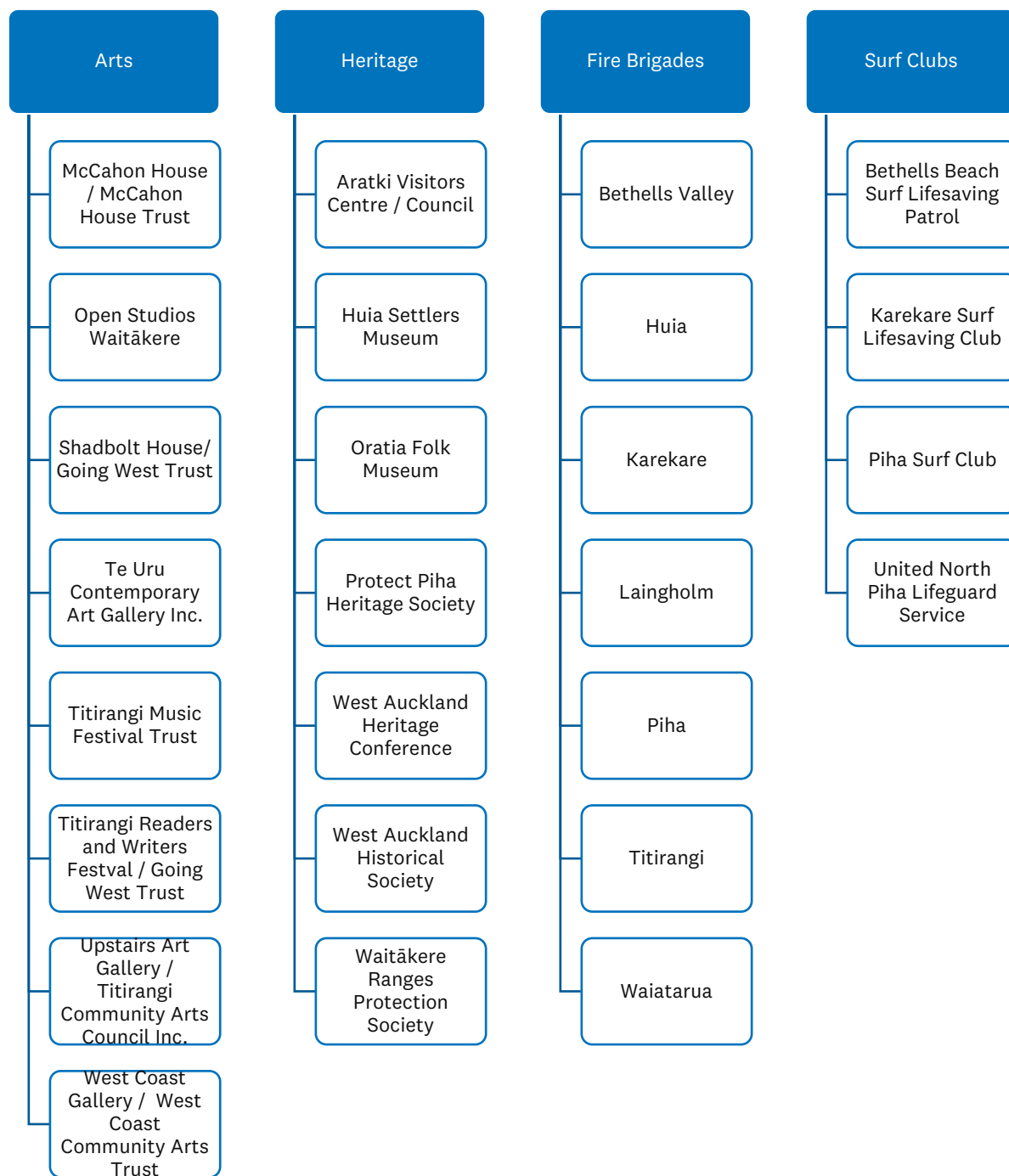


Figure 11 Long-established groups and activities, by broad area of interest. This is not an exclusive list (Auckland Council, 2023).

4.1.5 Effectiveness and efficiency of the plan

Effectiveness

The value of natural and historic heritage features in the WRHA is a relationship between man-made and natural elements. The WRHA encompasses numerous unique rural and coastal communities, each with its own character, amenity, and identity derived from historical and present-day development patterns, landforms, and vegetation. The AUP primarily provides opportunities for growth within these established centres and areas historically used for more intensive land use purposes. One local centre and several smaller neighbourhood centres serve as focal points within their communities and the size and intensity of them is reflective of the remoteness and size of the surrounding settlement. Outside of established settlement patterns, the heritage value of natural features is recognised to a greater extent through provision for sparser settlement and overlays which recognise different aspects of the natural environment. Housing options in the WRHA range from rural to remote wilderness settings.

The primarily residential land use in the WRHA places limitations on the type and availability of jobs in the ranges. Many residents with jobs in knowledge-intensive industries commute into urban Auckland. The type and availability of jobs in the WRHA may contribute to the slightly higher rate of unemployment, but this could result from more members of the comparatively older population being retired. The unemployment rate is not however representative of above average income, home ownership rates, and a greater than average increase in GDP between 2016 to 2021 comparative to the rest of Auckland. Economic and consent data from Titirangi indicates growth in its arts facilities, public services, and commercial offerings, reflected in the concentration of jobs and higher than average spend in the centre. Among jobs available in the WRHA there is a distribution between trade and professional services. Outside of established commercial centres non-residential development is limited to rural production and farming activities. Home occupations, while not quantified, have a strong presence, and contribute to its reputation as a hub of the arts and creativity. Despite comparatively fewer employment opportunities locally this does not limit prosperity being achieved by those who reside in the WRHA through a variety of means.

Kaitiakitanga and stewardship underpin the expression of community in the WRHA. Community groups are especially active in relation to the environment, community services and facilities, and the arts. Past and present human culture is recognised through whakapapa and connection to place, alongside buildings facilities, historic heritage, and other activities. Local knowledge bases are established in recognition of the heritage significance of the WRHA and a responsibility of care. The organisation of community in the WRHA is valuable as a reflection of the AUP priorities and provisions. The landscapes, historic character, environment, and inspiration for creative and active pursuits which the Act and AUP identify as worthy of protection are embodied by the people which identify in, grow, and care for them.

Visitor pressure is growing in the WRHA, and the ranges' formal and informal recreation spaces are popular gathering spots for leisure and sporting events. Dry track construction in response to kauri dieback is responsive to ecological pressures in the regional park. Extensive assessment of the effects of construction on indigenous flora and fauna prior to consent on the 35 trails identified to meet dry track standards is evidence that the requirements of the AUP for protection, retention, and enhancement in the regional park are conscious of the intrinsic value of the environment and do not prioritise the value of one taonga at the expense of others. Service and access upgrades to several other popular tracks in the WRHA recognises that the need for amenity which serves informal activities (such as dog walking or jogging) is likely to increase with residential development.

Efficiency

The AUP approach of enabling social, economic, and cultural wellbeing while preserving heritage features leads to a comparatively conservative response for growth and development. Preservation of existing lifestyle and community dynamics creates a highly desirable place to live and visit which is unique in Auckland. Community, commercial, and public facilities are utilised and expanded upon when incremental upgrades are necessary. Through limited subdivision, use, and development, new community histories expand from old ones, rather than replacing them. The economic vitality in the WRHA is also resilient to economic shocks, as evident from the COVID pandemic.

Limitations in the WRHA infrastructure, access networks, and recreation spaces means that a continual increase in visitor numbers will put pressure on established centres and recreation spaces to accommodate growth and services. The consideration of planning solutions which mitigate the effect of visitor pressure on heritage features whilst accommodating the increased interest in the amenity the WRHA has to offer is likely to become an increasingly pertinent topic as the wider regional population grows. The closure of tracks in the Waitākere Ranges illustrates tension between the role of the WRHA as a public place and natural heritage reserve but does not indicate a shortcoming on the part of the AUP. Rather the aggregation of support behind the closure process is further evidence that community groups are supportive of heritage feature protection.

Overall, it is considered that the plan is performing well regarding **Indicator 1**, enabling a range of activities in order for people to work, live and recreate within the heritage area.

4.1.6 Recommendations

At the time of the development of the next Unitary Plan review, council should consider including specific environmental and cultural indicators/measures from a Māori cultural point of view.¹⁰

¹⁰ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

4.2 Indicator 2 The limited capacity of the heritage area to provide for growth is recognised.

4.2.1 RPS approach

RPS objectives and policies

B4.4.1. Objective (4) *Cumulative effects of activities on the environment, including amenity values and heritage features, are recognised and avoided.*

B4.4.1. Objective (5) *The character, scale and intensity of subdivision, use or development do not adversely affect the heritage features or contribute to urban growth outside the Rural Urban Boundary.*

B4.4.2 Policy (1) *Design and locate structures and impermeable surfaces and undertake activities in a way that does not impede or adversely affect the potential for the regeneration of native vegetation or reduce the extent and range of areas of native vegetation and linkages between them.*

B4.4.2 Policy (5) *Require the type and density of settlements to avoid degrading the character of natural landscape features.*

Other relevant RPS chapters:

B9 Rural Environment

Cumulative growth effects such as increased traffic, service and infrastructure provision can have an irreversible effect on the heritage features of the ranges. The RPS aims to avoid placing a maximum threshold on development in the WRHA. Through its policies, the RPS aims to protect natural, social, and community features which are reliant on the retention of rural qualities. Therefore, the standards applied through the zoning and overlays within the WRHA allow for more rigorous management of effects in the application assessment process than what is common in assessment of similar applications located in urban Auckland.

4.2.2 Measures

The measures adopted are:

1. The approval rate of land use consents applied for in the WRHA during the monitoring period.
2. The number of land use consents and building consents granted during this monitoring period.
3. The proportion of total new dwellings in the WRHA which require a resource consent, grouped by zone.
4. The proportion of consents for new development which have been located in areas identified as having additional development capacity through the AUP.

What can the indicator and measures tell us?

This indicator draws from a generalised set of quantitative consent data and provides a broad overview of activity trends in the WRHA. The use of multiple measurements seeks to understand if recognition of the limited capacity for growth is evident in multiple ways through the plan making process. The measurements tell us:

- The approval rate of land use consents over the course of the monitoring period tells us whether the AUP applies a more precautionary approach compared to previous planning.
- The overall number of building, land use, and subdivision consents granted over the course of the monitoring period illustrates the general level of activity and development in the WRHA. This also establishes trends over the timeframe of the monitoring period.
- The amount of land use consents for new dwellings as a proportion of the total amount of building consents for new dwellings, by zone. This seeks to understand the level of control applied to new development through the WRHA zoning and overlays.
- The number of new developments and subdivisions located in areas with previously identified development capacity seeks to understand the level of land use and the remaining level of subdivision availability supplied by the AUP for new development in the WRHA.

4.2.3 Data and limitations

The land use consent, Resource Consent Table and Building Consent Table have been used to assess this indicator. These tables are used in conjunction with the 2018 development capacity overlays in **Measure 4**.

- Land Use Consent Table is filtered by:
 - Application status
 - New dwellings requiring resource consents
 - Year of decision
 - Zoning and spatial data
- Resource Consent Table is filtered by:
 - TRE Consents
 - SUB designated consents
 - Year of decision
- Building Consent Table is filtered by:
 - New Structures vs. Additions and Alterations
 - Year of issue
 - Zoning and spatial data

Limitations:

- The Land Use Consent Table does not record why a consent was declined, withdrawn, closed, cancelled, or lapsed.

- The LUC data and BC comparison do not capture why buildings may be requiring consent (i.e., the limited space for development left around Titirangi means that most new development will need a resource consent because the lot size all but requires it).
- The year-on-year table (**Table 7**) in **Measure 2** will not include 2021 as only half of that year is within the monitoring period.
- Given that resource consent usually precedes building consent, in some instances the BC data captures development that obtained resource consent prior to the AUP becoming operative. It is difficult to distinguish pre-2016 resource consented development due to the way that building consent data is presented.
- Issued consents (consents which have been approved but have not received a certificate of completion) are present in the LUC dataset but are not used in **Measure 1** as they are inconsistently recorded.
- The Capacity for Growth Study data recorded vacant lots in 2018. The criteria used to identify lots in the CFGS is not exhaustive and may not include some lots which could be considered vacant by other criteria (such as District Valuation Roll (DVR) data).

4.2.4 Findings

Approval rate of land use consents (Measure 1)

The Land Use Consent Table was filtered to categorise resource consents by their application outcome. A majority of resource consents that complete the application process are granted, primarily because those that initially fail to meet requirements are often amended to achieve an acceptable outcome and subsequently approved. Resource consents may be withdrawn or cancelled if amending the activities is not suitable for the applicant or if other obstacles arise during the consenting process. Consequently, very few consents that complete the application process are declined.

Between January 2016 and June 2021 (percentages rounded to the nearest hundredths):

- 559 consents were granted (99.28 per cent)
- Four consents were declined (0.72 per cent)

Additionally:

- Six consents lapsed. This means that the consent is lodged but is not implemented in the typical 5-year lapse period and an extension is not granted.
- 20 consents were cancelled. This means the consent is issued and then cancelled. Consents can be cancelled for a variety of reasons, including being lodged in error, the consent holder asking for the consent to be cancelled, or the consent holder not responding within required timeframes where council has the ability to close the consent under the RMA.
- 34 were withdrawn. This means the applicant asks for the consent application to be withdrawn before it is issued. The applicant is not reimbursed for the costs of processing up to the time that the application is withdrawn.
- 22 consents were closed. A closed label refers to the consent's status in council's records and not the decision issued on the consent. Consents may be closed when they are lodged in error or withdrawn during the process. Consents may also be retroactively updated to the closed status manually in review of old records. Two consents with the closed status overlap with the withdrawn decision label and one overlaps with the granted decision label.

The data from the current resource consents monitoring period is compared to data from previous WRHA SoE reports below. Previous WHRA SoE reports measured Lapsed, Withdrawn and Closed consent labels together. Closed is a status applied to resource consents, not a decision. Per the description above the Cancelled decision label more closely aligns with the Lapsed and Withdrawn decisions i.e., the consent was not implemented for a given reason. A measurement which is consistent with the previous SoE reports and a measurement using the Cancelled decision status are provided in Table 6 below. The outcomes are similar and do not affect the observations made below.

Table 6 Outcomes Land Use consents 2004 – 2021.

Land use consent status	Granted	Declined	Lapsed, Withdrawn, or Closed
April 2004-March 2008	1387 (96.8%)	12 (0.8%)	34 (2.3%)
April 2008- March 2012	1155 (87%)	0	173 (13%)
April 2012- June 2017	540 (64.6%)	1 (.1%)	295 (35.3%)
January 2016 – June 2021	559 (89.9%)	4 (.6%)	59 (9.5%)

Land Use Consent Status	Granted	Declined	Lapsed, Withdrawn, or Cancelled
January 2016 – June 2021	559 (89.8%)	4 (.6%)	60 (9.6%)

(Auckland Council, 2023)

Percentages rounded to nearest tenth.

The data reveals an overall decline in the number of consents granted since the beginning of monitoring and an increase in declined consents over the past two monitoring periods. These trends suggest that the planning process is limiting inappropriate growth within the ranges. The number of lapsed, withdrawn, and closed consents has decreased since the previous monitoring period. One of the council’s goals during the development of the AUP was to simplify the legacy plans’ structure to remove unnecessary complexity that hindered the usability and understanding of the legacy plans’ standards (Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel, 2016). A reduction in land use consent applications that did not progress to completion implies that this simplification process has resulted in better understanding of the resource consenting requirements by applicants. Clearer understanding of these requirements contributes to decisions about whether to apply, and so the AUP provisions provide a less obstructive consenting process.

Granted LUC, SUB, and BC consents (Measure 2)

Land Use Consent Table, Resource Consent Table, and Building Consent Table

The amount of land use, subdivision, and building consents granted in the WRHA is indicative of the general amount of activity and development occurring in the ranges. Between January 2016 and June 2021:

- 559 land use consents were granted in the WRHA (all types)
- 39 subdivision consents were granted in the WRHA (all types)

- 1538 building consents were issued in the WRHA (all types)
 - 387 consents for new structures
 - 1112 consents for additions and alterations
 - 39 for demolitions or unspecified activity.

As development capacity in the WRHA is realised, it is expected that overall consenting activity will continue to decrease. Monitoring of consenting activity year-on-year enables observation of ongoing trends in activity. Additionally, the development market experienced several external disruptions during the monitoring period, including buoyant housing markets and the COVID pandemic. Observing changes in the amount of consenting activity year-by-year (**Table 7** below) can illustrate how development was affected by these disruptions.

*Table 7 Number of consents recorded over the course of the monitoring period by type. **

Year	Land Use Consents - Granted	Subdivision Consents - Granted	Building Consents - New Structures - Issued	Building Consents - Additions and Alterations - Issued
2016	114	1 (Not measured)	70	229
2017	131	14	90	201
2018	116	9	83	172
2019	85	8	65	193
2020	75	5	49	199
	Total = 521	Total = 37	= 357	= 994

*2021 not measured as monitoring period concludes in June.

Overall consenting activity and development observed in the WRHA has declined over the course of the monitoring period. All categories have experienced reductions in consenting activity from 2016 to 2020.

- Land Use consents – Granted has experienced a 34 per cent reduction between 2016 and 2020
- Subdivision Consents – Granted has experienced a 64 per cent reduction between 2017 and 2020
 - (1 Subdivision consents recorded in 2016 is a recording error.)
- Building consents – New Structures – Issued has experienced a 30 per cent reduction between 2016 and 2020
- Building consents – Additions and Alterations – Issued has experienced a 13 per cent reduction between 2016 and 2020

Activities directly controlled by the AUP via Land Use and Subdivision consents, have seen the most pronounced decline in activity over the course of the monitoring period. As the objectives, policies,

rules, precincts, and overlays in the WRHA are more restrictive to development than that enabled in other rural and urban zones, it is reasonable to expect that a higher proportion of proposed land uses would require resource consent. A significant portion of land use consents are for activities associated with growth, such as earthworks, vegetation removal and private and public service installation. The extent of Rpo's, and ONF overlays in centres of development growth (around Titirangi and Piha) mean that some activities which would otherwise be a permitted activity will require a resource consent application. Subdivision, which will be discussed in more depth in the next indicator, cannot be undertaken without a resource consent.

Building consents – new structures – Issued have seen a similar, if less pronounced, decline in granted consents. A decline in building consents reinforces a reduction of growth observed in land use and subdivision consents. It suggests that growth activity is falling generally across the ranges, even including works that don't require a resource consent.

Building consents – Additions and Alterations has seen a less pronounced reduction in consents over the monitoring period and has been more consistent throughout the years measured. There is also a higher number of consents overall. Additions and alterations predominantly deal with improvements made to existing living spaces. Prominent activities are the installation of new fireplaces, decks, and swimming pools. Some of these activities will also trigger a resource consent, especially activities outside the existing dwelling, but since a wide range of activities could be applicable to additions and alterations it is difficult to quantify through resource consent data. A higher number of these consents is to be expected as compared to building consents for new structures. The comparatively consistent number of building consents for additions and alterations during the monitoring period shows a sustained interest in improvement of the existing building stock in the WRHA. COVID travel restrictions and a buoyant housing market have also created incentive for property owners to improve the potential of their living spaces.

Land use consents and building consents for new dwellings, by zone (Measure 3)

Land Use Consent Table, Building Consent Table

New residential development is the clearest indicator of growth in the ranges. The four primary zones which control residential development in the WRHA are:

- H1. Residential – Large Lot Zone
- H2. Residential – Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone
- H20 Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone
- H21 Rural – Waitākere Ranges Zone

Several overlays also control development in the ranges. The most relevant to this indicator are: D9 SEA Overlay, D10 ONF and ONL overlays, D11 ONC and HNC overlays, D12 WRHA Overlay, and D15 Rpo. Presence of one or more of these overlays makes it more likely a landowner will require consent. Consents within these overlays are discussed in more depth in **Indicator 4**. These overlays play significant roles in protecting the natural heritage and landscape features of the ranges, in part by placing additional standards on development and activities in the WRHA. Overlay coverage is generally more extensive in the forested and coastal areas of the ranges. The level of restrictiveness a zone and overlay apply is dependent on the type of activity being sought and the context of the surrounding area. However, overlay coverage is generally more extensive in the forested and coastal

areas of the ranges. Land use consents as a percentage of the total number of building consents in each of the four primary residential zones during the monitoring period is shown in **Table 8** below.

More information on these zones, overlays, and precincts can be found in **Section 1.6** of this report.

Table 8 Land Use Consents for New Dwellings as a percentage of Total Building Consents 2016-2021.

