



LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT BEACHLANDS SOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Prepared For:

Beachlands South Limited Partnership

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1. Introduction

This report addresses the range of ‘landscape’ effects associated with a proposed development at Beachlands South. The subject site encompasses the Formosa Golf Course on the south side of the current Beachlands settlement and its marina, together with a farm that stretches from the boundary shared with the golf course southwards – to near the intersection of Whitford-Maraetai Road with Maea Rise and the “Waikopua” subdivision immediately south of that junction.



Currently, Beachlands comprises a traditional ‘Single House’ precinct that stretches from near the edge of Whitford-Maraetai Road down to the edge of the Hauraki Gulf. It is anchored by two areas of development: a small, quite utilitarian, shopping centre and related car parking directly abutting Whitford-Maraetai Road and the Pine Harbour Marina at the sea’s edge – flanked by sedimentary cliffs that rise up both sides of the marina and its small Beachlands Ferry Terminal. The existing Beachlands residential area follows this descent from east to west, but also occupies both sides of a shallow ridge – carrying Beachlands Road – that extends from Whitford-Maraetai Road out to a point at the northern end of the marina. Beachlands’ earlier developed precincts occupy slopes that fall gradually northwards from that ridge crest – down to Sunkist Bay, Pohutukawa Bay and Shelly Bay. On the opposite side of the ridge, areas that have been more recently developed and are in the process of being occupied fall into a valley below Jack Lachlan Drive, facing across it to the Formosa Golf Course and Rydges resort.

The Plan Change proposed by the Beachlands South Limited Partnership (BSLP) would provide for a range of residential development and other amenities as part of an integrated urban environment. This would focus on a new 'village centre' to be located near the current Rydges Formosa Resort, with both Business and Mixed Use Zones, then Terrace Housing and Apartment (THAB) development, wrapped around it. Large Lot site would establish a 'buffer' between that more intensive development and the coastal escarpment above the CMA, while the Mixed Housing Urban (MHU) zone would then extend outwards – towards Whitford-Maraetai Road and the southern boundary of the Plan Change area. Nine of the current 18 holes within the existing golf course would be retained – running back towards Whitford-Maraetai Road – while a series of gullies across the course that are currently full of weed species would be revegetated. These would merge with revegetation across the coastal scarps at the seaward edge of the Plan Change site, and also with manuka, totara and other native species found within the gullies across the 'farm area' to the south. Additional native tree planting and shrubs would occupy a 10m wide strip at the roadside edge of the current farm. A similar strip – increasing to 15m width – would also be located between the current golf course and Whitford-Maraetai Road near Jack Lachlan Drive.

In total, the Plan Change site covers 307ha, with 255 ha currently owned by BSLP: traversing the golf course and resort, the aforementioned farm at the southern end of the development area, and one of a series of lifestyle properties abutting Whitford-Maraetai Road. Most of the initial development enabled by the Plan Change would occupy the current golf course and lifestyle property controlled by BSLP, whereas most of the farm and a series of adjoining lifestyle properties that share the western side Whitford-Maraetai Road would initially be zoned as Future Urban Zone (FUZ). This area is expected to be subject to rezoning at later stage, consistent with the current Plan Change proposals.

Notwithstanding this division between areas of live zoning and FUZ, this assessment addresses development (and zoning pattern) anticipated across all of the Plan Change area. It focuses on the appropriateness of the proposed Plan Change in the context of the wider landscape found around Beachlands, the higher order provisions of the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) and effects on receiving environments that include the currently developed area of Beachlands, the arterial corridor of Whitford-Maraetai Road, lifestyle properties south-west of the Plan Change site, and nearby parts of the Hauraki Gulf.

Although this report addresses the landscape, natural character and amenity effects of the proposed Plan Change, the assessment of these matters is 'shaped' by key Auckland Unitary Plan provisions. This includes addressing effects that are more relevant to both the current Beachlands community and the wider regional community, as opposed to effects on private properties and individuals residing near the Plan Change site.

As a result, this report progresses from an overview of the Plan Change proposal to analysis of the current 'site' and its wider landscape setting, before identifying key receiving environments and audiences that would be affected by development under the Plan Change, and detailed analysis of effects on 9 representative viewpoints. It culminates in a precis of the effects identified for 4 receiving environments around the Plan Change site, which then leads into my evaluation of the proposal against the key AUP provisions referred to above, and conclusions.

2. The Proposal

2.1 The Concept

The proposed pattern of development would emphasise connection and integration with the current Beachlands area and Pine Harbour Marina development, including both terrace housing and apartment developments that have recently occurred within the valley corridor near the marina – in the vicinity of Jack Lachlan Drive, Winterman Road and Seventh View Avenue, extending through to Beachlands Road (see below).



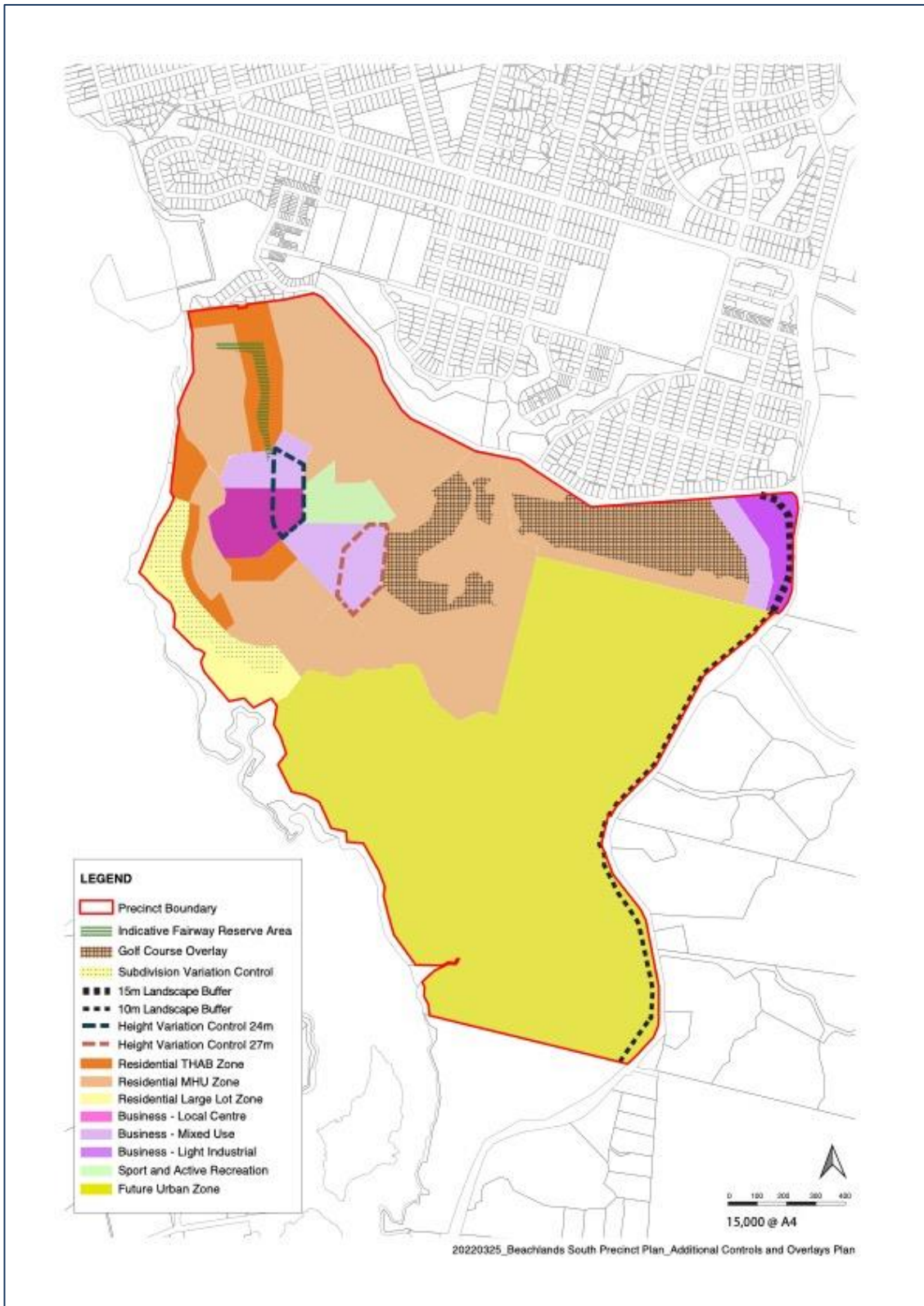
Aerial view of development ongoing near Pine Harbour Marina and Jack Lachlan Drive

As a result, the greater bulk of more intensive development would be focused on the area near the current Rydges / Formosa Golf Club and resort, and its adjoining residential villas. These occupy a shallow ridge crest that, together with a now largely unused recreation centre off the golf course entrance, look back towards Beachlands.



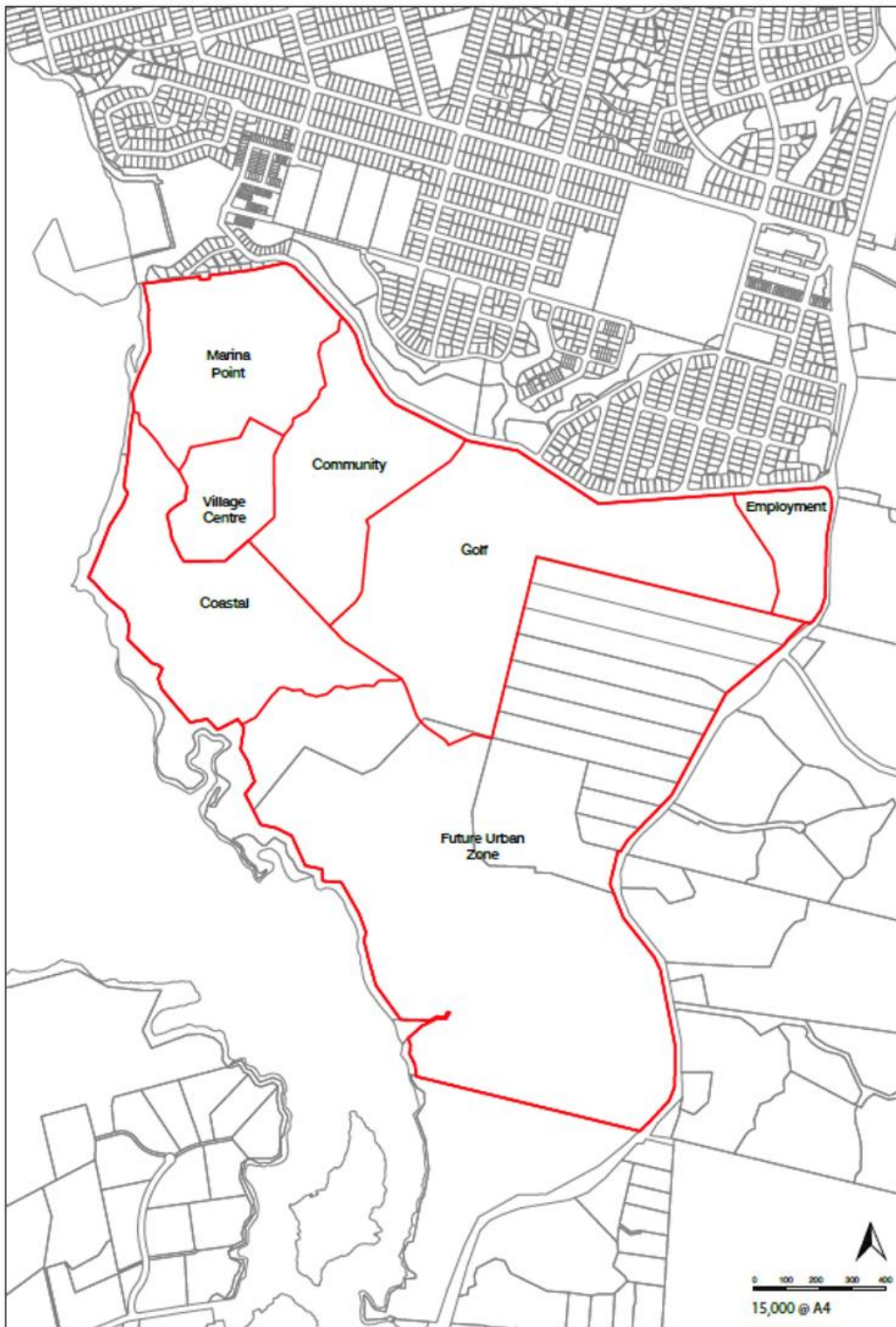
The current golf course 'clubhouse' (left) and recreation centre (right)

The following plan (overleaf; also see **Attachment 1**) provides an overview of the distribution of proposed zones across the Plan Change site. This includes the currently proposed FUZ Zone, but with proposed ecological area overlay also shown – mainly within the site's gully systems and along its coastal margins.

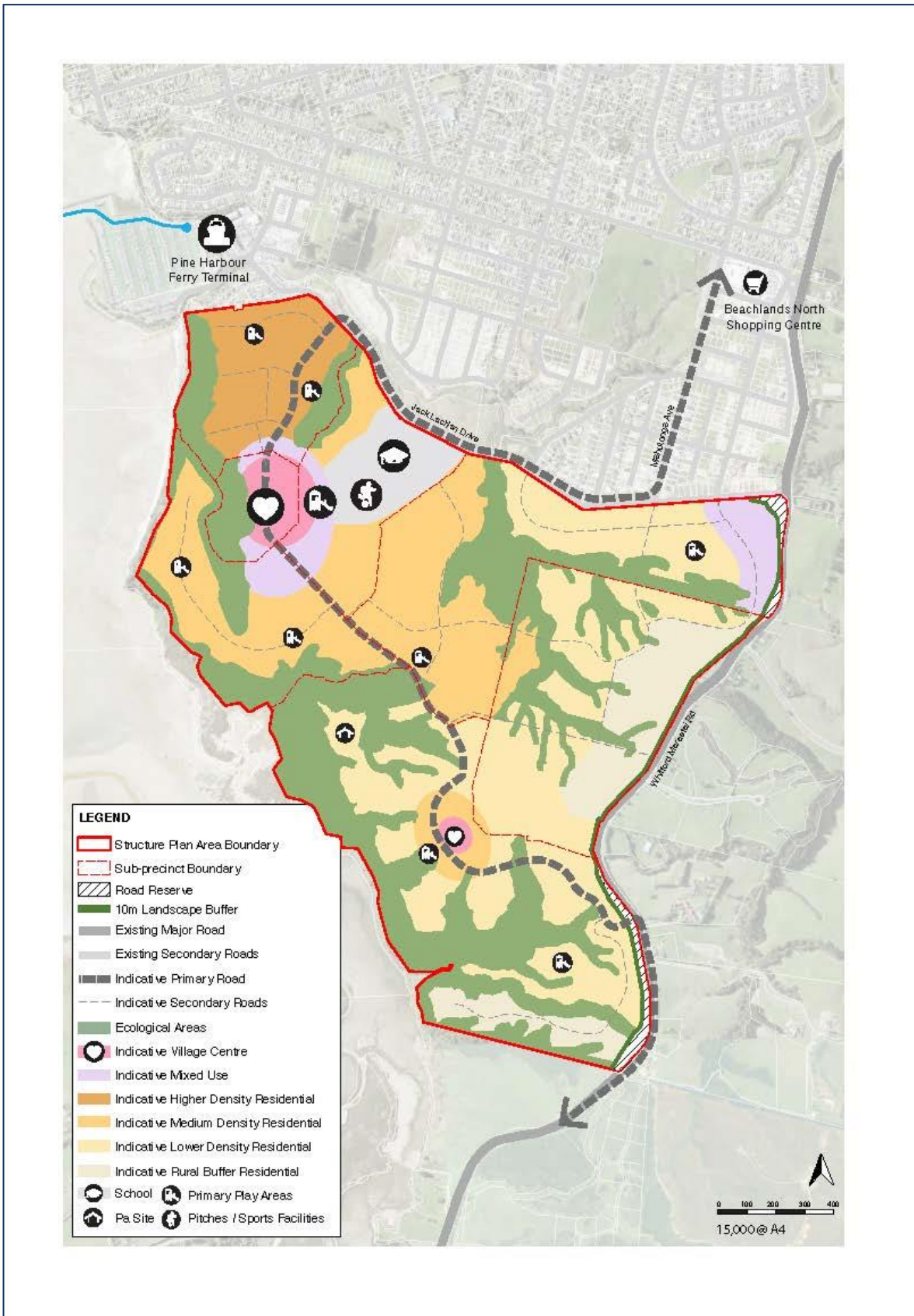


This plan highlights the strong focus on the village centre (with its more elevated height limit of 24m), while the hotel site (height limit of 27m) is located on the edge of the proposed centre, with ‘concentric rings’ of Business, Mixed Use, THAB and MHU development arrayed around them – together with a Large Lot Zone near the coastal escarpment. Even so, the greater bulk of this development would be connected, both physically and perceptually, with the development that has already occurred and is continuing to occur, within the valley corridor above Pine Harbour Marina.

