

Oratia and Waiatarua Community Consultation Report

*A summary of Local Area Plan consultation with the Oratia and
Waiatarua communities – October 2008 to June 2009*

31 July 2009
Version 1



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 (the Act) provides for the Council to determine for itself the process of developing a Local Area Plan (LAP). Section 26 states:

In preparing, amending, revoking, or replacing a LAP, the territorial authority concerned may decide for itself the process that it uses but, in doing so, it must—

- (a) ensure that the process encourages interested or affected persons to participate in and contribute to the LAPs preparation, amendment, revocation, or replacement; and*
- (b) comply with the principles of consultation in section 82 of the Local Government Act 2002; and*
- (c) if the LAP is for a local area that is adjacent to or includes a part of the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park, have regard to the current management plan for the Park prepared under section 19; and*
- (d) consult with tangata whenua, namely Ngati Whatua and Te Kawerau A Maki*

On 4 August and 7 September 2008 the Council's Policy and Strategy Committee resolved to adopt an approach of community engagement in the development of the LAP through a community enquiry workshop process. Key aspects of the engagement with the community included:

- i. Identification of the local area and its boundaries.
- ii. Identifying heritage features valued by the community.
- iii. Identification of local amenity and potential opportunities and threats to those heritage features and that amenity.
- iv. Imagining a vision of the future of the area, including accommodating different perspectives.
- v. Identification of methods to achieve that future vision.

From November 2008 Council staff undertook a series of meetings and workshops with members of the Oratia and Waiatarua communities and interested organisations. This report provides a summary of those conversations and outlines key matters raised by participants. Detailed information is provided on the main workshops and meetings held in November 2008, February 2009, March 2009, May 2009 reporting to the residents and ratepayers associations and the May 2009 Hui, along with a summary of other meetings and discussions that occurred. Information was also distributed using newsletters, letters and the Council's website.

Feedback was received from participants on the boundaries for the LAP. This is described in the accompanying Boundary Report.

2.0 COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

2.1 Community Meeting and Open Day – 19 November 2008

A community open day and meeting was held on 19 November 2008. An invitation to attend was sent to 1400 households in the Oratia and Waiatarua area. More than 70 members of the community attended. Dave Harre, local historian and guardian of the Oratia Folk Museum, spoke about the history of the area followed by Dr Morgan Williams, former Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, who discussed how communities can live within 'cherished' landscapes sustainably without compromising the qualities that attracted them there in the first place. Dr Graeme Campbell, Waitakere City Council's Director of Strategic Planning, emphasised the need to put people at the centre of thinking and to think long-term, in generations rather than in years.

This workshop provided a chance for Council to listen to residents about the kind of future character and amenity they wanted for Oratia. The focus was on gathering ideas about the way the community looks and feels. Discussions were framed around four key questions:

- what do you like about the area?
- what do you dislike about the area?
- what would you like see change?
- what would you like the area to look and feel like in 50 years?

Participants described the area as spacious, quiet, slow, peaceful, idyllic, walk-able, connected but that is also accessible (in the figurative sense), attainable and knowable.

Participants also said they value and enjoy:

- The natural environment and its biodiversity
- Its open spaces and views
- Its diverse landscapes of bush, fields, orchards and vineyards
- Its contrasts between urban Auckland, rural areas and the bush
- Its proximity to urban services, the ranges and the beaches, yet its remoteness from these as well
- Its strong sense of community, knowing your neighbours, of looking after each other
- The area's innovative spirit, history and culture
- Opportunities to work from home.
- Community infrastructure (the school, hall)
- Village atmosphere

Participants also identified those things they dislike including:

- Abandoned orchards
- Weed infestation, animal pests, streams and roadsides full of rubbish
- A lack of footpaths and road safety with speeding cars
- Limited access to public transport
- Too many restrictions and uncertainty about planning controls, the costs of consents
- Inability to establish and grow rural businesses
- There are contrasting views on creeping subdivision and whether there are enough subdivision opportunities
- Lack of a range of housing opportunities, including for retirement
- Urbanisation of the area through poorly designed buildings, houses and concrete driveways
- No intermediate or high school
- No focal point
- Unrecognised community boundaries

Participants identified a number of matters that they would like to see change including:

