



**KĀPITI COAST**  
**DISTRICT**  
**PLAN**  
**REVIEW**

**DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**  
**LANDSCAPE, CHARACTER**  
**AND HERITAGE**

The Council is reviewing the District Plan and invites you to  
have your say.

Be involved and help shape Kāpiti for future generations.

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## 1

# INTRODUCTION

This discussion paper is one of a set of papers which look at a range of sustainability issues that are important to consider during the District Plan Review process. The District Plan is Council's main regulatory tool for managing development, subdivision and land use.

By law, each provision of a District Plan has to be reviewed every 10 years. Much of the current District Plan hasn't been changed since it was completed in 1999.

Some of the thinking in the current Plan is now 15 years old, so it is also important to respond to new issues, opportunities and community direction.

Some of the principles underlying the Plan may remain the same but we also need to think about new pressures on the environment that have arisen or increased in the past decade.

It's also important to respond to "community vision" as expressed in the Community Plan and in Local Outcome Statements from communities such as Greater Ōtaki, Waikanae North, Otaihanga, Paraparaumu Beach, Paraparaumu Town Centre, Raumati Beach, Raumati South, and Paekākāriki.

The Review is carried out as one of Council's obligations under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), which has a focus on the sustainable management of natural and physical resources, and management of the effects of activities on the environment.

The intention of these papers is to ensure that the District Plan Review successfully converts a range of concerns and directions into RMA 'speak' without losing integrity.

The Council aims to have a District Plan Review that:

- Addresses implications of significant global issues (including climate change)
- Increases the ability of the community to deal with change, through resilience and innovation
- Reduces pressures on the natural environment and resources
- Increases the ability of people to work and live locally in a sustainable way
- Reduces pressure on people's day to day lives (e.g. cost of travel, noise); and
- Respects Kāpiti Coast culture

We have written this round of Discussion Papers to provide a sustainability framework for discussion and consultation on various aspects of the District Plan Review, and to stimulate discussion and feedback on some of the initial ideas being considered. Topics we have dealt with in this phase include:

1. Global Change: Issues and Pressures
2. Biodiversity
3. Natural Hazards and Managed Retreat
4. Food and Rural Productivity
5. Landscape, Character and Heritage
6. Infrastructure and Essential Systems
7. Urban Form and Transport

Readers are invited to complete the submission form at the end of the paper, supporting conclusions they agree with, as well as offering additional ideas and constructive feedback.

After feedback is received on these discussion documents the next steps in the District Plan Review process will be as follows:

- Publication of additional discussion documents including potential objectives and policies
- Production of the Draft District Plan for consultation, based on community feedback
- Notification of Proposed District Plan provisions for formal public submissions
- Submissions and Further Submissions under the RMA
- Hearings
- Council Decisions (providing some legal effect)
- Appeals to the Environment Court (if any)
- The new District Plan Provisions become Operative (with full legal effect)

**For more information on the District Plan Review visit: [www.Kapiticoast.govt.nz](http://www.Kapiticoast.govt.nz), particularly [www.Kapiticoast.govt.nz/DistrictPlanReview](http://www.Kapiticoast.govt.nz/DistrictPlanReview), where you can find the Scoping Discussion Document (March 2010).**



## 2

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper summarises the issues relating to the management of landscape, character and heritage in the Kāpiti Coast District, and considers the role of the District Plan in identifying, protecting and enhancing landscape, character and heritage values.

The Kāpiti Coast District's identity is closely associated with the coastal and escarpment landscapes which form the backdrop to the string of distinct low density urban townships. Each of the local townships has its own individual urban character which provides a distinct sense of place. Throughout the Kāpiti Coast there are a variety of heritage places which contribute significantly to the local character.

The landscape, character and heritage values in the Kāpiti Coast are coming under threat from development that is not sensitive to the existing landscape, character and heritage values, particularly in new urban expansion areas, infill residential areas and rural residential areas.

The current District Plan has some text in the objectives, policies and their explanations regarding the identification and protection of landscape, character and heritage values. The District Plan seeks to protect these values through the identification of outstanding landscapes and registered heritage items which are protected through District Plan provisions. More recent changes to the District Plan include provisions for specific features such as low density residential areas through average lot sizes, design guides and structure plans. The adverse effects of development activities on landscape, character and heritage values are also managed through District Plan provisions relating to the Waikanae North urban edge, infill development and rural subdivision, as well as regional and national policy statements.

This paper presents a number of proposed directions for consideration and discussion as part of the District Plan Review, with the aim of identifying, protecting and enhancing landscape, character and heritage values in the Kāpiti Coast District. These include:

- Identifying specific natural feature layers and important viewshafts, and protecting them from inappropriate development and land use
- Identifying and protecting special residential character areas to retain existing local character
- Identifying and protecting heritage sites, including heritage precincts, using a heritage protection hierarchy to strengthen heritage protection for natural heritage and wāhi tapu sites
- Enhancing visual and physical landscape access
- Protecting landscape and retain existing local character through feature-based provisions
- Strengthening character based rural subdivision provisions
- Providing for sustainable working landscapes



# 3

## ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND TRENDS

The Kāpiti Coast's identity is closely associated with the district's landscape, character and heritage values. Kāpiti Coast landscapes are identified by the natural coastal, riparian and ranges systems that extend through the district. These natural systems influence the way people use the landscape, influencing the district's string of town and village centres surrounded by low density suburbs, farm land and transport routes.