Some of the proposed THAB development would extend to near the coastal edge – on slopes above the marina, as well in the ‘crook’ of the coastal reserve and a major reserve ‘arm’ extending towards the town centre. Elsewhere, however, most of the more intensive development proposed would be sleeved by MHU and Large Lot development, notably near the coastal edge. It is further anticipated that the greater bulk of the FUZ – both near the coast and away from it – would comprise MHU type development, radiating outwards towards Whitford-Maraetai Road. The following two images show the various ‘precincts’ proposed within the Plan Change area, then those precincts in conjunction with ‘end’ land uses across all of the Plan Change site in conjunction with indicative roading.



Beachlands South Precinct Plan (also see Attachment 2)



Map showing the proposed Beachlands South Structure Plan (also see Attachment 3)

The following plan is more illustrative of the types of development proposed within this layering of zones and development areas, although its primary focus is on those areas controlled by BSLP. It shows the concentration of more intensive development already described, together with the reduction in development (essentially residential) intensity radiating outwards from the town centre. This transition

includes the creation of pockets of development between the proposed coastal and gully reserves, the retention of a 9-hole golf course near Jack Lachlan Drive, but also the location of a pocket of combined Business-Mixed Use and Business-Light Industrial development near the top of that same road. This pocket sits below the level of Whitford-Maraetai Road and would be buffered from roadside activity and views by the 15m band of native tree and shrub planting described in Section 1. This planting would create a 'filter' that helps to reduce the impact of new development on that key transport corridor. It would also have the role of minimising the impact of vehicle movements up and down the road on new residents within the Plan Change area.



Beachlands South Concept Plan (also see Attachment 4)

2.2 Key Beachlands South Precinct Provisions

The Precinct Description explains that the Precinct covers 307ha of coastal land and is to comprise a high quality environment comprising a “*variety of urban zones for residential, business, light industrial and recreational development opportunities.*” Key facets of the proposed management regime for the Precinct are designed to address the:

Area’s cultural landscape – closely linked to its ongoing occupation by Ngai Tai Ki Tamaki;

Sustainability – including responses to climate change and loss of biodiversity; and

The Natural Environment – through development of an Ecological Protected Area Network (EPAN) focused on the site’s streams and gullies, wetlands, and SEAs; protection of a marine SEA within the adjoining coastal waters; and the application of a rigorous stormwater management regime (SMAF 1 level control).

Key related objectives and policies include the following:

1.3. Objectives (precinct-wide) [rp/dp]

All relevant overlay, Auckland-wide and zone objectives apply in this precinct in addition to those specified below.

...

(4) *Development of Beachlands South creates a distinctive sense of place which maintains and enhances significant ecological features, and responds to natural site features, landform and mana whenua values.*

(5) *Mana Whenua cultural, spiritual and historical values and their relationship associated with the Māori cultural landscape, including ancestral lands, water, waahi tapu, and other taonga, in the Beachlands South Precinct are identified, recognised, protected, and enhanced.*

(6) *The tangible and intangible mana whenua values of the pa site identified on Precinct Plan 4 are protected and enhanced.*

...

(11) *Identified ecological values within terrestrial, wetland, stream and coastal marine habitats are protected, restored, maintained and enhanced.*

(12) *Subdivision and development are designed and located to avoid, or otherwise remedy or mitigate, adverse effects on ecological features within the Ecological Protected Area Network.*

(13) *Adverse effects on the receiving environment including the natural coastal environment and significant ecological areas are avoided as far as practicable, or otherwise minimised or mitigated*

(14) *A high-quality coastal walkway and connected network of open spaces is established which recognises the need to protect and manage effects on the marine significant ecological areas.*

1.4. Policies [rp/dp]

All relevant overlay, Auckland-wide and zone policies apply in this precinct in addition to those specified below.

...

Mana Whenua

(5) *Recognise, protect and enhance the cultural, spiritual and historical values and relationships associated with the cultural landscape at Beachlands South. These values include but are not limited to:*

- (a) *The pa site identified on Precinct Plan 4, wāhi tapu and other taonga;*
- (b) *The key views and spiritual connection identified on Precinct Plan 4;*
- (c) *Freshwater quality; and Mauri, particularly in relation to freshwater and coastal resources.*

Sustainability

- (6) *Develop Beachlands South as a highly sustainable and low-carbon coastal town by:*
 - (d) *Protecting and enhancing biodiversity values in the precinct with restoration and regeneration native planting, particularly within the Ecological Protected Area Network;*
- (7) *Contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change by encouraging native revegetation within the Ecological Protected Area Network identified on Precinct Plan 2 and across the wider precinct to enhance carbon sequestration and biodiversity values.*

Ecology and Biodiversity

- (8) *Enable the subdivision and development of land while protecting, restoring, maintaining and enhancing identified terrestrial, wetland, stream, coastal marine and wetland ecological values, particularly within the Ecological Protected Area Network.*
- (9) *Require the protection, restoration, maintenance and enhancement of terrestrial, wetland and permanent and intermittent stream habitats including within the Ecological Protected Area Network as shown on Precinct Plan 2 by:*
 - (a) *Native revegetation planting, including:*
 - (i) *Riparian planting;*
 - (ii) *Terrestrial revegetation including within existing high value habitats;*
 - (iii) *Wetland buffer planting; and*
 - (iv) *Wetland native enrichment planting.*
- (10) *Encourage the restoration, maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity values in the coastal marine environment by:*
 - (a) *Invasive weed management within coastal bird roosting and nesting sites;*
 - (b) *Selective mangrove management for the restoration and enhancement of coastal bird intertidal habitat;*

...

Open Space Network

- (18) *Establish an integrated movement and public open space network within and across the precinct as indicatively shown on Precinct Plan 3, including:*
 - (c) *Providing a safe, attractive and connected network of indicative open space linkages such as walkways and pedestrian accessways;*
 - (d) *Encourage provision of the indicative coastal walkway to enable access to and along the coast while avoiding adverse effects on the marine significant ecological areas;*
 - (e) *Requiring provision of the Fairway Reserve and connection to the coastal walkway;*
 - (f) *Enabling the provision of a high-quality civic space adjacent to the Village Centre;*
 - (g) *Encouraging the establishment of a network of suburban and neighbourhood parks, walkways and pedestrian linkages.*

Built Form

- (19) *Manage building height and form to:*
 - a) *Contribute positively to Beachlands South's sense of place, including by:*
 - i) *Responding to landform and the coastal environment; and*
 - ii) *Transitioning the scale of built form to visually integrate with adjoining areas.*
- (20) *Promote high-quality and diversity in architecture and urban design that enhances the relationship of buildings with public open spaces and reflects the coastal character of the precinct.*
- (21) *Requiring buildings to be set back behind the Whitford-Maraetai Road landscape buffer area as shown on Precinct Plan 1.*

Additional rules address more specific areas, including key road interfaces, eg:

1.7.2. Building Setback along Whitford-Maraetai Road

Purpose: To establish native planting within the landscape buffer strip adjacent to Whitford-Maraetai Road to soften the appearance of development along the Whitford Maraetai Road frontage of the precinct.

- (1) A 10m or 15m wide building setback must be provided along the entire frontage of the land adjoining Whitford-Maraetai Road measured from the existing Designation 1806, Road Widening – Beachlands Road boundary that existed at the year of 2022, as shown on Precinct Plan 1. No buildings, structures or parts of a building shall be constructed within either of these building setbacks.*
- (2) The front yard required in the underlying zones for land adjoining Whitford-Maraetai Road shall be measured from the 10m or 15m wide building setbacks required in Standard 1.7.2(1) above.*
- (3) The 10m or 15m wide building setback in Standard 1.7.2(1) above must be planted with a mixture of native trees, shrubs or ground cover plants (including grass) within and along the full extent of these building setbacks indicated as the landscape buffer on Precinct Plan 1. This planting requirement does not apply over any vehicle accessways.*

1.7.5. Riparian Margins

Purpose: Contribute to improvements to water quality, habitat and biodiversity.

- (1) A minimum riparian yard setback of 10m measured from the top of the bank must be provided along permanent or intermittent streams including those as shown on Precinct Plan 2. No buildings or structures are permitted in the riparian yard setback.*
- (2) The riparian yard setback required in Standard 1.7.5(1) above must be planted either side to a minimum width of 10m. This riparian planting must be native species and vested in Council or protected and maintained in perpetuity by an appropriate legal mechanism. The riparian planting required in this standard will be included as part of any ecological offsetting or compensation package.*
- (3) Walkways and cycleways must not be located within the riparian planting area required in standard 1.7.5(1) above.*
- (4) A building, or parts of a building, must be setback at least 20m from the bank of a river or stream measuring 3m or more in width, consistent with the requirements of E38.7.3.2.*

1.7.6 Ecological Protected Area Network

Purpose: To protect and enhance identified significant terrestrial vegetation/habitat types and significant ecological areas from subdivision and development.

- (5) No earthworks or development of buildings or structures are permitted within the Ecological Protected Area Network (EPAN) shown on Precinct Plan 2.*
- (6) All existing terrestrial vegetation and habitat types within the EPAN must be protected and maintained, except as provided for by*
- (7) Any application for subdivision within the precinct must include the following on the subdivision scheme plan, as identified on Precinct Plan 2:*
 - (h) Areas subject to the EPAN;*
 - (i) Areas subject to the Significant Ecological Area – Terrestrial overlay;*
 - (j) High Value Terrestrial Planting areas;*
 - (k) Wetland Margin Buffer Planting areas; and*
 - (l) Indicative Native Revegetation areas.*
- (8) The areas listed in Standard 1.7.6(3)(a) – (e) inclusive above must be legally protected and maintained by a covenant (or other legal protection mechanism) on the Certificate of Title for each site within the precinct.*

- (9) The covenant (or other legal protection mechanism) must require the areas listed in Standard I.7.6(3)(a) – (e) inclusive above to be revegetated, maintained, restored and enhanced in accordance with the Biodiversity Management Plan required in Special Information Requirement I.10.(1).*
- (10) The covenant (or other legal mechanism) must require every landowner within the precinct to be a member of a Residents Association (or similar) that will manage the areas listed in Standard I.7.6(3)(a) – (e) inclusive above and contribute a proportional sum each year to ensure the Biodiversity Management Plan is implemented on an on-going basis.*
- (11) A minimum 5m building setback must be provided from the High Value Terrestrial and Wetland habitats as shown on Precinct Plan 2. No buildings, structures or parts of a building shall be constructed within this 5m wide setback.*

This suite of objectives, policies and other (more specific) provisions addresses the landscape and natural character values of the Beachlands coastline and rural hinterland – both biophysical and perceived, restoration of large parts of the current Formosa Golf Course, and the enhancement of amenity and mana whenua values across the entire Plan Change site.

3. The Site & Its Landscape Context

3.1 The Plan Change Site

The greater bulk of the Plan Change site occupies the current Rydges / Formosa Golf Course and Resort. While the golf course / resort's core facilities – notably its clubhouse, pro shop, golf driving range and independent chalets – are in relatively good condition, the same can't be said of the actual golf course. Its fairways, golf cart paths, margins and the adjoining recreation centre, are all in need of maintenance and rejuvenation. The gullies between the fairways, many of which extend towards the coast, are either largely filled with pines or dominated by weed species: pampas, gorse, tobacco weed, woolly nightshade, etc. Although a few stands of manuka are also found within some gullies, there are few native species across the course as a whole. The Phoenix Island palms relocated to the golf course at its inception remain its 'signature' species, although a couple of large stands of pines are also prominent near Jack Lachlan Drive.

The terrain between the gullies just described, comprises a series of sedimentary cliffs that line the outer edge of the golf course (holes 11-15) and, further south, the adjoining farm. Inland of these cliffs, the land rises up gradually – via a series of secondary ridges and shallow valleys – towards Whitford-Maraetai Road. Most of the golf course also slopes from south to north, so that it faces into the valley system shared with Pine Harbour Marina, looking towards the existing residential development on the northern side of the intervening valley. However, a broad ridge – extending from above Whitford-Maraetai Road directly towards the sea – also splits the wider Plan Change site in half, with the southern 'farm half' sitting within a shallow valley of its own. This is enclosed by Whitford-Maraetai Road to the south and east, the coastline and sea to the west, and both the golf course and previously described lifestyle blocks to the north.

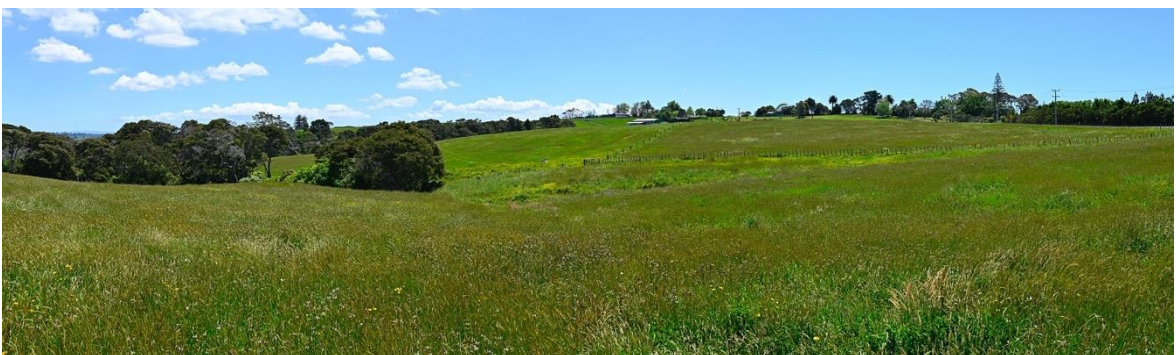
These lifestyle blocks straddle the broad ridge just described and follow the high ground next to Whitford-Maraetai Road – extending towards Jack Lachlan Drive. Approaching Jack Lachlan Drive, they then descend into an elongated valley that contains current golf holes 3-6.

Whereas the farm now mainly comprises pasture intersected by several major gullies containing stands of manuka / kanuka and totara, the adjoining lifestyle area mostly contains large dwellings set amid spacious grounds that are demarcated by hedgerows, shelterbelts and amenity planting. A few old farm sheds are scattered though these properties, but, for the most part, they comprise residential properties that are screened from Whitford-Maraetai Road by an abundance of vegetation and fencing. On the other hand, areas of outlook from most dwellings in the opposite direction – out over the existing golf course towards the Hauraki Gulf – are much more expansive and open. As a result, when looking from the direction of the existing golf course, they often sit on the crown of the ridge and higher ground near Whitford-Maraetai Road.

