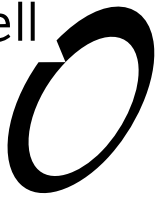


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Riverhead Plan Change


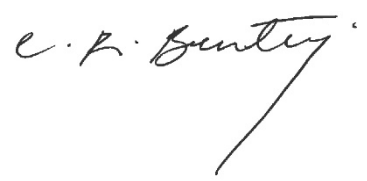
Landscape and Natural Character Effects Assessment

Prepared for Riverhead Landowner Group

3 October 2023



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Cover photograph: View from within The Site looking south, 2022

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of the report

Boffa Miskell Limited (**'BML'**) has been engaged by the Riverhead Landowner Group¹ (**'the applicant'**) to undertake a Landscape and Natural Character Effects Assessment (**'LNCEA'**) for a proposed structure plan and plan change of an 81.5ha area of land to the west of the Riverhead Township (otherwise referred to as **'The Site'** in this report). The Site is zoned 'Future Urban' (**'FUZ'**) within the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part). The Site falls within the area subject to the Spatial Land Use Strategy - North West - Kumeū-Huapai, Riverhead, and Redhills² (**'SLUS'**). The SLUS identifies the location of Future Local Centres, Future Neighbourhood Centres, and Future Business zones within the Kumeū-Huapai, Riverhead, and Redhills North areas. A Future Neighbourhood Centre is indicated within The Site and a Future Local Centre to the north west of The Site boundary.

The proposed private plan change seeks to optimise the use of the land within the FUZ and reflect national directive to deliver well-functioning urban environments with a variety of development opportunities. It proposes to rezone The Site as a mixture of Terraced Housing and Apartment Building Zone (**'THAB'**), Mixed Housing Suburban (**'MHS'**), Mixed Rural Zone (**'MRZ'**), Business – Neighbourhood Centre Zone (**'BNC'**) and Business - Local Centre Zone (**'BLC'**) and Mixed Rural Zone (**'MRZ'**).

This LNCEA report assesses the landscape and visual effects of the proposed THAB, MHS, BNC and BLC land use on the immediate and surrounding character of the environment, recognising that the potential for land use change from rural to urban has long been signalled for this locality as part of the Future Urban zoning and the Spatial Land Use Strategy.

This assessment:

- Briefly describes The Site and its landscape setting, recognising that a number of other documents supporting the plan change set out comprehensive descriptions of both;
- Analyses the proposed plan change development outcomes in the context of the SLUS;
- Describes the nature of the plan change and the ways in which it responds to landscape attributes, natural character and visual amenity;
- Sets out an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects in respect of the plan change

The applicant has engaged Urban Acumen to undertake a masterplanning exercise for The Site in conjunction with the projected zoning (refer Figure 5, Proposed Zoning of the Graphic Supplement). The Site sits adjacent to Riverhead Road to the west of Riverhead and the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway to the east. These roads are identified to be upgraded to as part

¹ The Riverhead Landowner Group includes Fletcher Residential Limited, Matvin Group, and The Neil Group.

² Spatial Land Use Strategy - North West - Kumeū-Huapai, Riverhead, and Redhills (adopted May 2021) - <https://www.supportinggrowth.govt.nz/assets/supporting-growth/docs/spatial-land-use-startegy-north-west-4.pdf> [accessed online – May 2022]

of the Te Tupu Ngātahi Supporting Growth transport network upgrades, to support Auckland's growth.

2.0 Assessment Methodology

Tuia Pito Ora / The New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects has endorsed new guidance for the assessment of landscape under the RMA context in Aotearoa / New Zealand. This guidance, *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*, has been used to guide the methods adopted in this assessment. This replaces earlier guidance which relied on international best practice / guidance that was not specifically tailored for the New Zealand context.

As part of our assessment, the Site has been observed from both proximate and more distant locations within the established urban and rural contexts of the locality. The site visit was undertaken on the 27th of May 2022 in fine weather.

During the site visit, the team visited the immediate local context to gauge the overall visibility of the Site and proposed residential development from the surrounding landscape. The team also visited areas identified through a desktop study as having the potential to gain outlook to, and views of, the Structure Plan and Plan Change area. Photographs were taken from within the Site, Coatesville-Riverhead Highway, Riverhead Road, Cambridge Road, Queen Street, Lathrope Road and Te Roera Place.

In assessing the scale of landscape effects, a seven-point scale of effects has been applied, as recommended in *Te Tangi a te Manu*, comprising: "very low", "low", "low – moderate", "moderate", "moderate high", "high" and "very high" values, a description of each is included in **Appendix 1**. Effects have been assessed in terms of the values of the landscape having first understood its characteristics in terms of the physical, associative and perceptual realms of the landscape. Importantly, it is noted that change in a landscape does not of itself generate adverse effects.

The effects covered in this assessment include:

- Landscape character and amenity effects derived from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. This may in turn affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape.
- Visual effects relating to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes, and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.
- Natural character effects, considered as they relate to a change in the baseline condition of the level of natural character related to watercourses.

Landscape, visual and natural character effects result from natural or induced change in the components, character or quality of a landscape. Usually these are the result of landform or vegetation modification or the introduction of new structures, activities or facilities into the landscape.

The nature of landscape and visual effects generated by any particular project can therefore be:

- positive (beneficial), contributing to the visual character and quality of the environment;

- negative (adverse), detracting from existing character and quality of environment; or
- neutral (benign), with essentially no effect on existing character or quality of environment.

The degree to which landscape and visual effects are generated by a proposal depends on a number of factors, these include:

- The degree to which the proposal contrasts, or is consistent, with the qualities of the surrounding landscape.
- The proportion of the proposal that is visible, determined by the observer's position relative to the objects viewed.
- The distance and foreground context within which the proposal is viewed.
- The area or extent of visual catchment from which the proposal is visible.
- The number of viewers, their location and situation (static or moving) in relation to the view.
- The backdrop and context within which the proposal is viewed.
- The predictable and likely known future character of the locality.
- The quality of the resultant landscape, its aesthetic values and contribution to the wider landscape character to the area.

Change in a landscape and natural character does not, of itself, necessarily constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. Landscape is dynamic and is constantly changing over time in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways. These changes are both natural and human induced. What is important in managing landscape change is that adverse effects are avoided or sufficiently mitigated to ameliorate the effects of the change in land use.

To determine the level of landscape, visual and natural character effects, both the sensitivity of the landscape, natural element or viewing audience and level of change resulting from a proposed development are considered. The sensitivities of the viewing audiences to visual change vary, however residential and recreational viewing audiences are generally considered to be more sensitive to change, while travelling and working viewing audiences are less sensitive. When assessing the potential effects arising from a plan change the assessment should consider the nature of maximised potential future development enabled by the provisions of the plan change. In this respect the present owner of the land is not a consideration as the zoning follows the land independent of ownership and the intentions of a particular landowner.

Prior to conducting the assessment, a desktop study was completed which included a review of the relevant information relating to the landscape and visual aspects of the proposal. This information included:

- Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) (AUP (OP)).
- Proposal Drawings including proposed zoning plan (Urban Acumen).
- Aerial photography (Auckland Council GIS Viewer).

The desktop study was also undertaken to determine likely viewing audiences, landscape character types, prominent ridge lines and the planning context of The Site and surrounding area. This information collected was used to inform site visits to The Site and the surrounding

area. Representative photographs were taken from viewpoints representing both private residential and public viewing audiences.

3.0 The Site and its Landscape Setting

The Site comprises some 81.5ha over multiple lots, it is defined by the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway and Cambridge Road (a paper road in part) to the east, Lathrope Road to the south and the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream at the northern extent of the site. The Site is bisected by Riverhead Road which connects to the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway. (Refer Figure 1: Site Context and Figure 2: Site Location in the Graphic Supplement). It is planned for Riverhead Road to be upgraded and for the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway to be updated as a Transport Corridor. This is intended to increase the safety and carrying capacity of the primary connections to Riverhead and provide an increased transportation choice, including pedestrian, cycle and public transport options. Te Tupu Ngātahi: Supporting Growth also seeks to improve the safety and connectivity of the road network, including improving intersections and reviewing speed limits.

The Site is set within the context of a mostly flat landscape which gently slopes up from the north towards the south. The surrounding land to the north and north west of The Site in the Riverhead Forest and its immediate borders are characterised by steep undulating landform and steep ridges, forming a network of valleys and streams that disperse into the wider landscape. The entirety of The Site sits upon underlying pumiceous mud, sand and gravel with muddy peat and lignite, as opposed to the undulating Riverhead Forest which is formed of sandstone and mudstone with variable volcanic content.

The relatively flat nature of the site allows for views across the site, however these are currently primarily broken up by intervening linear stands of shelterbelt planting. The wider context of the sloping hill country land of the site, within Riverhead Forest to the north, provides a well-defined landscape and visual backdrop. These hills define the skyline to Riverhead and rise to a high point of 178m within the Riverhead Forest (refer Plate 1 below).



Plate 1: View north from within The Site towards the Riverhead Forest hills.

Vegetation within The Site is reflective of its current agricultural production land use and predominantly comprises structured monocultures of seasonal fruits (primarily kiwi fruit and strawberries) within long fields. The northern portion of the site comprises pastoral grassland grazed by cattle, with some large native and exotic vegetation and bands of riparian vegetation along waterways. Lots along the eastern boundary of The Site south of Riverhead Road have a more varied land use, including lifestyle blocks, a florist and a bed and breakfast. The geometric lot boundaries are divided by tall lines of shelterbelt trees primarily comprised of Japanese cedar and Sheoak with small areas of Black acacia, White poplar and Japanese cedar. (refer Plate 2 and Plate 3 below). Residential properties within The Site are typically surrounded by amenity vegetation and exotic trees. Overall, this comprises a relatively small amount of the vegetation in The Site.



Plate 2: View north from within agricultural production land to the south of Riverhead Road.



Plate 3: View south along Cambridge road showing the interface with existing residential properties and the rural landscape.

Within the wider context of the landscape, vegetation patterns vary from those generally found within The Site. To the east of the site, vegetation the Single House Zone (**SHZ**) comprises

structured avenue trees along the street network and amenity planting within residential lots. Older residential lots north of Riverhead Road typically have more established vegetation and a greater density of trees. More contemporary housing to the south of Riverhead Road currently feature less established vegetation, however it is expected that this will continue to mature over time. Riverhead Forest to the north of The Site is characterised by the dense plantation pine forest (refer Plate 4 below). Although the land use to the west of The Site is also a rural agricultural typology, the landscape has a pastoral focus and comprises long thin fields bordered by combination of post and wire fencing, managed hedgerows and intermittent short sections of shelterbelt trees. The long channel of the Riverhead Stream which weaves across the land to the west of the site is bordered on either side by a mix of native and non-native riparian vegetation.



Plate 4: View north from the northern boundary of The Site towards Riverhead Forest.