The character of development in the Kāpiti Coast is typified by the distinct villages and townships located on the coastal plain between the beach and the Tararua Ranges. Added to this, the Kāpiti Coast has a wealth of heritage places throughout the District, including places with natural, built, cultural, archaeological and geological heritage values.

This paper sets out the landscape, character and heritage values in the Kāpiti Coast, how they are currently managed and options for their future management.

### **What are landscape, character and heritage?**

**Landscape is the sum of geological and environmental processes overlaid by the wide range of human activities. Landscape is more commonly referred to as the natural (landform, ecology and water bodies) and human (land use, and development) features that form the visible landscape. Local Kāpiti Coast landscapes are an important local identifier for sense of place and are particularly defined by natural landscape features such as the coastal edge, swift flowing rivers, bush clad Tararua Ranges, coastal plains, bush remnants, wetlands, coastal escarpments and coastal hills.**

**Character is the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern natural (soil, landform) and/or human (settlement and development) elements which create a distinctive collective identity or sense of place. Character distinguishes one location from another, rather than it being better or worse. Character is generally considered at a smaller scale than landscape, in an urban context it may be considered at a neighbourhood level such as the low-key beach character of Waikanae Beach, or a single street. Urban character is significantly influenced by built form and development. In the Kāpiti Coast the key elements that contribute to urban character are land use, development age, landform, vegetation and built form.**

**Heritage is the natural and physical resources that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand's history and cultures, including archaeological, architectural, cultural, historic, scientific and technological qualities. Examples of local heritage places in the Kāpiti Coast include natural heritage sites such as Hemi Matenga Reserve and cultural heritage sites such as Pukekaraka Presbytery in Ōtaki. Places of heritage value contribute to the character and landscape values of a place.**

## What is the value of landscape, character and heritage?

Landscape values are comprised of a variety of factors which can be difficult to define as different people, groups and cultures, identify different values and place different levels of importance on them. These factors can include aesthetic, amenity and scenic values which contribute to the pleasantness of a place and provide a landscape or character identity and sense of place. For example, many Kāpiti Coast residents place a high value on the view of Kāpiti Island when entering the District from the south along State Highway One for its scenic value, and it is a key identifier that you have arrived in the Kāpiti Coast District – Kāpiti Island does not provide this same immediate sense of place when entering the district from the north.

Heritage is inherited from a previous time and can be expressed in terms of cultural and natural values. The cultural values, especially for tangata whenua, of landscape and their contribution to the character of a locality, can be clearly identified within and across landscapes. These values vary across the Kāpiti Coast District depending on the specific cultural context and relevant iwi. The value of natural landscapes and character is evident in the Kāpiti Coast through the distinctive landforms, ecological diversity and other natural resources in the coastal plains and Tararua Ranges.

## Kāpiti Coast: landscape, character and heritage issues

Landscape, character and heritage values are important to people living on the Kāpiti Coast as many people choose to live in the district for lifestyle reasons. These values are significantly impacted, both positively and negatively, by land use change and development whether it is an individual development or the cumulative effects of many developments. Significant issues relating to the protection and enhancement of landscape, character and heritage values in the Kāpiti Coast include:

### Protection of highly visible and sensitive landscapes:

The siting and scale of development can significantly impact the quality and coherence of a landscape. In particular, development on highly visible landscapes can have significant a visual impact beyond the immediately locality. Land use, development and subdivision in areas such as steep lands and coastal dunes need to be carefully managed or avoided to prevent negative effects beyond the development site. Landscape edges are also particularly sensitive to the effects of development and development needs to fit in with the landscape rather than stand out. Also, some sensitive landscapes can only absorb so much development so it is inappropriate to develop beyond this capacity.

### Cumulative impact of individual developments

**on landscape and character:** Many developments undertaken across the Kāpiti Coast only have minor effects on the character and landscape; however as further development occurs there is a gradual change in the landscape or character which results in an overall adverse impact on the landscape and character value. This occurs incrementally over an extended period and often as the result of numerous developments rather than as the result of one large development. As a result of the cumulative adverse effects there is a loss of the district's landscape and character values. The loss of natural features such as the Kāpiti Coast's undulating dune landforms and native vegetation are two distinctive examples of irreversible loss of landscape and character values as a result of the cumulative effects of built development which does not take these features into account.

Collectively, individual developments and subdivisions have a contributory impact on the character or landscape in a locality and it is important for this to be considered and ensure that it is a positive impact.

### Limited physical and visual access to landscapes:

The importance of public access to valued landscapes and landscape features to the Kāpiti Coast community is evident by the many walkways, bridleway, cycle ways, viewing points and beach accessways throughout the Kāpiti Coast. The provision of public access to landscapes as a public resource is also an equity issue. Insufficient development setbacks, lack of open space provision and impermeable development and subdivisions limit the physical and visual access provided to landscape features such as the coast and rivers. This needs to be balanced with restricting access to avoid damage landscape features, for example; unrestricted access to coastal dunes may result in damage to native vegetation.

There are many important views and viewshafts of landscapes within the Kāpiti Coast District. This is epitomised by Kāpiti Island which can be seen from many public locations throughout the district. The





quality of a viewshafts is affected by the topography of a landscape and various features of development, including the height, permeability, scale and location within a landscape. The low density urban form of most settlements in the Kāpiti Coast has protected the views to the ranges and Kāpiti Island that frame the urban areas of the Kāpiti Coast.