- Restoration of the environment, including removal of pests, weeds and maintenance of stream margins.
- Recognition of a diversity of landscapes, the value of permanent crops and vegetation types in planting schemes.
- Provision of small scale public transport
- Better walking facilities including trails, cycleways and footpaths
- Improved road safety
- More quality rural design and innovation, as well as protection of heritage and historic buildings
- Stronger branding of the areas
- Opportunities for boutique businesses including a cider house, café, art store, wine bars, orchards revitalised
- Strong village and neighbourhood centres
- Less red tape, reduce expense of planning process
- Better long-term planning

2.2 Waiatarua Community Meeting – 22 February 2009

Council staff met with members of the Waiatarua Residents and Ratepayers to discuss a future vision for Waiatarua. Residents at this meeting were asked to think about where the boundary of Waiatarua is and discussed the same questions that were discussed at the November Community Meeting.

Participants gave a clear message that they see their area as quite distinct from Oratia and want to preserve that separate identity. Discussions showed that, for the most part, people want to keep Waiatarua the way it is.

Participants identified that the future look and feel of Waiatarua revolves around the retention of the bush character of the community, with buildings being generally hidden within the dominant forest setting. They also identified the need to grow and expand the services and facilities which serve the local residents.

Participants said they value and enjoy:

- The natural environment and its biodiversity
- Peace, tranquillity and views
- Community spirit and sense of a neighbourhood.
- Privacy
- Opportunities to work from home.
- Meeting places and community infrastructure (hall, the Waiatarua community library)
- Dining opportunities (Elevations Restaurant and Auckland's Waitakere Estate)
- Accessibility to Henderson, Glen Eden, West Coast beaches, proximity to CBD

Participants also identified those things they dislike including:

- Weed infestation, animal pests, streams and roadsides full of rubbish
- A lack of footpaths, cycle facilities and road safety with speeding cars
- Concealed driveways and visibility
- Limited access to public transport
- Too many restrictions on reasonable tree removal around houses to maintain light and air.
- Uncertainty about planning controls, the costs of consents
- Inappropriate signage.
- Urbanisation of the area through poorly designed buildings, houses and concrete driveways
- No recognised identity, village centre
- Lack of policing

Participants identified a number of matters that they would like to see change including:

- Restoration of the environment, including removal of pests, weeds and maintenance of stream margins.
- Provision of small scale public transport
- Better walking facilities including trails, cycleways and footpaths
- Improved road safety
- Less red tape, reduce expense of planning process
- Better long-term planning and recognition of need to selective tree removal around houses.
- A stronger sense of the community centre or focal point
- Undergrounding of overhead wires

2.3 Oratia District School Workshop – 17 March 2009

A group of Oratia District School students took part in a workshop at the School in which they created a montage of images expressing their vision of the future of Oratia. Eighteen students

from the Enviro School team and the School Council took part in the workshop. First the students undertook an exercise with photos of Oratia and Waiatarua, ordering them into those they liked most and those they liked least. The student's likes included their natural environment (particularly apple orchards), native animals and pets, family, their school and local history. Their dislikes included rubbish, graffiti, pollution and threats to native wildlife. The students then worked in groups to create collages of what Oratia might look like in 50 years. Each collage featured a statement about what makes Oratia so special now and in the future: These statements said "Oratia Means Beauty", "This place will be remembered forever" and "This place will be safe, beautiful, peaceful, quiet and fantabulous".

2.4 Community Enquiry Workshop – 18 March to 26 March 2009

The Community Enquiry Workshop included meetings, open days and workshops with the community. A newsletter and invitation was sent to 1600 households in the Oratia and Waiatarua areas.

On 18 March 2009 a community meeting was held and participants working in groups were asked to consider elements of character and amenity in Oratia and Waiatarua. They were asked to describe the values associated with these elements and imagine how they should look in the future. Participants were also asked to consider future wellbeing issues for the Oratia and Waiatarua communities, considering environmental, social, cultural and economic wellbeing. Key factors were:

- Environmental: landscape – bush and open space, sympathetic development, pest control, park facilities, unpolluted.
- Social: community heart and meeting places, traffic control, walking access/recreational trails, public transport, good neighbours.
- Cultural: history and retaining this, defining name and character, cultural linkages.
- Economic: opportunities, accommodation, orchards, food bowl.