The northern extent of the site is bordered by the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream (refer Plate 5 below) which flows in an easterly direction towards the Rangitopuni Stream. The central low lying area along the eastern boundary and an area of depression to the west are subject to periodic flooding.



Plate 5: View west along the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream .

Within the site and the surrounding context to the south and west, built form predominantly comprises individual rural lifestyle dwellings, agricultural storage structures (sheds and barns) and agricultural production buildings. There are 11 residential dwellings across the site, one large agricultural production building, consolidated areas of polytunnels/greenhouses and a series of smaller agricultural buildings.

The Zaberrri agricultural production facility is positioned within The Site to the south west of the Riverhead Road and Coatesville-Riverhead Highway roundabout, and is the most visible agricultural building within The Site (refer Plate 6 below). Small single level rural style residential properties used as dwellings and converted for small scale business purposes front on to the western side of the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway.



Plate 6: Zaberri large agricultural production building located at 340 Riverhead Road.

The most apparent land use within The Site and wider landscape is agricultural production, predominantly arable land, pastoral farmland and glass / hot houses. Residential development is at a very low density with clusters of lifestyle blocks in proximity to arterial roads and farmsteads scattered within the landscape. Agricultural fields are largely geometric shaped varying from small to medium, larger fields are present though less common to the west of the Coatesville Riverhead Highway. As is evident from Plate 7 below The Site is less vegetated than adjacent rural land to the north and west.



Plate 7: Aerial showing patterns of lot / paddock boundaries and other vegetation within The Site and surrounding area.

In summary, The Site is characterised by its relatively flat landform, consisting of a low profile to the north, gently rising to the south. The agricultural production land use and patterns of vegetation create a generally enclosed landscape. The Site does not have any areas considered to be of high landscape value, however the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream on the periphery of the northern boundary and the Southern Channel to the south of Riverhead Road, within western side of The Site. Within its wider landscape context, The Site is relatively unremarkable, with the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream along the northern boundary its more recognisable landscape feature. The Sites character is defined by qualities and attributes that are commonly found in the wider (agricultural) rural landscape (refer Plate 8 below).



Plate 8: Agricultural production land adjacent to urban residential properties at the north of The Site.

4.0 Statutory Context

4.1 The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

Part 2 of the RMA sets out the purpose and principles of the Act. Section 5 states that the purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

Section 6 sets out the matters of importance that must be recognised and provided for in achieving the purpose of the RMA. The protection of outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is identified as a matter of national importance in section 6(b). There are no outstanding natural features or landscapes within The Site, with the closest being Taylor Road ONL, south of

Helensville 4km to the west of The Site and Paremoremo Escarpment 3.5km to the east of The Site. These will not be impacted in any way by the proposal.

Another matter of national importance is the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development as identified in section 6(a). The Site is not located in the coastal environment although it does contain the Southern Chanel and part of the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream along the northern boundary.

Section 7 identifies a range of matters that shall be given particular regard to in achieving the purpose of the RMA. Section 7(c) in relation to the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values is particularly relevant to this project. This is considered in this report in relation to potential effects on views and visual amenity.

4.2 The Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part)

The Site is zoned Future Urban Zone (“**FUZ**”) under the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) (“**AUP OP**”). This zone appears across the north west extending on to the existing urban areas of Kumeū-Huapai, Riverhead, and Redhills North. The Site covers the entirety of extension to Riverhead urban area which is primarily a Single House Zone (“**SHZ**”). The SHZ also contains Business - Neighbourhood Centre Zone (“**BNC**”), an area of Business - Mixed Use Zone (“**BMU**”) and a small area of Business - Local Centre Zone (“**BLC**”), which all front on to the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway. Riverhead War Memorial Park is a large triangular area of parkland zoned as Open Space - Sport and Active Recreation Zone (“**OS-SAR**”) east of the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway. This open space is primarily used for sporting activities and comprises three rugby pitches, a Bowling Club and a multi-use hard games area that can accommodate a multitude of sports. The west and south of The Site is bordered by Mixed Rural Zone (“**MRZ**”), the land to the west is pastoral in nature and land to the south is used for agricultural production, similar to The Site. The Riverhead Forest immediately to the north is zoned as Rural - Countryside Living Zone (“**RCL**”) and makes up a small portion of the land bordering The Site. Figure 4 of the Graphic Supplement illustrates the proposed zoning of The Site within the current AUP zoning context.

The FUZ is applied to greenfield land that has been identified as suitable for urbanisation. The FUZ is a transitional zone. Land may be used for a range of general rural activities but cannot be used for urban activities until The Site is rezoned for urban purposes. The SLUS does not specifically advise on the proposed zoning, however it does anticipate a BNC and BLC within Riverhead.

In requesting a plan change to vary the zoning of The Site, a key consideration is whether the proposed zoning is the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the RMA (sections 74 and 32). One element of that consideration is assessing whether the form of land use makes best practicable use of the land whilst avoiding adverse effects particularly on land beyond The Site and whether the proposal would deliver on the opportunity for quality compact urban form and optimisation of growth within the Rural Urban Boundary (**RUB**), which is a key aspiration of the AUP OP and overarching Auckland Plan vision.

5.0 Non-Statutory Context

5.1 Spatial Land Use Strategy - North West - Kumeū-Huapai, Riverhead, Redhills North

The commencement of structure planning for the FUZ land within the north west is not anticipated to begin to be structure planned by Auckland Council until around 2025. As such there is currently no indicative zoning that directs Council's vision of the proposed development of the FUZ. The SLUS is intended to be a high-level outline for potential centres.

The development of the Spatial Land Use Strategy has been influenced by a number of factors including zoning principles from the Unitary Plan, directions from the National Policy Statement on Urban Development, the existing land uses and zonings of adjacent land, the Indicative Strategic Transport Network, potential future Rapid Transit Network ("RTN") station locations, future business and centre land requirements, various land constraints such as flooding and natural heritage, as well as feedback from public consultation.

The draft Spatial Land Use Strategy was open for consultation from November 2020 to February 2021. It was publicised in conjunction with the Supporting Growth Programme as it informs the Supporting Growth process.

In considering the potential locations of proposed local centres within the north west three potential options were tabled. The approved Spatial Land Use Strategy adopted in May 2021 shows an expansion of the existing Local Centre within the north of Riverhead and north east of the FUZ. A new Neighbourhood Centre is shown to the south of Riverhead opposite the existing Neighbourhood Centre zoning at the Hallertau Brewery.

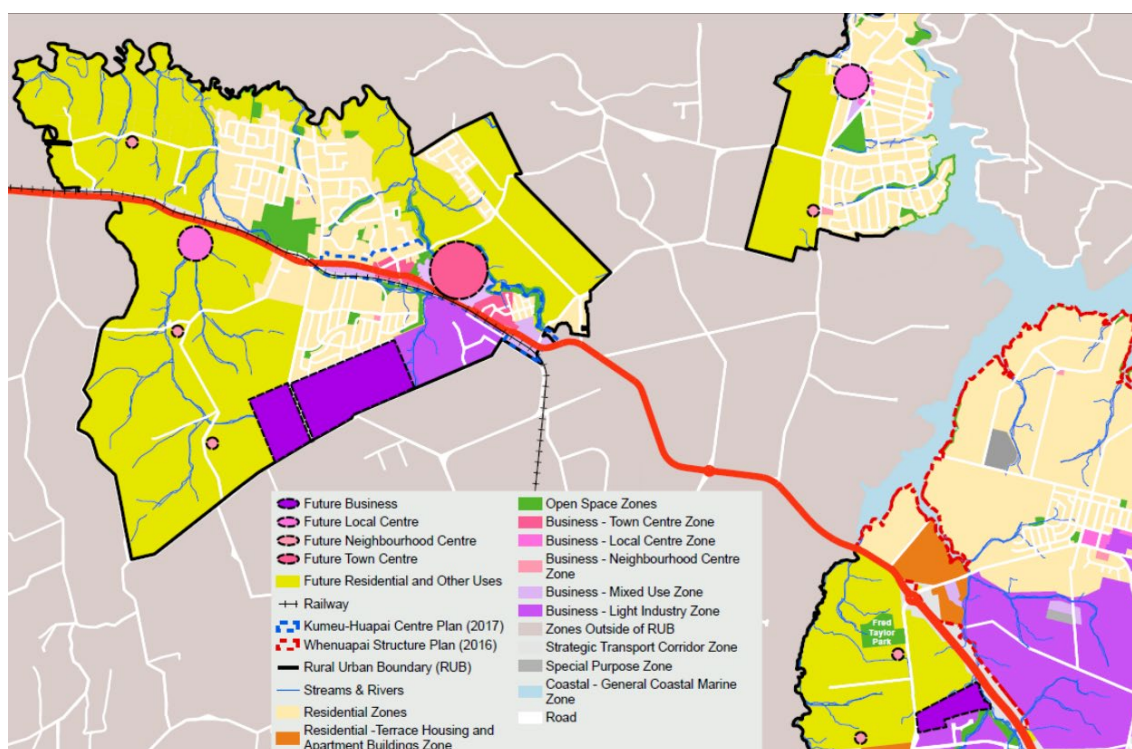


Plate 9: Spatial Land Use Strategy - Kumeū-Huapai, Riverhead, and Redhills North.

With the exception of the Future Business, Local Centre and Neighbourhood Centres within the plan indicated in the SLUS, the FUZ will be developed as a residential area with a mix of housing densities. The SLUS identifies that residential density types such as “Mixed House Suburban, Mixed House Urban and Large Lot will be identified at the structure plan stage”.

6.0 Proposed Riverhead Plan Change

The proposed Plan Change proposes four zones within the Site: THAB, MHS, MRZ, BNC and BLC (refer Plate 10 below). The plan change seeks to provide a sequence of zones that grade the height and density of future residential development around the central BLC and THAB zone at the junction of the Riverhead Road and Coatesville-Riverhead Highway along the eastern boundary.

The purpose of the plan change is to facilitate residential housing and employment within The Site and enable higher densities of development closer to centres, arterial routes and public transport networks. The plan change will enable greater density and diversity of development within The Site in terms of the scale and form of built development and the mix of activities provided for. The proposed MHS zoned land will typically have an 8m height limit, to reflect the generally lower level existing housing within Riverhead.

