



Issues and Opportunities for the Rural and Residential Review – Rural Edition

PLAN CHANGE 50 OF THE UPPER HUTT DISTRICT PLAN
2004



March/April 2020 Public Engagement

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About this report

Introduction

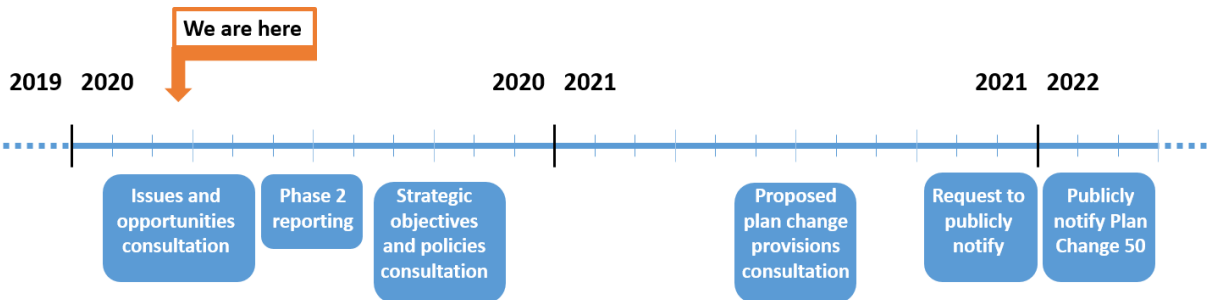
The Rural and Residential Review is an evaluation of our current rules and zoning for rural and residential areas across the Upper Hutt District. It seeks to assess whether District Plan measures are fit for purpose and are able to accommodate predicted growth for the foreseeable future in a way that reflects our local values. Current rules in the District Plan have a genesis that predates the current 2004 Plan and have not undergone a substantive review since the late 1990s. This review is therefore a significant component to defining the form of Upper Hutt for future generations.

Large scale reporting has been underway over the last year in order to identify what issues currently exist and what opportunities may assist us in addressing these issues. Community focus groups have also been established to better understand the implications of reporting conclusions at the local level, whether or not this accurately reflects their understanding of the environment, and what other problems and solutions they believe exist.

The following captures the conclusions of these discussions and reports, and summarises the issues and opportunities identified to date. We are seeking your feedback over March/April 2020 on whether you believe this accurately reflects the current issues for rural and residential areas and the opportunities that exist to secure their future.

How your feedback sets the agenda

This period of engagement represents the first in a wider agenda of public consultation. Feedback we receive on this report will help us define the desired community outcomes for rural and residential areas and what methods we should use to achieve them – to be known as our Strategic Objectives and Policies.



As above, it is anticipated that feedback will be sought on these objectives and policies in the latter part of 2020. These will set the framework for all supporting objectives and provisions that would be articulated for rural and residential areas.

It is currently anticipated that a draft plan change will be publicly released for feedback in mid-2021. Current feedback will influence the final proposed plan change, which is anticipated to be released for public consultation in early 2022. This will be the formal notification of the plan change under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Layout of this Report

All issues and opportunities have been organised into rural and residential themes. Rural issues and opportunities have also been split into 'general' rural issues by area, which we have called 'localities'.

Rural Localities are akin to suburbs in urban areas and are simply designed to spatially organise issues for ease of reference. They are determined based on factors including: topography; current zoning; land parcel boundaries; and known geography. For example, organising the rural area this way also allows us to more easily track the consenting history of an area, the influence of subdivision, or the changes in sales over time.

Each issue statement is set out as follows:

- **Issue / Opportunity**
- **Options / Questions**
- **Discussion**
- **What has informed this issue**
- **What focus groups have told us**

Each issue statement is briefly discussed, with references to reporting, as well as feedback we've received from the focus groups thus far.

This is the rural edition of issues and opportunities and only covers rural topics, with all residential topics covered in the residential edition.

How to make a submission

Submissions on the Rural and Residential Review Issues and Opportunities will be open from 16 March 2020 to 19 April 2020.

Submissions may be made online at: www.upperhuttcity.com/pc50

Submissions may also be made at any public library or at Council offices at 838-842 Fergusson Drive.

In addition, Council will also be operating a number of drop-in information sessions within the community to provide a chance to discuss Issues and Opportunities further with Council Officers. Session times will be advertised locally via our Social Media pages and through the Upper Hutt Leader.

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Executive summary

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General Rural Issues and Opportunities

The rural area covers over 90% of our entire District. Despite this large extent, the majority of this area is dominated by hilly and mountainous areas with extensive vegetation cover. These are largely inaccessible areas extensively held in public ownership to protect indigenous bush and water supply collection areas. The result is that valley floor zoning makes up less than 8% of all rural zoning and lifestyle zoning only about 2.5% of rural zoning. This highlights the scarcity of this resource in an environment with competing interests and the consequential importance of ensuring that this is suitably managed.

Valley floor areas present the most versatile land use choices, able to provide everything from arable farming conditions to rural settlements. However, these activities are not always compatible and care needs to be taken to not irreversibly develop a limited land resource.

In considering potential issues and opportunities, we looked at how our rural areas are used, where there has been subdivision growth, where land is sensitive to growth, and the rationale of these conclusions through our Rural Focus Group.

The following section provides an overview of **issues and opportunities identified generally** across the rural area to date and the various options or questions these have raised. The subsequent section provides additional detail at a more local level.

How to provide for future growth

The 2016 Land Use Strategy established a number of growth areas within rural areas, including: the Gillespies Block; Gabites Block; and Guildford Block. Analysis of the rural zoned land and discussions with community members have identified that there may be additional areas that could also cater for selective development. The following highlights some of these opportunities and various ways that these could be enabled.

#01 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Generally, subdivision rules and standards do not reflect current typology, use or intended future use. These need to be more flexible to cater for rural needs.

#01 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Review all zones and subdivision rules to reflect both current and future intended use. Introduce future zones to identify growth areas (like the LUS), which would only be triggered at specified milestones, while more sensitive areas are managed through more specific development area plans.*
- B) *Update subdivision rules for rural zones to permit allotment layouts that better reflect site functionality and practicality, rather than achieving minimum allotment sizes.*

- C) *Generally, retain existing controls over steeper slopes, adjusting development controls along select foothills, while clustering development in specific valley areas, retaining the predominant valley floor area for agricultural use.*

#01 DISCUSSION

It has generally been accepted that the three core rural zones that exist today do not always reflect how people wish to use their land or necessarily the most efficient use of land. The Rural Valley Floor zone extends through all flatter valley areas in the district and is intended for smaller farming activity and general rural enterprise. The Rural Lifestyle zone compliments this by providing for smaller lots in select areas, accommodating lifestyle development. The Rural Hill zone covers all remaining rural areas, generally capturing steeper hill areas, with the expectation that these would be used for general rural activities, such as grazing and forestry.

Development within these areas, as well as changing priorities in the rural area, mean that the boundaries between these respective zones requires review. Changes to national policy also means we need to consider a wider set of rural zones alongside protecting our productive potential – meaning that a balanced approach is required. Options above provide a broad approach to rural zoning, with supplementary issues and opportunities containing more local detail within the Localities section.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Issues and Themes Report
- Coffey Geotechnical Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us about this issue?

Most members felt that reviewing this is needed and supported a change. However, there was also an acknowledgement that there is value in rural areas as they are and increased growth could reduce attractiveness. Balancing these out was seen as a complex issue. There was also discussion over the former averaging rule for subdivision and how lessons learnt would need to be considered.

#02 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Areas with development potential have been developed in an ad hoc fashion, creating ribbon developments that are not responsive to the surrounding environment or housing demand. Opportunities exist for consolidated 'cluster' settlement-style developments to occur in select places throughout the Te Marua/Maymorn, Mangaroa, and Whitemans Valley areas.

#02 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Create a development plan for each area.*
- B) *Introduce selective zoning for areas with strong building location and development controls to ensure good outcomes are still achieved.*

#02 DISCUSSION

This opportunity has arisen from the high degree of interest in lifestyle living within rural areas. While additional detail is provided for each locality (see from page 12 onwards), we are interested to know whether this general approach to providing growth is supported, and if so, whether a more specific

development plan is preferred for each area or whether a traditional zoning approach with associated development controls is considered to be more useful.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

What have our Focus Group told us about this issue?