	Land use consents for new dwellings- granted	Building consent – issued	Percentage of BC's requiring LUC's
H1. Residential – Large Lot Zone	29	46	63%
H2. Residential – Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone	25	39	64%
H20 Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone	30	75	40%
H21 Rural – Waitākere Ranges Zone	35	53	66%

Remaining LUC and BC were identified as being activities in Open Space zones or road reserves. Building consents are required for new structures whether they are on newly developed land or construction which replaces older structures. Consent data considers both instances as new dwellings.

Overall, a high portion of development for new residential dwellings required a resource consent. The Waitākere Foothills Zone has experienced the highest rate of construction approved through building consent with the lowest rate of LUCs being required for new structures. This is consistent with the proximity of the zone to urban Auckland and intention of the zone to provide for limited settlement. The zone is subject to the least amount of overlay protections for SEAs. Conversely the Waitākere Ranges Zone has the highest rate of BCs requiring LUC. This zone has a high amount of SEA and more prescriptive standards on dwelling creation than the foothills. The Large Lot Zone, mainly focused around Titirangi, Laingholm and Green Bay is a smaller zone with more concentrated development. Significant portions of the zone, especially around Titirangi are subject to SEA and the Rpo. The Rpo in particular requires consent for any new building over one metre in height. This overlay is extensive on ridgelines upon which roads are located in the Titirangi/Laingholm area. The Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone in the WRHA is prominent on the west and south coast of the WRHA. D10, D11, and D15 overlays cover significant parts of the area.

The distribution of building consents in the in the WRHA can be seen in **Figure 12** below. Concentration is apparent around Titirangi, Oratia and Piha.

Development capacity (Measure 4)

The 2018 SoE report reviewed the future development capacity the AUP provides through its policy and rule framework. The report mapped existing vacant and potential new vacant lots created through subdivision (lots with Identified Development Capacity) which could reasonably be expected to support a new dwelling (see **Figure 13** below). However, there are often uncertainties in undertaking a development capacity assessment due to the limitations that may restrict the ability of land to be subdivided (e.g., natural hazards, landscape, slope, land instability, access, and infrastructure servicing issues). Also, landowners may not wish to take up the full development opportunities

provided by the zoning and thereby preclude the full achievement of the development capacity for the land.

This section identifies the uptake of development capacity during the current monitoring period.

Table 9 below specifies which land use consents for new dwellings, building consents, and subdivision consents are located in those areas identified in 2018 as having development capacity.

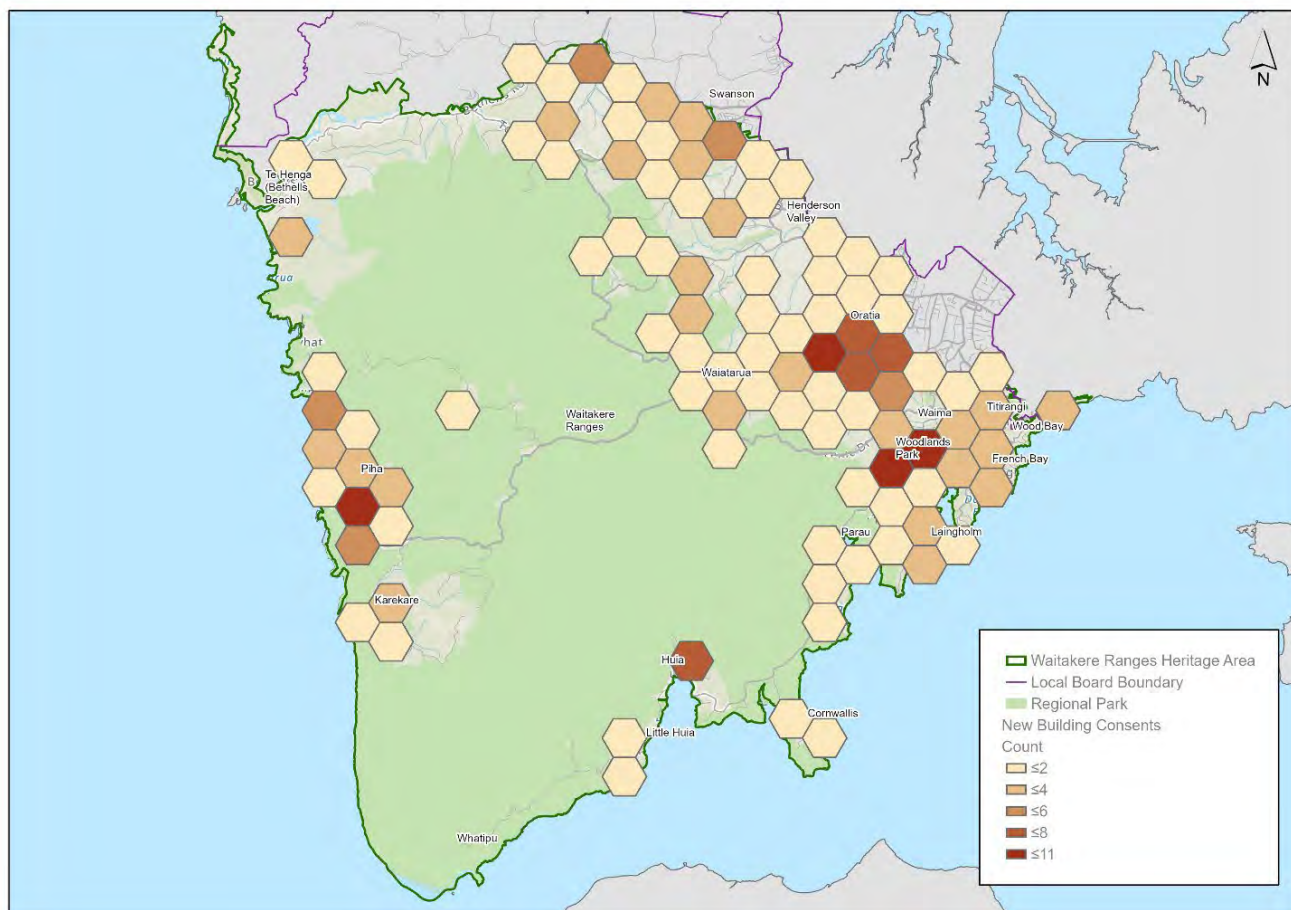


Figure 12 Density of building consents in the WRHA during the monitoring period.

Table 9 Consenting activity in vacant and lots with Identified Development Capacity (IDC) identified through the 2018 CfGS.

Consents located in vacant lots or lots with identified development capacity	Building Consents for New Structures	LUC	Subdivisions
Vacant Urban	13	1	0
Vacant Rural	69	29	4
Occupied Rural IDC	2	0	1
Occupied Urban IDC	6	1	2
Total	90	31	7

Approximately a quarter of new development recorded during the monitoring period is located in vacant lots or lots with IDC which were identified in 2018.

The category which has received the most development activity so far is vacant rural lots.

Less than half of subdivision consents creating a new lot were located in vacant or lots with IDC identified in 2018. Resource consent staff suggest that several remaining vacant lots and lots with IDC could be unfavourable to development due to constraints applied by special features such as steep contours creating geotechnical constraints or subject to flooding hazards or streams, overlays or through irregular property boundaries. It is expected that the development capacity remaining in the ranges will continue to be realised in the coming years.

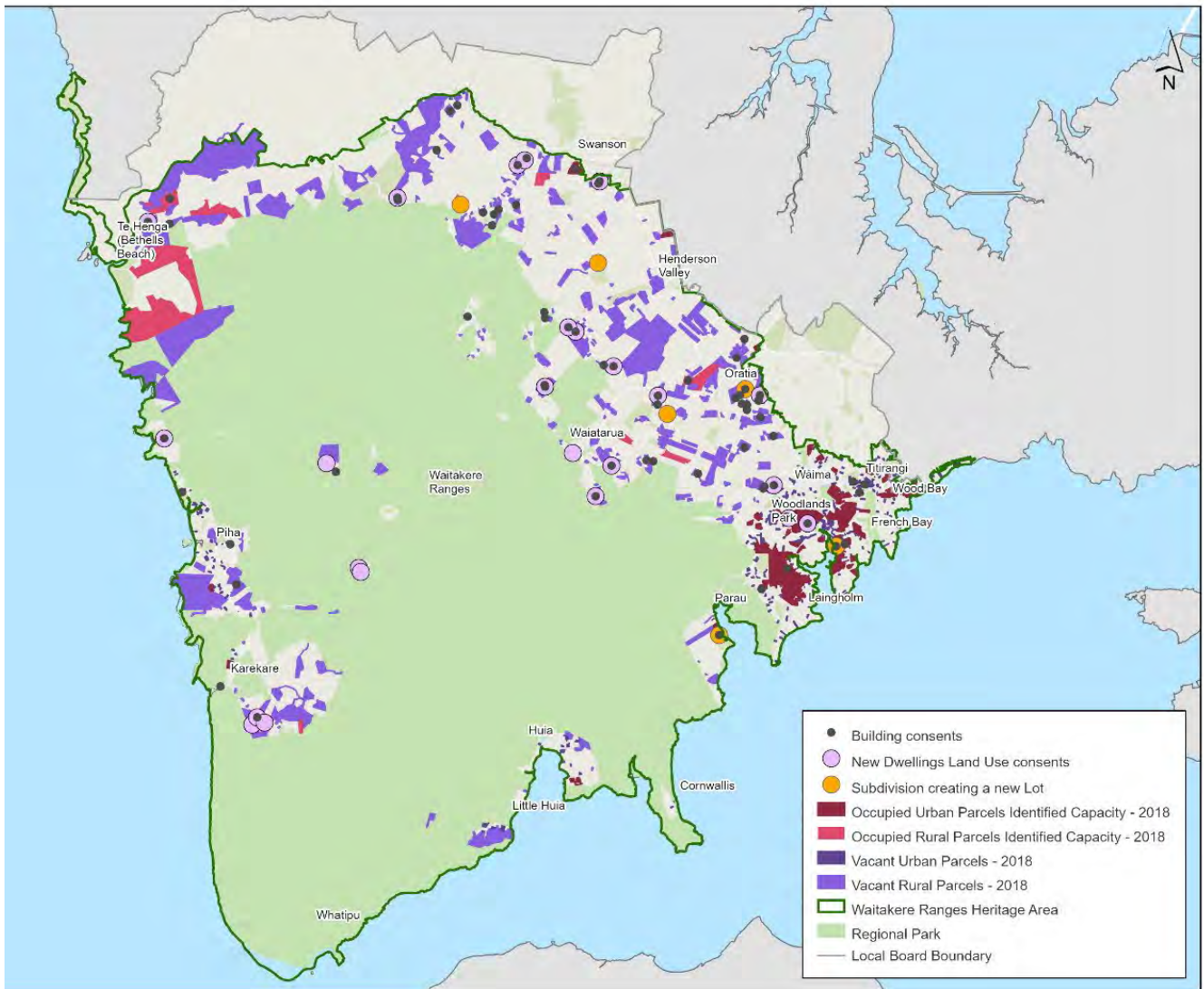


Figure 13 Land Use Consents and Building Consents in Vacant Lots and Lots with Identified Development Capacity.

4.2.5 Effectiveness and efficiency of the plan

Effectiveness

Findings indicate a reduction of resource consent activity between the previous and current monitoring period and a reduction of resource consents and building consents during the course of this monitoring period. The location of these consents within the zones of the WRHA also aligns with the intention to concentrate development in the eastern foothills and in established centres of development. The limitations to growth, understood through the portion of new dwellings requiring resource consents, also aligns with a higher level of restrictions in those zones beyond the eastern foothills. However, the comparatively lower level of lapsed, closed or withdrawn resource consents indicates that the AUP is not limiting growth through overtly complicated processes or restrictive planning. A sizeable amount of new development has occurred in zones previously identified as vacant, with a high number of building consents, suggesting that opportunity and incentive for growth is being directed into lots with existing capacity. The AUP therefore recognises Objective B4.4.1(4) by managing the cumulative effects of activities on the environment, amenity, and heritage features of the WRHA. Standards for development limit the cumulative impact of growth based on the identified capacity and existing settlement patterns of an area.

The distribution of building consents shown in **Figure 12** above highlights that although consenting is consistently distributed throughout the zones of the WRHA, three areas are the focus of the most development activity, being Titirangi, Oratia and Piha. The popularity of these settlements drives development pressures. Although Oratia is intended to support residential growth in the ranges and Titirangi is its largest internal centre, the concentration of development in each of these areas highlights the threat of intensity to the character and environment within the WRHA. Management of development pressure in the WRHA is conversely related to that of urban Auckland. Where the intention inside the RUB is to provide greater housing and growth opportunities, the provisions within the WRHA largely keep growth potential static, with the intention that existing capacity will be realised, and consenting numbers fall. This approach will subject the eastern foothills to more growth pressure generally and specific areas outside the RUB are likely to be subject to a greater degree of pressure. Influence of growth concentration from inside the RUB can be observed when comparing the concentration of consents in Oratia and Titirangi with Swanson. Despite the WRHA border being located on the edge of Swanson centre, concentration of building consents in the area does not exhibit the same intensity observed in Oratia and Titirangi.

Piha has the greatest concentration of development on the West Coast in part because of its existing popularity, but also because other beachside settlements, such as Karekare and Anawhata, are comparatively more remote.

Beyond the controls within zones and overlays, the distribution of growth and development in the ranges is mainly dependent on desired level of access to local centres and urban Auckland.

Efficiency

As mentioned above, the number of withdrawn, closed, and lapsed resource consents has lowered when compared to previous monitoring periods, indicating the planning process enables appropriate growth without submitting consent applicants to arduous administrative processes. The AUP creates opportunities for growth within the limits which sustain the features of the heritage area. The uptake of development in vacant lots identified in 2019 shows that the AUP is not unnecessarily restrictive on growth and encourages development uptake to be realised where there is identified capacity. The

consistent representation of additions and alterations numbers within the building consents dataset indicates that residents in the ranges are not being directed into the consenting process when they are upgrading or enhancing existing structures, either internally or externally.

Overall, it is considered that the plan is performing well regarding **Indicator 2**, recognising the limited capacity of the WRHA to provide for growth.

4.2.6 Recommendations

- Carry out economic modelling and on-the-ground assessment of ongoing development outcomes in the WRHA's centres to determine if plan-enabled capacity and provisions are contending with pressures for growth.¹¹

¹¹ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

4.3 Indicator 3 Subdivision in the heritage area is of an appropriate scale and intensity and complements the character and landscape of the heritage area.

4.3.1 RPS approach

RPS Objectives and Policies

B4.4.1. Objective (4) *Cumulative effects of activities on the environment, including amenity values and heritage features, are recognized and avoided.*

B4.4.1. Objective (5) *The character, scale and intensity of subdivision, use or development do not adversely affect the heritage features or contribute to urban growth outside the Rural Urban Boundary.*

B4.4.2 Policy (1) *Design and locate structures and impermeable surfaces and undertake activities in a way that does not impede or adversely affect the potential for the regeneration of native vegetation or reduce the extent and range of areas of native vegetation and linkages between them.*

B4.4.2 Policy (5) *Require the type and density of settlements to avoid degrading the character of natural landscape features.*

B4.4.2 Policy (7) *Adopt a cautious approach when considering proposals that threaten serious or irreversible damage to a heritage feature.*

Other relevant RPS chapters:

B9.2 Rural Activities

B9.4 Rural Subdivision

The RPS sets out that subdivision can lead to greater cumulative potential for growth and that there are serious and irreversible effects it can pose to heritage features. It encourages a precautionous approach to the scale, character and intensity of activity and encourages that growth activity account for the existing natural and historic context. B4.4.1 Objective 5 makes a distinction between the type of growth which occurs within the RUB and the WRHA. Additional residential capacity also increases the requirement capacity for services and infrastructure.

4.3.2 Measures

1. The amount and activity status of subdivision located in D12 Subdivision Schedules.
2. The amount of new subdivision consents for new lots, and the number of new lots created.
3. The average size of new lots created by subdivision.

What can the indicators and measures tell us?

Pressure for subdivision in the WRHA can come from increased development pressure in urban Auckland. The AUP does not provide an upper limit on the amount of subdivision which may take place in the WRHA but does manage demand for growth through more firm spatial standards on new lot sizes created. The rationale of implementing these three indicators is explained below:

- D12 Subdivision Schedules are the primary means through which site-specific subdivision is located and standards applied in the WRHA. This indicator seeks to understand if subdivision is proceeding within these schedules. Analysis of the activities triggering consent for these subdivisions also tells us if standards are being complied with or exceeded.
- The number of subdivision consents for new lots seeks to understand the extent of additional housing capacity created in the ranges during the monitoring period. The rate of new lots created per subdivision consent can also show where new lots are proliferating and to what extent they are accounted for in plan making procedures. Measuring subdivision consenting activity generally shows us what type of types of rules and activity standard breaches are occurring most commonly in new subdivision consents.
 - New freehold lots created by subdivision obtain a separate title of ownership and the accompanying development rights. Every new residential property is reasonably expected to support a dwelling.
- The size of property holdings contributes to the retention of rural characteristics. Measuring the average size of lots within and outside of the D12 Subdivision Schedules seeks to understand whether appropriate development outcomes are being provided for by the D12 Subdivision Schedules.

4.3.3 Data and limitations

The Resource Consent Table has been used to assess this indicator (January 2016 – June 2021). It is filtered by:

- SUB designated consents
 - Zoning and spatial data
 - Relevant overlays
 - Activity Status
 - Activity standards triggered
 - Number of new lots created
 - Consent technical plans and decision reports specifying m2 of new lots created through subdivision.

Limitations

- Subdivision resource consents that have been cancelled or declined are not included in the dataset, limiting the understanding of the effectiveness of the subdivision standards.
- Documentation for some consents does not contain information about whether a consent's activity status is due to breach of subdivision specific standards or other standards. This limits us from understanding if the activity status of a consent is due to an infringement of D12 or another zone or overlay standard.
- The AUP being made operative may have created additional subdivision capacity which was capitalised on during the monitoring period. Comparative analysis will not be possible until the next monitoring report.
- Most of the D12 Subdivision Schedule overlays do not have an adequate sample size of subdivision consents through which to measure if appropriate outcomes are being enforced.
- Not all the internal consenting technical plans and decision reports contain the area of new lots created.

4.3.4 Findings

Subdivision consents in D12 overlays (Measure 1)

Subdivision is the process of dividing a site or changing an existing boundary location for one or more sites. In the AUP subdivision activity standards are controlled through an activity table specific to the WRHA in AUP Chapter E39 Subdivision – Rural. Additional standards arise from D12 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay's Subdivision Schedules. D12 divides parts of the heritage area into Subdivision Scheduled Areas/ Sites which prescribe additional subdivision standards when subdividing in the specified areas/sites. These are recorded in Schedule 16 of the AUP (Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay Subdivision Scheduled Areas/ Sites). The underlying provisions of AUP Chapter E39 – Subdivision Rural also apply on matters not addressed by the schedules.

AUP Chapter D12 includes eighteen maps that illustrate where subdivision has been scheduled on individual sites. These schedules are in the eastern foothills where development pressures are most intense. Subdivision schedules provide standards for an area such as proposed lot boundaries to be created through subdivision, areas of enhancement, and allocated building areas. These schedules have a range of lot sizes. Some schedules provide plans for large areas of suburbs and others provide specific provision for individual lots. The standards applied through the schedules are specific to the heritage values of the area or lot which is identified. All subdivision activity within the schedule overlays requires a resource consent.

The standards applied to subdivision schedule overlays and scheduled sites are particularly prescriptive. Overlay Subdivision Plan 1 Oratia (Foothills) and Overlay Subdivision Plan 2 Swanson South (Foothills) provide spatial frameworks through proposed lot boundaries and indicative allocations of lot density. Both overlays contain enhancement areas subject to specific standards of regeneration in subdivision consenting. Swanson South also includes indicative pedestrian pathways through the area subject to retention in subdivision planning. Other subdivision overlays in D12 provide standards nonspecifically within their boundaries. Standards are considered when applying for a subdivision, and include minimum lot sizes, new right of ways, structures which will infringe on the SEA, and revegetation planning. The larger subdivision schedule maps also provide for control of

overall density by proposing lot sizes over a broad area. If subdivision does not comply with the specific standards listed in the schedule, the activity becomes more restrictive and the discretion available to consent staff becomes broader. In some cases, not meeting the established standards leads to the activity status becoming prohibited.

Sixteen of the 19 consents for subdivision creating new lots are located in the D12 Subdivision Schedules. A majority of the consents located within the D12 Overlay have not been for exceeding the standards of the overlay but exceeding the standards in other AUP chapters. The consenting application process was more restrictive for these consents.