**Insensitive subdivision patterns and density:** The density and patterns of many historical subdivisions do not reflect the shape of the landform on which they are situated. For example, rural residential subdivisions layouts should reflect landform character and the open space of the rural landscape, such as clustered allotments which preserve the open space rural character of the rural environment, although the individual allotments are at a higher density. Subdivision patterns determine the location of buildings and planting and therefore are a key determinant of whether the eventual development is consistent with the landscape and local character.

**Promotion of sustainable working landscapes:** Landscape, character and heritage issues are not necessarily in conflict with the preservation of rural productive potential. Instead, landscape, character and heritage issues should be considered in conjunction with rural productivity when considering the use of rural lands. The values of rural amenity and character are often correlated with the primary production use of the land. Landscape, character and heritage issues and impacts should be considered in conjunction with the retention of the productive potential of rural land and use for sustainable activities, including food production, ecological regeneration and, where suitable, energy generation. Rural production can be considered as contributing to landscape, character and heritage values, and likewise, energy production may be considered to be a positive value that can contribute to the a landscape and not at odds with existing landscape values.

**Protection of special character areas:** There are several areas in the District where the residents value the existing streetscape character and apparent density of the neighbourhood as it makes a significant contribution to the neighbourhood amenity. There is a concern that new development in these areas will result in a loss of local identity and sense of place, if undertaken in a way that is not consistent or respectful of the existing characteristics. In these areas the community has requested that development be controlled to protect the character of these areas.

The Council is currently undertaking an urban character assessment in Raumati, Paekākāriki and Ōtaki to identify the distinctive characteristics that contribute to the urban character of the areas. The current District Plan does not specifically protect the special characteristics of these areas and there is a risk that inappropriate development may result in the loss of valued neighbourhood character.

**Insensitive infill development:** New development within an existing neighbourhood can positively contribute to the urban character of an area, for example the Paraparaumu Beach Town Centre upgrade re-enforces a cohesive town centre. However, infill development that does not fit in with the existing locality can adversely affect the urban character of a neighbourhood. Examples of development that is inconsistent with the surrounding streetscape include poorly sited dwellings, high fences in a street characterised by low front fences, garages located forward of dwellings, extensive earthworks and native vegetation clearance. These can all adversely affect a neighbourhood's character and sense of place.



**Urban indigenous vegetation clearance:** The urban character of many Kāpiti Coast communities is closely associated with the extensive areas of urban vegetation. The urban vegetation throughout the Kāpiti Coast includes planted indigenous and introduced landscaping and indigenous bush remnants on residential lots and urban reserves, including along streams and as part of wetlands.

Many Kāpiti Coast communities value the contribution of vegetation on public and private land to a healthy and pleasant living environment in urban areas. Similarly, vegetation in the Kāpiti Coast's rural areas is an important element contributing to the rural landscape, character and natural heritage. Insensitive development can lead to vegetation clearance which compromises the distinctive urban character. Urban vegetation has a role in screening development which would otherwise have a significant visual impact on the character of an area. Rural and urban vegetation also has an important ecological biodiversity function which is further discussed in the Biodiversity Discussion Paper.



**Loss of distinctive landform:** Many of Kāpiti Coast's residential areas are located in the coastal dune areas. Where the undulating dune landform has been retained, for example in Raumati South, it forms a valued contribution to urban character. This distinctive landform can be adversely impacted by earthworks undertaken for new subdivisions and individual residential building developments which contribute to the alteration of the character of the area over time.

**Subdivision of heritage places and their surroundings:** The heritage value of a site or building (and its setting and curtilage) can be significantly impacted by changes in the surroundings such as new adjoining development, increased density, change in land use or fragmented landownership. In particular these activities can affect the setting and curtilage of a heritage place. For example, a subdivided ecological site will be managed differently by the different owners, which may impact the site's ecological values.

As subdivision is often a precursor or catalyst to these activities and significantly moulds the way these activities are undertaken, a heritage place is indirectly impacted by subdivision. However, with the exception of historic buildings, the subdivision of land is not required in the District Plan to take into account heritage places and their surroundings.



# INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

In 1984 New Zealand ratified the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972. Under the Convention, the World Heritage List comprises properties outstanding universal cultural heritage and natural heritage value. The World Heritage List lists three sites in New Zealand. There are no world heritage places within the Kāpiti Coast but there are places of national, regional and local value and importance.

More specific to New Zealand the *International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value* sets out principles to guide the conservation of places of cultural heritage value in New Zealand.

## Resource Management Act (RMA)

The national mandate for action for landscape, character and heritage protection and enhancement in the District Plan comes from the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) which is the primary act for land management in New Zealand. The RMA identifies the following topics as matters of national importance:

- the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development
- the protection of outstanding features and landscapes
- the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use and development; and
- the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites as a matter of national importance

The Resource Management Act also states that the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values should also be regarded in managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources

## New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS)

The mandate for the protection of the natural features and landscapes in the coastal environment is strengthened by the operative and proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement policies to identify and protect areas of scenic, recreational, historic, spiritual, cultural, scientific and landscape value; and maintain and enhance amenity values.

## Regional Policy Statement

The Regional Policy Statement proposed by Greater Wellington Regional Council addresses the identification and protection of landscape and natural character and heritage. The May 2010 decision version, which is amended in response to submissions, sets out objectives and policies relating to landscape, character and heritage to:

- protect natural and cultural features in coastal environments
- restore degraded natural character in coastal environment
- maintain access to the coast and rivers
- identify and protect heritage sites and features, outstanding landscapes and natural features
- identify and protect outstanding natural features and landscapes
- identify and protect significant amenity landscapes
- avoid impacts on the cultural relationship of Maori with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga

Many of the policies require local councils to adopt the policies through their District Plan to identify and protect the above matters. The proposed Regional Policy Statement objectives and policies are currently in the appeals process but have some weight alongside the operative 1995 Regional Policy Statement, which includes policies on landscape and heritage intended to protect those values.

