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Rural Land Use Assessment for Upper Hutt

PREPARED FOR UPPER HUTT CITY COUNCIL
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PERCEPTION PLANNING LIMITED

UPPER HUTT RURAL LAND USE ASSESSMENT

1

Summary and recommendations

WHAT'S THE RURAL LAND USE ASSESSMENT ABOUT?

The provisions in the Upper Hutt City Council District Plan (District Plan, the Plan) which relate to the rural environment are being reviewed. Reviews take place every ten years or so, to make sure the provisions still work and match what communities want.

A review is needed because:

- Some consent applications and requests for changes to the plan in the last few years made it clear that the rural provisions haven't been delivering the outcomes that the community wants.
- There is a lot of new information which needs to be brought into the plan, for example in relation to natural hazards.
- There are new restrictions and regulations from central or regional government which need to be reflected in the District Plan, for example in relation to special landscapes, indigenous vegetation, water quality, climate change and urban development.

A RURAL LAND USE ASSESSMENT (RLUA) TO SET THE SCENE

Reviewing those rural provisions is a huge task. To help this process, the council needs a good understanding of the trends, drivers and community expectations for Upper Hutt's rural environment.

To assist, the Council commissioned a Rural Land Use Assessment (RLUA). The RLUA analyses a vast amount of information about the rural area and distils it into a big picture overview. It was supported by separate pieces of work on landscape values and sensitivity (reported in the Landscape Report) and a detailed look at the rural economy (reported in Appendix 5). As the analysis was carried out, ways to improve or fill in gaps in the plan provisions became apparent. Therefore, the RLUA report also makes planning recommendations for the Council to consider as they review the rural provisions.

The RLUA answers these questions:

1. What is happening in Upper Hutt's rural environment (what is currently there, and what are the trends and drivers of change since 2015, when the last review was done)?
2. What aspirations might the community have for the rural area (based on previous community consultation feedback)?
3. What changes and activities are likely to happen in the rural environment in the future, and what responses might be needed?
4. How can the District Plan be updated to manage those future changes?

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN UPPER HUTT'S RURAL ENVIRONMENT?

The review considered a lot of new information, which is set out in Appendix 2. The key features of the Upper Hutt rural environment are:

Economy

Upper Hutt's rural economy is mainly from forestry and sheep and beef farming. There is very little horticulture, but there has been a recent upswing in forestry harvesting (as trees have matured). Strong commodity prices and a level of diversification of smaller properties to other types of primary production means that the rural economy is currently buoyant.

Past community feedback shows that they want to support rural business growth, and welcome tourism into the rural areas (in particular cycling).

Environment

Rural Upper Hutt is dominated by rivers, and by steep hill country that is covered in production forest or native vegetation. Natural hazards (erosion, faults, and flooding) have a big influence on how the district manages and uses its rural land. Past community feedback shows that they want to protect natural, open spaces and established rural activities (farming, forestry).

Community and housing

A lot of people have been moving to Upper Hutt's rural areas in the past decade,

especially places close to urban zones. The area is seen as an attractive commuter location.

Past community feedback shows that they want to protect the natural quality of the rural environment, and don't want too much urban expansion into the rural areas.

Movement and Infrastructure

Rural roads in Upper Hutt are narrow and used by many different users, which causes conflict. More people moving to rural areas puts pressure on existing roads and infrastructure.

Past community feedback shows that they think new technologies should be embraced when upgrading infrastructure to help improve the environment and manage infrastructure assets.

WHAT STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS HAS OUR ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTED?

The RLUA then looked at trends and changes and what implications these might have for managing rural development and activities in the future. The following table provides an overview:

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>The different rural localities all have their own particular characteristics and qualities, which provides a wide range of choice for rural living. Many of the rural areas are relatively accessible to the urban area.</p> <p>There is potential for further infill development in the rural areas, if this is done sensitively, using a planned approach (e.g. Structure or Outline Plans).</p> <p>Forestry is a key player in the Upper Hutt rural economy. The City's exotic forest</p> | <p>There is projected population growth in the rural areas, but limited remaining subdivision capacity (under the Operative Plan).</p> <p>The Operative Plan provisions do not provide a long-term approach to planning for the rural environment and do not make it easy to adopt more innovative ways of managing new development (like clusters).</p> <p>Infrastructure constraints - There are high average maintenance costs for rural roads,</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>plantations are small relative to those of other regions, but they are of economic scale and are relatively close to market and rail connections.</p> <p>Pastoral farming is likely to continue to be economically attractive, if strong commodity prices continue. Farms in Upper Hutt may be more resilient to climate change than other parts of the region.</p> <p>The Council has excellent spatial data to assist in planning for natural hazards, landscape values, indigenous vegetation values, projected population growth and requirements for infrastructure planning – following the work undertaken for the NPS UDC. This is an excellent evidence base on which to plan for individual localities.</p> | <p>and the limited design capacity and function of rural roads will make it difficult to accommodate future rural growth without investment. Higher density rural residential development is likely to require significant investment in 3 waters infrastructure.</p> <p>There is limited understanding of community values as they relate to individual rural localities.</p> |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> | <p>THREATS</p> |
| <p>The rural area is no longer a solely productive landscape, but provides a unique and attractive lifestyle within commuting distance of a major city.</p> <p>Planned rail, bus and strategic road network improvements will increase demand for rural living.</p> <p>Upper Hutt’s rural land makes a useful, but marginal, contribution to New Zealand’s overall agricultural and forestry production. It could be an area in which to accommodate increased urban development in the Greater Wellington area.</p> | <p>While the majority of projected population growth will occur in urban areas, there is a strong demand for rural residential living, which needs to be managed carefully to maintain rural character and amenity, and prevent unsustainable patterns of commuting.</p> <p>Future changes to the Wellington Region’s climate are likely to be significant, and will create resilience issues in rural communities. As land values increase there will be increasing pressure to develop land identified as erosion-prone,</p> |

Lifestyle sized enterprises can be a source of experimentation and innovation that is not always possible in larger businesses. Many of these activities may be able to take place on smaller blocks of 4 hectares or less.

Looking after valued landscapes and natural areas will have flow-on benefits for the local economy and community wellbeing, by protecting existing rural character and amenity.

There is an opportunity to be innovative and strategic in the rural environment. Cluster development can support home-based employment, retain the productive capacity of land, provide flexibility to adapt to climate change - and still offer a unique rural lifestyle.

The flat topography of the valley floors is ideal for non-motorised transport and there is an opportunity to create a good quality network of safe, shared paths.

The plan review provides an opportunity to protect significant and valued landscapes and indigenous biodiversity. This will be addressed by a separate plan change, prior to PC50 being notified.

which is likely to be increasingly subject to hazards.

Changing pest distributions, increased risk of droughts and floods, changes in river flows and reduced availability of water will all impact on primary productivity in the future. There could be increasing competition for water resources between urban and rural land uses in the future.

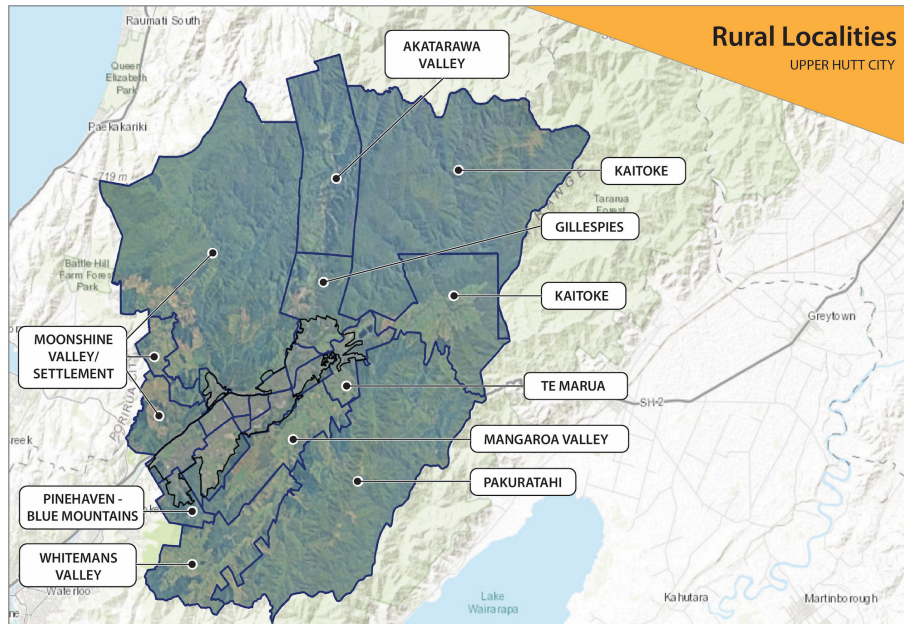
Policies designed to mitigate climate change are also likely to encourage more forestry. However, this needs to be considered alongside future predicted impacts of climate change, including a substantial increase in wildfire risk from exotic plantations, and reduced soil fertility. These adverse impacts could be worsened by this policy approach.

Parts of the rural community have previously been resistant to strategic development, like the Maymorn Structure Plan. The local community will need to be part of the development of any future proposals of this nature.

Piecemeal plan changes could make it difficult for rural landowners and stakeholders to understand the full complexity of potential changes.

ANALYSING THE RURAL LOCALITIES

After looking at the whole of the rural environment, the RLUA then split the district into localities, to make this large area easier to talk about. Here are all the rural localities.



The RLUA looked at a number of these individual rural localities in detail, including:

1. Te Marua
2. Mangaroa Valley
3. Whitemans Valley
4. Gillespies
5. Akatarawa Valley
6. Kaitoke
7. Moonshine Valley/Settlement.

It didn't look at all of them though, because some of them would not be appropriate places for development, and that's the main thing that would trigger the need to change rural plan provisions.

Each locality was analysed in great detail, using a consistent set of criteria which could either assist or constrain future development. The criteria drew on the information that had been collected and analysed above. (Appendix 1 explains the rationale and detail behind these criteria, and why this approach was used). To make it easier to see how each locality measured up to the assessment criteria, the RLUA contains a 'traffic light' chart (Appendix 3) for each of the rural localities.

With the help of this assessment and a landscape sensitivity analysis, the RLUA identified recommendations for each of the localities for managing future development.

HOW CAN THE DISTRICT PLAN RESPOND TO ALL THESE THINGS?

As well as recommendations for individual localities, the RLUA has identified some suggestions for the District Plan to manage development across the whole of the rural environment. Some of these recommendations are small in scale, while others are more strategic in nature. Broadly, the recommendations cover:

8. Some problems with the current District Plan, and how these might be tackled
9. Introducing some planning tools to help manage the impacts of new development on rural character and valued landscapes
10. Things to think about when implementing the National Planning Standards - including how the plan is structured, what it covers and what zones it includes
11. Planning at a 'big picture' scale through structure or outline plans, to provide a guide for future development
12. Responding to climate change challenges in the rural environment.

TO TAKE THIS WORK FORWARD, THE COUNCIL WILL NEED TO:

The final section of the RLUA sets out next steps and further work that will be needed to implement the recommendations in the report:

13. Talk to the community about the changes needed, the implications of climate change and confirm what communities' value about the rural area
14. Review the National Planning Standards, to see which elements should be adopted through the plan change
15. Work with iwi, to understand the relationships and connections iwi have with the local rural area and their aspirations for the rural environment
16. Work with the Regional Council, to understand the implications of and outcomes for planning under the new Regional Plan
17. Updating the RLUA if needed, to take account of this work.

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1 Introduction

1. Upper Hutt City Council (Upper Hutt District) is in the process of reviewing its District Plan. As part of that process, the Council needs to review the provisions that manage the use, development and protection of the rural environment. To inform the rural part of the review, the Council wants to understand the trends, drivers and community expectations that will influence how the rural area will change over time.
2. This Rural Land Use Assessment report looks at the trends and drivers of change in rural land use in Upper Hutt since 2015. The report will provide an evidence base from which to challenge, develop and test new management responses to these changes. The report will be the springboard to support a review of the rural zone provisions in the Operative Upper Hutt District Plan.
3. To make sense of the vast amount of information that is available, our assessment set out to answer the following questions:
 - What does the Upper Hutt rural environment look like?
 - What is happening in Upper Hutt's rural environment (in terms of trends and drivers of change)?
 - What aspirations might the community have for the rural area, based on past consultation responses?
 - What is likely to happen in the future, and what might be the response to future change?
 - How can the District Plan respond?
4. Answers to the first three questions provide a stock-take of where things are at since the Upper Hutt Rural Strategy Foundation Report – Volume I was prepared in 2015 (more on this in the background section).
5. Answers to the last two questions identify the potential opportunities and any constraints that should inform a review of the District Plan rural zone provisions. We have also undertaken a high-level review of benefits,

costs and risks to inform a future s32 Resource Management Act (RMA) analysis.

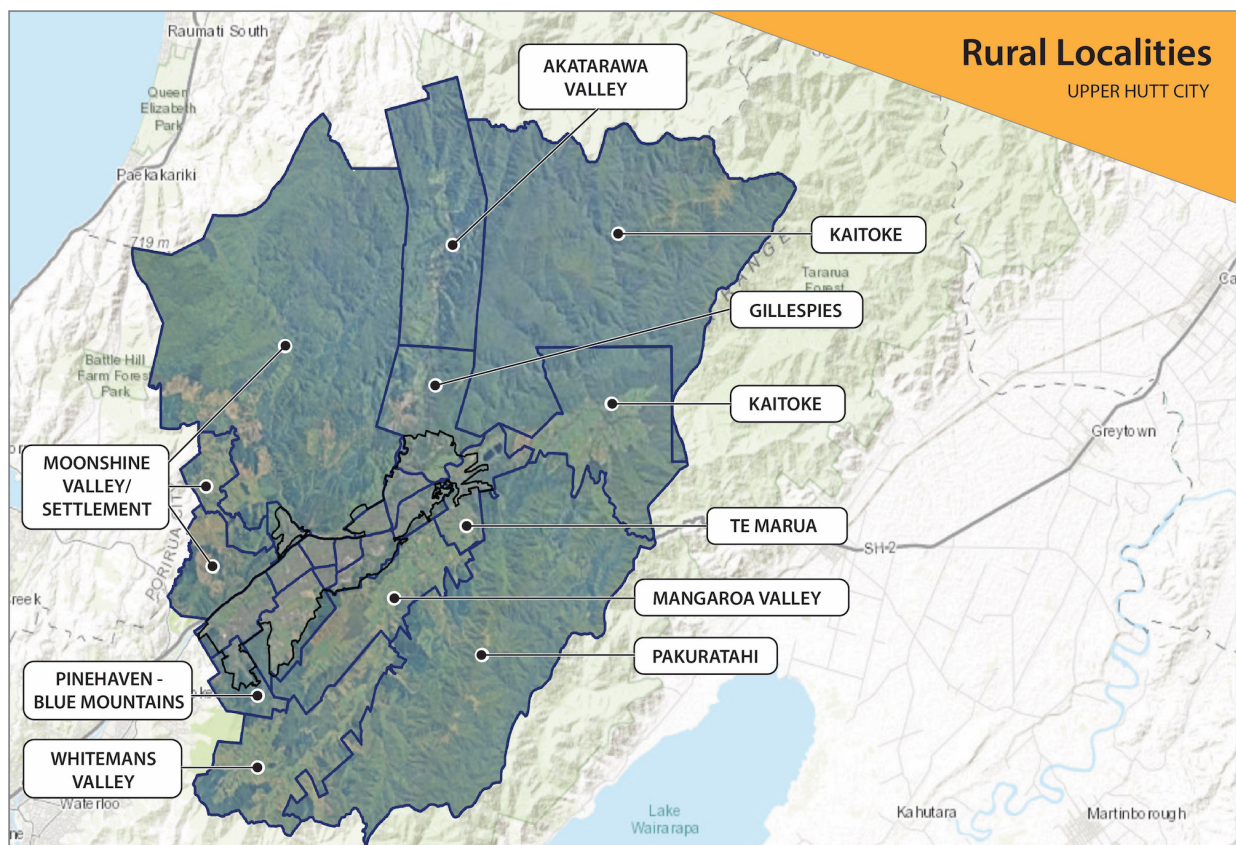
6. Two stand-alone research reports were commissioned to support this report:
 - An updated landscape character assessment and sensitivity analysis for the rural area
 - An economic analysis of land uses and activities in the Upper Hutt rural environment.

1.1 Background

7. In 2015, Perception Planning prepared the Upper Hutt Rural Strategy Foundation Report – Volume 1 (‘the Foundation Report’). The Foundation Report identified characteristics and trends within rural Upper Hutt which would inform the development of a Rural Strategy. Work on the Rural Strategy was later incorporated into a wider Land Use Strategy for Upper Hutt (2016-2026) (LUS) which encompasses both the urban and rural areas.
8. In the four years since the Foundation Report was prepared, additional plans, strategies, reports and other resources have been developed which are relevant to an assessment of Upper Hutt’s rural area. This latest information has informed our Rural Land Use Assessment (RLUA) report.
9. Specifically, this Rural Land Use Assessment (RLUA) has been informed by:
 - The Council’s latest GIS data, based on rural ‘localities’ defined by the Council (Figure 1).
 - Historic consenting and sales data from 2006-2018.
 - Detailed analysis and modelling undertaken to respond to the National Policy Statement for Urban Development Capacity (NPS UDC), identifying growth projections in the rural area.

- Recent community consultation to identify values with respect to the rural environment.
- Current opportunities to stimulate or guide innovative rural land use and development.
- The proposed zones, overlays, precincts and other spatial planning tools set out in the National Planning Standards 2019.
- The potential impact of climate change projections on rural land use.
- The impact of any policy or legislative changes at the national or regional level (for example, the proposed Regional Natural Resources Plan), recommendations emerging from the Whaitua te Whanganui-a-Tara planning process, and any Treaty Settlement processes.