On 19 March 2009 an open day was held along with a history session where stories of the past could be shared.

Community Enquiry Workshops were held on 20 and 21 March. These workshops included a briefing and discussion on matters relating to:

- Oratia village and rural economic innovation: village centre, branding and signage, uses to orchards; ideas for economic innovation.
- Environment: walking tracks/linkages, Ranges Neighbourhood Restoration Initiatives, weeds.
- Growth/rural design: growth allowed in the Structure Plan and how to accommodate this.
- Mobility/Transport: cars, buses, footpaths, drains

Between 23 and 26 March officers undertook studios with interested parties as they began exploring the matters raised during the previous meetings and workshops. These studios further developed the key themes from the workshops on 20 and 21 March. A series of maps and plans were created to express various opportunities for the future of Oratia.

On 26 March Council staff reported back to the community on the outcomes of the process over the previous week. Matters that were discussed included:

- Planning for the unimaginable / unforeseeable
- Reinforcing the village heart of Oratia
- Rural economic innovation
- The importance of supporting working from home
- The concept of a Parker Road extension
- The opportunities to develop an off-road movement network

- The importance of protecting habitats and streams
- The role of exotic vegetation in the Oratia landscape
- Anticipating the development provided for in the structure plan
- Keeping Waiatarua as it is, with buildings being subservient to the natural landscape and providing a different residential opportunity from elsewhere in City.

2.5 Oratia Residents and Ratepayers Association AGM – 12 May 2009

Council staff presented key elements of the developing LAP to the Oratia Residents and Ratepayers Association AGM which was attended by approximately 40 people. The meeting provided an opportunity to test out the work in progress with participants, which included a presentation on the boundary for the LAP, future character and amenity, a landscape gateway at Parrs Cross Road and possible options for the reinforcement of the village heart.

Many of those attending lived on Parker Road and the majority of these did not support the extension of Parker Road to Scenic Drive. Some preferred it to be a pedestrian and jogging route.

It was explained that Council are not redefining communities or the local area by proposing a LAP boundary. The boundary is for the purpose of the LAP and the specific objectives and policies that will result. There were many detailed questions regarding the boundary and the reasons for its location. It was agreed that boundary maps would be distributed to participants who would review and provide further comment.

A number of participants suggested different ways to manage design issues associated with development anticipated by the Oratia Structure Plan. This included providing for housing clusters, reducing the width of driveways and allowing multiple houses to be served by a single driveway. It was also suggested that subdivision should provide for exotic plantings to preserve rural character as opposed to reverting land back into native forest,

The Oratia Residents and Ratepayers Association had also submitted on the LTCCP requesting provision for road widening for safety and more provision for footpaths to improve safety,

There was general support for the reinforcement of the village as suggested by the presented diagrams. This is linked to the history of food production on the edge of the urban area. Council has also recently acquired land for an extension to the reserve in which the hall is located and this was supported by participants.

2.6 Waiatarua Residents and Ratepayers Association Meeting – 26 May 2009

Council staff presented key elements of the developing LAP to the Waiatarua Residents and Ratepayers Association meeting which was attended by 14 people. The meeting provided an opportunity to outline progress with participants, which included a presentation on the boundary for the LAP, and the vision for the future of Waiatarua.

There was debate surrounding the proposed boundary, with many feeling that the boundary was not inclusive enough and that it should be widened, particularly at the western end. Many were interested to hear of the criteria for determining the boundary and reason as to why some areas were included whilst others were not. Criteria for determining the boundary were taken from the legislation, this included future character and amenity, and these were discussed with reference to the boundary along with other factors such as topography, water catchment, landscapes, ecology and access. Many residents felt that the boundaries should be based on residents opinions not technical factors or experts opinions. Boundary maps were handed out to participants to review and provide further comment.

There was a general agreement that Waiatarua should stay much as it is. Discussions were had on issues on footpaths, and tree removal with residents using the opportunity to request tree clearance along road side to allow for safer pedestrian movement. There was also a request for the consideration of improved recreation reserves associated with the community facilities.

2.7 Tangata Whenua and Maori

Council staff engaged in discussions with Tangata Whenua, Te Taumata Runanga Committee, Hoani Waititi Marae and the Maori community of Waitakere. This continued from long-standing relationships and a common purpose expressed through the strong support received from Tangata Whenua for the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act.

