

Kapiti Coast District Council Proposed District Plan
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT VERSION
Coastal Environment Background Report

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

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2	03/06/2015	Second Draft issued for review	Brad Coombs	Brad Coombs
3	10/06/2015	Final report issued for incorporation into the Stakeholder Engagement Version.	Brad Coombs	Brad Coombs

KAPITI COAST DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAN REVIEW: COASTAL ENVIRONMENT BACKGROUND REVIEW

Task

To provide a background report on the methodology and the process for re-drafting the inland boundary of the Coastal Environment for the Kapiti District Proposed District Plan (PDP), in response to submissions on the PDP requesting a narrower inland boundary.

Submission Scope

Frank and Vicky Boffa's submission (no. 485) sought the re-consideration of the inland and seaward extent of the coastal environment. The seaward extent is under review between the Kapiti Coast District and the Greater Wellington Regional Councils. The location of the inland location of the boundary of the Coastal Environment is the subject of this report.

Background

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010

Policy 1 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS 2010) provides guidance in relation to the extent and characteristics of the coastal environment.

Policy 1 sets out the physical components or characteristics that may be present within the coastal environment: the coastal marine area, coastal islands, areas where coastal processes, influences or qualities are significant, coastal vegetation and habitat, elements and features that contribute to natural character, interrelated coastal marine and terrestrial systems, and physical resources and built facilities that have altered the coastal environment.

Policy 1 essentially sets out a list of physical components and attributes that are expected to be present within the coastal environment and therefore tends to become somewhat of a 'check list'. The 'extent and characteristics' set out in Policy 1 do not provide a definition for the coastal environment, as such, but provide a feel for what could be found in the coastal environment.

Interestingly Policy 1 does **not** require that the boundaries of the coastal environment are determined, however in order to give effect to Policies 13, 14 and 15, it is important to understand whether certain land features and areas are within the coastal environment or not, so by inference the boundaries of the coastal environment should be identified to provide planning certainty.

Policy 13 provides guidance in relation to the preservation of natural character in the coastal environment. Policy 13 requires:

- The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and its' protection from inappropriate subdivision, use and development:
 - Avoidance of adverse effects on areas of outstanding natural character in the coastal environment;
 - Avoidance of significant adverse effects and avoidance, remedying or mitigation of effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment.
 - Assessing the natural character of the coastal environment by mapping or identifying, at least, areas of high natural character.

Policy 13 also sets out a list of 'matters' that, by implication, should be considered when assessing natural character in the coastal environment. Those matters are set out in Policy 13(2) and form a type of checklist for the assessment of natural character.

Policy 13 sets up a mismatch between the identification of '*areas of at least high natural character*' and, '*avoiding adverse effects of activities on natural character in areas of the coastal environment with outstanding natural character*'.

While **high natural character** must be **identified**, **outstanding natural character** is to be **protected**. In reality this requires the identification of both.

Policy 14 promotes the restoration and rehabilitation of the coastal environment. The policy sets out a series of methods by which natural character could be restored or rehabilitated. Interestingly Policy 14 does not identify when natural character is to be restored or rehabilitated, just that those processes are 'promoted' by the policy.

As with Policies 1, 13 and 15 in relation to the coastal environment, natural character and outstanding natural features and landscapes respectively, Policy 14 provides a starting point for the factors that could lead to the restoration and rehabilitation of natural character. In practice these factors tend to be reinterpreted as they are 'given effect to' by relevant resource management plans.

Policy 15 requires the avoidance of adverse effects on outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes in the coastal environment. The same Policy also requires the avoidance of significant adverse effects and avoidance, remedying or mitigation of other adverse effects of activities on other natural features and landscapes in the coastal environment.

Policy 15(c) requires the identification and assessment of natural features and natural landscapes. A list of factors is also set out in Policy 15(c), which again provides a type of check list for natural feature and natural landscape assessment.

Summary

Policy 1 provides a list of components or characteristics which will, or are likely to be found in the coastal environment. The policy gives guidance to the identification of the extent of the coastal environment and therefore by inference the setting of boundaries.

Policies 13 and 15 are framed up similarly, requiring the protection of outstanding natural character values (Policy 13) and outstanding landscape values (Policy 15), the avoidance of significant adverse effects on natural character (Policy 13) and landscapes (Policy 15) and the remedying and mitigation of other adverse effects on other natural character and landscape values in the coastal environment. Both Policies also set up a list of matters or factors, which tend to be used as the starting point for the assessment of Natural Character and Landscape values in the Coastal Environment.

On balance, Policies 1, 13, 14 and 15 point towards the identification of an inland boundary of the coastal environment in order to provide some certainty for Councils and for land managers and owners in relation to the identification of outstanding and high natural character and the protection of areas of outstanding natural character and outstanding natural features and landscapes within the coastal environment.

