WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Matakana Island Plan

May 2013

Western Bay of Plenty District Council

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This document

The Western Bay of Plenty District Plan acknowledges that Matakana Island has a complex cultural-, social-, economic- and natural environment that requires a unique planning response. The Matakana Island Plan has been informed by significant research undertaken by various specialists, the Matakana and Rangiwaea Islands Hāpu Management Plan and the draft Matakana Forest Park Management Plan prepared by TKC Holdings Limited.

The Matakana Island Plan comprises six sections. The first explains the Plan's purpose, structure and conception. Sections two to four provide background detail of the Island community and social perspectives, the physical environment and the economic context. Each of these sections includes an overview, discusses relevant opportunities and constraints and sets out the visions and principles for future development. Section five provides analysis and critique of the current planning framework for landuse and subdivision and includes a list of recommended actions. Section six discusses the relationships between tangata whenua, landowners and Council that need to be maintained and nurtured to achieve the visions of this Plan.

Although the Matakana Island Plan has individual sections the Island is a multi-faceted environment and needs to be viewed from a holistic perspective. Therefore this Plan should be read in conjunction with the documents listed in sub-section 1.3.

Terminology

In this document *development* is used in the broader sense, i.e. it does not relate to a specific activity, unless specified, e.g. residential development, papakainga development or tourism development.

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Matakana Island is an elongated barrier island between Tauranga Harbour and the Pacific Ocean that lies in a northwest to southeast direction between Mount Maunganui in the southeast and Bowentown Heads in the northwest.

The Island has an area of approximately 5,800 hectares and has a population of 244 of whom more than 90% are Māori.

The Island comprises two distinct areas connected by a narrow isthmus.

- The forested sand barrier, which is predominantly used for production forestry, separates Tauranga Harbour from the Pacific Ocean. The forested sand barrier is 24 kilometres long, between 0.9 and 3 kilometres wide, and has an area of approximately 4,300 hectares.
- The western peninsula or farmland (approximately 1,500 hectares) extending into Tauranga Harbour. The farmland mainly comprises multiple

owned Māori land and is utilised for agricultural and horticultural purposes. Most residents live on the farmland.

Map 1: Matakana Island context

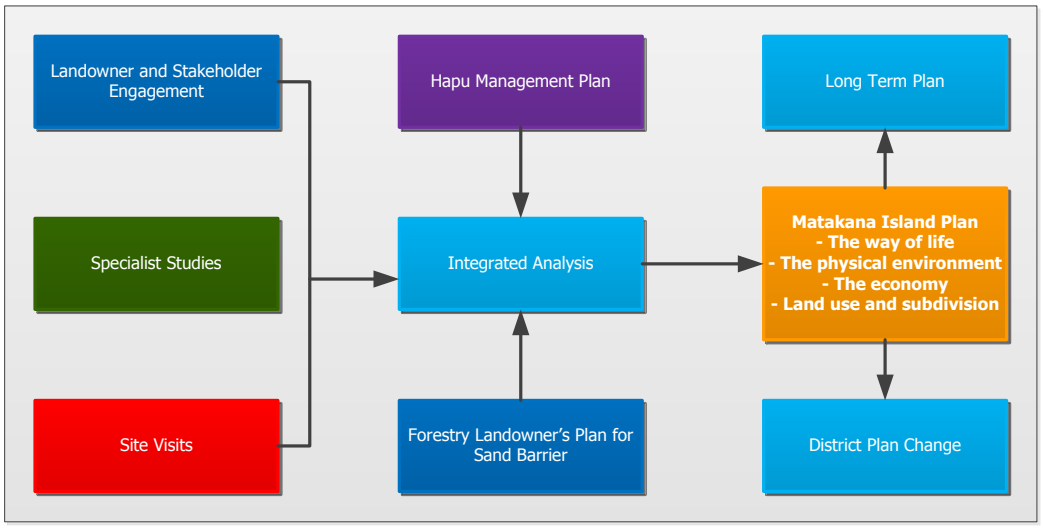
1.2 Purpose of the Matakana Island Plan

The Matakana Island Plan is a stand-alone strategic document that highlights the complex cultural-, social-, economic- and natural environment of the Island. It identifies Council's visions and principles regarding development and actions to achieve these visions. This Plan does not have legal power in its own right. However, it will trigger changes to the District Plan and may trigger changes to other plans, such as Council's Long Term Plan.

The Western Bay of Plenty District Plan identified the need for an integrated approach to land use and development on Matakana Island through a *Whole of Island Plan*. This was appealed to the Environment Court by some of the forestry landowners. The Court however supported Council's approach and set a timeframe with certain milestones to complete the Matakana Island Plan.

1.3 Matakana Island Plan development process and structure

The diagram below provides an overview of the Plan development process.



The Matakana Island Plan draws on consultation with hapū and free-hold landowners (including forestry landowners), stakeholders, a range of specialist studies undertaken in 2011, the Matakana and Rangiwaea Islands Hapū Management Plan presented by the five hapū in February 2013, and the draft Matakana Forest Park Management Plan prepared by TKC Holdings in November 2012.

Below are the specialist studies, which have helped to inform the Matakana Island Plan:

- Cultural values assessment report by Boffa Miskell (November 2011)
- Ecological aspects of a 'Matakana Island Plan' for Matakana Island by Wildland Consultants (August 2011)
- The archaeology of Matakana Island by Archaeology B.O.P. (August 2011)
- Matakana Island landscape assessment by Isthmus Group Ltd. (August 20011)
- Matakana Island: Coastal hazards and natural coastal features – opportunities and constraints summary by Eco Nomos Ltd. (August 2011)
- Water, transport, access & soils by Land Matters Ltd. (August 2011)
- Matakana Island: Social and economic analysis by WBOPDC (December 2011).

2. The people, the community and the Island way of life

Kō tōku ngākau, kō tōu ngākau, kōtōna reo, tūitūitūitūia. Kei runga. Our strength and bond is with each other in our journey to strive to do the best we can to achieve a common goal (Hapū Management Plan).

2.1 The people and community

In 2012 Matakana Island had a population of 244 primarily living on the farmland. The majority are tangata whenua who whakapapa to the five hapū of Matakana and Rangiwaea Islands. Over half the population (132) speak te reo Māori.

The individual hapū have always maintained their unique identity and governance structures despite their shared kinship through their common ancestor, Te Rangihouhiri. These hapū connections extend to the islands of Tuhua and Motiti, as well as hapū on the mainland. The hapū have formed a collective known as Nga Hapū o te Moutere and are in the process of formalising the authority as the mandated representative entity, to manage internal and external relationships on behalf of the five hapū.

"We are whakapapa to these Islands and this continues to shape our view of the world and our place in it. Our marae are an important part of our culture and are used extensively. We lead self sufficient lifestyles that draw on the resources of our environment." (Hapū Management Plan)

Matakana Island provides a vast landscape of cultural heritage and resources that tangata whenua see as their duty to protect.