FIGURE 1: THE RURAL LOCALITIES OF UPPER HUTT DISTRICT



1.2 Limitations and Assumptions

10. We reviewed many documents in preparing this report. As with all planning processes, we don't have a perfect understanding of all the factors that come to bear on this assessment, and some useful information was not available at the time of writing. This assessment may need to be reviewed and revisited when that work is available.
11. In light of this, here are the key assumptions and limitations we worked under:
 - The 2018 Census data was not available at the time of writing. This report relies on the population projections undertaken by Upper Hutt District to implement the NPS-UDC.
 - The growth options for the rural area use the options from the LUS 2016-2043 as a starting point. This acknowledges the level of community involvement and endorsement of the strategy.
 - A review of new information on natural hazards, infrastructure requirements and the potential locations of significant natural areas and outstanding landscape values is based on information that is currently publicly available. Where we used information that is not yet in the public domain, we were careful when drawing conclusions based on this data.
 - Liquefaction hazard has not been mapped as this information was not available at a sufficiently detailed scale at the time of writing. This report may need to be revisited once the geotechnical report is available.
 - Information on roading capacity is based on modelling done by Stantec in 2019, to identify and measure transport network deficiencies out to 2028, using the recently completed base 2013 Upper Hutt Transportation Model and future Urban Development Capacity (UDC) land use and population data.
 - Our understanding of community values is drawn from what was recorded from previous engagement processes undertaken by the Council. This includes the development of the LUS 2016-2043, the

Council's Long-Term Plan, workshops with Councillors and the local government restructure proposals. There is limited understanding of community values as they relate to individual rural localities. The Council is in the process of convening a Rural Community Forum for the purposes of engaging with the rural community on PC50. This forum was not in place at the time this report was being prepared. This report may need to be revisited once consultation has taken place.

- Iwi have not been consulted in the preparation of this assessment.
- The Climate Change projections in this report are based on a 'worst-case' or business as usual scenario (RCP 8.5). It is not possible to predict what emissions scenario will actually be achieved in the future.
- A consultation document on the proposed National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land was released as this draft report was being finalised. We didn't have an opportunity to review and consider the implications of the consultation document in detail at the time of writing.
- Our analysis of building consent data is based on issued codes of compliance. Building consent records from 2006-2016 were exported in Aug 2018, and 2017 and 2018 records were exported in May 2019. The records therefore provide a 'snapshot of a live record entry', and do not provide a full picture of the total certificates which will be issued.

12. The RLUA report may need to be revisited and reviewed when related workstreams are completed in the second half of 2019 and 2020.

2 What does the Upper Hutt rural environment look like and what is currently happening there?

13. This section is a broad overview of the key features, trends and drivers influencing the Upper Hutt rural area, alongside communities' aspirations captured in previous consultations¹. This summary is drawn from an extensive review and analysis of available information. The full analysis is set out in Appendix 2. The summary below follows the key themes in the Council's Long-Term Plan (LTP) and LUS.

2.1 Economy²

WHAT DOES THE ECONOMY IN RURAL UPPER HUTT LOOK LIKE?

- The Upper Hutt rural area is quite unique, as large tracts of the rural environment is in public ownership, rather than private, with the majority of the privately-owned land located on the valley floors.
- The most predominant productive land uses in the rural environment are forestry, and various forms of beef and sheep farming.
- Other types of farming enterprises are much rarer, with less than half a dozen enterprises for each of the following categories: horses, dairy cattle, poultry (eggs), crops, floriculture (under cover) and berry fruit.

¹ These include public consultation to inform development of the LUS 2016 and the Council's Long Term Plan.

² The data is taken from the Economic Analysis of Rural Land Use in Upper Hutt, prepared by Peter MacIntyre of Sapere Research as part of this assessment, but reported separately in Appendix 5.

- There is little horticulture in the Upper Hutt District area. Just 2 hectares of blueberries and a hectare of floriculture were recorded in 2017.

WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING TO THE RURAL ECONOMY?

- The number of farms in the district has been falling since 2002, with a significant fall of 18 enterprises between the 2012 and 2017 agricultural production census results. The overall figure has dropped from 135 to 96.
- Agricultural production census results from 2002-2017 show decreasing numbers of farms in most of the hectare ranges. The exceptions are farms between 60 and 79 hectares and those in the larger bands of 600 to 1999 hectares. This may indicate a degree of aggregation of larger rural properties in the district (or sampling errors).
- Trends in land use in Upper Hutt District are likely to largely match those observed in the rest of the country. These include a relatively buoyant agricultural and forestry sector due to good commodity prices relative to historic price trends.
- There is some evidence of increased forest harvesting and an emphasis on cattle over sheep in the district (farms switching from sheep to cattle). The latter has been largely driven by better beef prices for a longer period compared to sheep meat prices.
- Dairying is currently a minor land use activity in the Upper Hutt District and has been declining³. The level of decline is

³ Dairy farms have reduced from 6 to 3 between the 2012 agricultural production census and the 2017 one.

much greater than the decline in dairy cattle in New Zealand overall. This may be due to the volatility of the milk solid price in the last decade. Dairying is likely to come under increasing pressures and face greater costs given environmental concerns about the quality of freshwater resources and greater urbanisation in the district.

- Of the 96 farms recorded in the last Agricultural census (2017), only 9 have some sort of formal nutrient planning document.
- The rarer farm types (deer, pig) show sharp variation over the 15 years. This may indicate a changing emphasis in mixed farming operations leading farms to define themselves differently (or may be due to sampling challenges with small sample sets).
- The increase in exotic plantation harvesting in the District over recent years has been driven by the number of plantation forests nearing the optimum harvest age, and by improved returns from forestry as log prices have climbed relative to historic prices.

WHAT ASPIRATIONS HAVE THE COMMUNITY PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED FOR THE RURAL ECONOMY?

- Increased flexibility and versatility within the District Plan would allow for development of new businesses that are compatible with the rural environment.
- More reliable infrastructure is required to support rural business growth, especially broadband internet access.
- The community is supportive of encouraging tourism in the rural environment, including cycling tourism in particular.

2.2 Environment

WHAT DOES THE ENVIRONMENT IN RURAL UPPER HUTT LOOK LIKE?

- Rural land makes up 96% of the total land resource in the District. Of the productive rural land, 78% is either planted production forest or grassland. 20% is made up of mature native bush or native scrub and regenerating native bush. Other land, and arable crop land, fodder crop land and fallow land accounts for the balance of 2%.
- Areas of pasture are predominantly located in valley floor areas. Rural Upper Hutt is dominated visually and geographically by steep hill country that is covered in production forest or native vegetation. Some of this indigenous vegetation (i.e. Kaitoke Rainforest) is of high ecological significance and is not found in many other locations in the lower North Island.
- Around half of all the items listed in the District Plan as having heritage significance are located in the rural area.
- The District has significant landscape values associated with the rural valleys.

WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING TO THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT?

- Change in land cover since 2002 (data from successive agricultural production census results) shows an increase in land devoted to grassland and a reduction in land being used in planted production forest. These two trends could be the result of harvesting the plantations due to attractive log prices, with some land returned to pasture. Trends also point toward a decline in land that is in mature native bush, native scrub and regenerating native bush.

- The need to retain high class soils in productive use is less of an issue for the City than in other rural areas, as there is no Class 1 land and a limited area of Class 2 land. There are areas of Class 3 land located in the Kaitoke, Mangaroa, Akatarawa and Whiteman's valleys. The Class 2 land is located in the Gillespies Future Growth Area. Soil productivity is likely to be altered by climate change.
- Run-off from agricultural use is affecting water quality in the Mangaroa and Hutt Rivers.
- Natural hazards including erosion, fault bands, flooding, overflow paths and ponding associated with rivers, play a significant factor in governing land use, and this is expected to increase with climate change

WHAT ASPIRATIONS HAVE THE COMMUNITY PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED FOR THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT?

- Open spaces, quietness and naturalness are qualities that people value about the rural area.
- Agricultural activities are important features that define the rural character.
- The rights of established rural activities should be protected.
- There is support for using formal methods to give more protection to areas that have been identified as valuable for either amenity or ecology reasons.
- The rural environment is changing, with amenity and natural values now sharing emphasis with traditional productive uses.

2.3 Community and Housing

WHAT DOES LIVING IN RURAL UPPER HUTT LOOK LIKE?

- Over the past twelve years there has been a strong trend of people moving to rural Upper Hutt for rural lifestyle opportunities.
- The most popular areas for rural living have been those closest to the urban area (Te Marua, Mangaroa, Gillespies). However, most of the rural areas have experienced growth (Moonshine Valley and Pakuratahi are the exceptions) and sales prices relative to assessed value are rising.
- 456 new lots were created in rural areas between 2006 and 2018.
- Popular recreational activities in the rural area include road and off-road cycling, horse riding, walking, hunting, 4WD driving, motorcross and camping.
- Rural communities consider themselves to be well connected socially.

WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING TO RURAL LIVING?

- The overall population of Upper Hutt is growing, but also aging, the age band of 65+ is expected to double over next 30 years. There is an overall trend towards smaller households.
- Population forecasts prepared for the NPS UDC work predict that most of the growth in the rural areas will be in the Akatarawa/Gillespies/Kaitoke valleys (an increase of at least 1,525 people between 2017 and 2047), Te Marua, (an increase of at least 1,231 people in the same time frame) and at least a further 498 in Mangaroa Valley/Whitemans Valley. Much of the

growth in the Gillespies area will be within the Future Growth Area, which is zoned urban. There will be a rapid percentage increase from 2027 onwards. There is a strong emphasis on edge expansion in the LUS for the next 10-30 years.

- Most of the permissible (i.e. controlled activity status) subdivision capacity in the rural area has been taken up (under current zoning provisions). What capacity is left is generally restrained by other factors such as topography, access, hazards, or presence of indigenous vegetation.
- The population data illustrates a strong demand and uptake of rural residential living between 2006-2018. This is particularly demonstrated in the valleys which are accessible to the urban area, such as Te Marua, Mangaroa, and Gillespies, where very little subdivision potential remains. There has also been significant activity in the less accessible Whiteman's Valley. Other less accessible areas such as Kaitoke and Akatarawa valleys have also been growing in popularity in recent years, as subdivision opportunities in the more accessible locations have become restricted. Moonshine Settlement/Valley is the only locality where growth has been modest.

WHAT ASPIRATIONS HAVE THE COMMUNITY PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED FOR RURAL LIVING?

- The sense of spaciousness and low level of development is a key feature of the amenity of rural areas.
- The quality of the natural environment is a key contributor to quality of life. Rural landscape, natural and amenity values should be maintained. Future development needs to be in keeping with the surrounding environment.
- Many residents feel that housing development at an urban density should not occur on the hill slopes around the city and in rural areas.

- If development on the hills around the city is allowed, it would need to be carefully considered and be respectful of amenity, landscape and ecological values. Hillsides should be used sparingly and sensitively to ensure the green backdrop of Upper Hutt dominates the valley landscape.
- Intensification of the existing urban areas of the city is preferred to urban density expansion into the rural areas.
- New development needs to take into account servicing and infrastructure requirements.
- There is a high demand for semi-rural lifestyle housing. There is an expectation that the Council should ensure there are enough rural properties for 'lifestyle' options to meet market demand.

2.4 Movement and Infrastructure

WHAT DOES MOVEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN RURAL UPPER HUTT LOOK LIKE?

- The rural road network is often narrow, winding, with steep gradients. In some valleys there is only one road in and out.
- There are a large number of single lane bridges on the rural road network.
- These features cause multi-user conflicts between horse riders, pedestrians, cyclists, stock, farm vehicles and other motorised vehicles.

WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING TO RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE?

- Pressures on the rural road network are increasing, as rural lifestyle development increases.

- Rural roads are more expensive to service and maintain than urban roads.
- Resilience is a key issue for the management and maintenance of rural infrastructure, especially with the added complication of climate change.
- Reliance on telecommunication infrastructure is increasing and is an important requirement for daily lives.
- Availability of water is likely to become a key issue in the future.
- Higher standards for stormwater and wastewater management in rural areas are expected in the future, in order to address poor water quality.
- **There are planned rail, bus and strategic road network improvements (to increase reliability, capacity, frequency, speed and coverage) which will make the rural areas more accessible in the future.**

WHAT ASPIRATIONS HAVE THE COMMUNITY PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED FOR RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE?

- Rural residents are concerned about rural road safety and conflict between road users, and the potential for additional rural development to exacerbate this.
- The reliability of infrastructure services is a concern for rural business operators. Demand for lifestyle properties raises expectations of high quality, reliable infrastructure in the rural area. Flooding and stormwater management are key rural infrastructure issues.
- There is an enthusiasm for emerging technology, especially where infrastructure systems need supporting or upgrading. Young people in particular, see a huge potential for new and emerging technologies to help improve the environment and manage resources.

- Rural residents are less satisfied with public transport options than urban residents.
- A network of safe shared paths is desired and strongly supported. Cycling opportunities offer future potential for residents and as a tourism opportunity.

3 What is likely to happen in the future, and what might be the response to future change?

14. In this section, we look at how the features, trends and drivers of change in the rural environment are playing out in different parts of rural Upper Hutt.

3.1 What strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats has our assessment highlighted?

15. The following table provides an overview of some of the key themes that emerged from our analysis. We follow this with the findings of our analysis of the individual localities.

TABLE 1: SWOT ANALYSIS

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The different rural localities all have their own particular characteristics and qualities, which provides a wide range of choice for rural living. Many of the rural areas are relatively accessible to the urban area. • There is potential for further infill development in the rural areas, if this is done sensitively, using a planned approach (eg Structure or Outline Plans). • Forestry is a key player in the Upper Hutt rural economy. The City’s exotic forest plantations are small | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is projected population growth in the rural areas, but limited remaining subdivision capacity in the Rural Valley Floor and Rural-Lifestyle zones (under the Operative Plan). • The Operative Plan Provisions do not provide a strategic approach to planning for the rural environment. • The Operative Plan provisions are currently not sufficiently flexible to accommodate the creation of shared paths, or a cluster development approach. |

relative to those of other regions, but they are of economic scale and are relatively close to market (ie the Port of Wellington, or wood processing operations in the Wairarapa) and rail connections (although an operational yard would be required).

- Pastoral farming is likely to continue to be an economically attractive land use, if strong commodity prices continue. Pastoral farms in the Upper Hutt rural area may be more resilient to climate change than hill country farms in the east of the region, as the west is likely to continue to receive more rainfall relative to the east, and less pronounced increases in temperature.
- The Council has excellent spatial data on natural hazards, landscape values, indigenous vegetation values, historic resource consents, land parcels and ownership, as well as data on projected population growth and requirements for infrastructure planning – following the work undertaken for the NPS UDC. This is an excellent evidence base on which to plan for individual localities.

- Infrastructure constraints – There are high average maintenance costs for rural roads, and the limited design capacity and function of rural roads will make it difficult to accommodate future rural growth without investment. Higher density rural residential development is likely to require significant investment in 3 waters infrastructure.
- There is limited understanding of community values as they relate to individual rural localities.

| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rural area is no longer a solely productive landscape, but provides a unique lifestyle within commuting distance of a major city. • Planned rail, bus and strategic road network improvements (to increase reliability, capacity, frequency, speed and coverage) will increase demand for rural living, as it becomes an increasingly accessible commuter location. There is also an opportunity to create a functional rail yard for the transportation of logs. • The City’s rural land makes a useful, but marginal, contribution to New Zealand’s overall agricultural and forestry production. Given this, and the generally less valuable soils of the district, it could be viewed as an area in which to accommodate increased demand for urban development in the Greater Wellington area. • Lifestyle sized enterprises can be a source of experimentation and innovation that is not always possible in larger, more established | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the majority of projected population growth will occur in urban areas, there is a strong demand for rural residential living, which needs to be managed carefully to maintain rural character and amenity, and prevent unsustainable patterns of commuting. • Future changes to the Wellington Region’s climate are likely to be significant, and will create resilience issues in rural communities, especially those where the road infrastructure is constrained by one-way bridges, single points of entry and narrow carriageways, which could be compromised by landslide or wildfire. As land values increase there will be increasing pressure to develop land identified as erosion-prone, which is likely to be increasingly subject to hazards. • Changing pest distributions, increased risk of droughts and floods, changes in river flows and reduced availability of water will all impact the productivity of forestry, agriculture and horticulture in the future. There could be increasing competition for water resources |

commercial operations⁴. Many of these activities may be able to be accommodated on blocks of 4 hectares or less and some on 1 hectare or less. However, others will need flexibility to operate on larger areas. The returns per hectare of some of these activities is likely to be significantly better than that achieved on the pastoral sheep and beef farming land that they have superseded, even with the current buoyant meat prices.

- Keeping the rural areas in good condition, visually and ecologically, will have flow-on benefits for the local economy and community wellbeing, by retaining existing rural character and amenity.
- There is an opportunity to be innovative and strategic in managing land use effects in the rural environment. Cluster development provides an opportunity to support home-based employment, retain the productive capacity of land at the same time as flexibility to adapt to climate change – and still offer a unique rural lifestyle.

between urban and rural land uses in the future.

- Policies designed to mitigate climate change are also likely to encourage increased afforestation (especially on more accessible blocks with poor soil fertility). However, this needs to be considered alongside future predicted impacts of climate change, including a substantial increase in wildfire risk from exotic plantations, and reduced soil fertility, both adverse impacts which could be further amplified by this policy approach.
- Parts of the rural community have previously been resistant to strategic development, like the Maymorn Structure Plan. The local community will need to be part of the development of any future proposals of this nature.
- Piecemeal plan changes could make it difficult for rural landowners and stakeholders to understand the full complexity of potential changes.

⁴ Examples include: equestrian training for show jumping or dressage, horses trekking, truffle growing, olive orchards, greenhouses, small tourism enterprises like paintball or disc golf, rare and heritage animal breeding, nut production, speciality gardens, café's and crafts.