Members had mixed feedback on this topic. While there was general support for control of growth into more clustered settlements, members were also supporting of ribbon development, as well as retention of current District Plan controls.

#03 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

An opportunity exists for further development to occur on the foothills in select rural areas. Care needs to be taken to ensure that poor outcomes from previous hill developments are mitigated through any new provisions.

#03 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Do you support this style of development generally, and if so, where would you like to see this enabled further?*
- B) *Where hillside development is to be undertaken, require compensatory vegetation planting to screen new development areas and build upon existing planting.*

#03 DISCUSSION

Generally speaking, valley floor areas present as open expanses where increases in dwellings may become quite apparent and where agricultural production may be better suited. In addition, national policy supporting the protection of productive soils means that high class soils are likely to require consideration alongside any considerations for alternative uses. In providing for growth, an opportunity therefore exists to better utilise foothill areas around the perimeter of valley floor areas, where suitable sites exist, with a good degree of connectivity and site design to mitigate against visual intrusion.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us about this issue?

Members were supportive of selective hill development in principle, but stressed that previous lessons needed to be considered with hill development (septic tank location, visual dominance, privacy) and for some existing hill development typologies not to be repeated.

Providing for growth in existing areas

While additional growth opportunities may be evident, there are also aspects of how currently occupied rural areas are managed that also require evaluation. The following provides a brief overview of issues with general rural areas and how additional growth could be provided within these areas.

#04 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

The existing Family Flat rules (which set a maximum area of 55m² and may only be used by family members) appear to be overly restrictive and limit their use in the rural environment.

#04 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Relax rules on Family Flats, subject to location, design standards, and infrastructure availability.*
- B) *Allow for secondary dwellings to be located on rural sites, subject to access and location standards.*
- C) *Only allow second dwellings if sufficient land is available.*

#04 DISCUSSION

Rural areas can often have greater housing demands on a single parcel than their urban counterparts due to the demands of on-site labour or the accommodation of additional family members in a multigenerational housing environment. Current controls on dwellings development have little flexibility to cater for additional dwellings. For example, family flats have the same size limitations as those within the urban areas. Rural allotments are at a larger scale and certain occupied rural sites may be already suited to an additional dwelling unit without materially affecting the rural appeal or productive capacity of the surrounding area.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Members all agreed that the restricted allowable size of family flats was an issue, with some suggesting that there should be consideration for a secondary dwelling. They saw these units as being able to promote multigenerational living, while also providing additional housing.

Recognising the importance of greenspace and community space alongside growth

Upper Hutt prides itself on its greenspace and contains approximately 70% of all regional parks across the Greater Wellington Region. Throughout pre-consultation of the review, the value of greenspace has been strongly represented in feedback and it therefore important to consider how this is provided for when conceptualising growth. Currently there are no direct requirements to provide either recreational greenspace or community space within zoned development areas. In the rural environment, while there typically is a strong degree of openness and expanse, the majority of this land is inaccessible to the general public.

If development is increased in select rural areas should there be consideration of either public or communal greenspace areas, as well as community spaces for people to assemble for community events, markets, or otherwise.

#05 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Public Open Space needs to be better considered alongside lifestyle developments, with rules recognising active recreation.

#05 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Update controls for existing Council-owned land to ensure greenspace and/or community space can be created.*
- B) *Ensure that greenspace/community space is established within any development plans for rural clusters.*
- C) *Promote the use of some natural hazard-prone areas to be used as open greenspace.*

#05 DISCUSSION

Currently there is only a small amount of vacant public land available in the rural area, solely around the Wallaceville Church on Whitemans Valley Road. If development is increased around this node, this site could be a valuable resource for the community. Areas with a high degree of natural hazard susceptibility could also be considered as greenspace areas, particularly when located in close proximity to rural settlement areas.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- District plan analysis and focus group discussion

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

There was support for this idea throughout the focus group, with members agreeing that the likes of flood zone areas would be great for public space. Karapoti Park was used as a good example of a rural park.

Ensuring that housing is resilient and respectful of water/natural resources

Living in New Zealand means living with natural hazard is near-constant a risk, with our country being classified as the second most risky place to insure in the world. The effects of Climate Change will mean that the likelihood of experiencing adverse weather conditions will increase and our consequential level of preparedness should increase accordingly. Resilience should therefore form a cornerstone of any new growth areas.

In addition, the impact growth has on available current resources must be considered to ensure a sustainable level of housing growth. In the rural context, this means consideration of septic tank discharge field availability and suitability in conjunction with water take demands and water re-usage. Two thirds of the Upper Hutt District is covered in indigenous forest and hardwoods, with exotic forestry areas and grassland making up just over 20% of all land cover.

The review of rural areas provides the opportunity to direct growth to areas where effects on sensitive natural areas are reduced and impacts actively considered.

#06 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Protection of remaining indigenous vegetation needs to be improved and the enhancement of natural areas considered.

#06 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Updating zoning extent to be responsive to indigenous vegetation extent.*
- B) *Ensure that any new development has a net increase in indigenous vegetation cover.*

#06 DISCUSSION

Current rules for indigenous vegetation permit their removal in many cases and don't factor in progressive development. The above provides options to either protect vegetation when considering newly zoned areas, or to require additional vegetation to be planted as a result of development. These controls would be location-specific. It should also be remembered that a separate plan change (Plan Change 48) will address biodiversity and landscapes and implement supporting controls.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Rural Issues and Options
- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

There was strong support for increased vegetation controls across focus groups. Members noted that development should build on existing vegetation to increase coverage. Zoning could reflect sensitivities or there could also be a requirement to enter into private covenants to protect indigenous vegetation.

#07 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Zoning needs to better reflect natural hazards, such as erosion, slope stability, and flooding.

#07 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Create zoning that reflects appropriate use of land, when considering natural hazard risk exposure.*

#07 DISCUSSION

Historically, Upper Hutt has not had good or consistent information about geotechnical risk areas, largely relying on existing development zones to direct where development would be suitable or available regional information. Over recent years there has been an increase in the available information at a local level for flooding. This review has been an impetus to create a good dataset for geotechnical information. The resulting information provides a rich information source to inform us about where there are potential risks and an opportunity to direct growth accordingly.

What has informed this issue?

- Coffey Geotechnical Review
- District Plan hazard overlays
- GNS geotechnical reporting
- Resource consenting analysis and focus group discussions

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Members were supportive of additional controls to respond to hazards, while also reflecting hazards as a response to Climate Change and applying preventative zoning.

#08 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Resilience to the effects of Climate Change needs to be considered through any growth enablement and associated provisions.

#08 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Ensure that any growth area is developed with resilience in mind.*
- B) *Only enable growth in relatively close proximity to services, or with an element of self-sufficiency, and with a good degree of accessibility.*
- C) *Any new development should seek to adopt water conservation measures and give greater consideration to providing for or encouraging development that utilises renewable energy resources.*

#08 DISCUSSION

This issue and associated options attempts to bring resilience into consideration for all growth. Making sure we have a resilient community means we are able to respond better to adverse events and more easily retain a consistent degree of community functionality.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Issues and Options
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Members were supportive of creating more sustainable communities on multiple fronts. This included: assessing climate change impacts with growth impacts; encouraging the use of renewable energy and water conservation; and providing additional information to prospective developers on how sustainability measures can be achieved.

Enabling suitable rural economic opportunities in the rural environment

Rural production and the rural economy go hand-in-hand. There is also an acceptance now that Upper Hutt's rural environment has mostly transitioned to being lifestyle-oriented, rather than large-scale conventional farming taking place across valley floor areas. When analysing previous zoning decisions, the extension of the 4ha minimum allotment size across the entirety of the valley floor (from a previous 20ha minimum allotment size) appears to have been the beginning of the turning point for conventional farming to more lifestyle-oriented rural occupation. Evidence suggests that the 4ha size was not well suited to farming, leading sellers to promote lots as lifestyle blocks or hobby farms. This unfortunately also did not appear to be suitable, with landowners struggling to maintain this area of land, resulting in high turnover in ownership.