"Relationships with the whenua – that's the most important thing – without it we don't exist – we're a nobody – it gives us an identity – who we are and where we come from". (Cultural values assessment, 2011)

Most of the forested sand barrier is in private ownership and has 14 dwellings that are located close to the old saw mill site. Twelve dwellings are clustered directly north of the old mill and are rented out to tangata whenua. The other three dwellings are a few hundred metres further north on separate titles and are not permanently occupied. Although the remainder of the forested sand barrier has no dwellings, the current landowners would like the ability to subdivide and build dwellings on their land.

The current housing provisions on the farmland are modest but fit for the Island environs. New and affordable housing is a priority for the community, particularly

noting the expressed desire of hapu members living on the mainland to move back to the Island.

The median household income for Matakana Island was over one-third lower than that of Tauranga and Western Bay households (as per the 2006 census). However, when observed through a contemporary Māori model of wellbeing (Te Whare Tapa Wha), it is apparent that while the resident tangata whenua might be deprived of economic opportunities, they are rich in culture.

Over the years a number of people have left the Island due to a lack of employment. Tangata whenua would like to explore sustainable development opportunities that can create employment opportunities to bring hapū members back to the Island.

Some of the lots with free-hold titles on the farmland belong to non-Māori landowners some of whom live permanently on the Island. Even though these landowners may have a different culture, they are still part of the Matakana Island community and have their own aspirations for their land.

2.2 Cultural values

The Hapū Management Plan takes a four well-beings approach and is explicit in its cultural viewpoint, stating how this paradigm is 'interwoven' across each of the other three wellbeings. For Māori, cultural wellbeing is interconnected and shares a symbiotic relationship with the environmental, social and economic well-beings. The Plan states "*nothing should be taken in isolation or apart from our heritage and beliefs",* as the state of one well-being will impact on the others.

Similarly, this holistic and integrated viewpoint applies to how tangata whenua regard the land, air and sea, that is, each having a dependency on the other. For the hapū of Matakana and Rangiwaea, this association extends to the sand barrier, farmland, waters, surrounding islands and mainland so that nothing is considered in isolation, but rather any impact on one, can impact on the rest.

Through whakapapa, tangata whenua inherit the rights and duties of *rangatiratanga* (exercising of authority) and *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship) to achieve a 'healthy' balance across the four well-beings. Distinctions between resources still owned and resources no longer in Māori ownership, are relevant only to the question of how *rangatiratanga* and *kaitiakitanga* over that resource might now be expressed. This could include participation of tangata whenua within decision making processes, statutory acknowledgements, transfer of ownership, consultation required through the Resource Management Act, cultural monitoring protocols, iwi/hapū management plans, co-governance/management arrangements, and general goodwill on behalf of the parties involved.

Although the sand barrier is in private ownership, a sense of duty and obligation for tangata whenua to exercise *rangatiratanga* and *kaitiakitanga* remains. However, it is important that tangata whenua acknowledge that non-Māori landowners may

have different values that also need consideration. The challenge for the Island is to balance the proprietary and legal rights of private land owners with the cultural values of tangata whenua.

2.3 The way of life

The community has a strong sense of connectedness and belonging, and is relatively self-sufficient due to the body of water separating it from the mainland. The non-Māori landowners that live on the farmland indicated that one of the reasons for living on the Island is the relaxed way of life.

"For mainland observers, Matakana had gained the unflattering reputation of being backwards, underdeveloped and years behind the times……. For me and others, the failure to keep pace has preserved and contributed to the unique qualities of a way of life that is distinctive to Matakana. The strong traditional sense of belonging and relative freedom to develop at one's own pace has meant that life on the Island has a peace and tranquillity that is still in harmony with the values of the people."
Christine Kuka's statement of evidence to the Environment Court

The Matakana Island way of life is typified by its isolation, rural character and absence of large residential, commercial or tourist developments, the nature of which gives rise to the relaxed and highly self sufficient lifestyles of the Island population.

The Māori population of the Island is steeped in culture and tradition which strongly influences their view of the world and how they choose to live, work and play within contemporary society. They are a resourceful and resilient people. Good relations exist between the Māori and non-Māori residents due to their community mindedness and willingness to integrate and support one another. Quality relationships are critical to the success of any future development on the Island.

Unfettered access to the Tauranga Harbour and ocean remain high priorities for tangata whenua given their special relationship with whenua (land) and moana (sea), associated obligations and customary practices, and reliance on the environment for spiritual and physical sustenance.

Access to the open coast and food gathering areas are important to tangata whenua

2.4 Community facilities

The Island's marae, hauora, sports club and school provide examples of the collective unity of hapū to determine their future and ensure their cultural values are preserved.

Matakana Island has two functioning marae (Oruarahi and Opureora). During 2012 the primary school (kura) had 42 students and the pre-school (kohanga) had 11 children. Thirteen college students attend school on the mainland.

Matakana Island has a range of community facilities

Te Awanui Hauora promotes a holistic approach towards health and well-being and is supported by a general practitioner and a nurse that visits the clinic once a week.

Sport and recreation activities are an important community building block as it involves the entire community, beyond cultural boundaries. The Matakana Island Sports and Recreation Inc. provides a central facility that hosts netball, rugby, tennis and softball, amongst other pursuits such as the annual fishing competition.


Sport facilities bring the community together

2.5 Cultural and historic heritage

Included in the District Plan are 12 identified cultural heritage features and one built heritage feature (Te Kotukutuku School House) registered as a Category II Historic Place by New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Additionally, more than 400 archaeological sites, that have been recorded by the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA), are currently not included in the District Plan.