Approaches to Coastal Environment Boundaries

Three approaches for the identification of an inland boundary of the Coastal Environment from the Banks Peninsula Landscape Study have been used various ways throughout New Zealand and are generally applied to coastal environment assessment:

- Back to the nearest dominant ridgeline (the historical and landform approach);
- Only the area of active coastal influence (typically determined by vegetation communities that are tolerant of salt spray); and
- An arbitrary distance back from Mean High Water Springs (MHWS).

Each of these three approaches have some merit and have been accepted by the Environment Court in the past, depending on the specific context. For example, the arbitrary distance, with some micro-siting, adopted as appropriate for the Bank Peninsula Study was different from the first dominant ridge approach that was adopted for the Man O War case.

In the case of the Kapiti Coastal District, the scale and landform context is very different to both Banks Peninsula and to Man O War Bay. Across the Kapiti Coastal District, the implications of the various methods available lead to very different outcomes in relation to the identification of an inland Coastal Environment boundary.

Coastal Environment Boundary Methodology

Given the methods outlined in the Banks Peninsula Decision, there are three options of re-looking at the inland boundary of the coastal environment:

1. Back to the nearest dominant ridgeline

This approach relates to a visual connection between the sea and the land. This is the approach that the first inland boundary of the coastal environment was selected by, in conjunction with the second approach.

2. Only the area of active coastal influence (typically determined by vegetation communities that are tolerant of salt spray)

This approach favours the biophysical attributes to indicate the influence and effect of the coast. This approach is perhaps more scientific, as saline plant communities can be surveyed and measured, however does not consider the perceptual attributes.

3. An arbitrary distance back from Mean High Water Springs (MHWS).

This approach is almost purely pragmatic and assists when either urban land or very large areas of land would be captured by either or both of the first two. This approach is more planning driven and helps to rationalize the need for NZCPS assessment across large areas or in most instances.

The approach for the identification of the inland Coastal Environment boundary for the Kapiti Coast District is a combination of the three:

Firstly, where there is a bold, or topographically strong landscape backdrop (i.e, an escarpment) immediately adjacent to the coastal edge, then the inland boundary is back to the first dominant ridgeline. This is determinative at the Paekakariki escarpment. To some extent approach number two is also captured here as the landform hosts the coastal influences – saline tolerant species, visual connections, etc.

For the rest of the district, where the coastal plains or edge are deeper, the inland boundary is determined by a setback from MHWS, however not in an arbitrary way. In the urbanized areas the inland boundary is relatively narrow and includes coastal dunes, coastal edge reserves and roads and generally the first lines of houses. While the urbanization of the land has reduced the coastal influences through earthworks, the removal of coastal vegetation and the introduction of built form, the front lines of properties and structures clearly have a physical and perceptual connection to the coast and the marine area. In the non-urbanized areas the inland boundary is a deeper offset and includes the first line of dunes and coastal vegetation. In QEII park this extends back to the inside line of the dunes.

The exact boundary of the offset method above is determined by coastal influence factors: the inside edge of the coastal dunes and saline tolerant vegetation. Where river mouths and estuaries retreat back into the land, so does the offset and the coastal environment boundary.

This is the methodology that has been used to re-consider and to re-draft the inland boundary of the Coastal Environment for the KCDC PDP.

The approaches used for mapping the Coastal Environment boundary line and the resulting location of the line are appended to this report.

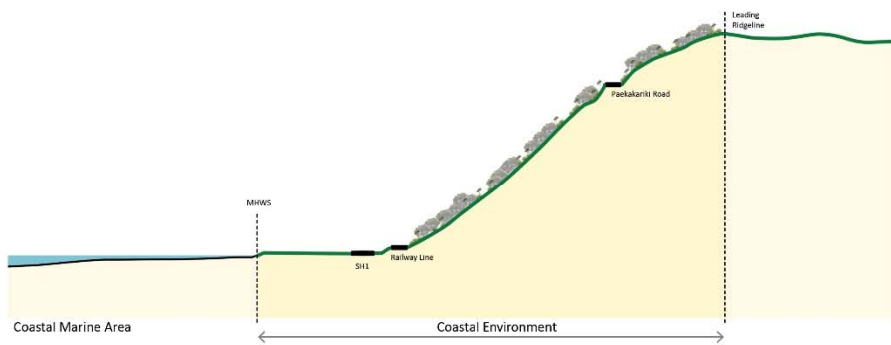


BRAD COOMBS

Registered NZILA Landscape Architect
Isthmus

Sources:

1. New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010. See relevant Policies in Appendix 1.
2. Natural Character and the NZCPS 2010. National Workshop – Summary of Discussion and Outcomes. Department of Conservation.
3. NZCPS 2010 Implementation Guidance Introductory Note. Department of Conservation.
4. NZCPS 2010 Guidance Note Policy 1: Extent and characteristics of the coastal environment.