## Development Management Strategy

The Council's Development Management Strategy was developed in conjunction with the community outcomes and local outcomes processes developed from 2003-2006. It sets an approach for future development and urban expansion to be shaped by the Kāpiti Coast's sensitive landscape. The Development Management Strategy outlines the Kāpiti Coast's key landscape values:

- places and landforms that embody ancestors and whakapapa and are tapu for tāngata whenua
- considerations of natural beauty and character
- the concept of sustainable landscapes where biodiversity, renewable energy and food production are essential elements

The Development Management Strategy seeks development in the District to be guided by the natural landscape by protecting specific landscape values and features. The District Plan Review should be guided by the following policies set out in the Development Management Strategy that development should:

- be fundamentally shaped by the key landform elements of the District of dunes, inter-dune wetlands, rivers and streams, escarpment and coastal hills and remnant native forest and ecological sites
- retain stream and river corridors, including stream and river mouths and estuaries as major features of any developed area
- enable restoration of riparian vegetation to create corridors between the coast and the coastal hills
- protect remaining coastal dunes within the existing urban areas
- retain and protect coastal dunes and wetlands within the wider rural areas
- protect the landscape values of the coastal hills and escarpment
- retain and protect remnant stands of native forest



### Current District Plan

The operative District Plan outlines the objectives for the management of landscape, character and heritage issues and values in the Kāpiti Coast District. There are specific objectives for landscape and heritage in sections C.8 Heritage and C.10 Landscape of the District Plan respectively. These objectives focus on identification and protection of outstanding landscapes and heritage features. There are further objectives and policies for landscape protection in C.2 Rural Zone.

There are no specific objectives for character protection in the District Plan but character is mentioned in C.1 Residential Zone, C.3 Commercial/Retail Zone, C.4 Paraparaumu Town Centre Zone, C.5 Industrial/Service Zone and C.7 Subdivision and Development objectives and policies.

The District Plan policies and objectives set a basic level of identification and protection of landscape, character and heritage; however, this can be strengthened to ensure the District Plan protects the valued aspects of the landscape, character and heritage, in accordance with the legislative context and the Development Management Strategy. The District Plan rules and standards to achieve the landscape, character and heritage protection require review to be more specific and ensure the objectives are effectively achieved.

The operative District Plan includes some specific provisions that protect some areas of high landscape value and some selected landscape features through the following provisions:

- **Rural Zone policy areas:** There are 3 policy areas identified within the Rural Zone and are based on the dominant coastal dunes, alluvial plains and hill country landscape features. The policy areas set specific requirements for the density and pattern of rural subdivision to ensure subdivision is appropriate to the landscape features.

- **Outstanding landscape areas:** The areas identified as outstanding landscapes include many highly visible and sensitive landscape features such as escarpments, ridgelines, fore dunes and riparian environments. The District Plan requires resource consent for farm tracks, masts and windmills in the outstanding landscape areas in the Rural Zone.
- **Protection of landform and viewshafts in the Paraparaumu Town Centre:** The Paraparaumu Town Centre Zone has policies relating to the protection of the “characteristic sand dune forms that make the coastal landscape of the town centre” and maximising opportunities for views to Kāpiti Island. The standards also require buildings to be “located so as to minimise adverse impacts resulting from change to the natural landform; and to maximize opportunities for views of Kāpiti Island for users”.
- **Retention of natural landform:** The District Plan provisions aim to manage the effects of earthworks on natural landforms, particularly for earthworks undertaken on high slopes, near water bodies or impacting wāhi tapu sites.
- **Limitation of impacts of extractive industries:** The District Plan provisions limit the visual amenity impact of extractive industries, such as quarrying, by requiring site landscaping and limiting visibility from the Residential Zone and State Highway One.



## Kāpiti Coast District Council Rural Subdivision Guide

The Kāpiti Coast District Council Rural Subdivision Guide was published in 2009. The overall vision of this guide is to encourage best practice subdivision design to help ensure the qualities of the Kāpiti Coast rural area are maintained and enhanced.

The guide identifies the following types of rural sites with characteristics better able to absorb development, including:

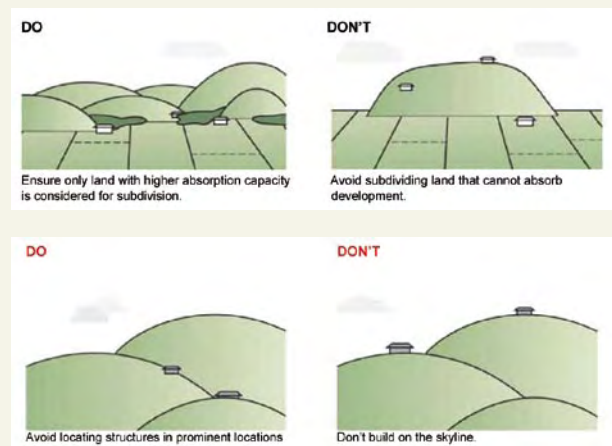
- flat areas, lower spurs, terraces, toe of hill slopes
- areas of low visibility and/or large numbers of trees and vegetation
- mixed use landscapes
- areas where productive land use is marginal
- areas where there is existing development and community amenities
- areas where there are existing transportation connections
- areas that can accommodate on-site water collection, stormwater, grey water and waste water treatment or have easy access to existing infrastructure

*Source: Rural Subdivision Design Guide,  
Kāpiti Coast District Council*

The guide also identifies characteristics of rural land that is less able to accommodate or absorb development, including:

- landmark sites
- highly visible sites i.e. dune tops and ridgelines
- steep slopes requiring prominent earthworks
- areas recognised as having special significance; cultural, historical or ecological
- open, simple landscapes of undeveloped character
- areas with the potential for productive land use and high quality soils
- sites traversed by major overhead and underground services infrastructure

The design guide is particularly useful for subdivision designers, architects and builders planning to undertake development in the rural areas of the Kāpiti Coast.