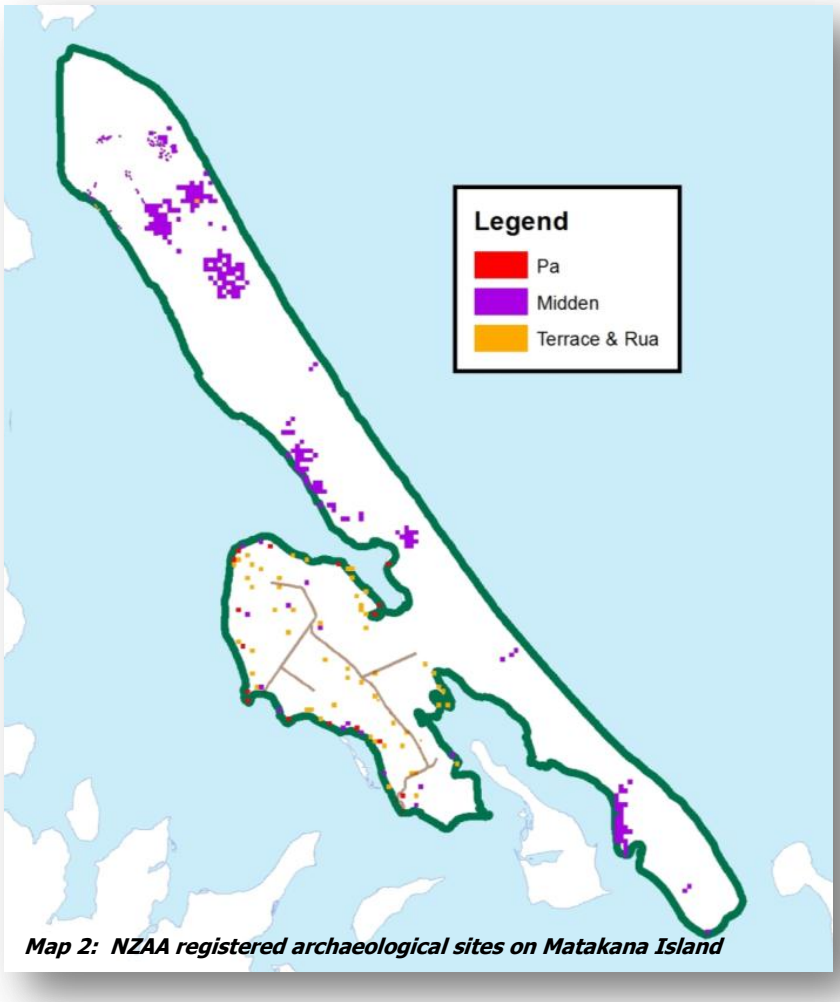

Te Kotukutuku School House

The farmland contains one of the highest concentrations of pā in the Bay of Plenty. To date, 37 pā have been recorded and are mainly located on the escarpments along the Harbour. Seven terraces and 12 rua are also recorded on the farmland. More than 300 midden sites are recorded on the forested sand barrier and 11 have been recorded on the farmland.

It appears from the current site inventory that the scale and intensity of the archaeological landscape on the Island dunes are more significant than that of the Papamoa dune plain.

It must however be recognised that the archaeological integrity or condition of the sites on the barrier dunes is extremely variable and the majority of recorded sites have been affected to some degree by 80 years of physical disturbance from operating production forestry and possibly gum digging prior to that. Many sites recorded from surface shell middens have been largely destroyed by forest operations.

Information regarding the rich archaeology of Matakana Island is incomplete due to the large size of the Island and the limited areas researched and investigated to date.



Map 2: NZAA registered archaeological sites on Matakana Island

2.6 Possible opportunities and threats

The tangata whenua population live a life based on Te Reo me ona Tikanga, their language, custom and practice. Matakana Island provides a haven that nurtures hapū identity, through its own marae, hauora, kohanga reo, kura, church and sports facility. An example is Te Kura o Te Kotukutuku, where tangata whenua assert educational outcomes consistent with the knowledge passed down from their ancestors, underpinning their values and beliefs and reinforcing culture, language and identity.

A leading concern of tangata whenua is the unknown impact that future development on the forested sand barrier will have on their way of life.

As described in 2.2 Cultural Values, of primary importance to tangata whenua is their ability to exercise rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga; that is their ability to protect and promote their heritage, values, beliefs and resources, through customary regulatory practices and controls. To enable tangata whenua to fulfil these obligations, access to the open coast, wahi tapu and customary resources is required, not withstanding the fact that ownership of the sandspit now rests largely with the forestry landowners.

Tangata whenua are concerned with the effect that development on the sand spit will have on the social fabric of the Island, specifically the risk of creating class distinctions and social disharmony resulting in a feeling of 'us and them' or the 'rich and the poor'. Tangata whenua have further expressed a fear that their cultural values will be subsumed by that of a new culture, particularly if the forested sand barrier was to be populated by people with no previous connection to the Island or insight to the Island's heritage and traditions.

The current residents of Matakana Island, both Māori and non-Māori are community minded, which contributes to the way of life, relaxed lifestyle and high level of self sufficiency. Sentiments drawn from the Cultural Values Assessment highlight concerns that new non-Māori residents will not socialise as part of the Island community, nor embrace the people and their way of life, for example, by not enrolling children at the Island school or participating in activities at the marae or sports club.

There are opportunities for development to occur on the Island provided any such development complements this way of life, is conducive to social harmony and prevents class distinction/social marginalisation (refer section 2.3). A key objective of any development must also address the sustainable future of the Islands social infrastructure, such as the kohanga reo, kura, marae, church, hauora and sports club, given their high value to the community.

2.7 People and the Island way of life: Vision, principles and actions

Vision:
Matakana Island is celebrated for its unique way of life.

Principles

1. The Island has a unique way of life that is valued, maintained and supported.
2. The nature and scale of development complements and sustains the Island way of life and fosters social and cultural harmony.
3. The cultural values of tangata whenua are recognised and actively protected.
4. Opportunities are created to enable tangata whenua to exercise rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga.
5. The land and the sea continue to sustain the people

Implementation strategies/actions

1. Access through the Island, particularly from Opureroa to Panepane and from the Tauranga Harbour to the ocean beach is secured for tangata whenua (in recognition of customary access) and visitors.
2. Sites of cultural and heritage significance are formally protected and access is provided to tangata whenua where appropriate.
3. The Island's heritage and culture is shared with visitors.
4. Improved health, education and social services that are sensitive to and integrated with the culture and way of life of the community.
5. Review the requirements for papakainga housing to ensure that there is flexibility to respond to the different needs of the Island and that papakainga housing is encouraged.
6. Encourage development that will contribute to the future of the existing social infrastructure and the cultural and social well-being of Matakana Island.
7. Development on land with a free-hold title should not be of a scale that dominates development on multiple owned Māori land.
8. Ensure that Council's planning documents support the unique culture and way of life on the Island.
9. Opportunities for ownership transfer, co-governance and management are explored, for example at Panepane.

3. The physical environment

3.1 Topography and geology:

The 24 kilometre long forested sand barrier has a frontal dune system along the open coast that is 100 to 150 metres wide. These dunes are between five and seven metres high. Inland from the dune system and on the northern end are low-lying swamps and small freshwater lakes. On the Tauranga Harbour side, most of the forested sand barrier is flat and low-lying.

Due to the sandy soils and exposure to the Pacific Ocean and tidal currents (especially at both entrances to the Tauranga Harbour), the landform of the forested sand barrier is dynamic in nature and has been and continues to be influenced by human activities and geographical and environmental factors.

Since the Kaharoa eruption some 700 years ago, the ocean foreshore has slowly advanced seawards, averaging approximately 0.2 metres/year.

The forested sand barrier has a high water table, between 1.5 and 2 metres below ground level. It is expected that with sea level rise the water table will rise.

The farmland is the oldest part of the Island landform and is derived from siltstones, sandstones, and conglomerates. The western side of the farmland rises to approximately 60 metres above mean sea level with a rolling contour and relatively high bluffs around the Harbour margins. The eastern side is 15 metres above mean sea level with rolling to flat contours.