The result is that the Valley Floor zone appears to sit awkwardly between farming use and lifestyle use, with much of this area already subdivided down to its current minimum allotment size. While the aforementioned transition is apparent, there is still productive potential in valley floor areas that needs to be recognised. This is because the Valley Floor zone is considered to have all of Upper Hutt's Class 1-3 soils, known as high class soils, stressing the importance of appropriate management of this resource.

The Land Use Strategy also notes that there are opportunities to leverage off the tourism potential within the rural environment, enabling the possibility of recreation ventures and visitor accommodation in suitable areas. Lastly, when considering the potential development of rural settlement clusters, it is valuable to also consider the allowance of mixed-use zoning, whereby localised commerce and residential development are both able to be pursued. This can foster a greater sense of localism and centre point for any settlement area.

#09 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Upper Hutt has little available high class soils available, with most located in valley floors. Recent economic activity in rural areas suggest that there is a continuing decline in rural production. There is an opportunity to consider whether there is sufficient productive land available to meet current and future demands.

#09 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Are there enough productive areas appropriately zoned?*
- B) *Are there areas where productive-type zoning should expand or contract?*
- C) *Mostly retain open flat valley floor areas for productive use, targeting any growth to appropriately located fringes along foothills (note locality options and questions).*

#09 DISCUSSION

As previously discussed, changes to national policy mean that highly productive land will likely need to be considered against any proposal to permit land development ([see the proposed National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land](#)). The options here seek consensus on whether there currently is sufficient productive land available to meet farming demands and generally where growth pressures should be directed.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Economic Assessment
- Rural Issues and Themes
- Discussions with Councillors and focus groups

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

While focus group members acknowledged that there were very few large commercial farming operations left, they also noted that smaller, more intensive farming should still be promoted. Members noted that such farming would not be considered as 'conventional' farming and that innovation and adaption was required to farm smaller lots – some providing examples of lots down to 1ha being commercially viable (e.g., flower farms). Members highlighted that highly productive soils were prevalent and should be sustainably farmed. The sale of rurally produced goods should also be explored within rural areas, through the promotion of local farming markets and communal farming areas. This could potentially be promoted within community facilities established as part of clustered settlement areas.

#10 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Rural tourism and the other visitor accommodation aspirations of the Land Use Strategy are not provided for in the District Plan.

#10 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- Provide for visitor accommodation rules as part of any cluster settlement or mixed use zoning.*
- Allow for a greater degree of at home accommodation within established dwellings.*
- Establish clear expected outcomes for recreation or tourism ventures within rural areas, with a view to permit their development, when appropriate.*

#10 DISCUSSION

The current District Plan makes such ventures difficult to achieve, with onerous consenting requirements and a lack of overall direction for outcomes. Upper Hutt has a vast potential for recreational commerce opportunities, with only a limited amount of tourism taking place within rural areas currently. Substantive ventures also need to consider the availability of visitor accommodation in close proximity to the business to maintain a level of commercial viability, and therefore this is also considered.

What has informed this issue?

- Land Use Strategy
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Members were generally supportive of increasing the availability of visitor accommodation, but stressed that promoting the likes of Airbnb could have adverse effects on housing availability, while hostel-type accommodation would likely be better suited to urban areas. It was also noted that Regional Parks in Upper Hutt were a big tourist attraction.

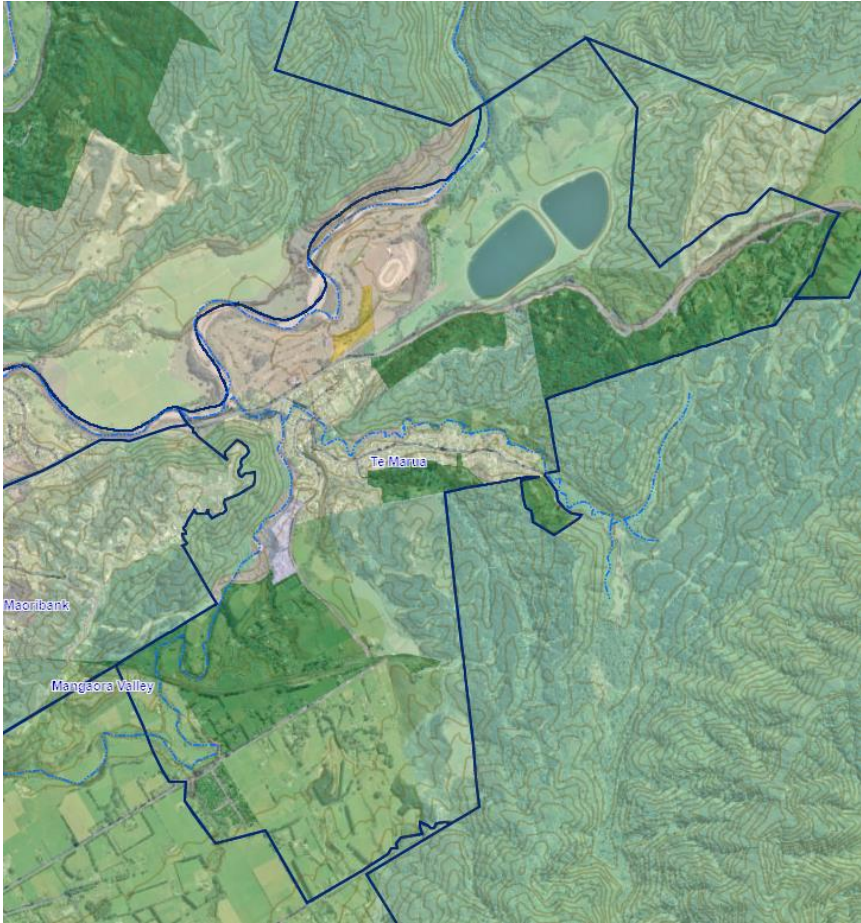
Rural Issues and Opportunities by Locality

As previous, some issues are better detailed at a more localised level. The following is an analysis of potential issues and opportunities within rural localities. It should be noted that this does not include options for Pakuratahi or Tararua as these are largely retained in public ownership, with a number of other restrictions which mean that it is unlikely to see any development. It is therefore considered that current management is largely fit for purpose for these two areas.

Te Marua Locality

Located adjacent to the northern most urban area, the Te Marua Locality includes rural-zoned areas throughout Maymorn, Plateau Road, and around State Highway 2 to the east of Twin Lakes. The area is mostly zoned for a denser rural form, containing a large degree of lifestyle zoning, with some valley floor and a little rural hill zoning. The area has a history of industrial occupation, with an extensive railway yard in operation during the early to mid-1900s, as well as intensive agricultural production nearby.

It is the only rural locality with a train station, located adjacent to an identified future growth area. Positioned as the buffer between residential and rural areas, this locality has a variety of growth options that are explored further below.



#11 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

The Land Use Strategy estimates that 220 lots could be possible over the Gabites Block site. In addition, reporting has also identified that housing may be possible close to the train station, Old School Road, and Maclaren Street. How should development be managed here to ensure that the rural appeal of Maymorn is retained?

#11 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Zone areas around the Maclaren Street and Old School Road nodes, as well as zoning the Gabites Block to enable settlement-style housing.*
- B) *Enable the development of settlement-style housing along the southern and eastern proportions of Maclaren Street and generally around southern proportion of Old School Road. Development areas would be setback from Parkes Line Road to maintain a rural feel.*
- C) *For the Gabites Block, establish a transitional zoning along the road boundary, with a denser residential development progressing up the foothills.*
- D) *Establish a development plan for the area, showing specific densities, layouts and intended outcomes.*

#11 DISCUSSION

Previous assessments for this area have shown that an increase to an urban density is not desired. The potential remains however for this site to contain additional growth in a suitable manner and therefore feedback is being sought on what the community feels is an appropriate development form for this area, capitalizing on the opportunities in and around the Gabities Block. Options provided seek to leverage off historically occupied areas, while retaining a sense of rural openness.

What has informed this issue?

- Land Use Strategy
- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Rural Issues and Themes Report
- Rural Economic Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Focus group members were generally in support of growth in this area, when adopting a transitional approach from residential to rural and being reflective of site sensitivities. This included remediation of historic contamination, traffic effects on State Highway 2, and an appropriate density being achieved. Members favoured the idea of a precinct or development plan being adopted to more clearly identify how the area would look and feel.