- Oratia's subdivision overlay includes Figure D12.10.1 Overlay Subdivision Plan 1 Oratia (Foothills) and Figure D12.10.1 5 Overlay Subdivision Plan 8 Oratia (Ranges). Ten of the 11 consents in the area are located in the Waitākere Foothills Zone. One is in the Oratia Ranges Overlay. Of the ten consents located in Oratia (Foothills), eight follow the standards of the overlay to create property boundaries, lot densities, and environmental enhancement areas which align with the overlay plan. The consent in the Oratia Ranges Overlay does not comply with the relevant standards for the overlay.
- Three consents relate to Figure D12.10.2: Overlay Subdivision Plan 2 Swanson South (Foothills). One of the consents follows the relevant standards of the overlay while two do not.
- One is in Figure D12.10.1 7 Overlay Subdivision Plan 10 - Titirangi - Laingholm (South). The consent does not comply with the standards relevant to the zone.
- One in Figure D12.10.19 Overlay Subdivision Plan 12 – 7 - 11 Christian Road, Henderson Valley. The consent does comply with the overlay standards.

Spatial data tells us that most subdivision consents in the WRHA are within D12 overlays and are located predominantly in the eastern foothills region. A total of 84 per cent of all subdivision consents are located in D12 overlays. A total of 63 per cent of the consents follow the standards set out in their relevant overlays. Not all decision reports are available for those consents which did not meet the relevant standards of their overlays, but the ones that are available show that the most common standard exceeded is the vegetation enhancement area not aligning with the overlay requirements.

The number of new lots created by subdivision (Measure 2)

The D12 Subdivision Schedules for area and site-specific subdivision provisions were carried over from the Auckland Council District Plan: Operative Waitākere section which preceded the AUP. Outside of the D12 Subdivision Schedule overlays, subdivision was made a less restrictive activity, from prohibited to non-complying (Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel, 2016). The AUP was intended to simplify complex restrictive processes of the preceding district plan. The intention is to provide further opportunities to live and work in the area if heritage features are protected. The correlation between overlays used in the preceding district plan and AUP allows for comparison between the current and previous monitoring periods.

In the monitoring period there were 19 subdivision consents for new lots out of 35 total consents for subdivision. These 19 consents created a total of 99 new lots in the WRHA. The number of new fee simple lots created during the current monitoring period is compared to those of previous monitoring periods. Boundary adjustments, while recorded, are not considered harmful to heritage qualities in the ranges as they do not create the additional capacity for more structures.

Table 10 Subdivision activity in the WRHA over current and previous SoE monitoring periods. Source: (Auckland Council, 2023)

	Applications for fee simple subdivision	Number of additional fee simple lots consented	Average number of additional fee simple lots consented per subdivision (rounded to tenths)	Number of boundary adjustments
April 2004-March 2008	75	164	2.2	47
April 2008- March 2012	41	108	2.6	20
April 2012- June 2017	30	62	2.1	25
January 2016 – June 2021	19	99	5.2	16

Table 10 above shows the number of additional lots created per subdivision consent has risen since the AUP was made operative. The average number of additional fee simple lots consented per subdivision is 5.2, the highest recorded average over all the monitoring periods. However, the increase is reduced when accounting for a 48-lot subdivision on Christian Road which is subject to its own Subdivision Schedule and not typical of development in the ranges.

Oratia supports the highest proliferation of new lots, besides the subdivision on Christian Road, a total of 10 consents creating 35 new lots are located in the suburb. Another four consents creating eight new lots are located in Henderson/Henderson Valley, one consent in Titirangi creates three lots and the special subdivision on Christian Road creates 48 new lots.

Three consents located outside the scheduled overlay are in Parau (two new lots), Piha (two new lots), and Swanson (one new lot).

Ninety-five per cent of new lots created during the monitoring period were located in the D12 Subdivision Schedule overlays.

A lower number of applications for fee simple subdivision but higher number of fee simple lots created supports the view that a higher amount of lots are being consented per subdivision consent than prior to the AUP.

Table 11 The Distribution and Activity Statuses of New lots Created per Consent in the WRHA.

Amount of new lots created	Percentage of total subdivision consents to create new lots	Activity status of consents
1	11% (2)	1 controlled 1 discretionary
2	42% (8)	3 restricted discretionary 2 discretionary 3 non-complying
3	26% (5)	2 restricted discretionary

		1 discretionary 2 non-complying
4	5% (1)	discretionary
5	5% (1)	discretionary
9	5% (1)	discretionary
48	5% (1)	non-complying

In terms of scale, defined as the number of subdivision consents granted in the WRHA, subdivision has been reduced in the WRHA. However, the intensity of subdivision, defined as the number of lots granted per consent, and therefore in the same area, has increased. The distribution of activity status across the number of lots created per subdivision does not indicate that consents creating additional lots are exceeding AUP standards at a higher rate (Table 11 above). This suggests that the intention to create less restrictive standards to subdivision consent in the AUP has provided for additional capacity to be realised by landowners without damaging heritage features.

Average size of new lots created (Measure 3)

Historically, rural settlement patterns have been dominant throughout most of the WRHA. Large lot sizes supported lifestyle blocks and rural production processes in the eastern foothills. Pressure on the urban boundary of the WRHA has, over time, divided properties and reduced the overall size of lots in the WRHA. The D12 Subdivision Schedules locate further subdivision of less rural patterns in areas where it has already proliferated, applying standards which provide guidelines to mitigate effects and enhance environmental outcomes. The character of the landscape is dependent, in part, of the distribution density of built form.

Outside the subdivision schedules, AUP Chapter E39 Subdivision - Rural specifies standards. Boundary adjustment activities creating lot sizes above four hectares are a controlled activity. All subdivision creating new lots in this zone is discretionary or more restrictive. That average site size is calculated *over the net site area of the site as it existed as of 14 October 1995* (Auckland Council, 2016, p. E39.6.5.3). If a subdivision consent creates new lots with an average below four hectares (as calculated from net site area in 1995), provides a lot under two hectares, creates a new road, or includes buildings which might affect the SEA, the activity becomes prohibited.

The size of new lots created, outside of and within the D12 Subdivision Schedules, is indicative of settlement patterns proceeding in different parts of the ranges. As not all D12 Subdivision Schedule overlays specify a minimum lot size, there is no common lower limit on the size of new lots created among schedule overlays. As mentioned above, not all subdivision consent decisions had data pertaining to the size of lots created.

Of the 99 new lots created by subdivision 85 had spatial data within their plans.

- Oratia (Foothills) Overlay had 27 measurable lots with an average new lot size of 1.5 hectare
- Oratia (Ranges) Overlay had 3 measurable lots with an average new lot size of 0.44 hectare.
- Titirangi – Laingholm (South) Overlay had no measurable spatial data.
- Swanson South (Foothills) had two measurable lots with an average new lot size of 3.82 hectare.

- Consents outside a D12 Scheduled Overlay had five measurable lots with an average new lot size of 3.74 hectare.
- Christian Road subdivision plan had 48 measurable lots with an average new lot size of 1.11 hectare.

The average size of new lots drawn from all 85 measurements is 1.42 hectares.

- Without including the Christian Road subdivision, the average lot size from the 37 lots is 1.84 hectares.
- The average lot size of the 80 new lots located in the D12 Schedule Overlay is 1.28 hectares.
- Seven new lots created were vested to council as reserves or esplanade reserves. These new reserves averaged 2.3 hectares in size.

As mentioned above, several overlays, particularly Oratia (Ranges), Titirangi – Laingholm (South), and Swanson South (Foothills), had too few new lots consented to draw substantial conclusions about the effectiveness of their standards and conditions. However, the distribution of lot sizes generally across the WRHA suggests that the scale of subdivision aligns with the intentions of D12. The overlay which has received most of the subdivision activity and greatest pressure for growth, Oratia (Foothills) Overlay, has an average lot size of 1.5 hectare. This size suggests that the overlay is enabling subdivision at a smaller scale than the ranges do through E39 generally, but at a much higher rate than is observed inside the RUB.

Christian Road case study

Located on the urban edge of Swanson near the Swanson Rail Station, the Christian Road case study is a special case among scheduled subdivisions and is not a typical example of the type of development that is sought through the foothills of the heritage area. It is an example of the development of the area which was anticipated before the Act came into effect in 2008

The subdivision site is bounded by Christian Road to the east and south and Tram Valley Road to the north and west. In the past the land was used for market gardening and open pasture. It contained several buildings along with a residential dwelling. An intermittent stream runs through the centre of the site, terminating at a small wetland.

The site was originally identified in the southern part of the Swanson Structure Plan under the former Waitākere City District Plan and proposed to be in the Swanson South sub-precinct in the AUP. However, it was eventually incorporated into the heritage area as a scheduled subdivision site with a specific set of provisions which determined the status of any subdivision activity.

Following hearings in 2018, a resource consent for 48 new residential lots, internal roads, and a drainage reserve was approved. The subdivision complied with several of the provisions for the heritage area including general density and layout but was not in accordance with some others. The subdivision plan approved for consent can be seen in **Figure 14** below.

Council's initial position was that the consent be declined as the identified non-complying activities would have a more than minor effect on the receiving environment. However, at the hearing, submissions from various experts for the applicant reassured council planners that the effects of stormwater on the environment and alignment of subdivision with the AUP were less adverse than what was previously understood.

The consent was publicly notified at the request of the applicant. A total of eight submissions were received, with one submission in support and seven submissions in opposition. The hearing primarily focused on the reserve area provided in the development plan for the stream and the effects of stormwater and flooding on the environment. These concerns, along with the appropriateness of subdivision and urban development on the site given its location, were the main issues in contention.

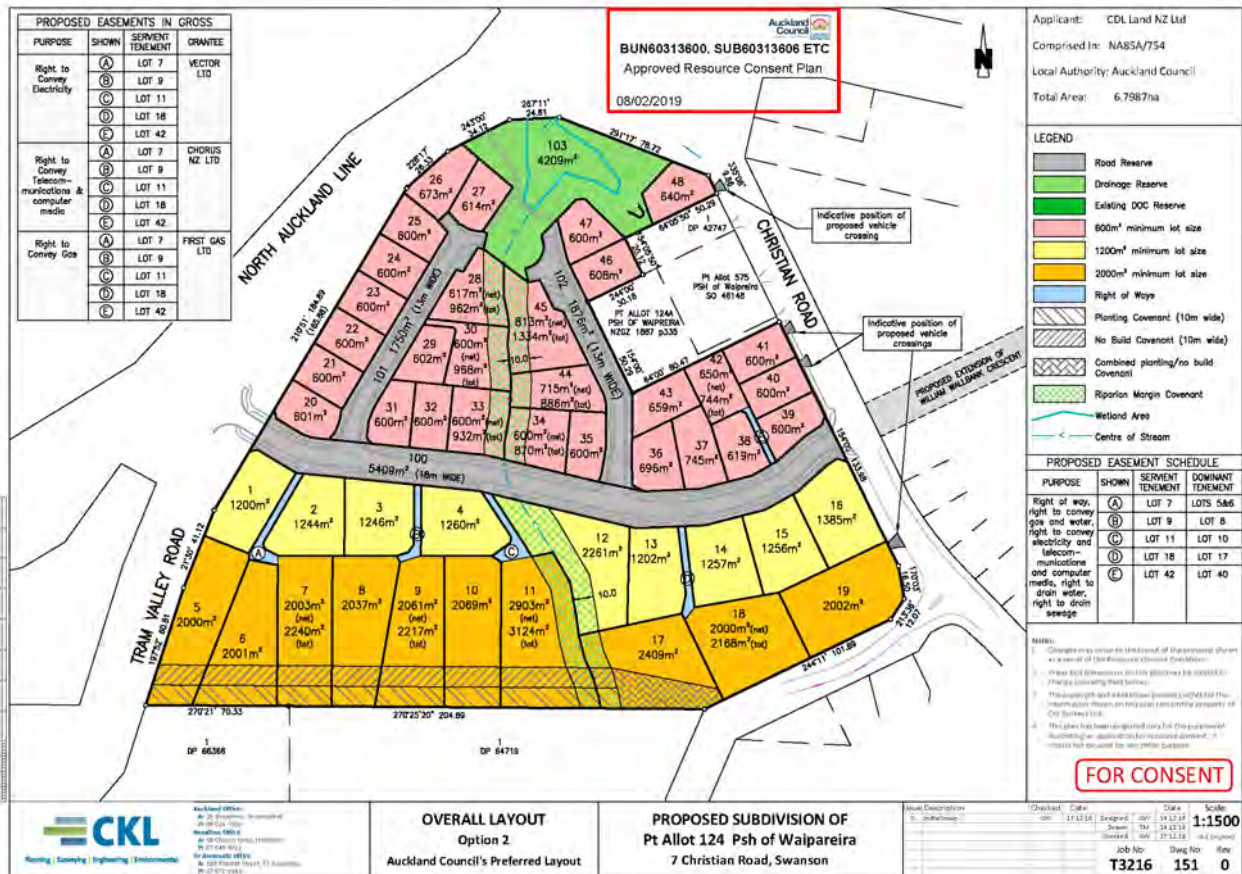


Figure 14 The approved subdivision layout plan for the Christian Road development.

The commissioners found that the scale of development on the site was appropriate because it was located within the Rural Urban Boundary and zoned for Residential – Large Lot development in accordance with its proximity to Swanson Train Station.

The D12 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay was used to apply specific provisions to the site in line with the former Swanson Structure Plan. The commissioners were concerned about the downstream management system for stormwater. However, they found that the mitigation techniques that will be used onsite, along with the risk of flooding, was acceptable.

The commissioners agreed with council that the small wetland to the north of site was to be vested for stormwater management and some lots to the south of site would require planting covenants. Several other particulars of suburban form, including footpath layout, lot size and height standards, fencing and road access, were accepted.

At the time of writing the lot has been cleared and roads constructed. Arrangement of barriers around the stream can be seen in Figure 15 below.



Figure 15 Looking towards the Christian Road development. The site has been cleared for construction and roads have been built (Kensington, 2023).

4.3.5 Effectiveness and efficiency of the plan

Effectiveness

An effective response to subdivision management in the ranges requires consideration of how it complements the existing landscape as well as its scale and intensity. These considerations can be understood as the controls placed on subdivision at an individual level and those placed on its accumulation in the ranges.

The proportion of total subdivision consents located in the D12 Subdivision Schedules and the percentage of those meeting all relevant schedule standards indicate that the D12 Schedules enable consenting opportunities which are sensitive to heritage features. Exceedance of those standards gives resource consent staff additional discretion in considering the effects on heritage features. Several esplanade and forest reserves were vested through subdivision activity and indicated that areas identified for enhancement in the D12 Schedules has led to an increase in conservation and protection of the environment. The size of new lots also indicates the AUP's effectiveness at retaining rural character. Within the D12 Subdivision Schedules the average lot size consented was 1.28ha, 0.72ha under the minimum net amount provided for in the WRHA outside of D12 Schedules. The D12 Schedules are more permissive of subdivision activity than the general E39 standards, but still lead to subdivision activity at a significantly larger lot size than what is present inside the RUB. Outside of the D12 Schedules a significantly larger average lot size of 3.82ha is observed.

The scale and intensity of subdivision is understood through the number of new lots created per consent and their location. The total amount of new lots consented per subdivision is higher during this monitoring period than the previous monitoring period. However, the restrictiveness of the activity applied does not correlate with an increase in the number of lots consented per subdivision consent. This suggests that the higher rate of new lots consented per subdivision could be due to capacity added once the AUP was made operative. The highest proliferation of new lots was in the Oratia foothills area. This suburb experienced far greater subdivision applications than any other D12 Schedule. The effect of development in Oratia is discussed in more detail in **Indicator 5** below.

Efficiency

The intention of the D12 Subdivision Schedules is to enable subdivision, provided that the conditions placed on approved consents protect, restore, and enhance heritage features. The tension between

these two goals requires consideration of numerous direct and indirect effects of subdivision activity. The prescriptive standards within the D12 Schedules are intended to account for the variety of impacts which arise from subdivision and enable a consistent and contextually applied set of assessment criteria to be applied to different subdivision consents. When D12 Schedule specific standards are complied with, subdivision is a restricted discretionary activity, meaning that consent applicants and consenting staff have transparency in the decision-making process and applicants are incentivised to comply with zone standards. The D12 Schedules also allow for discretion of consenting matters which are more tailored to individual sites than other AUP subdivision.

Overall, the plan is considered to be effective and efficient in regard to **Indicator 3**. Subdivision in the heritage area is enabled with in an appropriate scale and intensity which complements the character and landscape of the heritage area by responding to the context of the landscape and existing settlement patterns.

4.3.6 Recommendations

There are no recommendations relating to the AUP for **Indicator 3**.

4.4 Indicator 4 The quality and diversity of landscapes in the heritage area identified as having local, regional, or national significance are maintained.

4.4.1 RPS approach

RPS objectives and policies

B4.4.1. Objective (6) *The quality and diversity of landscapes are maintained by all of the following:*

- (a) protecting landscapes of local, regional, or national significance;*
- (b) restoring and enhancing degraded landscapes; and*
- (c) managing change within a landscape in an integrated way, including retaining rural character.*

B4.4.2. Policy (5) *Require the type and density of settlements to avoid degrading the character of natural landscape features.*

B4.4.2. Policy (6) *Avoid non-residential activities:*

- (a) that are unrelated to the productive use of rural land;*
- (b) that require substantial earthworks or vegetation removal; or*
- (c) that are industrial and unrelated to rural activities.*

B4.4.2. Policy (7) *Adopt a cautious approach when considering proposals that threaten serious or irreversible damage to a heritage feature.*

Other relevant RPS chapters:

B4.2. Outstanding natural features and landscapes

B4.3 Viewshafts

B8.2 Natural Character

4.4.2 Measures

1. The amount, type, and location of activity taking place in the Ridgeline Protection Overlay.
2. The activity types of consents within the Outstanding Natural Feature, Outstanding Natural Landscapes, Outstanding Natural Character, and High Natural Character Overlay.

3. The effect of the visual impact of development on outstanding and prominent landforms in the ranges.

What can the indicators and measures tell us?

The RPS recognises the diversity and quality of the landscapes and landforms in the WRHA. There is a strong directive to protect and enhance the unique and outstanding features of the WRHA which contribute to its significance on a local, regional, and national scale. Due to varied and extreme topography in the ranges, the visual effects of development on the landscape can be pronounced and disruptive of the natural backdrop if not managed appropriately. Identifying the ‘local regional or national’ significance of landscapes provides, similarly to other RPS Objectives, the consideration of the cumulative effects on the landscape and the management of the effects of development and land use on heritage features. The effect of development and land use on the landscape is related to **Indicator 5** and the subservience of the built environment to natural features.

The scale and massing of development located on prominent landforms can disrupt the naturalness of the landscape in the heritage area. Measuring the amount, activities, and locations of resource consents located in the D15 RPO can tell us whether the standards in the overlay appropriately manage the effects of development pressure on the visually prominent ridgelines located in the WRHA.

Inappropriate use, development, and subdivision can influence the ‘naturalness’ of significant features and landscapes. D10 ONF and ONL Overlay and D11 ONC and HNC Overlay protect overland and coastal features and landscapes through four separate overlays with different activity standards. Measuring the amount and types of activities that are triggering resource consent applications in these zones, in conjunction with the visual landscape assessments seeks to understand the extent to which the overlays are protecting the quality and diversity of the WRHA.

The visual effect of use and development on the landscape is a primary concern for the RPS. The appreciation of grandeur and scale in this landscape is drawn from observation of unique elements in connection with one another. For this reason, quantitative data when considered alone only captures part of the whole picture of the effects of land use and development in the ranges. Measures use the landscape assessment completed in 2023 to observe the changes made in significant landscapes in the WRHA.

4.4.3 Data and limitations

The Resource Consent Table has been used to assess this indicator. It is filtered by:

- Consents within the Natural Heritage: Ridgeline Protection Overlay
 - Consents which trigger D15 activities
 - Type of activity triggered.
 - Zoning of the consent.
- Consents within the Outstanding Natural Feature, Outstanding Natural Landscapes, Outstanding Natural Character, and High Natural Character Overlay
 - Consents which trigger D10 or D11 activities
 - Type of activity triggered.

The degree of change recorded in significant landscape units through the landscape assessment also supports this indicator.

Limitations: None relevant

4.4.4 Findings

Consents in the Ridgeline Protection Overlay (Measure 1)



Figure 16 Modified and natural ridgeline protection overlays in the WRHA.

The D15 RPO covers ridgelines in the eastern foothills, along the west coast, and along the southern coast near Huia. The extent of the RPO overlay in the WRHA can be seen in Figure 16 above. The RPO differentiates between natural and modified ridgelines. Natural ridgelines are those which have had very little or no development. Modified ridgelines are those where development has occurred, but the ridgeline has retained sufficient visual coherence to be worthy of protection. Most of the ridgelines in the WRHA are natural ridgelines. There is only a very small coverage of modified ridgelines in the Titirangi area. More information on the D15 RPO can be found in Section 1.6.3 of this report.