The importance of the Kāpiti Coast's distinctive urban character is a theme throughout the Operative District Plan, however there is very limited use of area-specific provisions to identify local features or special character areas. In the 10 years since the current District Plan became operative, it has become clear that the eight original zones (Residential, Rural, Commercial/Retail, Paraparaumu Town Centre, Industrial Service, Open Space, River Corridor and Conservation Zones) do not fully recognise the diversity of character within and specific to, the communities that make up the Kāpiti

Coast District. While the District Plan provides a level of consistency across the District in terms of subdivision requirements it is recognised that not all environmental effects are managed by uniform controls.

The current District Plan includes some place based provisions which address the specific character or desired character of an area, such as the medium density housing areas, Lupin Road, Pekawy, Ferndale and Panorama Drive Low Density Residential Housing areas, Peka Peka North Rural Residential Area, and Waikanae Garden Area.

The local outcome statements, developed as part of the Kāpiti Coast: Choosing Futures process, across the district identify unique local characteristics for each settlement. However, these values are not identified in the District Plan, which is rather limited on the protection and guidance given to retaining these unique and area-specific urban and rural characteristics.

The Council has begun addressing urban character through recent plan changes such as Proposed Plan Change 77 – Ōtaki Density Review. Proposed Plan Change 77 will assist to retain the low density character of Ōtaki while also providing for some flexibility in subdivision size and housing choice. This is consistent with the Council’s approach to future urban development, outlined in the Development Management Strategy, through targeted urban expansion and infill development and is consistent with the desire to retain the existing Kāpiti Coast characteristics in the rural and distinct urban areas.

## **Plan Change 77 – Ōtaki Density Review**

**In recent years the changing rate and type of development in Ōtaki has impacted the existing low density character of Ōtaki.**

**The Ōtaki community highly values the low density character of the town and has expressed a desire to maintain the community’s character. Proposed Plan Change 77 is intended to protect the erosion of Ōtaki’s low density character.**

**The operative District Plan typically allows a residential section size of 450m<sup>2</sup>, with a higher density allowed to 350m<sup>2</sup> per section in certain conditions. These sections are significantly smaller than the average Ōtaki lot size. Therefore, there is a potential risk that residential development allowed under the District Plan could alter the existing low density character of Ōtaki.**

**Proposed Plan Change 77 will provide the ability to create smaller lots (relatively easily) in areas close to the commercial areas and in the remaining areas of Ōtaki maintain a 700m<sup>2</sup> average lot size to allow for a range of allotment sizes while maintaining the existing low density character. Proposed Plan Change 77 was notified in 2008 and is currently awaiting the recommendations of the Hearing Commissioners.**

The District Plan identifies heritage places on the District Plan heritage register which are sorted into the following categories:

- historic buildings (116 items)
- natural heritage, comprising ecological sites (141 items) and significant trees (110 items)
- wāhi tapu (4 sites)
- geological sites (12 sites)
- archaeological sites (150 sites)
- national and regional rare and threatened species (18 species)

The subdivision of properties with historic buildings must consider the impact on the heritage values, however the subdivision of lots with other listed heritage values such as ecological sites or wāhi tapu do not require the impact on heritage values to be considered. The modification or demolition of heritage features is a discretionary activity and the demolition of Class 1 New Zealand Historic Places Trust sites is prohibited. There are exclusions to the protection of heritage vegetation in plantation forestry lots.

The Council has also developed a series of design guides which promote best practice development in the Kāpiti Coast. These design guides are not incorporated in the District Plan. The design guides that address landscape, character and heritage issues include the Rural Subdivision Design Guide, Best Practice Subdivision Guide, Streetscape Strategy and Guideline and Paekakariki Town Centre Design Guide.



## **How is the protection of wāhi tapu happening in practice in the Kāpiti Coast?**

The District Plan identifies wāhi tapu and other archaeological sites in the Kāpiti Coast District. The most obvious risk to these sites is at the time land is developed for subdivisions, new roads and building sites as these activities often require earthworks. Council has developed a proactive approach to avoiding or mitigating any damage to cultural sites in the assessment of any earthworks consent, including:

- Regularly meeting with iwi representatives to discuss resource consents for earthworks and other developments.
- Placing standard conditions on all resource consents for earthworks which prescribe the actions developers must undertake if a wāhi tapu or other cultural site is unearthed during earthworks to prevent further damage of the site.
- Where considered necessary, requiring an archaeological assessment and report before any earthworks commence on site.