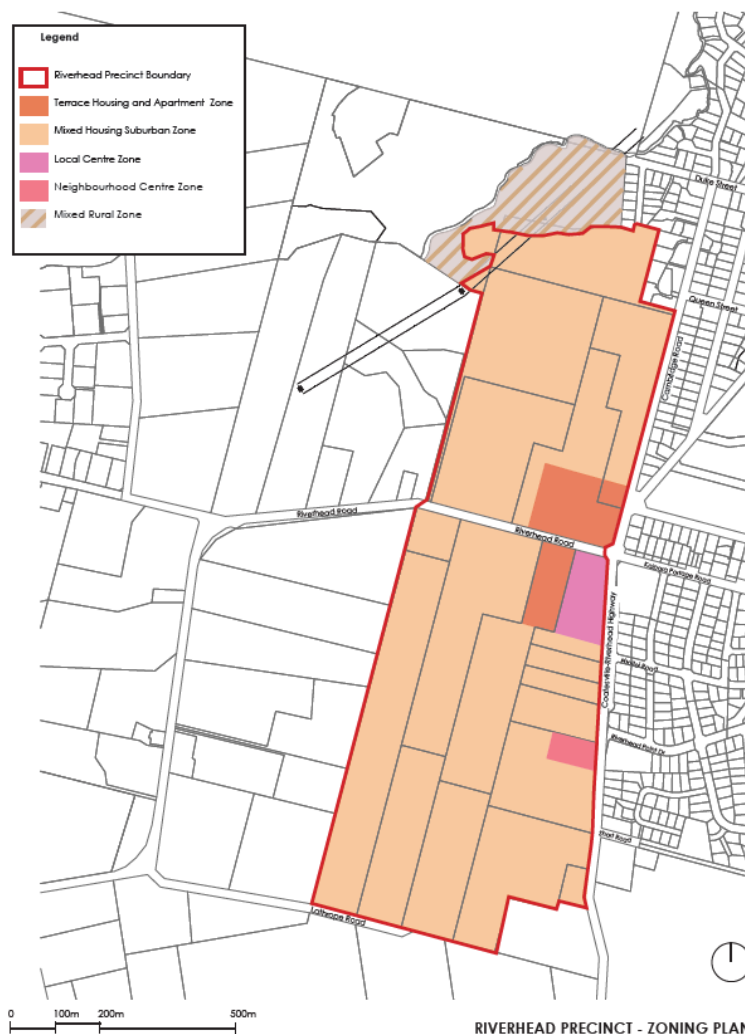


Plate 10: Proposed development zoning

The proposed THAB zoning is located around the Riverhead Road and Coatesville-Riverhead Highway which will be upgraded as part of the future transportation works. This junction will be a key intersection within Riverhead and it is considered to be an appropriate response to facilitate a higher density of development in proximity to the arterial transportation routes. The proposed THAB area to the north of Riverhead Road at 1092 Coatesville-Riverhead Highway, is intended to be developed as a retirement living complex. The immediately adjoining MHS-zoned land (sub-precinct B in Plate 11 below) will have an 11m height limit to create a transition in height to the lower surrounding MHS-zoned land.

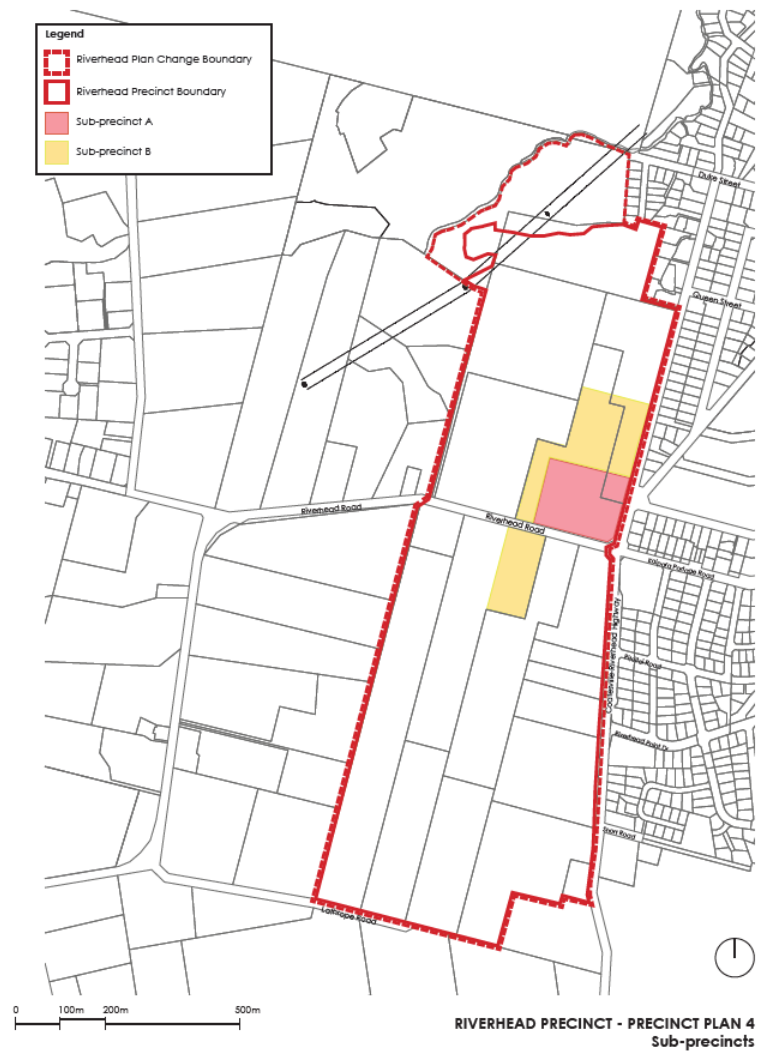


Plate 11: Riverhead Plan Change – Precinct Plan

Sub-precinct A overlays THAB zoned land and provides for a wider range of non-residential activities in recognition of the location at a key intersection adjacent to the BLC and public transport facilities, greater height and residential density in proximity to the key road interchange and the BLC. This precinct will provide for a range of non-residential uses. Sub-precinct B sits within MHS and applies an 11m height limit to create a transition between the Sub precinct A and surrounding MHS which has a two story height limit.

A BLC is anticipated within the SLUS, although this proposal has shifted its location from within existing SHZ in the north of Riverhead adjacent to the Riverhead Road and Coatesville-Riverhead Highway intersection. With this arrangement, the BLC will act as a gateway feature

to The Site and anchor the surrounding THAB development. This location also allows the BLC to be accessible to the established Riverhead community, without removing existing dwellings. The proposed location of the BNC is in alignment with the SLUS and will benefit from the relationship with the BNC to the east of the of the Coatesville Riverhead Highway, as intended in the SLUS.

The remaining balance within the Riverhead Precinct Boundary will be zoned MHS, this is envisaged to contain a variety of housing typologies including detached housing and multi-unit development in a range of layouts. In order to manage the interface between the proposed zoning and adjacent rural land, a minimum 5m building setback is proposed between built form and the boundary.

The northern extent of the Riverhead Plan Change Boundary will be zoned MRZ to reflect the zoning of the land to the west of the FUZ. This land has been excluded from the Structure Plan Area in respect of the significant flooding constraints. The rural zoning of this land provides an additional buffer between the proposed urban zoned land, Riverhead Forest and the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream.

A masterplan has been developed by project master planners Urban Acumen, in conjunction with the proposed zoning of The Site requested through the plan change. The site analysis underpinning the master plan includes the topography, vegetation and drainage, streams (permanent and intermittent), access and connectivity and the SLUS. The existing streams and drainage within the site are key drivers for the allocation and distribution of sustainable stormwater management.

The masterplan includes the provision of open spaces along the central spine road including three neighbourhood parks which will provide a different open space experience to the Riverhead War Memorial Park. The proposed neighbourhood parks have been designed and distributed across The Site to be within walkable distance of residential dwellings. The proposed neighbourhood parks will be part of the 'multi-purpose green corridor': a wider green and blue network of urban water reserves which provides direct drainage conveyance and attenuation in a north south direction.

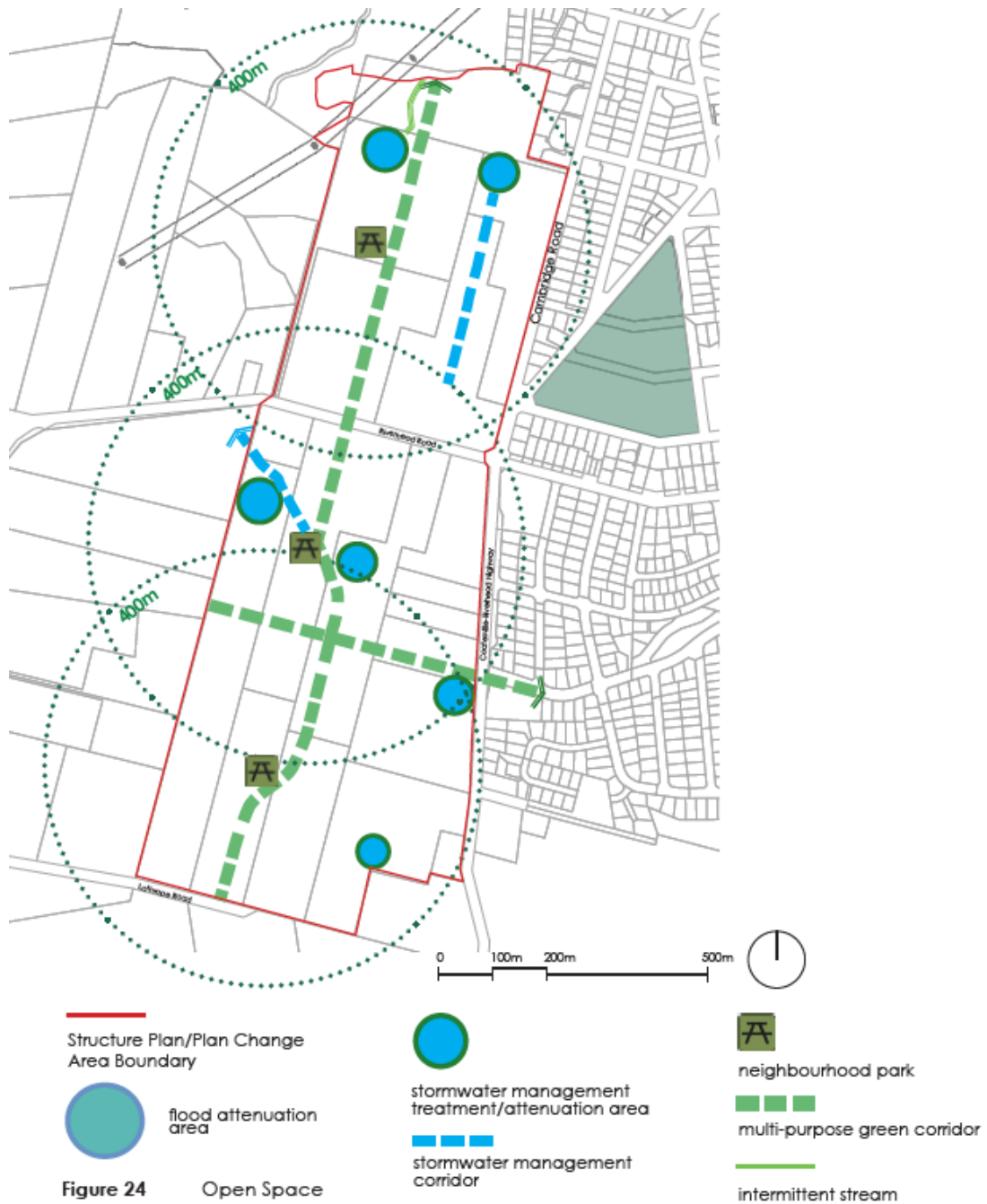


Plate 12: Open space and water reserve plan

The connectivity across The Site has been designed to utilise and respond to the existing features of The Site to create a legible vehicular as well as pedestrian and active mode network. This network will support and maintain a structured pedestrian legibility and connectivity across the development while enhancing existing landscape features. The gridded street layout reflects the layout of the roads in the wider landscape character area and provides for an efficient use of space to meet higher density zoning. The central north south orientated topography and steam environment has also been incorporated into the master plan design / plan change and is reinforced by the alignment of the central spine road.