Tall structures on ridgelines that are sensitive to urban built forms have the potential to be excessively conspicuous, generating adverse visual landscape effects from various public places, both near and far. Ridgelines can have wide viewing audiences and stark contrasts of built form on sensitive ridgelines are not considered appropriate by the general community. The natural heritage and character values provided to the city from these ridgelines means they are deserving of protection in line with the imperatives of Section 7 of the WRHA 2008 Act.

However, there are other factors besides ‘height’ that may generate adverse effects from built form. The overall bulk and form of a building or buildings and the nature and colour of claddings, along with the potential loss of vegetation, or the lack of new vegetation, may also give rise to an adverse effect in a particular context.

There is a range factors that the RPO Overlay seeks to address in evaluating a particular development proposal for a particular site. Height is the critical determinant of whether a resource consent is required and therefore whether a specific assessment is required to ascertain the extent of potential adverse effects. Any development over one metre in height requires a consent under the RPO provisions of Chapter D15 and requires specific assessment unless it is an alteration or addition of an existing building which does not add additional height to the structure. A greater level of scrutiny applies where the development proposal is visible above the ridgeline with a sky or sea backdrop. On modified ridgelines development above the ridgeline with a sky or sea backdrop is a discretionary activity; on natural ridgelines this is a non-complying activity.

Many ridgelines in the RPO have roads constructed along them. Ridgelines are suitable locations for roads for the advantages the terrain provides for the slope of the road and drainage of stormwater. Therefore, new development within the RPO is expected along ridgeline roads, especially in areas where development is already prevalent.

The consents within D15 RPO by zone are displayed in **Table 12** below:

Table 12 Consents in the D15 RPO by zone.

Zone	Large Lot Zone	Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone	Foothills/Waitākere Ranges and Foothills Zones	Business Local Centre Zone	Total
January 2016 – June 2021	21	13	23	4	61

The distribution of consents within these zones given the concentration of development generally recorded in **Indicator 2** of this report is as expected. The Foothills and Waitākere Ranges Zone cover the entire extent of the eastern foothills and immediate surroundings of the regional park where many prominent ridgelines form the backdrop to urban Auckland. The H11 Business - Local Centre Zone and Bush Living/Large Lot Zone in Titirangi Village and greater Titirangi, Laingholm and Green Bay has high concentrations of development and many prominent ridgelines as visible backdrop to urban Auckland close to the coast. The Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone also covers seaside areas of extreme topography and locations highly desirable for development such as Piha.

Of these 61 consents, 28 are for new structures and 22 of these new structures are not visible in front of the sea or above the ridgeline or skyline when viewed from a public place. The distribution of these consents is reflective of the distribution by zone recorded above. From the six new structures visible in front of the sea or above the ridgeline or skyline when viewed from a public place, five are on natural ridgelines and one is on a modified ridgeline. This distribution is not unexpected given the higher number of natural ridgelines in the WRHA.

Of the 33 consents not for new structures, five are for works visible in front of the sea or above the ridgeline or skyline when viewed from a public place, 27 are for works not visible in front of the sea or above the ridgeline or skyline when viewed from a public place, and one is for a structure less than one

metre in height. The distribution of these consents is predominantly in the Large Lot Zone and the Waitākere Ranges Zone. There is limited activity in the Rural and Coastal Villages Zone and the lower Waitākere – Foothills Zone.

Consents within the ONF, ONL, ONC, and HNC overlays (Measure 2)

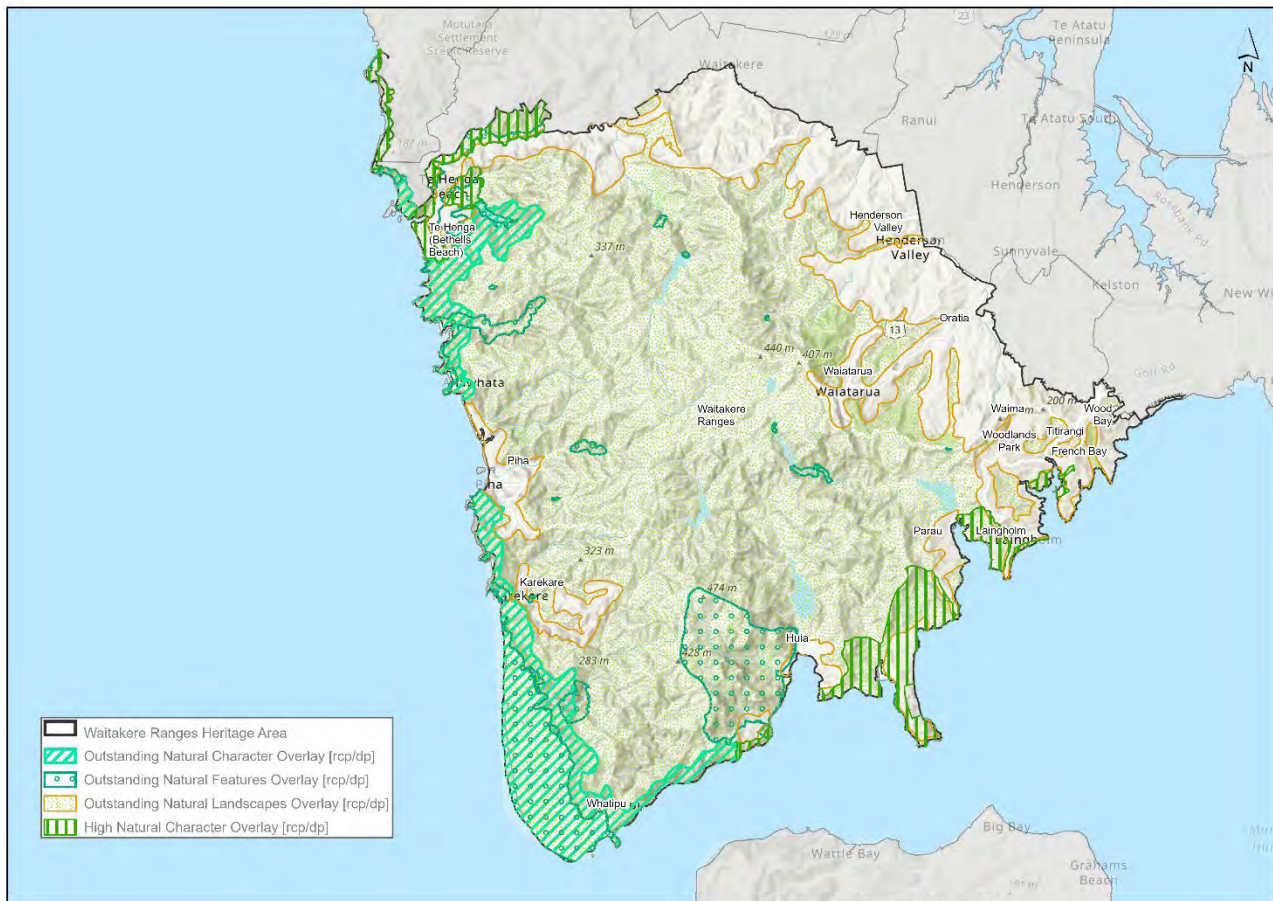


Figure 17 Extent of the D10 and D11 overlays in the WRHA.

The D10 ONF and ONL overlays cover a significant portion of the WRHA. The extent of these overlays can be seen in Figure 17 above.

Identification of ONFs is based on the geological significance and rarity, its standing as a representation of Auckland’s natural landscape, and heritage value to the community and mana whenua. ONFs are distinguished landforms of notability within the landscape such as a maunga or headlands. This overlay is primarily focused along coastal areas of the WRHA with some minor coverage in the regional park in areas with prominent topographical characteristics.

ONLs have more extensive coverage. They are identified through ecological and wildlife presence, including those transient values which arise from ecological processes or changing seasons, aesthetic values, and the heritage value to the community and mana whenua. This overlay covers most of the WRHA coast and regional park but is absent in the lower eastern foothills and areas of existing development around the ranges. There is overlap between the two D10 overlays as ONFs are often part of the ONLs.

The D11 ONC, and HNC overlays adhere to the coastal zones in the WRHA. Unlike the D10 overlays, the D11 overlays have the same set of criteria for identification. Different levels of precaution are applied between the two overlays with Outstanding Character being more restrictive. The identification criteria for these overlays are focused on the interface between the ocean and land. In addition to similar protection of natural environment and landforms in D10 the criteria also specify reefs, wetlands, surf breaks, the experiential aspects of the sea. The ONC Overlay covers most of the West coast of the WRHA and the HNC Zone covers the area on the southern coast of the WRHA around Huia and Cornwallis as well as some areas around Te Henga and Bethells Valley.

More information on these AUP chapters can be found in **Section 1.6.3** of this report.

Chapter D10 contains the objectives and policies for the ONFs and ONLs. The relevant activity table for ONLs is contained within D11, so consent applications in the ONL Overlay trigger activities that are controlled through D11 standards. The D10 and D11 activity tables both provide additional standards to similar activities. The D10 ONF Overlay provides more particular conditions on fencing and land use which could affect the discrete landforms protected in the ONF Overlay.

The D11 activity table provides more general controls on construction and productive land use which could disrupt the naturalness of the setting.

One hundred and sixty-one resource consents are located in the D10 and/or D11 overlays. This number includes two consents which were incorrectly recorded as not being within the overlay but had associated activities. Of these 161 consents only 31 are for activities related to the overlays. Thirty of the consents are for the D11 activity table. Only one consent is for activities in both D10 and D11 overlays. All the consents are for activities related to the construction of new structures or additions and alterations made to existing structures.

The 31 activities related to the D10 and D11 overlays are:

- D10.4.2 (A1): 1 Consent - Buildings and structures – Overlaps with D11.4.1 (A12)
- D11.4.1 (A10): 1 consent - Single additions to existing dwellings
- D11.4.1 (A11): 4 consents - Buildings and structures, including any additions that do not meet Standard D11.6.2
- D11.4.1 (A12): 26 consents - Buildings and structures including dwellings not provided for as a permitted activity.

There are 32 new dwellings which required resource consent located within the overlays. Sixteen of these new dwellings triggered an activity in D11 or D12.

The non-specific standards of activities which trigger the need for a resource consent in D10 and D11 mean that multiple types of use activities can fall under one activity. For example, D11.4.1 (A12) contains consents for new dwellings, subdivision of lots with existing dwellings, and the construction of new accessory structures. Review of internal consent documents which triggered the D11 Activities showed that many new structures did not have an inappropriate effect on the landscape or heritage features, but rather required consent because the intended construction was not provided for elsewhere within D11's Activity categories.

The underlying zone standards also apply, dependent on the activity, but the discretion given to resource consent staff by the D10 and D11 overlays is broad on most consents which trigger relevant activities. Activities which trigger D11.4.1 (A12) are discretionary and non-complying, so consent staff can consider the effect of the activity on the significance of the landform or landscape in the context

of the criteria set out in **Section 1.5.2** of this report. The practical outcomes of this approach are explored further in **Measure 3**.

Landscape assessment of significant landscapes (Measure 3)

The 2023 Landscape Assessment by Kensington Planning and Landscape Consultants Limited reviewed changes in the WRHA since 2018. Outstanding and prominent landscapes were recorded as part of the photographic record. The assessment included many panoramic shots of the landscapes covered by the D10, D11 and D15 overlays. These overlays collectively cover most of the WRHA except for the lower eastern foothills, so for the purposes of this measure discussion is focused on observations of the landscape where the topography allowed observation of the landscape as continuous and cohesive, such as from a view or vantage point. This allows changes in the built environment to be understood in the context of the surrounding landscape elements. The integration of the built environment into the natural environment at minor scale will be discussed in **Indicator 5**.



Figure 18 Looking back at Karekare from Beach Access 2022. New development seen on the left (Kensington, 2023).

Generally, what was observed in landscapes of significance during the assessment aligns with the purpose of the RPS. Landforms and landscapes of significance saw far less overall development than within established settlements, and development was better integrated within the context of the landscape. D10 and D11 overlays cover areas outside of many settlements in the ranges, meaning that development is unlikely to concentrate and extend beyond established borders.

The changes most apparent in landscapes of significance arise from new structures, especially on the west coast. Rigor of design and management of effects are established through the consenting process. New dwellings at Anawhata and Karekare are placed in prominent locations but have recessive design elements from the use of dark colours and integration of the building's form into the landscape (see **Figure 18** above and **Figure 19** below). These structures are notable partly due to the scarcity of other development in these areas. The landscape assessment recorded a very minor negative change in Anawhata due to the new development's visibility from the road below the ridgeline.



Figure 19 Anawhata 2018 (Top) and 2022 (Bottom) showing new residential dwellings (Kensington, 2023)

Other notable examples of development in areas of significance are the new Karekare Surf Lifesaving Club (seen in **Figure 20** below) and Te Pae lifeguard tower in North Piha. The Te Pae lifesaving tower, subject to a case study below is indicative of the deliberation necessary when providing for a structure in landscapes of significance.



Figure 20 The new Karekare Surf Club 2022 (Kensington, 2023)

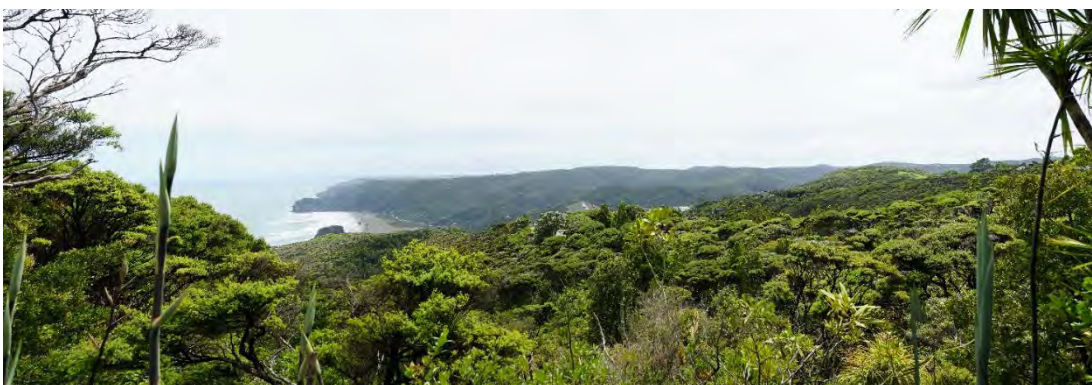


Figure 21 Looking out across the hills above Piha zoned H21 Waitākere Ranges 2018 (Top) and 2022 (Bottom). There is a lack of new development visible in the landscape (Kensington, 2023).

Where panoramic views of the RPO were possible, there was a lack of new development apparent such as in **Figure 21** above and **Figure 22** and **Figure 23** below. There is no proliferation of new development nor associated activities which resulted in notable visual effects. Vegetative growth has contributed to an overall positive effect on most ridgelines. Development pressure in the eastern foothills has not resulted in scale and intensity of built activity on ridgelines and the upper extent of the eastern foothills retains its role as a natural backdrop to urban Auckland.



Figure 22 Looking up towards North Titirangi from the edge of the WRHA 2018 (Top) and 2022 (Bottom). D15 RPO covers the upper foothills ridgelines which serve as part of the backdrop to urban Auckland (Kensington, 2023)



Figure 23 Looking towards the small settlement in Bethells Valley 2018 (Top) and 2022 (Bottom). The upper part of the settlement is covered by a RPO and the lower wetlands by ONL and HNC overlays. The impact of vegetation regrowth for screening existing dwellings is apparent (Kensington, 2023).

Anawhata Farm Regional Park is located alongside Anawhata Road and is a special management zone in the Regional Parks Management Plan 2022 (Auckland Council, 2022). The area is zoned Open Space – Conservation and is covered by the D10 ONL Overlay. Historically the land was a working farm and livestock still graze as part of the management plan to retain the recreational function and vistas provided by the open space. Farming is a permitted activity under the zone and overlay. Work to revegetate areas of the regional park which are unsuitable for grazing is ongoing through the Anawhata Farm revegetation plan. This includes riparian enhancement, stock shelter and erosion control. A panoramic view of the Anawhata Farm Regional Park can be seen in **Figure 24** below. Another working farm in council ownership in the WRHA, Pae o te Rangi, is located along Te Henga Road in Bethels. This farm is zoned Open Space – Conservation and is subject to ONL, SEA and RP overlays. Both parks offer camping facilities and Anawhata Farm has historic homestead accommodation options.

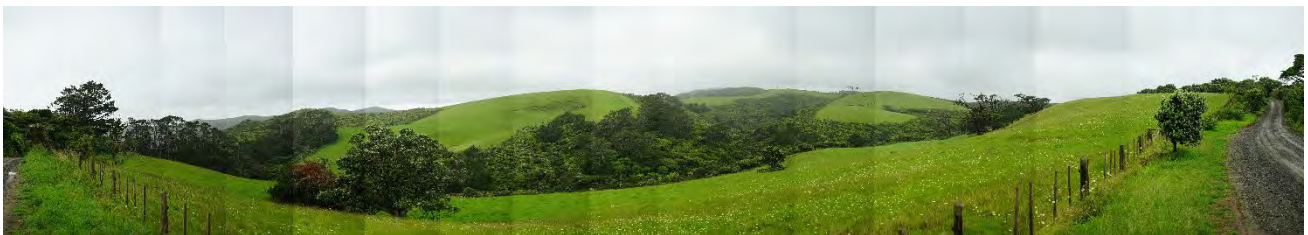


Figure 24 Pastureland in Anawhata Farm Regional Park seen from Anawhata Road (Kensington, 2023).

Te Pae Surf Tower case study

Te Pae, a new surf watchtower, has been completed in North Piha. The tower received resource and building consent as part of an overall upgrade to the United North Piha Lifeguard Service’s clubroom and facilities, which have yet to be built. The tower is in the same location and approximate height as the old surf lifesaving tower and can be seen in **Figure 25** below. Construction of the new nine-metre-tall structure was a discretionary activity as it is located in the dunes which are protected by the Outstanding Natural Landscapes Overlay.



Figure 25 Te Pae Surf Tower in North Piha (Kensington, 2023).

Expert evaluation of the impact of the surf tower on the landscape was undertaken by the council's landscape architect as part of the resource consent process. The tower responds to its context through several design cues. Oxidization of the concrete turns it a darker grey colour, closely reflecting that of the surrounding black sand. The seaside cliffs of Piha also share a similar palette, allowing the tower to be subservient between foreground and background. The height of the tower is such that it is visually obscured behind structures from the road and its height does not exceed the surrounding ridgelines when viewed from the beach. The curvature of the prefabricated concrete which makes up the structure is intended to be referential to the undulating dunes which will shift with time around the surf tower. The structure was a Finalist in the 2022 World Architecture Festival (Crosson Architects, 2023).

The brutalist architecture of the surf tower is intended to weather the severe environment of the West Coast beach and the prefabricated concrete pieces were able to be assembled onsite, minimising construction disturbance. As a purpose-built structure designed for long operating hours, insulation from sun, optimal views of the surf and infiltration of natural light were all part of the design of the structure (Crosson Architects, 2023).

4.4.5 Effectiveness and efficiency of the plan

Effectiveness

The AUP has been effective in protecting landforms and landscapes of significance in the WRHA. Development and use in D10, D11 and D15 overlays is low comparative to total consents, especially given the extent of the overlays in the ranges, and only a select few new developments were identifiable through visual assessment. Wide shots of landscapes of significance comparing 2018 with 2023 showed that overlays were effectively limiting or negating the visual effects of development which might otherwise expand settlements into more prominent topography, thus contributing to a reduction of cumulative effects on the landscape. In instances where the effect of development was apparent on the landscape, consideration was had to integrating built and natural form (such as the North Piha Surf Tower case study above). Several of the new notable dwellings were recently completed or still under construction so regrowth of vegetation is yet to be accounted for in observation.

Efficiency

There is broad discretion given to consent decision makers through the D10, D11, and D15 activity tables for those activities not otherwise provided for through activity categories. Applying non-complying and discretionary activity statuses to activities not provided for allows consideration of the multiple contextual features which contribute to the heritage value of a landform and landscape. The landscape assessment did not observe that the comparatively large number of consents for activities not provided for in the D10 and D11 Overlay activity tables were having an inappropriate impact on landscapes of significance. Furthermore, visual effects of development above ridgelines identified in the RPO has allowed development to advance, especially in areas more built up without disrupting the natural continuity of the ranges. This is also true of D10 and D11 limiting the visual impact of settlement expansion.

The AUP provides for a response to different landform and landscape types through the five overlays in D10, D11, and D15. They enable different scales and varying levels of significance to be recognised in the landscape and specify characteristics inherent to coastal and terrestrial zones. There are some

locations in the ranges where several of these overlays overlap. The landscape assessment observed that a high-quality integrated response is necessary to receive consent in these areas. The relationship between the activity tables in D10 and D11 creates a consistent reference of the assessment criteria the council assigns to consents which trigger D10 and D11 activities.

Overall, the plan is effective and efficient in maintaining the quality and diversity of landscapes and landforms of significance in the WRHA as set out in **Indicator 4**.

