

**BEFORE THE AUCKLAND UNITARY PLAN INDEPENDENT  
HEARINGS PANEL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991 and  
the Local Government (Auckland  
Transitional Provisions) Act 2010

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of **TOPIC 081a** Rezoning and Precincts  
(Geographical Areas)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of the submissions and further submissions  
set out in the Parties and Issues Report

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**STATEMENT OF PRIMARY EVIDENCE OF STEPHEN KENNETH BROWN ON  
BEHALF OF AUCKLAND COUNCIL  
LANDSCAPE**

**29 January 2016**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Stephen Kenneth Brown. I am giving evidence in these proceedings on behalf of the Auckland Council (**Council**). I hold a Bachelor of Town Planning degree and a post-graduate Diploma of Landscape Architecture. I am a Fellow and past president of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, an Affiliate Member of the New Zealand Planning Institute, and have practised as a landscape architect for 33 years.
  
2. During that period, the great majority of my professional practice has focussed on landscape assessment and planning. This has included evaluating the landscape effects associated with a wide variety of coastal development projects, including those of:
  - Various Waitemata Harbour crossing options in 2002/3 (for OPUS and NZTA);
  - the current Waterview Connection upgrade of S16 and the North-western Motorway (for Transit NZ);
  - the Sandspit Marina proposal (for Auckland Council);
  - the ALPURT B2 Waiwera River crossing on SH1 (for the Auckland Regional Council);
  - the proposed Weiti River bridge and highway (for the Auckland Regional Council);
  - the Southdown Power Station (Mercury Energy / Transalta);
  - the Papamoa Gateway Project (for Tauranga City Council);
  - the Marsden Point port development (for Northport); and
  - a number of marina proposals in the early 1990s for the Americas Cup Planning Authority.
  
3. More strategically, I have undertaken and participated in many landscape assessments aimed at identifying landscape values at the district and regional levels. Of relevance to the current application, I have twice undertaken landscape assessments of the Auckland Region (in 1982-4 and 2002-13), and – among others – have also been responsible for studies of:
  - the West Coast Region - Buller / Grey / Westland Districts: Landscape & Natural Character (2012);



- Buller District: Landscape & Natural Character (2010/2011) – for Meridian Energy Ltd in relation to the Mokihinui River appeals;
  - the Waikato Region: peer review of Outstanding Natural Landscapes (2011/12);
  - the Auckland Region: Outstanding Natural Features – Geological / Geomorphological (2012);
  - the Auckland Region: Amenity Values (2012);
  - the Auckland Region: Natural Character (2010 & 2012/13);
  - the Auckland Region: Landscape (2001-8);
  - Otorohanga District (2009/10);
  - the Horizons (Manawatu Wanganui) Region: Landscape – for Mighty River Power in relation to the Turitea Wind Farm application (2009/10);
  - the Thames Coromandel District: Landscape and Natural Character (2006-12);
  - the Kawhia and Aotea Harbour catchments: Landscape (2006);
  - the Mahia Peninsula and Wairoa District: Landscape (2003);
  - Waitakere City's Northern Strategic Growth Area Study: Landscape (2000);
  - North Shore City: Landscape (1997-2000);
  - Eastern Manukau City: Landscape (1995);
  - Auckland's urban coastlines: Landscape (1995);
  - Whangarei District: Landscape (1994 & 2005);
  - the Far North District: Landscape (1994/5);
  - Waiheke Island: Landscape (1988); and
  - the Auckland Region: Landscape (1982-4).
4. In 2006 I was also part of a team under the 'umbrella' of Urbis Ltd that was awarded the (UK) Landscape Institute's Strategic Planning Award for the "Landscape Value Mapping Study of Hong Kong". My contribution included development of an assessment method and evaluation criteria that were employed in that study.
5. I have been engaged by Auckland Council (**the Council**) to present evidence in relation to a number of Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (**PAUP**) rural zoning and precincts matters that relate to submissions on Topic 081 Rezoning and Precincts (Geographical Areas) (**Topic 081**).

6. I have previously prepared evidence for a range of PAUP hearing Topics including Topic 011 RPS Rural (**Topic 011**) and Topic 056 and 057 Rural Objectives and Policies & Rural Activities and Controls (**Topics 056 and 057**).

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

7. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and that I agree to comply with it. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express, and that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person.

### **SCOPE**

8. My statement addresses the landscape values and sensitivities associated with a large number of sites zoned Rural Production or Rural Coastal and other sites that submitters are seeking to 'up zone' – most commonly to Countryside Living or Mixed Rural. The locations addressed in my statement therefore cover a cross-section of rural Auckland, including:
- Mt Pleasant Drive, Leigh
  - Te Arai Point, near Pakiri Beach
  - Landholdings on the western, eastern and southern sides of Wellsford
  - Whangateau Harbour, the Matakana Hills and Omaha Valley
  - Eastern Matakana and the margins of the Matakana River
  - The northern edge of Warkworth near Goatley Rd
  - Algies Bay
  - Kaipara Flats to Matakana and Point Wells
  - Warkworth South – Near Sandspit Rd, Thompson Rd, Perry Rd & Hepburn Creek Rd
  - Hatfields Beach

- The South Head / Muriwai Coastline which is subject to both Treaty claims and submissions
- Helensville on the eastern side of Inland Rd
- Kaukapakapa
- The northern half of Taylor Rd, Waimauku
- West of Puhoi village, from Remiger Rd to Ahuroa
- Upper Orewa Rd, between Silverdale and Wainui
- Wainui
- The broad basin around Pine Valley Rd at Silverdale / Dairy Flat
- Coatesville on the western side of the Coatesville Riverhead Highway
- Dairy Flat south and west of Kahikatea Flat Rd
- Chenery Rd, next to the Weiti River on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula
- The Whitford Precinct area
- South of Maraetai
- Brookby
- The Clevedon Valley, village periphery and coastal corridor extending towards Kawakawa Bay
- South Clevedon / Ardmore
- The coastal hinterland of the southern Manukau Harbour – from Kingseat through to Karaka Point
- The coastal margins of the Awhitu Peninsula, the Waiuku River and southern Manukau Harbour
- The coastal margins of eastern Manukau from Maraetai through to Matingarahi

9. My analysis of the zoning changes proposed for these and other areas focuses on the key landscape and amenity / rural character issues associated with them. However, any such commentary necessarily traverses ground that has already

been traversed in my primary and rebuttal statements for Topic 011 and Topics 056 and 057 as well as for the following topics:

**Topic 010** – RPS Heritage and Special Character;

**Topic 019** – Natural Features, Landscape and Character;

**Topic 016** – RUB North/ West; and

**Topic 017** – RUB South.

10. These jointly address the protection of outstanding natural landscapes and areas of high natural character, the preservation of areas of outstanding natural character, and the maintenance of rural character and amenity values. I do not intend to address these matters again at length, but instead will focus on providing an overview of the 'landscape' issues that pertain to individual locations and will summarise the response that I regard as being appropriate in order to protect landscape, natural character and amenity values.
11. In this context, it is important to note that most of the submissions addressed in my evidence seek zoning changes from Mixed Rural to Countryside Living; a few request re-zoning from Production Rural to Mixed Rural or even the 'bigger jump' directly to Countryside Living. Even though the Mixed Rural Zone accommodates smaller lots than are generally available within rural Auckland, those lots still retain a productive rural function related to such activities as horticulture, viticulture, live growing, greenhouse production and market gardening. Hence their concentration around Omaha, Whenuapai – Hobsonville and Ardmore – Clevedon. By contrast, the Countryside Living Zones represent a quantum change in relation to core activities and lot sizes. With lots as small as a 2.0ha average, in places even as small as 1.0ha, the Countryside Living Zones focus on making provision of rural-residential lifestyle activities, and the landscapes devolved from this intensity have much more of a low density, quasi-suburban character.
12. The fundamental nature of this change, in all respects, means that the Countryside Living Zones are both selectively located – to avoid areas of heightened sensitivity in relation to landscape, natural character and rural amenity values. Although far from unattractive, areas like Runciman, Stillwater and Weiti

are not as renowned for their dramatic terrain, sensitive ridgelines, native forest, coastal margins, stream corridors, key views and susceptibility to public scrutiny as, for example, are parts of the Waiwera and Mahurangi estuaries, or the margins of the Waitakere and Hunua Ranges. Other issues have also influenced the process of Countryside Living Zone identification, such as the ecological issues discussed by Ms Shona Myers and the need to protect Elite and Prime land which is addressed by Dr Fiona Curran-Cournane.

13. Consequently, in addressing the issue of re-zoning, much of my focus has inevitably fallen on addressing those factors that make specific areas more or less appropriate for the sort of transition that I have just described – from a landscape perspective. For the most part, I will address these matters briefly, commenting as succinctly as possible on those areas where I believe rural zoning changes would either be appropriate or would give rise to more significant, landscape and amenity effects.
14. However, there are two key areas that I address in more depth: Whitford and Hatfields Beach. Both areas are complex and remain subject to multiple submissions seeking both re-zoning and precincts within key ‘gateway’ areas at the edge of metropolitan Auckland.
15. Consequently, my evidence is structured as follows:
  - Part One: addresses the more complicated range of matters associated with Whitford and Hatfields Beach.
  - Part Two: outlines those locations where I would be comfortable with ‘up zoning’ – generally to Countryside Living or Mixed Rural.
  - Part Three: addresses those locations where I consider that such changes (or similar) ones would have an unacceptable level of effect on landscape, natural character and amenity values.
  - Part Four: addresses other matters, including the revised extent of the Rural Coastal Zones proposed for Awhitu and the southern Manukau Harbour, as well as for eastern Manukau’s coastline from Maraetai to Matingarahi.