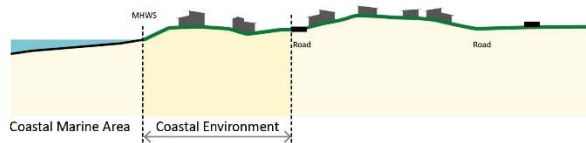


*Seaward extent of Coastal Environment / Responsibilities yet to be determined between KCDC + GWRC.
Drawings are diagrammatic only.

1. PAEKAKARIKI ESCARPMENT - LANDFORM APPROACH



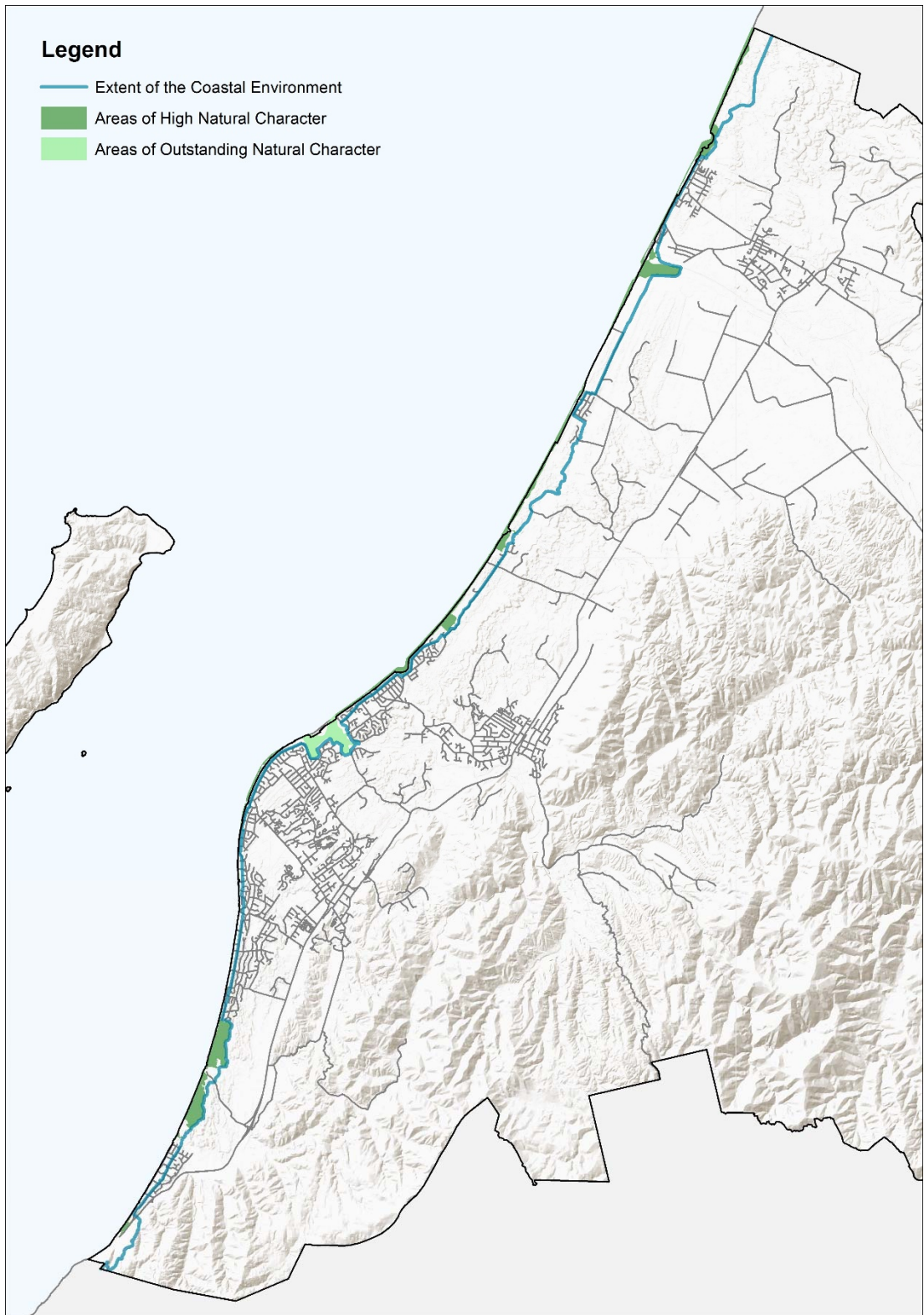
2. QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK - RURAL AREAS - LANDFORM AND BIOPHYSICAL APPROACH



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Drawings are diagrammatic only.

3. URBAN AREAS - SETBACK APPROACH

(GENERALLY THE FIRST FEW LINES OF HOUSES - MICRO-SITED TO CADASTRAL BOUNDARIES)



Note that Kapiti Island is not illustrated as having either high or outstanding natural character on this overview map. This area is still under review. It is likely that the island will largely have outstanding natural character with some areas of high natural character.