The Urban Acumen masterplan illustrates a greater level of detail than is required for the plan change request, which relates to identifying the location of the proposed zones, key road and open space network. This additional detail is because the Applicant has aspirations for a development that has an appropriate balance of residential, commercial, services and amenity in order to create a high-quality living environment for the future residents. Much of the design intent within the master plan relies on future resource consents guided by the provisions of the AUP. All relevant provisions of the Auckland wide and zone provisions of the AUP that relate to landscape and visual effects apply.

7.0 Visual Catchment and Viewing Audiences

To assist in determining the visual catchment and potential viewing audiences of future development within the plan change area a site visit was undertaken to observe and record observations regarding the visibility and existing viewing audiences. It is noted that over time, the make-up of these viewing audiences will change as the FUZ evolves in line with the AUP OP, including the removal of existing shelterbelt planting which inhibit existing views into The Site. In consideration of the nature of the plan change, the greatest height sought is within the proposed THAB near the Riverhead Road and Coatesville-Riverhead Highway.

The following observations in respect of the visual catchment of The Site and its future urban development, have been made:

- The Site has a low-lying topography and multiple stormwater catchments and is surrounded by comparatively low-lying agricultural land allowing for open views towards The Site from all directions, with the exception of the steep forested land to the north of The Site;
- Intervening vegetation such as shelterbelts will obscure many views of the development for surrounding viewing audiences, although it is recognised that such vegetation will likely be removed due to the future development of the surrounding area;
- Very distant views of The Site could not be obtained due to the low-lying nature of the surrounding landscape and the intervening vegetation. However, some views from elevated private residences are not able to be represented with representative photographs due to their remote nature.

The primary viewing audiences of The Site / potential future development enabled by the plan change have been identified as the following:

Viewing Audiences in the immediate vicinity

- Users³ of surrounding local roads such as Kaipara Portage Road, Grove Way, Deacon Road, Lathorpe Road, Coatesville-Riverhead Highway (Route 28), Riverhead Road and Queen Street;
- Visitors to and workers of surrounding local businesses including the Hallertau Brewery, T & M Nurseries and Van Lier Nurseries;
- Residents located along Kaipara Road, Grove Way, Coatesville-Riverhead Highway (Route 28), Riverhead Road, Cambridge Road and Te Roera Place,

³ Including people walking, cycling and traveling in vehicles

Viewing audiences in the wider context

- Users of distant areas of public open space at Huapai Golf Club (limited visibility); and
- Residents located on Broadwood Drive.

As outlined earlier, a range of viewpoints representing the key viewing audiences have been selected (refer **Figure 6 of the graphic supplement and Table 1 below**) and are referred to in the visual effects assessment. The viewpoints have been selected as it is considered they address the key aspects of the visual catchment for the potential future development.

Table 1: Viewpoints Considered as Part of Visual Catchment Evaluation:

VP No.	Location	Distance from landholding (approx..)	Direction of View	Reason for selection	Nature of View: Open, Partial, Obscured
1	Te Roera Place	37m	North West	Representative of residents on Te Roera Place	Partial / Obscured
2	Coatesville-Riverhead Highway	350m	South West	Representative of residential properties on Coatesville-Riverhead Highway and Alice Street	Partial / Obscured
3	Queen Street	190m	West	Representative of residential properties on Alice Street	Partial / Obscured
4	Cambridge Road	5m	West	Representative of residents on Cambridge Road	Partial / Obscured
5	Kaipara Portage Road	135m	West	Representative of residents and road users on Kaipara Portage Road	Partial / Obscured
6	Grove Way	40m	West	Representative of residents on Grove Way	Open
7	Coatesville-Riverhead Highway	140m	North West	Representative of views from motorists on Coatesville-Riverhead Highway	Partial / Obscured
8	Coatesville-Riverhead Highway – Outside Huapai Golf Course	460m	North West	Representative of people on Huapai Golf Course and motorists travelling north on Coatesville-Riverhead Highway	Obscured
9	240 Riverhead Road	40m	East	Representative of views from motorists, and residents /workers on the east of Riverhead Road	Partial
10	220 Riverhead Road	430m	East	Representative of views from residential properties on Riverhead Road.	Open
11	Lathrope Road	30m	North	Representative of views from residential properties and businesses to the south of Lathrope Road.	Open

12	Old North Road and Riverhead Road intersection	665m	West	Representative of Road users and motorists on at the intersection of Old North Road and Riverhead Road.	Obscured
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8.0 Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

Landscape and visual impacts result from natural or induced change in the components, character or quality of landscape. When plan changes are proposed, the inevitable consequence is a transition of the landscape to a new form of land use with its consequent changed character and amenity.

When assessing the potential effects arising from a plan change the assessment should consider the nature of the maximised potential future development enabled by the provisions of the plan change.

8.1 Landscape Effects

The conversion of approximately 75.5ha from a rural land use to an urban form of development comprising four zones of the AUP will lead to a change in the character of the landscape. A change from a rural landscape to an urbanised landscape is however signalled and largely anticipated within the FUZ and recognised in the Spatial Land Use Strategy.

Whilst substantial landscape change will occur, provisions of the AUP will provide for the restoration and enhancement of the identified watercourses as natural features of the future urban landscape. The watercourses and drainage features have helped to structure the form of the development and guide the connectivity of the proposed open spaces. The proximity of future intensive urban development to the relatively sensitive, unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream, small scale ephemeral and intermittent streams will need to be sensitively managed, future resource consents will enable the consideration of this interface and its amenity.

Earthworks across The Site, to establish the street network and land suitable for urban development, will alter the slightly undulating nature of the topography. The characteristic low lying land to the north adjacent to the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream will be retained as a rural landscape to maintain the character of the landform given the flooding constraints in this area. Earthworks within The Site including the arrangement of the road network, lots and open space will result in a change in the landscape that is in line with the changes anticipated for urbanisation.

The extensive nature of proposed earthworks associated with the urbanisation of rural land will result in very little vegetation within The Site being retained, with the exception of riparian vegetation around the stream environments and an identified notable tree. Importantly, there is no vegetation identified to be significant in terms of ecological value (SEA) and only one notable tree having amenity values. The notable tree is a mature Copper Beech (*fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea') located at 298 Riverhead Road residential lot (refer Plate 13 below).



Plate 13: Copper Beech proposed notable tree (refer Greenscene NZ, Arboricultural Assessment)

The existing vegetation within The Site is primarily for agricultural production or required to support these crops is not considered of sufficient value to justify retention or protection and does not relate to the intended future urban use. Development of The Site enabled by the plan change will ultimately provide a structured soft landscape, including street trees, trees in parks, stormwater management and vegetation in residential gardens, throughout The Site. This will be achieved by providing a strong network of streetscapes reinforced by urban trees and planting, connecting the network of open spaces, and enhanced riparian margins.

Public open space and stormwater management parks enabled by the plan change will ultimately support appropriate riparian vegetation which will reinforce and support the network of waterways.

The Site boundaries to the north, west and south which are, or are proposed to be, adjacent to rural land will benefit from a 5m building offset. This will provide opportunities for boundary treatment to soften the transition between urban and rural landscapes. Along the eastern boundary of the site, the southern paper road portion of Cambridge Road will be activated to provide a safe urbanised street to interface with the proposed retirement living complex.

In the wider landscape context, The Site is backdropped by the Riverhead Forest to the north. The enabled height within the THAB and BLC zones is up to 16m and 18m respectively. The development of these zones has the potential to reduce views towards the Riverhead Forest, however it is also recognised that due to the relatively flat landscape and the intervening tall boundary vegetation, views through the site toward the hills are restricted. A visual connection

to the Riverhead Forest will be maintained from The Site through the strong central collector road and multi-purpose green corridor which runs north south through the site.

The proportional potential future height of the THAB and BLC development will appear larger than the existing SHZ buildings in Riverhead. The form of the development along these interfaces will be managed through the provisions within the underlying zoning. These provisions will require that visual amenity effects on retained properties and audiences will be managed. Where the THAB and BLC zones interface with the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway, the width of the road corridor in conjunction with zoning provisions will provide an appropriate transition between The Site and residential properties to the east of the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway.

The proposed neighbourhood centre will appear as a comparable extension to the existing adjacent zone to the east of the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway. The concentration of THAB and BLC development at the Riverhead Road and Coatesville-Riverhead Highway is considered to be an urban marker which is an appropriate landmark to signify the centre of the Riverhead township. This will be a focal point in the urban environment providing a variation in height and form, creating a level of interest, diversity and legibility in built form in the future urban landscape.

In summary, a substantial change will be introduced to the FUZ landscape to the west of Riverhead. The proposed THAB and BLC zoning will represent a focal point for the new and existing community. The Site will retain a response to the natural environment, and the proposed provision of open space is designed to enable future connection along greenways towards the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream.

The proposed development outcomes are considered to be in line with the need for greater density, variety and compact urban form in line with the recommendations in the Auckland Urban Design Manual, as detailed in the Urban Design Statement⁴. The proposal will develop the future urban zone to its full potential and will provide a mixed use and compact urban development.

8.2 Visual Amenity Effects

Visual effects relate to the amenity values of a landscape including the “natural and physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes”⁵.

The specific nature of the visual effects will depend on the future more detailed masterplanning and design of specific development proposals. Each proposal will require resource consent and be subject to a range of assessment criteria, including those which address the provision of structuring elements, including the location of roads and open spaces. Interface outcomes will be required through the proposed Precinct Provisions. Future resource consents for subdivision, earthworks, the establishment of infrastructure and for residential development will include restricted discretionary status applications that include the opportunity for the comprehensive review of proposals.

⁴ Riverhead Plan Change, Urban Design Statement – Urban Acumen, September 2023

8.2.1 Views from the immediate vicinity

Views from the immediate vicinity include users of surrounding local roads, visitors and workers of surrounding local businesses and existing residents along Cambridge Road (VP4), Coatesville-Riverhead Highway (VP7 and VP8) and Te Roera Place (VP1). These need to be considered against the expectations of the FUZ (as addressed below). These views towards the site vary dependent on proximity to the site and intervening mature vegetation, built form and undulating landform which screens views.