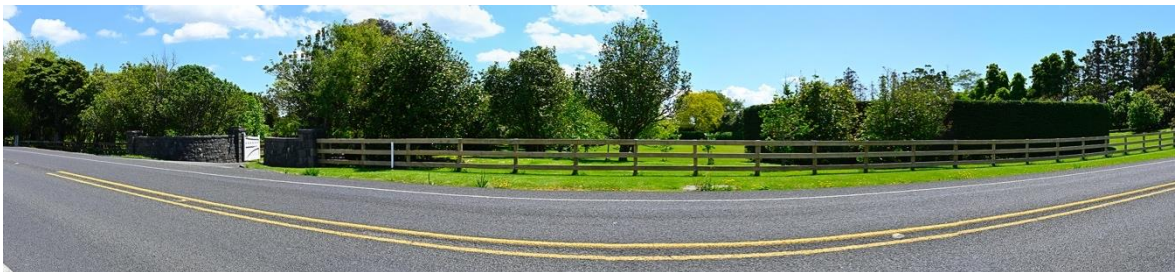
The following photos illustrate some of these characteristics of the current site landscape (also see **Attachments 5-14**).



Different perspectives of the current golf course: holes 1, 11 & 17



The farm at the southern end of the Plan Change site



The lifestyle blocks off Whitford-Maraetai Road

3.2 The Site's Wider Landscape Setting

Beachlands and Maraetai are the two major population hubs east of Whitford. Both are beach settlements, although Beachlands has become a substantial dormitory suburb, whereas Maraetai is still much more physically hemmed in by both its beach, facing out into Tamaki Strait, and rising land behind it. As a result, Maraetai has retained more of the feeling of a contained beachside community.

Between and around these settlements, open farmland dominates the more elevated slopes that rise up towards the crest of the Maraetai ridge – separating Beachlands and Whitford to the west from Umupuia and the outer Clevedon / Wairoa River valley to the east. Much of the crest of this landform is, in turn, dominated by production forestry. While large stands of native forest still also exist east of that ridge crest, most of Beachlands' hinterland comprises a working landscape that is dominated by primary production. Consequently, even though the area closer to Whitford-Maraetai Road is also dotted with residential properties, shelterbelts and smaller stands of amenity planting, overwhelming impressions remain of a landscape that is both rural and rather utilitarian. Such impressions are reinforced near the entrance to Beachlands, both by a quarry (operated by Manukau Quarries) within the rural catchment directly opposite (east of) Beachlands Road and the 'hard' environment of its conventional, very traditional, shopping centre and car parking immediately west of Whitford-Maraetai Road.

Two existing residential subdivisions are also found on the southern and eastern sides of that major road corridor, opposite the 'farm area': "Waikopua" next to Maea Rise and a 5-lot lifestyle estate at 631-

645 Whitford-Maraetai Road. The first of these, with 19 sites either sold or for sale, sits on elevated ground that is naturally oriented towards the Hauraki Gulf and Rangitoto, with the Plan Change site in the foreground of such views, while the smaller rural-residential development slightly further to the north is located within a large valley system shared with Okaroro Drive. It drops away from Whitford-Maraetai Road to the east and has no direct contact with the site.

All of this contrasts very markedly with Omana Regional Park, just under 1km to north-east of Beachlands, which is flanked by native bush following natural stream courses down to the Tamaki Strait shoreline. Blocks of residual pasture and picnic areas are framed by tracts of native revegetation, while elevated vantage points within the regional park offer highly appealing views across Tamaki Strait to the southern coastline of Waiheke Island and the iconic outline of Rangitoto. Directly 'next door', the open grass sward of Te Puru Park acts as a buffer between Omana Regional Park and the north-eastern edge of the Beachlands settlement. Its broad, low-lying cricket ground extends out to Shelly Beach at the edge of the Strait (much like the sequence of beaches, from Sunkist Bay to Shelly Bay, on the edge of Beachlands to the west) and it is enclosed by rising ground next to Beachlands, as well as Te Puru Stream. This stream is backed by rising banks and the more elevated bush margins of the regional park immediately beyond it. Further enclosed at its western end by a line of planted pohutukawas, Te Puru Park displays significant appeal for both active and passive recreation activities, with a cricket club, tennis club and community centre all located on its margins. A walkway / cycleway also connects it with both Beachlands and the regional park – over Te Puru Stream. Nevertheless, it is the park's open 'window' to Tamaki Strait' that is its most obvious feature and the one that is most significant for the wider community using Whitford-Maraetai Road.

Turning to the opposite end of the Plan Change site, a large estuary and wetland around the outer reaches of Waikopua Creek separates its southern end from another peninsula that projects northwards from Whitford. Much of it is gently rolling and lower lying than the terrain closer to Beachlands, while a low coastal shelf and beach edge projects forward from the peninsula below Clifton and Porterfield Roads. Most of this land is now subdivided into large lifestyle properties, although some farms remain largely intact further back from the coast. Even so, nearly all of the properties facing towards Beachlands and the Plan Change site are primarily used for a mixture of residential activities and hobby farming. As a result, the area is generally notable for its array of large, to quite stately, dwellings that are enclosed by a mixture of shelterbelts and amenity planting. Part of the coastal flats below this residential area are occupied by the local pony club's paddocks and a small jumping arena, while other property-owners appear to graze their land intermittently, and in one case – next to the Clifton Road Walkway – appear to be re-creating a series of wetlands. As with many of the lifestyle properties within the Plan Change site, most local landowners make the most of frequently expansive views out over the coastal terraces and beach, towards the Hauraki Gulf, Rangitoto and the coastal landscape south of Beachlands (**Attachments 15-18**).



The landscape east of Whitford-Maraetai Road heading from Beachlands towards Maraetai



The landscape directly east of Whitford-Maraetai Road near the current quarry that is directly east of Beachlands



The landscape east of Whitford-Maraetai Road near the proposed FUZ



The entrance to the lifestyle estate at 631-645 Whitford-Maraetai Road



The landscape around Okaroro Drive



Te Puru Park with Omana Regional Park to the east (above the bush of Te Puru Stream)

3.3 Significant Values

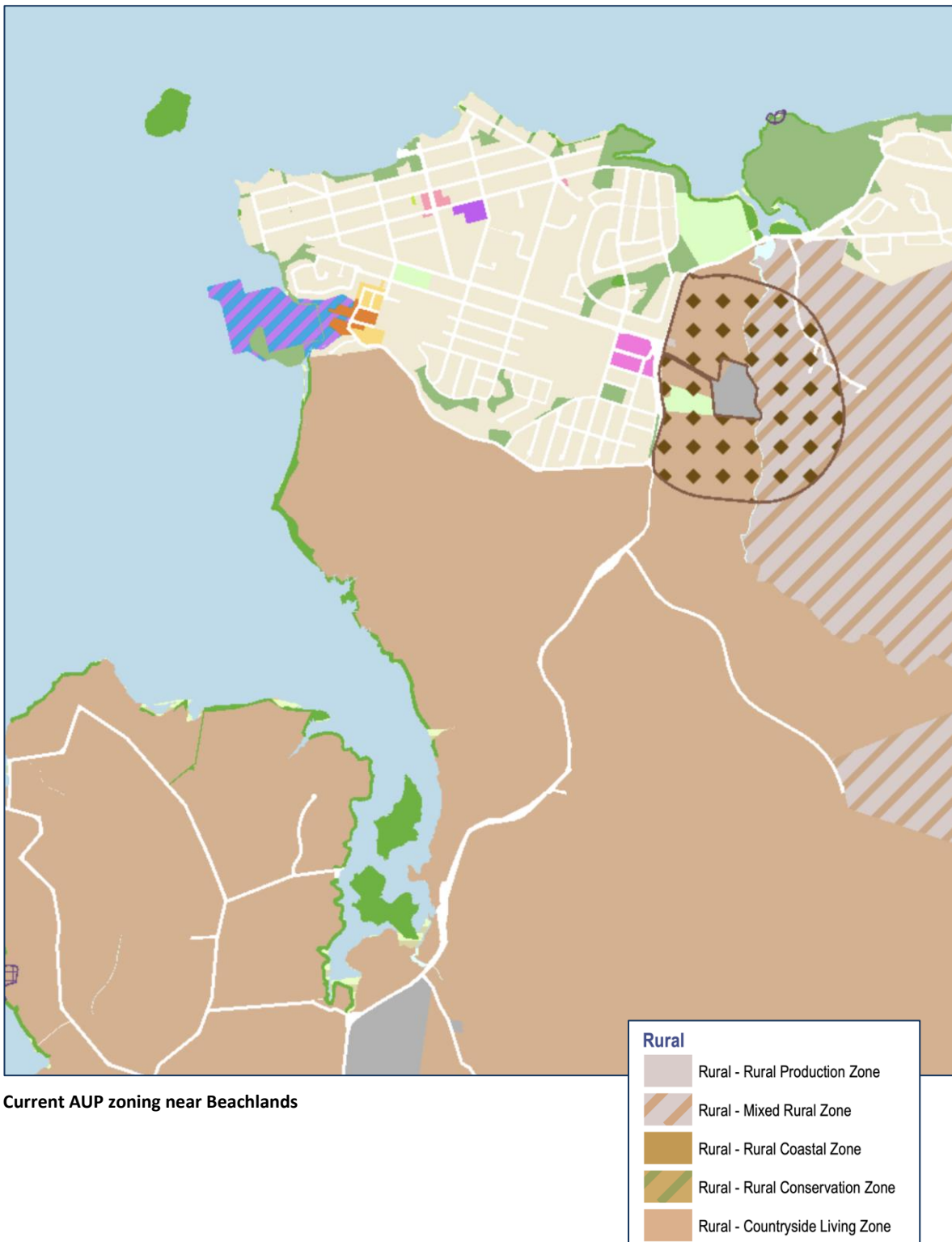
Although Motukaraka Island off Sunkist Bay is identified as part of the coastal environment that has high natural character values in the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP), no such values are found down the coastline of the Plan Change site. Similarly, while Omana Regional Park near Maraetai is identified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape, no such landscape values are attributed to any part of the site.



AUP aerial showing the area of High Natural Character across Motukaraka Island & the ONL across Omana Regional Park (see also Attachment 19)

4. Statutory Context

The Plan Change site is located within the AUP's Rural – Countryside Living Zone, as too is the area directly east, across Whitford-Maraetai Road, before it transitions into a Rural-Mixed Rural Zone on the more elevated parts of the Maraetai peninsula. A quarry buffer zone also exists opposite Beachlands Road, addressing the surrounds of the quarry described above.



Current AUP zoning near Beachlands

Objectives and policies relevant to expansion of Auckland's rural and coastal settlements include the following found in the AUP's RPS:

B2.6 - Expansion of Rural and Coastal Towns

- (1) *Growth and development of existing or new rural and coastal towns and villages to be enabled in ways that (paraphrased):*
 - a) *Avoids natural and physical resources that have been scheduled, or natural and coastal environment resources:*
 - d) *Are consistent with the local character of the town or village or surrounding area:*

Policies:

- (1) *Require the establishment of new or expansion of existing rural and coastal towns and villages to be undertaken in a manner that:*
 - (a) *Maintains or enhances the character of any existing town or village*
 - (f) *Is compatible with natural and physical characteristics including the coastal environment*
- (2) *Avoid locating new or expanding existing rural and coastal towns and villages in or adjacent to areas that contain significant natural and physical resources, that have been scheduled, unless growth and development protects or enhances such resources by including any of the following measures: (a) The creation of reserves*
 - (b) *Increased public access*
 - (c) *Restoration of degraded environments*
 - (d) *Creation of significant new areas of biodiversity*

Section B8 – Coastal Environment

B8.2.1. Objectives

- (1) *Areas of the coastal environment with outstanding and high natural character are preserved and protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*
- (2) *Subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment are designed, located and managed to preserve the characteristics and qualities that contribute to the natural character of the coastal environment.*
- (3) *Where practicable, in the coastal environment areas with degraded natural character are restored or rehabilitated and areas of high and outstanding natural character are enhanced.*

B8.2.2. Policies

- (4) *Preserve and protect areas of outstanding natural character and high natural character from inappropriate subdivision, use and development by:*
 - (a) *avoiding adverse effects of activities on natural character in areas of the coastal environment scheduled as outstanding natural character; and*
 - (b) *avoiding significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment.*
- (5) *Avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects on natural character of the coastal environment not identified as outstanding natural character and high natural character from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*
- (6) *Enable land use practices and restoration projects that will restore, rehabilitate or enhance natural character in outstanding natural character and high natural character areas in the coastal environment.*

B.9 Rural Environment

B9.2.1. Objectives

- (4) *Auckland's rural areas outside the Rural Urban Boundary and rural and coastal towns and villages are protected from inappropriate subdivision, urban use and development.*

B9.2.2. Policies

- (1) *Enable a diverse range of activities while avoiding significant adverse effects on and urbanisation of rural areas, including within the coastal environment, and avoiding, remedying, or mitigating other adverse effects on rural character, amenity, landscape and biodiversity values.*

B9.4.1. Objectives

- (3) *Subdivision of rural land avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the character, amenity, natural character, landscape and biodiversity values of rural areas (including within the coastal environment), and provides resilience to effects of natural hazards.*
- (4) *Land subdivision protects and enhances significant indigenous biodiversity.*

B9.4.2. Policies

- (4) *Provide for new rural lifestyle subdivision in locations and at scales and densities so as to:*
- (a) *avoid areas that would undermine the integrity of the Rural Urban Boundary and coastal towns and villages;*
 - (b) *protect areas where natural and physical resources have been scheduled in the Unitary Plan in relation to natural heritage, Mana Whenua, natural resources, coastal, historic heritage and special character;*
 - (f) *maintain or enhance landscape, rural and, where relevant, coastal, character and amenity values;*

In addition, the Plan Change site is located within the AUP's Whitford Sub-precinct B, and is therefore subject to a range of additional provisions:

Whitford sub-precinct B

Sub-precinct B lies within both the Te Puru and the Beachlands south stream catchments. It has a coastal edge and includes specific provisions addressing both the landscape character and environmental considerations. An average site size of 5ha is applied to this sub-precinct.

Road corridor indicative constraints area

This constraints area is based on a visibility out to 300m every 50m along arterial roads within the Whitford precinct, being Whitford Park Road, Sandstone Road and Whitford-Maraetai Road, shown on Whitford Precinct: Precinct plan 4, so that:

- *existing views of the wider countryside are maintained along the roads network.*
- *separation distances between developments are maintained by dispersing dwellings or clusters of dwellings.*

Coastal indicative constraints area

The coastal edge contributes to the existing character and amenity values of Whitford's landscape, refer to Whitford Precinct: Precinct plan 3. Views of the coastal edge, estuarine areas and the inner Hauraki Gulf are a source of significant amenity to the area. The coastal indicative constraints area covers the area where land subdivision, use and development can influence coastal landscape and amenity within the precinct. The primary purpose of this constraints area is to protect existing landscape character and amenity values associated with the coastal edge including beaches, intertidal areas, estuaries, cliffs, escarpments and coastal slopes.