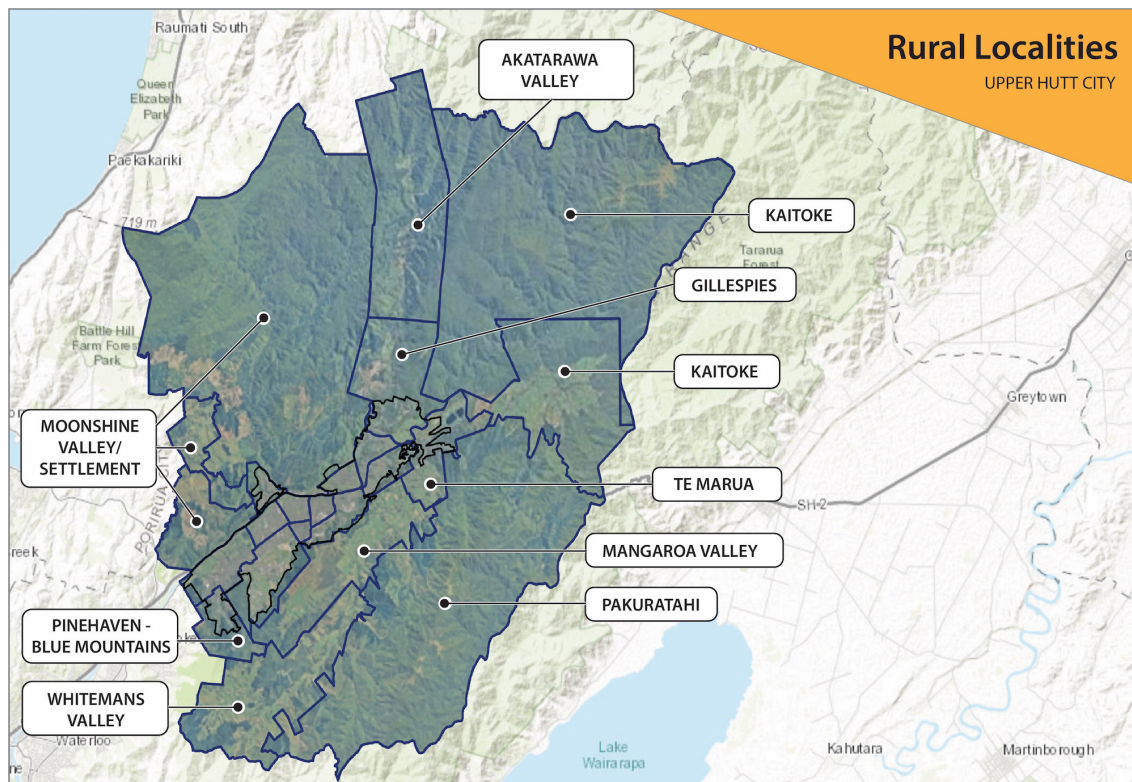
- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The flat topography of the valley floors is ideal for non-motorised transport and there is an opportunity to create a good quality network of safe, shared paths.• The plan review provides an opportunity to protect significant and valued landscapes and indigenous biodiversity. This will be addressed by a separate plan change, prior to PC50 being notified. | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

3.2 Analysis of the rural localities

16. We analysed these individual rural localities:

- Te Marua
- Mangaroa Valley
- Whitemans Valley
- Gillespies
- Akatarawa Valley
- Kaitoke
- Moonshine Valley/Settlement.

FIGURE 2: THE RURAL LOCALITIES OF UPPER HUTT DISTRICT



17. There are three other rural, or semi-rural localities in the City that we did not analyse: Pakaratahi, Tararua and Pinehaven-Blue Mountains.

18. The reasons we did not include them in the analysis are because:

- There has been almost no development in the remote area of Pakaratahi area, which lies to the east. Only two codes of

compliance for buildings have been issued in this area in the period the data was collected (2006-2019) and no sales data was captured. We have no resource consent or sales data for Tararua.

- The Pakaratahi and Tararua two localities are predominantly made up of steep, inaccessible hill country which is unlikely to attract residential development. In addition, large areas are covered by designations for drinking water supply, or are located within publicly owned Regional Parks. For these reasons, we did not undertake a detailed assessment of these areas.

The Pinehaven-Blue Mountains locality to the south west of the district is predominantly located within the urban boundary, which is beyond the scope of this study. We have not undertaken an assessment of this area.⁵

3.2.1 Te Marua Locality

19. The Te Marua locality is directly adjacent to the eastern side of the urban area, and some parts are within the urban boundary. There are several key parts to this locality: an area to the north along SH2 which we have called the 'northern sector', Maymorn and surrounds, Parkes Line Road and surrounds, and Maclaren Street.

NORTHERN SECTOR

20. There is almost no remaining potential for subdivision in the Rural Lifestyle zone along SH2. Any parcels that have theoretical capacity have potential areas of significant indigenous vegetation protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Any increase in density would be inappropriate in this northern sector, given the strategic function of SH2.

⁵ Avro Road and Serra Way lie within the rural area, but we have not undertaken an assessment of these areas.

FIGURE 3: TE MARUA LOCALITY ZONES, ROADS AND RIVERS

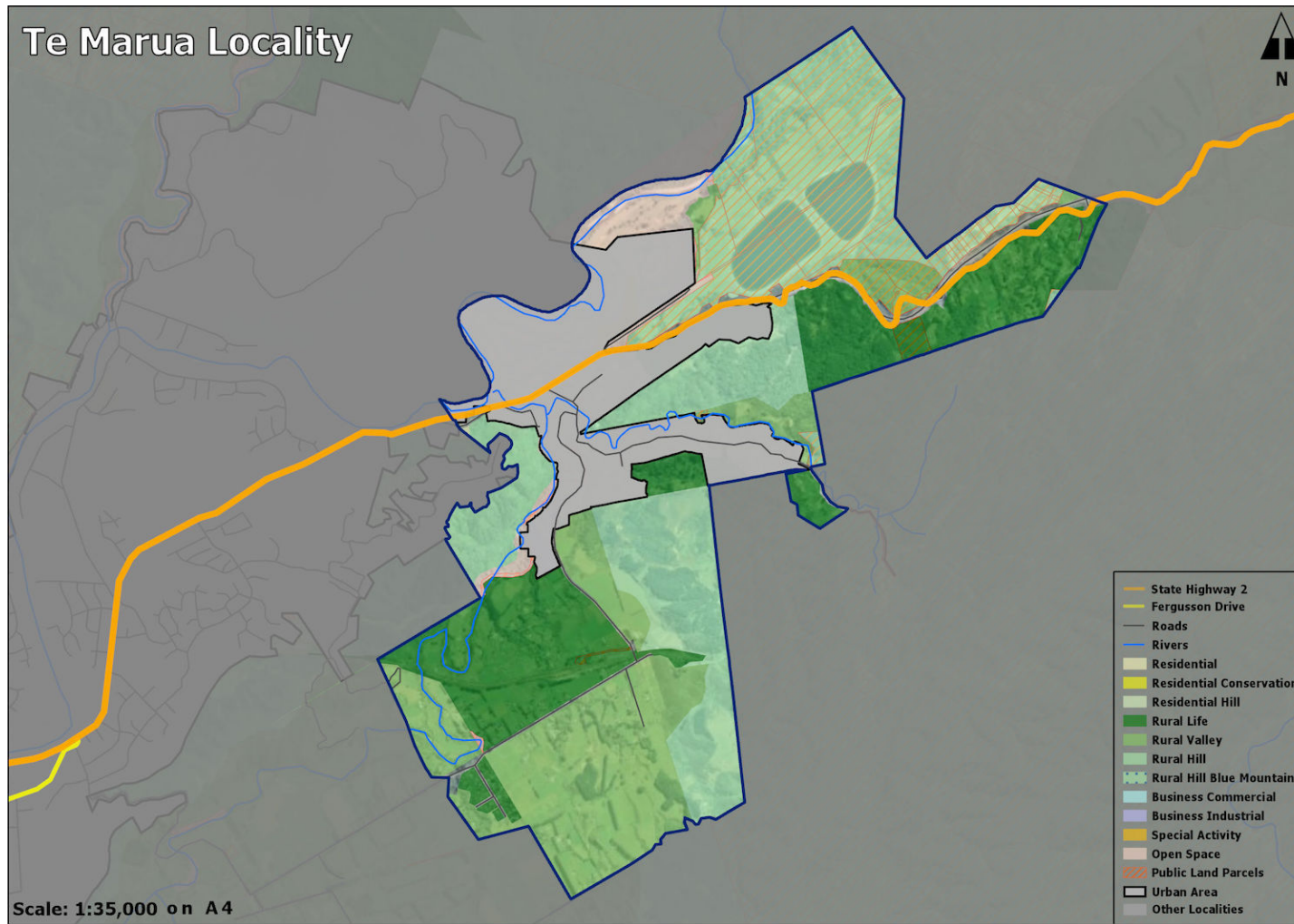
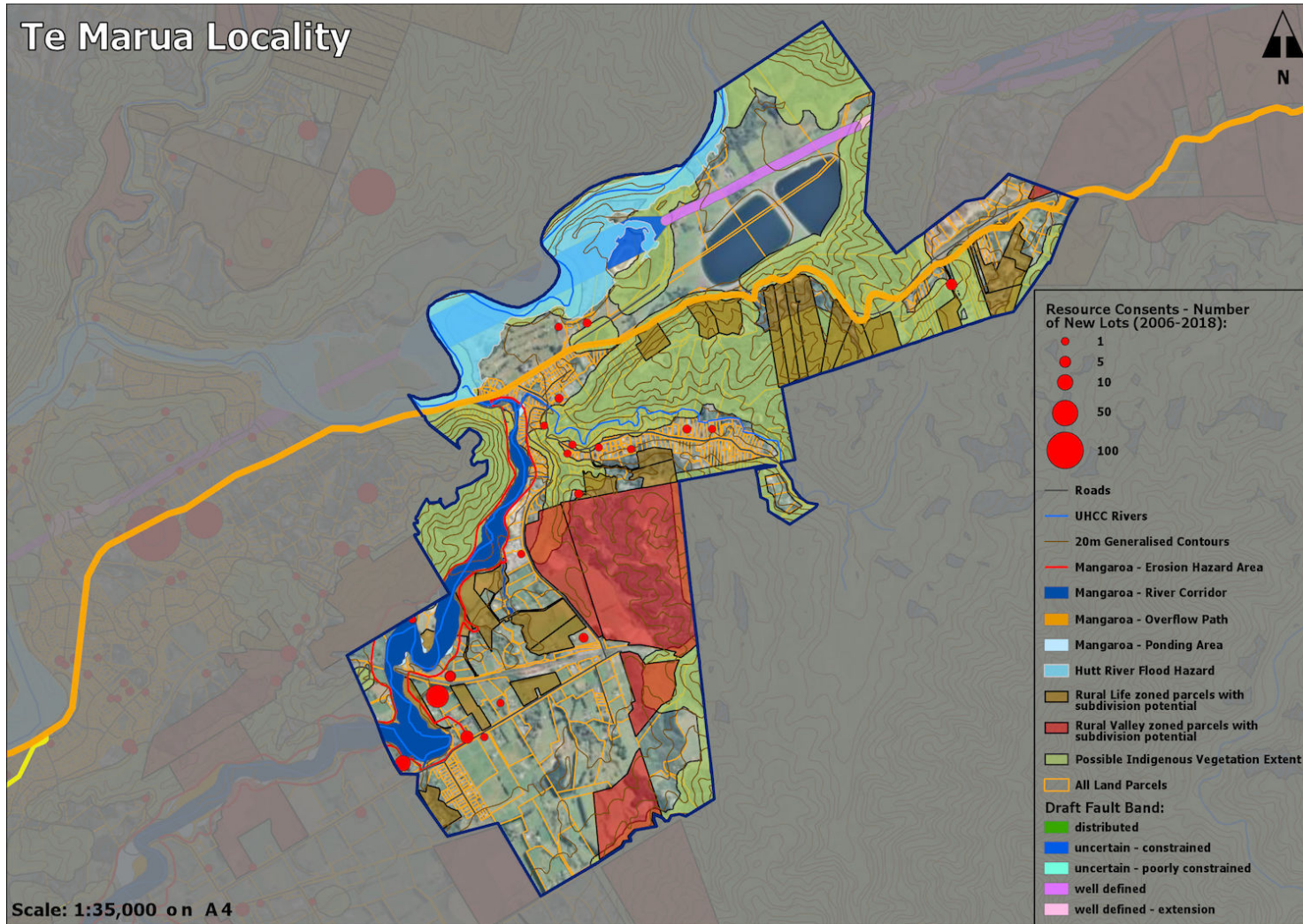


FIGURE 4: TE MARUA LOCALITY RURAL SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL AND CONSTRAINTS



MAYMORN AND SURROUNDS

21. There are various hazards associated with the Mangaroa River in this area and some High Class 2 and 3 soils associated with the Hutt and Mangaroa rivers. There are isolated esplanade strips along the river, but there are long gaps in this esplanade network. Te Marua is the only rural locality that is served by a railway station, and it is in the Maymorn area.
22. Reticulated services (water, and sewer) are available along Old School Road. Mains water and sewer mains are available along Parkes Line Road as far south as Maclaren Street. Maclaren and Paton Streets are served by mains water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure.
23. Parkes Line is an important local distributor road. There is strong demand for rural lifestyle development in this area.
24. Subdivision capacity is largely used up in this area under the Operative Plan provisions. Plan Change 42 (Operative 12 September 2019) will control future subdivision and development where there are ponding and erosion hazards associated with the Mangaroa River. The presence of the railway station is an urbanising feature.
25. The three waters infrastructure assessment (2019)⁶ has shown that wastewater network capacity is a more pressing issue than the Council originally thought. Infrastructure upgrades in Te Marua/Maymorn may need to be programmed earlier than previously planned for, to allow for higher density growth in this area.
26. The landscape report that accompanies this Rural Land Use Assessment recognises an opportunity to consolidate development around the train station, reflect and build on the existing development pattern of Maclaren Street, and utilise/extend existing infrastructure

⁶ Wellington Waters Ltd. *Three Waters Assessment for Upper Hutt*. 2019

(utilities). There is a rationale for higher density development framing the rail station/opposite the future growth area.

27. Consolidated growth in this area would facilitate multi-modal transport and less car-dependent commuting, provided it was supported by a cycle network, reserves/open space and linkages strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

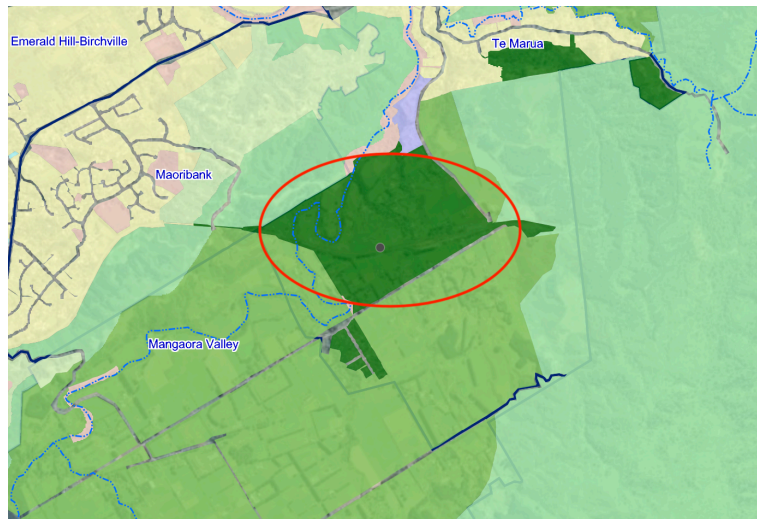
- Use the Planning Standards Rural Settlement Zone to consolidate development around the railway station and adjacent to the proposed growth area to the north of Maymorn Road.
- The vicinity of the railway station would be an appropriate location for a community hub, providing for mixed use development and/or community facilities. A precinct zone could be used as a tool to encourage this.
- Rezoning of the area should be future proofed in a way that provides for the following:
 - Increasing density around the station
 - Reducing density of zoning as you move beyond walkable distance from this central core
 - 2ha lots at the boundaries as a buffer to address the rural context
 - Open space planning and networks and their integration with stormwater management and shared paths
 - Use of the historic railway alignment as a local shared path connection.
- The above recommendations could be set out in an Outline Plan.
- Investigate opportunities for improved shared pathways along Maymorn Road into the urban area and down into Mangaroa Valley.

PARKES LINE ROAD AND SURROUNDS

28. Parkes Line Road provides an important thoroughfare route for the Te Marua locality. It is surrounded by the open flat valley and has been a population location for rural lifestyle development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider rezoning the area to the west of Parkes Line Road and south of Maymorn Road (in line with the existing boundary of the Business Industrial zone) and to a straight line across the valley from Maclaren Street, from Rural Lifestyle to a general rural zone, in light of erosion hazards and reflecting the development pattern on the opposite side of the road.



- The area adjacent to Parkes Line Road (on the eastern side of the road) should be carefully managed. Existing Rural Valley Floor zoning (that is, its equivalent rural zone under the National Planning Standards) should be retained, with further control over built form design, location of building platforms and landscape mitigation.
- In between cluster and settlement areas along Parkes Line Road to the junction with Flux Road (through Te Marua and Mangaora Valley), the general recommendation to increase controls to manage any subdivision to the minimum lot size is appropriate.

- To facilitate further residential development in the wider area, it would be appropriate to develop local shared pathways to promote safer and more efficient local journeys from Colletts Road through to Mangaroa School and Flux Road (taking local traffic, which doesn't need to be there, off Parkes Line Road). This recognises and supports work done on the Upper Valley Horse Trail Feasibility study, undertaken in 2015.
- Medium density zoning (in rural terms) could be appropriate through the lower hill areas to the east, for example lot sizes of 2-4ha, with reference to the development pattern along Katherine Mansfield Drive.

MACLAREN STREET AND SURROUNDS

29. There is an opportunity for cluster development around Maclaren Street, but it is important to avoiding 'bleeding out' of the urban edge. Framing lot sizes could be double the size of the existing Maclaren Street properties, at around 900sqm, providing a buffer between the existing smaller lots and larger lots in the rural environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(See Appendix 1 of the Landscape Report for a visual presentation of these recommendations.)

- Create a Settlement zone around Maclaren and Paton Streets, to accommodate higher density development, rezoning this area from Rural Lifestyle to Rural Settlement. The waterway and riparian planting on the south west side of this area forms a natural barrier and delineation for this zone.
- Signal an intention in the plan to extend Old School Road and/or Maclaren Street to connect to Colletts Road to provide a local road/shared path network to access Mangaroa School (Mangaroa Valley) and the new Settlement zones.
- This area is an appropriate place to implement our general recommendations for shadow building platforms/access ways.

This would help future proof the potential to increase density over time (without sprawl).

