



- Legend**
- Proposed Boundary
 - ▨ Bush Living
 - ▤ Coastal Village
 - ▥ Foothill
 - ▦ Open Space
 - ▧ Rural Village
 - ▨ Special Area
 - ▩ Waitakere Ranges

Coastal Boundary at Mean High Water Springs

Created: 15/10/2004
 Scale: 1:60000 © Unkenoh



Proposed Boundary for Waitakere Ranges and Foothill Heritage Area

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Appendix

Identification of a Boundary for the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Protection Heritage Area

Background

The purpose of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Protection Project is to develop a package of measures that will help ensure the long term protection of this area. This necessitates a boundary being established around the area, to focus the proposed measures in the appropriate area, and to give a clear indication to landowners and others as to the area that will be affected by any measures adopted. This is especially important in relation to measures that have a regulatory component, such as any legislation enacted for the area, and any provisions developed in statutory plans such as the Waitakere District Plan and the Auckland Regional Policy Statement.

To date, there have been two rounds of public consultation on the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Protection Project have been undertaken, using two 'draft' boundaries.

Phase I Community Consultation Draft Boundary

The first draft boundary was very inclusive, and included all land identified in the Waitakere District Plan as either Waitakere Ranges, Bush Living, Coastal Villages, and Foothills Human Environment, and areas of Open Space Environment (parkland) and Rural Villages Environment surrounded by or adjacent to this area (in the case of the Rural Villages Environment, Waitakere Village was included). These are the District Plan Human Environments (equating to 'zones') that encompassed the area that might be considered the Waitakere Ranges. However, the Foothills Human Environment extends well into the north of the City, and includes areas of land some distance away from the Waitakere Ranges. At that stage of the project, no detailed investigation of the appropriate alignment of the boundary had occurred, and the boundary was one component for which feedback was sought. Essentially, it was considered better to initially identify land that might later be excluded, rather than excluding land that might later be identified as appropriately included. The Environmental Management Committee, acting through delegated authority to four Councillors, signed off the content of the Phase I Community Consultation material, including the first draft boundary, in August 2003. (1715/2003)

The first round of consultation (the Phase I Community Consultation) revealed that there was divided community opinion on inclusion of (or parts of) the eastern foothills, but general support for the proposition that the other areas were part of the Waitakere Ranges (although the need and nature of provisions that should apply was more controversial).

The March Boundary Report

Between the first and second phases of consultation, the Waitakere City Council commissioned a report examining the issues around determining a boundary for the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area (the March Boundary Report).¹ This report identified the following criteria as being important for this process:

¹ *Waitakere Ranges Project Boundaries* March 2004. A report prepared for the Waitakere City Council and the Political Liaison Group by Jenny Macdonald.

1. The boundary must, as far as possible encompass the concentrations of natural, landscape and cultural heritage resources in the Waitakere Ranges.

These resources include native vegetation and fauna habitat, streams and waterbodies and their margins, natural features, areas of Outstanding Landscape and outstanding natural coastal character (identified as such in Regional Planning tools), iwi and non-iwi heritage areas. In other words, the high value resources of the Waitakere Ranges, many of which have are identified as such in the Waitakere District Plan.

2. The area is to be contiguous

3. A 'buffer' area will be applied as appropriate

This is in recognition of the need to ensure that development at high densities does not abut the 'core' areas of the Waitakere Ranges, and that appropriate management of areas adjacent to resources of high value is needed in order to ensure protection of high value resources results. The eastern foothills were seen as playing a critical role in this.

4. The boundary should follow property lines, and other boundaries well-recognised by the community.

5. The boundary should cross Territorial Boundaries where the value of the resources dictates.

The Boundary Report included an area in Rodney District Council identified as Outstanding Natural Landscape or as a Site of Natural Significance in the Auckland Regional Policy Statement..

6. Where examination of boundaries of resources or values identifies inaccuracies, these cannot be remedied through this process, but will be brought to the attention of the parties.

Additionally, although not explicitly identified as such, the following criterion was also utilised:

7. Known Planning Context

In other words, planning matters known to be on the cards, or likely in the short to medium term. This affected the proposed alignment of the boundary in the Sturges area, to exclude the area affected by the Babich Concept Plan, which the Waitakere District Council is seeking to include within the MUL. Additionally, the area within 500m of the Swanson Train Station was excluded from the second draft boundary in recognition of the ongoing discussion about the most appropriate landuse there. However, this latter exclusion was on the proviso that further investigation of this matter was undertaken, and that the matter be particularly canvassed through consultation at some stage.