1441.2. Objectives

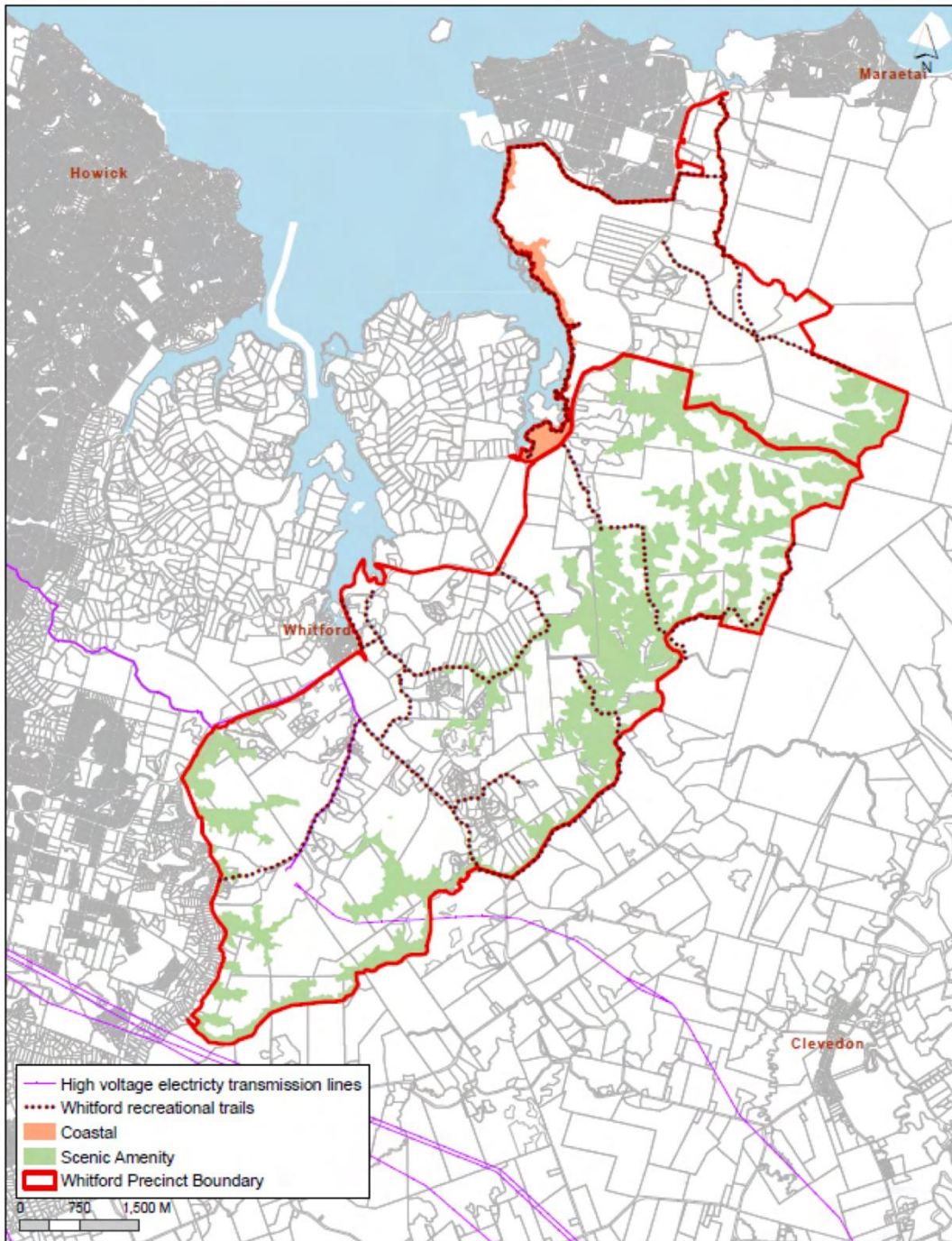
- (1) *Rural countryside living subdivision, use and development of land occurs in a way which ensures that:*
 - (a) *landscape character and rural amenity values are maintained and enhanced;*
 - (c) *the natural character values of native bush and vegetation areas, the streams and coastal waters are maintained and enhanced;*

1441.3. Policies

- (1) *Identify areas where constraints on development are necessary to prevent them from being visually prominent or obtrusive when viewed from public places.*
- (2) *Require land subdivision, use, and development to maintain and enhance the natural character and ecological values of native bush and vegetation areas, the streams and coastal waters through:*
 - (a) *the setting of limits on density, minimum site size, vegetation maintenance and legal protection of vegetation;*
 - (b) *requiring minimum revegetation planting through subdivision standards; and*
 - (c) *providing for significant enhancement planting.*
- (3) *Require the retention and enhancement of the natural character values of native vegetation, riparian areas and streams within the precinct.*

Of note in relation to the Sub-precinct B provisions, the coastal edge of the Plan Change site is identified as being part of the 'coastal indicative constraints area'. However, the site is not part of the more elevated, 'scenic constraints area' also identified (overleaf).

1441.10.3. Whitford Precinct: Precinct plan 3 - coastal and scenic amenity



Whitford Precinct Plan 3 (see also Attachment 20)

5. Effects

5.1 Effects In General

Assessments addressing changes to the various landscapes and environments, and the community perceptions of such change, often refer to a range of effects on visual, landscape, natural character and amenity values. The following descriptions of each type of effect are designed to help clarify their areas of commonality and difference, which, in turn, affects how they have been addressed in this report.

Visual Effects

‘Visual effects’ reflect changes to the visual composition, configuration and character of a locality or landscape, together with the perceived magnitude or scale of such change(s) – in terms of their relative legibility and prominence. However, an assessment of visual effects does not address the values (including community values) associated with such change, which are more appropriately addressed in relation to the landscape, natural character and amenity attributes of an area. Visual change and ‘effects’ are, in effect, devoid of value: they convey a sense of the magnitude of visible change that would be experienced from a viewpoint or viewpoints, but not the impact that this would have on the character, values and identity of the subject site and its surrounds. As such, visual ‘effects’ are no more than a stepping stone to addressing effects on landscape, amenity and natural character values, which are ultimately much more meaningful precisely because such assessment focuses on how such changes would actually impact on public and private perceptions of the subject landscape / environment.

Landscape Effects

“Landscape” is an all-encompassing term. The NZ Institute of Landscape Architects’ Charter (2010) describes “*Landscape*” as being “*the cumulative expression of natural and cultural elements, pattern and processes in a geographical area.*” Moreover, the Charter’s Preamble offers the following, slightly more fulsome, description of landscapes – as follows:

“Landscapes are the result of unique combinations of biophysical, cultural and social processes, evolving over time and interwoven with memory, perception and tradition. They include land, water systems and marine areas, and play a vital role in human nurture, fulfilment and in shaping individual and collective identity. Landscapes range from the outstanding and the memorable, to the familiar and commonplace”

In addition, the NZILA’s *Te Tangi A Te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, 2021* (p. 35, section 4.22) identifies landscape values as comprising three ‘layers’ of attributes:

Physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions

The current professional practice of conceptualising ‘landscape’ as the overlap of its physical, associative, and perceptual dimension is reflected in ‘case law’ including the following recent decision¹:

¹ [2011] NZEnvC 384, *Mainpower NZ Limited v Hurunui District Council*, (‘Mount Cass Wind Farm’), paragraph 300-301

“Landscape means the natural and physical attributes of land together with air and water which change over time and which is made known by people’s evolving perceptions and associations.”

“In keeping with the Act such a definition enables the development of landscape assessment which takes account of:

- (1) natural and physical environment: and*
- (2) perceptual; and*
- (3) associative aspects (beliefs, uses, values and relationships)*

which may change over time”

In relation to most urban and suburban environs, the latter two layers are typically of greater concern and relevance, whereas in more rural or natural environments, the biophysical state and values of that environment can be more significant.

Within Auckland’s coastal and rural areas, landscape effects therefore relate to modification of both the biophysical and sensory (or perceptual) characteristics and values of an environment. Often, these are addressed in terms of changes to the landforms, vegetation cover, sea / water forms, biota and land uses within a landscape, together with the visual legibility, expressiveness, aesthetic value, transient values and other ‘associative’ matters (with reference to the well-known, ‘*Modified Pigeon Bay / WESI factors*’). However, changes to the character of a landscape may also affect people’s appreciation of its ‘shared and recognised values’ and identity (reflecting appreciation of a landscape by local communities and the public at large), together with its cultural dimensions and historical values.

Natural Character Effects

Natural character effects overlap with landscape effects, with emphasis on effects that impair, or otherwise alter, the naturalness of the coastal environment in terms of its biophysical attributes and perceived character. Policy 13 (2) of the NZ Coastal Policy provides further direction in this regard, by identifying some of the elements / features / characteristics associated with natural character values, including:

- (a) natural elements, processes and patterns;*
- (b) biophysical, ecological, geological and geomorphological aspects;*
- (c) natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, freshwater springs and surf breaks;*
- (d) the natural movement of water and sediment;*
- (e) the natural darkness of the night sky;*
- (f) places or areas that are wild or scenic;*
- (g) a range of natural character from pristine to modified; and*
- (h) experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea; and their context or setting.*

These elements and characteristics are not exclusive, however, and the significance of effects in relation to any one factor (or more) need to be considered with regard to the particular elements, patterns and processes that contribute to the natural character values of any coastal environment. Thus, coastal environments that are highly natural will be much more sensitive and susceptible to the effects of change than those that are already highly developed and modified – or within those where such change is anticipated by relevant statutory instruments.

Amenity Effects

Again, effects on amenity values overlap with effects on the 'sensory' and 'associative' qualities of landscape, and the meaning attributed to Amenity Values in the Resource Management Act describes them as being:

those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes.

This indicates that 'amenity' pertains to areas that are known, understood and appreciated by those who live within them or visit them – often on a reasonably regular basis. Amenity values also relate to such factors as noise, lighting, smells and awareness of activity and movement; in effect, the fuller spectrum of sensory factors that contribute to perception and appreciation of an area's character, pleasantness and aesthetic coherence. Inevitably, this also brings into play perceptions of identity and sense of place (evolved from the Greek concept of the '*genius loci*') that reflect the more particular, even unique, qualities of a locality or environment. Concepts of familiarity, shared ownership (in a figurative sense) and pride of place are also important in this regard. Moreover, Section 7(c) refers to "*cultural and recreational attributes*", which often pertains to areas used for walking, cycling, coastal activities and passive recreation.

Amenity effects can also include so called, 'nuisance' effects that degrade the 'pleasantness', 'aesthetic coherence' and other values associated with a particular locale. These often pertain to such matters as:

- Visual dominance or over-dominance;
- Loss of open space and perceived spaciousness;
- Encroachment on privacy;
- Over-shadowing; and
- Noise.

Cumulative Effects

In addition to the direct effects that developments can generate in relation to specific receiving environments and audiences, cumulative effects need to also be considered. These typically relate to viewing or experiencing a development proposal in one of two ways:

- Either in a dynamic fashion from transport corridors and / or multiple viewpoints in which the proposal becomes part of a sequence of accumulative change (successional / sequential effects); and / or
- The development proposal becomes part of a sequence of change in which two or more developments of similar character are visible from one or multiple vantage points (simultaneous effects).

5.2 Effects Relevant to The Plan Change

Although the range of effects theoretically relevant to any application of plan change proposal is therefore very broad, a number of key effects are of greater relevance to the Beachlands South Plan Change proposal – derived from the subject site’s location, its landscape setting, and the higher order AUP provisions described above:

- effects on the natural character values of the Beachlands / Maraetai coastline and key views to both the sea and Rangitoto;
- effects on rural character and related landscape values;
- effects on amenity values, including those associated with Beachlands and the lifestyle area across Waikopua Creek mouth near Clifton Road;
- integration of the Plan Change development with the current Beachlands settlement; and
- establishment of a defensible urban -rural boundary.

These effects and related matters have been addressed in three stages:

1. Through identification of the main receiving environments and audiences likely to be affected by the proposed Plan Change;
2. Through the use of representative viewpoints to analyse the landscape, natural character and amenity effects of development under the Plan Change for different receiving environments and audiences; and
3. Through extrapolation of the viewpoint findings to the key receiving environments and audiences identified around the Plan Change site.

5.3 Receiving Environments & Audiences

The key receiving environments exposed to the Plan Change site and future development on it comprise:

1. Beachlands village – embracing the more traditional village around, and north of, Beachlands Road from its shopping centre off Whitford – Maraetai Road to Pine Harbour Parade above the marina;
2. Whitford-Maraetai Road near the lifestyle blocks included in the FUZ;
3. Whitford Maraetai Road south of those same lifestyle properties;
4. A sizeable lifestyle ‘precinct’ across the Waikopua Creek estuary – around Clifton and Porterfield Roads; and
5. The coastal marine Area (CMA) off Beachlands and Waikopua Creek.

The audiences associated with these key receiving environments and vantage points comprise:

- Beachlands residents;
- Occupants of the lifestyle properties next to Whitford-Maraetai Road;
- Occupants of the lifestyle area across the Waikopua Creek estuary;
- Users of the Beachlands Shopping Centre;

- Users of the Pine Harbour Marina;
- Users of the (future) residual Formosa Golf Course;
- Motorists on Whitford-Maraetai Road – including local commuters and visitors to Omana Regional Park;
- Users of the Pine Harbour Ferry service and boaties off Beachlands and Howick.

5.4 Viewpoints Assessment

Assessment Viewpoints

This assessment employs 8 representative viewpoints that represent the full range of public receiving environments and related audiences around the Plan Change site. This includes both ‘first and second generation’ development areas within the current Beachlands Settlement, different parts of Whitford-Maraetai Road exposed to the site and a viewpoint on the concluding section of the ferry route from Auckland to Pine Harbour Marina. The viewpoints employed in this assessment are located as follows (**Attachment 21**):

- Viewpoint 1. **Winterman Road** (below Karaka Road)
- Viewpoint 2. **Keshvara Road** (at the intersection with Eighth View Avenue)
- Viewpoint 3. **Angiangi Crescent**
- Viewpoint 4. **Beachlands Road** (next to the current horse paddocks)
- Viewpoint 5. **Whitford Maraetai Road** (south of Jack Lachlan Drive)
- Viewpoint 6. **Whitford Maraetai Road** (next to no. 649)
- Viewpoint 7. **Whitford Maraetai Road** (opposite the Waikopua lifestyle subdivision & Maea Rise)
- Viewpoint 8. **The Clifton Road Walkway** (on the edge of the Waikopua Creek estuary)
- Viewpoint 9. **The Pine Harbour Ferry Route**

It is important to note that the greater bulk of effects discussed in Section 5.2 of this report pertain to the public domain and effects on community values (including those of the regional community). This is reflected in the selection of viewpoints, as set out above. These viewpoints provide the basis for comparison of the current situation with that anticipated once development has occurred under the direction of the proposed Plan Change.

This comparison has been undertaken using existing photos that capture views towards the application from each viewpoint, together with modelling of potential development under the proposed Plan Change zones and provisions. That modelling has been prepared by Virtual View and is attached as **Annexure A** to this report. It shows:

Existing views: photographs towards the existing Plan Change site taken on the 9th of November 2021 using a Nikon Z7 full-frame camera and either a 35mm lens or 50mm lens (the latter was used for photos from Viewpoints 8 and 9). Most of the viewpoint images comprise either 3 or (in the case of Viewpoint 3) 4 photos stitched together using Autopano Giga 4.4 software. Each photo location was GPS located.

Future panoramic views: showing buildings that are colour-coded within each zone, and developed to a realistic level, together with street tree and reserve planting.

Future Single-frame Views: showing the same development and vegetation, but within individual photo frames.

A 'Statement of Methodology', prepared by Virtual View, is also found at the end of Annexure A.