16. I need to make it clear that I have not been asked by the Council to address all re-zoning submissions that may raise landscape issues. My evidence is limited to those sites and areas that I have been specifically asked to address by Council and that are discussed in the body of my evidence.

## **PART ONE: WHITFORD & HATFIELDS BEACH**

### **WHITFORD**

17. In 2004 Mansergh Graham (landscape architects) embarked on a highly detailed analysis of the Whitford area that set out to achieve:
- the identification and mapping of distinct landscape character areas within the Maungamaungaroa, Turanga, Waikopua and Te Puru catchments; leading to
  - a detailed review of the subdivision and development scenarios then proposed within Manukau City's *Rural 1* and *Special Rural 1 Zones*, including the identification of how each of these would affect existing landscape character patterns, valued landscapes and amenity 'experiences'.
18. The approach used in assessing Whitford's landscape involved analysing its character from both a 'landscape-ecological' perspective and in terms of 'landscape perception'. This resulted in a four stage process:
- i. Identification of existing landscape and rural character and amenity values, and the needs, aspirations and desires of the local community.
  - ii. The identification of areas of the landscape that are more susceptible to character changes as a result of development, or are highly influential in defining landscape character.
  - iii. Evaluation of potential development scenarios and future growth strategy outcomes.

- iv. Recommendations to guide the planning processes associated with the *Whitford Plan Change*.

19. This led to the identification of Landscape Types and Character Units across the study area.

#### **Landscape Types:**

20. These were determined by topographical analysis, with a digital terrain model of the study area employed to undertake slope and aspect analysis. This produced three distinct landscape types with related 'accessibility' levels:
  - *Steep Hill Country: land that generally had a large variation in slope, regularly in excess of 20 degrees. This was land that was relatively inaccessible.*
  - *Rolling Hill Country: land that generally had a slope between 10 to 20 degrees and on occasions steeper. This was land that was relatively accessible.*
  - *Undulating Lowland: land that generally had a slope between 0 to 10 degrees. This was land that was easily accessible.*

#### **Landscape Character Units:**

21. It was found that the differences between the various character units identified were often relatively subtle. Even so, Mansergh Graham initially identified fourteen distinct Landscape Character Units, some of which were amended slightly as a result of consultation with the Whitford Working Party: Twelve of these are contained within the revised plan change area:

*Type 1: Rural Working Landscape.*

*Type 4: Rural / Forestry Hill Country Landscape.*

*Type 5: Rolling Rural Hill Country.*

*Type 6: Whitford Country Club.*

*Type 7: Aggregate Extraction/Landfill.*

*Type 8: Steep Land Production Forestry and Native Bush.*

*Type 9: Formosa Country Club.*

Type 10: Rural Lowland Valley.

Type 12: Estuary.

### Identification of Sensitive Landscapes:

22. In addition, the following landscape elements were identified as being key in relation to rural character and amenity:
- *Visually sensitive high ground and ridge lines;*
  - *Stream, water courses and riparian margins;*
  - *View sheds from the main roading corridors (Whitford Park Road, Sandstone Road and the Whitford-Maraetai Road);*
  - *Ecological patterns (predominantly native);*
  - *Rural vegetation patterns (predominantly exotic);*
  - *Forestry;*
  - *Existing building development densities;*
  - *Slope;*
  - *Coastal edge.....*
23. This contributed to a constraint mapping exercise, which identified those parts of Whitford considered more sensitive to change and erosion of rural character and amenity values. The areas identified as being at greatest risk were:
- Land within close proximity to the **main roading network**;
  - Elevated land associated with the **upper ridgelines** and the skyline; and
  - Riparian areas and land adjacent to existing **streams** and overland flow paths.

### Mansergh Graham's Evaluation of Development Scenarios

24. Utilising these findings, modelling was then undertaken to ascertain the likely effects of a range of future potential development scenarios. This involved:
- The creation of a number of development scenarios, together with related density ratios and housing yields.

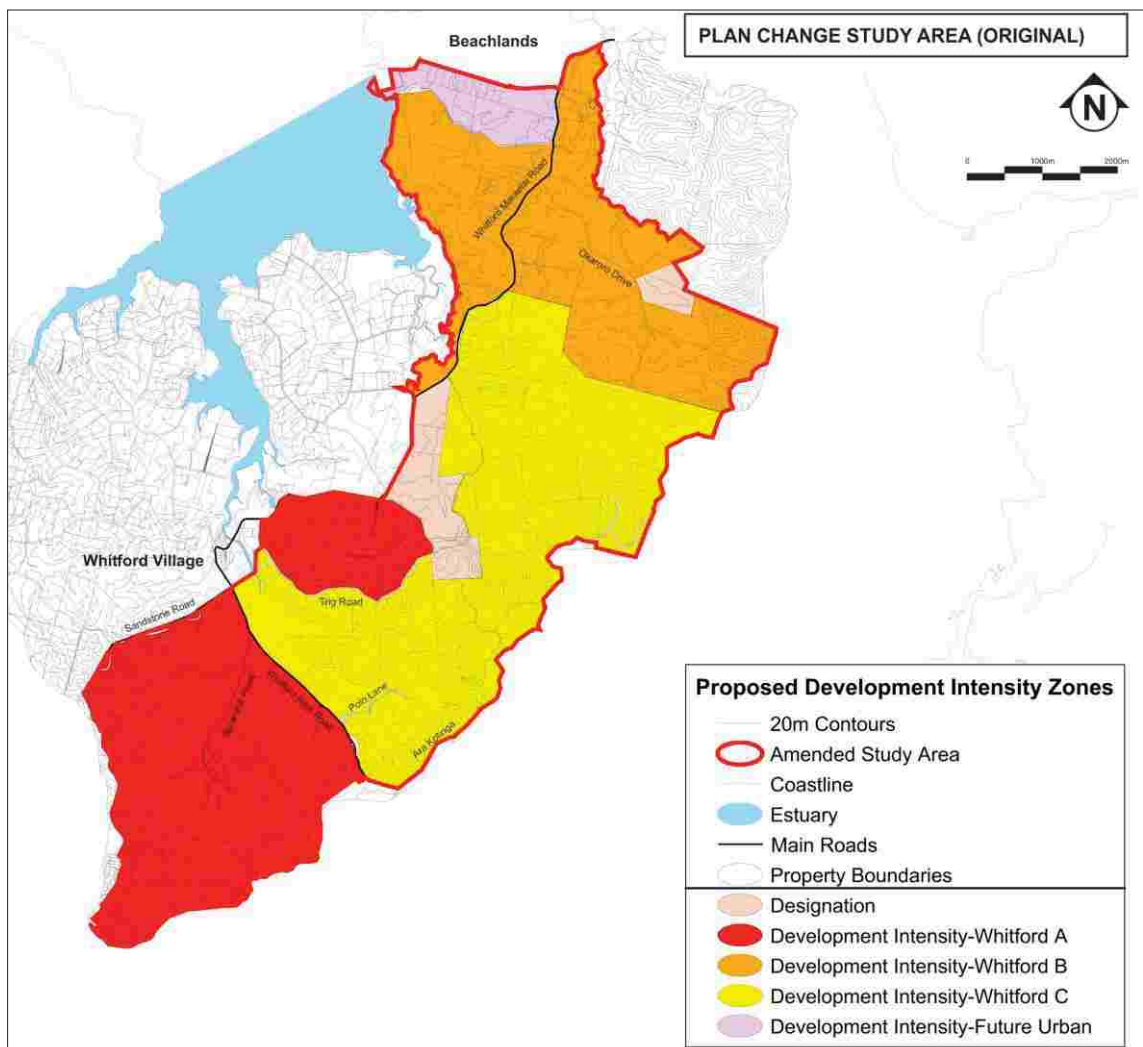


- Testing of each development scenario against the visual absorption capability of individual catchments.
  - Identification of the 'limits of acceptable change' for individual catchments, with reference to the landscape and amenity outcomes established at the onset of the study through community consultation.
  - Identification of the 'carrying capacity' of the Whitford landscape as a whole.
  - Establishment of recommended development density ratios and yields for each landscape type.
25. Central to this process was an analysis of the intervisibility levels within different landscapes, with the likely prominence of new development assessed in terms of each Landscape Type's foreground and background topography, existing vegetative screening, and relationship to existing development. Landscape character and amenity changes were also compared with those considered likely to occur as a result of application of development controls prescribed by Manukau City's Rural 1 Zone. Hardly surprising, this process highlighted the fact that more complex, dissected and vegetated landscapes within the study area's rolling hill country and forest catchments displayed an appreciably greater ability to accommodate new development than more open, planar valleys closer to the coast and most gently rolling, pastoral landscapes. More complex and diverse landscapes were also better able to absorb higher development densities than relatively open, simple, landforms and landscapes. Again, this was hardly surprising: it was consistent with work undertaken overseas on Visual Absorption Capability since the 1970s by J Burton Litton, and still is.
26. This led to the recommendation for different development density zones across the Plan Change area, while parallel testing of the effects of clustered and dispersed subdivision models also contributed to the identification of development density zones, associated with individual Landscape Types. For management purposes, the boundaries of each zone were rationalised to align with adjacent cadastral boundaries.
27. As a result of this process, Mansergh Graham identified the total carrying capacity for the Whitford plan change area as being some 760 Development Units /

dwellings – both existing and new. Public input at Manukau City Council’s (MCC) open days determined that the majority of respondents considered this level of development to be acceptable.