3.2 Hazard risks associated with the physical environment

Coastal erosion and inundation

Open coast side:

Apart from the northern and southern ends, Matakana Island has a relative low risk of coastal inundation, due to the wide (100-150 metres) and high (5-7 metres) frontal dune system that extends along most of the ocean foreshore. There is evidence that wind erosion has occurred along much of the foreshore in historic times associated with disturbance of native sand binding vegetation. It is critically important that the native dune vegetation be retained or improved to stimulate natural dune repair.

The most significant shoreline changes have occurred and will continue along the lower lying northern and southern ends of the Island, which are the entrances to the Tauranga Harbour. Although there is evidence of foreshore accretion, the foreshore is likely to experience significant shoreline retreat in response to projected sea level rise over the next century and beyond. A conservative range of present sea level rise projections of between 0.5 - 1.5 metres over the next century

could see the ocean foreshore retreat by 20 - 35 metres to 60 - 100 metres respectively. As a result, the risk of coastal inundation from sea level rise may increase significantly.

Well developed frontal dune system that protects the Island and is a significant ecological feature

Harbour side:

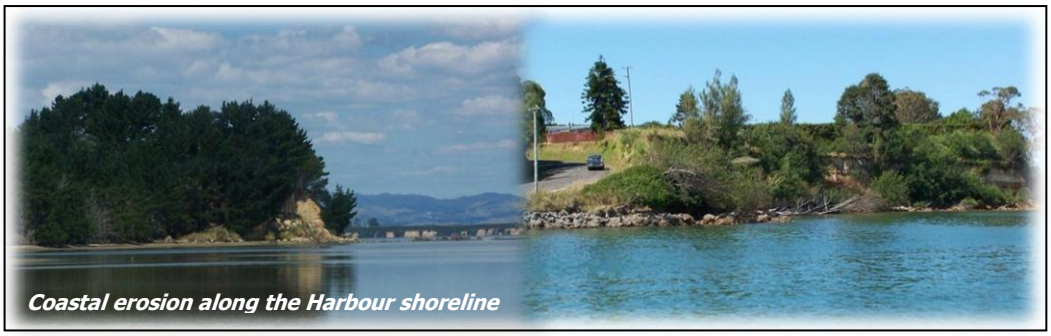
Sea level rise is likely to increase erosion adjacent to the Tauranga Harbour entrances.

On the Harbour side, the following areas are particularly vulnerable to inundation due to sea level rise:

- The wetland areas at the northern end of the forested sand barrier.
- The back-barrier sand flats along the landward side of Matakana Island at the northern end of the Island.
- The ecological area along Blue Gum Bay.
- The southern end of Matakana Island to the south of Duck Bay.

It can also be expected that the water table in low lying areas will rise as the sea level rises.

The Harbour shoreline is subject to coastal erosion associated with both tidal currents and wave action. This is most notable where tidal channels are close to the shoreline, for example parts of Hunters Creek.



Coastal erosion along the Harbour shoreline

Liquefaction risks

Liquefaction most commonly occurs in saturated loose sands and silty sands. Although the coastal sand deposits, such as along the frontal dune system, are generally resistant to liquefaction, the high water table that is present in most parts of the Island increases the risk.

According to studies undertaken in 2002, the frontal dune system is classified as having a "Minor Liquefaction" risk, with the rest of the forested sand barrier classified as a "Moderate Liquefaction" risk. Approximately 70% of the farmland is classified as having a "Minor Liquefaction" risk.

Tsunami risks

The risk from tsunami is presently unknown – though the limited available data suggests the potential for local and distantly-generated tsunami of 2 to 4 metres height for a return period of 500 years. This is unlikely to pose a threat along the ocean foreshore due to the wide and high frontal dune but could seriously inundate low-lying areas along the Harbour side of the Island and at the northern and southern ends. The serious erosion evident at the northern and southern ends of the Island does however suggest the occurrence of larger less frequent tsunami events – but as yet little is known about the potential magnitude or return period of such events.

However, the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has produced an indicative tsunami inundation map for tsunami of specific heights at the mean high water mark. According to the map, the entire forested sand barrier has to be evacuated if a tsunami wave exceeds 4 metres.

Fire risks

Although closely linked to the management of the production forest, the impact of a fire in a production forest can be greater than compared with rural land in general. Currently there are some areas along the forestry and public roads with a high concentration of weeds, such as pampas and gorse, that increase fire risks.

3.3 Ecology

The Island has a diverse range of habitats that result in a rich and varied array of biodiversity. Despite the extent of exotic forestry on the Island, there are over 200 indigenous vascular plant species known on the Island with eight of these species included in the New Zealand threatened classification lists.

The native dominated vegetation cover along the frontal dune system is commonly only 12 to 25 metres wide. Due to a lack of native sand binding vegetation, there is evidence of wind erosion and an opportunity to improve the dune system by extending the native vegetation to the backdune.

The dunes and beach are breeding and nesting grounds for a range of 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' shorebirds including the Northern New Zealand Dotterel, the Banded Dotterel, the Variable Oystercatcher and the Pied Stilt. The most extensive population of 'Threatened' Katipo spider in the Bay of Plenty is present along the dunes and beaches of Matakana Island.

The freshwater wetlands and dune lakes at the northern end have one of the best populations of swamp ferns in New Zealand. These species are classified 'At Risk – Declining'. Pines are also growing above a much lower canopy of indigenous

species of swamp grasses such as Knobby Club Rush (Wiwi), Tussock Swamp Twig Rush and Oioi. Some of the wetlands in the northern end are dominated by Grey Willow, Ti Kouka (cabbage tree) and Manuka.