Assessment Criteria

In assessing the extent and nature of such effects for each viewpoint (and surrounding locality, where applicable), I have developed and employed the following checklist of key matters that need to be addressed:

A. Natural Character Values:

- 1) *Any effects in relation to the biophysical characteristics and naturalness of the subject site, taking into account the coastline's current state;*
- 2) *Any effects in relation to the perceived naturalness of the coastline.*
- 3) *Effects on key views to / from the CMA and coastal / CMA features.*

B. Rural Character & Landscape Value:

- 4) *Impacts on rural elements, patterns and open space, taking into account the current state of the site and its surrounds;*
- 5) *Effects in relation to its perceived naturalness, expressiveness, aesthetic value, legibility; transient values and 'shared and recognised' values;*
- 6) *Intrusion into, or loss of, key views and landscape features.*

C. Amenity Values:

- 7) *Any effects related to the aesthetic coherence and 'pleasantness' of the site and its immediate surrounds;*
- 8) *Any 'nuisance effects' associated with the future use of the Plan Change site;*
- 9) *Any effects in respect of Beachland's identity and sense of place*

D. Integration With The Current Beachlands Settlement:

- 10) *Whether or not development within the Plan Change site would demonstrably integrate with that already found at Beachlands.*

E. Establishment of a Defensible Urban-Rural Boundary:

- 11) *Whether the future margins of development within the Plan Change site would establish an urban-rural boundary that is meaningful (from a landscape standpoint) and defensible.*

Effects Rating Scale

The effects ratings for each receiving environment or vantage point are 'scored' in accordance with the following rating scale (**Table 1** overleaf). This is aligned with the 7-point ratings scale recommended in the *Te Tangi A Te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines* because, as stated at p.64:

- *It is symmetrical around 'moderate'.*
- *It has even gradations.*
- *It uses neutral terms so does not confuse rating and qualitative aspects.*
- *The scale is therefore suitable for both positive and adverse effects, and for other purposes such as aspects of landscape value and natural character. It can be used in a 'universal' manner.*
- *The seven points provide for nuance of ranking, while being near the practical limit at which such distinctions can be made reliably. For those who struggle with seven points, the scale can be envisaged as three simpler categories (low, moderate, high) with finer steps above, below, and in-between.*

Table 1.

<i>Adverse Effects:</i>		<i>Adverse Effects Rating:</i>
1	<i>No appreciable change to landscape character, together with landscape & amenity values: no visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	Very Low
2	<i>Limited change to landscape character; no appreciable change to landscape & amenity values: no visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	Low
3	<i>Increasingly evident change to landscape character; limited change to landscape & amenity values & a low level of visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	Low - Moderate
4	<i>Appreciable change to parts of the local landscape; more obvious impact on some landscape & amenity values, but still limited visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	Moderate
5	<i>Marked change to parts of the local landscape; obvious impact on some landscape & amenity values, including evident visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	Moderate - High
6	<i>Obvious changes to landscape character with degradation of landscape & amenity values, including obvious visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	High
7	<i>Severe degradation of landscape & amenity values accompanied by high levels of visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	Very High

Visual Effects Evaluation

The following tables summarise the assessment undertaken for each viewpoint and the corresponding receiving environments. As indicated above, they are accompanied by the 'before and after' images prepared by Truescape that are contained in **Annexure A**.

Viewpoint 1. Winterman Road



Effects on Coastal Character:

Views from Winterman Road, running up from the valley floor near Jack Lachlan Drive to Karaka Road, are strictly confined by existing terrace housing and other residential development. As a result, they are either aligned on the valley corridor below or a confined part of the Karaka Road / Beachlands Road above. One's eye is inevitably drawn towards the green sward and distinctive Phoenix Island palms of the current Formosa Golf Course – rising above a quite dense matrix of housing – whereas the Hauraki Gulf, although physically nearby, is completely screened from view. As a result, development under the proposed Plan Change would have no effect on the character of the CMA or Beachlands coastline experienced (or not experienced) from this vantage point.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Effects on Rural Character & Landscape Values:

Views from this vantage point are largely dominated by both existing and emerging residential development. The grass and vegetation of the Formosa Golf Course, including pampas and other weeds on the slopes near the course maintenance sheds, are visible, but appear somewhat remote. They provide contrast with the mixture of bungalows and terrace houses that dominate the foreground to middle distance of current views down Winterman Road; but other than being green display limited rural character. It comprises a managed environment (for the most part) that clearly registers as a golf course, rather than farmland or a truly rural environment.

Consequently, the displacement of the current golf course would remove much of the greenery and open space presently associated with the southern side of the valley, replacing it with the complex layering of mainly MHU housing, then THAB and Business development closer to, and on, the ridge crest to the right. This change would be very significant *per se*, removing an area of open space that contributes to the character and amenity of the current 'village', but would not actually diminish Beachlands 'rural character'.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Integration With Beachlands:

The proposed town centre and adjoining THAB development would evoke feelings of intensification that are only partly evident within Beachlands at present – around Jack Lachlan Drive near the marina entrance. However, that more intensive development would also, for the most part, be visually connected with the terrace housing in the foreground of views from this quarter, which is quite dominant in its own right.

At the same time, the lower lying matrix of MHU development spread across the valley slopes and floor directly opposite this viewpoint would display an intensity and apparent scale not too dissimilar to that already evident on the eastern side of Winterman Road (below Seventh View Avenue), as well as around part of Jack Lachlan Drive that is visible beyond. Consequently, much as this array of development, together with

a more remote hotel, would fundamentally change the nature of the landscape beyond Jack Lachlan Drive, it would still merge with the existing village – both physically and perceptually. The scale and intensity differences inherent in the transition from the current village to the Plan Change area would be largely – though not wholly – negated by both viewing distance and the existing development that tightly frames views from this vantage point.

Effects Rating: **Low**

A Defensible Boundary:

The edge of the current golf course does not represent a true rural-urban boundary at present, while the future proposed rural-urban boundary down Whitford-Maraetai Road and across farmland to the south would not be visible from this quarter. As a result, neither boundary is particularly meaningful in relation to this viewpoint.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Viewpoint 2. Keshvara Road



Effects on Coastal Character:

Views from the intersection of Keshvara Road and Eighth View Avenue currently capture both the Formosa Golf Course and, more obliquely, an embayed part of the Hauraki Gulf with the Howick / Eastern Beach coastline beyond. Enclosed by headlands both sides of the Pine Harbour Marina, and with both the marina's moorings and some of the more recent terrace housing development nearby 'frittering' its base, the sea is clearly discernible, but views to it are far from all-embracing or sweeping. Even so, it remains a key component of Beachlands' identity, contributing to both its aesthetic appeal and feeling of being a coastal settlement.

Development on the Beachlands South Plan Change site would compound the sea's visual framing and enclosure by the headland at the southern edge of Pine Harbour Marina by replacing its existing sward of open grass, pines and a scattering of other trees with mainly MHU and THAB development. However, this would screen, at most, a sliver of sea visible between existing trees and would otherwise remain separate from the main body of water presently apparent. Although the anticipated development would increase the feeling of juxtaposition or contrast between both land and sea and development and sea, this could well enhance the significance of the area of sea that remains.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Effects on Rural Character & Landscape Values:

Views towards the Formosa Golf Course currently reveal a relatively open area of fairways, Phoenix Island palms and other trees flanking the clubhouse, abandoned fitness centre and driving range, while part of the headland around Holes 15 and 16 is also revealed closer to the marina and sea. However, these two, more visible parts of the course are connected by little more than a narrow sliver of tree canopies on the skyline, with housing in the foreground – directly south of Eighth View Avenue – screening out the rest of the course.

Development in accordance with the proposed Plan Change would displace both areas of current golf course, also removing much of the greenery and open space associated with the southern side of the valley, that provides a degree of visual counterpoint to the housing development in the foreground. In particular, MHU housing would dominate the golf course's slopes, interspersed with street trees, part of the residual golf course in line with Keshvara Road and – more remotely – both the taller THAB / Business blocks following coastal ridge to the right and a proposed hotel above the remnant golf course. The golf course would also be occupied by a school, although that is much more difficult to isolate from the broad sweep of anticipated development. This transformation would be very marked, resulting in a fundamental change to the character of the visual backdrop to views from this quarter.

Yet, as for Viewpoint 1, this would not actually diminish or remove Beachlands' rural character values. Those values, focused on parts of the Beachlands-Maraetai landscape that are still used for farming, pertain to the countryside east of Whitford-Maraetai Road and south of the ridge that the Plan Change site straddles near the Formosa clubhouse. Both of these areas are hidden from view at this viewpoint.

Even so, the loss of open space, greenery, and the largely manicured fairways and greens of the current golf course would clearly affect the outlook of local residential and visitors alike. Part of Beachlands' identity is still linked to the Formosa Golf Course, and it offers an appealing degree of contrast with the matrix of suburban development otherwise dominant around Keshvara Road. Consequently, much as the new development proposed would be too distant to generate the sort of nuisance effects often associated with new developments – over dominance, noise, light glare, awareness of activity, and even loss of privacy – at least some of the pleasantness and aesthetic appeal of views across the valley corridor would be lost.

Effects Rating: **Moderate**

Integration With Beachlands:

Looking to the future, both halves of Beachlands – new and old – would coalesce around Jack Lachlan Drive. As a result, the housing in the foreground to middle distance, stretching from Eighth View Avenue towards the end of Keshvara Road and Angiangi Crescent, would appear to merge seamlessly with the proposed MHU development above Jack Lachlan Drive. Indeed, the road axis would appear to connect this 'viewshaft' with a remaining part of the golf course, with new buildings and some planting arrayed around it. The taller THAB, Business and hotel components of that development matrix would be, both physically and visually, more distant. Consequently, most of the expanded 'village' would appear reasonably sympathetic – in terms of their scale, modulation and height – to the houses in the more immediate foreground and just beyond. Furthermore, when looking more obliquely towards the Pine Harbour Marina, down Eighth View Avenue, the taller THAB and Business development anticipated would be counterbalanced by the apartments and terrace housing current under construction in that area.

Overall, therefore, much as the zoning proposed would result in a level of intensification that is only partly matched by that within the current Beachlands settlement, it is my assessment that there would be a relatively comfortable merger of both village 'halves' over time. Indeed, the Beachlands South Plan Change effectively represents a third stage or era of development at Beachlands – evolving from the traditional suburban area on north-facing slopes above Sunkist, Pohutukawa, View and Shelly Bays, into the current area of more intensive development within the valley south of the Beachlands Road ridge, and finally – as now proposed – across the Formosa Golf Course. Each of these stages is associated with physical expansion and a ratcheting up of development intensities in line with wider community expectations and standards. Viewed in this context, the Plan Change proposals would also appear well integrated with the current settlement and relatively 'seamless'.

Effects Rating: **Low**

A Defensible Boundary:

See Viewpoint 1.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Viewpoint 3. Angiangi Crescent



Effects on Coastal Character:

Views from this vantage point and nearby are totally dominated by a stream corridor and associated open space directly 'in front of' it, which merges with expansive views out across the Formosa Golf Course. However, much as described in relation to Viewpoint 2, the sea – backed by the Eastern Beach Peninsula and Musick Point – is much more oblique to the main viewing axis. In this instance, it appears even more remote, with just a small area of open water revealed between nearby housing and the headland immediately south of the Pine Harbour Marina. Together with a partial, low-lying, view of Rangitoto, which appears destined to be soon lost behind emerging housing, this glimpse of the sea remains important in terms of Beachlands' identity and sense of place, but lacks real presence. Unfortunately, it, like the view of Rangitoto, looks likely to remain only until new housing emerges west of this viewpoint.

Even if this were not the case, future development on the Plan Change site would, as described in relation to Viewpoint 2, rise up to the left of the visible sea: although the apparent scale of the headland framing the left-hand side of the CMA would 'increase' because of the buildings on top of it, that same development would not encroach into the sea. As also described in relation to Viewpoint 2, the counterpoint and appealing tension between land and sea could well be heightened by this change, but it would not directly impact on perception of the sea itself.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Effects on Rural Character:

Views from this quarter are currently dominated by the stream corridor described above, then the Phoenix Island palms, pines, fairways and greens of the Formosa Golf Course, together with the built profile of its clubhouse, recreation centre, and – less obviously – some of the houses on lifestyle blocks above it. This largely 'green', but also entirely cultural, environment is viewed in the context of existing development that has recently emerged around Angiangi Crescent itself, as well as around Cadwil Drive and Kahawairahi Drive (connected with Jack Lachlan Drive) also hugging the western side of the aforementioned stream corridor.

The development anticipated and modelled for the far side of Jack Lachlan Drive would remain on the far side of Jack Lachlan Drive – beyond that same stream corridor and the manuka-dominated regrowth emerging within parts of it. That stream course and gully turns south below this viewpoint and, as a result, meets Jack Lachlan Drive before merging with the 9 golf holes that are to remain – and associated planting. It would also link up with a large tract of bush on the far side of the golf course. This would effectively split the Plan Change's development area in two, with a proposed school and MHU development dominating most of the area over Jack Lachlan Drive to the right, in front of quite distant THAB buildings and a hotel, while MHU development would be visible left of the stream gully, sitting lower down on the slopes around the eastern end of the golf course.

As described for Viewpoints 1 and 2, this would not result in any appreciable loss of truly rural countryside – both of which emerge out of view from this location. However, the loss of open space, greenery, and some of

the more open fairways that are currently exposed to Beachlands' village would undoubtedly have an adverse impact on the perceived naturalness and legibility of the landscape exposed to this vantage point, its aesthetic appeal and even the sense of place that locals derive from the merger of the stream corridor in the immediate foreground with the current golf course beyond. These 'losses' would be mitigated, to some degree, by the retention of the stream corridor directly adjacent to Angiangi Crescent, which would keep much of the Plan Change development at 'arm's length' and the integration of its gully system and vegetation with the open space and planting on the far side of Jack Lachlan Drive. Nevertheless, the current landscape would lose some of its attraction, pleasantness and amenity value overall.

Effects Rating: **Moderate**

Integration With Beachlands:

Development within the Plan Change site would merge with the existing Beachlands settlement much as described in relation to Viewpoint 2 – at the more macro level.

However, Angiangi Crescent would also retain a sizeable buffer area – the stream corridor – between Beachlands' old and new halves. This would create a situation in which there is a synergy between development both sides of the stream system that is assisted by this separation. In particular, this 'breathing space' would help to diminish the disparities in terms of built scale and housing intensities between both areas and soften the transition from one area to the other in general.

Effects Rating: **Low**

A Defensible Boundary:

See Viewpoints 1 and 2.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Viewpoint 4. Beachlands Road Near the Horse Paddocks



Effects on Coastal Character:

Views from this vantage point are either to the north, towards Waiheke Island and the Tamaki Channel above Beachlands' early settlement area, or to the south, towards the Formosa Golf Course and Plan Change site – but devoid of any connection with the sea. In fact, the rising elevation of Beachlands Road west of this viewpoint shuts out all views towards the CMA near Howick and Eastern Beach, or Rangitoto. As a result, views towards the sea from Viewpoint 4 would be completely unaffected by development within the Plan Change area.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Effects on Rural Character:

Views across the existing horse paddocks are dominated by their gently rolling terrain and a sward of open pasture, while recent housing development dominates the valley corridor closer to Jack Lachlan Drive, backed by a line of open space and trees on, and near, the skyline that denotes the existing Formosa Golf Course.

Most of the changes to Beachlands' landscape character described in relation to Viewpoints 2 and 3 would remain pertinent to this viewpoint, including the loss of open space and its visual counterpoint with the current settlement, leading to some erosion of the area's perceived natural qualities, aesthetic appeal, legibility, distinctiveness and sense of place etc. In reality, such effects would have more of a bearing on appreciation of the local landscape and its amenity values, as opposed to any real loss of rural character, as I have explained in relation to Viewpoints 1-3. Even so, the changes would be apparent.