ZONE	AREA (ha)	RATIO (Dwellings/ha)	CARRYING CAPACITY	EXISTING	ADDITIONAL
Whitford A	1270	1:4	318	89	229
Whitford B	957	1:5	191	67	124
Whitford C	1507	1:6	251	160	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>3734</b>		<b>760</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>444</b>

28. Subsequent to completion of this work and determination of the study area’s overall carrying capacity the Whitford A ‘catchment’ was slightly enlarged from 1270has to 1287has, resulting in a very slight increase in the Whitford study area’s overall capacity to 764 Development Units. Based on their assessment, Mansergh Graham recommended dividing the study area into four Development Density Zones (overleaf):



29. In addition, their work:

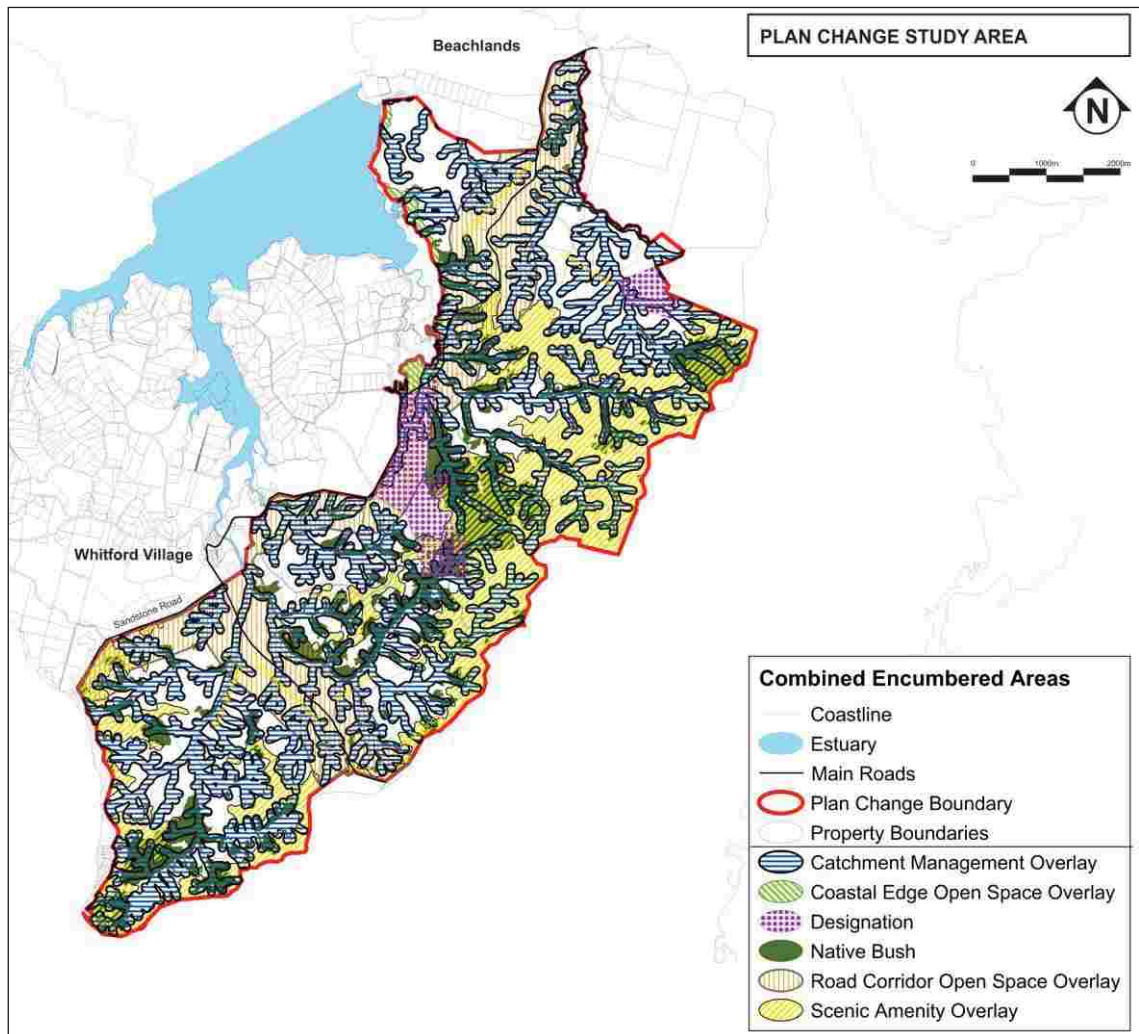
- Defined a Carrying Capacity for each zone: the maximum amount of new unmitigated development that could occur before rural character and amenity values were adversely affected.
- Created Policy Overlays to identify critically important and sensitive landscapes, together with landscape attributes that contribute significantly to the maintenance of rural character and amenity values within the Whitford study area.
- Developed specific Rural Design Standards to ensure that Whitford's existing rural character and amenity values are not eroded through the cumulative introduction of urbanising elements (such as street lighting, illuminated signage, kerbs, etc).
- Prepared Design Guidelines to aid both applicants and Council planners in assessing and processing resource consents for the Plan Change 8 catchment.

30. The four **Policy Overlays** were a key plank of Mansergh Graham's landscape management strategy:

- Road Corridor: the primary purpose of this overlay was to maintain open space within the overlay and views of the landscape beyond.
- Scenic Amenity Overlay: applied by Mansergh Graham to all land above the 80m contour, the primary purpose of this overlay was to maintain the existing balance between built environments and existing "natural" areas (including production forestry, areas of native bush and pastoral development), in particular along the ridge lines that enclose the study area.
- Catchment Management Overlay: Mansergh Graham proposed that a Catchment Management Overlay be applied to all land within 50m of existing streams and overland flow paths (as identified by NIWA in their sedimentation study), to ensure development was dispersed through the plan change area while maintaining large areas of rural and / or "natural" landscape in between.
- Coastal Management Overlay: the main function of the Coastal Management Overlay was to protect existing landscape character and

values associated with coastal margins, including local beaches, intertidal zones, estuaries, cliffs, escarpments and coastal slopes.

31. The combination of the proposed rural densities and policy overlay areas is illustrated by the following plan (overleaf):



MCC Plan Change 8

32. Manukau City's Plan Change 8 proposals, including the study area's overall carrying capacity and policy overlays, generally accord with Mansergh Graham's assessment and recommendations. However, there was one key area of change: whereas Mansergh Graham's carrying capacity of 764 Development Units was based on 'unmitigated' development, MCC Plan Change 8 incorporated additional

development capacity derived from development subject to 'mitigation'. This produced an overall carrying capacity of 923 Development Units:

Zone	Land Without Overlays (ha)	Ratio (development unit/ha)	Additional Development Units – Land Without Overlays	Carrying Capacity of Zone	Maximum Carrying Capacity
Whitford Rural A Zone	291	1:2	72	318	391
Whitford Rural B Zone	248	1:2.5	49	191	240
Whitford Rural C Zone	243	1:3	40	251	292
<b>Total</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>923</b>

33. Subsequently, a Discussion Paper was prepared as part of the Environment Court assisted Mediation process addressing decisions in relation to (MCC) PC8. That paper incorporated other changes to the original Plan Change proposals, most notably combining the previous Whitford Rural A and Rural C Zones to form a new Whitford Rural A Zone.

Brown NZ Review 2009

34. Subsequently, in 2009, my practice was asked by the Auckland Regional Council to undertake a review of the Plan Change, in order to:
- Determine whether or not there was consistency between Mansergh Graham's landscape assessment and recommendations and the Plan Change 8 proposal.
  - To assess PC8's consistency with relevant 'umbrella' objectives, policies (District & Regional) and relevant statutes (RMA, HMPA, NZCPS), including those regional and overarching district plan policies which address:
    - protection of outstanding landscapes / natural features
    - protection & enhancement of amenity values
    - protection of the natural character of the coastal environment, lakes, rivers & margins

- other concerns, including stormwater & ecological conservation / enhancement
  - mitigation of adverse effects in general
35. That review was undertaken after thorough analysis of Mansergh Graham's 2004 landscape assessment, together with the:
- MCC's Proposed Plan Change 8 Whitford Rural
  - MCC's Proposed Plan Change 8 Whitford Rural Sec 32 document
  - Mansergh Graham's '*The Whitford Landscape Study*'
  - Draft *Design Guidelines for Rural Subdivision and Development* in the Whitford Area
  - The ARC's submission to MCC Plan Change 8
  - MCC Proposed Variation No.1 To Proposed Plan Change No. 8
  - MCC Proposed Variation No.1 To Proposed Plan Change No. 8 sec 32 document
  - MCC Decisions Report Variation No.1 To Proposed Plan Change No. 8
36. Brown NZ's review, by and large, agreed with most of the findings and recommendations found in Mansergh Graham's 2004 report. If implemented, it was then considered that the recommendations of the report would be generally consistent with both regional and district plan policies addressing rural character and amenity values, and would also assist with the maintenance of the Whitford landscape's physical and ecological values. In particular, it was felt that the various overlays proposed by Mansergh Graham, in conjunction with the protection of riparian margins and bush areas, would be critical to such conservation.
37. Some of Mansergh Graham's original recommendations were modified by changes that emerged in MCC's December 2008 Discussion Paper on PC8. While some of the lower densities proposed in that Discussion Paper still accorded with Mansergh Graham's 2004 findings, the maximum densities supported in that paper were above those originally recommended by Mansergh Graham. This resulted from MCC accommodating additional capacity on the basis of mitigation measures – typically micro-siting and revegetation.