3.2.2 Mangaroa Valley Locality

30. This is a large area that extends approximately from Maclaren Street in the north (the boundary with Te Marua Locality), down to Pinehaven-Blue Mountains in the south. It borders the urban area to the west and shares a boundary with Whitemans Valley and Pakuratahi to the east. We have made recommendations for several areas within this locality including the valley floor south of Maclaren Street, the foothills on the eastern side of the valley and Katherine Mansfield Drive.
31. Large areas of the valley floor to the west of the Mangaroa River are subject to hazards associated with the river. There are large areas of moderate earthquake hazard on the western side of the valley and some areas of high potential hazard to the west of Katherine Mansfield Drive. There is a large area of high liquefaction potential associated with the low-lying peatland areas. There are areas of LUC Class 3 soils associated with the floodplains of the Mangaroa River.
32. There are no reticulated services (three waters) in this locality. Mangaroa Primary School is located in the very north of the area. Mangaroa Road is a key secondary arterial road for the locality, which links to SH2. It provides access to Mangaroa over the railway line and the Mangaroa River (via a single lane bridge).

FIGURE 5: MANGAROA VALLEY LOCALITY ZONES, ROADS AND RIVERS

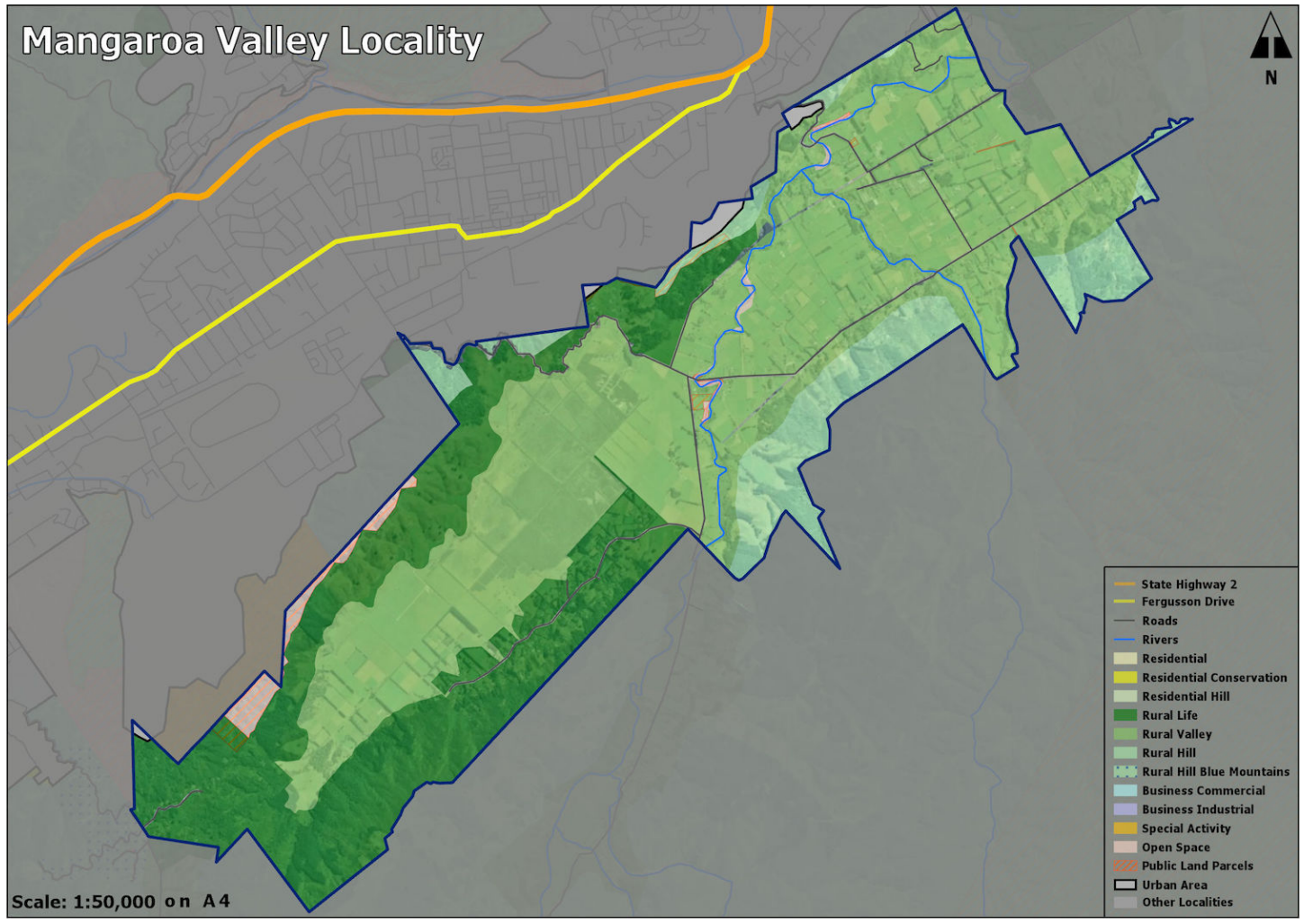
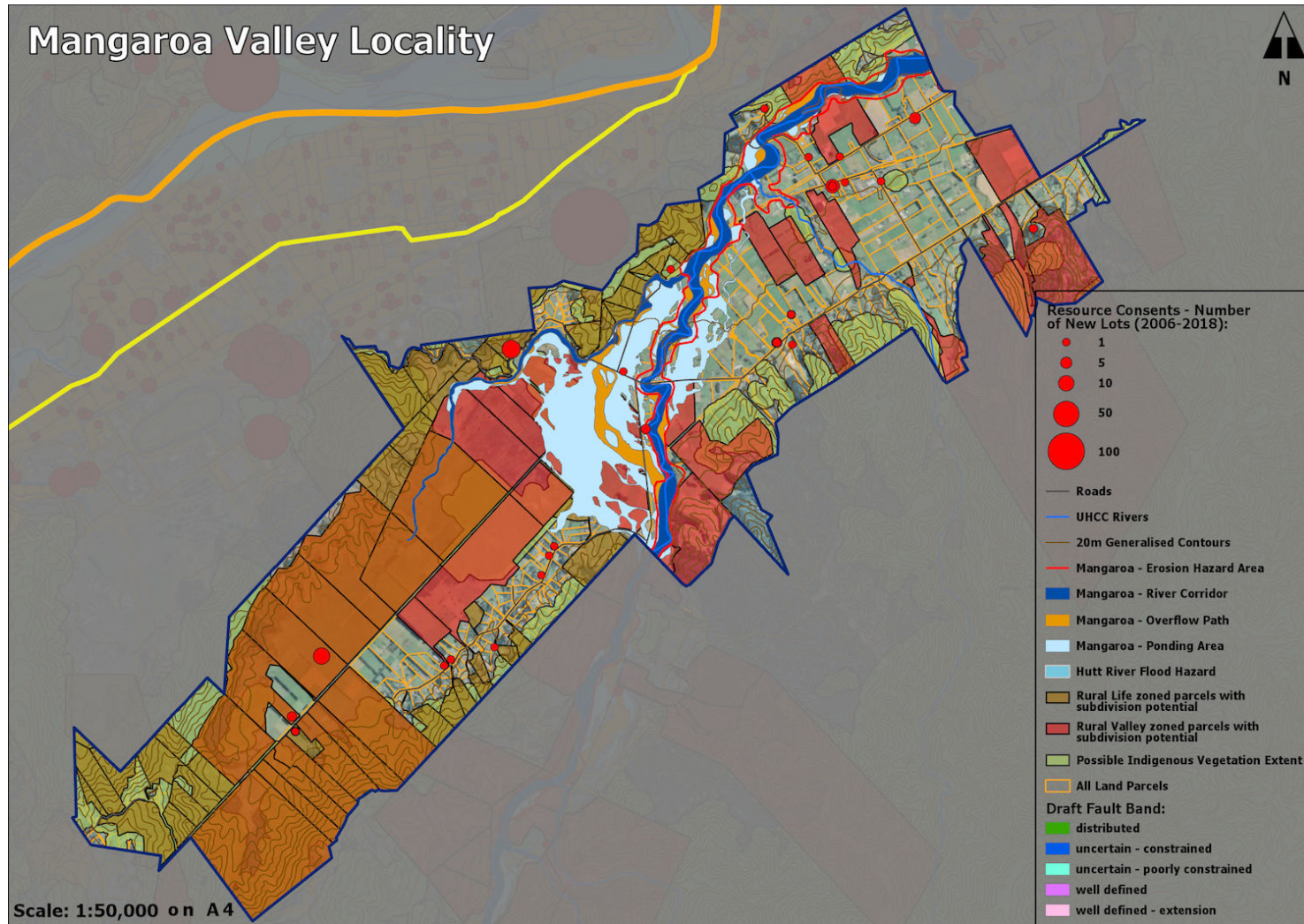


FIGURE 6: MANGAROA VALLEY LOCALITY RURAL SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL AND CONSTRAINTS



33. Unlike some of the other remoter localities, this valley can be accessed from both ends. The Open Space Strategy identifies opportunities to connect river and stream corridors through esplanade strips, and to form a shared pathway within the valley floor, along a paper road.
34. This locality has been subject to a high level of pressure for rural lifestyle development, given its proximity to the urban area. However, there is limited further subdivision capacity under the Operative Plan rules.

VALLEY FLOOR SOUTH OF MACLAREN STREET

35. There is an opportunity for cluster development along Flux road/Leonards Road near Mangaroa school, reflecting the existing development pattern of some undersize lots.
36. Just south east of Maclaren Street there is a block of land zoned Rural Valley Floor that could potentially accommodate higher density rural residential development, given its proximity to Mangaroa School, the Maclaren Street pattern of development, and the potential to formalise the paper road as a multimodal path. There are opportunities to create shared paths connecting the school to adjacent streets (as part of a cluster development) and to link into a wider network connecting Maymorn and Whitemans Valley.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(See Appendix 2 of the Landscape Report for a visual presentation of these recommendations.)

- Develop a structure plan or outline plan for the Mangaroa Valley Rural Valley Floor area, before further subdivision precludes future connectivity, because potential access points have not been defined and set aside. This plan should address local roads, multimodal access and a reserve strategy, as well as defining suitable locations for clusters. This could accompany some

adjustments to the current zoning, such as allowing Rural Lifestyle zoning in the block described above, provided this was on the basis of cluster subdivision principles, due to the open nature of the valley floor.

- Facilitate cluster development with a Settlement zone or precinct near Mangaroa school, along Flux Road/Leonards Road.
- Controls on landscape planting would help prevent an urbanised feel. The landscape in the southern area (i.e. peatland) is quite bare, and the contrast of formal planting is visually significant. We consider landscape planting controls are particularly important given the projected population growth in this Valley.
- For those general rural zone areas of the valley floor (along Parkes Line Road to the junction with Flux Road (through Te Marua and Mangaroa Valley), there should be further controls to manage adverse impacts on landscape associated with subdivision, especially where allotments are created which are minimum lot size.

FOOTHILLS ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE VALLEY

37. The area to the east of Colletts Road between the road and the hills has potential to accommodate denser development, due to the topography of the foothills, which reduces visibility of built development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recommend investigating the location of the boundary between Rural Valley Floor and Rural Hill zones in this area⁷, as there may be capacity for pockets of lots smaller than 4ha. Any higher density development would need to be carefully managed,

⁷ This recommendation is dependent on what rural zones are ultimately adopted through the National Planning Standards.

with minimum average lot sizes configured to be responsive to the landscape.

KATHERINE MANSFIELD DRIVE AREA

38. The hills in this southern end of the valley have Rural Lifestyle and Rural Valley Floor zoning. Katherine Mansfield Drive is largely at development capacity. Any subdivision capacity that remains is mostly elevated, on the less accessible and steeper sections, and where there is potential for significant indigenous vegetation protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- We do not consider it is appropriate or practical to take rural lifestyle development to the top of the ridgeline in this location. If ribbon development continues to occur along road edges, this will have an urbanising effect, increasing apparent density (i.e. due to topographical or vegetation removal constraints resulting in houses fronting the roadside). Consider rezoning the Rural Lifestyle area at the end of Katherine Mansfield Drive to a general rural zone (i.e. the National Planning Standard zone which will replace the Rural Hill/Rural Valley zones).
- The upper edge of the Rural Lifestyle zone in the area framing Mangaroa/Wallaceville swamp should be more landscape responsive, acknowledging the potential visual prominence of poorly placed buildings on higher slopes or spurs. This can be exacerbated by allotment boundaries which do not follow contours, but rather run straight up hills. Our general landscape recommendations on sensitive allotment boundaries, landscape responsive zone boundaries and controls on building platform locations, are applicable here.

3.2.3 Whitemans Valley Locality

39. This valley is in the south of the district, separated from Mangaroa Valley by a line of hills to the west. The hilly Pakuratahi locality is on the eastern boundary.
40. This locality covers a large area, and the lifestyle and connectivity offered are quite different at either end.
41. The sales and consenting data indicates that this area attracts the highest sale prices of all the rural localities.
42. There are multiple hazards associated with the Mangaroa river corridor. The Council have identified that indigenous vegetation on selected hills may be of a quality that meets the Significant Natural Areas threshold under the Regional Policy Statement (RPS). There are some LUC Class 3 soils associated with the river floodplains.
43. Development on the western hills could be both highly visible and shaded, depending on the aspect. The central part of the valley is narrower, steeper and the areas of potential indigenous vegetation protection extend close to the road in places, largely enclosing the valley.

FIGURE 7: WHITEMANS VALLEY LOCALITY ZONES, ROADS AND RIVERS

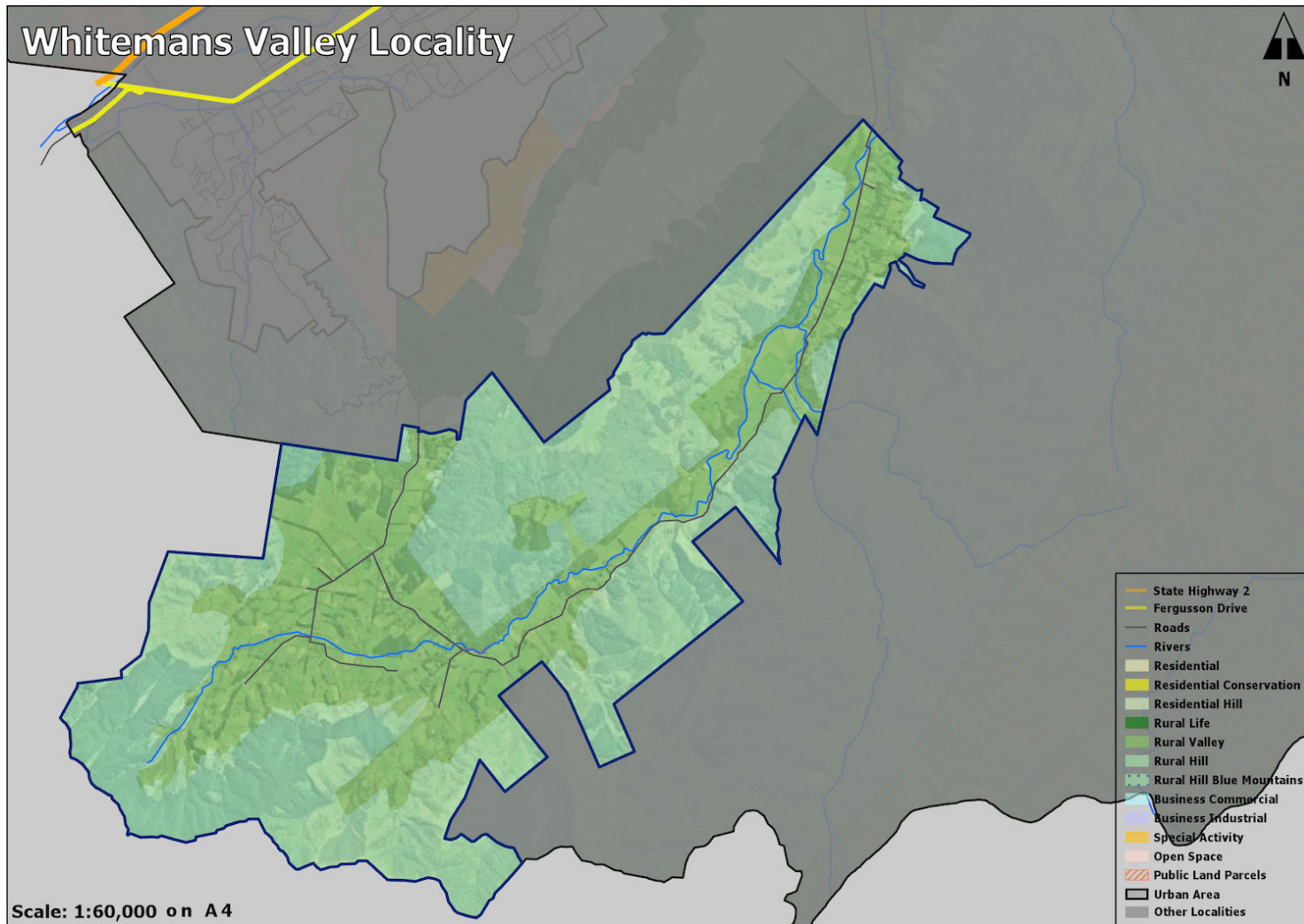
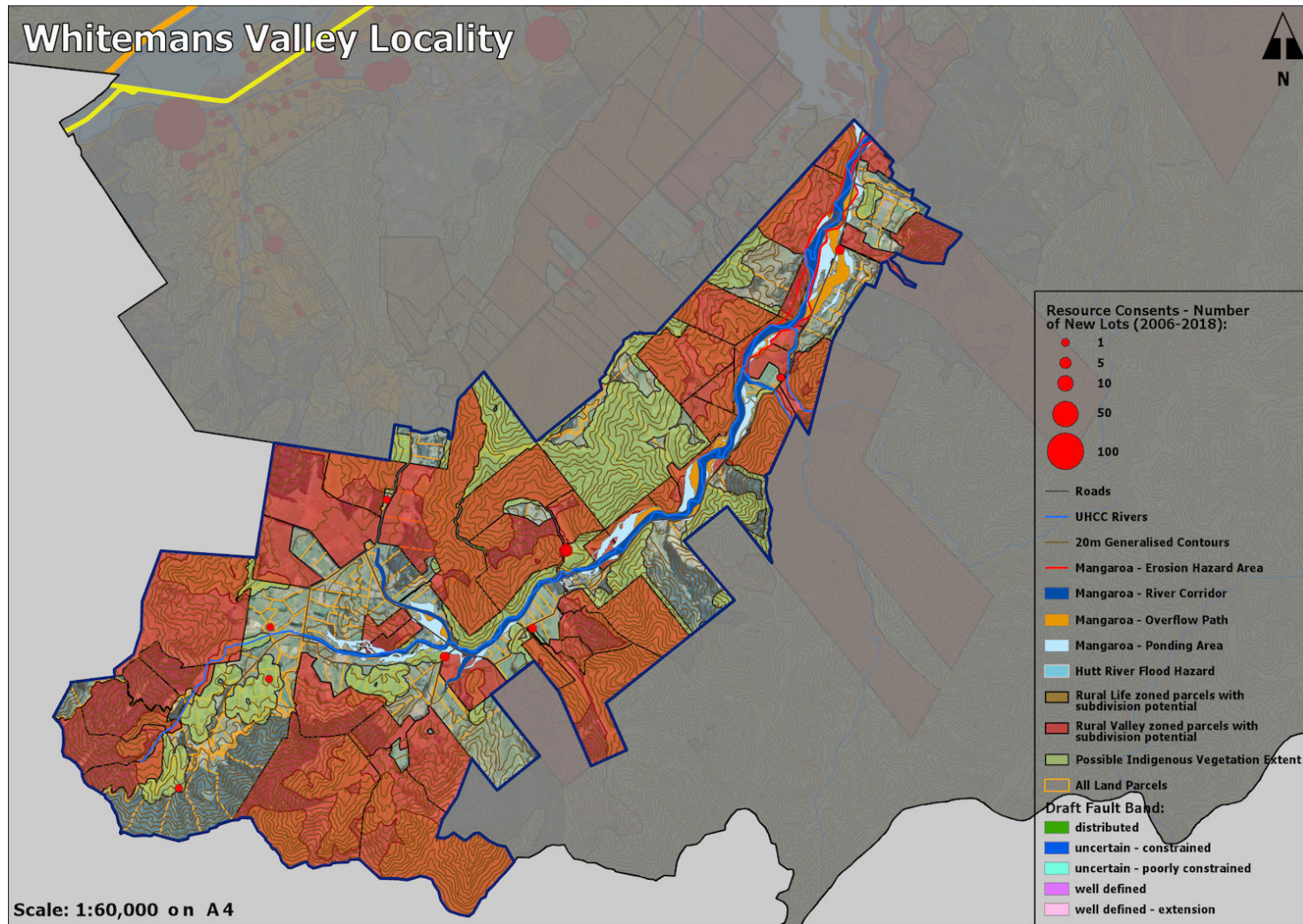