Yet, three key factors would help to reduce the significance of such effects:

- (a) This viewpoint is much further from the Plan Change site – some 950m or more from it (by comparison, Viewpoint 3 is only 250m from it) – and this would appreciably diminish the scale of visible development on the far ridge;
- (b) The horse paddocks in the foreground of views from this vantage point will either remain to retain a strong impression of open space at the heart of Beachlands or will eventually be replaced by housing or other development that is likely to screen out most or all of the Plan Change land; and
- (c) Views from this quarter focus more strongly on the remnant golf course and the lower lying MHU housing around its eastern margins, further reducing the apparent scale of the development anticipated across the subject site.

As a result, while that same development would remain visible, it would have less presence than in views from the vicinity of Viewpoints 2 and 3, in particular.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Integration With Beachlands:

The proposed MHU development and 9 hole golf course at the eastern end of the Plan Change site would appear to merge quite seamlessly with the pattern of development already found north of Jack Lachlan Drive. The viewing distance from this vantage point, the slightly elevated appearance of development of the current housing near Jack Lachlan Drive, and its own intensity would combine with the golf course and surrounding vegetation to help paper over any visual discontinuities at the interface of new and 'old'. At the same time, the proposed hotel, village centre and THAB development, although visible, would appear quite remote and secondary to the patina of less intensive development closer at hand.

Effects Rating: **Low**

A Defensible Boundary:

See Viewpoints 1-3.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Viewpoint 5. Whitford – Maraetai Road South of Jack Lachlan Drive



Effects on Coastal Character:

When travelling along Whitford-Maraetai Road from the direction of Whitford, the Hauraki Gulf and Rangitoto are briefly visible as vehicles approach Jack Lachlan Drive – looking over the valley system near golf holes 3 to 5. However, that view is soon curtailed by the Phoenix Island palms lining the golf course and pines near Jack Lachlan Drive, and is offset well to the left of the curving road corridor. It is fleeting at most. Proposed development directly below Whitford-Maraetai Road, mostly Business - Light Industrial development subject to design controls, would intrude into this view early on, but would soon be superseded by the 15m deep strip of buffer planting proposed along the road margins in the vicinity of Jack Lachlan Drive.

Travelling in the opposite direction, the current golf course and nearby lifestyle housing is clearly visible, but little more than small patches of the sea – near Howick and Eastern Beach – are again fleetingly glimpsed between vegetation on the golf course. Those ‘patches’ are well to the right of the road axis and offer a very limited sense of contact with the CMA.

Overall, therefore, such views are not significant in relation to appreciation of Beachlands’ coastal character and environment. The introduction of extensive screen planting to this road margin would curtail such view, but would have a very limited effects in relation to the values of the coastal environment.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Effects on Rural Character & Landscape Values:

Viewpoint 5 reveals a valley system that open out between the lifestyle properties to the south (within the proposed FUZ) and Jack Lachlan Drive. The valley landform, combined with the trees both framing and lining the golf course, the bush lower down and even the defined ‘corridors’ of golf fairways and greens have appreciable appeal. For those travelling towards Beachlands and Maraetai, this is subtly amplified by the brief glimpses of Rangitoto and the sea described above. At present, this marks the point of arrival at, and departure from, Beachlands – with the open space of the Formosa Golf Course and some of the lifestyle blocks on rising ground to the south complementing the farmland that dominates the local landscape east of Whitford – Maraetai Road. Even so, there are clear differences between the manicured, structured character of the golf course and that of the paddocks and farmland across this key thoroughfare. The golf course comprises carefully articulated, ‘manufactured’ countryside, while the farmland opposite has a truly rural flavour – even with a quarry in its midst.

Initially, the light industrial development directly below the road corridor would be reasonably prominent, despite its lower elevation. That development would turn its back on Whitford-Maraetai Road, with signage focused on a proposed road off Jack Lachlan Drive. Even so, the actual buildings, storage areas, parking bays, service areas, docks, security fencing and lighting would all signal a significant departure from the current golf course dominated environment that passing motorists are exposed to. More positively, development proposals for this area would be subject to specific assessment criteria, designed to minimise such effects by addressing the extent to which:

-
- Buildings at the corner of Jack Lachlan Drive and Whitford-Maraetai Road are designed in response to the site's prominence in the roading network and the adjoining intersection;
 - Building and landscape design is used to frame and define edges to roads and emphasise key intersections; and
 - Front activities (i.e. the more active office, showroom or similar activities) are located fronting adjacent streets or open spaces; and conversely 'back' activities (i.e. warehouse, distribution, industrial, storage) are located in less visible locations.

In the longer term – beyond approximately 8-10 years – most, then all, of this development would be screened from view, as mass native planting next to Whitford-Maraetai Road takes hold and matures. This would also foreclose, then block, views of the valley corridor that are described above (see **Annexure A**).

As a result, the short-term effects associated with development under the Plan Change would largely revolve around the perceived removal of countryside at the gateway to and from Beachlands – even if that 'countryside' is entirely contrived and has a recreational function. Perhaps just as important, the appealing landscape of the valley system would be rapidly lost. Presently, it affords Beachlands with an attractive visual 'frame' that is only lost as motorists approach or leave the Jack Lachlan Drive intersection. In the future, this frame and gateway would be rolled back, much further down Whitford – Maraetai Road. The buildings, other structures and activity around a light industrial complex would represent a very significant change in this regard. However, as the proposed planting next to the roadway matures, at least this aspect of the proposed Plan Change development would be lost. That planting would initially integrate with the hedgerows, shelterbelts and other planting that presently afford a buffer between the lifestyle properties immediately south of Viewpoint 5 and Whitford-Maraetai Road and, in the longer term, would merge with other buffer planting between the FUZ and the road corridor.

On balance, it is my assessment that while the loss of 'countryside' near this vantage point would, in actuality, be quite modest, the diminution of landscape and amenity values would have more meaning, especially while the proposed buffer planting matures. In particular, the proposed changes would affect the perceived continuity of open space wrapped around Beachlands at present – extending towards the coast – as well as the appeal and identity of a landscape that currently helps to signal motorists' at, and departure from, Beachlands

Effects Rating – Short Term²: **High**

Effects Rating – Long Term³: **Moderate**

Integration With Beachlands:

Despite the golf course being different from the current 'village', it still has a feeling of being associated with the existing settlement. At the very least, it conveys the sense of being on the edge of Beachlands, so that the merger of development both north and south of Jack Lachlan Drive would appear logical. As the planting next to Whitford – Maraetai Road matures, both the profile of development within the light industrial area would soften and the level of perceived integration would be enhanced.

Effects Rating – Short Term: **Moderate**

Effects Rating – Long Term: **Low**

² Through to the time at which the road-side buffer planting starts to mature and its canopy closes – approximately 8-10 years

³ After the road-side planting has matured and its canopy has closed – beyond 8-10 years

A Defensible Boundary:

Whitford-Maraetai Road is a significant road in its own right and the ridgeline that it generally follows creates a sense of division between the rural valley system centred on Okaroro Drive to the east and the land falling towards the coast to the west. The combined road and ridge – even with the swale near this viewpoint – would be more defined than the current ‘de facto’ boundary down Jack Lachlan Drive.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Viewpoint 6. Whitford Maraetai Road No.649



Effects on Coastal Character:

As Whitford-Maraetai Road passes the current farm at the southern end of the Plan Change site, part of the Waikopua Creek estuary becomes briefly visible, together with the edge of the CMA – although this is only the case south of Viewpoint 6. As with other public vantage points, such views are significantly offset from the axis of Whitford-Maraetai Road and are quite fleeting. Like other such views they subtly contribute to awareness of the nearby coastline and confer a sense of proximity to it – part of a collage of such impressions experienced when travelling along Whitford-Maraetai Road – but are not particularly obvious or significant in their own right.

The proposed housing development across the Plan Change site, together with road-side buffer planting, would curtail such glimpses and remove any sense of connection with the coast around Viewpoint 6 – limited as both currently are.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Effects on Rural Character & Landscape Values:

Currently, the ‘farm’ part of the Plan Change site comprises gently rolling pasture that is flanked and, in places, interspersed with stands of totara, manuka / kanuka and broadleaf species rising out of the site’s gully systems. These are connected by a ‘thread’ of bush running along the far side of the paddocks, at the edge of the coastal escarpment. To the right (north), this swathe of farmland is capped by a patina of buildings, fencelines and tracks / accessways that denote the edge of the lifestyle blocks also within the Plan Change’s FUZ, while the “Waikopua” lifestyle subdivision sits on rising ground to the south of Whitford-Maraetai Road. More distant views across the current ‘farm’ reveal the lifestyle block landscape on the far side of the Waikopua Creek estuary around Clifton Road.

Development within the Plan Change’s FUZ would fundamentally change this outlook and landscape in the longer term, with MHU development spread across most of the paddocks in the immediate foreground to middle distance. Pasture would remain on the higher ground just beyond the western edge of the images prepared for Viewpoint 6 by Virtual View, but the transformation from ‘pasture’ and more distant lifestyle blocks would be dramatic – including either side of a new entry road to the anticipated development. On the other hand, the bush-filled gullies would remain bisecting some pockets of development and the 10m deep strip of revegetation next to Whitford-Maraetai Road would screen out much of the anticipated development once it matures. Furthermore, this catchment of present-day paddocks remains largely separate from the neighbouring rural environs both east and south of Whitford-Maraetai Road because of the ridgeline that it runs along. Inevitably, the contrast between ‘town and country’ would still remain marked, but less dramatic than might otherwise be the case – influenced by a number of other factors as well:

- The presence of the currently stand-alone development within “Waikopua” – on a prominent ridge elevated above the southern end of the Plan Change site and Whitford-Maraetai Road;

-
- The more subtle presence of the lifestyle estate at 631-645 Whitford-Maraetai Road, on the eastern side of that road corridor;
 - Awareness of the existing lifestyle properties on elevated land beyond the Plan Change site – that is experienced either before or after this viewing catchment, depending on the direction of travel along Whitford-Maraetai Road; and
 - The predominantly ‘working’, in some places quite utilitarian, character of the rural environment experienced in the course of using the road corridor near Beachlands.

It is therefore apparent that development within the FUZ would remove most of the countryside within the catchment of the current ‘farm’. At the same time, it would give rise to a significantly modified residential environment that is quite different to the current paddocks and lifestyle blocks. Even so, once the buffer strip of vegetation has matured next to Whitford-Maraetai Road, the road frontage would be more akin to that currently experienced when passing the lifestyle blocks closer to Beachlands, and most – if not all – of the future residential development would appear to sit within a setting that is bush-like and has significant intrinsic appeal. This would not obviate the loss of views over open paddocks or the perceived encroachment on, and loss of, countryside – especially when approaching Beachlands from the direction of Whitford – but it would soften the ‘blow’ of that change.

Effects Rating – Short Term : **Moderate-High** (see Footnote 2 above)

Effects Rating – Long Term: **Low-Moderate** (see Footnote 3 above)

Integration With Beachlands:

This viewpoint and locations in its vicinity have no direct visual connection with Beachlands, but are still connected to it perceptually. The sequence of views experienced when travelling southwards from Beachlands is also significant in this regard, with the settlement and its shopping centre currently transitioning into the golf course and lifestyle properties on its periphery, then into the southern ‘farm’ component of the Plan Change site. This creates a degree of connection between both areas, that would be affirmed as development within it pushes progressively southwards in the future – from the village centre and THAB into the MHU areas exposed to this vantage point. Over time, therefore, this progression would create a feeling of integration and linkage with the current settlement: it would ‘make sense’.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

A Defensible Boundary:

Whitford-Maraetai Road is a significant road in its own right and the ridgeline that it generally follows creates a sense of division between the Plan Change catchment falling towards the nearby coast and both the farmed valley centred on Okaroro Drive, which falls to the east, and other farmland then forestry on land that falls to the south near Maea Rise and Waikopua Road. The combination of Whitford-Maraetai Road and its ridgeline would, in reality, be more defined than the current ‘de facto’ boundary down Jack Lachlan Drive or any part of the Formosa Golf Course.

Indeed, as indicated for Viewpoint 5, the current boundary is already fragmented to some degree by the lifestyle blocks on the western side of Whitford-Maraetai Road, and the recent consenting of further lifestyle development in the form of “Waikopua” and the 5-lot estate at 631-645 Whitford-Maraetai Road raises further concerns about the potential for further erosion of the proposed boundary in the future.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Viewpoint 7. Whitford Maraetai Road Near 'Waikopua'



Effects on Coastal Character:

Travelling from Whitford towards both Beachlands and Maraetai, Whitford-Maraetai Road climbs up through a cutting then emerges directly below the Waikopua subdivision off Maea Rise. At this point, it reveals a broad landscape 'canvas' that encompasses the Hauraki Gulf, Rangitoto, and paddocks in the foreground intermixed with tracts of manuka and totara. In the future, the closest of these paddocks, together with bands of manuka extending the coastal edge would remain intact, while future MHU development would traverse the gently rolling series of paddocks in the middle distance and beyond – between intervening gully systems. This layout would protect views towards Rangitoto and the great majority of the Hauraki Gulf – although the visual 'frame' for such views would change very markedly. At the same time, however, the coastal edge would gradually become more defined and legible as revegetation augments the existing gully vegetation that criss-crosses the southern end of the farm area.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Effects on Rural Character & Landscape Values:

I have described the changes anticipated for the Plan Change site and around it above. The paddock retained in the foreground of most views, together with the bush around it, would provide a filter or buffer for introductory, north-bound views of the developed Plan Change area from Whitford-Maraetai Road. Moreover, as the road progresses northward, it follows a ridge that opens up views to the east as well – of farmland and forest areas across the Maraetai Peninsula's main spine and the intervening valley system focused on Okaroro Drive.

The proposed development would result in a significant change to the perceived rural character of the area around the road corridor, notwithstanding the views just described to the east, and this change would be quite abrupt. However, as the landscape buffer down the side of Whitford-Maraetai Road starts to mature, it, together with the residual paddock and bush at the southern end of the Plan Change site, would soften this interface and sense of contrast. Within the Plan Change site, the MHU housing expected to dominate much of the FUZ would appear be visually subdivided, contained, and even isolated by the gully systems and bush between the proposed pockets of development. As a result, it would also be isolated, to a significant degree, from its wider rural setting. Perception of the developed FUZ landscape would also be influenced by the other factors identified and annotated in the analysis of effects for Viewpoint 6.

As such, it is clear that development under the Plan Change would fundamentally change the nature of the landscape south of Beachlands, but this transformation would be softened by those same factors and would not spill over into the rural catchments east and south of the Whitford-Maraetai Road corridor. The interplay between MHU development, bush-filled gully systems, road-side buffer planting and the retained paddocks in the immediate foreground would create a landscape that is significantly altered, but also that has some appeal in its own right. Importantly, the current sense of connection with both the nearby coastline and Rangitoto would also be retained.

Overall, therefore, it is my assessment that much of the landscape currently exposed to this viewpoint would lose its rural character, together with some of its landscape appeal. However, as the buffer planting next to Whitford – Maraetai Road, together with the bush in the gullies, reserves and streets that bisect the site, begin to mature, the landscape of the Plan Change would soften appreciably. It would evoke a strong feeling of interplay between its cultural and natural components that is much more positive.