**The Council also monitors all subdivision and earthworks consents to make sure the conditions are being complied with and that the work is proceeding according to plan. If a landowner or developer undertakes earthworks without resource consent the Council can initiate enforcement actions, and in the event of a cultural site being uncovered or damaged, the Historic Places Trust has authority to initiate proceedings under the Historic Places Act 1993.**

**To further the existing actions Council undertakes to protect wāhi tapu, Council is also undertaking further research on wāhi tapu sites in the Kāpiti Coast in conjunction with iwi.**

## **2003-2008 Heritage Register statistics**

The following statistics outline resource consents issued by Kāpiti Coast District Council between 2003-2008 relating to Heritage Register matters

- 27 resource consents were approved for the removal of indigenous trees
- 5 resource consents were approved for the removal or modification of Heritage Register listed significant trees or ecological sites
- 3 trees were 'delisted' from their status as a significant tree in the Heritage Register
- 7 resource consents were approved for the minor alteration, restoration or relocation of Heritage Register listed historic buildings
- No resource consents were issued for the demolition of a historic building in the Heritage Register
- No buildings were 'delisted' from their status in the Heritage Register as historic buildings

## **Recommended approaches for the District Plan**

There are numerous ways in which the District Plan could address landscape, character and heritage issues to protect and enhance the Kāpiti Coast District's landscape, character and heritage values. The following approaches consider ways these issues could be addressed in the District Plan:

### **Identification of landscape, character and heritage:**

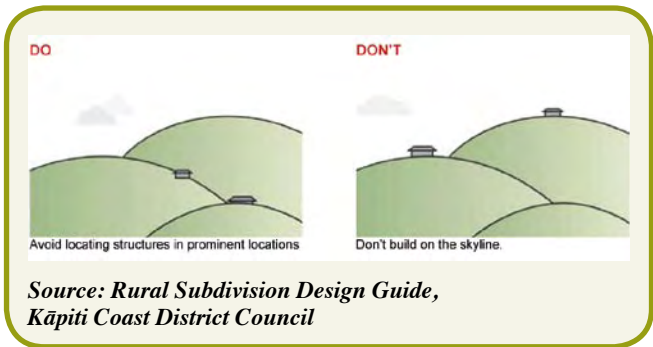
The clear and adequate identification of landscape, character and heritage values in the District Plan is critical to enable the protection of these values from inappropriate development. If these features are not identified they cannot be protected. Key landscape, character and heritage features to consider for identification are as follows:

- Outstanding natural landscapes and features
- Significant amenity landscapes
- Viewshafts
- Special character areas
- Heritage precincts
- Wāhi tapu
- Natural heritage



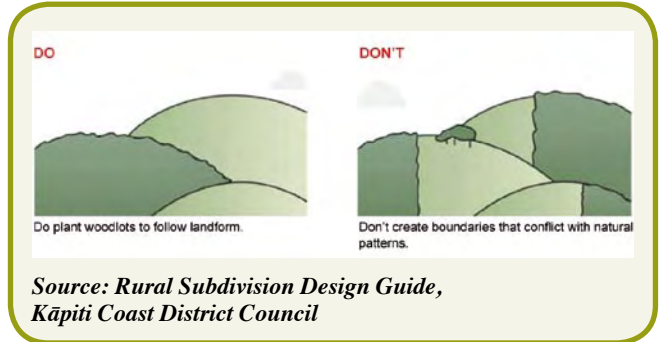
**Natural landscape feature layers:** Although the operative District Plan identifies an outstanding landscape layer, individual landscapes and features are not specifically identified, and there is no explanation of the factors that make these landscapes outstanding. As a result the provisions associated with the outstanding landscape layer do not specifically address the valued elements of the landscape. This is important to include in the District Plan as the values will be different depending on the specific identified landscape features, such as steplands, wetlands, dunes, etc.

Specific natural landscape features should be identified in accordance with the factors for identifying outstanding landscape and features and significant amenity landscapes specified in the proposed Wellington Regional Policy Statement. The specific layers would identify sensitive and highly visible landscape features to provide for a more precise level of protection which targets the specific landscape values. When identifying the specific landscape features, the specific values should determine how they are identified.

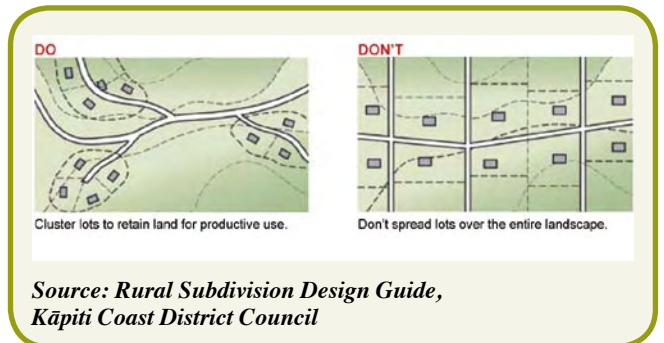


**Protect identified landscape features from inappropriate subdivision and land use:** The value of landscape features area impacted by subdivision scale, location, density, pattern, land use and associated development. There are a number of resources that should be included in the District Plan to ensure subdivision and development does not result in negative impacts on landscape values.

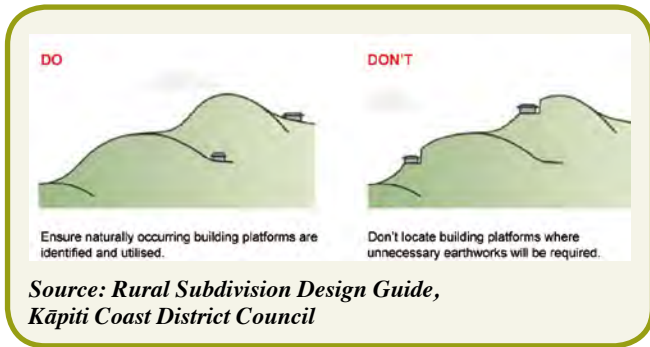
- Strengthen existing provisions which require subdivision and development to take into account the natural landform (i.e. rivers, floodplains) and landform processes (i.e. flooding and erosion). In order for built form to follow the natural landform the District Plan may need to provide greater flexibility in some District Plan provisions to allow buildings to be designed appropriately around the existing landform in urban and rural areas and still meet the needs of the building users.