#12 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

An opportunity exists to consolidate growth around the train station through a development plan process. This could include community facilities and/or mixed use areas enabling a mixture of residential and local commerce (e.g., dairy, café, library, etc.).

#12 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

A) *Is this something you support, and if so, how could this look?*

#12 DISCUSSION

The Land Use Strategy identified the need for further rural commerce, with our reporting identifying that this is difficult to achieve under current development rules. In addition, if development in and around this area is adopted, supporting commerce facilities like those mentioned could assist in creating a sense of community and focal point for nearby residents. Creating such facilities near local transport nodes, like the Maymorn Station, adds to the overall efficiency of providing these services and minimises the potential for conflicting land uses.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Issues and Themes report
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Land Use Strategy
- Focus group discussions

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Most members were supportive of this idea, highlighting the options to also sell locally produced goods within the community. Members stressed that any development style should reflect the area, not adopting standardised commercial designs, and that any new facility should still be accessible and affordable for local people and business operators. Developing this area comprehensively could better ensure quality outcomes.

#13 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

An opportunity exists to accommodate rural lifestyle development along southern proportions of Colletts Road, either nestled into the foothills or along the northern face of the road on flatter areas.

#13 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

A) *Create a Development plan for the areas that are suited for development.*

B) *Create rural lifestyle zoning along appropriate proportions of this area.*

#13 DISCUSSION

The potential development pattern that has come about through this review is to generally minimise development in flatter, open valley areas, focusing development opportunities on suitable foothill areas. A good degree of accessibility, orientation, and desire for more lifestyle development, means that development around this area could be suitable.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Report
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Analysis of resource consenting and focus group discussions

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Most focus group members were supportive of development in this area, stating that smaller lots (as small as 0.5ha) could be suitable. They were accepting of both options to achieve development, however some also preferred for the zoning to remain as is.

#14 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

An opportunity exists to enhance the entrance to Pakuratahi Regional Forest and stimulate local tourism.

#14 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Do you support this, and if so, what do you think the options are?*

#14 DISCUSSION

The Land Use Strategy identified that opportunities exist to establish tourism ventures in the rural area. This opportunity seeks to leverage off Pakuratahi Regional Forest as a destination for recreational tourism and associated enterprise. This could encourage local employment and enhance a sense of identity for the area.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Issues and Themes Report
- Focus group discussions

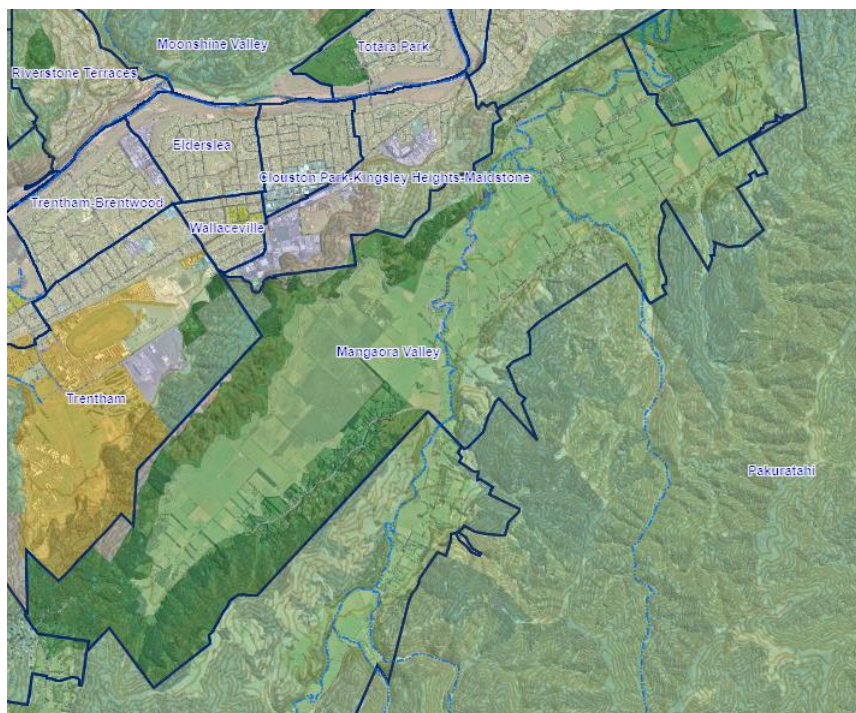
What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Members noted that this could be part of an overall heritage trail in the rural area, and supported the enhancement of the area to create this possibility. Some members questioned whether this was a specific demand and the impact this may have on surrounding activities.

Mangaroa Locality

The Mangaroa Locality is located parallel to the urban area of Upper Hutt, alongside the southern hills. It forms a unique rural area where a high degree of rural amenity is experienced in quite close proximity to the urban area. It would take, for example, 10-15 minutes to drive from the centre of Mangaroa locality to the Wallaceville Train Station to quickly travel to the Wellington CBD.

This area is predominately zoned rural valley floor, with significant hill areas to the south of the locality zoned for lifestyle purposes, the most successful of which is Katherine Mansfield Drive. Other established pockets exist (albeit without supporting zoning), around the Mangaroa School and Wallaceville Church. The area is constrained by steep slopes to the north and south, as well as flood hazards from the Mangaroa River and geotechnical peat hazards over the Mangaroa Peatlands area.



#15 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Reporting has identified both natural hazard constraints and ecological sensitivities within the Mangaroa Peatlands area. Zoning should be more responsive to these constraints.

Two separate plan changes will be developed and consulted on before Plan Change 50 proceeds, and will address ecological and natural hazard issues across the District. Plan Change 47 will address natural hazard risks, while Plan Change 48 will address biodiversity and landscape values.

#15 DISCUSSION

Since this has been identified through other projects, Plan Change 50 will not be addressing controls over this area and no options have been provided. As above, these other plan changes will introduce measures to protect biological values and the avoidance of risk exposure, respectively.

What has informed this issue?

- Coffey Geotechnical Assessment
- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Discussions with Councillors and focus groups

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

There was general support to restrict development in this area. Members commented that this could instead be used as a tourism destination, if farming was not pursued over the area. Members also noted that any decision would need to consider the financial implications on current landowners and occupiers.

#16 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

The established area of Katherine Mansfield is largely at development capacity, however there remain development opportunities on upper ridges, other lifestyle areas further to the southern end of the road, and across the valley from Katherine Mansfield. Standard ribbon development along these areas could reduce positive rural aspects currently enjoyed and create a development that is more urban in appearance.

#16 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Restrict development on upper ridges and change southern zoning to be more general rural.*
- B) *Set provisions for building platform locations to be more responsive to the existing landscape.*
- C) *Rezone the land zoned 'rural lifestyle' at the southern proportion of Katherine Mansfield as 'general rural'.*
- D) *Allow development in the same areas, but increase the required allotment size to be greater than the current 1ha minimum for new lots.*

#16 DISCUSSION

Current lifestyle zoning encircling the Mangaroa Peatland extends to the upper ridges. These are visually exposed areas with a high degree of indigenous vegetation cover and little control for visual intrusion. The options seek to reduce lifestyle zoning to outside of these sensitive areas. Options also seek to address the urbanising effect development on exposed hill sides can have. The introduction of vegetation controls to reflect the current development typology on Katherine Mansfield Drive, and building location controls to ensure buildings are not positioned in a way that detracts from the rural landscape are seen as measures to address these impacts.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Coffey Geotechnical Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

There was support from members to protect ridgelines. Members commented that existing planning currently protects these areas and that their poor accessibility and steep topography meant that there was a lack of interest to build here. Some members supported a wider assessment to recognise their values, similar to the Southern Hills assessment previously undertaken by Council. In terms of development styles, perspectives from members was mixed. Some felt that ribbon development (through general zoning) could achieve good outcomes when suitable development controls were enforced. Members also felt that a density of 2.5ha would be suitable for the area and mitigate any visual or urbanising impacts. There was strong support to avoid development within the peatland area, mitigating against any land stability risk exposure.