38. Even so, the core principle of matching development potential to environmental capacity was retained within PC8. In particular, my practice's review supported the matching of development intensities to the different characteristics of Parts (later Sub-precincts) A and B, and the use of the overlays to maintain both physical environmental values and the protection of key views and landscape features.

#### The Current Situation & Submissions

39. The Whitford Precinct plan and provisions notified in the PAUP are derived directly from PC8, and its division of Whitford into Sub-precincts A and B. These still result in different development capacities being assigned to the different types of landscape captured by each 'zone':
- Sub-precinct A continues to address generally steeper terrain, where development can be arranged to fit within the topography, providing a 3.5ha minimum average lots size as the standard within that area.
  - Sub-precinct B comprises more open country, with fewer opportunities to screen or integrate new built development. Accordingly, it has a 5.0ha minimum average lot size.
40. In addition, a complex formula accommodates bonus sites within both areas providing a net environmental enhancement can be achieved.
41. These different capacities are still underpinned by Mansergh Graham's original analysis of individual catchment's ability to accommodate development while managing adverse effects on landscape, natural character and amenity values. An assessment of the cumulative ability of the entire Whitford area to accommodate development, which also took into account other specific issues – such as the potential ecological effects of new development on the Waikopua Estuary – contributed to the overall cap on development for Whitford that I have already mentioned, now rounded to 925 Development Units / dwellings.
42. Submissions on the PC8 controls, now transferred to the PAUP, typically seek zoning, together with minimum lot sizes and development potential, that accord

more with the proposed Countryside Living Zones, such as that proposed for Runciman. More specifically, they typically seek:

1. Subdivision potential associated with lots generally as small as 2.0ha, but down to 1.0ha in places.
  2. Clustering provisions, similar to those proposed for the Rodney area.
  3. Deletion of the Whitford wide development cap.
43. In response, I continue to support the principles behind the current PAUP zoning proposals for Whitford. In my opinion, the process that underpinned the Mansergh Graham analysis – from Manukau City’s initial consultation with the local community over its vision for the future of Whitford through to the identification of the area’s overall ‘development carrying capacity’ – remains valid, some 11-12 years on. In particular, it offered a means of achieving the community’s vision for Whitford, not just that of individual landowners.
44. In the context of this discussion, it is important to remember that the proposed Countryside Living Zones (**CLZ**) have been specifically chosen because of their ability to accommodate rural-residential development on a number of fronts, including in relation to landscape, natural character and amenity values. In most instances, they do not share or display the same terrain, length of coastal environment, sensitive ridgelines, key public roads or overall ambience as Whitford. Just as the landscape character of those CLZs is different from Whitford, so too is their potential to physically accommodate and visually absorb or integrate development. Consequently, the situation at Whitford is not directly analogous to the landscape context that underpins CL zoning elsewhere, and it would be wrong, in my assessment, to rather simplistically assume that the zoning solution for one area is appropriate for another.

#### Assessment

45. Based on all of the above, it is my opinion that the provisions proposed for the Whitford precinct should be retained as notified in the PAUP, together with the amendments proposed by Mr Reaburn in his evidence on the precinct.



## HATFIELDS BEACH

46. A number of submissions address the possibility of the introduction of residential precincts and re-zoning within the Hatfields Beach catchment – from the vicinity of the Otanerua Stream through to Waiwera Hill Scenic Reserve. Relevant submissions include those of Soft Technologies JR Ltd, Otanerua Property Holdings Ltd, Chin Hill Farm Ltd, Objective Holdings Ltd and James MacKenzie. In response to these, and other submissions, Auckland Council asked me to address the values and sensitivities of the Hatfields Beach landscape in my Northern Settlements RUB assessment.

### Landscape Context

47. I have already addressed the landscape character and values of Hatfields Beach at some length in response to previous RUB submissions (Topic 016). As part of my evidence in relation to that locality, I identified a number of key landscape qualities that are associated with Hatfields Beach (**Annexures 1-3**):
- The native forest areas of ONL44, together with some areas of scrub and pasture on its margins that are appropriately identified as Outstanding Natural Landscape in terms of section 6(b) of the RMA. Most of the ONL comprises forest that has regenerating kauri as its climax species, while the surrounding area of bush and forest is both physically and visually cohesive. It is important, as it affords a natural backdrop to most of Hatfields Beach and – looking from a quite different perspective – frames the path of SH1 and the Northern Toll Road through to the Waiwera Estuary. It also encloses the Otanerua Stream corridor and Otanerua Viaduct immediately west of Hatfields Beach, together with part of the stream corridor and adjacent pastoral slopes that fall towards the Hatfields Beach estuary.
  - Further north, the slopes leading up to a major ridgeline, separating Hatfields Beach from the Waiwera Estuary catchment, reveal a landscape that is more open, with a greater quantity of pasture emerging, interspersed with pockets of bush, scrub and shelterbelts. The pasture becomes more cohesive as it descends towards the Hatfields Beach

estuary, with a large band of open pasture separating most of ONL44's forest area from the wetland and its margins. To the north, this pasture separates tracts of remnant bush that extend up and over the ridge leading towards Waiwera. The resulting interplay of bush and open pasture has very considerable appeal; indeed, it is, in many respects, emblematic of the wider interplay of natural and rural elements that is such a feature of ONL44. Below the main body of the ONL, closer to both the Hibiscus Coast Highway and Waiwera coastline, the landscape is steeper and more dissected, with rolling to steeply rolling terrain that reveals a mixture of pasture, bush and scrub cover. It also interacts with the stream corridors, estuarine margins and kahikatea pockets that feed into Hatfields Beach and its estuary.

- North of both the Hatfields Beachfront and Hibiscus Coast Highway, the coastline / coastal environment extending through to Waiwera is dominated by a sequence of steep coastal cliffs, bluffs and escarpments – wrapping around the 'Hatfields North Peninsula', then extending past the Waiwera Hill Scenic Reserve towards the settlement of Waiwera. Native forest / bush follows much of this coastal edge, which becomes even more spectacular and well defined as it approaches Waiwera. However, above Hatfields Beach, through to the Hibiscus Coast Highway, it is also intermixed with some pockets of rural-lifestyle development, pines and other exotic vegetation cover. Even so, the coastline remains distinctive, visually expressive and relatively natural; it comprises an 'arm' of ONL44 that wraps around the northern, ridgeline edge of Hatfields Beach.
- Finally, at the very centre of Hatfields Beach, an open beachfront runs parallel to both the Hibiscus Coast Highway and estuary across that road corridor. Lined by Pohutukawas, the beachfront faces a large bay that is flanked by two headlands: to the south a layering of sedimentary cliffs topped by residential development; to the south the much more prominent headland and sequence of cliffs, described above, that connects Hatfields Beach with Waiwera.

48. These landscape features and patterning mean that most of the high ground framing Hatfields Beach to the west and north comprises ONL, while the same outstanding landscape embraces the prominent headland landscape at the

Beach's northern end – as part of a much wider coastal cliff / escarpment sequence extending through to Waiwera. The beachfront and estuary also display a high level of value and sensitivity, while the hinterland behind the beach, estuary and coastal cliffs comprise the local Coastal Environment – making this sequence subject to Policies 13 and 15 of the NZ Coastal Policy Statement (Map 20, *Natural Character Assessment Auckland Region*, Brown NZ Ltd, January 2013).

49. Areas of pasture between the estuary and more elevated forest areas and rural-residential development on the edge of the coastal ONL, near the Hibiscus Coast Highway, are less conspicuous and 'eminent', although the residual vegetation cover and pasture / open space associated with both local farms and rural-lifestyle properties contribute to the fundamental naturalness and aesthetic appeal of the adjacent ONLs – both on surrounding hill country and along the coastal edge. Indeed, the open pasture above Hatfields Beach's estuary acts as the frontispiece and contextual frame for the forest closer to the skyline. This is reflected in the way that part of ONL44 actually extends beyond the confines of forest near Otanerua Stream to embrace some of the pastoral slopes that are visually linked to the main body of forest / bush.
50. At the same time, the pocket of rural-residential development wedged between the coastal escarpment and Hibiscus Coast Highway at the northern end of Hatfields Beach has a strong sense of connection with the coastal ONL – although its pockets of development are clearly 'at odds' with the qualities of that coastal edge. As motorists descend the hill that separates Hatfields Beach from Waiwera this interaction is particularly apparent because of views to both this enclave and the open seas beyond. Although such views are brief to fleeting, they still create a powerful impression for the motoring public.
51. If development, at a density proposed by the Countryside Living zone, were to be located between the estuary area and elevated forest above Otanerua Stream, or in the vicinity of the Hibiscus Coast Highway – either abutting the coastal escarpment or climbing towards the ridge crest that marks the edge of the Waiwera catchment – then it would have a very significant impact on the perceived values of ONL44, especially when viewed from the Hibiscus Coast

Highway and beach / estuary margins. In particular, it would dominate the foreground and mid ground of views from the Hibiscus Coast Highway and it would create pockets of development around the estuary and associated lowland / valley areas (following the Highway) that appear rather ad-hoc, without any sense of connection to the existing residential area at the southern end of Hatfields Beach.