The March Boundary Report recommended a boundary which differed from that used during the Phase I Community Consultation principally by:

- Excluding most of the area north of Swanson Road. The March Boundary report identifies that this area is quite visually and topographically distinct from the area south of Swanson Rd/West of Waitakere Road. Additionally, there is (generally) a different geology here, and there are no Outstanding Landscapes in this area; and
- Excluding the area of the 'Babich Concept Plan', in recognition of the fact that the WCC has applied to the ARC to have this area included within the Metropolitan Urban Limits; and

- Excluding the area within 500m of the Swanson Railway Station. This was in recognition of the fact that this area is likely to become the focus for discussions about intensifying residential and other development around Railway Stations.

Phase II Community Consultation Draft Boundary

The recommendations of the March Boundary Report were, by and large, adopted when determining the second draft boundary for the Phase II Community Consultation, with the notable exception of parts of Rodney District. It was considered that it would be inappropriate to include this area without a clear mandate from the Rodney District Council and the people of Rodney for including parts of Rodney. (This issue is discussed further below.)

Additionally, the March Boundary Report recommended excluding the Green Bay Scarp because of the different geology of the underlying rocks here, and because the area was identified in the Tamaki Ecological District rather than the Waitakere Ecological District (within which the bulk of the Waitakere Ranges lies). However, the Green Bay Scarp was included within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area for the purposes of the Phase II Community Consultation as it was seen as being critically linked, visually and ecologically, with the rest of the Waitakere Ranges. This area is discussed further below.

Thus, the second draft boundary, used for Phase II Community Consultation, included a less extensive area than that identified for the purposes of the Phase I Community Consultation. (See Map 2 – Second Draft Boundary). This second draft boundary was approved for inclusion in the materials used during the Phase II Community Consultation by the Environmental Management Committee in April 2004.

The Phase II Community Consultation identified a similar level of community division about the appropriate location of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area boundary as emerged from the Phase I Community Consultation, with the inclusion of the eastern foothills a particular issue. Nevertheless, there was a high degree of acceptance that the eastern foothills need to be protected as a rural transition or buffer between the urban area and the Waitakere Ranges.

In summary, the two rounds of consultation that have been carried out have both identified that there is a high level of acceptance that most of the area identified for inclusion within the project area is, indeed, 'part' of the Waitakere Ranges. Inclusion or otherwise of the eastern foothills (or parts), however, is somewhat more controversial, although there is some very strong community support for this.

Inclusion of the Eastern Foothills

As outlined above, the eastern foothills have generated the most controversy in terms of whether or not they should be included within the boundary of the project area. Concerns about management of this area have been a key driver for the whole project, and in particular concerns about the rate, scale and nature of subdivision in this area. It is quite probable that opinions about the appropriateness of including this area are a reflection of people's attitude towards subdivision of this area.

The Landscape Report

Whether or not the eastern foothills are 'part' of the Waitakere Ranges is, to some extent, a matter of landscape. Accordingly, to help clarify this issue, the Waitakere City Council commissioned a study into the relationship between the eastern foothills and the 'core'

Waitakere Ranges.² This landscape report identified that from this perspective, the majority of the eastern foothills, including the Titirangi/Laingholm area were appropriately included within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area, although there was a definite 'weakening' in this relationship from (generally) those areas immediately adjacent to the 'core' forested area to those closest to the urban area. Additionally, this study confirmed that the area north of Swanson Road was appropriately excluded. The landscape study did exclude some areas within the eastern foothills, principally on the basis of landform, as these areas are more accurately considered valley floors, rather than foothills. This applied to areas of land in Oratia, Swanson, Anzac Valley and Henderson Valley. The boundary recommended here includes all of these areas, principally because of the need to manage natural resources in an integrated fashion. Flooding has been identified as an issue in all of these catchments (to varying degrees), and appropriate management of rural catchments has been identified as a critical component of "protection" of the Waitakere Ranges. Moreover, improved ecological connectivity through the foothills is one of the expected outcomes of the protection project, and streams are the principal location for such ecological corridors.