#17 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

An opportunity exists to cluster settlement-style development around Mangaroa School, extending along Flux Road/Leonards Road. This could incorporate internal shared pathways, connecting the school to the settlement area.

#17 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Introduce a development plan for this area, specifying general settlement-style layout and outlining anticipated outcomes.*
- B) *Change zoning around this area to enable a settlement, permitting increased residential development and mixed-use development.*

#17 DISCUSSION

Mangaroa School forms an important community focal point, with some rural development already established in close proximity to the school. Reporting has identified that while current underlying zoning does not reflect the settlement pattern, an opportunity exists to develop upon this node, allowing for more settlement-style development around the school to grow upon the established community. Options provided seek feedback as to whether there is desire to more finely direct the development pattern, or to simply provide more enabling zoning.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Discussions with focus groups

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Focus group members provided little feedback to this opportunity, stating that any opportunity needed to be balanced against others in the valley (like in the Te Marua Locality), while others did not believe it was worthwhile creating more enabling zoning. Some members also felt that there could be better utilisation of existing buildings, like the former Defence Force facilities.

#18 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

A natural cross roads exists around the Wallaceville Church intersection, with housing already somewhat clustered around this area. Some Council-owned land also exists, which could be used for a community space, however there are also sections of this area that are predicted to flood.

#18 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Rezoned appropriate proportions as a 'settlement' – allowing for increased residential development, as well as permitting small-scale local commerce and community facilities.*
- B) *Promote / create a structure plan around this area, showing where commercial, housing, community facilities, and indicative roading layout would be located.*

#18 DISCUSSION

As with the opportunity to build upon the Mangaroa School area, a similar opportunity exists around the Wallaceville Church. Community facilities could possibly be created here through utilisation of available Council-owned land and heritage facilities. In addition, a recently consented Café means that this area is seemingly transitioning to more lifestyle development, with a proposal currently underway to change the density on part of the foothills (Riverside Farms). Care needs to be taken that flood hazards are considered for any increase in development opportunities in this area.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Private Plan Change Request (PC51 Riverside Farms)
- District Plan Flood Hazard Extents
- Analysis of resource consenting outcomes and focus group discussions

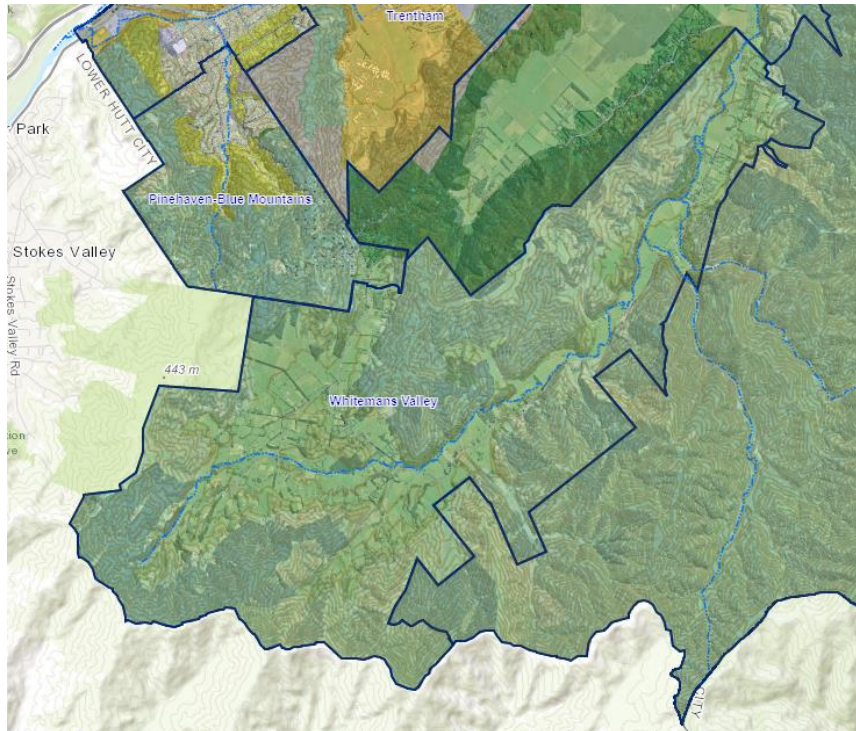
What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

There was support from focus group members for development around this focal point, members predominantly noting that a development plan would be the best option. Some members stated that retaining the current 4ha allotment size on flat areas would be suitable, with 1ha allotments along foothills, noting that any development needs to be balanced. Members also stated that community facilities could be utilised, but flood risk areas could restrict development areas.

Whitemans Valley Locality

The Whitemans Locality is located at the south-western edge of the Upper Hutt District, lying between the Pakuratahi and Blue Mountains areas. Rural production is prevalent in this area, with more lifestyle type occupation existing at northern and southern ends of the locality.

The Mangaroa River originates in this valley, travelling north in a tight valley formation towards the Mangaroa Valley. Flood hazard extents and high slope areas therefore need to be considered.



#19 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

The northern proportion of Whitemans Valley, on the eastern side of the Mangaroa River, is well oriented to the sun. However, under current zoning is largely unable to be developed further. This presents a good opportunity for lifestyle development, up to the foothills.

#19 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Rezone this area to enable rural lifestyle development, subject to building design and vegetation controls.*
- B) *Extend Katherine Mansfield zoning to this area.*
- C) *Establish a development plan to better define development layout and intended outcomes.*

#19 DISCUSSION

This area has been largely developed to its maximum subdivision potential, with the majority of allotments meeting the 4ha minimum allotment size. It is an area with good accessibility and proximity, a moderately

low natural hazard risk exposure, and a strong desire to develop lifestyle areas further means that there may be opportunities to increase development. However, due to the visual exposure of the area, more refined development controls to prevent visual dominance from additional structures may be suitable.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

There was general support for increased development in this area, members noting that the availability of servicing needs to be considered in light of a drying climate. An opportunity to extend the Katherine Mansfield lifestyle zone was also presented. Some members also stated that the area would be better suited for agricultural use and food production.

#20 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

The southern proportion of Whitemans Valley (south of Blue Mountains) is in close proximity to Pinehaven and has been developed as Rural Lifestyle. The open valley however has mostly developed to its permissible limit, with development opportunities isolated to foothill areas. The exposure of these sites means that care needs to be taken as not to appear urban in nature.

#20 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Largely retain existing zoning and introduce provisions to control visibility and clustering of new dwellings/structures.*
- B) *Introduce selective lifestyle zoning alongside strong vegetation controls to shield dwellings and prevent the urbanisation of the area.*

#20 DISCUSSION

While in close proximity to the established urban centre of Pinehaven, limitations still exist which limit the possibilities of increased development in this area. This includes the quality of roading connections over Blue Mountains Road, as well as the exposed nature of this part of the valley, in and around Johnsons Road. Reporting has identified that the gentle slopes and lack of distinct vegetation means increasing development here could be detrimental to the existing rural character of the area. Options have therefore been presented to either maintain existing zoning, or if increasing development is pursued, strong controls are adopted to avoid any negative effects of exposed buildings.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