Effects Rating – Short Term: **Moderate-High** (see Footnote 2 above)

Effects Rating – Long Term: **Low-Moderate** (see Footnote 3 above)

Integration With Beachlands:

Again, this viewpoint and locations in its vicinity have no direct visual connection with Beachlands, but are still connected to it perceptually. The sequence of views experienced when travelling southwards from Beachlands is also significant in this regard, with the settlement and its shopping centre transitioning into the golf course and lifestyle properties on its periphery, then rapidly into the southern ‘farm’ component of the Plan Change site. This creates a strong sense of connection with Beachlands, even if it is not directly visible from this viewpoint. The progressive movement of Beachlands (as a whole) southwards would ‘make sense’ because of this association.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

A Defensible Boundary:

See Viewpoint 6.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Viewpoint 8. The Clifton Road Walkway



Effects on Coastal Character:

The shallow bay at the mouth of the Waikopua Creek dominates views from this viewpoint and adjoining parts of both the Clifton Road Walkway and the lifestyle properties both behind and near it. Views across the bay are backed by the rising escarpment at the edge of the Plan Change land, with a mixture of unkempt pasture, pines, and scattered pockets of native shrubland and trees dotting its slopes. The terracotta roofs and cream walls of the Rydges / Formosa chalets south of the current clubhouse are also visible atop the escarpment's ridge crest.

Under the proposed Plan Change, the 'leading edge' of Beachlands' coastal escarpment would remain much as at present initially, while most of the visible ridgeline beyond it would be modified by residential development on higher ground – with MHU and Large Lot housing near its edge rising up to THAB development near the village centre and proposed (separate) hotel. This change would be accentuated by the removal of pines and other weed / exotic species across the ridge (as well as elsewhere).

Over time, however, nearly all of the coastal edge would become afforested, with much of the lower-lying MHU development being at least partly screened by it. All of the taller development around the village centre would remain visible, including that subject to the Plan Change's proposed Height Variation Control, but this would typically appear quite distant, with the foreground to middle distance remaining – as now – dominated by the coastal flats below Clifton and Porterfield Roads, its beachline, then the embayed area off Waikopua Creek. The coastal edge in 'front of' the proposed residential and village centre development would become progressively more 'natural' (albeit as the result of human intervention) as the revegetation matures across it, and the bush within the gully systems penetrating inland from the escarpment would also gradually increase in scale – though to a more limited degree.

The proposed development would not affect the CMA, nor would it reduce the visual primacy of both Rangitoto and the island of Motukaraka in views towards the Hauraki Gulf. Consequently, this would create a somewhat contradictory situation in which:

- The CMA and its immediate margins would either stay as natural as at present or – in the case of the main coastal escarpment – would become more natural over time; whereas
- The already significantly modified ridge crest that is currently occupied by the Formosa Golf Course, adjoining lifestyle development and part of the Plan Change 'farm' would become significantly more modified and developed. As such, the coastline's rural-coastal aesthetic would be replaced by one in which there is very marked contrast between the urban development and the CMA, together with its 'naturalised' margins.

This situation is not evenly balanced because the changes to the crest of the coastal ridge would be quite fundamental, affecting perception of the coastal environment and its natural character values by locals and visitors alike. They would permeate all of the visible coastline. On the other hand, they would also be mitigated by the avoidance of:

- physical incursion into the CMA;
- Key views to Rangitoto and Motukaraka;
- the enhancement of the bay and estuaries immediate margins; and
- the 1.3km or more viewing distance to the nearest edge of the proposed residential zones.

Effects Rating: **Moderate**

Effects on Rural Character & Landscape Values:

The rolling slopes on the far side of the Waikopua Creek estuary and the embayed area off it are prominent in views from this quarter. However, the flat angle of viewing across the bay results in the slopes directly above the shoreline being more prominent, whereas those beyond this outer coastal edge are more difficult to clearly discern.

Initially, therefore, development across the Plan Change site would generate effects similar to those described above, with the taller development around the THAB blocks, village centre and hotel prominent, while the profile and apparent scale of the lower MHU and Large Lot development near the coastal edge and across the current farm would be reduced by the vegetation along the coastal escarpment and rising up the gullies off it. Over time, however, revegetation across the coastal escarpment and up the gully corridors – including near the village centre – would make this complex matrix of development proposed appear slightly more recessive, although the loss of farmland and rural character would still be apparent. Again, viewing distance, the avoidance of encroachment into the CMA (which is the centrepiece of views from near this viewpoint), and the absence of any effects in relation to views of Rangitoto and Motukaraka, would all be mitigating factors that help to offset some of the effects anticipated.

Notwithstanding these factors, development under the Plan Change would still erode some of the intrinsic naturalness, aesthetic appeal, cohesion and pleasantness associated with current views across the Waikopua Creek estuary and bay. It would also impact on the identity and sense of place that local residents, in particular, associate with the Beachlands coastline.

Effects Rating: **Moderate**

Integration With Beachlands:

Even though Beachlands is not visible from this sector, there remains clear recognition of the presence of the current settlement. The proposed development would well appear logical and ‘coherent’ in that regard – much as describe for Viewpoints 5-7.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

A Defensible Boundary:

The presence of future urban development across the Plan Change site would clearly affect perceptions of the environment around the embayed area of Waikopua Creek, and reduce some of the current feeling of separation of this area from Beachlands. On the other hand, the intervening creek and its large expanse of mangroves, salt marsh and inter-tidal flats would provide a strong line of demarcation between the rural lifestyle area within this sector and the Plan Change site.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Viewpoint 9. The Pine Harbour Ferry Route



Effects on Coastal Character:

The coastline of Beachlands is currently dominated by the Pine Harbour Marina, and boats along its seaward edge, the grassed mole at its southern end, and residential development both next to, and behind, it. The slopes south of the marina are mostly covered in pine trees that would be removed in the course of the development enabled by the Plan Change. Proposed development near the new village centre would rise well above the escarpment after this clearance, especially the THAB blocks, village centre and hotel. This change would be exacerbated by the clearance of exotic trees and weed species from the escarpment and its crest.

As a result, the ridgetop landscape south of the current Beachlands Settlement and Pine Harbour would go through a quite fundamental evolution. More positively, however, the resulting sequence of development would be sufficiently close to both the current 'village' – including its more recently constructed apartment complex – that there would be a feeling of connection with that existing node. Moreover, revegetation of the coastal escarpment, would offer the sort of mediation and mitigation described in relation to Viewpoint 8, helping to soften the visible edge of development near the town centre and, over time, helping to subtly lower its apparent scale. The MHU development further south would also be increasingly screened by that same vegetation in the longer term – not unlike the situation now evident at Hobsonville Point. This means that the coastal escarpment and 'edge' would be increasingly demarcated by two layers: the dark line of native vegetation rising up from the CMA to the crest of the escarpment, then the matrix of different built forms creating a new skyline above it. In between that coastal edge and this viewpoint, the expanse of sea in the immediate foreground would retain its visual primacy.

This means that many of the effects identified in relation to Viewpoint 8 are also pertinent to this public vantage point, while the connection with the existing coastal development around the Pine Harbour Marina and headland north of it is perhaps even more decisive in this instance.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Effects on Rural Character & Landscape Values:

As with other viewpoints, the pasture, pines and other vegetation presently visible atop the coastal escarpment and ridge mainly resides within the current golf course, so that any loss of rural character would be more perceived than real. Notwithstanding this, the replacement of the seemingly grassed spaces and 'shelterbelts' within the course would still result in some diminution of the coastline's rural qualities and perceived – as opposed to biophysical - naturalness. In places, the coastal edge could well appear raw and 'damaged' initially.

Eventually, however, the native revegetation closer to the shoreline, would compensate for some of the anticipated change, much as described above, by creating a more natural and native edge at the front of the

visible land area. This would not entirely offset the loss of 'rural character' and landscape value associated with development in the Plan Change area, but as discussed in relation to coastal character, it would soften the change somewhat. Perhaps of more importance, however, would be the natural synergy between the current Beachlands settlement and development under the proposed Plan Change, while those using the ferry service anticipate arriving at both a marina and established urban environment. These considerations would further colour perception of the much enlarged, Beachlands settlement and its effects on the area's coastal landscape.

Overall, therefore, it is anticipated that the new skyline created by the combined THAB, village centre, hotel and MHU development would erode some of the naturalness, aesthetic appeal, cohesion, and pleasantness currently associated with its coastline. Consequently, much like Viewpoint 8, this would have an impact on the identity and sense of place associated with Beachlands, including its juxtaposition with both the sea and its 'countryside' (largely golf course) surrounds. As a result, the changes to landscape character generated by the Plan Changes effects would be clearly apparent, but any effects in relation to its values would be muted by the already modified nature of the Beachlands / Pine Harbour coastline and the effective melding of new development with the current settlement.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Integration With Beachlands:

The development proposed would have a natural feeling of connection and synergy with both Beachlands and the Pine Harbour Marina. It would be quite difficult to tell where that existing development ends and the proposed development begins, other than via a more fine-grained analysis of built form and building scales: the THAB, village centre and hotel development proposed would be appreciably taller and larger than that currently found throughout most of Beachlands.

Even so, there would still appear to be a strong sense of linkage from north to south and there would also be a certain degree of logic and 'fit' associated with this apparent merger.

Effects Rating: **Low**

A Defensible Boundary:

The presence of future urban development across the Plan Change site would clearly affect perceptions of the environment around the embayed area of Waikopua Creek. In particular, while the lifestyle area off Clifton Road enjoys significant separation from Beachlands because of both the bay at the mouth of Waikopua Creek and the 'countryside' south of Pine Harbour Marina, development under the proposed Plan Change would effectively reduce this area of separation to the creek estuary and bay off it.

Even so, the intervening creek and its large expanse of mangroves, salt marsh and inter-tidal flats would provide a strong line of demarcation between Clifton Road's lifestyle area and the Plan Change site. This separation would also be subtly reinforced by the revegetation along the face of south Beachlands' coastal escarpment.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

5.5 Key Findings

Table 2 (below) summarises the effects ratings for all 9 viewpoints:

Table 2.

	Viewpoint:	Effects on Coastal Character:	Effects on Rural Character & Landscape Values:	Integration With Beachlands:	A Defensible Boundary:
1.	Winterman Road	Very Low	Low	Low	Very Low
2.	Keshvara Road	Low	Moderate	Low	Very Low
3.	Angiangi Crescent	Low	Moderate	Low	Very Low
4.	Beachlands Road	Very Low	Low-Moderate	Low	Very Low
5.	Whitford-Maraetai Road	Low	Short Term: High Long Term: Moderate	Short Term: Moderate Long Term: LOW	Low-Moderate
6.	Whitford-Maraetai Road	Low	Short Term: Moderate-High Long Term: Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
7.	Whitford-Maraetai Road	Low-Moderate	Short Term: Moderate-High Long Term: Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
8.	Clifton Road Walkway	Moderate	Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
9.	Pine Harbour Ferry Route	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low	Low-Moderate

The following factors have contributed to the ratings:

1. The absence of any ONLs, areas of HNC or ONC values, or other areas of high environmental value within or close to the Plan Change site.
2. The 'working', rural production, nature of the landscape found largely around the site, and its exclusion from the Whitford Sub-precinct B's 'scenic constraints area'.
3. The physical and visual connections between the site and the current Beachlands settlement, suggesting a certain degree of synergy between both.
4. The current proliferation of residential development within the Rural - Countryside Living Zone across and around the Plan Change site.
5. The concentration of much of the more intensive development proposed within and near the Formosa Golf Course and Rydges resort, as opposed to the paddocks of the 'farm area' further south. Less intensive areas of development would then emanate from the village centre, with more dispersed pockets of MHU development located closer to the site's more critical, southern and eastern margins.
6. The extensive revegetation proposed along the coastal escarpment / edge of the site and its internal gullies would break the proposed development up into a sequence of layers and nodes across the Plan Change area. This revegetation would also progressively enhance demarcation of the CMA's margins.
7. Retention of a large paddock at the southern end of the site, together with associated stands of bush in adjacent gullies, would maintain a 'viewshaft' to the Hauraki Gulf and Rangitoto, as

well as a rural 'edge' at a key point of introduction to the Plan Change site and Beachlands for those travelling north on Whitford-Maraetai Road.

8. Proposed native planting within the landscape buffer next to Whitford-Maraetai Road would, over time, help to soften the visual interplay between development within the Plan Change site and the rural landscape around it. Such buffering would be further assisted by the way in which the land around the lifestyle properties within the Plan Change site rises up near Whitford-Maraetai Road before falling away towards the sea. This would help to conceal the greater bulk of proposed development from that road corridor – if not along its margins.
9. The quite flat angle of viewing from both the CMA and the lifestyle area near Clifton Road (including the Clifton Road Walkway) helps to largely screen internal parts of the site. The proposed revegetation down the coastal edge would help to naturalise that important interface. It would also help to further screen development within the Plan Change site and soften the profile of that which remains visible.
10. In views from the CMA, a close association is evident between the proposed Plan Change site and existing development within both Beachlands and the Pine Harbour Marina.
11. Much of Whitford-Maraetai Road rides along a ridge that helps to separate the Plan Change site from the inland valley system around Okaroro Drive. This ridge, in conjunction with the road corridor itself and coastal edge, helps to define a large wedge of land south of Beachlands that would both meld with the current village and remain distinct from areas around it.

These factors have combined with other, more subtle, considerations to result in effects ratings that 'peak' at a Moderate level for Catchments 2 and 3 – solely in relation to the changing rural character experienced when travelling along Whitford-Maraetai Road. Yet, all of the other ratings range between Very Low and a Low-Moderate level. None of these ratings reach the point of being 'Significant', and many reflect a high degree of synergy between Beachlands' current village and the proposed Plan Change area.

In addition to these points, which focus largely on the perceived or visual character of the Beachlands landscape, two other factors are also noteworthy:

- The proposed revegetation would enhance both the biophysical and natural character values of the coastal edge as it matures; and
- The proposed revegetation within the site's gully systems would displace large colonies of weed species and pines that currently inhabit them – especially across the Formosa Golf Course – and would help to establish a more robust and sustainable network of native 'bush' across the site.

More specific Plan Change responses referred to in the viewpoint analyses that are also significant in relation to the mitigation of natural character and amenity effects include:

- The creation of a 10m and 15m wide landscape buffer of native planting along the edge of Whitford-Maraetai Road. This is especially important in relation to views over the proposed light industrial area off Jack Lachlan Drive and across the 'farm' at the southern end of the Plan Change site from Whitford-Maraetai Road.
- The location of Large Lot zoning along the edge of the coastal escarpment, between that highly significant feature and the taller, more intensive, THAB and village centre development. This

would help to reduce effects on, and in relation to users of, the CMA and the Clifton Road Walkway / lifestyle area.

5.5 Effects in Relation to Different Receiving Environments

Extrapolating these findings to the wider areas around each viewpoint, **Table 3** (below) then provides an overview of the key effects anticipated for the various receiving environments around the Plan Change site – derived from both the viewpoint assessment and site visits to other parts of Beachlands and surrounding areas (**Attachment 22**).

- Catchment 1. **Beachlands village;**
- Catchment 2. **Whitford-Maraetai Road;**
- Catchment 3. **The Clifton Road Lifestyle Area & Walkway;**
- Catchment 4. **The Coastal Marine Area off Beachlands.**

Table 3.