52. Currently, Hatfields Beach offers the impression of being a gateway into the mixture of rural, coastal and natural landscapes of the former Rodney District. Sporadic, or appreciably more intensive, development within the catchment would remove or seriously erode this gateway and the related sense of transition from 'town' into 'country'. It would also compromise the values of the adjoining ONLs, both within and outside the coastal environment. The twin 'arms' of ONL44 would lose much of their current sense of naturalness, while their expressiveness, aesthetic value, and even identity, would also be significantly compromised by the intrusion and encroachment of residential development in prominent locations that have a high degree of visual presence relative to the Hibiscus Coast Highway, main beachfront and small domain at the southern end of the estuary. Such changes and effects would have a direct bearing on the implementation of NZCPS Policies 13 and 15.

### Submissions

53. A number of submitters request the Countryside Living on single land holdings properties, whereas Chin Hill seek CSL zoning over almost all of the rural land between Waiwera and Hatfields Beach as discussed in the zoning evidence of Mr Te Pairi. Some of those submitters (Seaforth, Objective Holdings Limited and Chin Hill) have also requested precincts, and the key components of the precincts are summarised in Mr Te Pairi's evidence.
54. A mixture of seemingly conventional, large lot, and bush lot, residential subdivision is proposed, with greater intensity near the Otanerua Stream (51 and 57 Otanerua Rd, together with Chin Hill Farm Ltd) as well as within the basin on the northern / inland side of the Hibiscus Coast Highway climbing towards the Waiwera Hill Scenic Reserve (Objective Holdings Ltd).
55. The exact configuration of development on 51 and 57 Otanerua Rd has not yet

been determined, while proposals for the Chin Hill land are still largely conceptual. Even so, the latter proposal includes three protection / conservation areas and nine development areas. The latter proposes up to 81 lots within both a Countryside Living Zone and precinct – with each site covering some 2-5000m<sup>2</sup> at an average of 2.0ha per site or more.

56. The Objective Holdings proposals are more clearly defined, with development clustered within three 'sensitivity areas': just over 150 conventional (600m<sup>2</sup>) residential lots would abut the Hibiscus Coast Highway opposite the Hatfields North Peninsula, while approximately 20 larger lots (1500m<sup>2</sup>) would be located on rising slopes closer to Waiwera Hill Reserve and more elevated parts of the adjoining highway.
57. Across the Hibiscus Coast Highway, James MacKenzie proposes a new "Rural Coastal Bush Block" zone across the Hatfields North Peninsula. This would accommodate one dwelling for every 2.0ha as a permitted activity and two or more dwellings on lots of that size as a Discretionary Activity.

#### Assessment

58. In my evidence on possible changes to the RUB at the southern end of Hatfields Beach (on the Soft Technologies and Otanerua Property landholdings), I raised a number of concerns about residential and large-lot residential development crossing the Otanerua Stream and extending towards both the northern end of Hatfields Beach and the Waiwera estuary catchment. Those concerns distil down to the following key matters:
  - Hatfields Beach marks an important point of transition from Auckland's metropolitan margins into that part of the Region more notable for a combination of its rural ambience and its natural qualities and values. The presence of ONL44, wrapping around Hatfields Beach and traversing part of all five landholdings that are the subject of key submissions, together with the RAP21 area across the Otanerua Stream headwaters and SH1 corridor and the Waiwera Hill Scenic Reserve at the topographic junction of Hatfields Beach with Waiwera, emphasises this point. Hatfields Beach is a key 'gateway' in and out of Auckland City,

both via the Hibiscus Coast Highway and SH1 / Northern Toll Road. The accumulative effect of the various clusters and ribbons of development proposed would be to erode the qualities just referred to and the overall 'gateway' value of Hatfields Beach.

- The physical incursion of proposed development within 51 and 57 Otanerua Rd, together with part of the 203 Weranui Rd, into ONL44.
- Fragmentation and frittering away of the regenerating bush edge on the eastern side of the Northern Toll Road / SH1 – again within ONL44.
- The disruption of views towards the ONL from the Hibiscus Coast Highway due to the location of residential development on open slopes between the Hatfields Beach estuary / Otanerua Stream and the bush-line directly above it. This development would be exposed to both the highway and Hatfields Beach Reserve (which straddles the highway).
- In addition, the development areas proposed for 51 and 57 Otanerua Rd, together with part of 203 Weranui Rd would have a significant impact on the natural character and landscape values of the coastal environment and ONL44.

59. It is also important for me to reiterate that even though Ms Jan Woodhouse criticised the identification of ONL44 and its component parts, none of the submitters have challenged the extent of that overlay (Topics 010 and 019) or its provisions. Moreover, it is my view that the coastal environment includes both the open pastoral areas that I have described wrapping around the Hatfields Beach estuary and the lower margins of ON44 extending down from the hill country and forest above. Although Mr Jeffrey Brown and Stephen Skelton have suggested a different boundary for the coastal environment, I note that neither they nor their clients have challenged the extent of the coastal environment under Topics 010 and 019. In my opinion, there is every justification for the boundary proposed within Appendix 6.1 to the PAUP.

60. In the context of these findings, I find it difficult to see how a fundamental change to the character of both individual landholdings and – cumulatively – to Hatfields Beach in its entirety could avoid having a significant impact on the natural

character values of the coastal environment and the landscape values (including underlying 'naturalness') of ONL44. In my view, this suggests that Policies 13(1)(b) and 15(a) and (b) of the NZCPS are relevant when considering both the RUB submissions and related re-zoning and precinct submissions to the PAUP. Just as important, the objectives and policies proposed for the ONLs within RPS Chapter B4.3.2 strongly promote the approach of avoiding adverse effects on such landscapes – in line with '*King Salmon*'.

61. Precinct proposals incorporating additional residential development across the greater bulk of the Chin Hill and Objective Holdings properties, together with the Hatfields North Peninsula, could only compound both the physical extent and degree of modification just described (focused on 51 and 57 Otanerua Rd). In particular, I anticipate the following additional effects:

- Fragmentation of the forest tracts, bush and open slopes that are so central to delineation of ONL44 north and west of the coastal estuary, especially on the larger Chin Hill property. Even though revegetation and planting is proposed generically around individual dwellings and their curtelage, there is little detail that can be relied on to ensure mitigation of all significant effects, including those generated by roading, access tracks, building platform formation and other earthworks.
- Just as important, there is little likelihood that such amelioration and mitigation could every wholly counteract, or compensate for, the irreversible changes imposed on ONL44 and the wider landscape of Hatfields Beach.
- In particular, the open pasture that provides such strong rural counterpoint to the stands of native bush, from near the Hatfields Beach estuary to the ridge crests that ring the wider catchment, would be largely in-filled by a mixture of residential development, roading, infrastructure and revegetation.
- The catchment as a whole would lose much of its inherent naturalness and related cohesive assemblage of natural landforms, vegetation and water catchments, becoming more obviously 'developed' and 'domesticated'.



62. These changes could not help but impact on the gateway values that I have described in relation to Hatfields Beach.
63. The one area where current landscape values are more ‘mixed’, and in some respects degraded, is across the Hatfields North Peninsula. This enclave, located between the Hibiscus Coast Highway and the series of coastal cliffs and bluffs that form the seaward arm of ONL44, is already partly subdivided into rural-residential lots, with a less than cohesive collection of driveways and dwellings scattered among pockets of pasture, scrub, pines, gums and a line of remnant native vegetation closer to the coastal escarpment. It has also contained, at various times, a small lodge, motel and aged care facility. Rising above the adjacent Hibiscus Coast Highway, much of this land is nevertheless visible from that road corridor as motorists descend from Waiwera Hill, heading southwards.
64. It has also been the subject of previous appeal proceedings, with the Environment Court declining an application for more intensive rural-residential zoning across the peninsula in 2010 (Decision No. [2010] NZEnvC 141). The Court determined that (paragraphs 14 and 17): “ *we have reached the conclusion that the level of development that has already been permitted to occur in this area is more intense than that which is appropriate within this zone.*” and “ *..... we have concluded that the intensity sought by the appellants would compromise the character of the East Coast Rural area and that the existing provisions better achieve the purpose of the Act in broad terms.*” The intensities discussed by the Court were similar to those now proposed by Mr MacKenzie.
65. In my assessment, this area is not as visually attractive and cohesive as much of the rest of the Hatfields Beach catchment. Although its coastal vegetation and cliff-line are important components of the coastline subject to the ONL44 overlay, the combination of ad-hoc development and a rather scrubby mix of pasture, pines, gums and other vegetation – when viewed from its ‘inland’ side – is much less appealing.
66. Nevertheless, additional development would exacerbate this situation by ‘chopping up’ this coastal landscape to an even greater degree, and the Hatfields



North Peninsula remains an important part of the visual frame and context for the land across the highway (Chin Hill and Objective Holdings) rising towards ONL44's sequence of more elevated ridges and stands of bush, together with the Waiwera Hill Scenic Reserve. At the very least, it remains important to retain and enhance a vegetative buffer near both the coastal edge and highway, and the overall predominance of natural / rural elements and patterns across the rest of the peninsula. Consequently, much as I can see the 'issues' associated with the current state of the Hatfields North Peninsula, it is my opinion that further intensification through precincts and CSL zoning, as sought by submitters, would be inappropriate.