Urban residential viewing audiences adjacent to the to the east along Te Roera Place, Cambridge Road, Coatesville-Riverhead Highway and Grove Way are afforded short distance views towards the site. These views are currently limited by screening vegetation around the site, but are expected to have open and partially filtered views towards the proposed retirement living complex.

Rural residential properties to the north, south and west of the site are fewer and more widely distributed across the landscape and generally have a longer distance views towards The Site. The further away the audiences are, the more views are interrupted by intervening vegetation, residences and agricultural production buildings. Rural viewing audiences with view of the site are accessed from Riverhead Road, Duke Street, Coatesville-Riverhead Highway and Lathrope Road. Motorists along the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway and Riverhead Road will have open views of the development when audiences are adjacent to The Site. Oblique views further away from The Site are primarily contained by linear bands of vegetation along the road corridor, and infrequent glimpsed views will be available from Riverhead Road which is perpendicular to the western site boundary.

Representative photographs of these viewpoints are provided in the Graphic Supplement attached to this report (**Appendix 2**).

Through the master planning process which has informed the plan change, it is proposed to refine the extent and the distribution of the THAB and BLC zoning to the eastern centre of the site adjacent to the Riverhead Road and Coatesville-Riverhead Highway. However, the nature and form of development on this land will be largely determined by the resource consent for the proposed development.

Viewing audiences in the immediate vicinity of the site boundary will observe views of one of the predominantly one to two storey buildings within the MHS zoned land, 11m development within Sub-precinct B, and up to 16m within the THAB zone, which will comprise the retirement living complex. This will result in the middle distance back drop for these viewing audiences changing from a rural outlook to an urban one, in line with the expectations of the underlying FUZ.

Commercial properties and visitors of surrounding business and road users are considered to have a lower sensitivity to changes in the landscape and will observe adverse visual effects at a level of effect up to low, given the anticipated level of visual change within the locality.

Residential viewing audiences in the immediate context of The Site have a higher sensitivity to change and will ultimately lose their existing rural outlook of The Site. This land use change is however an anticipated outcome of the FUZ. Furthermore, due to the rural nature of the surrounding context as it currently exists, there are low numbers of existing residential viewing audiences having views into The Site within the immediate context. With this in mind, there will be elements of greater density proposed over and above those which are shown within the SLUS, however the Local Centre will be proximate to the location identified in the SLUS. Additionally, the THAB and MHS land will be land that is at a greater density than the existing SHZ land and which will contribute to a level of adverse effects, however it is not considered that this increase in density will be seen to be wholly out of context in this evolving urban

environment and a proposed local centre. It is therefore considered that the potential adverse effects on established residential viewing audiences in the immediate vicinity of The Site will be up to **low-moderate**.

8.2.2 Views from the wider context

Wider contextual views of The Site include those from Lathrope Road to the south (VP11), Riverhead Road to the west (VP9 and VP10), Old North Road to the south west (VP12) and in the distant elevated views from private residential properties. Audiences with the highest sensitivity to change are those residential viewing audiences to the west which sit outside of the Future Urban zone on Riverhead Road as these have the potential for long term views from within their rural environment.

Photographs of these viewpoints are provided in the Graphic Supplement attached to this report (**Appendix 2**).

Wider context views of The Site are defined as views which include The Site within the context of the wider area. These views are more obtainable to the west due to the rising landform and the areas of open field patterns. Examples of these viewpoints are VP9, VP10 to the west and VP12 to the south west (see the Graphic Supplement). The setting of the views towards The Site from the west predominantly include open rural pasture and linear belts of shrubs / hedgerows, shelterbelts and clumps of trees. Viewing audiences up to the middle distance would observe glimpsed and partial views of The Site through the rising and falling landform and bands of mature trees. Distant viewing audiences from the higher ground to the west experience views in the context of the Riverhead township and views towards The Site are filtered by linear shelterbelts, linear vegetation along Riverhead Road and riparian vegetation along the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream.

Audiences beyond the middle distance which sit lower in the landscape will not be afforded direct views to site due to the intervening/ undulating landform, built form and vegetation. Road users along Riverhead Road and the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway are not afforded views towards The Site due to intervening road side vegetation, linear bands of rural vegetation. Road users along Riverhead Road and the Coatesville-Riverhead Road tend to have a lower sensitivity to the changes proposed and sit within a transportation corridor that is a well enclosed by vegetation and / or landform.

The increase in development density anticipated in the FUZ and height in envisaged zoning (via the PPC) will introduce more vertical development in the area, within the THAB and BLC zones acting as a focal point. The arrangement of the development density has focussed on grading the density towards the centre of the site at the intersection of Riverhead Road and the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway.

This results in a visually softened but legible development in the context for some of the more distant views in negligible or very low adverse visual effects. In respect of the above analysis visual effects on residential, worker and transient audiences are expected to range from **low** to **very low** adverse.

9.0 Assessment of Natural Character Effects

The primary aspects of Natural Character are considered to be the biophysical (abiotic and biotic) landscape attributes reflecting the extent to which natural elements, patterns and processes occur and the extent to which human modification has occurred. Secondary experiential aspects associated with the context of such waterbodies and their margins have also been considered. The site is not considered to be within the coastal environment and the site is not considered to hold Outstanding Natural Character or High Natural Character.

9.1.1 Biophysical – Abiotic Attributes

The key abiotic attributes of the project include the geology, water catchments and landform. The site is primarily land which has been modified over time to have an agricultural land use including the modification of streams. Therefore, a number of the key natural elements, processes and patterns relate to watercourses within the landscape.

A single stream within the site is primarily defined by the existing topography and is a contributing element to localised riparian habitat. The quality and value of this vegetation varies along the stream as a result of the differing levels of management at sections of the stream, with some areas overrun with invasive species including gorse.

The low lying landscape at the northern extent of the site south of Duke Street primarily comprise exotic pastoral grassland. This field periodically floods when the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream and northern channel overflow, identified in the ecology report included with the plan change. The southern channel of the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream has been excavated and channelled to form an overland flow and therefore is no longer natural. A pond is located on the northern part of the site (pond 1), this was created for irrigation purpose and has no natural qualities.

Overall, it is considered that the biotic attributes of the Site hold a low-moderate degree of natural character.

9.1.2 Biophysical – Biotic Attributes

The biotic attributes of the project area are the living organisms which shape an ecosystem. Surveys have been undertaken by an ecologist and arboriculturist in respect of these aspects and the site contains a notable tree which has intrinsic, age/health and character/form attributes with a heightened value.

The site and vicinity are primarily made up of agricultural production crops with areas of pastoral grassland to the north, surrounded by shelterbelts of exotic trees. The open pastoral grassland to the northern extent bordered close to the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream by interspersed with mature native and exotic trees including three notable trees. The vegetation can be divided into five broad types which are the:

- managed pastoral grassland of the area;
- riparian and native vegetation adjacent to the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream along the edge of the site boundary;
- standalone mature native and non-native trees dispersed amongst the landscape;

- amenity vegetation around dwellings; and;
- shelterbelt of mixed exotic trees along the site boundaries and dividing the field boundaries.

The pastoral grassland is not considered to have high natural character values, similarly the agricultural crops, stand alone non-native mature trees and pine trees. However, there are a small number of the indigenous species within the riparian margins along sections of the unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream and its associated channels, which have greater value. Sections of the streams are overgrown with non-native species, including gorse which is an invasive pest species. Taking the above into account, it is considered that the natural character biotic values of The Site are generally low across the site, however these are low-moderate in the stretches of native riparian vegetation along the stream.

9.1.3 Experiential Attributes

Experiential attributes comprise the interpretation of human experience of the waterbodies that occur within the project area. As established, the majority to the site is used agricultural production with an area of grazed farmland to the north. The unnamed tributary of the Rangitopuni Stream has a deep channel and is bordered either side by thick vegetation, restricting the ability for the experiential qualities to be experienced outside of the immediate vicinity. The sights, sounds and smells of the river and stream environment are understated and largely not experienced within the majority of the site. As a result, it is considered that low levels of natural character exist.

10.0 Conclusion

The Site is currently zoned as FUZ and as such anticipates the urbanisation of the site in the future. The Site is well positioned to accommodate built form, density and diversity of the development. The plan change caters for Auckland's north west expansion and provides a greater level of variety within Riverhead township, whilst preserving the landscape qualities of The Site. Whilst The Site itself does not currently contain features of significant value (such as SEAs) and only a single notable tree, the low lying land to the north of the site which periodically floods, the presence of natural streams and overland flow paths will remain acknowledged and reflected in the open space and drainage network through the centre of The Site. The retained rural character at the northern extent of the Riverhead Plan Change Boundary will provide an appropriate transition to the Riverhead Forest to the north of The Site.

The open space linkages and road layout have been designed to enable accessibility and permeability across the community, as well as future proofing future connections to Riverhead to the east and rural land to the west. The existing stream network will be enhanced through the provision of stormwater management areas, ensuring that the local tributary network remains an integral element within the landscape and maintains its links to the surrounding environment.

Views from the wider context will observe an inherently urban development that, in the short term, will introduce new elements and forms into the visual landscape. The increased height and density provided in the plan change will introduce a diverse visual landmark. Within the context of the future urban environment, the proposed development will be able to seamlessly integrate. The additional height of the proposed THAB, MHS (sub-precinct B) and BLC, will create an apparent visual landmark and identifiable focal point to the community, creating a

sense of place. The proposed masterplan has been developed to integrate the proposed urban density with a well-designed range of vegetated open spaces and linkages that break up the structure of the urban environment. Visual corridors have been established to create vistas and appropriate responses to height and visual amenity.

It is considered that the future urban form of the development will respond to and maintain a connection to natural landscape attributes of The Site and wider context. This integration and sensitive response to the receiving environment will lead to the creation of a quality mixed urban environment with diverse and structured open space provisions, resulting in a diverse community that provides a range of residential, commercial and leisure opportunities consistent with the expectations of a quality urban open space.

Appendix 1: Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment Methodology

23 June 2022

Introduction

The Natural Character, Landscape Effects Assessment (NCLEA) process provides a framework for assessing and identifying the nature and level of likely effects that may result from a proposed development. Such effects can occur in relation to changes to physical elements, changes in the existing character or condition of the landscape and the associated experiences of such change. In addition, the landscape assessment method may include (where appropriate) an iterative design development processes, which seeks to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects (see **Figure 1**).

This outline of the landscape and visual effects assessment methodology has been undertaken with reference to the **Draft Te Tangi A Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines** and its signposts to examples of best practice, which include the **Quality Planning Landscape Guidance Note**⁶ and the **UK guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment**⁷.