FIGURE 8: WHITEMANS VALLEY LOCALITY RURAL SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL AND CONSTRAINTS



NORTHERN SECTOR

44. The northern sector is close to Katherine Mansfield Drive, the eastern ranges provide good solar orientation, and the sector contains very little potential Significant Natural Area cover. Access is generally via Wallaceville Road, which crosses flood hazard areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The sunnier eastern aspect of the northern end of Whitemans Valley may be an appropriate location for further subdivision and growth, due to the advantageous solar gain and proximity to urban areas and Katherine Mansfield Drive.

CENTRAL AREA

45. The central part of the Whitemans Valley locality is far from the town centre, and lacks public transport and community facilities such as schools. This encourages a commuting lifestyle, which would be accentuated if smaller properties were to be consented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Retain general Rural zoning, given hazard and landscape constraints, the presence of potentially significant indigenous vegetation and the distance to urban areas from this part of the valley.
- Vegetation clearance controls will be important if housing is to be located on the edges of the hills, where the valley narrows. This is likely in this locality, given the multiple hazards in the valley floor.
- Conservation lots would be appropriate and should be encouraged as a way of protecting significant indigenous vegetation. Conservation lots should be a relevant matter for assessment/inclusion in consents.
- This high-value landscape reads as an enclosed valley, so a sensitive and site-responsive approach is needed for any potential

development. Consider if there is a need for specific discretion to address the landscape values of this locality. There may be situations where native vegetation planting should be specified, and where more formal or overtly urbanising landscape design should be avoided. Where the valley narrows, building platforms should be carefully sited to avoid the appearance of ribbon development.

- Our general recommendations are appropriate here, with respect to placing more specific controls on applications to subdivide to minimum lot size in the Rural Valley Floor zone (i.e. ie whichever general rural zone replaces this), requirements for landscape assessments, and landscape sensitive allotment boundaries (especially given the extent of indigenous vegetation which naturally develops around gullies and fertile soil).

SOUTHERN SECTOR

46. The southern sector of the Whitemans Valley locality has limited potential Significant Natural Area cover, but also has little flood hazard. Slopes of 22° or greater are forested, leaving southern slopes potentially able to accommodate housing. Access to this area is usually via Pinehaven.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Development in this area should not intensify the existing scattered development pattern. For example, it would be more appropriate for subdivision to be off side roads, and/or tucked or clustered behind existing lots (when viewed from Whitemans Valley Road).

3.2.4 Gillespies Locality

47. This area lies to the north of the urban area, and provides access to the Akatarawa Valley further to the north. Large areas of this locality are out of scope of this study, being either within the urban area, or an identified growth area (Gillespies).

48. There are some hazards associated with earthquake faults and flooding/erosion from the Hutt River. There is an area of LUC 2 soils adjacent to the Hutt River which coincides with the Gillespies Growth Area. The Council have identified that indigenous vegetation on the hillsides and river corridor may be of a quality that meets the Significant Natural Areas threshold under the RPS. Akatarawa Cemetery is listed as a heritage feature in the DP.
49. Stormwater mains extend up Akatarawa Road to the junction with Fairview Drive (urban boundary). Other water services stop slightly down the hill. Birchville Primary School is the nearest school, located in Emerald Hill. This area is relatively accessible to the urban area, especially at the southern end.
50. The existing development pattern in this locality is based on practicality and accessibility on challenging topography. Rural Valley Floor subdivision potential has been completely taken up, with any remaining lots likely to be subject to access and hazard constraints due to proximity to the river. Some Rural Lifestyle zone development capacity remains, but again, this is in the remoter area, and likely to be constrained by topography and potential indigenous vegetation protection. There is a risk of this rural area becoming quite urbanised in character or appearance, due to the long slim allotments which go uphill, and the location of dwellings close to the road edge.
51. There are some amenity values associated with the locality. There is a strong sense of enclosure as a result of the narrow valley, screening vegetation which comes up to the road edge, and lack of extensive public views across the wider landscape. The locality has a very distinctive character from nearby rural areas such as Mangaroa Valley or Te Marua and has more in common with Whitemans Valley. However, the proximity to the urban boundary probably makes this locality more sustainable than Whitemans Valley.

FIGURE 9: GILLESPIES LOCALITY ZONES, ROADS AND RIVERS

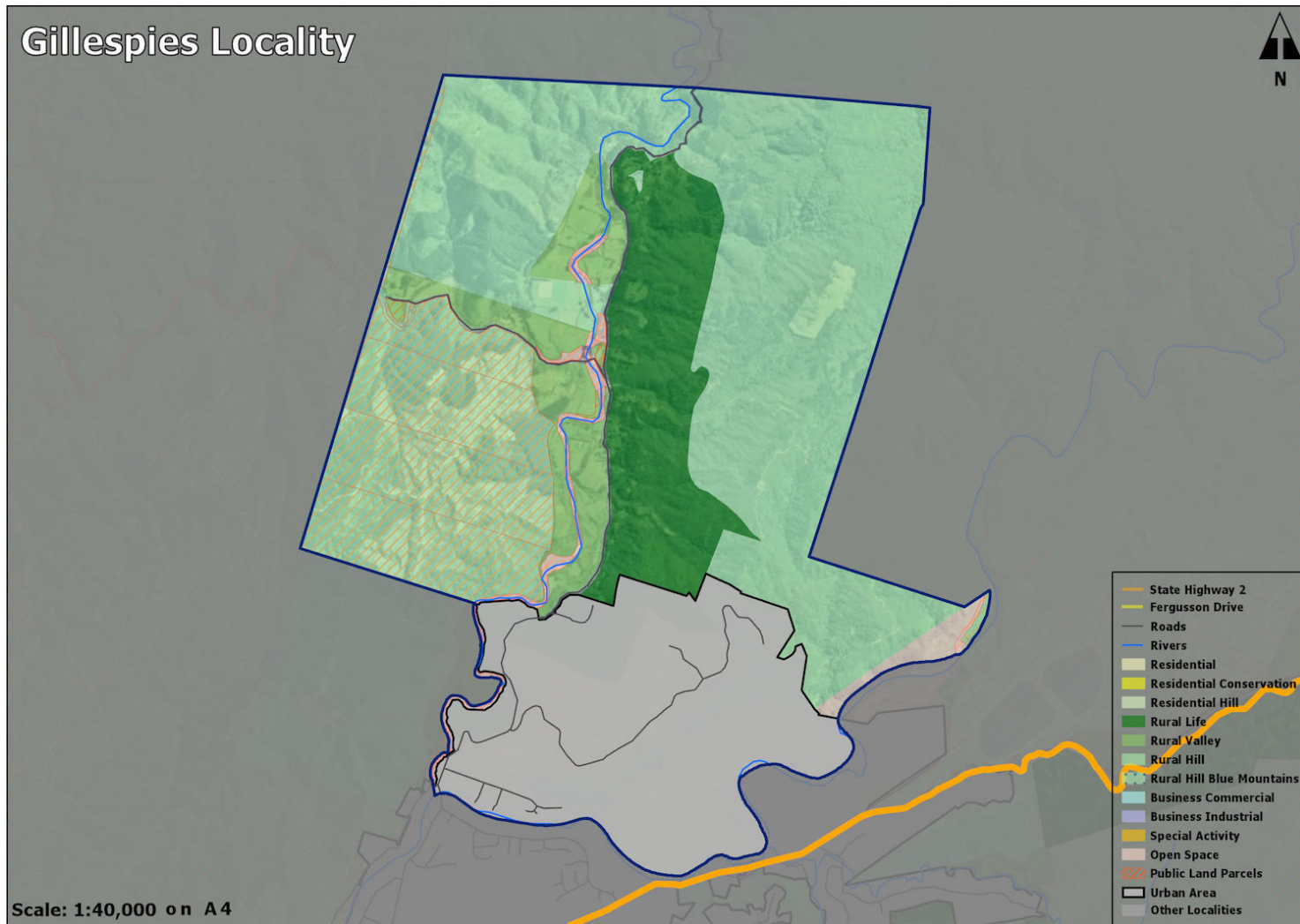
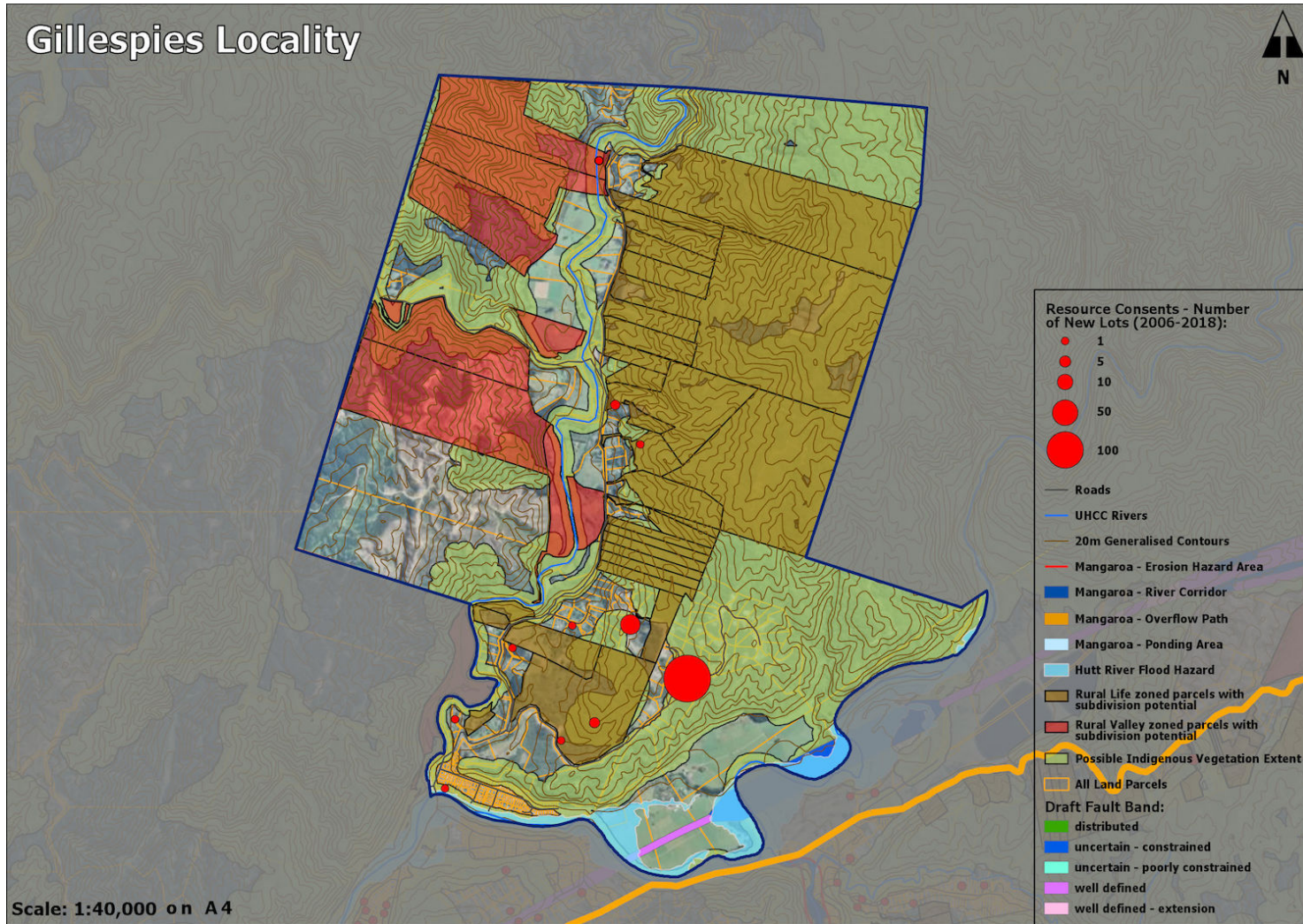


FIGURE 10: GILLESPIES LOCALITY RURAL SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL AND CONSTRAINTS



52. The development pressure in this locality is almost entirely addressed by the identification of the Gillespies future growth area.
53. The distinction between urban and rural land use in this locality is not readily apparent, given the current development pattern. The urban density is apparent south of the cemetery and forms a natural boundary. The Fairview Drive land parcels lack sensitivity to the landscape values and are an unusually large for an urban area. They read as large-lot residential, or possibly rural lifestyle, which is an inefficient use of land here. There is a risk that permitted development would significantly change the character and density from what is currently on the ground. What could happen as of right would seem, for existing residents of larger lots, to be out of place. The officer's report for the 44A Crest Road discretionary subdivision application highlighted this issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- As with Whitemans Valley, the plan review should consider landscape capacity, character and values (associated with indigenous vegetation) in this locality.
- It would be appropriate to do a finer-grained zoning study for the area between Akatarawa Cemetery and the area southwest of Crest Road, as this area reads as a rural landscape. This study should aim to maximise development potential, balanced with the constraints of landscape values, hazards, access and topography and future climate change resilience.
- There may be small cluster subdivision opportunities in the lower parts of this valley to consolidate rural lifestyle properties, where there is landscape capacity to absorb the level of change. We don't suggest changing the Rural Valley Floor zoning (from its equivalent under the National Planning Standards) necessarily. Rather, we suggest making such development more permissible in this zone by using a "balance lot" approach which is of a sufficient

size to retain landscape values. All development should be tested against landscape/visual effects given the high level of landscape significance associated with the surrounding landscape and the prominence/urbanising effect associated with ribbon development.

- Consider if it is appropriate to site shadow building platforms for new and existing developments at the point of subdivision. This is a less overwhelming way to increase density for existing residents, and a proactive way to consolidate growth.
- Our general recommendations on sensitive siting and control over building platforms, built form design controls, planting mitigation and landscape assessments are appropriate here.

3.2.5 Akatarawa Valley Locality

54. This valley sits at the north of the district, between the Moonshine Valley and the Tararua localities. It shares a southern boundary with the Gillespies locality.
55. There has been limited development activity in this locality, which is a long way from the city centre. Akatarawa Road is one of the few secondary arterial roads in the district, providing access to SH 2. However, it provides only one way in and one way out of the locality, with no other access, and the intersection with the city centre has operating constraints. The road is also quite vulnerable to adverse weather conditions, with slips often closing the road in heavy rain events. Safety improvements to this road are included in the Infrastructure Strategy 2018. There is no three waters infrastructure in this locality, and it is a long way from any schools.