4.4.6 Recommendation

There are no recommendations relating to the AUP for **Indicator 4**.

4.5 Indicator 5 Subdivision, use and development in the heritage area is subservient to the natural and rural landscape and character.

4.5.1 RPS approach

RPS objectives and policies

B4.4.1. Objective (1) *The natural and historic resources, including the significant environmental values and heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges, are protected, restored, and enhanced for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the community.*

B4.4.1. Objective (3) *Development in settlements recognises and is sympathetic to the qualities, character and natural features of the Waitākere Ranges and the complex mixed landscapes of the foothills.*

B4.4.2 Policy (1) *Design and locate structures and impermeable surfaces and undertake activities in a way that does not impede or adversely affect the potential for the regeneration of native vegetation or reduce the extent and range of areas of native vegetation and linkages between them.*

B4.4.2 Policy (2) *Prevent activities from releasing pest species likely to harm native plants and animals and their habitats.*

B4.4.2 Policy (4) *Manage activities to minimise their adverse effects on water quality, soil, native vegetation and fauna habitats, mauri of the waterway, taiāpure and mahinga mātaītai.*

B4.4.2 Policy (5) *Require the type and density of settlements to avoid degrading the character of natural landscape features.*

Other relevant RPS chapters:

B9.4. Rural subdivision

The RPS encourages adaptability of the built environment to the natural context, and development which is responsive to the natural landscape and vegetation. Unique heritage features and characteristics of the existing built and natural environment identified in the Act and the RPS limits development and activity that overwhelms and is unsympathetic the natural environment. The objective to ‘protect, restore, and enhance’ the natural environment through new built environment policies and rules provides a challenge to plan making requirements and consent applicants. B4.4.2 Policy 1 provides that built environment should *Design and locate structures and impermeable surfaces and undertake activities in a way that does not impede or adversely affect the potential for the regeneration of native vegetation or reduce the extent and range of areas of native vegetation and linkages between them.*

4.5.2 Measures

1. Landscape assessment of subservience
2. Total amount of consents related to building coverage, height, yard dimensions, maximum impervious area, or design standards

What can the indicators and measures tell us?

The use of the term ‘subservience’ in the indicator encompasses the plan-making approach in the WRHA to allow development and activity only where it is not at the expense of the natural environment. The use of ‘subservience’ in the indicator is consistent with its use in the Act and places conditions on activity, which, like other indicators, enable development provided that heritage features are protected. The measures used here are limited in their scope. Subservience at large within the WRHA is dependent on the processes of several Unitary Plan zones, precincts and overlays working together, some of which are measured in other indicators. Of relevance to subservience are the type of industries operating in the ranges (**Indicator 1**), subdivision lot densities (**Indicator 3**), and amount of vegetation coverage (**Indicator 8**). As the standards placed on subdivision activity were explored in **Indicator 3**, **Indicator 5** will focus on the subservience outcomes of subdivision activity.

- The landscape assessment is essential to understanding subservience. Visual impact of the built environment on natural features can change over time through cumulative activities or through the regrowth of vegetation. The varied topography of the WRHA means that development can have a visual effect on public spaces from a distance.
- Several standards within the WRHA residential and rural zones control the prominence of the built environment in the context of property boundaries and intended density of the zone. Quantifying the number of consents which infringe minimum standards, and their location, seeks to identify where the subservience of the built environment is being placed under development pressure and, in conjunction with the landscape assessment, if subservience is being appropriately maintained through the AUP zone standards. This measure is better suited to understanding where subservience may be under pressure from density of development or use in the ranges, especially in those instances where structures are not readily visible from public places.

4.5.3 Data and limitations

The Resource Consent Table has been used to assess this indicator along with the 2023 Landscape Assessment which is used to make a visual assessment of subservience.

- Resource Consents Table is filtered by:
 - Consents within H1, H2, H20 and H21 zones
 - Activities triggering height related standards
 - Activities triggering yard standards
 - Activities triggering building coverage standards
 - Activities triggering impervious coverage standards
 - Activities triggering building design standards

Limitations:

- The WRHA has many large, heavily vegetated lots and long driveways which are not viewable from public spaces. The landscape assessment is limited in its measurement of subservience to what is viewable from a public space.
- Due to the number of consents for new dwellings and other structures it is not feasible to review individual consent documents to ascertain what conditions were placed on new construction to retain subservience through positioning or revegetation.

4.5.4 Findings

Landscape assessment of subservience (Measure 1)

Built environments which achieve subservience are commonly described as being nestled into their surroundings rather than appearing superimposed upon it or overwhelming the landscape. The subservience of the built environment transcends rural and urban identifications. Sparse settlement where sites have been cleared of vegetation, or building footprints that are located prominently on the landscape can be rural in density and character but lack subservience. An example, consented in 2012 prior to the AUP becoming operative, of a large lot format which lacks subservience can be seen below in **Figure 26**. Conversely, higher density and smaller lot settlement patterns can be screened through vegetation and positioning to limit disturbance to the natural environment. Structures associated with development, such as fences, or other land use activities, such as earthworks for a new driveway can also contribute to the level of subservience achieved. The *Building in the Bush Design Guide 2017* is a non-statutory document which provides guidance to developers and landowners looking to align their construction with the contextual requirements of the WRHA and specific sites (Auckland Council Plans and Places, 2017).



Figure 26 A development along Henderson Valley Road which stands out prominently in the landscape despite occupying a small amount of total lot space (Kensington, 2023).

Subservience of the built environment is not managed through discrete activity categories or overlays. The indicator's use of 'subdivision, use, and development' exemplifies that numerous activities can contribute to or exceed subservient outcomes. Revegetation conditions are commonly placed on approved consents which require the removal of vegetation or earthworks. Subdivision requirements in D12 Schedules include enhancement areas, as described in **Indicator 3**. New development can be subject to visual assessment of effects depending on its exceedance of standards or position within overlays. More discussion about the conditions placed on consents for protection and replanting of vegetation is in **Indicator 8**.

Subservience is largely a visual characteristic, and the experience of the natural environment in the WRHA is dependent on the continuity and dominance of natural elements when people travel through public places. The landscape assessment provides two dimensions of assessment useful to this indicator. Firstly, it provides for an assessment of subservience presently on the site. Secondly, it allows assessment of the progression of subservience achieved around new builds. When juvenile vegetation is planted following construction, these species often have to mature before providing appropriate screening effects. The removal of existing vegetation for development and subsequent replanting is often also used to remove weeds and establish indigenous planting. In this way, subservience, through the screening of vegetation, can also enhance the biodiversity outcomes for the WRHA. Some structures in the built environment, especially those requiring extensive earthworks, can take several years to become screened from view as vegetation regrows.

The landscape assessment states:

Potential effects of development on the three landscape types (foothills, bush living, and coastal) include a shift towards a landscape in which native vegetation is increasingly removed, physical features such as landforms are modified and human-made structures and urban style roads, driveways and houses with sometimes inappropriate locations, design and colour that dominates the natural elements, thereby undermining the dominance of natural elements. The cumulative effect of many small changes (on an individual property, for example) may contribute to an overall loss of landscape character and value over time (the ‘death by a thousand cuts’ analogy), noting that permitted activities might contribute to these changes, as would illegal activities that are not subject to enforcement (Kensington, 2023, pp. 7-8).

The change measured in landscape units by the landscape assessment provides a general overview of the impact of built form in the ranges since 2018 (**Figure 27**).

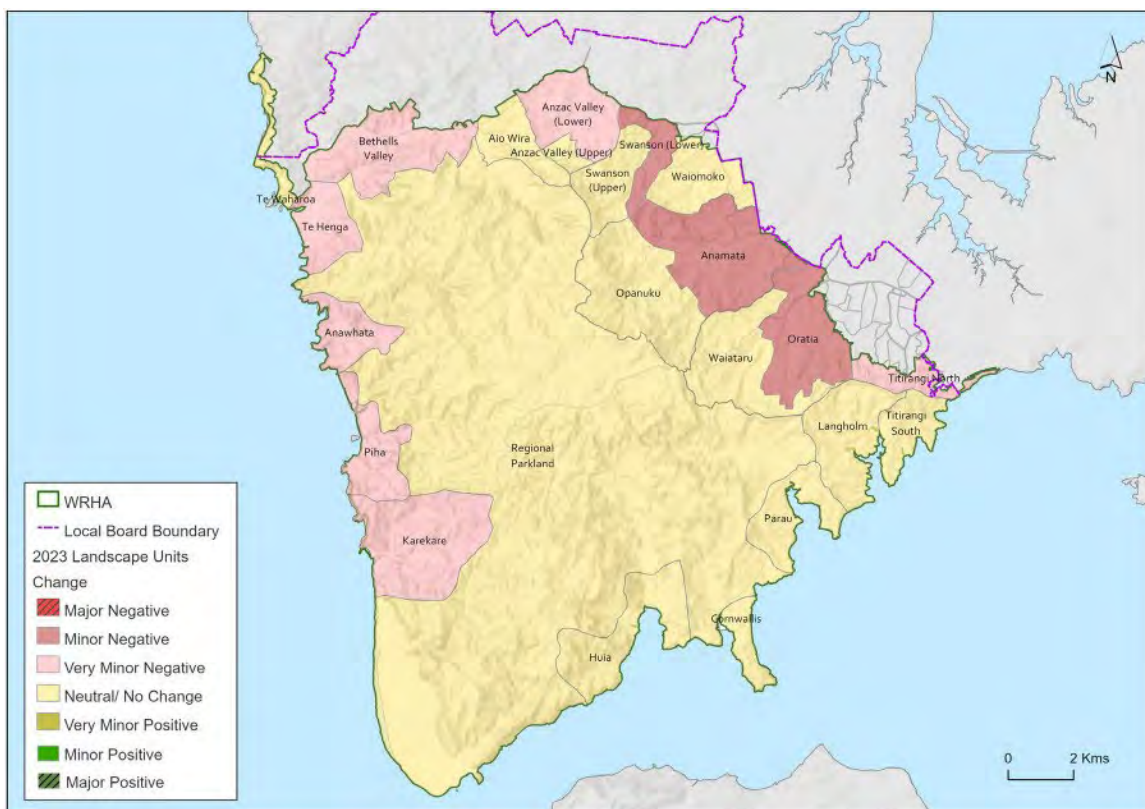


Figure 27 Changes to landscape character of units 2018-2023 (Kensington, 2023).

The assessment goes on to say:

*...overall, there have been only minor changes to the landscape character and heritage features of the WRHA, with this being consistent with the overall findings of the 2018 reporting. Only minor or very minor negative changes were found within individual landscape units and many examples of positive outcomes and changes were observed. Having said this, standout areas of change include the new subdivision in Swanson at the corner of Christian and Tram Valley Roads and subdivision / development within Oratia on Shaw Road (seen in **Figure 28** below). The edges of the foothills landscape units of Anamata and Oratia, where these meet the Rural Urban Boundary under the AUP(OP) are also starting to [exhibit] a change in landscape character, where previous rural land use and activity does not appear to be continuing and the land being managed as mown grass or being left unmanaged (Kensington, 2023, p. 26).*

... From the examples of new dwellings observed, it was those that minimised vegetation clearance, driveways and that utilised appropriate external materials (including darker colours) where successful integration into the localised landscape has been achieved (Kensington, 2023, p. 27).

Development which lacked subservience to the environment was most notable in the eastern foothills.



Figure 28 Developments at Shaw Road, Oratia in the H2O Rural - Waitākere Foothills Zone (Kensington, 2023).

Seen in **Figure 28** above, several new developments along a cleared part of Shaw Road, Oratia are located prominently in the landscape and are of suburban character.



Figure 29 (Top) and 2022 (Bottom) view of Holdens Road, Oratia. Clearance of productive land in the H20 Rural - Waitākere Foothills Zone (Kensington, 2023).

The lot seen in **Figure 29** above, formerly used for grapevines, shows the loss of productive use of land in the foothills.



Figure 30 Roadside fencing at 103 Bethells Road 2022 in the H21 Rural - Waitākere Ranges Zone (Kensington, 2023).

Prominent roadside fences, like those seen in **Figure 30** above, either installed alongside new structures or as additions can disrupt the continuity of the natural environment when travelling through the ranges.



Figure 31 New subdivision / development in the H2 Residential - Large Lot Zone. Shows the vegetation removal required for construction (Kensington, 2023).

This new development shown above in **Figure 31** shows the effect construction can have through vegetation loss (often done to provide driveways, building platforms and sunlight to the new dwelling) but also shows the effect of screening to the right of the photo.

As with **Indicator 4**, examples of development which lack subservience are readily apparent, primarily because much of the ranges remains subservient to the natural environment. Subsistence has largely been retained through vegetative screening and retention of mature growth around buildings and settlements. The rapid rate of vegetation growth means that several disruptive developments observed in the heritage area in 2018 have since been screened from view. Subsistence of the environment can also extend to the effect artificial lighting can have on the ranges and the night sky.

The landscape assessment reports:

The majority of the WRHA has very sparse settlement scattered along roadways and in small clusters such as at Waiatarua and Parau. Titirangi, Laingholm, Piha and parts of the eastern foothills have rather denser settlement patterns, but even here built elements are generally subservient to the bush and coastal landscapes and there are low levels of street lighting. Houses are generally nestled into the bush which minimises the extent to which lighting is visible at night. These factors, along with the size of the undeveloped parklands contribute to a relatively dark night sky and an impression of sparse settlement. Activities that might impact upon the quietness and darkness of the area include increasing levels of development, with an associated increase in houses, street lighting and business development with its associated illuminated advertising, increased traffic movements and noise associated with activities, vegetation modification/clearance altering existing levels of buffering of lights. The use of outdoor lighting to illuminate areas of storage, or for sports fields for example, also has potential to impact enjoyment of the natural darkness of the night sky. For example, the lighting of outdoor sports field at Henderson Valley includes shrouds on the lighting fixtures to minimise lightspill into the surrounding area (Kensington, 2023, p. 5).

Review of the photos from the landscape assessment illustrates the effect vegetation regrowth and replanting can have on the subservience of the built environment.



Figure 32 Looking south from the beach in Piha up the hillside in 2018 (Top) and 2022 (Bottom) (Kensington, 2023).

Observation of the landscape, such the hillside shots of Piha in **Figure 32**, shows that vegetation regrowth obscures development from view over time.



Figure 33 An example of a fence installation combined with vegetation which aids subservience in 2018 (Top) and 2022 (Bottom) (Kensington, 2023).

New fencing can be buffered with vegetation to lessen the direct visual effects when viewed from the roadway, as seen in **Figure 33** above.



Figure 34 Regrowth of vegetation aiding subservience on roadside development. 2018 (Top) and 2022 (Bottom) (Kensington, 2023).

Enhancement of vegetation on the immediate road boundary, as seen in **Figure 34** above, reduces the visual effect of cleared or productive land on the natural environment.



Figure 35 New developments in the Piha hills in 2018 (Top) and 2022 (Bottom) (Kensington, 2023).

The effect that a development has on the environment is often more pronounced during its construction phase than after completion. For example, **Figure 35** above shows a new development in the Piha hills which stands out prominently from the landscape during construction but is screened by vegetation growth and the use of subservience aiding materials. Overall, most new developments observed since the AUP became operative in 2016 have not resulted in large areas of permanent vegetation clearance or occupation of prominent landscape positions.

Total amount of consents for subservience related standards (Measure 2)

The four predominant residential zones in the WRHA contain standards for minimum yard dimensions, building coverage as a percentage of total lot size, building height and impervious area (H1 and H2 only). Adherence or exceedance of these standards is indicative of the prominence of buildings within their lots and their effect on the surrounding environment, including neighbouring properties. These standards can be triggered for different structures and activities, not just dwellings. H21 Rural – Waitākere Ranges Zone generally applies more restrictive standards than H20 Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone aligning to the patterns of settlement they’re intended to manage. H20 and H21 also contain additional standards providing for the materials, reflectivity, and other design elements of structures, but do not contain maximum impervious area standards. The amount of consents triggering subservience standards in different zones is shown in **Table 13** below.

Note that one application may be assessed against several standards.

Table 13 Number of activities for subservience related standards by zone.

Zones	Total consents located in the zone	Total consents which trigger zone related activities	Consents for building height standards	Consents for yard dimension standards	Consents for building coverage standards	Consents for max impervious area (residential only)	Consents for number of dwelling and property standards (rural only)
H1 – Residential - Large Lot	135	87	29% (25)	70% (61)	9% (8)	16% (14)	NA
H2 – Residential - Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone	83	30	3% (1)	27% (8)	30% (9)	6% (2)	NA
H20 – Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone	102	61	7% (4)	34% (21)	57% (35)	NA	25% (15)
H21 – Rural – Waitākere Ranges Zone	117	55	15% (8)	71% (39)	51% (28)	NA	16% (9)

Notes on the table: Percentages are a measurement of the total amount of consents which trigger a zone activity, relevant to this table or not. Percentages will not equal 100 per cent as the table does not

include other activities not related to subservience and many consents contain multiple activities assessed against different standards.

H20 and H21 have several standards which become more or less restrictive based on whether the proposed activity abides with underlying zone standards. For example, in H20, Building Coverage which does not meet Standard H20.6.4.(1) - *The maximum building coverage is one per cent of the net site area or 300m², whichever is greater and is less than or equal to 25 per cent of total site area* is a restricted discretionary activity. If the building coverage exceeds 25 per cent it becomes a non-complying activity. Additionally, in H21 the minimum yard setback requirements are different if a property is located within the Overlay Subdivision Plan 7a-7g. Properties outside of these plans require a resource consent if yard setbacks are under ten metres. Within these plans consent is required if the yard setbacks are under three metres. This standard recognises the smaller lot sizes enabled by more permissive subdivision standards within the subdivision plans. The distribution of activities among these different levels of restriction on activity are recorded below:

H20- Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone

Standard H20.6.4 Building Coverage – 35 consents

35 consents - H20.4.1(A4) *Building coverage that does not comply with Standard H20.6.4.(1) and which is less than or equal to 25 per cent of net site area*

1 consent (overlaps with the 35 consents listed above) - H20.4.1(A5) *Building coverage that exceeds 25 per cent of net site area*

H21- Rural – Waitākere Ranges Zone

H21.6.3 Yards – 39 Consents

19 consents - H21.4.1(A4) *A building that does not comply with Standard H21.6.3(1) that has front, side and rear yards of not less than 3m*

17 consents (some overlap with the 19 consents listed above) - H21.4.1(A5) *A building that does not comply with Standard H21.6.3(1) with front, side or rear yards of less than 3m*

- 7 of these 17 consents are located within D12 Overlay Subdivision Plan 7a-7g

7 consents only mention the standard non-specifically.

H21.6.4 Building Coverage - 28 consents

19 consents - H21.4.1(A6) *A building that does not comply with Standard H21.6.4(1) and (2) where the building coverage does not exceed 15 per cent.*

3 consents - H21.4.1(A7) *A building that does not comply with Standard H21.6.3(1) and (2) where the building coverage exceeds 15 per cent.*

6 consents only mention the standard non-specifically.

H1, H20, and H21 all contain a notable number of consents which exceed subservience related standards.

H1 Residential – Large Lot Zone

About two-thirds of consents which trigger activities and just under half of all resource consents in H1 are for exceedance of yard standards. H1 requires a greater minimum yard depth pursuant to its intention to provide spacious landscape character. Exceedance of yard standards at this rate may be a result of the historic lot dimensions in the Titirangi area, which are long and narrow. This is reinforced by a low proportion of consents (9 per cent) which trigger consent for building coverage standards, suggesting that structures in H1 are being constrained by lot dimensions, rather than dominating the lot through built form. A higher proportion (29 per cent) of consents in H1 were also for exceedance of height related standards, compared to other zones, indicating that development may be building up where building out is limited by lot dimensions. During conversation with resource consents staff, it was highlighted that the previous Waitākere District rules had yard standards reflective of the narrower sites in the Titirangi area, but that these were not carried over into the AUP.

H2 Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone

Comparatively, H2 has the lowest proportion of total consents which trigger a zone related activity. Thirty per cent of consents exceeded building coverage standards and 27 per cent of consents exceeded yard dimension standards.

H20 Rural - Waitākere Foothills Zone

Fifty-eight per cent of consents for activities in H21 triggered building coverage standards. However, of the two restriction levels all but one was for the less restrictive activity category, meaning that the buildings were below or equal to 25 per cent of total site area. Thirty-four per cent of the consents triggering a yard standard aligns with findings in Indicators 2 and 3, that being the area of development and subdivision activity having the highest concentration (in the eastern foothills close the RUB). Furthermore, 25 per cent of new structures do not comply with standards for material, reflectivity, and design in the zone.