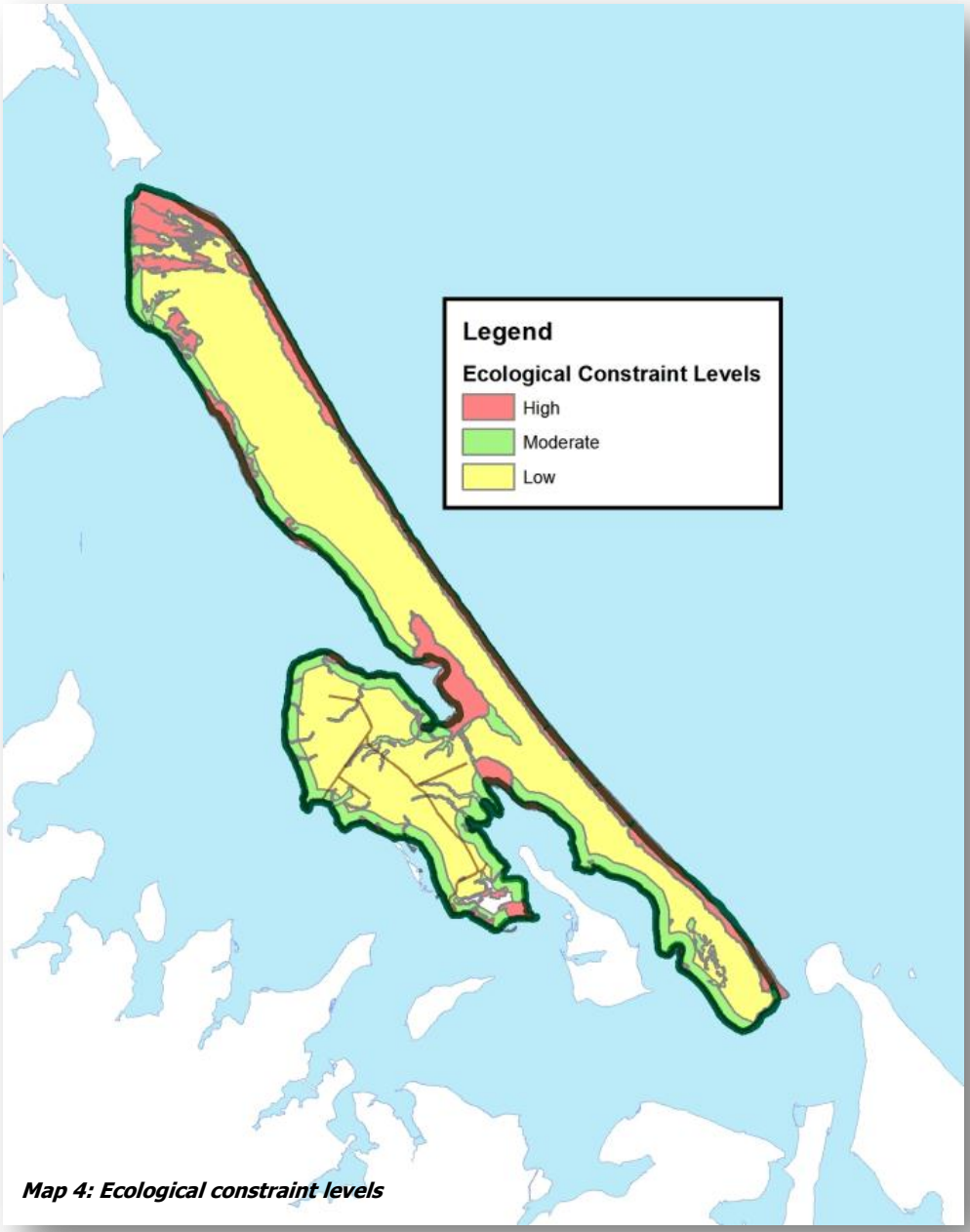
The freshwater lakes and wetlands also provide habitat for threatened or at risk birds, such as the Grey Duck, Australasian Bittern, Spotless Crake and the North Island Fernbird. Surveys have recorded three indigenous fish species in some of the drains at the northern end of the Island, namely; Shortfin Eel, Inanga and Giant Bully. They also recorded Mosquito Fish, an exotic pest species.

Map 3: Significant Ecological Features included in the District Plan

Copper Skink and Shore Skink are the only lizard species known on Matakana Island. Both species are classified as 'Not Threatened'.

In response to studies undertaken prior to 2009, the Western Bay of Plenty District Council has listed a number of Ecological Features in the District Plan, which are

shown on Map 3 (see the District Plan for more details on the Ecological Features). Most of the ecological features are along the coastal areas adjoining the Harbour on both the farmland and the forested sand barrier. The largest Ecological Feature, with an area of approximately 183 hectares, is located on the northern end of Matakana Island. In total, the Ecological Features measure approximately 585 hectares.



Map 4: Ecological constraint levels

A number of pockets of Pohutukawa, Karaka and Kanuka trees can be found on the Island.

The local community, Department of Conservation and Bay of Plenty Regional Council are actively involved in a number of wetland restoration projects, including the following:

1. On the north side of Waihirere Road, bounding part of Blue Gum Bay.
2. Near the intersection of Matakana Road and Matakana Point Road in gullies that drain westwards and flow into part of Blue Gum Bay.
3. On the coast south of Matakana Point, an estuarine wetland and a freshwater wetland in the adjacent gully are being restored.
4. At Opureora, an area of wet pasture is being restored to a wetland.

Weed control and pests

Weed control is required across Matakana Island. Marram, Coastal Tea Tree, gorse, boxthorn and other pest plant species are present on the sand dunes. Saltwater Paspalum has invaded a wetland at the northern end of the barrier island, covering a large area, and there are also infestations at other sites. Royal Fern and Reed Sweetgrass are also present in some of the wetlands. Wild Ginger and Smilax are present on roadsides in Opureora Village and may also be present elsewhere in native habitats. Other common widespread weed species are Grey Willow, pampas, Woolly Nightshade, and Brush Wattle. Weed control will need to be undertaken with care to ensure that the native environment is not adversely affected.

Matakana Island is free of deer, goats, wallabies, hedgehogs, hares, ferrets and weasels. However, the Island does have possums, pigs, stoats, rats, mice, rabbits and feral cats. The cat numbers have been dramatically reduced by trapping over the last few years. Although the Island has a relatively small population of wild pigs, they cause significant damage especially to the wetlands in the northern end of the Island where they tend to congregate for fresh water in the summer. The pig numbers are controlled by hunting, however this can disturb nesting birds.

3.4 Landscape

Viewed from Mauao, Bowentown and the ocean, the Matakana Island beach, frontal dune system and tree line (20 to 30 metres high pine plantation) have significant landscape value. The northern and southern ends are especially important and sensitive to change as they form the Harbour entrances.

Matakana Island viewed from Mauao

The District Plan confirms the importance of the land within 100 and 300 metres of Mean High Water Spring along the open coast and the Tauranga Harbour edge respectively by classifying them as 'Outstanding Landscape Features', and restricting development within those areas.

The landscape of the sand barrier along the Harbour

3.5 Cultural associations with the natural resources

The value of the natural environment extends beyond the protection of species that might be endangered or threatened. There are a number of species that may not be of high importance from a conservation perspective, but are of significance to tangata whenua as a food source (for example shellfish) or their use for general purposes (for example flax for weaving, and a variety of species used for rongoa Māori – traditional Māori medicine and remedies).

A number of fauna and flora species are also associated with Māori culture and the history of the hapū of the Island. An important obligation for tangata whenua is their ability to 'manaaki' or effectively host visitors to the Island, by providing from the 'pātaka kai' – the food cupboard, for food resources that the Islands of Matakana and Rangiwaea are renowned for.

By definition, tangata whenua means 'people of the land' which goes some way to explaining the inherited duty of care of tangata whenua to protect and conserve the natural environment for generations to come.

