



Henderson Valley/Opanuku Local Area Plan

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

What is a LAP?

The essence of the Local Area Plan (LAP) is that together we can imagine, plan and influence the future. A LAP is about thinking long term, in generations rather than years, and setting goals to work towards.

This proposed LAP builds on the nine months of discussions with members of the community to provide an accurate picture of the local area, identifying all the valued features of the valley, including the natural environment (bush, cultivated land, streams), landscapes, buildings and community, and parks. It sets out objectives about how the place will look and feel in the future and how people can provide for their comfort, health and wellbeing, while protecting and enhancing what is important in the area.

The Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 (Ranges Act) recognises the significance of the Heritage Area and the need to protect and enhance the heritage features for present and future generations. LAPs are the method for ensuring that this occurs at a local level.

- Section 1 of the LAP describes the purpose of the Henderson Valley/Opanuku LAP in more detail and Section 2 outlines the area that the LAP applies to.
- Section 3 of the LAP identifies the heritage features of Henderson Valley/Opanuku.
- Section 4 of the LAP contains statements of Henderson Valley/Opanuku's present and future Character and Amenity
- Section 5 of the LAP outlines the proposed Objectives, Policies and Actions for Henderson Valley/Opanuku. These outline how the heritage features in Section 3 will be protected, restored and enhanced, and how the Existing and Future Character and Amenity in Section 4 will be recognised and achieved.

A 'Local Area Plans FAQ' has been developed and is available here:

<http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/AbtCit/ne/pdf/localareaplans/localareaplans-qa.pdf>

What area does the LAP cover?

The LAP boundary takes in the area west of Henderson Valley Road and travels along Sturges Road through to Tasman Avenue, Simpson Road and Coulter Road. The LAP area includes properties along Henderson Valley Road where it intersects with Mountain Road, then traverses along to include land on Opanuku Road through to Scenic Drive. The southern boundary encompasses land west of Pine Avenue and travels up Forest Hill Road.

The boundary was determined using a range of natural features (water catchments, ecology, landscape), physical patterns (roads, residential houses), existing administrative boundaries (District Plan zonings, the urban limit, the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area boundary, school zones, etc), as well as the distinctive local communities. Consultation with local residents also played a significant role in determining the proposed boundary. For a map and more details on how the boundary was determined, refer to Section 2 of the LAP, and the *Henderson Valley/Opanuku Boundary Report* available at www.waitakere.govt.nz

What is the proposed vision outlined in the Henderson Valley Opanuku LAP?

Henderson Valley/Opanuku will remain a rural place; the natural environment will be protected and restored; the rural/urban edge will be clearly defined and managed; rural activities will be enhanced to provide for people to connect with nature, culture and the rural area; and the school and the community hall will continue to be the centre of the community. (Refer sections 4 and 5 of the LAP for more detail).

How will the LAP affect me/my land?

The LAP will not impact on anyone directly. It provides local interpretation of the Ranges Act, defining what the goals of the legislation mean in that local area. It will provide greater certainty as to what can be expected in the future.

The aim of the LAP is that when decisions concerning a local area are made in the future, such as providing services or deciding whether to grant resource consents, those making the decisions have something against which to measure the impact of the action that is proposed. The LAP looks to the long-term future to ensure that as an area grows and develops, change does not destroy the things that make it distinctive but contributes positively to ensuring that it remains special and unique.

Will District Plan subdivision provisions change?

Waitakere City Council is not proposing to change the District Plan to implement the LAP. This will be a decision for the new Auckland Council. In the interim the LAP will be used to provide guidance to resource consents and decisions of the Council.

The LAP itself signals that the valley will remain a rural place. The Ranges Act does not provide any possibility of urban development in the valley. There is also overwhelming community support and technical justification for not preparing a structure plan in the wider Valley to accommodate additional opportunities for further subdivision, beyond what is possible under the current District Plan.

The LAP identifies that for the majority of the valley, subdivision will be limited to those opportunities available in the existing District Plan. Once those subdivision opportunities are taken up there will be no further subdivision provided for.

Expert landscape advice received by Council has indicated that the rules for managing the remaining subdivision opportunities on the larger properties need improvement. If these are not changed for the better, then those rural landscapes that the community appreciates could be undermined by poorly designed subdivision. The issue is that the existing District Plan provides for a four hectare minimum lot size, which on the remaining large sites in the mid-valley would result in checkerboard subdivision that would not respect the sensitivity of the rural landscape.

To fix this, it is recommended that future subdivision locates lots and new buildings in less conspicuous places, using vegetation and landform to soften and hide new development. A Large Property Management Area approach is proposed with an average lot size of four hectares. This doesn't change the total number of lots that can be created, but it does move away from rigid adherence to a checkerboard subdivision pattern. This large property approach proposed by the LAP provides a more flexible way to fit existing subdivision within the landscape and maintain the rural character of the area. It also proposes that streams and ridgelines will be permanently protected and enhanced, public access will be facilitated where appropriate, and the productive potential of the land will be maintained.

Several sites abutting the urban area (along Pine Avenue and adjacent to Sturges Valley) have been identified for specific management as a rural/urban interface area. The District Plan currently provides little opportunity for these sites to intensify. However, these areas are under increasing pressure to develop. The LAP gives greater guidance so that notified resource consent and non-regulatory decisions will protect heritage features and provide a buffer and transition between urban and rural areas.

The proposed objectives, policies, and actions of the LAP relating to subdivision are outlined under Objective 3 in section 5 (See particularly Policy 19).

What happens to the LAP under the new Auckland Council?

The Ranges Act applies to the new Auckland Council as much as it does to Waitakere City Council. The LAP, as a local expression of the goals of the Ranges Act, will be a useful tool for the Auckland Council, the Local Board and the existing and future community to work together on achieving the future identified.

What is the timeframe for the LAP process?

LAP submissions close on 30 July 2010. The Council will be holding a drop-in session on **Thursday 8 July 2010, 3.30pm – 7.30pm at Henderson Valley School Hall**. Council Officers will be on hand to answer any questions you may have, or discuss any issues of concern, during the times stated. Please feel free to attend at the time most suited to you.

What happens with my submission?

Submissions will be reported to the Council for consideration. Where appropriate, the Council will amend the LAP to reflect matters raised in submissions before adopting the LAP as a Council policy document.