H21 Rural – Waitākere Ranges Zone

Over half of consents in H21 exceed yard dimension and/or building coverage standards. Of the two levels for each activity nearly half of yard dimensions were for the more restrictive activity, meaning that they had yards of less than three metres. Of these consents with yard dimensions under three metres, ten were outside of Subdivision Overlay plans and seven were within them. During conversations with resource consent staff, it was suggested that standard exceedances were likely to be more common as available capacity in the Foothills and Ranges zones are realised and development of remaining lots with limitations becomes more profitable to pursue.

4.5.5 Effectiveness and efficiency of the plan

Effectiveness

The AUP is largely effective at providing built environments which are responsive and integrate with the environment, especially beyond the lower extent of the eastern foothills. New development observed in 2018 was commonly obscured by vegetation by the time of the 2023 assessment. The new development observed in 2023 was mostly positioned with the intention to nestle into the surrounding landscape. New planting was common on the roadside and property boundary of new developments. Observing landscapes at large, both in this Indicator and **Indicator 4** showed that natural vegetation growth in the ranges far exceeds the rate at which it is removed for new construction.

In the H2 Residential – Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone a comparatively low proportion of consents were required for subservience related standards. This corroborates the landscape assessment, which found only very minor negative impacts to subservience, in part related to poorly integrated infrastructure outcomes in coastal settlements. These infrastructure outcomes are explored further in **Indicator 7**. The landscape assessment does note the coastal areas of the WRHA have the greatest vulnerability to future change, citing their varied landscape, distinct community characters and popularity as destinations.

Loss of subservience was not observed in the H21 Rural – Waitākere Ranges Zone in the landscape assessment. The high proportion of consents triggered by building coverage (51 per cent) and yard dimension (71 per cent) exceedance in H21 were mostly for the less restrictive of two activity categories or were within Subdivision Overlay plans designed to be more enabling of development.

Issues with subservience are, however, apparent in the lower extent of the eastern foothills. In H20, an increase in development pressures is resulting in more development that is at odds with the zone's intention in its objectives to model use and development similar to the Rural – Countryside Living Zone. The landscape assessment recorded minor negative impacts to subservience in the Oratia, Anamata and Swanson (lower) landscape units. While rural production industries still function in the zone, several pastoral lots previously used for production are now disused or support dwellings which have few subservient qualities. The comparatively lower extent of existing vegetation coverage in the H20 Zone and greater capacity for growth means that development outcomes which lack subservience are more visible. The concentration of subdivision and building consents in the H20 Zone, particularly in Oratia, means that pressure for higher density development is going to continue. In the context of the RPS objectives there is a trend of development advancing in the eastern foothills which is not sympathetic to the qualities, character, and natural features of the ranges. Furthermore, it is unclear what role these new developments have in protecting, restoring, or enhancing heritage features. As per the AUP:

D12.2 Objective (10) (Waitākere Foothills)

The Waitākere Foothills retain a rural character with low-density settlement and few urban-scale activities.

D12.2 Objective (12) (Oratia Foothills)

Subdivision and development retain and enhances local rural character and amenity values.

D12.2 Objective (13) (Oratia Foothills)

Subdivision and development are designed to maintain and enhance rural character and natural landscape qualities, including watercourses and significant native vegetation and fauna habitats.

Use of the word urban in Objective 10 creates ambiguity as 'urban activities' is not given clear parameters. Urban as a descriptive term can apply to a range of environments from central business districts, suburban residential areas, industrial areas, and town, local and neighbourhood centres.

Efficiency

A high proportion (70 per cent) of consents in the H1 Residential - Large Lot Zone are for exceedance of yard dimension standards. This percentage should indicate a loss of subservience which is not supported by the findings of the landscape assessment, in which only the Titirangi North landscape unit recorded a very minor negative impact on subservience. The observation of resource consent staff

is that the yard dimension standards required for a permitted activity status by H1 (6m side yards) do not align with the historically long and narrow lot dimensions in the Titirangi/Laingholm area. This observation is supported by the consenting data above, which did not find a similar rate of exceedance in any of the other subservience related standards in the zone.

The discrepancy between the zone standards and the outcomes observed is indicative that the plan is not achieving efficient outcomes in regard to the objectives and policies of the RPS.

As per the AUP:

D12.2 Objective (19) (Titirangi-Laingholm N, S, W)

The unique settlement pattern and landscape qualities of the residential areas of Titirangi – Laingholm are maintained and enhanced.

Overall, the AUP is shown to be mostly effective and efficient in regards to **Indicator 5**, but standards in the H1 Residential – Large Lot Zone are not efficiently enabling appropriate development. Additionally, development pressures arising from inappropriate development typologies for the Waitākere Ranges are allowing intensification of growth outside of the RUB.

4.5.6 Recommendations

- Consider the application of updated spatial planning, including area plans, and growth strategies to all catchments in the Waitākere eastern foothills.¹²
- Review whether the current standards in the H20 Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone are effective in maintaining the transitional function of the zone.¹³
- Review the efficiency of the H1 Residential - Large Lot Zone in providing for sparse development which has few effects and protects, restores, and enhances heritage features.¹⁴
- Review the incentives provided by standards and assessment criteria within the Unitary Plan that provide for enhancement of natural heritage features through use and development in areas which have had its vegetation previously cleared.¹⁵

¹² These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

¹³ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

¹⁴ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

¹⁵ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

4.6 Indicator 6 The water supply catchments and their related supply functions are protected.

4.6.1 RPS approach

RPS Objectives and Policies

B4.4.1. Objective (8) *The water supply catchments and their related supply functions are protected.*

B4.4.2. Policy (4) *Manage activities to minimise their adverse effects on water quality, soil, native vegetation and fauna habitats, mauri of the waterway, taiāpure and mahinga mātaītai.*

Other relevant RPS chapters:

B7.3 Freshwater Systems

The RPS recognises the vital function the water catchments, dams, and associated supply infrastructure in the WRHA plays in supplying Auckland's water.

4.6.2 Measures

There is only one measure for this indicator:

1. The water supply catchments and their related supply functions are protected.

What can the indicator and measure tell us?

The measure mirrors the indicator and seeks to understand if the necessary regulatory protections which sustain the ranges' role in Auckland's freshwater supply provide for continued service.

4.6.3 Data and limitations

Data from the 2017-2022 SoE contributes to this indicator. AUP maps and relevant overlay chapters are also used along with the Resource Consent Table.

- The Resource Consent Table is filtered by:
 - Watercare consents

Limitations: None relevant.

4.6.4 Findings

The water supply catchments and their related supply functions are protected (Measure 1)

Zoning overlays D1, D2, D4, D5 and D7 protect various aspects of the water supply function in the WRHA, including, aquifer sources, streams, lakes and supply infrastructure. D7 Water Supply

Management Overlay provides for works, maintenance for the supply of water, and protects the catchments essential to supply from ecological degradation.

Watercare has a licence over approximately 6,619ha that provides for the water catchment, and leases specific areas related to five water supply reservoirs and dams. There are eleven designations held by Watercare for the provision of water and wastewater services. These designations have been established over time as the water supply system has developed to meet the needs of a growing city.

The natural water flows of streams are stopped by dam structures that capture and hold the water for water supply purposes. If not managed, the resulting lack of water would have catastrophic effects on downstream ecology, particularly migratory fish, eels, and other stream life. To ensure that the ecology of streams within the water supply catchments is maintained, a number of managed interventions are undertaken, as discussed below.

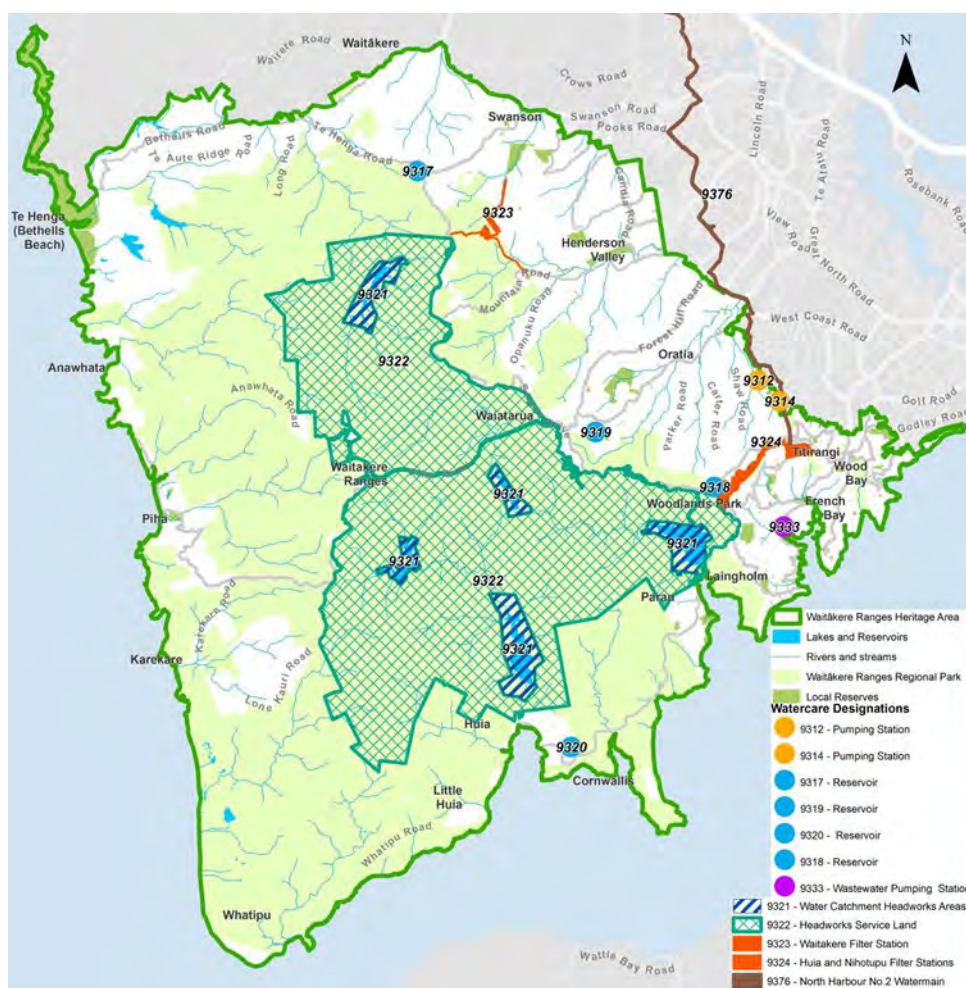


Figure 36 Planning protections for water supply purposes.

The catchments and reservoirs were incorporated into the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park under Regional Catchment Parkland (Local Government Act) on 1 July 1992 with their ongoing catchment and supply function protected by designations. Approximately 6,800 hectares of the regional park are designated for water catchment purposes (Auckland Council, 2023, p. 141). These designations are shown in Figure 36 above and the Waitākere Dam and Waitākere Reservoir can be seen in Figure 37 below.

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Figure 37 Looking out across the Waitākere Dam and Waitākere Reservoir (Kensington, 2023).

Reservoir water quality

The management of water quality for water supply purposes is subject to Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand.

A number of factors are measured to confirm the quality of the water stored in the Waitākere Ranges Reservoirs, these include pH, metals, total organic carbon, temperature, dissolved oxygen, taste and odour compounds, E. coli, protozoa tests for other microorganisms. Watercare also measures nutrient concentrations in the reservoirs for the purpose of determining their trophic statuses (Auckland Council, 2023, p. 104).

The analysis data shows that pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and microbial pathogen indicators have remained relatively stable over the past five years. This indicates that the catchment protection measures (such as the 50-metre buffer zone and prohibitions on water contact) that are in place are effective in minimising the likelihood of water source contamination.

The five reservoirs are oligotrophic verging on mesotrophic (low to moderate nutrient levels). Run-off from native forestry is the principal source of nutrients to the reservoirs, and this is reflected in lower trophic status in drier years, such as in 2020, when all but Lower Nihotupu was oligotrophic (Lower Nihotupu was oligo-mesotrophic). The trend over the last five years is consistent with baseline results.

Cyanobacterial/algae growth has been observed in all of the Waitākere Ranges reservoirs. These naturally occurring microorganisms can generate compounds that can cause the water to smell (earthy, musty, or like a fish tank) and in extreme cases (depending on the species and the conditions), can produce cyanotoxins which can be harmful to human health.

Catchment management

The protection of the water catchments and reservoirs during the early 1900s was a fundamental driver in allowing the regeneration of land to native forest that was later incorporated as part of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park (originally named Auckland Centennial Memorial Park established in 1940).

The water catchments within the regional park contain a number of bush walking tracks and the reservoirs are the destination of some walks. To protect the water in the reservoirs from contamination, people and dogs are prohibited within a 50-metre buffer zone around the dams and contact with water within a reservoir is prohibited. Discretionary activities in the regional park that are within water catchment land are required to obtain Watercare's approval.

Ecological trends from resource consent monitoring

No significant trends are evident in results collected since the 2018 report baseline. Short-term events, such as the 2019/2020 drought, appeared to affect ecological results at some sites downstream of the Waitākere reservoir. A NIWA review of reservoir water quality indicated that there was no clear evidence that extreme weather events in 2018 or the 2019/2020 drought had significantly affected long-term water quality (Auckland Council, 2023, p. 138).

Huia Water Treatment Plant

There was a single resource consent applied for by Watercare during the monitoring period. It was for a new water treatment station in Tititangi. The current facility, Huia Water Treatment Plant (Huia WTP), is now over 90 years old and nearing the end of its operational life. To ensure future growth and development, Watercare proposed to construct a new WTP and two treated water reservoirs to enhance treated water storage in the western supply zone. The site for the new WTP is close to the old WTP and designated for water supply purposes. It was selected after a comprehensive site alternatives assessment, considering technical and environmental constraints. The construction, to be completed in 2029, will involve earthworks and vegetation removal, as well as stream works, groundwater and stormwater diversion and discharge, and disturbance of potentially contaminated land. The consent was for a non-complying activity and required regional resource consents and land use consent.

The consent was publicly notified, and 500 submissions were received, 472 in opposition. In June 2021, a panel of independent commissioners granted consent for the construction of the new water treatment plant. The panel cited public good from resilient infrastructure as a key reason for granting consent, with positive outcomes for the region as a whole. The decision document also addressed kauri dieback disease spread, stating that the Kauri Dieback Management Plan proposed by Watercare will enable comprehensive and robust management to control the disease's spread. The consent includes 171 conditions relating to site clearance, construction, kauri dieback management, and operational activities.

The decision report stated that the replacement WTP will provide reliable, long-term, high-quality water supply for the north-west of Auckland, with significant social, cultural, and economic benefits. However, it will also cause adverse environmental effects, such as the removal of 3.5 ha of native vegetation within a SEA. Watercare proposes mitigation and compensation measures, including the retention and enhancement of 11 ha of native vegetation, a comprehensive ecological mitigation and compensation package (Waima Biodiversity Management Plan) within the Little Muddy Creek catchment, and a \$5,000,000 contribution to a charitable trust for implementation of ecological mitigation.

Local conservation groups have contested the decision to grant consent for the new WTP, citing major concerns on the effect the WTP will have on the indigenous kauri forest through removal and the spread of

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kauri dieback. In 2021 the consent was appealed to the environment court by local and environmental advocacy groups (Clent, 2021).

The existing Huia Water Treatment Plant can be seen in **Figure 38** below.



Figure 38 Existing Huia Water Treatment Plant in Titirangi (Watercare, 2021).

4.6.5 Effectiveness and efficiency of the plan

Effectiveness

The overlays and designations which protect water supply functionality have been updated and adopted into the AUP provisions from legacy plans. The ecological health in the catchments which supply water to reservoirs is subject to conservation and monitoring which ensures the vitality of upstream sources of Auckland's water supply are protected.

Efficiency

Designations in the WRHA largely enable Watercare to perform maintenance, upgrades, and service without needing to apply for a resource consent. Expansion of Watercare's infrastructure capacity through the new water treatment plant in Titirangi was in accordance with the existing designation of the site and required resource consent approval under the AUP. The new Titirangi water treatment plant highlights the tension between essential infrastructure provision and the protection of heritage features but shows that expansion of the water supply function of the ranges is made possible within existing designations.

Overall, the AUP is shown to be effective and efficient in regard to **Indicator 6**. The AUP has updated and adopted provisions from legacy plans which protect the water supply function of the WRHA, and these designations have provided for expansion of capacity.

4.6.6 Recommendations

There are no recommendations relating to the AUP for **Indicator 6**.

4.7 Indicator 7 Infrastructure and related activities are enabled, provided that the heritage features of the area are protected.

4.7.1 RPS approach

RPS objectives and policies

B4.4.1. Objective (1) *The natural and historic resources, including the significant environmental values and heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges, are protected, restored and enhanced for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the community.*

B4.4.1. Objective (6) *The quality and diversity of landscapes are maintained by all of the following: (a) protecting landscapes of local, regional, or national significance; (b) restoring and enhancing degraded landscapes; and (c) managing change within a landscape in an integrated way, including retaining rural character.*

B4.4.2. Policy (3) *Where clearing vegetation for infrastructure is necessary, it should be undertaken only where the vegetation is of lower value and there is no practicable alternative option.*

B4.4.2. Policy (4) *Manage activities to minimise their adverse effects on water quality, soil, native vegetation and fauna habitats, mauri of the waterway, taiāpure and mahinga mātaītai.*

B4.4.2. Policy (6) *Avoid non-residential activities:*

(a) that are unrelated to the productive use of rural land;

(b) that require substantial earthworks or vegetation removal; or

(c) that are industrial and unrelated to rural activities.

Other relevant RPS chapters:

B3.2 Infrastructure

B3.3 Transport

B10.2 Natural Hazards and Climate Change

Essential to the RPS's function to enable living, working, and recreation in the WRHA is the provision of infrastructure and transport. Infrastructure is only explicitly mentioned in the RPS in B4.4.2 Policy 3 where it states that, *Where clearing vegetation for infrastructure is necessary, it should be undertaken only where the vegetation is of lower value and there is no practicable alternative option.* Infrastructure and transport projects often require extensive earthworks and are not as easily integrated into natural landscapes.

4.7.2 Measures

The measures adopted are:

1. Provisions applied for through infrastructure consents and related activities.
2. Landscape assessment of infrastructure impact on heritage features.

What can the indicators and measures tell us?

Requirements for infrastructure in the WRHA are dependent on other factors which contribute to use. These include the increased capacity for dwellings through subdivision or the resulting use of transport and underground services. The indicator, and the D12 Objective it mirrors, acknowledges the necessary requirement of enabling infrastructure alongside development while accounting for the effect created upon heritage features.

4.7.3 Data and limitations

The Resource Consent Table is used in this indicator with the landscape assessment for additional comment:

- Resource Consent Table It is filtered by:
 - Consents in Chapter E26
 - Internal plans and decision reports for consents in Chapter E26
 - Consents in Chapter E27.

Limitations

This report is aware of and sensitive to the storm events of January and February 2023 and their disastrous effects on accessibility and safety of communities in the ranges. These storm events caused extensive damage to properties and livelihoods in the ranges' communities and particularly affected access to coastal communities. However, reporting directly on these events is outside the timeframe of this report. Still, it is apparent from the amount of infrastructure consents which deal with reparative landslips that greater preventative identification of instability is needed.

4.7.4 Findings

Provisions sought through infrastructure consents and related activities (Measure 1)

Provision for infrastructure in the WRHA is located in AUP Chapter E26. Additional provisions arise from the D12 Waitākere Heritage Area Overlay and the Act. The varied and mountainous topography in the WRHA is a challenging environment to provide infrastructure and manoeuvre the heavy machinery required for its construction. Comparatively low population and growth in the ranges means that few infrastructure projects are undertaken and usually only as necessary.

There are 35 total consents for Chapter E26: Infrastructure over the resource consent monitoring period (2016-2021). Consents for infrastructure works are predominantly for retaining walls and slip repairs. A small number are for upgrades of service utilities like power poles and stormwater drainage. In a handful of instances upgrades of these utilities requires minor earthworks or vegetation removal, for which resource consent is sought.

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The Waitākere Ranges has varied and complex mountainous terrain which is subject to landslips. Land disturbance, including vegetation removal and earthworks, and extreme weather events can contribute to increased erosion and instability in the landscape. These events often affect roads and can damage houses on or close to the hillsides. Land disturbance, such as vegetation removal and earthworks, can contribute to increased erosion and instability in the landscape. Geotechnical assessment and remediation works are required for new projects, but existing instability can cause landslips to occur unexpectedly. Due to the complex geotechnical and infrastructure work involved in remediation, landslips require extensive work to repair. Often the instability caused by a landslip can affect surrounding structures and infrastructure, complicating the repair process.