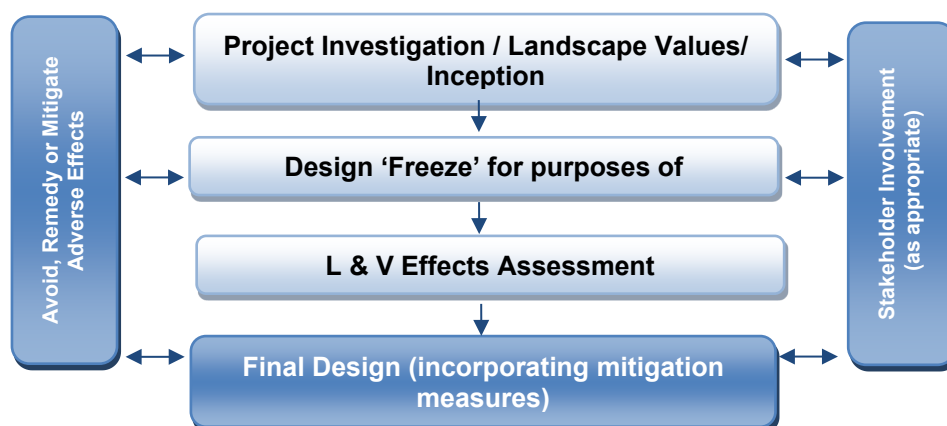


Figure 1: Design feedback loop

When undertaking any landscape assessment, it is important that a **structured and consistent approach** is used to ensure that **findings are clear and objective**. Judgement should be based on skills and experience and be supported by explicit evidence and reasoned argument.

While natural character, landscape and visual effects assessments are closely related, they form separate procedures. Natural character effects consider the characteristics and qualities and associated degree of modification relating specifically to waterbodies and their margins, including the coastal environment. The assessment of the potential effects on landscape considers effects on landscape character and values. The assessment of visual effects considers how changes to the physical landscape affect the viewing audience.

The types of effects can be summarised as follows:

⁶ <http://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/index.php/planning-tools/land/landscape>

⁷ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)

Natural Character effects: *Change in the characteristics or qualities including the level of*

Landscape effects: *Change in the physical landscape, which may affect its characteristics*

Visual effects: *Change to views which may affect the visual amenity experienced by people*

The policy context, existing landscape resource and locations from which a development or change is visible, all inform the 'baseline' for landscape and visual effects assessments. To assess effects, the first step requires identification of the landscape's **character** and **values** including the **attributes** on which such values depend. This requires that the landscape is first **described**, including an understanding of relevant physical, sensory and associative landscape dimensions. This process, known as landscape characterisation, is the basic tool for understanding landscape character and may involve subdividing the landscape into character areas or types. The condition of the landscape (i.e. the state of an individual area of landscape or landscape feature) should also be described together with, a judgement made on the value or importance of the potentially affected landscape.

Natural Character Effects

In terms of the RMA, natural character specifically relates to the coastal environment as well as freshwater bodies and their margins. The RMA provides no definition of natural character. RMA, section 6(a) considers natural character as a matter of national importance:

...the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

Natural character comprises the natural elements, patterns and processes of the coastal environment, waterbodies and their margins, and how they are perceived and experienced. This assessment interprets natural character as being the degree of naturalness consistent with the following definition:

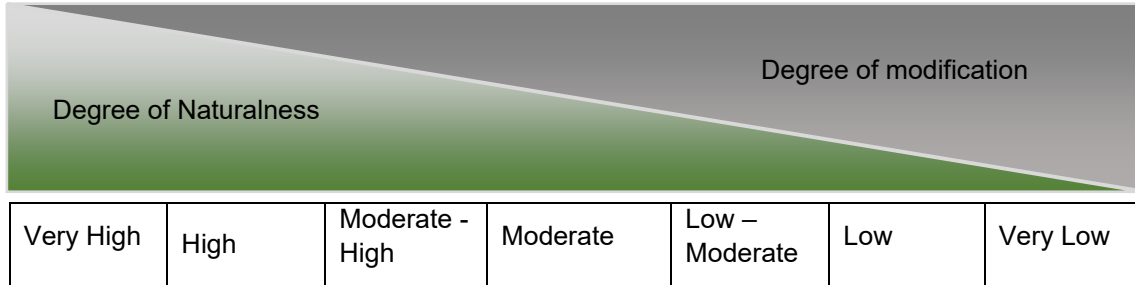
Natural character is a term used to describe the naturalness of waterbodies and their margins. The degree or level of natural character depends on:

- *The extent to which natural elements, patterns and processes occur;*
- *The nature and extent of modifications to the ecosystems and landscape / seascape;*
- *The highest degree of natural character (greatest naturalness) occurs where there is least modification; and*
- *The effect of different types of modification upon the natural character of an area varies with the context and may be perceived differently by different parts of the community.*

The process to assess natural character involves an understanding of the many systems and attributes that contribute to waterbodies and their margins, including biophysical and experiential factors. This can be supported through the input of technical disciplines such as marine, aquatic and terrestrial ecology, and landscape architecture.

Defining the level of natural character

The level of natural character is assessed in relation to a seven-point scale. The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the degree of naturalness and degree of modification. A high level of natural character means the waterbody is less modified and vice versa.



Scale of assessment

When defining levels of natural character, it is important to clearly identify the spatial scale considered. The scale at which natural character is assessed will typically depend on the study area or likely impacts and nature of a proposed development. Within a district or region-wide study, assessment scales may be divided into broader areas which consider an overall section of coastline or river with similar characteristics, and finer more detailed ‘component’ scales considering separate more local parts, such as specific bays, reaches or escarpments. The assessment of natural character effects has therefore considered the change to attributes which indicate levels of natural character at a defined scale.

Effects on Natural Character

An assessment of the effects on natural character of an activity involves consideration of the proposed changes to the current condition compared to the existing. This can be negative or positive.



The natural character effects assessment involves the following steps;

- assessing the existing level of natural character;
- assessing the level of natural character anticipated (post construction); and
- considering the significance of the change

Landscape Effects

Assessing landscape effects requires an understanding of the landscape resource and the magnitude of change which results from a proposed activity to determine the overall level of landscape effects.

Landscape Resource

Assessing the sensitivity of the landscape resource considers the key characteristics and qualities. This involves an understanding of both the ability of an area of landscape to absorb change and the value of the landscape.

Ability of an area to absorb change

This will vary upon the following factors:

- Physical elements such as topography / hydrology / soils / vegetation;
- Existing land use;
- The pattern and scale of the landscape;
- Visual enclosure / openness of views and distribution of the viewing audience;
- The zoning of the land and its associated anticipated level of development;
- The scope for mitigation, appropriate to the existing landscape.

The ability of an area of landscape to absorb change takes account of both the attributes of the receiving environment and the characteristics of the proposed development. It considers the ability of a specific type of change occurring without generating adverse effects and / or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

The value of the Landscape

Landscape value derives from the importance that people and communities, including tangata whenua, attach to particular landscapes and landscape attributes. This may include the classification of Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape (ONFL) (RMA s.6(b)) based on important physical, sensory and associative landscape attributes, which have potential to be affected by a proposed development. A landscape can have value even if it is not recognised as being an ONFL.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

The magnitude of landscape change judges the amount of change that is likely to occur to areas of landscape, landscape features, or key landscape attributes. In undertaking this assessment, it is important that the size or scale of the change is considered within the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration of change, including whether the change is reversible. In some situations, the loss / change or enhancement to existing landscape elements such as vegetation or earthworks should also be quantified.

When assessing the level of landscape effects, it is important to be clear about what factors have been considered when making professional judgements. This can include consideration of any benefits which result from a proposed development. **Table 1** below helps to explain this process. The tabulating of effects is only intended to inform overall judgements.

Contributing Factors		Higher	Lower
Landscape (sensitivity)	Ability to absorb change	The landscape context has limited existing landscape detractors which make it highly vulnerable to the type of change resulting from the proposed development.	The landscape context has many detractors and can easily accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences to landscape character.
	The value of the landscape	The landscape includes important biophysical, sensory and shared and recognised attributes. The landscape requires protection as a matter of national importance (ONF/L).	The landscape lacks any important biophysical, sensory or shared and recognised attributes. The landscape is of low or local importance.
Magnitude of Change	Size or scale	Total loss or addition of key features or elements. Major changes in the key characteristics of the landscape, including significant aesthetic or perceptual elements.	The majority of key features or elements are retained. Key characteristics of the landscape remain intact with limited aesthetic or perceptual change apparent.
	Geographical extent	Wider landscape scale.	Site scale, immediate setting.
	Duration and reversibility	Permanent. Long term (over 10 years).	Reversible. Short Term (0-5 years).

Table 1: Determining the level of landscape effects

Visual Effects

To assess the visual effects of a proposed development on a landscape, a visual baseline must first be defined. The visual ‘baseline’ forms a technical exercise which identifies the area where the development may be visible, the potential viewing audience, and the key representative public viewpoints from which visual effects are assessed.

Field work is used to determine the actual extent of visibility of the site, including the selection of representative viewpoints from public areas. This stage is also used to identify the potential ‘viewing audience’ e.g. residential, visitors, recreation users, and other groups of viewers who can see the site. During fieldwork, photographs are taken to represent views from available viewing audiences.

The viewing audience comprises the individuals or groups of people occupying or using the properties, roads, footpaths and public open spaces that lie within the visual envelope or ‘zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)’ of the site and proposal. Where possible, computer modelling can assist to determine the theoretical extent of visibility together with field work to confirm this. Where appropriate, key representative viewpoints should be agreed with the relevant local authority.

The Sensitivity of the viewing audience

The sensitivity of the viewing audience is assessed in terms of assessing the likely response of the viewing audience to change and understanding the value attached to views.

Likely response of the viewing audience to change

Appraising the likely response of the viewing audience to change is determined by assessing the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations and the extent to which their interest or activity may be focussed on views of the surrounding landscape. This relies on a landscape architect’s judgement in respect of visual amenity and the reaction of people who may be affected by a proposal. This should also recognise that people more susceptible to change generally include: residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views; visitors to heritage assets or other important visitor attractions; and communities where views contribute to the wider landscape setting.

Value attached to views

The value or importance attached to particular views may be determined with respect to its popularity or numbers of people affected or reference to planning instruments such as viewshafts or view corridors. Important viewpoints are also likely to appear in guide books or tourist maps and may include facilities provided for its enjoyment. There may also be references to this in literature or art, which also acknowledge a level of recognition and importance.

Magnitude of Visual Change

The assessment of visual effects also considers the potential magnitude of change which will result from views of a proposed development. This takes account of the size or scale of the effect, the geographical extent of views and the duration of visual change, which may distinguish between temporary (often associated with construction) and permanent effects where relevant. Preparation of any simulations of visual change to assist this process should be guided by best practice as identified by the NZILA⁸.

When determining the overall level of visual effect, the nature of the viewing audience is considered together with the magnitude of change resulting from the proposed development.