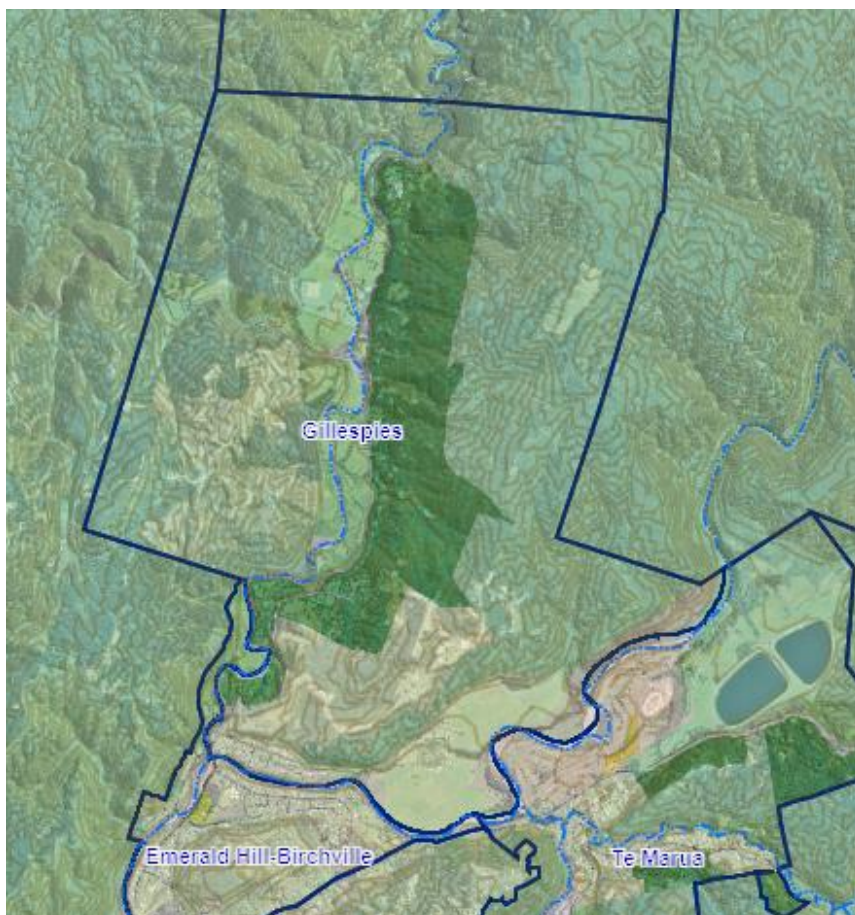
What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Members were in agreement that of sensitivities in the area, noting that additional vegetation controls would be suited for any new dwellings. However, some members also noted that select development, when done with these sensitivities in mind, could be achieved. This included increased density similar to that around Kakariki Way could be feasible, potentially establishing an intermediate zoning (between valley and lifestyle) across the wider area.

Gillespies Locality

The Gillespies Locality is located at the beginning of the Akatarawa Valley and represents the transition from urban to rural living from Gillespies Road onwards. This area includes the largest proportion of lifestyle development in the Akatarawa Valley, located along the western slopes of the valley. Remaining rural land is either used for grazing or forestry, with a large proportion of land held in public ownership.

This lifestyle area has been successfully developed, with recent developments taking place over Fairview Drive and Crest Road (in the order of 50 lots), despite extensive vegetation cover and sloping hill sides. Akatarawa Road represents the singular main road through the area, with a poor degree of accessibility north over the Akatarawa Ranges. The valley also contains the Akatarawa River, which has been subject to historic flooding events.



#21 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Underlying residential zoning around the Fairview Farms area does not reflect its current use or degree of serviceability or sensitivity. There is a risk that additional intensified development here could compromise the overall existing character. In addition, current zoning does not reflect the extent and future extent of the Akatarawa Cemetery.

#21 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Re-zone Fairview Farms residential areas to be more rural lifestyle in nature.*
- B) *Re-zone the current and future extent of the Akatarawa Cemetery.*

#21 DISCUSSION

Recent development in this area has challenged the underlying zoning, as the residential zone extent does not necessarily align with underlying topography and developments have consequently not aligned with zoning extent. Retaining zoning as is could potentially result in an urban form of development taking place in areas that do not reflect their rural surrounds. Future development in the area also needs to be reflective of future Akatarawa Cemetery growth.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions with Councillors and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Focus group members had mixed views on this issue, with an overall desire to maintain the rural feel of the area. They urged caution over any rezoning, which should consider land instability risks, noting that more intensified development in select locations may not be detrimental. Overall, a form of flexibility was desired, subject to achieving outcomes that did not deteriorate the existing rural nature of the area.

#22 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Additional clustered lifestyle development along lower Akatarawa Valley may be appropriate, when visual prominence, hazards, and accessibility are considered.

#22 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Update subdivision controls to enable subdivision that reflects the local landscape by seeking to manage development with controls on: building platform location; larger balance lot subdivision layouts; and vegetation planting.*

#22 DISCUSSION

There is interest within the local community to provide for increased lifestyle opportunities. However, the area has a number of sensitivities that need to be considered alongside any available opportunities to ensure degrading the local environment and increased risk exposure to local residents is avoided. This means protecting local indigenous vegetation and locating development in a way that reflects geotechnical and potential flood risks, as well as mitigating against an increase in visual prominence. Existing lifestyle development directly along the western slopes have largely achieved this, nestling within existing vegetation, reducing their overall prominence and maintaining a rural feel. Any new development should seek to achieve similar outcomes.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions Councillors, Focus groups, and Regional Council.

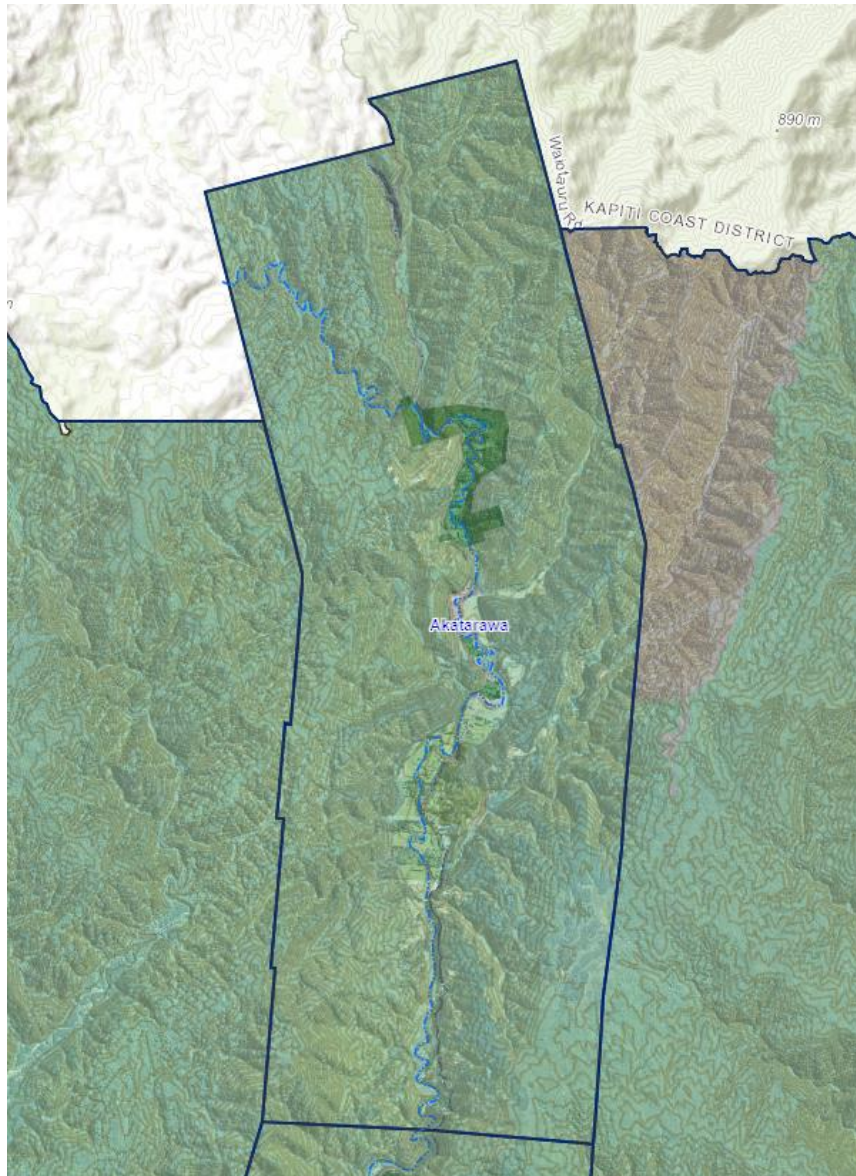
What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Most focus group members were supportive of select development, highlighting opportunities that may exist in lower valleys, so long as good planting approaches were adopted. Some members also preferred retaining current controls, maintaining larger rural blocks.

Akatarawa Locality

The Akatarawa Locality represents the majority of Akatarawa Valley, with the remaining proportion captured under the Gillespies Locality. This is an isolated steep valley, dominated by rural hill zoning. While some pockets of valley floor and lifestyle zoning exist, fewer than 80 dwellings are located here.