FIGURE 11: AKATARAWA LOCALITY ZONES, ROADS AND RIVERS

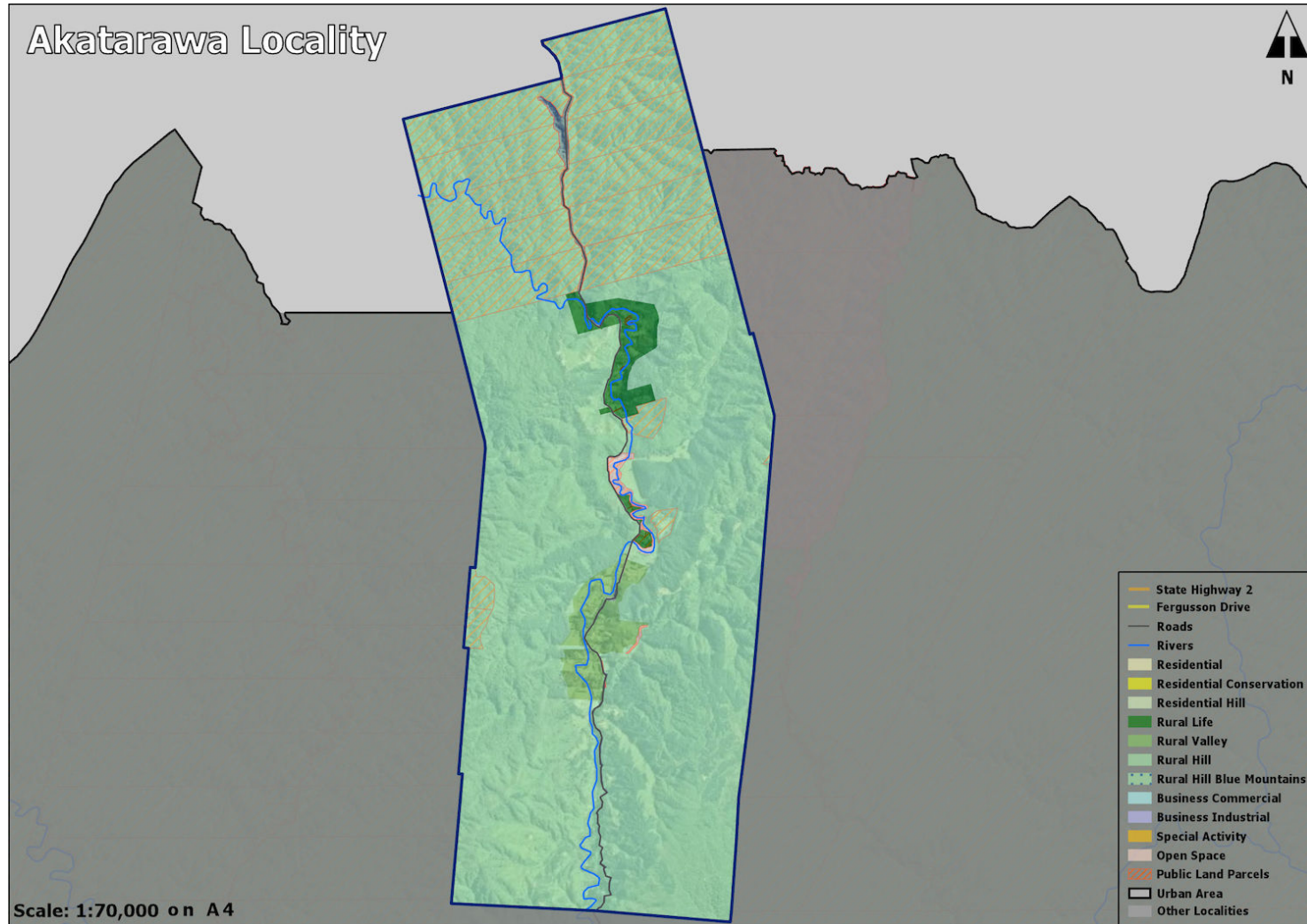
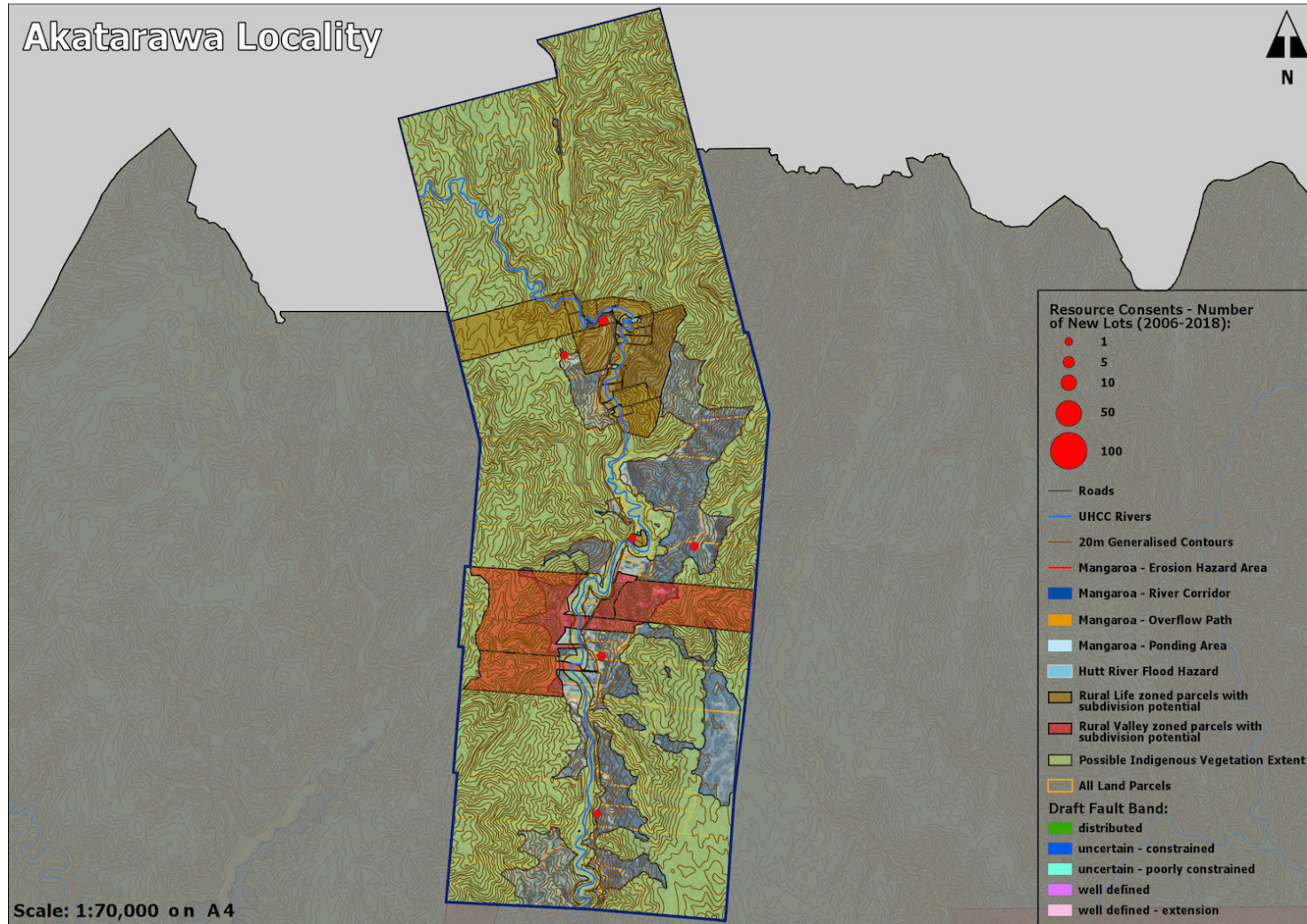


FIGURE 12: AKATARAWA LOCALITY RURAL SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL AND CONSTRAINTS



56. This is a long narrow valley with high landscape values. The surrounding hill terrain is the dominant landscape feature and there are extensive areas of potential indigenous vegetation protection. The southern third of the valley is the only area without a layer of potential landscape significance associated with it (potential ONLS and SALs).
57. There are no high class soils in this locality.
58. The area of Rural Lifestyle zoning is very distant from services/facilities and the urban area. Further rural residential development would also create a resilience issue in light of future climate change, given there is only one way in and out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Rezone the Rural Lifestyle area at the top of the valley to a general Rural zone (the equivalent Rural zone which will replace the Rural Hill or Rural Valley Floor zone when the National Planning Standards are adopted). This is on the basis of its isolation, evident lack of uptake of subdivision potential, future issues around resilience to climate change risk and natural hazards, and to help protect the high landscape values.
- As there is potential for a high level of landscape sensitivity, sympathetic development is really key - our general recommendations for built form design controls, building platform locations, landscape assessments are appropriate here.
- If there is any notable push for development, there should be further assessment of the values associated with the potential ONFLs and SALs and their sensitivity.

3.2.6 Kaitoke Locality

59. This area sits in the north east of the district, and is accessed from SH2.
60. Marchant Road is the collector road into the valley and provides access to SH2. This road is narrow and winding in places and is the only point of access. This area is a relatively long way from the city centre. The Kaitoke Regional Park is a key recreational asset.
61. The potential extent of protected significant indigenous vegetation in this locality is significant and includes corridors along waterways. There are some LUC Class 3 soils in the valley floor. The Wellington Fault Band runs through this area, north of SH2 but largely within public land, apart from an area at the top of Marchant Road.
62. The nearest school is Plateau School which is some distance away. The Kaitoke Outdoor Education Facility and Community Hall is located at the head of the valley.
63. The scale of residential development in this locality has been modest, but there have been relatively high net sale prices and demand for rural residential development, given the isolation.

FIGURE 13: KAITOKE LOCALITY ZONES, ROADS AND RIVERS

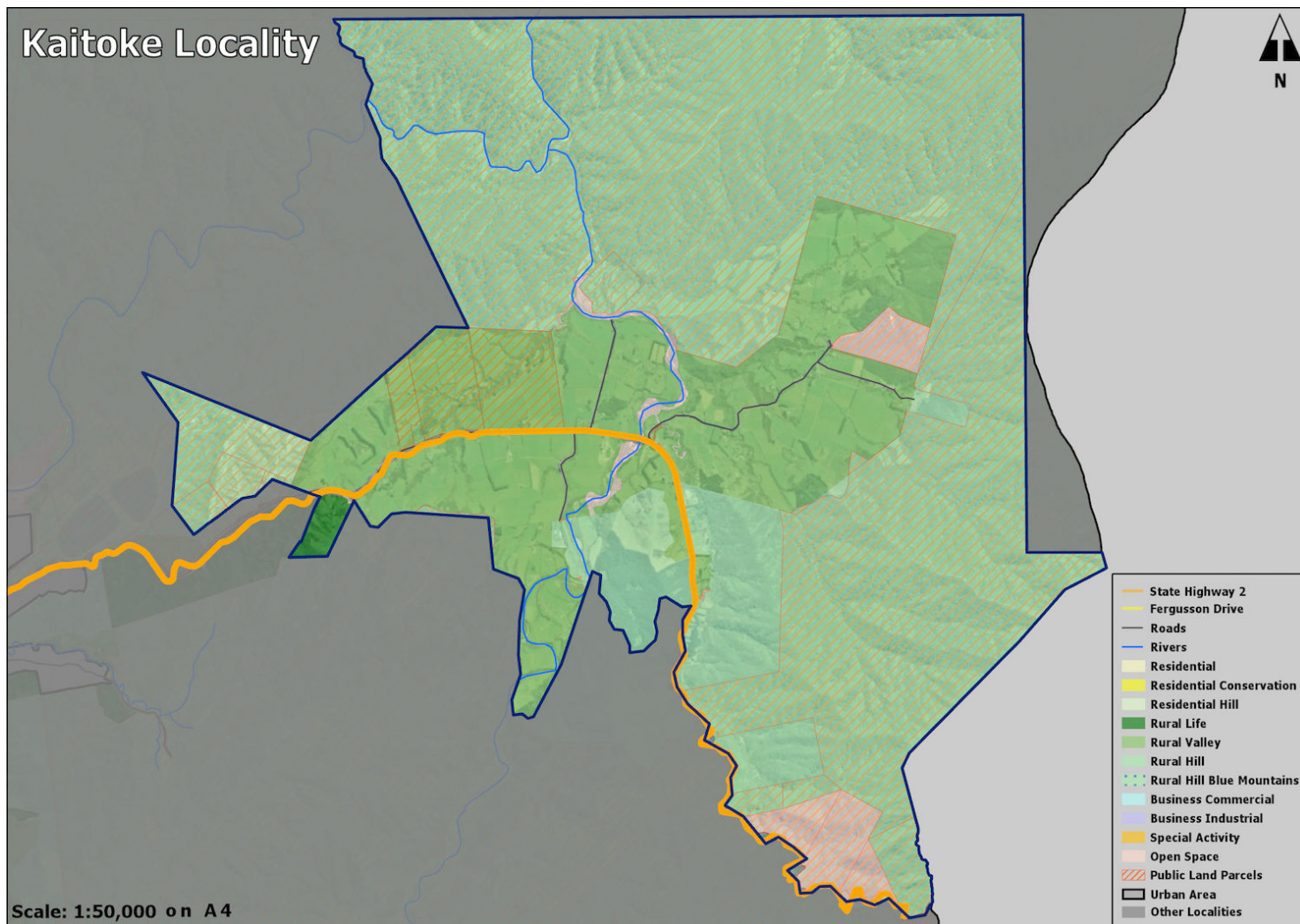
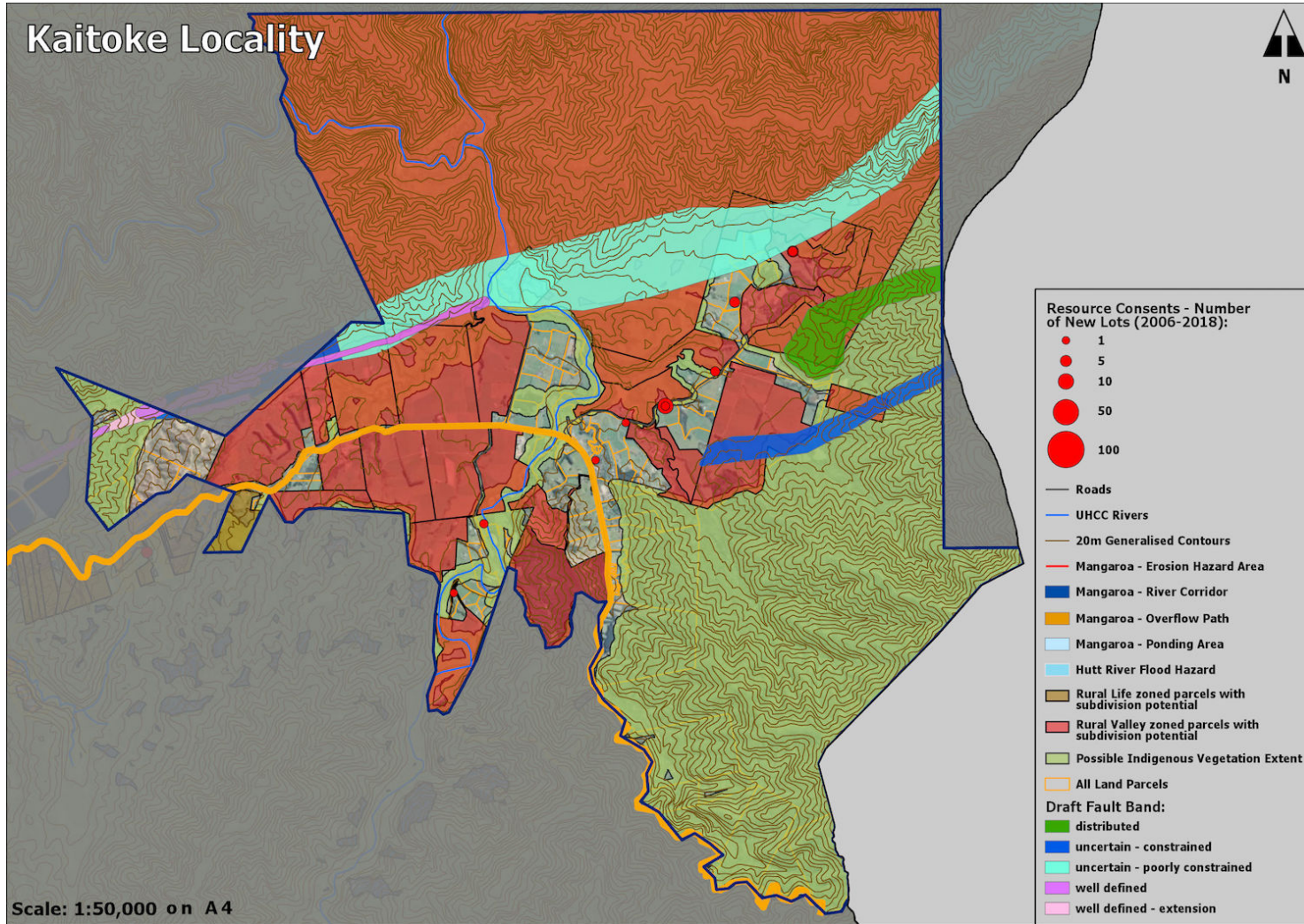


FIGURE 14: KAITOKE LOCALITY RURAL SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL AND CONSTRAINTS



64. There is existing subdivision capacity in the Rural Valley Floor sub-zone which has not been taken up. Loose ribbon development has occurred, following the road pattern. The result is that development patterns are highly visible, despite the limited development which has occurred.
65. The open and visible nature of this valley and the landforms does not always offer much absorptive capacity (i.e. screening or visual anchoring).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Retain existing zoning (i.e. the equivalent general rural zone in the Planning Standards) as there is no imperative to change this. This is not an area that would be suitable for an increase in rural-residential density given its isolation, landscape sensitivity, and current roading constraints (safety to access SH2).
- Zone the Kaitoke Regional Park as an Open Space zone (under the Planning Standards).
- The open valley means there is limited potential for the landform to mitigate visual impacts, therefore our general recommendations for requiring landscape reports, building platforms, built form design controls, and planting as mitigation would be appropriate here to mitigate visual impacts of any future development.
- In addition, the following controls should be tested for this particular locality (examples of these standards are in section 5.3 of the landscape report):
 - a) Potentially requiring minimum frontage widths along road boundaries and increased minimum setbacks from road boundaries
 - b) A requirement for shared driveways
 - c) Site responsive locations for dwellings, i.e. locate buildings in association with existing vegetation

- d) A mandatory requirement for cluster development for larger or more prominent subdivisions.

3.2.7 Moonshine Valley and Moonshine Settlement Localities

- 66. This vast area is sparsely populated, and sits in the western side of the district.
- 67. There are no high class soils in these localities. The Moonshine Fault runs directly through the 'settlement' area. There are some earthquake hazards associated the Moonshine Fault, which runs directly through the 'settlement area', the Akatarawa Fault and the Wellington Fault. The Wellington Fault lies largely under areas of land in public ownership, which are unlikely to be developed. Potential areas for protection of significant indigenous vegetation are unlikely to be a constraint in the Settlement locality, but cover a large area of the Valley locality.
- 68. There are no three-waters infrastructure in these areas. The Settlement locality is a long way from the city centre, and the access road is long, steep and winding. Moonshine Hill Road is subject to performance constraints at peak traffic periods, and operates at the lowest level of service during these times. There are no schools in the Moonshine Valley locality. The nearest is Totara Park Primary, which would be fairly accessible. The nearest school to the Settlement locality is in Trentham-Brentwood.
- 69. There has been very limited development in these areas so far.