"Being kaitiaki to the land and waters of Matakana Island ….Knowledge passed down from my tupuna i.e. seasonal planting, fishing by the moon etc…teaching my mokopuna the values passed on to me from my tupuna i.e. names of places, caring for the water springs, working on the land to feed manuhiri, whanau, hapū and iwi."
Cultural values assessment

3.6 Possible opportunities and threats

The current low risk of coastal inundation from a storm can be further reduced by increasing the width of the area and density of native sand binding plants. This will reduce the impact of natural hazards and also improve the ecosystem of a number of 'Threatened' or 'At Risk' species.

The District Plan has a 'Coastal Protection Area – Open Coastline' (which is under appeal in certain areas) and 'Outstanding Landscape Feature' overlay on the land

within 100 metres of Mean High Water Spring. However these overlays do not acknowledge the sensitivity and value of the ecosystem along the frontal dune system. It is therefore important that the frontal dune system is protected.

To enhance the protection of all ecological features, a 20 metre wide buffer strip should be established along the edge of the ecological features. These buffer strips should be treated as 'moderately constrained' features.

Ecological features, such as the wetland habitat, are primarily threatened by inappropriate development that could result in loss and degradation through reclamation and drainage, reduced water quality, agricultural chemical seepage, grazing, and an increase in predators such as cats and dogs. The relatively high water table, and the impact sea level rise will have on it, may require a different approach towards wastewater disposal practices.

The Western Bay of Plenty District Council and the Regional Council should encourage and support restoration projects, and work with the landowners to develop a management plan to improve the natural environment and to control pest plants and animals (on both the sand barrier and farmland).

It is not yet resolved whether the soil is contaminated at the old saw mill site and surrounding areas, and what actions may be required to address the issue. The Regional Council and TKC Holdings Ltd are currently addressing the issues and the outcome may impact on the future land use within the area.

3.7 Physical environment: Vision, principles and action

Vision:
Matakana Island is recognised and visited for its biodiversity and ecosystems.

Principles

1. Protect, and where possible, enhance the biodiversity values of the Island by ensuring:
    - endangered species flourish;
    - foreshore habitats and fauna, and natural regeneration processes are protected;
    - freshwater lakes, estuaries and wetlands are sustained.
2. Matakana Island is pest free.
3. The Island landscape (as viewed from on the Island and from outside) maintains a dominance of tree vegetation on the forested sand barrier, and a rural 'feel' on the farmland.
4. Natural hazards are avoided and fire risks are minimised.

Implementation strategies/actions

1. Important ecological sites are formally protected and ecological buffer zones are created around these areas.
2. Restoration projects are undertaken to enable at risk or threatened fauna and flora to thrive.
3. Invasive plant species and animal pests are eradicated.
4. Built form on the farmland is set back from the water's edge.
5. Built form on the forested sand barrier is not obvious when viewed from the ocean or Harbour.
6. The effects of coastal erosion, liquefaction and a possible tsunami are identified and future development is located in areas of least risk to minimise the risk to lives or economic development.
7. Options for managing Harbour erosion that is affecting sensitive sites are investigated.
8. Fire risk management is a component of all activities.

4. Economy, access and infrastructure

4.1 The economy

The Island has a long and varied history of primary production. From initial Māori settlement to the present day, due to the favourable micro-climate, primary production (agriculture - both pastoral and arable, horticulture and forestry) continues to be the predominant economic driver of the Island.

The five dairy farms, three kiwifruit orchards, two avocado orchards, maize blocks, other small-scale horticultural activities, and a native tree nursery are the current major landuse activities of the fertile farmland area. These provide a limited number of full time labour opportunities and some seasonal employment.

The majority of the forested sand barrier is almost exclusively used for exotic commercial plantation forestry. This began in the 1920s and is expected to remain the dominant landuse in the medium term given the harvest rotation cycle of forestry.

Forestry and the proximity to the Port of Tauranga led to the establishment of the mill in the 1950s. The mill was decommissioned in the early 2000s and this had a severe negative effect on local on-island employment opportunities. Due to the scarcity of other full time work the closure of the mill resulted in the Island being classified as an employment 'black spot' by the Ministry of Social Development, resulting in residents being unable to claim unemployment benefit.

Due to the lack of employment opportunities a number of residents commute to the mainland for work.

4.2 Access to Matakana Island and infrastructure

Being an island, the retention of reliable, efficient and affordable transportation links underpin the existing economy, the expansion of current businesses, the development of future commercial enterprises and related growth in the local labour market.

The barge service is the lifeline for the Island

The Island is dependent on the barge links from Omokoroa to Opureora and from Tauranga (Port and Cross Road boat ramps) to Panepane. For the majority of residents and business activities, the Omokoroa barge service is

the lifeline for the Island. The service is run by a private company but is open for the use of the general public, Island residents and businesses.

The current forestry operations are reliant on the service to the Port/Cross Road boat ramps from the Panepane ramp. These services are operated by the forestry companies but the service is restricted in terms of "permitted" passengers and hours of operation.

There are a number of landowners that have their own boats to get across to the mainland and use public boat ramps or private jetties.

4.3 Infrastructure

Internal Transport Links

The farmland is serviced by a limited number of Council owned and maintained sealed and unsealed roads. Due to the low traffic volumes in comparison to other parts of the District the upgrading of the unsealed roads will remain a low priority.

The Panepane boat ramp can be reached from the farmland by Island residents, along the privately owned Hume Highway, now that access agreements between the landowners and Council are in place. The road however is only maintained as a low grade, working forest road and there are potential safety implications and road user conflict between large logging trucks and other vehicles. Any development on the forested sand barrier would have to address these issues in a satisfactory manner.

Water supply

There is a lack of information surrounding the quantity and quality of the Matakana Island groundwater supply. It is however noted that excessive groundwater usage would potentially put the Island aquifer at risk of salt water intrusion.

There are six consented bores on the Island that use 10,000m^3/week for dairy wash down, stock supply, irrigation and horticulture. The majority of homes rely on rain water supply which can be problematic in dry years.

Construction of a Council water supply from the mainland is considered to be too costly given the present economic climate and low numbers of Island residents. Therefore, any additional dwellings or development will have to provide their own water supply.

Wastewater

All wastewater on the Island is currently dealt with by disposal either through soak holes or conventional on-site septic tank treatment. Full sewerage reticulation for the Island remains cost-prohibitive due to the small number and dispersed nature of dwellings.

There is a strong community support for the development of more sustainable treatment through the upgrading of existing systems where practicable, to comply with AS/NZ 1547:2000 as well as the standards of the Regional On-site Effluent Treatment Plan and discharge requirements of the Regional Water and Land Plan.

An on-going concern for tangata whenua is the presence on the Island of the pipeline and associated ocean outfall, 300 metres from the open coast, that carries and discharges the treated wastewater from the Katikati sewerage treatment plant. The process to address this will be through the statutory resource consent process that will be separate to the Matakana Island Plan.