- Provisions to be strengthened may include the Plan Change 79 Eco-Hamlet Area provisions to ensure that the location of balance lots, including open space, in rural residential cluster developments retains the most sensitive landscape features, for example retaining dominant dunes and ridgelines as relatively open and undeveloped features.



- Consider allowing average (not just minimum) lot sizes for subdivisions to provide for the generally low density characteristics of the Kāpiti Coast and provide housing choice through housing diversity to meet the varied needs of the population in new and existing urban areas.
- Require development to be sympathetically located and scaled in sensitive and highly visible landscapes. For example identify no build areas at subdivision stage so dwellings are located away from high gradients and ridgelines and screened to minimise the impact on visible ridgelines.



- Set development buffers around sensitive and highly visible landscape features, for example riparian environments and ridgelines, so that buildings must be suitably located.

**Retain existing local character by identifying and protecting special residential character areas:**

The District Plan should identify special residential character areas based on the specific characteristics that contribute to the special character of an area and implement provisions which seek to retain the existing characteristics of the area. The application of specific provisions to identified places and areas would protect the identified character features of special character areas valued by residents, such as those in Paekākāriki, Raumati and Ōtaki currently being assessed.

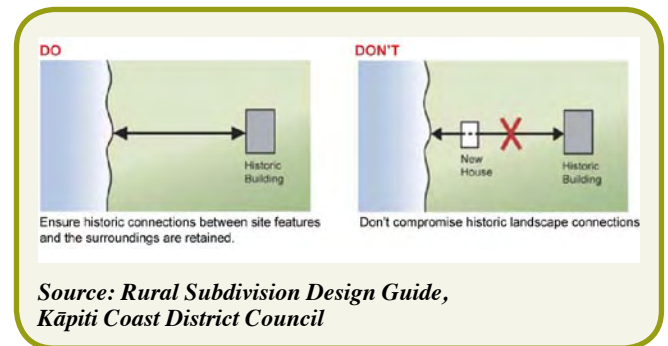


**Identify and protect important viewshafts:**

Viewshafts are not currently identified and protected from inappropriate development in the District Plan. Impacts of development on important viewshafts could be managed through height limits, boundary setbacks, careful siting of buildings and the provision of open space. Important viewshafts to be considered for protect include specific views to Kāpiti Island and the Tararua Ranges from key public locations.

**Identification and protection of heritage values:** The Heritage Register is an efficient way to identify heritage places and variety of heritage values in the Kāpiti Coast. The following revisions and additions to the Heritage Register should be considered to ensure the full range of heritage values are appropriately identified in the Kāpiti Coast:

- Identify heritage precincts which contain related groups of historic sites and buildings that contribute towards an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand's history and cultures. Heritage precincts would ensure the important relationships between specific listed heritage items are not damaged by inappropriate development. An example of a potential heritage precinct is the Pukekaraka Presbytery and surrounding heritage places. Heritage precincts should include the curtilage and setting of the related heritage places. A heritage precinct could also contain more than one of the heritage categories identified in the Heritage Register.
- Individually identify significant urban trees (and groups of trees) as natural heritage items in the Heritage Register to ensure the continued and ongoing protection of important trees in the Kāpiti Coast urban environments and consistency with recent RMA changes. This also acknowledges the role that native vegetation contributes to local urban character.
- Include additional ecological sites in the District Plan to ensure significant bush remnants in the Kāpiti Coast District are afforded sufficient protection of their natural heritage and ecological values.
- Include additional wāhi tapu site information based on research undertaken in conjunction with iwi



**Promote and enhance public landscape access:**

Physical and visual access to important landscape features could be addressed in the District Plan through a number of approaches. To retain important public views the District Plan should limit development at prominent locations to protect public viewshafts of key landscape features. This could be done through the careful siting of open space and road infrastructure in subdivision design and the appropriate siting, location and design of development on or near sensitive locations. This approach could also include requiring appropriate access to natural landscapes (e.g. rivers and the coast) by strengthening requirements for developments and subdivisions to be permeable and provide access connections through subdivisions to adjoining land and landscape features.

**Protect specific landscape and character features from the cumulative effects of individual developments:** The loss of the District's landscape and character values as a result of the cumulative impacts of development can be prevented by the proactive protection of specific land and character features from development. Ways the District Plan can protect landscape and character features from cumulative effects of development include:

- Tightening the District Plan earthworks provisions and providing greater flexibility for setbacks to prevent the loss of local identity, landscape legibility and permeability.
- Consider using built/plot ratios, relating maximum height limits to surrounding properties and other design based approaches to ensure development is consistent with the existing streetscape and neighbourhood character
- Limit the perceived encroachment of development into the public realm.
- Require active dwelling frontages, consistent with CPTED principles, to maintain and improve streetscape amenity. This may include requiring dwelling garages to be set back behind main entrances or limiting high solid fences to provide street surveillance.
- Strengthen the native vegetation protection provisions and landscape planting requirements to retain existing vegetated urban areas

So that provisions do not place an undue burden on home builders it is important to provide a level of flexibility as well as tightening certain provisions to protect landscape and character features. For example, if garages on new houses are required to be set back from the street further than the front door, a reduced building street setback may be considered acceptable for living areas.