Table 4 has been prepared to help guide this process:

Contributing Factors		Higher	Lower	Examples
The Viewing Audience (sensitivity)	Ability to absorb change	Views from dwellings and recreation areas where attention is typically focussed on the landscape.	Views from places of employment and other places where the focus is typically incidental to its landscape context. Views from transport corridors.	Dwellings, places of work, transport corridors, public tracks
	Value attached to views	Viewpoint is recognised by the community such as an important view shaft, identification on tourist maps or in art and literature. High visitor numbers.	Viewpoint is not typically recognised or valued by the community. Infrequent visitor numbers.	Acknowledged viewshafts, Lookouts
Magnitude of Change	Size or scale	Loss or addition of key features in the view. High degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (i.e. in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture). Full view of the proposed development.	Most key features of views retained. Low degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (i.e. in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture). Glimpse / no view of the proposed development.	- Higher contrast/ Lower contrast. - Open views, Partial views, Glimpse views (or filtered); No views (or obscured)
	Geographic extent	Front on views. Near distance views; Change visible across a wide area.	Oblique views. Long distance views. Small portion of change visible.	- Front or Oblique views. - Near distant, Middle distant and Long distant views
	Duration and reversibility	Permanent. Long term (over 15 years).	Transient / temporary. Short Term (0-5 years).	- Permanent (fixed), Transitory (moving)

Table 2: Determining the level of visual effects

Nature of Effects

In combination with assessing the level of effects, the landscape and visual effects assessment also considers the nature of effects in terms of whether this will be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in the context within which it occurs. Neutral effects can also occur where landscape or visual change is benign.

⁸ Best Practice Guide: Visual Simulations BPG 10.2, NZILA

It should also be noted that a change in a landscape does not, of itself, necessarily constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. Landscape is dynamic and is constantly changing over time in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways; these changes are both natural and human induced. What is important in managing landscape change is that adverse effects are avoided or sufficiently mitigated to ameliorate the effects of the change in land use. The aim is to provide a high amenity environment through appropriate design outcomes.

This assessment of the nature effects can be further guided by **Table 2** set out below:

Nature of effect	Use and Definition
Adverse (negative):	The activity would be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform which results in a reduction in landscape and / or visual amenity values
Neutral (benign):	The activity would be consistent with (or blend in with) the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape maintaining existing landscape and / or visual amenity values
Beneficial (positive):	The activity would enhance the landscape and / or visual amenity through removal or restoration of existing degraded landscape activities and / or addition of positive elements or features

Table 1: Determining the Nature of Effects

Cumulative Effects

This can include effects of the same type of development (e.g. bridges) or the combined effect of all past, present and approved future development⁹ of varying types, taking account of both the permitted baseline and receiving environment. Cumulative effects can also be positive, negative or benign.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

Cumulative landscape effects can include additional or combined changes in components of the landscape and changes in the overall landscape character. The extent within which cumulative landscape effects are assessed can cover the entire landscape character area within which the proposal is located, or alternatively, the zone of visual influence from which the proposal can be observed.

Cumulative Visual Effects

Cumulative visual effects can occur in combination (seen together in the same view), in succession (where the observer needs to turn their head) or sequentially (with a time lapse between instances where proposals are visible when moving through a landscape). Further visualisations may be required to indicate the change in view compared with the appearance of the project on its own.

Determining the nature and level of cumulative landscape and visual effects should adopt the same approach as the project assessment in describing both the nature of the viewing audience and magnitude of change leading to a final judgement. Mitigation may require broader consideration which may extend beyond the geographical extent of the project being assessed.

Determining the Overall Level of Effects

The landscape and visual effects assessment conclude with an overall assessment of the likely level of landscape and visual effects. This step also takes account of the nature of effects and the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation. The process can be illustrated in Figure 2:

⁹ The life of the statutory planning document or unimplemented resource consents.



Figure 2: Assessment process

This step informs an overall judgement identifying what level of effects are likely to be generated as indicated in **Table 3** below. This table which can be used to guide the level of natural character, landscape and visual effects uses an adapted seven-point scale derived from Te Tangi A Te Manu.

Effect Rating	Use and Definition
Very High:	Total loss of key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. amounts to a complete change of landscape character and in views.
High:	Major modification or loss of most key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. little of the pre-development landscape character remains and a major change in views. <u>Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition</u> <i>High: adjective- Great in amount, value, size, or intensity.</i>
Moderate- High:	Modifications of several key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. the pre-development landscape character remains evident but materially changed and prominent in views.
Moderate:	Partial loss of or modification to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. new elements may be prominent in views but not necessarily uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape. <u>Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition</u> <i>Moderate: adjective- average in amount, intensity, quality or degree</i>
Low - Moderate:	Minor loss of or modification to one or more key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. new elements are not prominent within views or uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
Low:	Little material loss of or modification to key elements / features / characteristics. i.e. modification or change is not uncharacteristic or prominent in views and absorbed within the receiving landscape. <u>Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition</u> <i>Low: adjective- 1. Below average in amount, extent, or intensity.</i>
Very Low:	Negligible loss of or modification to key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline, i.e. approximating a 'no change' situation and a negligible change in views.

Table 3: Determining the overall level of landscape and visual effects

Appendix 2: Graphic Supplement

RIVERHEAD PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE

GRAPHIC SUPPLEMENT

3 OCTOBER 2023



Riverhead Private Plan Change



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- FIGURE 3: Elevation and Streams
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- FIGURE 6: Viewpoint Location Map

VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHS

- VP 1: View looking North-West from Te Roera Place (Existing)
- VP 2: View looking South-West from Coatesville-Riverhead Highway (Existing)
- VP 3: View looking West from Queen Street (Existing)

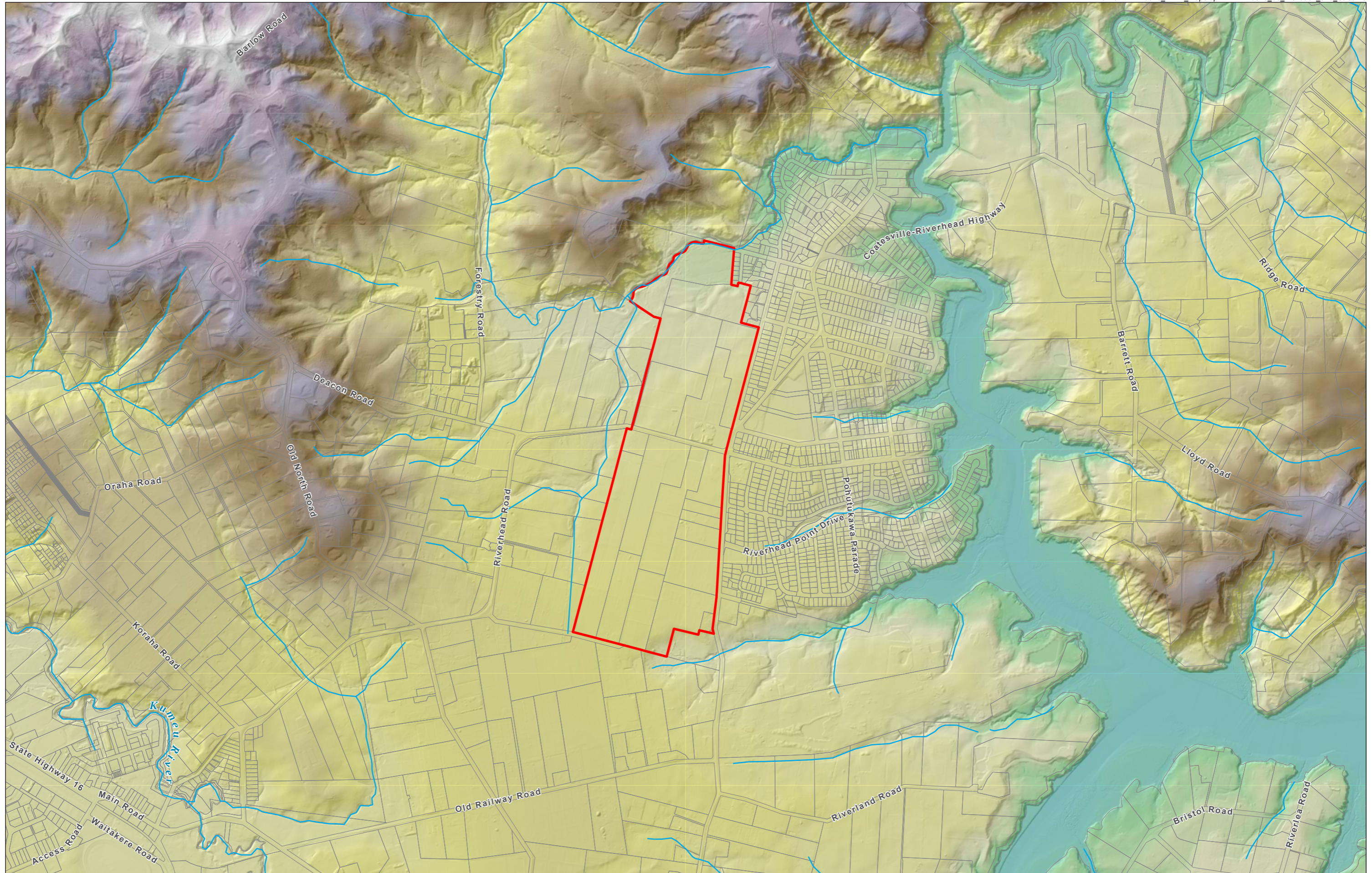
- VP 4: View looking West from Cambridge Road (Existing)
- VP 5: View West from Kaipara Portage Road (Existing)
- VP 6: View West from Grove Way (Existing)

- VP 7: View North-West from Coatesville-Riverhead Highway (Existing)
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- VP 10: View looking East from 220 Riverhead Road (Existing)
- VP 11: View North from Lathorpe Road (Existing)
- VP 12: View west from the intersection of Old North Road and Riverhead Road (Existing)