67. Based on all of the above, I agree with Mr Te Pairi that Rural Coastal zoning should be applied to those parts of the Hatfields Bay catchment north of the RUB.

## **PART TWO: SUBMISSIONS GENERALLY SUPPORTED**

68. In this section, I will provide a very brief overview of the submissions seeking changes to rural zoning and precincts that I support in general, although in one or two instances I also raise matters that need to be considered in finalising the zone boundaries

### **WEST WELLSFORD**

69. Submissions 5280-294, 5277-292 and 6091-3 seeking a change from Rural Production to Countryside Living for an area of land immediately west of Worker Rd, Wellsford. The subject landholdings are located on the western side of a large valley corridor that physically abuts the town centre and would face back, across the valley, towards it (**Annexure 4**). The subject properties comprise rolling pastoral land that retains a scattering of totara. It rises towards a ridge crest running north of Kaipara Coast Highway then over it, into a stream gully that continues through to Wellsford Valley Rd. The subject land is contiguous with a large area of proposed CSLZ, abutting the town centre, that occupies large part of the wider valley system, and the relevant submissions seek to extend this area to just north of Wellsford Valley Rd.

70. This catchment is already strongly influenced by the presence of the current township and displays no significant landscape or amenity values, other than the ridge sequence near its south-western edge. In other words, the proposed extension of the current township would 'make sense'.
71. I also consider, however, that the CSLZ should be kept below that ridgeline, so that it retains some of the rural qualities associated with the countryside extending beyond it, in the general direction of the Kaipara Harbour, and establishes a clear line of demarcation between the 'town' of Wellsford and the 'country' around it. This proposal has been considered by Ryan Bradley and I understand that it is acceptable from his standpoint.

### **SOUTH WELLSFORD**

72. Submissions 5277-294, 5280-296 and 1599-1 seek a change from Rural Production to Countryside Living for landholdings at the southern end of Wellsford, near Davies Rd (**Annexure 5**). The proposed CSLZ would extend southwards from that road, across a broad valley system that lies adjacent to the Northern Trunk Railway Line to Whangarei. Again, this valley has limited landscape significance, although stands of totara and kahikatea are notable across parts of the valley floor, especially so near the stream that acts as the point of demarcation at the southern end of the proposed CSLZ.
73. This stream, together with the vegetation flanking it, offers a logical 'end point' at the southern end of the catchment, while a small area of the proposed CSLZ is proposed to extend onto a small ridge near the railway track would cut into this vegetation cover. Given the general paucity of mature vegetation around Wellsford, it is my view that the proposed Countryside Living zone should stop short of both the stream corridor and small ridge – including the vegetation that flanks both. As a result, the CSLZ would end slightly north of the boundary proposed by submitters. Again, I understand that Ryan Bradley has considered this alteration to the modified CSLZ and considers it to be acceptable.

## MATAKANA / WHANGATEAU

74. Contrary to a number of submissions seeking up-zoning of the Rural Production and Mixed Rural zones around Matakana, Submissions 132-1, 6950-3 and 991-1 request that all of the 'Coastal Environment and Coastline' should be zoned Rural Coastal instead of Mixed Rural (**Annexure 6**). Near Matakana, this includes a current 'gap' in the RC zoning around Leigh Rd and the eastern side of Matakana village that extends through to the Matakana River and the estuarine flats near Tongue Farm Rd.
75. Such a zoning change would still avoid the coastal flats near the junction of Leigh Rd with Takatu Rd, then Omaha Flats Rd, as it is clearly too late to impose expectations about rural open space and coastal values on the area where Leigh, Takatu and Omaha Flats Roads converge: the presence of the Matakana Country Park, local wineries and rural-residential lots, have already appreciably changed the enclave around both road junctions. However, the proposed zone would extend from Leigh Rd into the foothills of ONL31 below, and south of, Pukematakeo, then down across a low coastal ridge near Tongue Farm Rd (the location of Morris and James' pottery) to cover the flats around the upper reaches of the Matakana River.
76. Most of this landscape is currently still in pasture, although a scattering of rural-residential properties, the pottery and even the margins of Matakana village establish 'developed' pockets within the subject area, as well as on its margin. Conversely, the reserve next to Matakana and the meandering river margins visible from the main conduit to and past the village, together with remnant stands of bush and pasture both sides of Tongue Farm Rd, still contribute to a local landscape that is largely characterised by its strong mix of natural and rural elements / qualities that are amplified by the variable terrain and its interplay with water areas closer to the Matakana River.
77. I also note that the description and provisions of the Rural Coastal Zone supported by the Council in Topics 056 and 057, in particular the specific provisions applying to the coastline from Whangateau to Waiwera in Section 6.4.2, have some relevance to the issues raised by this submission:

*This coastal area is typically characterised by an indented and variable coastline with steep headlands, small coves, sheltered beaches and harbours, interspersed with extensive, more exposed sandy beaches. A sequence of five major estuaries are distributed along the eastern coast area – Whangateau, Matakana, Mahurangi, Puhoi and Waiwera. Within these estuarine environments, inter-fingering of land and water provides extensive nooks and crannies which brings the coastal environment some distance inland as it follows these inlets. Those estuarine environments provide fish nursery areas that contribute to the overall productivity of the Hauraki Gulf.*

*Between Mahurangi and Waiwera, the land is characterised by steep to rolling rural land with extensive areas of indigenous vegetation and partially bush-clad slopes. In general, there are few areas of flat land, the largest areas being at Omaha Beach and Omaha flats. Given the hilly topography, the areas have high view amenity from land out to sea, both nearshore across estuaries and to more distance islands in the Hauraki Gulf.*

*Much of the coastal edge is identified as having areas of ONHC with further expanses of land identified as ONLs and SEAs.*

*Five regional parks at Tawharanui, Scandretts, Mahurangi East, Mahurangi West and Wenderholm provide public access and recreational opportunities, as well as being significant ecological areas.*

*The East Coast area provides a favourite location for rural lifestyle development and coastal holiday homes. It also provides extensive opportunity for recreational use of the coastline and estuarine areas, with scattered boat launching facilities. The satellite town of Warkworth and the coastal settlements of Snells Beach, Leigh, Point Wells, Omaha, Matakana, Sandspit and Waiwera are all close to the East Coast area.*

### **Objectives**

1. *The open, high-quality coastal landscape character and the*

*natural environmental values of the East Coast area are retained.*

- 2. Recreational, home occupation, marine transport and tourism activities are supported where they are consistent the coastal landscape character and natural environmental values of the area.*
- 3. The management of activities and development is integrated with the management of growth in identified rural and coastal towns and settlements.*
- 4. The high natural values of the East Coast estuaries are maintained by requiring high performance standards for activities and development on land.*

***Policies***

- 1. Require dwellings, their curtilage and access to be located sensitively in the landscape, with particular consideration of their size, location, scale and density, ability to tuck into the landscape and the desire for views against visual dominance in landscape.....*
- 3. Avoid locating dwellings and other significant buildings on ridgelines and the construction of urban type access ways up or across visually significant slopes.....*
- 5. Avoid activities and development of a type, scale or location that adversely affects the public use and enjoyment of regional parks and other public open space for:*
  - a. active and passive recreation, both on land and in the adjoining CMA*
  - b. appreciation of open space, scenic and natural landscape values*
  - c. centres for biodiversity management and enhancement  
.....*
- 7. Concentrate larger scale tourist facilities, including tourist accommodation, in rural and coastal towns.*

*8. Manage activities that have the potential to generate sediment into estuarine environments to ensure the high natural values of these environments are protected and maintained.*

78. Just the one small reserve is located within the subject area – at the end of Matakana Wharf Rd – while ONL31 would, as I have already indicated comprise part of the area subject to Rural Coastal zoning.
79. However, it is also clear that the area around Matakana is critically important in terms of that settlement's village ambience and image, while Leigh Rd is highly important as a conduit for traffic to Point Wells, Omaha, Tawharanui Regional Park, Buckleton Beach, Baddeleys Beach, Mathesons Bay, Whangateau, Leigh and Goat Island Marine Reserve. The landscape experienced in passing through / by Matakana and heading north or south is integral to impressions of both the adjacent village and the wider east coast environment.
80. Its sequence of coastal flats, rising hill country, bush, pasture and glimpses of the Matakana River help to glue the coastal 'idyll' of the wider coastal landscape together, while the rolling sequence of ridges, slopes and bush around Pukematakeo – already within the Rural Coastal Zone – provide a strong frame and backdrop for the area closer to the Whangateau Harbour and the upper reaches of the Matakana River. The pockets of rural-residential development, woodlots and other man-made elements that are also visible within this landscape do not, ultimately, derogate from the more natural patterns and significant values of this landscape.
81. Finally, it is apparent the proposed extension of the Rural Coastal Zone is logical in terms of capturing the fuller sequence of hill country overlooking both coastal catchments and linking up with the large Rural Coastal Zone that covers most of the Takatu Peninsula. It is my opinion, therefore, that the Rural Coastal Zone should be applied to the area that is the subject of this submission.