In summary, and in light of the above discussion, the criteria formulated for the March boundary report, listed above, indicate that the eastern foothills should be included. These are discussed briefly below:

1. There are significant natural heritage and landscape values in this area, although they tend to be more spread out. There are areas identified as Outstanding Landscape towards the top of the foothills.
2. The eastern foothills are a contiguous area, in turn contiguous with the 'core' Waitakere Ranges
3. As well as being an integral part of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area, they also perform a buffer function between the 'core' ranges and the urban area
4. The eastern foothills have been defined along property boundaries.
5. The issue of crossing territorial boundaries does not apply here, as the eastern foothills are entirely within the Waitakere City boundaries
6. There are no identified anomalies in relation to the eastern foothills (this issue is discussed in more detail below, in relation to the Landscape Study)
7. The known planning context is reflected in the proposed boundary.

Proposed Phase III Consultation Boundary

The boundary recommended here has been determined using the criteria set out, and in light of the landscape and integrated management issues discussed above. It differs from the Phase II boundary only in the Swanson area, where a smaller area adjacent to the Swanson Railway Station is now proposed for exclusion. The proposed boundary is attached as **AXXX**. It generally follows the alignment of the Metropolitan Urban Limits except at a few key locations. These and other points of particular interest are discussed in more detail below, particularly in light of the findings of the landscape study.

Titirangi/Laingholm – Green Bay Scarp

These areas are unique in relation to the area proposed for inclusion within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area, and indeed within the city. They are within the Metropolitan Urban Limits, and hence generally within the area subject to intensification under regional initiatives such as the Regional Policy Statement and the Regional Growth

² *Waitakere Ranges Landscape Study* August 2004. A report prepared for Waitakere City Council by Melean Absolum Ltd Landscape Architects

Strategy, particularly as informed by the recently passed Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act 2004 (LGAAA2004), yet they have extremely high natural, amenity and landscape values, and other environmental constraints that mean any significant intensification is not appropriate. It has been proposed to include specific discussion of this area within the Regional Policy Statement through amendments promulgated in response to LGAAA2004, to identify the unsuitability of this area for significant intensification.

The Titirangi Laingholm area is largely covered in native vegetation, identified as significant in terms of section 6(c) of the Resource Management Act 1991. Additionally, a recent review of the region's outstanding landscapes, intended for inclusion in the Regional Policy Statement, identified much of this area as having outstanding landscape values. The native vegetation is continuous with the forested area of the 'core' Waitakere Ranges, and includes unique ecological associations, and some important areas of fauna habitat. The landscape study discussed above identified this area as an integral part of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area. For many people entering the Waitakere Ranges from the south, Titirangi Village represents a gateway into the ranges.

The Green Bay scarp is a relatively small area (~30ha) of approximately 50 properties, at the south eastern edge the City. It is covered in native vegetation identified as being particularly important (and hence identified as Protected Natural Area), and has been identified in the Auckland Regional Policy Statement as a regionally significant landscape. It is ecologically and visually continuous with the Titirangi area, and hence the core of the Waitakere Ranges. From the Manukau Harbours and other areas to the south, the Green Bay Scarp is continuous with and indistinguishable from the Waitakere Ranges.

Oratia

In the Oratia area, the proposed boundary follows exactly the alignment of the MUL. Thus, the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area, as proposed, extends from the very edge of the urban area up through the foothills and into the 'core' forested area of the Waitakere Ranges. As discussed above in relation to the landscape study, part of the area closest to the Metropolitan Urban Limits has been identified as being not 'part' of the Waitakere Ranges, from a landscape perspective. The emphasis on landform and perspective from public places in the landscape study has resulted in a relatively extensive area of land in the lower Oratia Valley being excluded, on the basis that the landform here is quite markedly different from the area to the south, being relatively flat. Additionally there is a ribbon pattern of landuse along the northern side of West Coast Rd in the vicinity of Shaw Rd, extending partly along Shaw Rd, which gives the area a more intensive character than elsewhere in the eastern foothills. At various times, it has been proposed that part of the lower Oratia Valley be identified as a village, acting as a nucleus for the residents of Oratia, and to some extent the landscape study supports this. It is likely that any such village would have to be outside of the Metropolitan Urban Limits. However, there are significant resource management issues that suggest the entire lower rural Oratia Valley be included within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area. In particular the presence of the Cable, Sunde, Cochran and Kaurimu Streams in this area – the latter two having their headwaters up near the Scenic Drive, makes the Metropolitan Urban Limit the most logical location for edge of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area here. From an integrated management perspective, it is important that these natural features are managed in a way that is consistent throughout their extent in the rural areas of the City – indeed such an approach is critical if true protection of these areas is to be achieved. Moreover, the Oratia Structure Plan has already identified a pattern of landuse for this area that seeks to address the range of issues applicable for the area, and has also established a framework for ecological restoration and enhancement that extends throughout the area. From a management perspective it

would be difficult and potentially counter-productive to have a distinction made between areas within the Structure Plan. Arguably, this area also is an integral component of the transition between the urban area and the 'core' of the Waitakere Ranges.