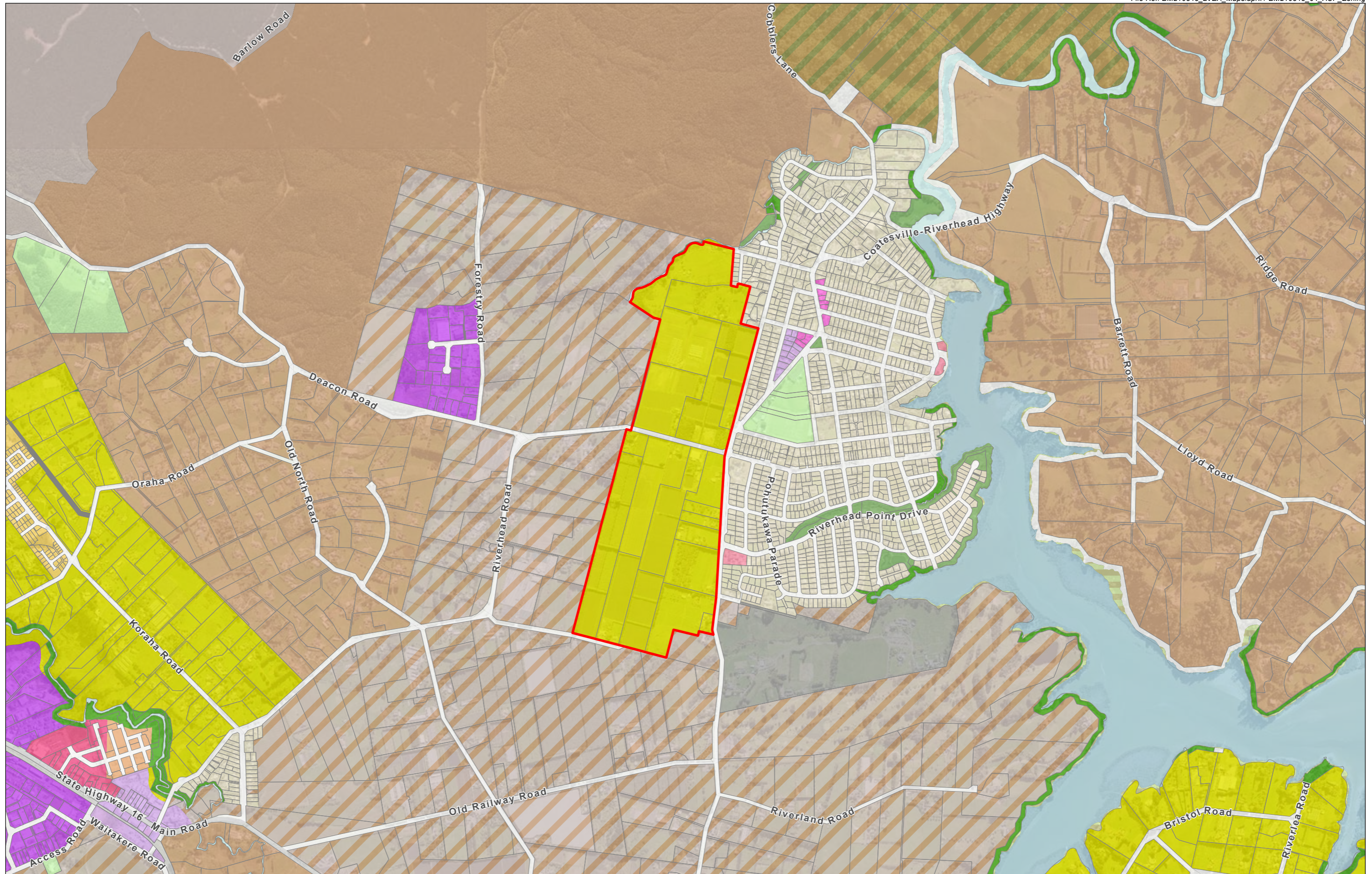
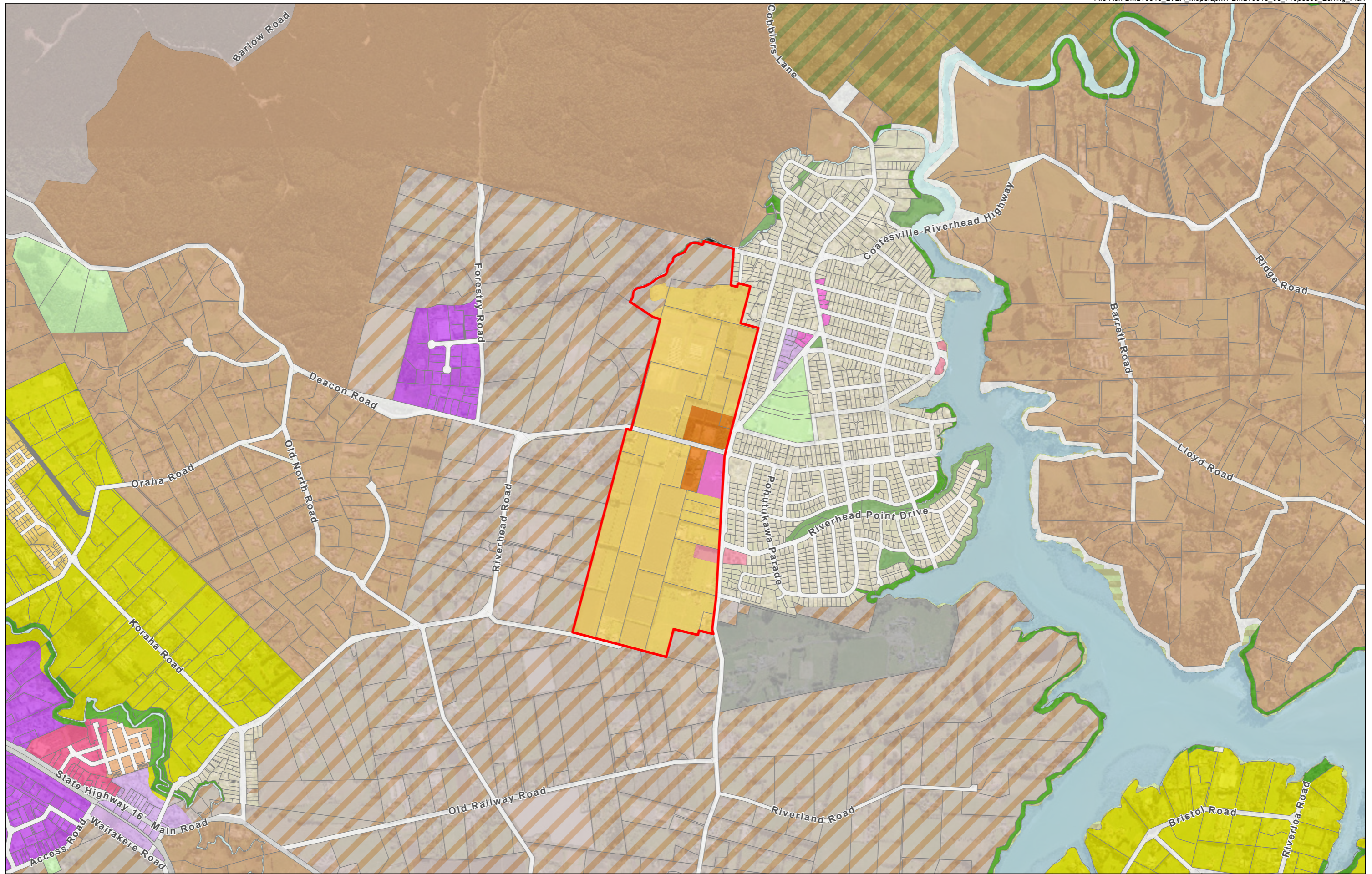
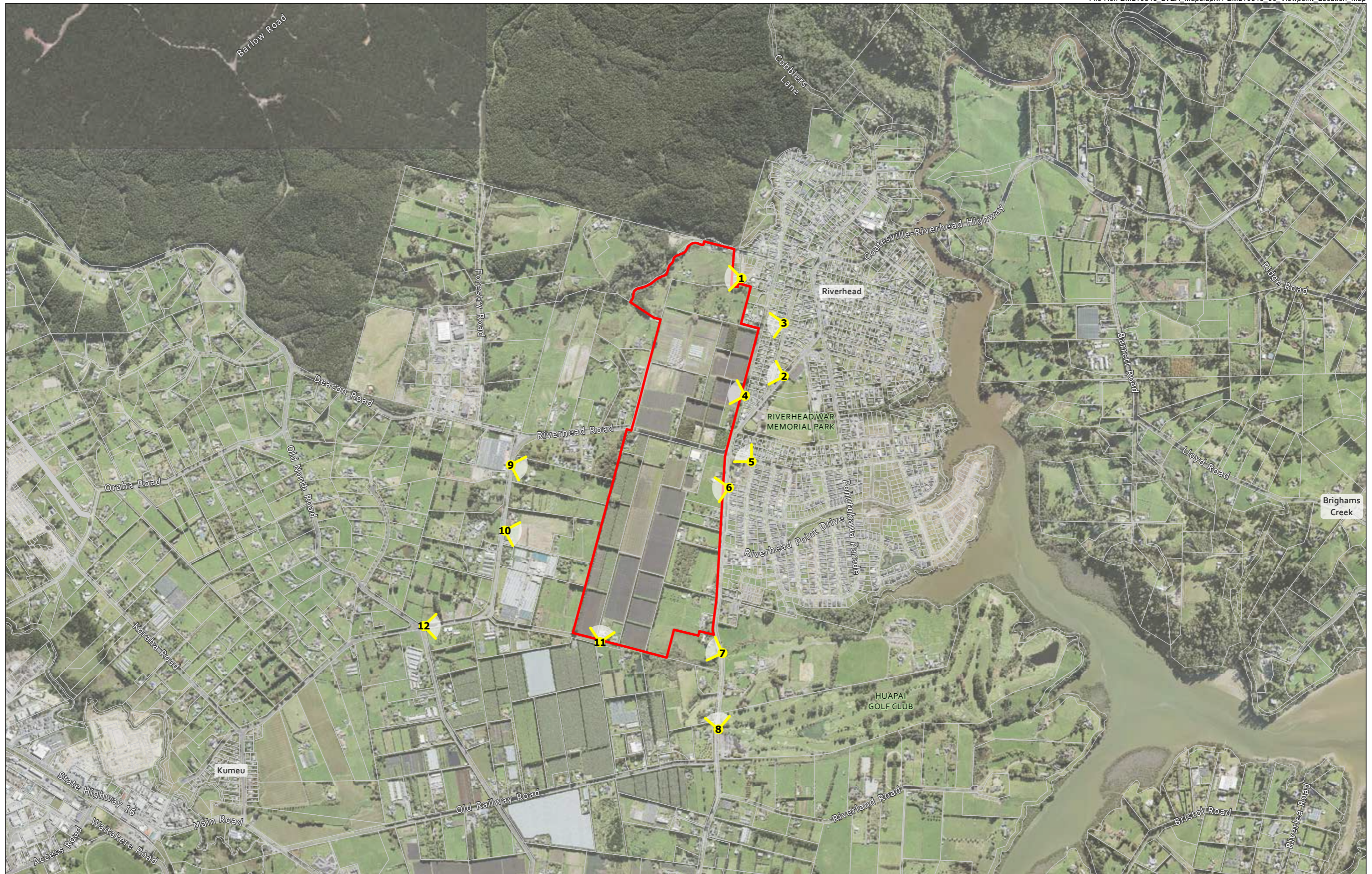


Figure 4







Existing View



Existing View



Existing View



Existing View



Existing View



Existing View



Existing View



Existing View



Existing View



Existing View



Existing View



Existing View

About Boffa Miskell

Boffa Miskell is a leading New Zealand professional services consultancy with offices in Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Queenstown. We work with a wide range of local and international private and public sector clients in the areas of planning, urban design, landscape architecture, landscape planning, ecology, biosecurity, cultural heritage, graphics and mapping. Over the past four decades we have built a reputation for professionalism, innovation and excellence. During this time we have been associated with a significant number of projects that have shaped New Zealand's environment.

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