MOONSHINE VALLEY

- 70. Limited development is anticipated in this area, due to the narrow access roads and steep topography.
- 71. It is noted that the hilly pocket of land zoned Rural Lifestyle opposite Totara Park is considered to be 'urban' in nature.

FIGURE 15: MOONSHINE SETTLEMENT AND MOONSHINE VALLEY LOCALITIES ZONES, ROADS AND RIVERS

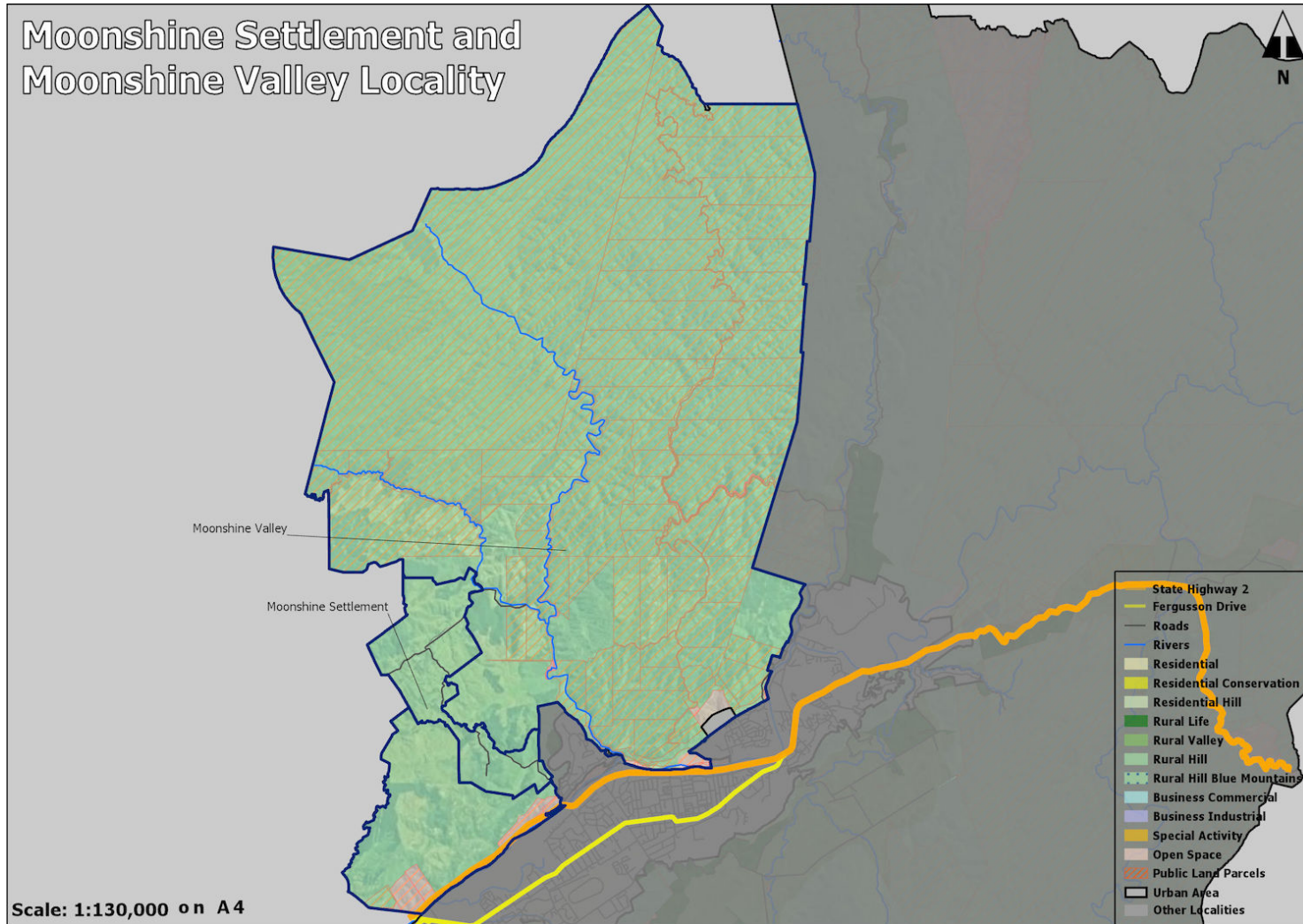
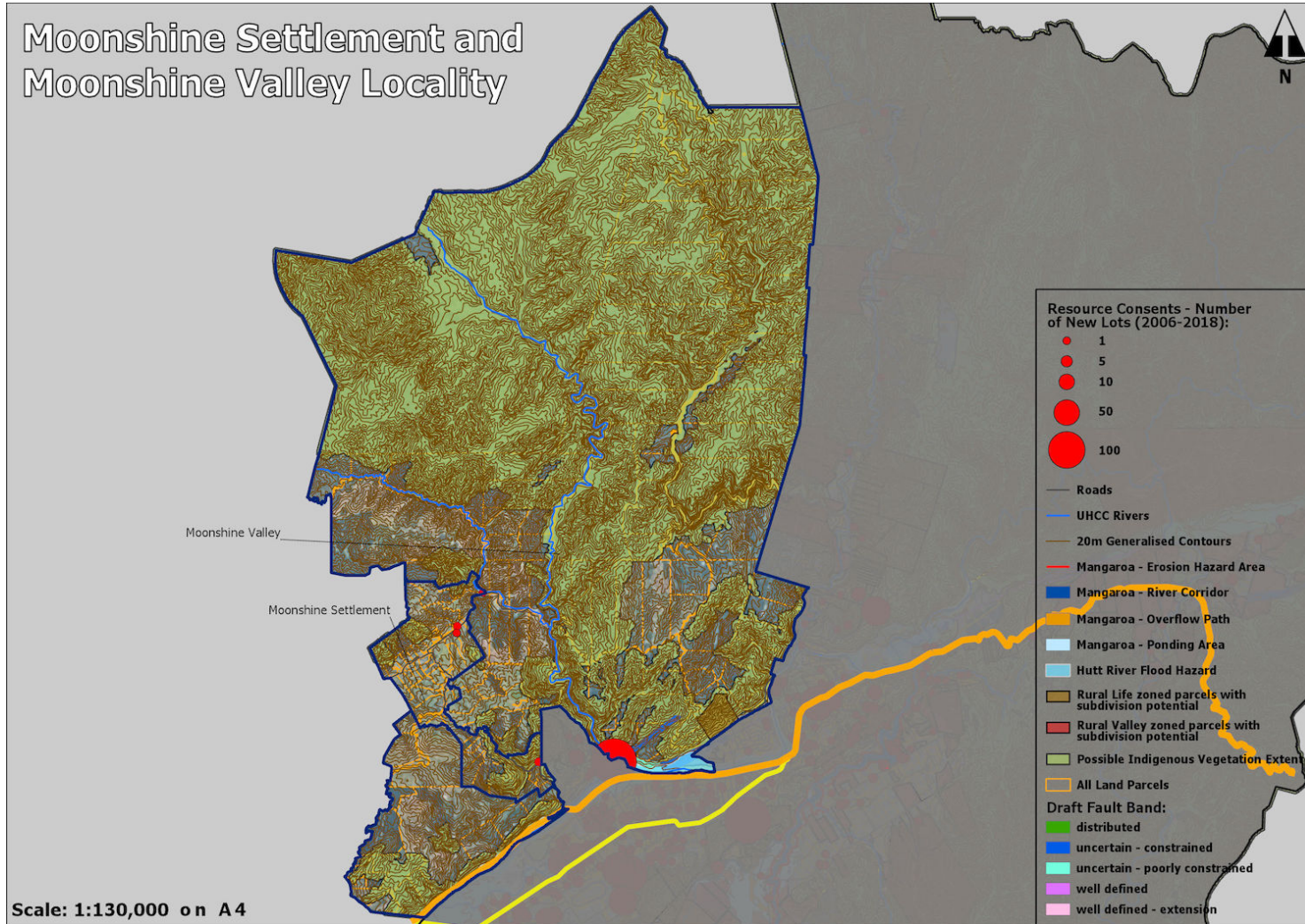


FIGURE 16: MOONSHINE SETTLEMENT AND MOONSHINE VALLEY LOCALITIES RURAL SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL AND CONSTRAINTS



RECOMMENDATIONS

- The existing Rural Hill zoning (by that we mean whichever general rural zone equivalent is adopted under the National Planning Standards), is appropriate for the Valley locality.
- Controls over building platforms locations and building design should be applied, in response to the topography and physical constraints.

MOONSHINE SETTLEMENT

72. The Rural Hill zoning is likely to have discouraged rural lifestyle development in the Settlement locality. This area is largely made of established farms with some land parcels that are slightly smaller and atypical of the surrounding area. Existing development follows a scattered pattern. We would anticipate that further rural residential development of this locality is limited by the lack of infrastructure and facilities, and the distance from the urban areas (including Porirua).
73. The Settlement locality has a stronger relationship with Porirua due to its proximity to SH58 and associated connectivity to Porirua. Indigenous vegetation cover, while present, is not a key landscape feature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The existing Rural Hill zoning (by that we mean whichever rural zone equivalent is adopted under the National Planning Standards), is appropriate for the Settlement locality.
- If anything unexpected happens here (for example, lodgement of a private plan change), it would be appropriate to do a more focussed study on landscape sensitivity, values and capacity.
- Discourage any further development or increase in density in the Moonshine Settlement locality. Factors such as climate change resilience and poor access would suggest a strategy to 'hold the line' unless further strategic investigation of the area indicates this is not appropriate.

4 How can the District Plan respond?

General recommendations

74. In this section, we set out a range of options to respond to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints identified from our analysis. In order to help the Council with its future s32 reporting, we have also briefly identified what the high-level costs, benefits and risks of those options might be. This analysis is set out in Appendix 4.
75. Regarding options, we have focused on matters which fall within a district plan jurisdiction, including the appropriateness of the existing zones and provisions.
76. The options fall under the following broad headings:
- a) Issues with the Status Quo - are there any areas where the Operative Plan provisions and zoning are working well, and we wouldn't want to change them?
 - b) Incremental change - are there any areas where it would be appropriate to retain the existing approach, but with some tweaks to provide better recognition of constraints, sensitivity and new information?
 - c) National Planning Standards 2019 - what opportunities does implementing the new Standards provide?
 - d) Strategic and spatial changes - are there any areas where a strategic or spatial approach should be taken to change, responding to demand, values and constraints?
 - e) Climate change - what additional challenges could be coming in the future?

4.1 Issues with the Status Quo

77. Our review has highlighted that there are some areas where the Operative Plan rural zone provisions are not achieving the desired outcome.

78. These include:

- Other than a setback provision of 10m, the plan provisions provide little scope to manage reverse sensitivity between rural living and forestry. The New Zealand Forestry Code of Practice is referred to, but this has been superseded by the NZ Environmental Code of Practice for Plantation Forestry. In addition, the NES for Plantation Forestry 2018 should be considered in the review of these provisions.
- Two or more dwellings on any one site is a non-complying activity. It is not clear why there is a need to be more restrictive than the approach taken to visitor accommodation (discretionary), or to family flats in conjunction with a dwelling (permitted activity).
- Visitor accommodation (other than as part of any home occupation) and tourism facilities are discretionary activities. These provisions may be limiting the aspirations in the LUS to increase rural tourism.
- Educational institutions, places of assembly and community facilities are all discretionary activities in the rural zones. Although the need to manage reverse sensitivity is appreciated, the provisions appear to discourage those facilities which are integral to community wellbeing.
- The limited combination of setback provisions, minimum lot sizes, accessways rules and lack of discretion, makes it difficult to achieve good landscape outcomes and efficient use of rural land.
- The definition of and distinction between active and passive recreational facilities is poor, and active recreation is discouraged in the rural-lifestyle zone. Given the ambition to provide for active

recreation in various other Council strategy documents, this appears to be an outdated approach.

- The rural objectives are not well supported by the policies, and in some cases are more narrowly focused than the policies which are intended to implement them. Some policies are hanging policies, and do not clearly flow from an objective. In other cases, the objectives and policies are so broad, they are difficult to apply.
- The objective, policy and rule framework does not actually provide much support for rural uses (i.e. primary production and rural industries), or much scope to address reverse sensitivity.
- There is insufficient protection for areas of significant indigenous flora or fauna. (This is being addressed through an upcoming plan change.)
- There is a rigid and aggressive approach to all other activities which are not considered by the current rules. This approach does not provide flexibility for new activities which may want to locate in the rural area in the future, and which may well be acceptable in a rural context.
- In some places, the rationale for the existing zoning is not clear or appears arbitrary, and does not seem to be related to the values which the zones seek to protect (e.g. retention of productive land, sensitive siting of built development to reflect landscape values). In other cases, zoning does not reflect the constraints or capacity of areas to absorb development.

79. Having said all that, there are a number of localities where the existing zoning is appropriate, in particular:

- Kaitoke Valley – A general rural zone (ie whatever equivalent National Planning Standards zone replaces the Rural Valley Floor zone) provides appropriately for small scale farming. The level of isolation does not support higher density rural-residential living (Rural Lifestyle).

- Whitemans Valley - Retain general rural zoning in the central area of the valley in particular, given hazard and landscape constraints, and the distance to urban areas from the central part of this valley.
- Moonshine Valley/Moonshine Settlement – A general rural zone is appropriate, given the isolation, earthquake hazard, difficulties in access and topography.
- Akatarawa Valley – A general rural zone (that will replace the Rural Valley Floor and Rural Hill zones when the National Planning Standards are adopted) is appropriate, (existing areas of Rural Lifestyle are not).

80. These recommendations were covered in more detail in section 3.2, which looks at the individual rural localities.

4.2 Incremental change – introducing landscape responsive planning

81. There are a number of localities where we feel there could be more controls to prevent urban encroachment/ fragmentation and loss of rural amenity and character. We also think there are some controls that would assist to address landscape and visual effects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

82. The following recommendations draw on the findings of the landscape assessment and our collaborative spatial analysis of the rural localities (see section 3.2):

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS

- Consider an appropriate trigger (which responds to the number of lots, proposed lot size and configuration, topography etc) that would require subdivision applications in the rural zones to be accompanied by an expert landscape assessment, for peer review. This would be a place-responsive requirement, and may not be

required in all areas. (Any provisions of this nature should be tied to the landscape evidence base).

BUILDING PLATFORMS

- Introduce controls in the plan to require building platforms to be identified and consented with subdivision applications, dependent on scale of the proposed development, location, prominence, precedent, topography etc. The purpose of this control is to manage landscape and visual effects, climate change resilience and take a precautionary approach to natural hazards.

SHADOW BUILDING PLATFORMS

- Investigate an appropriate trigger or threshold to require applicants to identify a (second) shadow building platform and access arrangements in sensitive rural development areas, especially where new lots proposed are greater than the minimum lot size. This might be appropriate for lot sizes between 1000m and 4ha, for example. The requirement to demonstrate a shadow building platform needs to be balanced alongside other outcomes, e.g. landscape, topography, natural hazards.

Shadow building platforms can be useful as a tool for two reasons. First, they can prevent unnecessary urban sprawl in sensitive landscape areas, by promoting infill and clustered development. Second, they provide a means to control the prominence and visibility of such development. Bulk and location controls may be a mechanism for defining a potential shadow building 'area', as opposed to a specific location. (See the landscape report, section 5.3.1 for an illustration of how shadow building platforms might work in practice).

GREATER CONTROLS FOR SUBDIVISION TO MINIMUM LOT SIZE (4HA) IN THE RURAL VALLEY FLOOR ZONE

- The Operative Plan provides for minimum lot sizes of 4ha in the Rural Valley Floor sub-zone as a controlled activity. Regardless of which rural zone is adopted through the Planning Standards, it may

be appropriate to increase the scrutiny of such developments, by introducing more specific matters of control in relation to landscape and visual effects, design controls, hazards, precautionary approaches to climate change, potential loss of highly productive land and further assessment matters, to be defined. This would need to be supported by specific policies to address these issues.

LANDSCAPE RESPONSIVE ZONE BOUNDARIES

- Rural zoning boundaries should provide a more landscape-responsive alignment, i.e. recognising sensitivities associated with elevated areas, ridgelines and spurs. We recommend that future zoning boundaries are more responsive to these landscape patterns rather than geometric lines on a plan following parcel boundaries. The area south of Katherine Mansfield Drive (Mangaroa Valley) is an example where the rural lifestyle zone upper boundary should be revisited.

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVE ALLOTMENT BOUNDARIES

- Individual allotment boundaries should be more responsive to landform in more sensitive settings (e.g. in ONFLs, SALs or in more prominent visual locations such as spurs and ridgelines). Boundaries may be emphasised by shelter belt planting that can be out of place in more open landscapes. As a mitigation measure, opportunities should be taken through subdivision applications to reconfigure allotment boundaries so that they do not generate 'at-boundary' effects (for example, locating boundaries in gullies). This could be introduced as a qualitative assessment matter for relevant subdivision consents.

4.3 Opportunities (and constraints) arising from the National Planning Standards

83. The rural plan change is an opportunity to consider and respond to the directions in the National Planning Standards which cover zoning and strategic objectives and policies.
84. The District-wide Matters Standard (Standard 7) directs Councils to identify objectives and policies which outline the “*key strategic or significant resource management issues for the District*”. Each ‘strategic direction’ matter must have its own chapter in the Plan. The Standard provides an opportunity to adopt a strategic approach to the rural environment.
85. In particular, we see this as a way to signal the importance of retaining and providing flexibility for rural industries to flourish and adapt over time, preventing unnecessary urban encroachment, as well as to introduce more of a values-based approach to assessment of impacts.

ZONING OPPORTUNITIES

86. The Planning Standards prescribe a set of zones (Zone Framework Standard - 8), which every authority must use. Within the rural areas, it could be suitable for the Council to adopt any of the following zones:
- General Rural Zone
 - Rural Production Zone
 - Rural-lifestyle Zone
 - Settlement Zone
 - Natural Open Space Zone
 - Open Space Zone
 - Sport and Active Recreation Zone
 - Special Purpose Zone

87. The 'Rural Hill and 'Rural Valley' Sub-zones will not be consistent with the National Planning Standards and the Council will need to consider which zones to adopt from the above list instead.