**Protect heritage values from insensitive subdivision design:** The District Plan provisions should protect heritage items from the effects of poor subdivision design and discourage the further subdivision of properties with listed Heritage Register items if it will result in a negative impact of the heritage value. For nationally important heritage places (Class I and Class II NZHPT sites) subdivision of neighbouring properties should consider the impact on the heritage item.



**Provide for sustainable working landscapes:** The protection of the productive potential of rural land for food and energy production in the District Plan should be in harmony with consideration of the landscape and character values of rural areas. This includes the contribution of working primary production to landscape and rural character value. The *Food and Rural Productivity* discussion paper discusses in detail how the Kāpiti Coast District food production capacity can be strengthened.



**Use design guides as a regulatory tool:** Kāpiti Coast District Council has published a number of design guides which promote development in a manner that is sensitive to landscape, character and heritage values. The concepts set out in the design guides should be strengthened through the inclusion in the Subdivision and Development Principles and Requirements and District Plan provisions, where appropriate.

**Review the District Plan signage standards to consider character and heritage:** Advertising and signage can significantly impact on heritage values. It is important that signage and advertising is designed and located in a way that does not undermine the heritage values or the local character. The District Plan should include specific standards for signage associated with special character areas and Heritage Register items.

**Strengthen the heritage identification and protection hierarchy:** The District Plan has a basic hierarchical approach to heritage identification and protection to heritage management in the Kāpiti Coast. This should be strengthened to ensure the level of heritage protection is appropriate to the heritage feature, its values and the activity proposed. A hierarchy of control for heritage modification needs to be clear that minor alterations are the most acceptable in the spectrum of changes (change of use, subdivision, major alterations or additions, relocation, and demolition), with demolition the least acceptable. These should include provisions that specifically relate to the relocation and demolition of all heritage features, not just heritage buildings. This would also involve adding District Plan provisions to protect wāhi tapu, geological and archaeological sites based on recent research and using the protection hierarchy principles.

# 6 CONCLUSION

Local landscape, character and heritage values are an important part of the Kāpiti Coast and contribute to the identity of the local communities. The development of the Kāpiti Coast affects the local landscape, character and heritage values. The proposed approach in the District Plan Review is to build on and strengthen the Council’s existing policies relating to the identification and management of landscape, character and heritage values to ensure their protection and enhancement. In brief, these policies will:

- Protect identified landscape features from inappropriate subdivision and land use
- Identify and protect special residential character areas
- Protect important viewshafts

- Enhance public landscape access
- Protect specific landscape and character features from the cumulative effects of individual developments
- Protect heritage values from insensitive subdivision design
- Provide for sustainable working landscapes

Some of the new ideas listed in the previous section can potentially provide the strengthened approach in the District Plan that will see the above policies embedded more fully in an RMA framework.

The table below summarises the elements of the proposed approach for the District Plan Review.

|   | 1  | 2   | 3  | 4  | 5  |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Possible new concepts</b>                  | Identify and protect natural landscape feature layers, including view shafts                         | Identify and protect special character areas  | Address the cumulative effects of development and subdivision on landscape and character | Identify heritage item curtilage and heritage precincts                | Include heritage and character based signage standards |
| <b>Concepts to continue and/or Strengthen</b> | Build on the existing heritage protection hierarchy for subdivision and development                  | Update the Heritage Register with new information and research                                  | Strengthen provisions to enhance access to landscapes                                    | Incorporate landscape and character design guides in the District Plan | Retain a high level of natural heritage protection     |
| <b>Barriers to Remove</b>                     | Revise generic zoning which does not recognise landscape, character and heritage features and values | Provide flexible provisions where required to retain important landscape and character features | Enhance flexibility for working sustainable landscapes                                   |  |  |

## REFERENCES

Kāpiti Coast District Council

<http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz>

Development Management Strategy

<http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Documents/Downloads/KCDC-Development-Management-Strategy.pdf>

Operative District Plan 1999

<http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Planning/District-Planning/District-Plan1/>

Local Outcome Statements

<http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Planning/Community-Plan/Local-Outcomes/>

Development and Subdivision Principles and Requirements

<http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Documents/Downloads/Subdivision-and-Development-Principles-and-Requirements.pdf>

Rural Subdivision Design Guide

<http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Documents/Downloads/Rural-Subdivision-Design-Guide.pdf>

Best Practice Subdivision and Development Guide

<http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Documents/Downloads/Best-Practice-Subdivision-and-Development-Guide.pdf>

Streetscape Strategy and Guideline

<http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Documents/Downloads/Streetscape-Strategy-and-Guidelines.pdf>

Ministry for the Environment

<http://www.mfe.govt.nz>

The World Heritage Convention

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>

New Zealand Historic Places Trust

<http://www.historic.org.nz>

International Council on Monuments and Sites

<http://www.icomos.org/>

ICOMOS New Zealand Charter

<http://www.icomos.org.nz/nzcharters.html>

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/conservation/marine-and-coastal/coastal-management/nz-coastal-policy-statement.pdf>

Greater Wellington Regional Council

<http://www.gw.govt.nz/>

Operative Regional Policy Statement

[http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/importedfiles/1566\\_regionalpolicyst\\_s3033.pdf](http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/importedfiles/1566_regionalpolicyst_s3033.pdf)

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