Accessibility is limited to Akatarawa Road, leaving the area fairly vulnerable and separated from urban Upper Hutt.



#23 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Poor accessibility, as well as moderately high degrees of natural hazard, ecological, and landscape constraints, means that retention of the current state is appropriate.

#23 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Rezone valley floor area to a 'general rural zone', effectively affixing the current development pattern.*
- B) *Design controls could also be introduced to ensure new dwellings/structures are sympathetic to the surrounding landscape.*

#23 DISCUSSION

With a changing climate, it is important to ensure that rural areas are managed with resilience in mind. Increasing development within the valley would mean increased pressure on a (singular) vulnerable road, while developing in areas that may be subject to natural hazard risks. Development would likely require the removal of established vegetation, potentially diminishing the rural landscape that currently exists. Options have therefore sought to retain current density, while ensuring that any new development is built in a way that reflects its surrounds, rather than detracts from them.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions Councillors, Focus groups, and Regional Council.

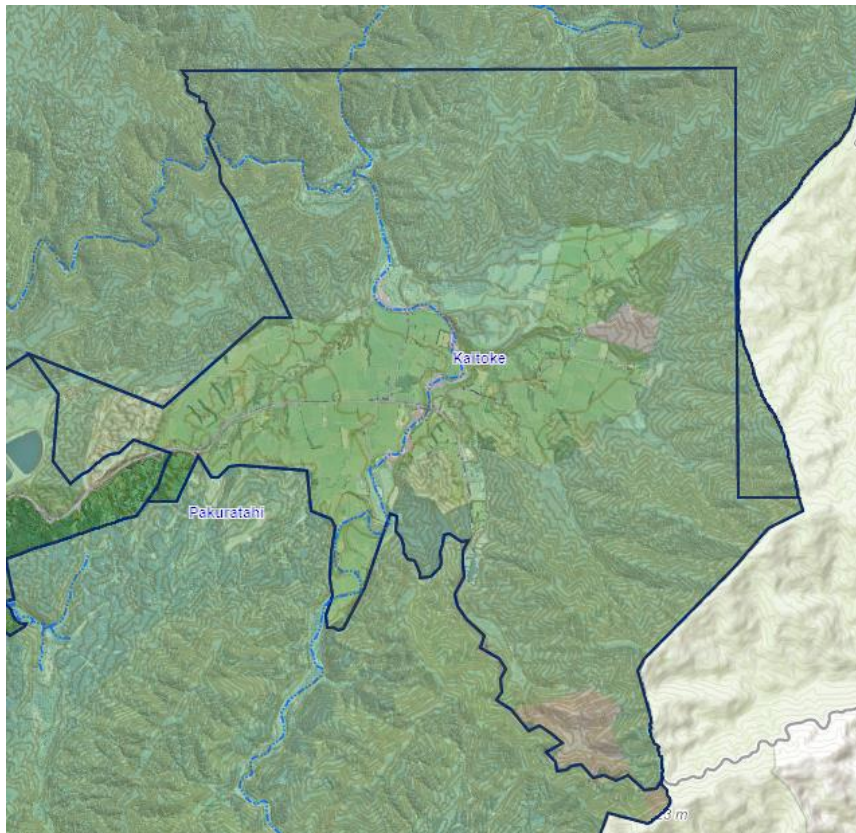
What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Focus group members were generally in favour of introducing controls that ensured that a sensitive design approach was taken. They highlighted that there may be an opportunity to have selective development if the roading infrastructure were to be upgraded. Some members questioned whether there was much potential for productive use, considering the topography of the landscape. Overall, there was support for a mixture of rural uses, when good development principles were applied.

Kaitoke Locality

The Kaitoke Locality captures the Kaitoke Valley proper, including surrounding hill areas and the upper most proportion of State Highway 2 on the Remutaka Ranges. A simplistic zoning philosophy is adopted here, with flatter proportions zoned as valley floor and steeper slopes as rural hill. Some local recreational areas are zoned for open space with a small pocket of lifestyle zoning at the western end.

It is estimated that just over 100 dwellings are located in this area. A number of local businesses are located here, established through resource consents and existing use rights. The open expanse of the valley means that there is a high degree of visual exposure in flatter portions. Care therefore needs to be taken that development ensures a balanced approach is adopted to retain the rural localism of the area.



#24 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

While there currently remains a moderate level of additional development capacity, this has not been taken up. The open form of the valley offers poor screening of additional development. Its distance to urban areas and singular connection via the State Highway means this is also not suited to a denser rural lifestyle typology.

#24 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Maintain predominant zoning type.*

- B) *Introduce controls to ensure a more responsive design for new dwellings/structures through the likes of: managing building platform locations; establishing minimum frontages; design controls; mitigation planting requirement; limited spacing between accessways, etc.*

#24 DISCUSSION

This issue is reflective of two core local sensitivities: separation from urban Upper Hutt and the wide pastoral valley floor. Located over 150m higher in elevation, some 15km up State Highway 2, the valley remains fairly isolated and is reliant of a single form of access. As previous, the open expanse of the valley means that increases in density and/or development could easily degrade the current rural feel of the area. Development opportunities therefore need to be carefully considered with self-sufficiency and suitable development typology in mind. The options provided here seek to largely retain current density rules, with supplementary sensitivity controls for any additional development.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions Councillors, and Focus groups.

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

There was strong support throughout the focus group for increases in development controls to direct more responsive and integrated designs, as well as largely maintaining current density. Members highlighted transportation issues, with the reliance on State Highway 2 and associated safety concerns. They also noted that there may be opportunities to direct any development to more targeted location, such as future development in and around the agricultural research farm.

#25 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Some established commercial/industrial ventures lack support in the District Plan and rely on existing use rights, current home occupation rules, or established resource consents to operate. An opportunity exists for this to be further protected through the District Plan.

#25 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *What do you think the options are to reflect this in the District Plan?*

#25 DISCUSSION

The isolation of Kaitoke Valley means that there is a degree of dependence on support services to service rural living. The provision of local enterprise therefore represents an important rural facility, as well as facilitating a greater sense of local identity and a focal point for the surrounding community. Despite this, established zoning makes this difficult to achieve, and established enterprises exist as of right (predate the current Plan rules) or have obtained resource consent to operate. Introducing a new zoning type that provides sufficient flexibility could improve local outcome.

What has informed this issue?

- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes; discussions Councillors, and Focus groups.

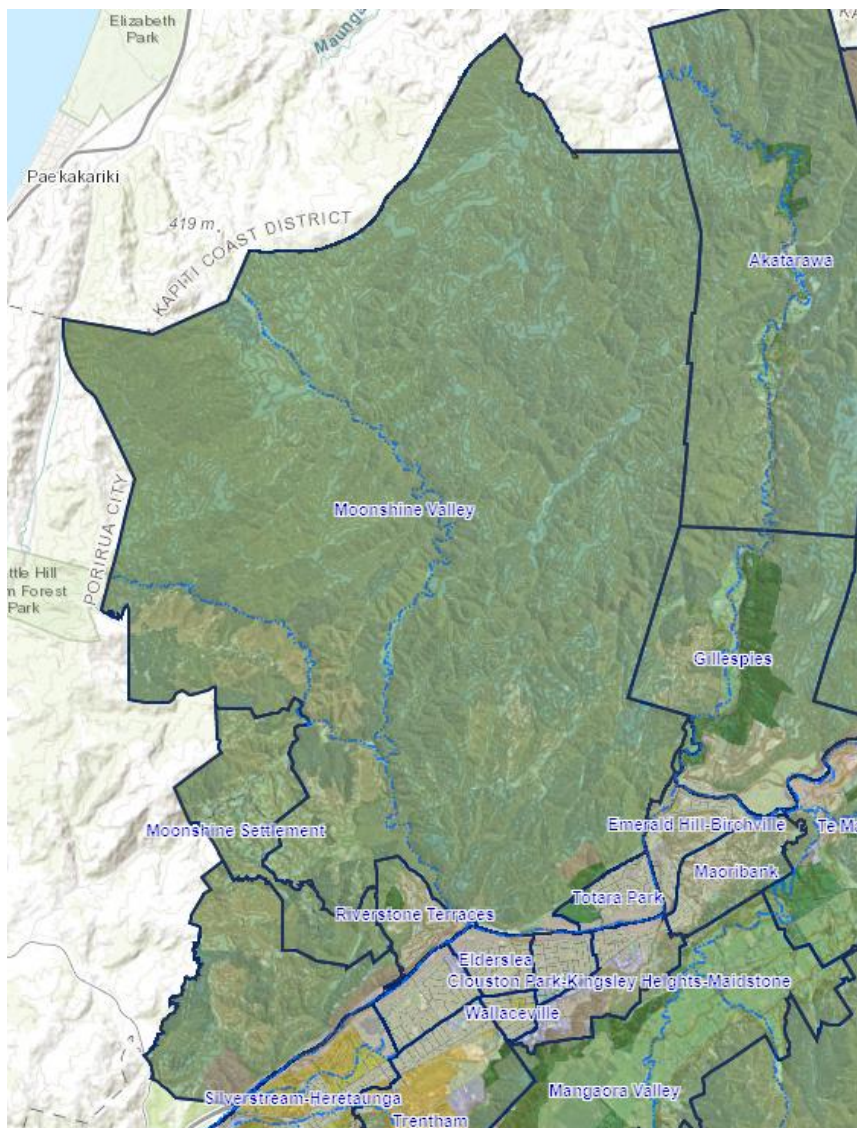
What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