88. The definitions of 'General Rural' and 'Rural Production' are very similar. Looking at the *2G Zone Framework Standard – Recommendations on Submissions Report for the first set of National Planning Standards*⁸, it is explained that the intent is to retain flexibility within the two zones for a wide range of uses. The report explains that the 'rural production zone' might be more appropriate where applied to areas with:

“environmental characteristics (such as soil type, sunlight hours and other climatic factors) that are particularly supportive of primary production activities. Provisions of these zones seek to avoid loss or degradation of these environmental characteristics to other uses such as countryside residential urban development. Subdivision and land fragmentation are closely managed to avoid urban encroachment onto this land, and have stricter standards than more general rural zones, particularly on non-production activities”.

89. In this respect, the Rural Valley Floor zone might most closely approximate the 'Rural Production' Zone⁹ and the Rural Hill Zone would approximate the General Rural Zone.

90. There would also be an opportunity to distinguish those areas of the Rural Hill Zone which may be more appropriately zoned as one of the Open Space zones, providing for the water capture areas of Greater

⁸ Ministry for the Environment. 2019. *2G Zone Framework Standard Recommendations on Submissions Report for the first set of National Planning Standards*. Wellington. Ministry for the Environment.

⁹ The Operative Plan states that “The Valley Floor Sub-zone is defined as the area largely used for productive agricultural purposes with a range of land holdings located primarily on the valley floor”.

Wellington Regional Council, and/or recreation activities (e.g. the Tararua Forest Park and Kaitoke Regional Park).

91. The Rural Lifestyle sub-zone in the Operative Plan aligns well with the ‘Rural Lifestyle Zone’ in the Planning Standards. This zone is described as:

“Areas used predominantly for a residential lifestyle within a rural environment on lots smaller than those of the General rural and Rural production zones, while still enabling primary production to occur”.

92. There is explicit recognition that primary production is appropriate within this zone.

93. There is also an opportunity to introduce a “Settlement Zone”, which is specifically tailored for higher density living in rural areas. The definition of the ‘Settlement Zone’ is:

“Areas used predominantly for a cluster of residential, commercial, light industrial and/or community activities that are located in rural areas or coastal environments”.

94. A ‘Settlement Zone’ would provide flexibility to accommodate and cluster land uses which naturally support rural communities. Adopting a ‘Settlement Zone’ would provide for a more pro-active, strategic and spatial direction to the location of rural industry/rural community facilities than the provisions in the Operative Plan. We consider that such a zone might be appropriate in the following areas:

- Around Maymorn Station, extending to Old School Road (Te Marua)
- Around Maclaren Street (Te Marua)
- Whitemans Valley Road intersection with Mangaroa Valley Road and Wallaceville Road (Mangaroa Valley)
- In proximity to Mangaroa School, lining Flux Road/Leonards Road (Mangaroa Valley).

95. The Blue Mountains Area overlay could become a 'precinct'.
96. A precinct approach could also be appropriate in the immediate vicinity of Maymorn Station.
97. The future urban growth areas as outlined in the LUS could be zoned and shown on the planning maps as a 'Future Urban Zone'.

4.4 Strategic Spatial Changes

98. There are a number of areas where we think a more strategic and/or spatial approach would be appropriate in order to respond to the challenges facing the rural area.

CLUSTER SUBDIVISION

99. We think there is a real opportunity to capitalise on the benefits of cluster development. Clustering residential lifestyle development would provide an opportunity to:
 - improve rural outlooks
 - mitigate visual impacts of built development
 - retain rural amenity and character
 - improve the efficiency of use of productive land
 - retain flexibility to respond to climate change
 - generate more land for open space and recreation in rural areas.
100. This approach would require subdivision and site design standards in the Rural zones to accommodate a range of lot sizes, along with balance lots. The operative plan provisions would make it very difficult to undertake this type of development currently (e.g. in relation to setbacks from boundaries and minimum lot sizes). It will be important to ensure allotment sizes are sufficient to ensure onsite disposal of sewerage does not result in pollution, especially where land is poorly drained. This may

have implications for minimum lot sizes unless some sort of communal scheme is used.

101. Examples of cluster development are set out in the landscape report. We provide more details of the potential benefits and costs of cluster development in the S32 analysis (Appendix 4).

STRUCTURE/OUTLINE PLANNING FOR INFILL RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

102. There are a number of locations in the rural area that would benefit from structure or outline planning. In particular, we think this would be useful in the locations that could accommodate 'infill' rural residential development, and that are reasonably close to the city centre or public transport hubs, such as the Maymorn Railway Station and Old School Road¹⁰.

FUTURE CONNECTIVITY

103. There should be a strategic approach (e.g. through outline plans) to provision of future local rural roads and shared paths. This would provide for connectivity between adjacent rural subdivisions, especially where density might increase in the future. This could be achieved via easements or other mechanisms to safeguard future provision. An example where this would be useful is to identify future connectivity between Old School Road, Maclaren Street, Colletts Road and Flux Road (Te Marua).
104. The flat topography of the valley floors is ideal for non-motorised transport and there is an opportunity to create a good quality network of safe, shared paths. The Open Space Strategy 2018 has identified an opportunity in the Mangaroa-Whitemans Valley to connect stream and river corridors by acquiring esplanade strips and reserves. There is a further opportunity to form a shared pathway within the valley floor

¹⁰ with a Settlement Zone and Station Precinct potentially used to facilitate this, see further recommendations under the Planning Standards discussion.

along a paper road. This would greatly improve connectivity in these valleys for active travel, which is a key aspiration in the Council's Long Term Plan, and a consistent theme of community consultation to date.

PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE

105. The Open Space Strategy is premised on the existing pattern of large-lot subdivisions, and makes the assumption that private open space performs the same function as community open space. However, this ignores the importance of human connections to wellbeing. It is not clear how aspirations for active recreational uses, such as rural sport, are provided for in this approach. The definition and distinction between active and passive recreation in the Operative District Plan provisions is not clear. Despite the Rural Lifestyle zone being the most intensive rural living zone in the plan, active recreational activities which would service these communities are a discretionary activity. There is an opportunity to be more proactive in providing for open space and recreation.

COMMUNITY HUBS

106. It would be useful to identify rural 'community hubs' which can act as a focal point for rural communities. The plan should encourage land uses that support rural industry/rural community life to locate in these hubs. Such hubs would be appropriate where there is already a suitable anchor activity (school or community open space), and where the road network can accommodate additional traffic. Hubs should be designed so that they separate more vulnerable, multimodal traffic from through-traffic, and reduce traffic conflicts on less suitable parts of the road network. The new 'Settlement Zone' in the Planning Standards is a tool which could be used to delineate such hubs. We identify some potential locations in our discussion on the future zones (see section 4.3).

PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH TO HAZARDS

107. We think it is sensible to restrict or avoid new development in areas subject to risks of natural hazards, especially where climate change modelling predicts that these hazards are likely to be exacerbated in the future. Built development is generally permanent in nature, and there is

clear incentive (and directive) to take a precautionary and long-term approach. The Council has done a lot of work recently to identify and manage risks associated with natural hazards (e.g.eg Plan Change 42), which we support. In the future, modelling may identify the need for further overlays to address hazards associated with climate change in those rivers or tributaries which are not covered by Plan Change 42.

PROVIDING FOR AND MANAGING THE EFFECTS OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

108. Forestry and pastoral farming are key rural industries in Upper Hutt. The economics report (Appendix 5) has shown that they are likely to remain important land uses in the future. The District Plan should respond to this by enabling these uses to continue and managing reverse sensitivity issues associated with rural-residential living. The impacts of harvesting on the local road network and road user safety are a key issue for rural Upper Hutt, given the particular constraints of the rural road networks. The NES on Plantation Forestry 2018 should be considered in this context, to determine whether any further controls are necessary. The Operative Plan requires a setback of ten metres between dwellings and forestry, which may require review (see section 4.5 recommendations for more detail).

FUTURE URBAN EXPANSION?

109. The economic analysis concludes that the City's rural land makes a useful, but marginal, contribution to New Zealand's overall agricultural and forestry production. Given this, and the generally less valuable soils of the district, it could be viewed as an area in which to accommodate increased demand for urban development in the Greater Wellington area.
110. The district might provide attractive expansion options as part of a wider strategy for coordinating areas for future urban growth in the region. This is particularly so, given its proximity and accessibility, and planned improvements in road, rail and bus service infrastructure, which are likely to further increase that accessibility.

PROVIDING FOR TANGATA WHENUA ASPIRATIONS

111. Direct engagement with iwi is needed to identify particular relationships and connections iwi have with localities in the rural area, and learn the tangata whenua's aspirations for the rural environment - both of which may have a bearing on how the rural environment is managed. An iwi liaison officer was appointed by Council as this report was being finalised. Greater engagement with Ngāti Toa, Taranaki Whānui ki to Upoko o te Ika will be an important next step in taking this work forward. A refresh of the RLUA to reflect findings of any consultation with iwi may be needed.

REGIONAL PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

112. It is too early at this stage to gauge what the full effect will be of the Proposed Natural Resources Regional Plan or the Whaitua te Whanganui-a-Tara's Whaitua Implementation Plan. However, it will be important to keep abreast of the future policy directions and to consider the effects this may have on rural land use in Upper Hutt.

4.5 Responding to climate change challenges in the rural environment

113. Section 1.4.1 of the 'Issues and Themes informing Rural Land Management in Upper Hutt' (Appendix 2) takes a detailed look at the climate change challenges facing rural communities in Upper Hutt. The modelling shows that climate change will impact on the occurrence and severity of weather events and natural hazards and affect water availability in the rural area.
114. Due to local geography, the rural areas will be particularly vulnerable to flooding and wildfire. Temperature increases over summer along with a decrease in rainfall are likely to increase the risk of fires.
115. Regulating the location of building platforms in response to hazard areas, and increasing building setbacks in response to increased fire or flood and erosion risk, may become more important in the future. The Operative Plan requires a setback of ten metres between dwellings and forestry. The appropriateness of this distance (especially in remote rural locations) should be discussed with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ).
116. Increases in extreme rainfall will increase the incidence of flooding and landslides, and with this, damage or loss of key infrastructure. This makes community resilience a key factor in locating new development. Many of the rural roads in Upper Hutt are narrow, winding and steep, with single lane bridges. Some valleys have only one point of access, and no alternative route. Unless developers are required to contribute to the upgrades of such roads to improve their resilience and capacity, it does not seem appropriate to accommodate further rural residential development in these areas. In the future, there may be a need for further restrictions on subdivision and development such as that introduced by Plan Change 42 (Pinehaven and Mangaroa Flood Hazard Extents), in the vicinity of rivers or main tributaries not covered by Plan Change 42.

117. Given scientific¹¹ (and government¹²) advice to adopt a precautionary approach to planning for long-term assets and infrastructure in the face of climate change, it does not seem appropriate for the District Plan to facilitate higher density rural-residential development in the more remote rural valleys in the district. In this respect, we recommend that the area currently zoned Rural Lifestyle in the Akatarawa Valley should be considered for rezoning.
118. We think it would be timely to include conversations around the implications of climate change during community consultation on Plan Change 50. It will be important to determine the level of tolerance and acceptability of rural communities to increased risks of wildfires and isolation due to infrastructure failure, landslides and extreme weather events. There are implications of climate change for key rural industries, particularly forestry and pastoral farming. This discussion will need to encompass issues which are wider than the district plan, for example minimum levels of service for infrastructure.
119. Primary industry will be especially susceptible to climate change in terms of potential reduced water availability, increased numbers of pests, increased erosion, reduced soil fertility, increased flood intensity and fire risk and increased heat stress in livestock. Responses to climate change are likely over time to drive innovation in rural land use and in activities typically associated with rural environments, for example tech-driven food production. The District Plan needs to be responsive to change, and the restrictive, activity-based rule provisions should be revisited with this in mind.
120. The plan review should look at whether it needs to strengthen protection for highly productive land, in light of the incoming National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land (NPs-HPL). The very recently

¹¹ NIWA Report, 2017

¹² Preparing for future flooding: A guide for local government in New Zealand, May 2010

released consultation document on the NPS-HPL¹³ indicates that the definition of ‘highly productive land’ will include Land Use Capability Class 1, 2 and 3 land (italics are our emphasis) by default. The definition of ‘highly productive land’ for each region will be then determined by regional councils, “in consultation with their communities” and within a three-year period. Regional Councils will have an option to exclude some of this land, or to identify other highly productive land, on the basis of factors such as: the suitability of climate, size of properties to support primary production, water availability, access to transport routes and appropriate labour markets. In this respect, it may be premature at this point to dismiss the minor contribution that Upper Hutt District’s productive land makes to the overall rural land resource in the region, on the basis that, although small, it may still be important. The discussion document notes that as parts of the country become warmer, cooler, drier or wetter, the areas which are currently considered to be highly productive could change and that “Councils will need to consider the climate, among other factors, when identifying highly productive land.”¹⁴

121. Policies designed to mitigate climate change are also likely to encourage increased afforestation (especially on more accessible blocks with poor soil fertility). However, this needs to be considered alongside future predicted impacts of climate change, including a substantial increase in wildfire risk from exotic plantations, and reduced soil fertility (NIWA, 2017), both adverse impacts which could be further amplified by this policy approach.

¹³ <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/36624-discussion-document-on-a-proposed-national-policy-statement-for-highly-productive-land> accessed 15 August 2019

¹⁴ Ministry for Primary Industries and Ministry for the Environment. 2019. *Valuing Highly Productive Land: Discussion Document*. Wellington. MPI. Accessed 15 August 2019 at: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/36624-discussion-document-on-a-proposed-national-policy-statement-for-highly-productive-land>

122. Clustering rural residential development provides an opportunity to retain productive land for that purpose¹⁵ and provides flexibility to innovate in its use. It also provides a way to locate development away from hazard areas and reduce risk of flooding from stormwater and erosion. As we identify above, this is a particular option which we think could have real value in the Upper Hutt rural environment.
123. There is a declining trend in landcover by indigenous biodiversity. Climate change will put significant pressure on native biodiversity (freshwater and terrestrial), as a result of increased temperature, pests, reduced river flows and groundwater availability, drought and changes to soil fertility. Protection of significant natural areas and ecological corridors in the rural areas will be important to give ecosystems a fighting chance. The protection of such areas will be addressed through an upcoming plan change which will identify Significant Natural Areas and Outstanding Natural Landscapes.

¹⁵ Research for the NPS-HPL suggests that generally, smaller blocks will experience a moderate to significant fall in overall production when broken up, while larger blocks, and those converted from extensive grazing, may see an increase in agricultural production when subdivided (Lillis et al, 2005, pg 25, MPI & MFE, 2019).

5 Conclusions and next steps

124. There has been significant change in central government direction on a wide range of issues (urban development, content and structure of planning documents, natural hazards, climate change, water quality), that indicates that a review of the rural plan provisions is timely.
125. There has been no major change to the rural provisions in the District Plan since the plan was adopted in 2004, and consequently the zoning provisions have had a strong influence on the existing development pattern.
126. At a district-wide and more local level, our analysis has shown that there is good reason to take a closer look at the current approach and challenge whether this is delivering the outcomes that the community wants, and whether there is an opportunity to do better. Our review of private plan change requests and discretionary subdivision consents have highlighted certain areas where a review is needed (see Appendix 2, section 1.5.9 and 1.5.10).
127. In addition, a lot of new information has been collated. This includes information on landscape values, potential significant areas of indigenous vegetation, climate change projections for the Wellington Region and natural hazards. This information will influence discussions around the appropriateness of existing zoning and plan provisions for managing these issues.
128. Our analysis has highlighted areas where the plan change process can respond to the challenges and opportunities ahead.
129. To take this work forward, we think the following will be required:

TALK TO THE COMMUNITY

- As part of the PC 50 review, the Council proposes to convene a rural community forum. It will be important to engage with this group to confirm the values identified through recent consultations.

- Community engagement is essential to combat resistance to change, and enable a more strategic approach to planning for the rural area. It will be helpful to have examples of where things have been done well, so that these models can inspire and motivate others.
- Talk to the community about the implications of **climate change** in the rural environment – for productive industries such as forestry and pastoral farming, levels of service for infrastructure, awareness and acceptability of risk, as well as ways to increase resilience.
- It would be useful to combine consultation on rural provisions with topics such as protection of indigenous biodiversity, sensitive landscapes, hazard and climate change planning and any geotechnical plan change, so that rural stakeholders can understand the full picture.

REVIEW THE NATIONAL PLANNING STANDARDS ZONES

- Determine whether this zoning, and the strategic district-wide issues approach, can be adopted through the plan change.

PARTNERSHIP WITH IWI

- Work with iwi to understand Treaty obligations and how these might play out through new rural plan provisions. Direct engagement with iwi is needed to identify particular relationships and connections iwi have with the local rural area, as well as to understand the tangata whenua's aspirations for the rural environment - both of which may have a bearing on how the rural environment is managed. The Council has recently appointed an iwi liaison officer who will be in post from August 2019. We strongly recommend early engagement with that person once in post. A refresh of the RLUA may be needed to reflect findings of any consultation with iwi.

PARTNERSHIP WITH GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

- Close working will be needed to understand the implications of and implement the outcomes of the Whaitua process in terms of water and nutrient allocation, wetlands, and the Proposed Regional Plan.

REVISIT THE RLUA

It may be useful to **revisit the RLUA** to take account of outcomes from:

- the Whaitua planning process
- new regulations emerging through the Proposed Regional Plan in relation to water, hazards, earthworks, forestry and indigenous biodiversity
- engagement with iwi and local community
- results of the geotechnical review of liquefaction hazard.

DISCLAIMER

This report has been prepared by Perception Planning Ltd, with input from Peter McIntyre of Sapere Research Group on economic matters.

We used a lot of different sources of information to write this report. Where we could we tried to make sure that third party information was accurate, but we couldn't audit all those external reports, websites, people or organisations. If the information we used turns out to be wrong, we can't accept any responsibility or liability if that affects our report or its conclusions. We might (but aren't required to) update our report if we find any additional information that was available when we wrote the report that affects its conclusions.

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