Discussions with Te Kawerau a Maki utilised the Council's fortnightly iwi consultation meeting. This provided an opportunity to update Te Kawerau a Maki on the development of the LAP and for matters, particularly associated with cultural heritage to be discussed.

The fortnightly iwi consultation meetings also provided a forum to engage with Ngati Whatua O Orakei, ensuring information and progress was shared. The key values expressed in the Act were considered to be essential to the development of the LAPs.

Recognising that Hoani Waititi Marae sits just outside the area of the Oratia LAP, Council staff provided regular updates and sought feedback from the marae committee. A strong theme that was developed through these conversations was the role of Oratia as a place for all people to enjoy in the future, recognising that our communities are changing and will continue to change in the future. It was recognised that while the Act gives specific recognition to the named Tangata Whenua, that Maori in general have a role to play in the future of the Waitakere Ranges.

Council officers provided regular updates on the project to Te Taumata Runanga and the Chair Warahi Paki. As a consequence of guidance from the Te Taumata Runanga and representatives of Ngati Whatua Runanga and Ngati Whatua Nga Rima O Kaipara, officers in partnership with Mr Paki organised a Hui on the LAPs which was held at Hoani Waititi Marae on 11 May 2009. Invitations were sent to Tangata Whenua, urban marae and representatives on the Te Taumata Runanga. The Hui provided an opportunity for participants to a different perspective from the largely European views provided in the community meetings to form part of the development of a future vision for the areas.

Key matters raised included:

- The role of Oratia as a place of education and experience for tamariki and mokopuna about ecology, plants, food and gardening. This is linked to the rediscovery of where food comes from for urban dwellers and re-establishing knowledge about how to grow food.
- The importance of recognising kaitiaki, spiritual and metaphysical relationships of tangata whenua and the Waitakere Ranges.
- The importance of acknowledging Maori history of area through Po (to signify a Maori presence and history) and bilingual signs.
- The role of Hoani Waititi Marae (and other marae) as a meeting place and resource for all peoples. This acknowledges the changing demographics of communities.
- The importance of cultural tourism as part of recognising history and creating economic opportunities for Maori.
- The need to retain rural character in Oratia and to avoid the need for urban infrastructure solutions such as stormwater drainage which has significant effects on the environment.
- Opportunities for overnight stays (campgrounds, trampers huts) and trails throughout the Waitakere Ranges.

2.8 Other community communications between October 2008 and June 2009

Between October 2008 and June 2009 Council staff met with a range of people and organisations to discuss the LAPs. These discussions included looking at what people liked, disliked or wanted to change about the Oratia/Waiatarua areas and the future that these individuals/groups wanted for those areas.

Below is a summary of who those discussions were with, the form that they took and the key points that were discussed. In addition to these discussions, Council staff also provided regular updates to the Council's Policy and Strategy Committee, Waitakere Community Board and Te Taumata Runanga Committee and had discussions with various teams at the Council.

The issues raised by individuals were included in the development of the LAP, although the names of those individuals have been withheld for reasons of privacy.

Date	Who	Type of Communication	Key Points of Discussion
8/10/2008	Ministry of Education (MOE)	Meeting	Discussed WRHAA, LAPS and Oratia. MOE provided zoning boundary maps. They advised no plans for school at Piha - studies showed not enough future growth anticipated in area.
29/10/2008	Ngati Whatua o Orakei (Bernadette Papa)	Council fortnightly iwi consultation meeting	Initial background discussion. Interest of Ngati Whatua o Orakei primarily stems from the fact that the LAPs are connected with the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act.
4/11/2008	Te Kawerau A Maki (Saul Roberts)	Council fortnightly iwi consultation meeting	Te Kawerau A Maki identified a need to provide a cultural heritage dimension to the LAP.
4/11/2008	Waitakere Community Board	Monthly update	Update on Oratia LAP process.
6/11/2008	Waitakere Ranges Protection Society	Meeting	WRPS concerned about requirement for plan changes arising from LAPs. Discussed rural economic futures in the foothills. LAPs meeting process outlined, some concern from WRPS over the process becoming solely about subdivision, particularly in other areas where LAPs are scheduled.
11/11/2008	Oratia School (Sherilee Swanepoel - Principal)	Meeting	Background on LAP process and Oratia LAP.
11/11/2008	Oratia Residents and Ratepayers	Meeting	<p>Provided information on the LAP, boundary issues and process for developing LAP.</p> <p>Key discussion points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong desire for community and village heart associated with school and hall. This could include a café, some retail, craft, more community facilities (e.g. community house) etc. This has been a focus of the community for last 10 years. • Building and design elements that make Oratia unique, and how these elements need to be considered in the future with new building design. • Public transport options for Oratia. • Footpaths, safety and convenience for users /children. • How those who do not participate in the community meeting can continue to contribute to the process.