There was general support for this opportunity, with an overall desire to simplify rules to make it easier to apply when developing. One option that was raised was simply to create such controls for rural zoning, rather than denoting zoned areas where such activities may be possible. Some members also felt that validation through zoning could increase development in the area, urbanising the valley.

Moonshine Valley Locality

The Moonshine Valley Locality captures the north-western corner of the Upper Hutt District, and is split through the middle with the Moonshine Settlement Locality. The area is a hilly, vegetated landscape, and exclusively held within the rural hill zoning.

The locality is dominated by the Akatarawa Forest Regional Park, resulting in a high degree of public ownership. Land use activities are largely limited to recreation, forestry, and drink water catchments, with little to no additional development.



#26 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

Steep topography and poor accessibility means that little to no additional development is anticipated. The area also contains a high degree of vegetation cover and significant landscapes, while largely being retained in public ownership.

#26 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Retention of current zoning is appropriate, with additional development controls for new dwellings/structures to adopt a landscape responsive design.*

#26 DISCUSSION

As above, considering the current land use, topography, and land ownership, it is thought that current zoning controls would be appropriate. Any privately owned areas have a poor degree of accessibility and high degree of isolation, resulting in a lack of demand for any increase in development potential.

What has informed this issue?

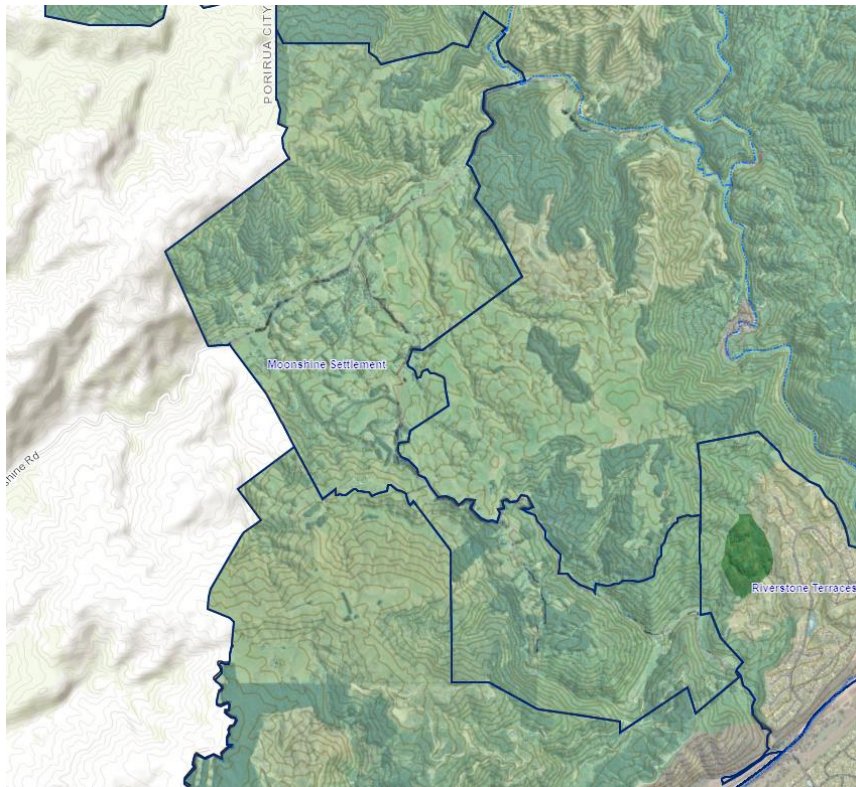
- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Rural Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Rural Economic Assessment
- Analysis of Resource Consenting outcomes and focus group discussions

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

The focus group had mixed views on the options provided, stating that in some areas 4ha allotments may be possible, and that generally a more flexible zoning control could be implemented when good outcomes are still defined.

Moonshine Settlement Locality

The Moonshine Settlement Locality is the part of the Moonshine Valley area where denser allotments are located, and where rural occupation is more prevalent. The area is exclusively captured by the rural hill zone, despite containing areas more akin to rural settlement. The latter is centred upon the intersection of Moonshine Hill and Bulls Run Roads.



#27 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

This area is fairly isolated and maintains a stronger relationship with the likes of Porirua, through its connection to SH58. Development here is restricted by underlying zoning and topography, however a cluster of housing has developed over time around the eastern proportion of Bulls Run Road, with current zoning not reflecting current density.

#27 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Retention of current zoning for steep slopes.*
- B) *In the area where Moonshine Hill Road and Bulls Run Road intersect, changing zoning to reflect current use could be appropriate, subject to good design and mitigation planting rules.*

#27 DISCUSSION

While a cluster of dwellings already exist in this area, zoning does not reflect this. The Moonshine Valley Road and Bulls Run Road intersection presents as a more softly sloping landscape, when compared to the larger Moonshine Valley surrounds. Previous RMA Plans for the Upper Hutt District have not sought to

increase density in this area beyond the most restrictive rural zoning, therefore this review presents as an opportunity to consider whether retaining this zoning is appropriate. As above, the area is in close proximity to SH58, being only 5km from the Judgeford intersection (within the Porirua District) where a further increase in development is anticipated. This therefore may be a viable opportunity to increase density.

What has informed this issue?

- Rural Land Use Assessment
- Porirua Draft District Plan Review
- Discussions with Councillors and Focus Groups

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

The focus group expressed support for options to increase development in this area, some stating that development on hill block sites could be suitable. Some members also noted that predicted changes in land demand as a result of Transmission Gully may result in increased housing demand for the area.

#28 ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY

There is currently a disincentive to develop in this area due to paper roads. A rule relating to the treatment of paper roads could be introduced as removing these is an expensive and time-consuming exercise.

#28 OPTIONS / QUESTIONS

- A) *Review subdivision controls for paper roads in this area.*

#28 DISCUSSION

Paper roads represent those areas where Council currently intends, or historically intended to, further extend or develop public roading. As these are a land ownership instrument with legal defined parcel boundaries, it means that District Plan yard setback rules apply. This means that paper roads can artificially encumber development potential where paper roads are not planned to be given effect to. While the District Plan cannot remove paper roads, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate for setback rules to be relaxed where there is no obvious or planning intention to develop the road.

What has informed this issue?

- Analysis of Resource Consenting and focus group discussions

What have our Focus Group told us on this issue?

Members supported the removal of paper roads in the area as a means to increase flexibility.

Have we captured everything?

The above represents the conclusions of reporting completed by Council and feedback received from our community focus groups. We want your feedback on these topics, but also to know whether there are any other prominent issues you feel should be addressed through the plan change project.

To make a submission:

- see our webpage: www.upperhuttcity.com/pc50
- complete the forms sent to your mailbox
- come to your local library or Council office to make a submission
- attend a drop in session

Submission are open until **19 April 2020**.