#### **GOATLEY ROAD, NORTH WARKWORTH**

82. Submission 6678-2 requests a change from Rural Production and Mixed Rural to

Countryside Living for an area of rolling countryside north of Warkworth and Matakana Rd. The subject land culminates in a quite heavily vegetated and incised, valley corridor below the forested hill country extending eastwards from the Dome Valley and southwards from Mt Tamahunga. The subject landscape is notable for its residual stands / pockets of native forest, including those following a series of stream courses, and its enclosure by the rising bush margins east of Dome Valley (**Annexure 7**). It already contains a scattering of rural-residential development, and it is my assessment that a band of CSLZ development could be tucked into this landscape – near Warkworth’s northern margins – without it having a significant impact on the values of the north Warkworth landscape. The landform and the existing vegetation would provide an attractive framework for such development, containing it, both physically and visually.

83. However, I also consider that such development should be limited to the area south-east of a major farm / residential accessway that branches off Goatley Rd next to No.184, so as to maintain the open space and landscape values of the area closer to ONL32. I understand that Mr Bradley also supports this modification to the proposed CSLZ.

#### **AHURUA RD, PUHOI**

84. Submissions 261-2 and 3452-1 request a change in zoning from Rural Production to Countryside Living for a band of land on the south side of the Ahuroa Rd. (**Annexure 8**). The changes proposed by submitters would extend the currently proposed CSLZ westwards from near Saleyards Rd and Puhoi village. This part of Puhoi sits within a deeply incised valley corridor, that is dominated by a mixture of open pasture, stands of totara and other natives, willows near the Puhoi River and scattered pockets of residential development. Pine woodlots and shelterbelts are also evident, while the Puhoi Valley cheese factory – incorporating visitor / tourist facilities and car parking – is a feature of the short journey from Puhoi village to Ahuroa.
85. The landscape south of the river contrasts with the much more extensive, and cohesive, native bush cover following an escarpment down the opposite, northern, side of the Puhoi River (ONL46), and its highly variable terrain affords

significant opportunities for the integration of residential development with a northern aspect. Consequently, even though some concerns remain about the potential for a CSLZ following Ahuroa Rd to develop in a 'ribbon like' fashion down the length of the Puhoi Valley, it is nevertheless considered that this sector is generally suitable for pockets of rural-residential development – separated / contained by the natural ridgelines extending down towards the river system and stands of remnant bush.

#### **UPPER OREWA RD, WAINUI**

86. Submissions 5277-294, 5280-296 and 1599-1 seek a change from Rural Production zoning to Countryside Living for properties both sides of Upper Orewa Rd near SH1, then along the northern side of Upper Orewa Rd as it heads further westwards (**Annexure 9**). This part of Wainui comprises rolling land that is dissected by a mixture of stream corridors, localised ridges, shelterbelts and pockets of remnant bush. It is also strongly associated with the suburban development stretching westwards from Orewa / Silverdale around the upper reaches of the Orewa estuary, and it directly abuts a large Future Urban Zone that extends southwards from near Wainui Rd, following the western side SH1 in the general direction of western Silverdale.
87. In my assessment, rural-lifestyle blocks could be managed within this strongly compartmentalised landscape, with the existing framework of vegetation, stream courses and varied topography helping to both 'bed' such development into its surrounds and contain its external effects. Again, such development in this area also 'makes sense' because of its direct associations with Orewa and Silverdale west and the Future Urban Zone south of Upper Orewa Rd.

#### **INLAND RD, HELENSVILLE**

88. Submission 5259-159 seeks a change from Rural Production zoning to Countryside Living for a large farm block on the eastern side of Inland Rd, Helensville (**Annexure 10**). Land immediately north of the subject property, also on the eastern side of Inland Rd, has already been subdivided into rural-lifestyle blocks – from the intersection with Rautawhiri Rd to directly opposite Joanna Lee



Lane – and the current proposal would extend this area of residential development southwards.

89. The land in question rises towards the ridge that Inland Rd run along – becoming more elevated to the south – and its relatively bare pasture faces towards a mixture of production pine forest and a 220kV transmission corridor. Part of the forestry also occupies the southern end of the subject property. Although the subject land is more rolling and ‘broken’ than that further north, it adjoins the existing area of rural-residential development and it is largely devoid of any significant landscape values in its own right. It is quite isolated from public vantage points of any significance and, from an amenity standpoint, the subject site comprises an expanse of pastoral open space, but is not really noteworthy in any other regard. As a result, I do not consider that rural-residential development across the submitter’s property would give rise to any significant landscape or amenity effects.

#### **PINE VALLEY RD SILVERDALE**

90. Submissions 3773-3, 5471-1, 6391-1 and 7601-3 have requested a change in zoning, from Mixed Rural to Countryside Living, for a large valley area both sides of Pine Valley Rd (**Annexure 11**). The subject area is located between Dairy Flat Highway and a Future Urban Zone across part of Dairy Flat to the south, and another area of Future Urban zone to the north extending southwards from Wainui Rd (already mentioned in relation to Upper Orewa Rd). ONL48 is also located on rising ground to the north of Pine Valley Rd.
91. The centre of this catchment contains two ONFs that contain sizeable stands of kahikatea – next to Kahikatea Flat Rd and Wilks Rd West – while ONL48, to the north, comprises kauri dominated forest running along a prominent sequence of hills and ridge crests. Between these residual natural features / landscapes, much of the gently rolling landscape subject to the current submissions is already subdivided into largish rural-residential lots, with the presence of some very large houses, extensive amenity (as opposed to production) planting and the clearly subdivided nature of much of this landscape appearing to ‘pre-condition’ it for further development. Although this development is intermixed with residual areas

of open pasture, especially so near ONL48, the presence of both proposed Future Urban Zones simply amplifies the feeling of a peri-urban landscape in transition.

92. Consequently, I consider the current proposals to be largely acceptable. However, I retain some concern about residential development within this area creeping too close to ONL48 and, in particular, eroding the apron of mid-slope open space below the forest at the core of this ONL. Development across the slopes in front of this ONL would clearly disrupt its inherent naturalness and sense of spatial separation from the increasingly intensive residential development that sits below and 'in front of' it. As a result, it is my opinion that any extension of the CSLZ should be limited to the area south of stream course that runs in front of ONL48. This proposal has been considered by Ryan Bradley and I understand is acceptable from his standpoint.

#### **CHENERY ROAD, WEITI**

93. Two submission points were received from Chris Dickson in relation to Chenery Road, Weiti. Submission 5882-10 seeks rezoning from Large Lot residential zone to Single House zone, while 5882-11 seeks amendments to the Rodney Landscape Precinct with the addition of a specific sub-precinct promoting two options for subdivision on the subject property. One option involves subdivision of the 6.6 ha site into 'conventional' 600m<sup>2</sup> lots; the second, subdivision into larger 4,000m<sup>2</sup> lots. Both options would be accompanied by creation of a reserve area that captures the bush-clad escarpment directly abutting the Weiti River. This area of coastal vegetation is identified as part of proposed HNC Area 92.
94. In reply to these proposals, it is apparent that although the northern side of the Weiti River is still dominated by open space, bush remnants and shelterbelts, it is also notable for an increasing proliferation of rural-residential development, both west of Chenery Rd, and near John Deere Crescent through to the Hibiscus Coast Highway. In other words, the landscape around the subject site is already in a state of clearly discernible transition. It is neither rural nor urban, but in a state somewhere between these two 'poles'.