Solid Waste and Recycling

Of concern to the Island residents is the current lack of an affordable and regular waste collection service. The community is conscious that any further development will potentially generate additional waste and exacerbate this problem. Some residents take their recycling with them from the Island but a lack of recycling facilities at Omokoroa means that it is long way to travel to the nearest transfer stations at either Katikati or Tauranga. Resolution of this issue is strongly linked to barge access and costs.

Telecommunications and Electricity

Land line telecommunications are available on the farmland and cell phone reception is available but variable throughout the Island. Electricity supply to the Island from the mainland is via Hunters Creek to the old saw mill site and then to adjoining dwellings. It is believed that surplus electricity delivery capacity is available due to the decommissioning of the saw mill.

4.4 Economic challenges and opportunities

There is general agreement that part of the longer term vision for the Island should include the development of an enhanced, diversified and sustainable local economy that supports a vibrant Island community. However there are differences in opinion between landowners as to how this may be best achieved. It is important that development is built on the strengths and opportunities of the Island. This Plan is not intended to be overly prescriptive in determining the range of activities that could be envisaged. However, it is noted that this growth must be of a nature acceptable to the community and at a rate that can be absorbed by Island society in order to safeguard and complement the unique sense and feel of Matakana Island. For these reasons the argument that 'scale' is required in order to sustain the Island economy into the future is not accepted.

The rural feel of the farmland

While there is a recognition of the economic imperative associated with development, it must be co-ordinated, integrated and focused on the long term to protect the values and character of the Island and its community in perpetuity.

Adequate information from the detailed specialist studies regarding Matakana Island and the Hapū Management Plan is available to ensure that the Island shapes development as opposed to development shaping the Island. It is therefore important that future development flows from these studies and the Hapū Management Plan

With an Island location and proximity to the marine environment, aquaculture should be given recognition as a possible economic driver. This has the potential to be land based with any large structures hidden by vegetation.

The Island's soils and microclimate mean that there is latent potential for diversification into high value, niche market garden crops that could provide sustainable work for an additional local work force.

The commercial plantation forestry on the forested sand barrier may be diversified over time into other tree crops for specialised markets. An option could be to undertake re-planting with Manuka specifically as a source of pollen for honey production. This could be in tandem with the development of a local bee-keeping cottage industry.

Given the perceived isolation of the Island, the tranquil pace of life, the outstanding environmental and archaeological features, and special ecosystems it is particularly suited to the development of home-stays and small-scale eco-tourism type ventures. There could be additional environmentally low-key business associated with activities such as horse riding, cycling, wild life watching, heritage and cultural tours that could enhance any visit to the Island.

There is however a strong desire that the Island retains its individuality and so restrictions on the numbers of people, length of stay, and visitor nights allowed may have to be considered. As one local put it "*we are happy to welcome people to our island, but equally happy to see them go*".

There is the potential to develop the forested sand barrier in a low key manner with limited additional residential development sympathetically blended into the timberland landscape. There is debate as to the number of dwellings that could be constructed, the nature of their location and their overall density. In recognition of the development constraints of the Island and the operational requirements of the forest managers, a clustered (as opposed to a widely dispersed) development pattern should be promoted. Due to the lack of utility and service infrastructure on the forest barrier, all house sites would have to be self-sufficient in terms of water supply and waste water disposal.

As previously noted excessive groundwater usage would potentially put the Island's aquifer at risk of salt water intrusion, which would restrict certain development

activities. Due to the risk of a rising water table from sea level rise, existing and new development should consider the use of innovative on-site wastewater systems, including composting and low pressure systems with the possibility of communal systems for clustered residential development.

An innovative and sustainable solution to deal with solid waste is required to ensure that it does not create pollution on the Island or hamper development.

Travelling costs between the Island and the mainland are high, given the relatively low number of regular passengers and additional operating costs due to on-going silting of the navigation channel. Although the barge from Omokoroa is the only publicly accessible transport service between the Island and the mainland, it does not obtain any government subsidy that would apply to most other public transport services, for example the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's bus service.

It would be preferable if development on the Island could incrementally increase passenger and vehicle movements on the ferry to achieve greater viability and resilience for the service and reduce individual passenger travelling costs.

4.5 Economy, access & infrastructure: Vision, principles and actions

Vision:
A thriving, sustainable economy that leverages and complements the uniqueness of the Island, its location, the environment, and the community.

Principles

1. The Island economy retains a high level of self-sufficiency.
2. Access to the Island is economically viable.
3. Sustainable employment opportunities are available for residents.
4. Sustainable eco-tourism that reflects and promotes the Island's natural and cultural values.
5. A sustainable agricultural and horticultural base.
6. The scale and nature of development acknowledges the unique cultural and natural environments.

Implementation Strategies/Actions

1. Water transport infrastructure (including navigation channels) is maintained to meet the current and future needs.
2. Explore opportunities to reduce travelling cost between the mainland and the Island.
3. Development that generates employment opportunities for the local community.
4. Islander's initiate opportunities to develop the economy.
5. Opportunities are provided for visitors to experience the Island.
6. Explore opportunities for land based aquaculture and marine education to be based on the Island.

7. Ensure that development is eco-friendly, and is located in a way and of a scale that complements the Island's values.
8. In recognition of the risks and values, development (particularly on the forested sand barrier) should be clustered.
9. Ensure that subdivision and development does not compromise the functioning and economic viability of rural production activities.
10. Development should not have any flow-on effects for housing affordability for tangata whenua, for example, an increase in land values or additional cost due to a required higher level of service.
11. Water supply, wastewater and stormwater disposal are self-sufficient and sustainable. Solid waste is disposed of sustainably. This will require an investigation into appropriate solutions.

5. Future land use and subdivision

5.1 Current planning framework

During the first review of the District Plan in 2009, the unique characteristics of Matakana Island and its people were acknowledged and given greater consideration than in previous plans.

The Explanatory Statement to the Rural Zone within the 2010 Decisions version of the District Plan (First Review) required a comprehensive 'Whole of Island Plan' to be prepared before consideration could be given to any intensive or large-scale development noting the Island's rich cultural history, and the sensitivity of its landscape and natural environment. Although most of the Matakana Island specific provisions were appealed, the appellants agreed that the development approach of a 'Whole of Island Plan' was warranted.

The District Plan - First Review became operative on 16 June 2012, except for provisions of that Plan that related specifically to Matakana Island and were still under appeal to the Environment Court. Until those appeals are resolved, the provisions of the 2002 District Plan and the 30 January 2010 Decisions Version of the Proposed District Plan remain applicable.

(a) 2002 District Plan

Under this Plan, Matakana Island was zoned Rural G and treated the same as Rural G zoned land throughout the District. The General Farming Lot Rule provided for a minimum lot size of 40 hectares. This would have allowed an additional 79 lots to be created on the sand barrier, adding to the existing 31 titles and giving a potential minimum total of 110 dwellings on that part of the Island.