Date	Who	Type of Communication	Key Points of Discussion
12/11/2008	Auckland Regional Council (policy, parks and consents staff)	Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of the LAP and consultation process.
17/11/2008	Hoani Waititi Marae	Committee Meeting	An update on the process and the LAP workshops.
17/11/2008	Te Taumata Runanga	Meeting	Update on LAP.
18/11/2008	Oratia School Board of Trustees	Meeting	Provided an outline on the LAPs and the process for Oratia. Discussion on how the school could participate in the development of the LAP.
3/02/2009	Waitakere Community Board	Board Meeting	Updated on progress with LAP.
10/02/2009	Oratia Residents and Ratepayers	Meeting	Update on LAP and outline of March Community Enquiry Workshop. They indicated community very interested in the boundary discussion especially between Oratia and Waiatarua. Village heart and community facilities important aspect for workshop. They discussed a land management plan approach to providing for future rural activities and rural economic activities.
16/02/2009	Te Taumata Runanga	Meeting	Outlined plans for Community Enquiry Workshop. Would like the opportunity to provide a briefing to inform of next stages of LAP process and discuss how they wish to participate in community meetings and/or contribute to the preparation of a Local Area Plan for Oratia/Waiatarua. Ngati Whatua Nga Rima O Kaipara indicated support for a hui on the LAPs.
18/02/2009	ARC (Policy Implementation)	Meeting	Update on preparations for CEW and outcomes of November Community Meeting.
18/02/2009	Ngati Whatua o Orakei (Bernadette Papa)	Council fortnightly iwi consultation meeting	Discussed opportunity for hui to discuss the Oratia/Waiatarua LAP. Ngati Whatua o Orakei keen to be involved.
19/02/2009	Oratia School (Sherilee Swanepoel - Principal)	Meeting	Organising School Workshop for LAP
24/02/2009	Te Kawerau A Maki (Saul Roberts)	Council fortnightly iwi consultation meeting	Discussed Community Enquiry Workshop and cultural heritage work aspects of LAP.
3/03/2009	Waitakere Community Board	Community Board Meeting	Update on LAP and Community Enquiry Workshops. Waiatarua R&R requested that Waiatarua not be absorbed in Oratia LAP. Matters discussed included expectation management, rural economic development.

Date	Who	Type of Communication	Key Points of Discussion
16/03/2009	Te Taumata Runanga	Meeting	Update on the LAP and Community Enquiry Workshops
16/03/2009	Hoani Waititi Marae	Committee Meeting	Update on LAP process and participation of marae.
31/03/2009	Waitakere Community Board	Community Board Meeting	Update of outcomes from the Community Enquiry Workshops.
7/04/2009	Te Kawerau A Maki (Saul Roberts)	Council fortnightly iwi consultation meeting	Discussed work on cultural heritage and preserving/maintaining that heritage for the future.
14/04/2009	Oratia Residents and Ratepayers	Meeting	Discussed progress with Oratia LAP and the next steps. Residents and Ratepayers invited Council to speak at their AGM.
5/05/2009	Te Kawerau A Maki (Saul Roberts)	Council fortnightly iwi consultation meeting	Discussed contribution to cultural heritage work.
5/05/2009	SPAN	Meeting	Discussion on future rural land uses and rural economic activity.
9/06/2009	SPAN	Meeting	Discussion on Oratia Local Area Plan and future rural land uses and rural economic activity.
12/06/2009	ARC (Policy Implementation)	Meeting	Update on Councils progress with Oratia LAP, intentions with regards the rest of the foothills and rural economic development work.