Resource consents show that slip repairs and preventative infrastructure work (mainly retaining walls) are common works applied for and undertaken by Auckland Transport in the heritage area. Preventative works are planned when instability is recorded. For example, cracks in multiple locations on Piha Road in 2017 prompted assessments of soil instability and new retaining walls to be installed. New retaining walls in the ranges often require consent for vegetation removal and earthworks exceeding the zone standards. Future erosion is also considered when repairing landslips. If existing or altered overland flow paths are not properly mitigated, they can compromise the integrity of retaining walls and infrastructure. Therefore, many retaining walls have drainage behind them which collects groundwater into the stormwater system. In addition to planning standards, slip repair must contend with the effects on public and private assets and surrounding topography. For example, in 2019, a new two-part 36.2m long retaining wall was consented for construction on Tanekaha Road in response to a burst pipe causing instability in the roadway. Works on this retaining wall had to contend with steep slopes on either side the road, power infrastructure, private driveways, and sharp curves in the road layout in the construction zone.

When existing retaining walls become dated or show signs of failure they are also replaced. In 2018, a 40m rock wall along South Titirangi Road was consented for replacement with a retaining wall. Installation of this new retaining wall required the removal of the current wall and its base at the roadside, stabilisation of soils, and recreation of the structure of the existing wall with additional structural support. To reduce the chance of further instability, work periods were restricted to dry summer periods. In another instance two retaining walls downslope of Huia Road had been shifted from their initial location by destabilised soil. Replacement of the 20m and 26m long walls required engineers to support the existing footpath and roadway which relied on the walls while construction was ongoing.

Landslips above and below roads can cause lanes to be blocked and, at times, pieces of the road to fall downslope. These slips require emergency works to stabilise soil, assess the extent of damage, and redirect traffic. In 2017, a landslip on Scenic Drive 400m from Titirangi Township caused one lane of the road to be blocked. Emergency works retroactively received consent. Mesh coverings and soil nails were used to remediate the slope and drains were also bored to lower groundwater levels around the slip. When removing debris and repairing slips, care is taken to ensure that the large quantities of sediment involved are not conveyed to waterways. Close by, on Laingholm Drive a slip below a private residence threatened the road below. Remediation of the slip was completed through installation of inground rock anchors, new drains, and mesh webbing to stabilise new planting.

There were 45 consents granted for Chapter E27: Transport over the monitoring period. Consents are predominantly for private applicants and associated with new garages or parking spaces. There are a limited number of consents for upgrading the capacity of, or building new, carparks. These consents are mostly located in popular destinations within the ranges or in Titirangi centre. Consents for residential applicants must abide by the same standards which protect heritage features required by other development in the ranges. Applications for new parking lots were limited (<5) and were located in

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established settlements such as Titirangi and for the North Piha Surf Club’s new facility. The Bethells Beach carpark was also upgraded. Works were limited to the existing footprint, retained the permeable gravel surface, and did not remove vegetation.

Landscape assessment of infrastructure impact on heritage features (Measure 2)

In regard to infrastructure, the landscape assessment reports:

As with the 2018 reporting, it continues to be disappointing that some of the negative changes identified are the result of infrastructure development, noting that new infrastructural elements (poles or concrete surfaces) tend to stand out initially and then naturally weather over time – with some of the examples of poor outcomes highlighted in the 2017 monitoring review now being less visually prominent. The new cell phone tower within the Bethells coastal landscape (Figure 39 below) has not successfully integrated into the landscape; and new roading infrastructure in Parau (Figure 40 below) is not consistent with the area’s existing character. (Kensington, 2023, p. 27)



Figure 39 A new cell tower near Bethells Road near Bethells Beach (Kensington, 2023).



Figure 40 New roading layout at the intersection of Huia Road and Rahuia Crescent (Kensington, 2023).

The challenge of integrating infrastructure into the landscape while maintaining its safety and operational function exemplifies the role of the WRHA as both wilderness area and public place.

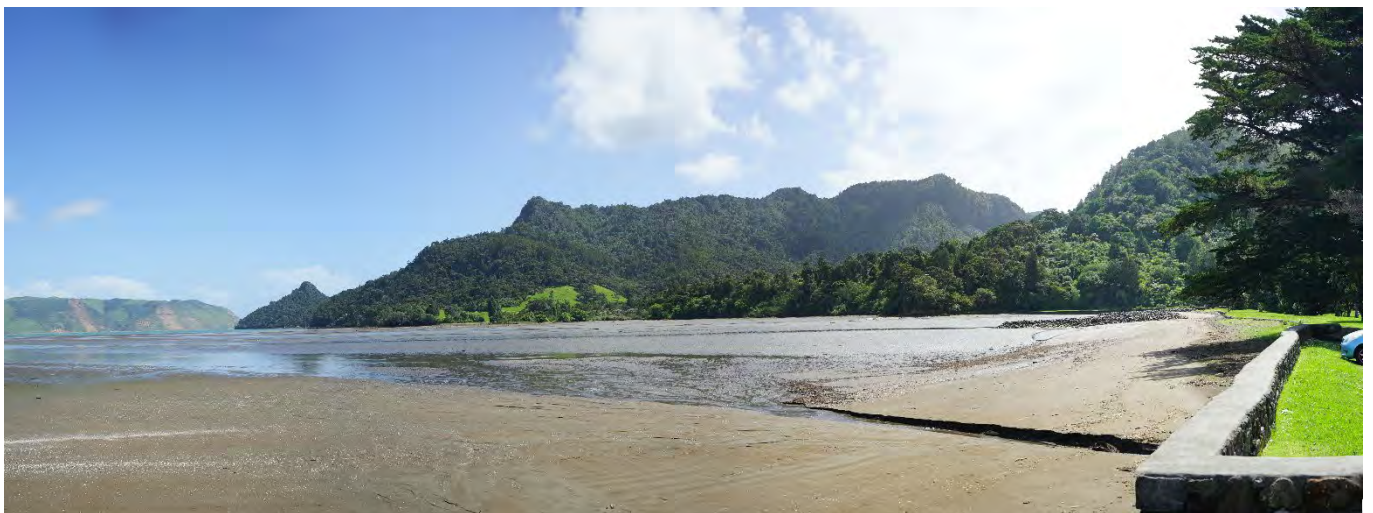


Figure 41 Two new flood protection walls (seen far right) were installed in Huia Bay along with new drainage infrastructure (Kensington, 2023).

While integration of infrastructure into natural landscape is difficult, the instance in **Figure 41** above illustrates that heritage character may be retained through infrastructure works. The two new flood walls and drainage system in Huia Bay are less intrusive due to the use of natural materials.

4.7.5 Effectiveness and efficiency of the plan

Effectiveness

Review of resource consent documents found that heritage features were considered through infrastructure provision. This was especially true for natural features. Infrastructure provision which required the removal of vegetation implemented replanting programmes which replaced weeds with indigenous vegetation and increased the area of planting. The effect of transporting and clearing soil on surrounding waterways and wildlife was considered in slip remediation works. Furthermore, preventative action on slips restored and enhanced social heritage features and vital connections of communities in the ranges.

The landscape assessment identified that, in several instances, infrastructure provision was not successfully integrated into the landscape and degraded heritage features. While limited, these examples show that greater care could be put into understanding infrastructure design which integrates with landscape features, rather than the application of urban typologies.

Efficiency

The ranges face several infrastructure challenges. Telecommunications, flooding, and unstable land are products of the diverse topography and remoteness of the wilderness. Maintenance and provision of infrastructure, which enables vital connections to be made with the ranges' residents and most communities, are important factors in safety and disaster preparedness. The diverse topography and limited access routes in the ranges also makes preventative and reparative work difficult and time consuming. The time, disruption, and safety issues caused to the ranges access routes by landslips has been a common complaint for residents of the ranges over the years. Understanding the complications of remediation work does not invalidate these complaints.

Indicator 7 Infrastructure and related activities are enabled effectively and efficiently, provided that the heritage features of the area are protected.

4.7.6 Recommendations

- Review and develop improved methods of identification of instability in the landscape.¹⁶
- Provide for infrastructure integration standards in E26 specific to the WRHA.¹⁷

¹⁶ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

¹⁷ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

4.8 Indicator 8 Natural vegetation cover is enhanced, and indigenous vegetation is protected.

4.8.1 RPS Approach

RPS objectives and policies

B4.4.1. Objective (1) *The natural and historic resources, including the significant environmental values and heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges, are protected, restored and enhanced for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the community.*

B4.4.1. Objective (9) *The natural and historic resources of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park are protected in perpetuity for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the people and communities of Auckland and New Zealand.*

B4.4.2 Policy (1) *Design and locate structures and impermeable surfaces and undertake activities in a way that does not impede or adversely affect the potential for the regeneration of native vegetation or reduce the extent and range of areas of native vegetation and linkages between them.*

B4.4.2 Policy (7) *Adopt a cautious approach when considering proposals that threaten serious or irreversible damage to a heritage feature.*

Other relevant RPS chapters:

B4.5 Notable Trees

B7.2 Indigenous Biodiversity

The RPS addresses the importance of protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural features. It further specifies the intrinsic values of natural heritage be protected in perpetuity, highlighting that activities should be managed to minimise the effect on native biodiversity. Vegetation, alongside freshwater supply from above and belowground sources, is one of the most prominent natural resources in the ranges and is indicative of ecosystem health through providing habitat for terrestrial and freshwater species. The experience of naturalness in the ranges is largely due to its heavily vegetated landscape. This indigenous bush cover contributes to the identity of communities, recreation enjoyment, scientific study, and conservation management in the ranges.

4.8.2 Measures

1. Total number of consents for vegetation removal and their locations.
2. Consenting activity within the SEA Overlay.
3. Consenting activity related to notable trees.

What can the indicators and measures tell us?

Measures have been adopted for the following reasons:

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- The densely vegetated landscape of the WRHA is one of its defining heritage features. The construction of built features in the WRHA commonly requires the removal of vegetation. Standards for vegetation removal vary depending on the applicable zones and overlays. By measuring the number of consents for vegetation removal and their locations we can understand where and to what extent vegetation removal for development is occurring.
- Around 85 per cent of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area is covered by indigenous vegetation. The SEA protects areas of this indigenous vegetation which have significant indigenous biodiversity, flora and fauna. The overlay covers large parts of the WRHA, including all the regional park, much of the west coast, upper eastern foothills, and area around Titirangi. Measuring the extent of consents and type of activities located in the SEA seeks to understand if the overlay's protection of biodiversity aligns with the protective direction of the RPS.
- The RPS recognises in Policy 7 the threat of 'irreversible' damage to a heritage feature. This term acknowledges that there are natural and historic resources which would be irreplaceable if damaged. Mature trees identified in the Notable Trees Overlay have significant ecological and historic value deserving special protection. This measure seeks to understand if notable trees are being protected from damage through the resource consent process.

4.8.3 Data and limitations

This indicator uses the Resource Consent Table in its analysis and the landscape assessment for additional comment:

- Resource Consent Table is filtered by:
 - Vegetation consents in the following chapters and their zoning, SEA Overlay status, and relevant activities.
 - D13. Notable Trees Overlay
 - E15. Vegetation management and biodiversity
 - E16. Trees in Open Space zones
 - E17. Trees in roadsand the following activities
 - E26 Infrastructure
 - E26.3 Network utilities and electricity generation – Vegetation management
 - E26.4 Network utilities and electricity generation – Trees in roads and Open Space zones and the Notable Trees Overlay

Limitations

- Last LIDAR update was 2016/2017 which limits the ability to develop comprehensive quantifications of coverage gained or lost since the AUP became operative.
- 66 consents in E15 for vegetation removal are for activities not provided for.

4.8.4 Findings

Total number of consents related to vegetation removal (Measure 1)

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One hundred and fifty-nine resource consents related to vegetation removal activity during the monitoring period. This includes all works in AUP chapters:

- D13. Notable Trees Overlay
- E15. Vegetation management and biodiversity
- E16. Trees in Open Space zones
- E17. Trees in roads

and the following activities

- E26 Infrastructure
 - E26.3 Network utilities and electricity generation – Vegetation management
 - E26.4 Network utilities and electricity generation – Trees in roads and Open Space zones and the Notable Trees Overlay.

The activities within these chapters cover activities for the removal of contiguous vegetation, individual trees, and the trimming of vegetation. A few of the activities are for works within the dripline or rootzone of mature trees (not for the removal of vegetation) to protect mature vegetation from adverse effects. H20 and H21 both specify native vegetation retention, recognition, and protection in their policies. Amount of removal, protection, and restoration plans are accounted for in assessment criteria when consents are, or are more restrictive than, a restricted discretionary activity. H1 Residential - Large Lot Zone and H2 Residential Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone rely on relevant vegetation removal chapters and overlays for assessment.

The 2018 SoE measured that 85 per cent, or 22,000 hectares, of the heritage area is covered by indigenous vegetation (including forest, scrub/shrubland, wetland classes). The remaining land cover is associated with rural production (12 per cent) and urbanised areas (three per cent). These land cover classes have been relatively stable since measurements in 2018 (Auckland Council, 2023). The transition from pastoral land in the eastern foothills to extensive vegetation coverage surrounding the regional park can be seen in **Figure 42** below.

Of the 159 consents for vegetation removal 35 per cent (56), the largest concentration, are located in the Residential – Large Lot Zone and Business Local Centre Zone covering the area around Titirangi, Laingholm, and Green Bay. Twenty-six per cent (42) of consents are located in the Rural - Waitākere Ranges Zone in the upper reaches of the foothills and 17 per cent (27) are located in the Residential - Rural and Coastal Settlement Zone. Notably, the Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone only contains six per cent (11) of all consents for vegetation removal, a lower concentration of activity than is observed among other consent types in the lower eastern foothills. The lower foothills area has a greater prevalence of pastoral landholdings and less SEA coverage than the more forested parts of the ranges. Twelve per cent (21) of the consents are in Open Space, Coastal zones, or both. The remaining two consents are located on the WRHA border in Residential - Single House or Residential - Mixed Housing Suburban zones.

This distribution of consents aligns with the concentration of vegetation present in a zone and the amount of development and use located and provided for in that zone. The SEA Overlay also covers much of the upper extent of the foothills where the H1 Residential – Large Lot Zone and H21 Rural - Waitākere Ranges Zone are present. The inverse relationship between the amount of consenting activity in H20 versus H21 and the greater number of consents for vegetation related activities in H21 exemplifies the protections to vegetation being applied in the more densely forested part of the Ranges.

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Figure 42 A view from the eastern foothills looking southwest towards the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park. Pastoral land in the foreground gives way to more heavily forested areas in the background. (Kensington, 2023).

Consenting activity within the significant ecological area overlay (Measure 2)

One hundred and forty-one (89 per cent) of the 159 consents are for vegetation works in the Significant Ecological Area Overlay. This overlay protects areas which support significant habitats of indigenous vegetation and fauna on land or in freshwater environments and covers a significant extent of the WRHA, especially beyond the eastern foothills. The extent of the SEA Overlay can be seen in Figure 43 below.

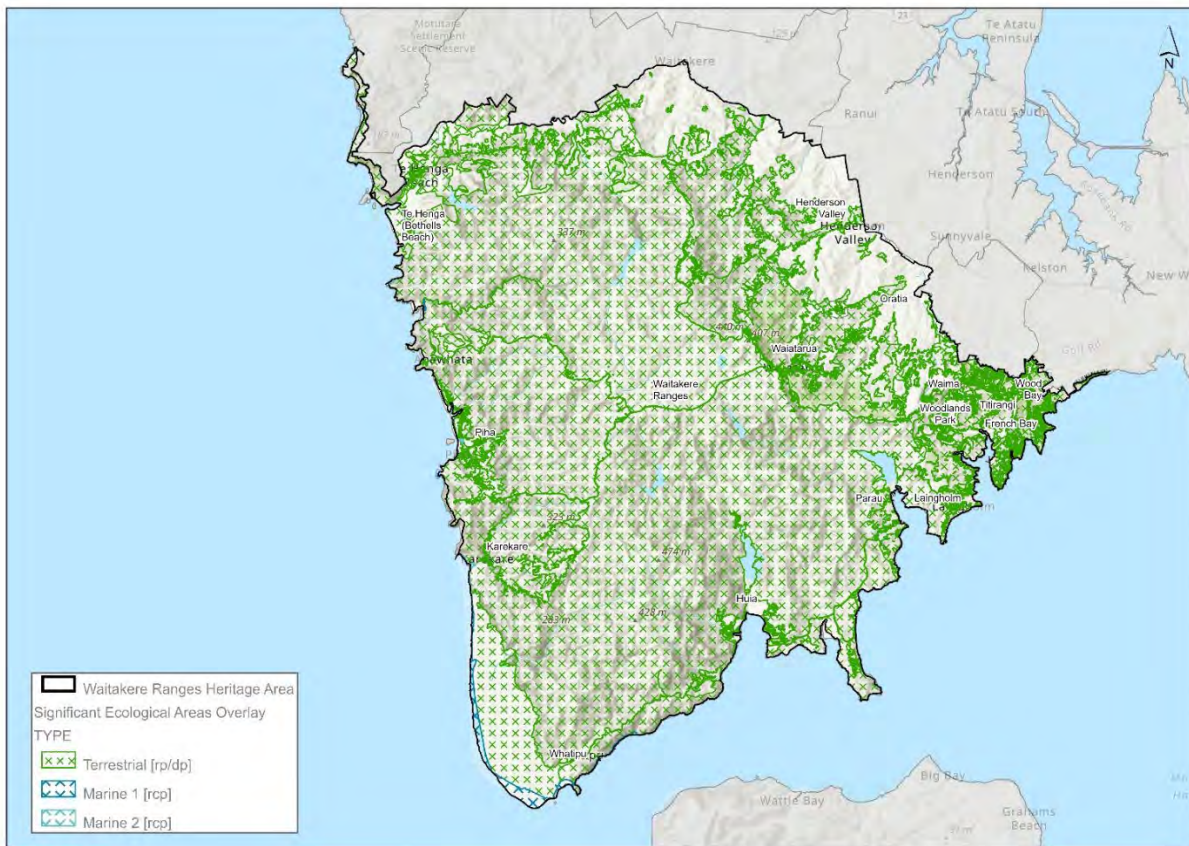


Figure 43 Extent of the SEA Overlay in the WRHA.

A consent is required for construction which requires vegetation alteration or removal which is not otherwise permitted, wholly or in part, within an SEA Overlay. It is a controlled activity to remove up to 300m² of vegetation in the SEA Overlay for one building platform or accessway, meaning that the council cannot decline these consents. Forty-six LUC consents are for vegetation removal within a property subject to SEA coverage for the purposes of constructing a new dwelling. This is just over one-third of the 119 total dwellings consented through LUC during the monitoring period, indicating that most new development is taking place outside of areas supporting indigenous biodiversity. Seventeen consents within the SEA are for activities within the Open Space – Conservation Zone. From review of conditions established through zones, overlays, and AUP Section E, numerous protections are established for native vegetation in the ranges. Development which occurs in SEAs has the imperative to remedy, restore, and enhance vegetation outcomes through activity. Observation through the landscape assessment and review of consent documents shows that mitigation and remediation of native vegetation is commonplace for development and activity. Often where weeds are present the activity will be used to provide for their removal.

Notable tree consents (Measure 3)

The Notable Trees Overlay aims to safeguard notable individual and groups of trees in Auckland from harm or destruction due to development. These trees, listed in Schedule 10 Notable Trees, hold exceptional arboriculture characteristics, and offer significant benefits to future generations. They can also be selected for their historical importance and significance to local iwi. The D13.2 Objective is to retain and protect these trees from unsuitable subdivision, use, and development.

D13.3 Policies involve providing education and advice to promote tree protection in rural and urban areas. Retention and protection requirements consider various factors, such as the trees' specific attributes and potential adverse effects on people and property. Compatibility with subdivisions or development is assessed, as well as the necessity of tree alterations or removal. Additionally, policies evaluate alternative retention methods, potential mitigation of lost values, and adherence to best arboriculture practices. Measures for plant pathogen and disease control and the provision of tree management or landscape plans are also taken into account.

Works which do not result in potential harm of a notable tree range from permitted to controlled activity status. Those works which may threaten the health of the tree through root zone work or trimming are restricted discretionary activities. Tree removal is a discretionary activity.

There are four consents in the D13 Notable Trees Overlay for work on notable trees. Two are for tree trimming or root zone work. Two consents are for the removal of a notable tree.

One of the consents for the removal of a notable tree is for the removal of two notable trees causing structural damage to an existing building. The other consent is for a notable tree removal as part of flood wall and drainage infrastructure upgrades in Huia to avoid inundation. The activities are considered to be appropriate reasons for the removal of notable trees.

4.8.5 Effectiveness and efficiency of the plan

Effectiveness

The multiple protections in place for native vegetation in the ranges are effective at protecting, restoring, and enhancing the native vegetation and total vegetation coverage. Natural and assisted regrowth far outpaces the rate of removal and indigenous biodiversity is commonly restored through weed removal in new subdivision, use, and activity. Most new development is being located outside of SEA coverage. Drawing from data in **Indicator 3**, enhancement areas vested as part of D12 Schedules increase the total

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amount of vegetation protected in the ranges over time. Rules in the D13 Overlay provides for the removal of notable trees only in circumstances where significant adverse effects are identified.