The 2002 District Plan also provided for papakainga development on multiple-owned Māori land. There was a requirement for a minimum of 2,000m² net land area per dwelling, and the scale of the proposed development determined the activity status and planning requirements.

Included in the 2002 District Plan were designations for proposed government purpose reserves for wildlife conservation. This designation included a 50m wide coastal strip (measured from Mean High Water Spring) along the open coast and parts of the inner harbour edge, and the three lots at the northern end of the Island on which the fresh water lakes are located.

The 2002 District Plan also had specific controls over matters such as ecological, landscape and heritage features, and natural hazards.

(b) 2012 District Plan – First Review

The District Plan - First Review identifies Matakana Island as having attributes that require a different planning methodology to that of rural land elsewhere in the District. These attributes relating to archaeological, cultural, spiritual, ecological and landscape values, informed the 2009 District Plan Review approach to rural subdivision and land use activity on Matakana Island.

In the District Plan – First Review (Rural Zone rules) there are additional restrictions placed on Matakana Island for the following: minor dwellings, accommodation and education facilities for more than 4 people, places of assembly and protection lot subdivision. The General Farming Lot Rule (minimum lot size of 40 ha), as part of the Rural Zone provisions, was carried through to the District Plan – First Review from the 2002 District Plan.

The designations for proposed government coastal reserves for wildlife conservation, as included in the 2002 District Plan did not roll over into the District Plan - First Review. As a result, the 50m wide coastal strip along the open coast and parts of the inner harbour edge, and the three lots at the northern end on which the fresh water lakes are situated, are no longer earmarked for a government reserve.

The District Plan - First Review also provides for papakainga development on multiple-owned Māori land, in the form of dwellings and related community facilities, which do not have to be associated with marae. There is a requirement for a minimum of 2,000m² net land area per dwelling, and the scale of the proposed development determines the activity status and planning requirements.

5.2 Limitations of current planning framework

The Island has a number of characteristics that are not typical of the Rural Zone in the rest of the District, and these require specific attention.

The following are the main limitations of the District Plan (both the 2002 District Plan and the 2012 District Plan - First Review):

- The objectives and policies are not sufficiently robust to protect the social and cultural values of the Island.
- The rules have limited regard to the Matakana and Rangiwaea Islands Hapū Management Plan, which was developed subsequent to the District Plan – First Review becoming operative in June 2012.
- The rules for Matakana Island are broadly the same as those that apply to all other rural parts of the District and are not considered responsive enough to the special characteristics of the Island.

- The rules do not sufficiently protect the fragile ecosystem along the ocean facing frontal dune system.
- The General Farming Lot rule provides for subdivision into 40 hectare blocks. The potential consequence of this rule is a "scattered" built form throughout the Island without consideration for the specific impact on landscape and rural amenity.

In light of the various specialists studies, the Matakana and Rangiwaea Islands Hāpu Management Plan and the draft Matakana Forest Park Management Plan prepared by TKC Holdings Limited, it is clear that the Island (including its people and communities) does not have in all respects the capability to accommodate subdivision at the level and nature currently provided for in the 2002 District Plan or the District Plan – First Review. It is Council's view therefore that subdivision and new dwellings should be restricted to below that currently provided for in both of these District Plans, unless a development can demonstrate that it meets the principles below. Further, and as discussed in section 2.0 of this Plan, the nature and scale of buildings associated with any land use activity must also complement and acknowledge the values of the Island and its community.

5.3 Future land use and subdivision: Vision, principles and actions

Vision:
Land use and subdivision complements the uniqueness of Matakana Island, its location, the environment, the landscape, its people and community.

Principles

Future land use and subdivision on the farmland and the forested sand barrier should:

1. Value, maintain and support the Island community, their cultural values and the Island way of life.
2. Protect, and where possible, enhance the biodiversity values of the Island.
3. Complement, and where possible, enhance the Island landscape, characterised by a dominance of tree vegetation on the forested sand barrier, and a rural 'feel' on the farmland.
4. Be located and designed to mitigate risk to life and damage to properties and the environment from natural hazards.
5. Incorporate best practice responses to the potential effects of global warming and climate change.
6. Incorporate sustainable design and operating practices.
7. Enhance sustainable employment opportunities for the Island community.

Land use and subdivision on the forested sand barrier should:

8. Not be of a scale and nature that would dominate any future development of the principal community of the farmland and their Island way of life.

Implementation strategies/actions

1. Inclusion of references to this Plan and the Hapū Management Plan in the District Plan.
2. Include the frontal dune system along the open coast as a Significant Ecological Feature in the District Plan to ensure that future development and land use will enhance this significant asset.
3. Investigate how an additional buffer strip around Significant Ecological Features can be attained.
4. Consider changes to the District Plan to manage subdivision by reference to a maximum density instead of a minimum lot size to allow clustered development as opposed to development being "scattered" across the Island.
5. Develop criteria in the District Plan:
    - That will manage the scale and nature of land use activities, subdivision and buildings to ensure that the farmland retains a 'rural feel' and additional buildings on the forested sand barrier blend with the current landscape.
    - To ensure that future development on the forested sand barrier does not overwhelm the current social cohesiveness of the Island.
6. Ensure that buildings on both the farmland and forested sand barrier are set back from the water's edge.
7. Ensure that land use activities acknowledge and incorporate best practice to minimise water use, wastewater and solid waste.
8. Consider the merits of incorporating the 'management plan' approach, as included in the draft Matakana Forest Park Management Plan, as a District Plan tool to:
    - Promote sustainable development.
    - Provide access by tangata whenua to cultural and heritage sites and the open coast.
    - Ensure that consent conditions are met, such as the planting and maintenance of the frontal dunes.

6. On-going relationships

The Matakana Island Plan has identified a number of development opportunities and constraints on both the forested sand barrier and the farmland that may not be supported by all landowners. However, the Western Bay of Plenty District Council is committed to work with the respective landowners and the community to advance the vision statements and principles included in the previous sections.

The Hapū Management Plan for Matakana and Rangiwaea Islands has been received and under current legislation Council must take into account the Plan. Council has a protocol for responding to such plans and this will occur independently of the Matakana Island Plan. The protocol requires that the parties work together in order to ensure that the Plan is taken into account, rather than just being a reference document that sits on a shelf.

The five Matakana and Rangiwaea Islands hapū currently have representation on Te Komiti Māori.

The Island is part of the newly defined Katikati - Waihi Beach Ward represented on Council by three councillors.

Council is committed to the building of relationships around the future management of Panepane.

It is acknowledged that the forestry landowners have business challenges due to the unfavourable economic climate. Council is committed to work with all landowners to look at a range of options to diversify the economy in a sustainable manner.

These all require that Council improves existing communication practices and nurtures the relationships between itself, tangata whenua and landowners.