Henderson Valley

Again, in this location the proposed boundary for the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area follows the Metropolitan Urban Limits. As with Oratia, the landscape study excluded a small area from the Waitakere Ranges, on the basis of landform, and to some extent because of aspect. However, the area proposed for exclusion lies adjacent to the Anamata Stream, which floods, and the area is also subject to flooding from the Opanuku Stream. As such, any significant development is already precluded. The Opanuku Stream and its tributaries are a key natural feature of the eastern foothills, and it is important that they are managed comprehensively in a way that supports their ecological, landscape and stormwater management roles.

Swanson

One of the criteria identified as relevant when determining the proposed boundary of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area is that of "known planning context". In other words, ensuring that the boundary aligns with other strategic priorities of the City and Region. There are two circumstances in the Swanson area where this criterion was used to determine the proposed boundary.

Firstly, there is an area adjacent to the Babich winery, bounded by Simpson Rd, Metcalfe Rd, Tasman Ave and the Paremuka Stream, that is currently proposed for inclusion within the Metropolitan Urban Limits. A proposed plan change to the Regional Policy Statement to this effect was notified in late September this year. A comprehensive Concept Plan has been prepared as part of this application, which emphasises stream and amenity protection, and in many ways the pattern of development set out in this Concept Plan will serve as an appropriate transition between the urban area and the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area, and will complement the protection focus of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area. However, the existing natural and landscape values of this area are relatively low, and, unlike the Titirangi/Laingholm and Green Bay Scarp areas, do not justify inclusion of an area within the Metropolitan Urban Limits, and the likely constraints on urban intensification this would imply, within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area.

The other area where the known planning and strategic context criterion has been applied is for part of the land (between the Blewitt Stream and the Railway Station) known as the Penihana Land, adjacent to the Swanson Railway Station. Its location next to the Swanson Station means that, within the context of the regional and local initiatives to intensify urban development around key transport nodes, it is likely to be identified as appropriate for some intensification in the medium to long term, particularly as it is possible that the double tracking of the western railway line currently underway may extend to Swanson.

The Waitakere District Plan identifies a 500m circle as the appropriate 'node' in relation to Swanson Railway Stations, however, the boundary proposed here does not exclude all of the land within the 500m circle. This is because land to the west of Christian Road has already been considered for some intensification via the Swanson Structure Plan, based on the identified environmental constraints. The Swanson Structure Plan identifies a density of approximately one dwelling per 1.3 ha on those properties within the 500m circle, and this represents the sort of level of development that would provide a transition between the existing and potential urban parts of Swanson Village and the adjacent rural

areas of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills. (Note that the Swanson Structure Plan is currently before the Environment Court, and as a consequence may be amended in light of evidence presented there.).

The area proposed for exclusion forms a relatively distinct landform unit, with land to the south rising quite steeply from the Blewitt Stream (which roughly corresponds to the property boundary along which the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Protection Project boundary is proposed to lie). The landscape study identifies that, from a landscape perspective, the area does not form part of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area.

The boundary of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Protection Project, once established, will be one of the matters that is considered during the development of the detail of the Growth Strategy, and positioning it where it is proposed will clearly establish those areas where any significant intensification is not appropriate. Exclusion of the areas immediately adjacent to the Railway Station does not necessarily imply that a firm decision has been made to include areas within the MUL and including all of the land down to Swanson Road could foreclose options identified as appropriate in the Council's Growth Strategy, as it could be difficult to identify any areas within the boundary for inclusion within the MUL and consequent intensification. This will be particularly so if legislation is developed for the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area, as such legislation would likely have a strong focus on precluding urbanisation from the area covered. Indeed, inclusion of the 'Penihana' land within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area could imply that a decision not to proceed with intensification of this area has already been made. As discussed above, exclusion from the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area does not indicate any final decision on the nature of development of the land. Rather, it helps protect the future options available for the land.