	Catchment:	Commentary:
1.	Beachlands Village	<p>The key issue faced by both residents of, and visitors to, Beachlands is the loss of the ‘borrowed landscape’ of the Formosa Golf Course, with its fairways and greens attractively defined by Phoenix Island palms and stands of bush. Currently, the golf course and its margins offer a feeling of visual counterpoint to, and respite from, the more recently developed, housing areas within the Beachlands / Pine Harbour valley system. It has significant aesthetic appeal, contributes to the feeling of the Beachlands being contained by surrounding ‘countryside’ (even if this is somewhat illusory) and the course is now quite strongly associated with Beachlands: it is part of the settlement’s identity. For those parts of the current village relatively isolated from the sea and coastline, it also offers a degree of compensation for that separation: the course is a focal-point instead of the CMA.</p> <p>The Plan Change proposal would displace most of the golf course and replace it with both housing and a village centre that have a quite different character. Although the village centre, together with the proposed school abutting Jack Lachlan Drive, may well have some appeal in their own right, the loss of half of the golf course, together with much of its visual open space on the southern skyline, would be significant. The anticipated change would impact on both the landscape character and amenity values of the current settlement, including locals’ perception of what Beachlands is as a place to live and recreate in.</p> <p>These changes would be mitigated to varying degrees by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the suburban / urban context that frames views towards the Plan Change site; ▪ the stream gully that would follow the northern side of more than half of Jack Lachlan Drive – from Kahawairahi Drive down to just west of the golf course maintenance compound – acting as a buffer between current housing areas and future Plan Change development, as well as a landscape feature in its own right; ▪ The connection of emerging bush within that stream system with the open space of the residual golf course and the large tract of bush on its southern side; ▪ Views retained to the remnant golf course, especially so near the ‘top’ half of Jack Lachlan Drive; and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The visual (as well as physical) synergy between the urban development both sides of Jack Lachlan Drive, creating a much enlarged, potentially more vibrant, settlement. <p>These factors would help to both reduce the more immediate landscape and amenity effects visited on the local community and contribute to a future environment that offsets some of these ‘losses’. The variability of effects on different parts of Beachlands because of these and other factors are clearly reflected in the effects ratings for Viewpoints 1-4 in relation to countryside character and landscape values – which are lower within those areas closer to Pine Harbour Marina and a more distant Beachlands Road, but Moderate for those vantage points that more directly overlook and interface with the current golf course.</p> <p>Other effects, such as those in relation to perception of the coastal environment and a future rural-urban boundary, would be of a lower order ‘across the board’.</p>
2.	Whitford-Maraetai Road	<p>The loss of countryside associated with the southward shift of Beachlands’ urban area is the key change that drives the typically Moderate effects ratings for countryside character and landscape values in relation to Viewpoints 5-7 (with higher ratings in the short term and lower ratings in the longer term). That shift would fundamentally transform the ‘paddocks and pasture’ landscape experienced in the course of approaching Beachlands from the south.</p> <p>Even so, key views towards the Hauraki Gulf and Rangitoto would be protected, including that of critical importance as motorists climb up Whitford-Maraetai Road near Maea Rise and first gain an overview of the southern half of the Plan Change land in conjunction with the sea area off Waikopua Creek and that most iconic of Auckland’s island landforms. Moreover, the foreground in this introductory sequence of views would remain in pasture, while tracts of bush would back that pasture line together with the Plan Change area’s coastal edge. Other stands of bush would rise up from a series of gullies to subdivide the anticipated MHU development into a series of clusters and nodes, while close-up views from other parts of Whitford-Maraetai Road would be gradually screened out by planting within the 10m landscape buffer of native planting next to the road corridor. Over time, this would create a landscape that intermixes native planting and regrowth with housing development in an appealing manner.</p> <p>The current ‘farm’s’ countryside would still be lost, but the resulting combination of residential development and regenerating bush would eventually afford a feeling of quite appealing transition between the heart of the Plan Change area, with its more intensive development, and the rural domain across Whitford-Maraetai Road.</p> <p>The resulting containment of future Plan Change development within a broad catchment north and west of Whitford-Maraetai Road would be reinforced by the ridgeline that the road runs along, already creating feeling of separation between both sides of its corridor. As is reflected in the ratings for Viewpoints 5-7, this would limit effects associated with establishment of new rural-urban boundary, while other effects, related to integration of the Plan Change’s development areas with Beachlands and the natural character of the coastal environment, would remain at a low level.</p>
3.	The Clifton Rd Lifestyle Area	<p>The public walkway and line of rural lifestyle properties near Clifton Road would be affected by the Plan Change’s new built forms across the skyline of the coastal escarpment near the mouth of Waikopua Creek on two ‘fronts’ – in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the loss of both physical and perceived naturalness and natural character within the coastal environment; and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the related loss of rural character and landscape values down that same coastline. <p>In particular, development along the crest of that coastal ridge would create a quite different landscape to that presently revealed in views from this quarter. It would become markedly less rural, less natural and perhaps less cohesive. However, the CMA and views out to both Rangitoto and Motukaraka Island would remain 'intact', and the coastal escarpment would become progressively more defined and natural in its own right as native regrowth on it matures. Moreover, that vegetation, together with the Large Lot development along the escarpment's edge, would help to provide transition into the village centre and THAB blocks beyond. These factors, together with the already modified nature of the escarpment's main slopes (including the presence of the Rydges' chalets atop the ridgeline) and the continued visual primacy of the expansive water directly 'in front of' the Clifton Road shoreline and walkway, would mitigate some of the coastal character effects identified.</p> <p>At the same time, even though there would be a related loss of countryside character and landscape values, such effects would be limited by the same factors described above, together with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The retention of 'farmland' near Waikopua Creek itself; ▪ The more limited scale and impact of mainly MHU development – in pockets – south of the proposed town centre; and ▪ The limited amount of farmland that is actually visible at present from the coastal walkway and most of the Clifton Road coastline. <p>When these factors are realistically balanced against the changes anticipated, it is apparent that the Plan Change proposals would involve some very real trade-offs, with the erosion of some landscape and natural character values at least partly offset by the enhanced naturalness and definition of the CMA and its margins. This interplay of factors is consistent with the moderate ratings identified in relation to countryside character / landscape values and coastal character effects for Viewpoint 8.</p> <p>Other effects – pertaining to the integration of new development with the current Beachlands settlement and establishment of a new rural-urban boundary would be of a slightly lesser order.</p>
4.	The CMA Off Beachlands	<p>Views from the CMA in general would reveal much the same interplay of natural and cultural (built form) environments described for Clifton Road. As a result, the erosion of some natural character values would be counterbalanced by the enhancement of the coastal escarpment. In addition, the new development would be viewed as complementing, and merging, with both the existing settlement and marina, and could well enhance perception of Beachlands as a destination that derives much of its value from the interplay of its 'village' with the CMA and coastal landforms.</p> <p>Overall, therefore, the effects identified in relation to the CMA would be similar in nature to those discussed in relation to the Clifton Road catchment, but typically one 'rung' lower on the rating scale (Viewpoint 9).</p>

6. Statutory Review

The following are a series of brief analyses, in which the Plan Change – and its identified effects – are evaluated against those RPS and Whitford Precinct provisions that are particularly relevant to the proposal from a landscape perspective.

B2.6 - Expansion of Rural and Coastal Towns

(1) *Growth and development of existing or new rural and coastal towns and villages to be enabled in ways that (paraphrased):*

- a) Avoids natural and physical resources that have been scheduled, or natural and coastal environment resources:

Comments:

The Plan Change land is located within the coastal environment, as described in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, and is also subject to the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act (which is a NZ Coastal Policy Statement for the Hauraki Gulf). The land also has a substantial coastal edge along its western boundary. However, there are no high or outstanding natural character areas (AUP Schedule 8) affected by the Plan Change. Similarly, it avoids the Region's Outstanding Natural Landscapes (AUP Schedule 7).

In relation to related Policy (2), the Plan Change would avoid location next to “*areas that contain significant natural and physical resources that have been scheduled*”. Even so the proposed reserve system would enhance public access to the coastline (restricted at present by the Formosa Golf Course), restore degraded environments within and next to the course, and enhance – if not actually create – significant areas of biodiversity.

I therefore consider that the Plan Change proposal appropriately addresses this section of Chapter B2.6.

B2.6 - Expansion of Rural and Coastal Towns

(1) *Growth and development of existing or new rural and coastal towns and villages to be enabled in ways that (paraphrased):*

- d) Are consistent with the local character of the town or village or surrounding area:

Comments:

The Beachlands South expansion would not be the same as the current settlement. However, as indicated above, it represents the opportunity for the significant expansion and integrated development of a rural coastal town. The transition to greater intensity is, in fact, already reflected in the multi-level apartment and terrace housing developments currently emerging near the Pine Harbour Marina, but the Beachlands South Plan Change would take this a significant step further. Even so, the proposed location of mainly MHU development near the ‘dividing line’ of old and new down Jack Lachlan Drive, together with the retention of 9 golf holes and siting of a school next to that key road corridor, would soften this transition, while the new town centre and development nearby would be

appropriate for the combined settlement envisaged. In fact, it should help to activate and invigorate the urban environment of Beachlands – internally at least.

In addition, Beachlands is an established enclave of suburban / urban development enclosed by the CMA and its rural periphery. The expanded settlement would maintain that quality, including its separation from nearby Maraetai (especially) and Whitford. It would retain the feeling of being a contained and somewhat ‘stand-alone’ coastal settlement, notwithstanding its increased size.

Consequently, much as development within the Plan Change area would be different from that which has historically dominated Beachlands, it would still integrate with, and complement, those established areas of mainly residential occupation and the current shopping centre. It would also add to the diversity of Beachlands’ urban form, without becoming over dominant in its own right, and reflect a pattern of intensification that is already sweeping across the Region.

Overall, therefore it is my assessment that the Plan Change is consistent with this section of Chapter B2.6.

B.8 – Coastal Environment

B8.2.1. Objectives

- (7) *Subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment are designed, located and managed to preserve the characteristics and qualities that contribute to the natural character of the coastal environment.*
- (8) *Where practicable, in the coastal environment areas with degraded natural character are restored or rehabilitated and areas of high and outstanding natural character are enhanced.*

B8.2.2. Policies

- (9) *Preserve and protect areas of outstanding natural character and high natural character from inappropriate subdivision, use and development by:*
 - (c) *avoiding significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment.*
- (10) *Avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects on natural character of the coastal environment not identified as outstanding natural character and high natural character from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*

Comments:

The proposed Plan Change would adhere to the ‘old’ (2004) NZCPS maxim of concentrating new development where modification of the coastal environment has already occurred and is clearly apparent. In this case, the proposed expansion of Beachlands would build on the location of the current coastal settlement and its effects would be largely (though not entirely) concentrated on areas already exposed to both Beachlands and the CMA. Inevitably, the proposed expansion southwards would reinforce a pattern in which Beachlands’ coastal cliffs, headlands and steeper slopes remain relatively free of development, with nearly all housing and other development concentrated behind that ‘edge’.

Development in accordance with the Plan Change would result in the contrast between undeveloped and developed areas becoming even more marked, because of the greater

scale and intensity of built forms proposed, but also because of the remedial effects of revegetation along the coastal escarpment. In effect, both the cultural and natural dimensions of the coastline would be enhanced, creating an even stronger degree of engagement between them that is presently apparent, but not one that is new.

Although the visual contrast and counterpoint derived from this situation would be marked, it would remain at a less than 'significant' (Moderate-High) level, with reference to my viewpoint assessments.

As a result, I consider that the Plan Change meets the 'tests' posed by Chapter B.8.

B.9 Rural Environment

B9.2.2. Policies

(1) Enable a diverse range of activities while avoiding significant adverse effects on and urbanisation of rural areas, including within the coastal environment, and avoiding, remedying, or mitigating other adverse effects on rural character, amenity, landscape and biodiversity values.

B9.4.1. Objectives

(4) Land subdivision protects and enhances significant indigenous biodiversity.

B9.4.2. Policies

(4) Provide for new rural lifestyle subdivision in locations and at scales and densities so as to:

- (a) avoid areas that would undermine the integrity of the Rural Urban Boundary and coastal towns and villages;*
- (f) maintain or enhance landscape, rural and, where relevant, coastal, character and amenity values;*

Comments:

Matters related to the avoidance, remediation and mitigation of effects on rural character, amenity and landscape have been addressed in detail – both above and in Section 5.5 and 5.6 of this report. As a result, it is considered that development within the Plan Change area would:

- Complement the existing Beachlands settlement and integrate with it;
- Avoid having a significant level of effect on the natural character of the coastal environment;
- Avoid undermining the integrity of the rural-urban boundary; and
- Help to mitigate and/or offset some of the adverse effects identified in relation to the natural character of the coastal environment and countryside character by instigating large scale, indigenous revegetation and regeneration, while at the same time, removing exotic plants and weed species.

Accordingly, it is my view that the Plan Change is consistent with the provisions of Chapter B.9.

Whitford Sub-precinct B Provisions

The Plan Change site will be removed from Whitford Sub-precinct B and instead will be subject to the new set of Beachlands South provisions, some of which are described in Section 2.2 above. While the Whitford Precinct focuses on managing its Rural Countryside Living zoning, future development will need provisions that are more relevant to urban development, which those of the Beachlands South Precinct provide.

Even so, it is noted that the Whitford Precinct has a strong emphasis on the protection of landscape and coastal values, together with the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values and environmental qualities. In this regard, it is noted that the Plan Change site is located outside the Whitford Precinct Plan's Scenic Amenity Areas (Precinct Plan 3). On the other hand, much of the coastal escarpment directly abutting the Plan Change site is overlaid by one of the Coastal Areas identified in Precinct Plan 3.

It is clear from the Viewpoint 8 and 9 photos contained in **Annexure A** that the coastal escarpment south of Pine Harbour Marina is a clearly discernible feature at the edge of the CMA. However, this 'distinction' is not matched by its vegetation cover, which is more apparent when viewed close up. Much of it is actually covered by pine trees, rank grass and weed species at present. Consequently, removal of those plants and revegetation of the coastal escarpment would significantly enhance the feature's ecological values, biodiversity and even its landscape and natural character values over time. While the sort of contrast between natural and cultural components of the wider coastal environment discussed above would be readily apparent from a range of vantage points, the values of the actual escarpment would be enhanced, and this could well contribute to a more positive tension between quite different components of the coastal landscape – again as is described above.

Proposed Beachlands South Precinct Provisions

Environmental matters covered by the Whitford Sub-precinct B provisions include the protection of rural landscape, amenity and natural character values which are addressed above. The proposed precinct provisions appropriately respond to the protection of rural landscape, amenity and natural character values by applying the Ecological Protected Area Network over natural gullies and significant terrestrial, wetland and freshwater ecological value areas, the requirement for 10m and 15m landscaped buffers along Whitford-Maraetai Road, applying a minimum 30m coastal protected yard standard to ensure buildings are adequately setback from the coastal edge as well as applying the Large Lot Zone and Subdivision Variation Control over this zone to preserve a spacious coastal landscape character. These proposed provisions in the Plan Change are considered to embody the landscape character, amenity values and environmental qualities of the Whitford Precinct and will overall maintain and enhance these. Having regard to the precinct provisions and the aforementioned standards in particular, it is concluded that the Plan Change would generate effects in relation to such values that typically range from a low to moderate level.

Overall, therefore, it is my opinion that the Plan Change is consistent with and will maintain and enhance landscape character, amenity values and environmental quality values currently within the Whitford Sub-precinct B provisions.

7. Conclusions

Based on this assessment, I consider that:

- The landscape, natural character and amenity effects arising from the proposed Plan Change would be limited – typically of a low to moderate order – particularly once planting and revegetation within its reserves, buffer strips, streets and down the coastal escarpment, becomes more established.
- The proposal would be consistent with the relevant AUP/RPS and Whitford Sub-precinct B provisions. Although the current precinct provisions would be replaced by new provisions specific to Beachlands South, it appears that the proposed Plan Change would maintain the more significant values of the Beachlands area and the intent of the current objectives and policies applicable to Sub-precinct B.

On the basis of the foregoing assessment, including detailed review of Virtual View’s photo simulations and evaluation against relevant AUP provisions, it is my opinion the Beachlands South Plan Change proposal is appropriate in terms of its landscape, natural character and amenity effects.

Stephen Brown

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