Efficiency

There are numerous layers of protection which apply to native vegetation depending on zone, activity, and overlay. These protections provide for a reasonable level of precaution and incentive for exploring alternatives when applying for a resource consent, but do not appear to unreasonably constrain development which is appropriate and engages in mitigation and remediation.

Overall, the AUP is shown to be effective at protecting significant vegetation and encouraging development which minimises the effect on and restores vegetation cover.

4.8.6 Recommendations

There are no recommendations relating to the AUP for **Indicator 8**.

Summary and conclusions

The responsibility of the AUP to provide for the protection, retention, and enhancement of historic and natural heritage features in the WRHA is a broad directive. Themes of kaitiakitanga and stewardship are interwoven throughout the Act and are embodied by the communities who value the ranges. Indigenous biodiversity, historical use of the ranges, and the character derived from those relationships are recognised for their intrinsic and ongoing value to Tāmaki Makaurau and Aotearoa. Use and activity enabled through the AUP must be awake to the interconnectedness of the natural environment and the effect on the natural and existing character.

This report has measured the effectiveness and efficiency of the AUP planning instruments and provisions in achieving the policies and methods of RPS Chapter Section B4.4. The RPS sets out key issues and outcomes of its objectives and policies. These include:

The protection, restoration, and enhancement of the values and heritage features of the ranges helps to:

- Retain the rural character of the ranges and the transitional function of the foothills
- Protect the Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Landforms which contribute to the character of the ranges.
- Provide for development and subdivision of a scale and intensity which recognises and is sympathetic to the heritage qualities of the Waitākere Ranges
- Avoid cumulative effects on the environment from activity and use.

The chapter identifies several outcomes within its objectives and policies:

- Protect and maintain resources which are of significance to the spiritual dimension and mauri of mana whenua's kaitiaki role in the Waitākere Ranges.
- Development recognises and is sympathetic to the qualities, character and natural features of the Waitākere Ranges and the complex mixed landscapes of the foothills.
- Environmental values and natural heritage features are protected restored and enhanced in perpetuity for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the community.
- The social, environmental, and cultural well-being of the people that live and work in the area is enabled.
- The water supply catchments and related functions are protected.

The AUP implements several planning instruments and provisions to give effect to the RPS, including zoning, overlays, and precincts. The D12 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay is the most encompassing of these instruments and gives effect to the purpose and objectives of the Act, and Section B4.4 of the regional policy statement. The indicators for this report were derived from the objectives of D12 to align measurements more directly with the outcomes sought through the higher-level RPS provisions.

The data indicates the AUP provides numerous opportunities to live, work, and recreate in the ranges (**Indicator 1**), giving effect to B4.4.1. Objectives (1), (7), and (9). Settlement patterns in the ranges are reflective of access to local centres and the relative remoteness from urban Auckland. The primarily residential focus of the ranges precludes certain jobs from locating within the heritage area, but this is not reflected in economic indicators, which show a higher average income and homeownership rate than Auckland generally. Community groups are numerous and varied in their attention, embodying a historical connection to the ranges and body of knowledge in environmental, service, or creative roles. An increasing

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number of visitors have been drawn to the WRHA for recreation, putting pressure on popular destination spots and highlighting the role of the WRHA as both a public place and a wilderness space.

The AUP is found to be effective and efficient in recognising the limitations of growth (**Indicator 2**) and meeting the outcomes of B4.4.1. Objectives (4) and (5). Resource consent activity and building consent activity are concentrated around established centres. Resource consent has reduced during this, as compared to previous, monitoring periods and building consents and resource consents have seen an overall decline throughout the monitoring period. The proportion of new development which required resource consent was higher in the interior of the ranges, reflecting greater caution and a more rigorous planning process in sensitive areas. However, the overall number of resource consents withdrawn, closed, and lapsed has decreased during this monitoring period, suggesting that growth is not limited through overly complicated consent processes.

The AUP is effective and efficient in providing for subdivision of an appropriate intensity and scale (**Indicator 3**) which also contributes to the outcomes of B4.4.1. Objectives (4) and (5). The D12 WRHA Subdivision Schedules provide a transparent process for developers and decision-makers regarding the intensity of growth appropriate in the heritage area. These overlays are contextual, and many include areas of revitalisation or reserve. The D12 Schedules effectively manage the location and scale of subdivision activity in the ranges and on average provide for lots which are smaller than what is normally allowed in the WRHA, but significantly larger than lots within the urban area. Most subdivision activity was located within the D12 Schedules and complied with the relevant standards.

The AUP effectively and efficiently safeguards significant landforms and landscapes in the WRHA, contributing to the outcomes of B4.4.1. Objectives (1) and (3). Low levels of development disruption are recorded in D10, D11, and D15 overlays (**Indicator 4**). Minimal development was observed in landscapes of significance, and where it was visible, high-quality outcomes were achieved from new construction. Of the 61 consents located in the Ridgeline Protection Overlay, only 11 were for works visible above the ridgeline or skyline. The landscape assessment did not find any impact on the role of the eastern foothills as a natural visual backdrop to urban Auckland.

The AUP has largely been effective and efficient in promoting the development of built environments that maintain subservience with natural surroundings (**Indicator 5**), contributing to B4.4.1. Objectives (1) and (3). Recessive design elements and vegetation screening have effectively been utilised to retain a rural and wilderness character in many parts of the ranges. Comparison between the 2018 and 2023 landscape assessments shows that many new developments ‘bed in’ over time, especially in heavily vegetated areas, effectively limiting or negating their visual effect. However, challenges are present in the eastern foothills, especially within the H20 Residential – Waitākere Foothills Zone, where instances of increasing development pressures are causing a shift away from the rural outcomes intended for the area. A decline in rural production and rural typologies, coupled with the greater capacity of the area for growth is making un-subservient development more apparent. In the Titirangi/Laingholm area, a high proportion of consents for exceedance of yard dimension standards in H1 Residential – Large Lot Zone is not reflected by the landscape assessment, which found very little loss of subservience in the area. This inconsistency is indicative that the standards of the plan do not align with the historically long and narrow lot dimensions in the Titirangi/Laingholm area and are not efficiently enabling development.

The AUP has been effective and efficient in retaining and upgrading the water supply function of the WRHA (**Indicator 6**) overlays and designations from legacy plans to ensure the conservation and monitoring of ecological health in water catchments, thereby safeguarding Auckland’s water supply sources. WRHA

designations allow Watercare to conduct maintenance, upgrades, and service without the need for resource consent, exemplified by the expansion at the Titirangi water treatment plant. This expansion, although the subject of tension between infrastructure provision and heritage protection, demonstrates the possibility of enhancing water supply within existing designations. The findings of this indicate the AUP is achieving the outcomes of Objective B4.4.1 (8).

The AUP was found to be largely effective and efficient in regard to enabling infrastructure provision in the WRHA (**Indicator 7**) per B4.4.1 Objectives (1) and (6). Projects are organized to avoid adverse effects on indigenous vegetation and runoff impacts on local waterways. Works requiring vegetation removal and earthworks implement remediation and enhancement efforts within their works. Works on landslips were a recurring activity in infrastructure consents. The occurrence of landslips can compromise structures and disrupt access to communities. The ranges also face significant infrastructure challenges related to telecommunications, flooding, and access due to diverse topography and remoteness. Maintenance and development of infrastructure are crucial for safety, disaster preparedness, and maintaining vital connections with residents and communities in the ranges. While infrastructure provision generally considers heritage features, there are instances where it fails to integrate into the landscape. Infrastructure which is not consistent with the landscape in its design and implementation can introduce urban character to an environment.

The measures implemented for native vegetation protection in the ranges have proven effective in not only preserving but also enhancing the indigenous flora coverage (**Indicator 8**) under B4.4.1 Objectives (1) and (6). Through natural and assisted regrowth, along with weed eradication in new subdivisions, indigenous biodiversity is often restored. The data from **Indicator 3** shows a positive trend where areas designated under D12 Schedules contribute to an increase in protected vegetation over time. The removal of trees in the D13 Notable Trees Overlay is done only in select instances where greater damage would occur without action. Vegetation protection overlays encourage the exploration of alternative solutions during resource consent applications without imposing undue constraints on appropriate development.

Overall, the planning provisions applied to the WRHA through the AUP are extensive and utilise different instruments to identify and manage growth. The AUP is effective and efficient in realising the outcomes set out in RPS Chapter B4.4. Where the observed outcomes of the AUP deviated from the RPS outcomes a commonality is observed. Intensification of the lower foothills, slips caused by extreme weather, and increasing visitor numbers putting pressure on existing infrastructure are all examples of external pressures changing the environment within the WRHA. Amendments made to the AUP provisions at the time of plan review should be aware to the need for the WRHA to be responsive to unpredictable impacts upon its heritage features.

Prioritisation of recommendations

No high-priority recommendations are made as part of this monitoring report.

Medium - Investigate at the time of plan review.

- At the time of the development of the next Unitary Plan review, council should consider including specific environmental and cultural indicators/measures from a Māori cultural point of view.¹⁸

¹⁸ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

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- Consider the application of updated spatial planning, including area plans, and growth strategies to all catchments in the Waitākere eastern foothills.¹⁹
- Review whether the current standards in the H20 Rural – Waitākere Foothills Zone are effective in maintaining the transitional function of the zone.²⁰
- Review the efficiency of the H1 Residential - Large Lot Zone in providing for sparse development which has few effects and protects, restores, and enhances heritage features.²¹
- Review the incentives provided by standards and assessment criteria within the Unitary Plan that provide for the enhancement of natural heritage features through use and development in areas which have had their vegetation previously cleared.²²
- Review and develop improved methods of identification of instability in the landscape.²³
- Provide for infrastructure integration standards in E26 specific to the WRHA.²⁴

Low - Further monitoring is advised.

- Carry out economic modelling and on-the-ground assessment of ongoing development outcomes in the WRHA's centres to determine if plan-enabled capacity and provisions are contending with pressures for growth.²⁵

¹⁹ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

²⁰ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

²¹ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

²² These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

²³ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

²⁴ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

²⁵ These recommendations will need to be tested fully through an RMA Section 32 assessment, be considered alongside other recommendations from other topics and the Plans & Places Department work programme.

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Appendix 1 B4.4 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Policy Cascade

RPS - B4.4 Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area	<p>B4.4.1. Objective (1) The natural and historic resources, including the significant environmental values and heritage features of the Waitākere Ranges, are protected, restored and enhanced for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the community.</p>	<p>B4.4.1. Objective (2) Resources that are of significance to Mana W henua are protected and maintained including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the spiritual dimension and the mauri of natural and physical resources and of people; (b) the kaitiaki of these resources and significant sites and wāhi tapu; and (c) those institutions that are integral to the relationship of Mana W henua with their environment in a way that promotes the expression and practice of kaitiakitanga 	<p>B4.4.1. Objective (3) Development in settlements recognises and is sympathetic to the qualities, character and natural features of the Waitākere Ranges and the complex mixed landscapes of the foothills.</p>	<p>B4.4.1. Objective (4) Cumulative effects of activities on the environment, including amenity values and heritage features, are recognised and avoided.</p>	<p>B4.4.1. Objective (5) The character, scale and intensity of subdivision, use or development do not adversely affect the heritage features or contribute to urban growth outside the Rural Urban Boundary.</p>	<p>B4.4.1. Objective (6) The quality and diversity of landscapes are maintained by all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) protecting landscapes of local, regional, or national significance; (b) restoring and enhancing degraded landscapes; and (c) managing change within a landscape in an integrated way, including retaining rural character. 	<p>B4.4.1. Objective (7) Enable social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of people that live and work in the area.</p>	<p>B4.4.1. Objective (8) The water supply catchments and their related supply functions are protected.</p>	<p>B4.4.1. Objective (9) The natural and historic resources of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park are protected in perpetuity for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the people and communities of Auckland and New Zealand.</p>
RPS objectives with indicators	<p>B4.4.2 Policy (2) Prevent activities from releasing pest species likely to harm native plants and animals and their habitats.</p>	<p>B4.4.2 Policy (4) Manage activities to minimise their adverse effects on water quality, soil, native vegetation and fauna habitats, mauri of the waterway, taiāpure and mahinga mātai.</p>	<p>B4.4.2 Policy (1) Design and locate structures and impermeable surfaces and undertake activities in a way that does not impede or adversely affect the potential for the regeneration of native vegetation or reduce the extent and range of areas of native vegetation and linkages between them.</p>	<p>B4.4.2 Policy (7) Adopt a cautious approach when considering proposals that threaten serious or irreversible damage to a heritage feature.</p>	<p>B4.4.2 Policy (1) Design and locate structures and impermeable surfaces and undertake activities in a way that does not impede or adversely affect the potential for the regeneration of native vegetation and linkages between them.</p>				
			<p>B4.4.2 Policy (3) Where clearing vegetation for infrastructure is necessary, it should be undertaken only where the vegetation is of lower value and there is no practicable alternative option.</p>		<p>B4.4.2 Policy (5) Require the type and density of settlements to avoid degrading the character of natural landscape features.</p>				
			<p>B4.4.2 Policy (6) Avoid non-residential activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that are unrelated to the productive use of rural land; (b) that require substantial earthworks or vegetation removal; or (c) that are industrial and unrelated to rural activities. 						
D12 Waitakere Ranges Heritage Overlay Objectives	<p>D12.2 Objective (1) The heritage area and its features described in section 7 of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 are protected, restored and enhanced. (http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/local/2008/0001/latest/DLM1076075.html)</p>		<p>D12.2 Objective (4) Subdivision in the heritage area is of an appropriate scale and intensity and complements the character and landscape of the heritage area.</p>	<p>D12.2 Objective (7) Risks and uncertainties associated with subdivision, use and development that could threaten serious or irreversible damage to a heritage feature of</p>	<p>D12.2 Objective (3) The limited capacity of the heritage area to provide for growth is recognised.</p>	<p>D12.2 Objective (5) The quality and diversity of landscapes in the heritage area identified as having local, regional or national significance are maintained.</p>	<p>D12.2 Objective (2) A range of activities are enabled in order for people to work, live and recreate within the heritage area.</p>	<p>D12.2 Objective (8) The water supply catchments and their related supply functions are protected.</p>	<p>D12.2 Objective (6) Subdivision, use and development in the heritage area is subservient to the natural and rural landscape and character.</p>

Te Aroturukitanga o te Mahere ā-Wae ki Tāmaki Makaurau

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D12 Waitakere Ranges Heritage Overlay Objectives for specific areas (in brackets)	D12.2 Objective (17) (Rural Bush Living - Ranges) The forested character and natural landscape qualities of the surrounding environment, including prominent ridgelines, watercourses, native vegetation and fauna habitats are maintained and enhanced.
	D12.2 Objective (18) (Oratia Ranges) The rural character and natural landscape qualities of the Oratia area, including watercourses and native vegetation and fauna habitats are maintained and enhanced.
	D12.2 Objective (19) (Titirangi-Laingholm, N, S, W) The forested character and natural qualities of the surrounding landscape which includes a low-density residential setting, prominent ridgelines, coastal areas and native vegetation and fauna habitats are maintained and enhanced.

D12 Waitakere Ranges Heritage Overlay Policies

D12.3 Policy (4) Protect the distinctive natural and rural character of the heritage area.

	the heritage area are recognised and considered.				
	D12.2 Objective (9) Infrastructure and related activities are enabled, provided that the heritage features of the area are protected.			D12.2 Objective (11) (Waitakere Foothills) The Waitakere Foothills provide a rural buffer between urban Auckland and the forested landscape of the Waitakere Ranges and the coasts.	D12.2 Objective (15) (Swanson South Foothills) The ecological and landscape values of the area are protected from inappropriate subdivision and development.
	D12.2 Objective (10) (Waitakere Foothills) The Waitakere Foothills retain a rural character with low-density settlement and few urban-scale activities.			D12.2 Objective (16) (Swanson South Foothills) The effects of subdivision and associated development are managed to retain a buffer between the bush-clad and urban parts of the city.	
	D12.2 Objective (12) (Oratia Foothills) Subdivision and development retains and enhances local rural character and amenity values.				
	D12.2 Objective (13) (Oratia Foothills) Subdivision and development is designed to maintain and enhance rural character and natural landscape qualities, including watercourses and significant native vegetation and fauna habitats.				
	D12.2 Objective (14) (Swanson South Foothills) Swanson South's rural character, with low-density settlement and few urban-scale activities, is protected.				
	D12.2 Objective (19) (Titirangi-Laingholm N, S, W) the unique settlement pattern and landscape qualities of the residential areas of Titirangi – Laingholm are maintained and enhanced.				

D12.3 Policy (2) Manage the scale, design, and location of subdivision so that it is consistent with section 8 of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008.

D12.3 Policy (10) Adopt a precautionary approach when assessing subdivision, use and development that could threaten serious or irreversible damage to a heritage feature.

D12.3 Policies (1) Limit subdivision and development within the heritage area to protect its heritage features.

D12.3 Policy (3) Protect the different natural landforms and landscape within the heritage area.

D12.3 Policy (6) Recognise that people live in distinct communities by enabling appropriate residential, business and community activities.

D12.3 Policy (14) Provide for legal and physical protection of native vegetation to ensure these areas are protected for perpetuity, including, where necessary requiring fencing to achieve permanent stock exclusion.

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D12.5 Policy (7) Protect the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park for the benefit, use and enjoyment of people and communities and maintain the quietness and wilderness of the regional park.

D12.3 Policy (9) Manage built development so that it is integrated and is subservient to the natural and rural landscape and the heritage features of the area.

D12.3 Policy (13) Require subdivision design to:

- (a) incorporate on-site native vegetation planting;
- (b) retain or link significant vegetation and fauna habitat areas; and
- (c) avoid adversely affecting the visual, historical, cultural, or spiritual significance of heritage features.

D12.3 Policy (15) (Ōrātia (Foothills)) Provide for limited subdivision and development that:

- (a) protects where possible significant and outstanding native vegetation and
 - (a) fauna habitat;
 - (b) minimises adverse effects arising from placement of structures, driveways, and other infrastructure, on the overall resilience, biodiversity and integrity of ecosystems;
 - (c) retains, enhances and maintains native vegetation and fauna habitat and stream margins; and
 - (d) retains and enhances rural landscapes through the management of existing vegetation and replanting of exotic and native vegetation where appropriate.

D12.3 Policy (16) (Swanson South (Foothills)) Provide for limited subdivision that:

- (a) protects and enhances streams, watercourses, and wetlands;
- (b) avoids where possible the need to clear native vegetation and restores areas of vegetation or re-vegetates areas of land along watercourses;
- (c) avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on rural character and amenity values;
- (d) retains or links native vegetation and fauna habitat areas; and
- (e) avoids where possible development on natural landscape elements and heritage features.

D12.3 Policy (8) Manage subdivision, use and development within the area to ensure all of the following:

- (a) areas identified in the Outstanding Natural Character and High Natural Character Overlay, the Outstanding Natural Features Overlay and Outstanding Natural Landscapes Overlay, and the Significant Ecological Areas Overlay and are protected, restored or enhanced;
- (b) heritage features are not adversely affected;
- (c) rural landscape and character is retained; and
- (d) degraded landscapes are restored and enhanced.

D12.3 Policy (11) Maintain a clear contrast between the urban parts of the city and the Waitākere Ranges foothills through the design and location of subdivision, use and development which maintains and enhances rural character and amenity values.

D12.3 Policy (5) Protect the quietness and darkness of the Waitākere Ranges and the coastal part of the area.

D12.3 Policy (12) Provide for limited subdivision and development that:

- (a) protects and enhances streams, lakes, watercourses, and wetlands and their margins;
- (b) restores low-quality areas of vegetation or carries out revegetation of bare areas along waterway margins; and
- (c) minimises vegetation clearance by locating buildings and development in areas of lower ecological value.

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D12.3 Policy (17) Titirangi – Laingholm
(North, South and West) Provide for limited subdivision and development that:

- (a) avoids where practicable, or otherwise minimises the need for clearance of native vegetation and maintains the dominance of the natural environment;
- (b) includes planting of native vegetation to improve the natural environment;
- (c) protects native vegetation through legal protection mechanisms and fences;
- (d) ensures buildings and structures will not be visually prominent, particularly on ridgelines, or through the removal of native vegetation;
- (e) enables practical vehicle access to a road which maintains safety but does not modify the site to an extent that adversely affects the character of the surrounding landscape; and
- (f) is consistent with the existing pattern of residential density in the area.

D12.3 Policy (18) Orātia (Ranges) and Rural Bush Living (Ranges)
Provide for limited subdivision and development that :

- (a) protects significant and outstanding native vegetation and fauna habitat, and where possible avoids clearance of, or damage to, this resource;
- (b) minimises adverse effects arising from the placement of structures on the overall resilience, biodiversity and integrity of ecosystems; and
- (c) recognises the natural values of native vegetation and fauna habitat areas and the linkages between these areas.

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