However, the proposal to exclude part of this land is likely to provoke a degree of controversy amongst some members of the public.

Positioning of the Boundary in the North-West

One of the criteria initially used to identify the appropriate boundary for the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area relates to the issue of land in more than one Territorial Local Authority Boundary. In other words, the inclusion or not of parts of Rodney District Council. The criterion states that the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area boundary should cross Territorial Local Authority boundaries where this is appropriate, and it is considered that, ideally, parts of Rodney District should be included within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area. The Territorial boundary runs down the middle of the regionally significant Waitakere Wetland, and clearly integrated management of this would indicate that inclusion of at least the immediate catchment of this wetland is appropriate. Additionally, there are areas of significant native vegetation, identified as being within the Waitakere Ecological District⁵ that are within Rodney District, and if excluded will be the only parts of the Waitakere Ecological District not within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area. However, while staff at the Rodney District Council have indicated that they will be conducting a consultation exercise with the

⁵ The Waitakere Ecological District was delineated through the Protected Natural Area programme as a way of identifying examples of all rare and representative ecosystem types within the 'core' Waitakere Ranges. The Protected Natural Area programme predates the Resource Management Act, and has been somewhat superseded by the requirements of that Act to protect significant areas of native vegetation and fauna habitat. Nevertheless, it remains a useful methodology for assessing the quality and value of areas of native vegetation and fauna habitat, and has been used as such in the Waitakere District Plan.

Rodney District Elected Representatives and public about this project, it is not appropriate to indicate parts of Rodney District within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area until such time as the Rodney District Council signals a desire for this to occur.

Coastal Boundary

The location of the boundary at the coast has not been canvassed through either of the two consultation phases conducted to date. The staff recommendation is that the boundary should lie along Mean High Water Springs, which demarcates the extent of the Waitakere City Council's Resource Management jurisdiction. While activities below Mean High Water Springs, and which are under the Resource Management jurisdiction of the Auckland Regional Council, can undoubtedly impact on landscape, natural and other values, including in areas above Mean High Water Springs, it is highly likely that proposing to include this area could derail the entire project, particularly given the current controversies around such issues as Marine Reserves and the Foreshore and Seabed Bill. For any of the area below Mean High Water Springs to be included, there would likely need to be extensive consultation on this issue alone, and detailed clarification of the implications of such an inclusion. At this stage of the project, there is insufficient time for such consultation and clarification to take place.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while it is acknowledged that other areas arguably could be included within the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Heritage Area, the boundary recommended is considered to address the range of issues identified as relevant in determining this boundary.

Proposed Terms of Reference Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Joint Working Party November 2004

The Purpose of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Protection Project is:

'Through a partnership of iwi, Waitakere City Council, Auckland Regional Council, Rodney District Council & local Members of Parliament, and in close consultation with stakeholders, to find and implement ways of achieving better long-term protection for the natural and landscape values of the Waitakere Ranges and West Coast'.

The Purpose of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Working Party is:

" To provide a co-ordinated overview of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Protection Project, including matters of policy, consultation process and materials. To provide a forum to discuss the views of the parent bodies as regards to the direction to the project, and with consideration to the agreed Joint Project Plan, make recommendations, with clear reasons, to the parent organisations around the project."

The Scope of the matters to be considered by the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Working Party is:

- The consultation on the draft Waitakere Ranges and Foothills proposed legislation and the co-ordination of the related work programme
- The three year work programme to implement the other components of the package to better protect the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills.

Timeframe

The Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Working Party is expected to be established for a term of three years.

Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Joint Working Party Membership

Formal Membership of the Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Working Party will be:

Three Councillors from Waitakere City Council
Three Councillors from Auckland Regional Council
One Councillor from Rodney District Council
Three MPs from Central Government
1 representative of Te Kawerau A Maki
1 representative of Ngati Whatua

In addition to the members, appropriate staff and officials from the 6 partner organisations will attend meetings as required to provide advice and information to the members of the Working Party. Staff and officials have no status with regard to voting or decision making on the Working Party.

The meetings will be chaired by one of the members of the Working Party – to be determined by the Working Party at its first meeting.

Terms of Reference

1. Members are representatives of their parent organisations and as such will present their parent organisations' views at the working party.
2. The working party is not a decision making body and it will co-ordinate between the parent organisations