95. Each step of residential intensification – from the current semi-rural pattern of use to large lot (Cato Bolam: Option 1) then conventional development (Cato Bola: Option 2) – is likely to impact on the ONL and HNC area associated with the Weiti River, to some degree. Although there are differences in the extent to which these development options would contrast, both physically and visually, with the bush-lined escarpment and river corridor, they are not as fundamental as the change from a rural environment into a semi-rural landscape in the first instance, which has already occurred. In this respect, the sort of change now proposed, to either large lot or conventional development, might be regarded as incremental.
96. Focusing more specifically on the Dickson / Cato Bolam proposals, the conventional residential development shown as part of Cato Bolam's Option 2 is clearly more intensive and more overtly 'urban / suburban'; yet it would also establish more 'breathing space', in the form of a spatial buffer, between the proposed development and bush / escarpment margins. In addition, it would make that potential reserve more accessible and more of a public asset.
97. I have also considered the following Assessment Criteria for development in Rodney's Special Character Areas:

### **3.2 Assessment criteria**

*For subdivision in this precinct the following assessment criteria apply in addition to the criteria specified for the relevant restricted discretionary activities in the Auckland-wide subdivision rules:*

#### *1. Protecting significant landscape values*

*a. subdivision including sites identified for future cluster subdivision should be designed to protect significant landscape values and avoid land with physical constraints. This includes:*

- i. avoiding the need to remove native vegetation*
- ii. ensuring future development will not protrude above a notable ridgeline or be visually dominant when viewed from a public place*

- iii. ensuring that future buildings and works will be located away from significant ecological areas and landscape features including prominent undeveloped landscapes that have an attractive natural character*
- iv. ensuring that development will be located away from land with steep topography and areas where ground conditions are suitable for development.*
- b. An application for subdivision or development which proposes to remove any native vegetation, must provide for replanting of new native vegetation to offset the loss of vegetation removed. A maintenance program should also be established that provides for the appropriate ongoing management of native vegetation including the removal of weed species.*

## *2. Siting and design of buildings and works*

- a. Building platforms should be created so the maximum height of any future buildings is below any notable ridgeline and will not be visually prominent when viewed from a public place including any roads, foreshore reserves and other public land.*
- b. Development should be sited and designed to:*
  - i. minimise the visual prominence of buildings and structures viewed from a public place*
  - ii. minimise the visual bulk and prominence of buildings as a result of the scale, built form, colours and materials used in their design and construction*
  - iii. integrate and blend with the surrounding landscape and topography*
  - iv. avoid the removal of any vegetation or other significant landscape features.*
- c. Earthworks and modifications of the landform should*

*be minimised to avoid scarring of the landscape and increasing the visual prominence of a development. This includes the development of fences, retaining walls or other structures that could adversely affect the landscape character of the area.*

98. In relation to these criteria, I am reasonably comfortable that development on the subject site – under either option – would meet most of the criteria listed. The only area of concern in relation to the assessment criteria is that of development staying below the Whangaparaoa Rd ridgeline. Most of the development proposed under both scenarios would sit below the ridge crest, but not all of it. However, given the effects of existing development on the area around that ridgeline and the changed (indeed, still changing) nature of the area both sides of Whangaparaoa Rd, it is my assessment that the effects generated by encroachment on the ridgeline would be quite limited. More important is retention of the sequence of bush and escarpment next to the Weiti River.
99. On the basis of this preliminary analysis of two conceptual subdivision options, I am of the view that either alternative (Option 1 or Option 2) is generally acceptable from a landscape and natural character standpoint, although the area defined for development should clearly avoid the adjacent river margins of HNC Area 92 (**Annexure 12**).

### **PART THREE: SUBMISSIONS NOT SUPPORTED**

100. In this section, I will provide a summary of the issues associated with submissions that I regard as being unacceptable from a landscape standpoint and that are therefore not supported.

#### **TE ARAI POINT, PAKIRI**

101. Submission 5237-1 requests that a small block of land at the rear of Te Arai Point seeking a change from Rural Production to Countryside be zoned CSLZ. The land in question is located close to ONL22 and HNC Areas 48 stretching down the

main Pakiri beachfront and dune corridor, as well as across Te Arai Point **Annexure 13**). The land in question, abutting Western Boundary Rd and Ocean View Rd, comprises a mixture of pasture, native shrubland / forest, pine woodlot and recently cleared bush. A farmhouse and farm buildings are also located on site. Even so, part of the property sits within HNC Area 48 and the site sits next to the point of main entry to south Pakiri Beach, as well as being next to the main route in and out of Te Arai Point and north Pakiri Beach. In addition, the Tomarata Dune Lake Reserve is located to the immediate south, across Ocean View Rd.

102. In my assessment CSL type development on the subject site would exacerbate the removal of vegetation cover across the 'back' of Te Arai Point and would degrade the entrance to an important coastal recreation area. It would have a detrimental effect in relation to both the landscape values of the nearby lake reserve and the natural character values of HNC Area 48, together with the wider Coastal Environment. Moreover, development at this site would be rather isolated – several kilometres south of the Te Arai Golf Course and rural residential area further north – and would appreciably diminish both the landscape qualities and amenity value of the coastal hinterland at a strategically important location. As a result, I do not support a CSLZ on the subject property.

#### **EAST WELLSFORD**

103. Submission 6091-3 seeks to have CSL zoning applied to two blocks of land east of Wellsford: between Wayby Valley Rd and Flagstaffe Rd bordering Rustybrook Rd, and abutting both Whangaripo Valley Rd and Worthington Rd. Both locations comprise rolling countryside, with that near Worthington Rd becoming steeper at its northern end.
104. Development at both locations would be somewhat isolated from the main township and the site near Wayby Valley Rd (**Annexure 14**) is also reasonably prominent in views from the 'truck route' to Mangawhai and Pakiri by-passing Wellsford. While views across the site are broken up by both the aforementioned shelterbelts and copses of totara, development across it would still be very legible from the by-pass – devoid of any real association with the nearby township. Instead, it would sit in the apparent midst of rural land that has considerable appeal as part of the landscape frame for the journey towards or from Mangawhai

/ Pakiri. Perhaps of just as much significance, the centre of the site is also directly adjacent to Wellsford's sewage treatment ponds.

105. The more northern of the two subject sites (**Annexure 15**) stretches across a hill that is prominent when looking from Wellsford, especially so near Matheson Rd's intersection with SH1. The subject site directly abuts the main road from the township towards Pakiri and the by-pass to Mangawhai, and even though an historic scattering of dwellings lines the foot of the hill, its upper slopes and crest are still devoid of development at present – a local landmark that is prominent when turning onto the start of the eastern part of the Coast To Coast Trail. To the left of the main hill crest, an undulating sequence of ridges and open slopes reinforces the interaction of the town with its rural hinterland.
106. The spread of rural-residential development across that same hill – enjoying commanding views towards Pakiri's coastal hinterland from its crest and upper slopes – would completely destroy this interaction. The hill's profile and sense of demarcation, even separation, from its residential margins, would be rapidly eroded and part of Wellsford's identity and sense of place would be markedly diminished.
107. In my assessment, these sites are not appropriate candidates for CSL zoning.

#### **MATAKANA HILLS, OMAHA VALLEY & WHANGATEAU HARBOUR**

108. Submissions have been received seeking that the hill country immediately north of Matakana village be re-zoned from Rural Production to Mixed Rural, while other submissions – addressing the valley system and lowland flats around Leigh Rd, then Omaha Valley Rd, should be Zoned Mixed Rural instead of Rural Coastal (**Annexure 16**).
109. Most of the land north of Matakana Village is captured by ONL31. This hill country and associated tracts of bush forge a strong link with the forested peak of Mt Tamahunga – further north again. Further east, the conical peak of Pukematakeo is a very distinctive, and prominent, landscape feature elevated well above the Leigh Rd terraces and valley, while stands of remnant forest draped across the

ridges and slopes around the peak and associated ridges help to reinforce ONL31's role as the backdrop to both Whangateau Harbour and its lowland margins. The main body of the Matakana Valley still retains a strongly pastoral character, with hedgerows and shelterbelts defining a 'patchwork quilt' of pasture and a number of rural-residential blocks. Although the Matakana Country Park – a commercial visitor operation that offers food, rides and related activities for visitors – sits at the junction with the turnoff to Omaha, Point Wells and the Tawharanui Peninsula, the rest of this landscape – extending through to the shallow salt marsh, margins of the Whangateau Harbour – retains a strong rural ambience intermixed with coastal influences and views. Furthermore, it provides the main corridor for locals, part-time residents and visitors – to and from Mathesons Bay, Leigh and Goat Island, as discussed at my paragraphs 78 and 79 (above).

110. In my assessment, the qualities discussed in my assessment of proposals for extension of the Rural Coastal Zone west of Leigh Rd are also applicable to the landscape extending up the valley corridor either side of Omaha Valley Rd, contributing to a landscape that is still notable for its amalgamation of rural characteristics and natural qualities. In my assessment, these values would be appreciably compromised by the application of CSLZ to this catchment.
111. As such, I consider that the area close to Matakana Village, on rising hill country, should remain zoned for Rural Production, while the combination of hill country and the very pronounced valley corridor either side of upper Leigh Rd and Omaha Valley Rd should remain zoned Rural Coastal.

#### **KAIPARA FLATS TO MATAKANA**

112. Submissions 2176-18, 6717-1, 6149-1, 7131-6 and 7371-17 all seek that CSL zoning be applied to Rural Production and Mixed Rural zones across a broad band from the small settlement of Kaipara Flats through to Matakana, then Point Wells (**Annexure 17**). Implementation of the submissions would result in a low-density, suburban conurbation stretching for some 17km across the Kaipara Flats, more rolling terrain between Warkworth and Matakana, then the coastal terraces stretching out to Point Wells.



113. Although stretching across land that is close to ONLs 45, 32 and 31 – from west to east – the main effects associated with CSL zoning across this area would be in relation to rural character and amenity. The open, planar farmland of the Kaipara Flats, west of Warkworth, would be profoundly altered by an expanse of rural-residential development, while the more rolling farmland closer to Warkworth and Matakana displays both more variability in terms of its ability to absorb change, but is also more exposed and open to public viewing from SH1, Sandspit Rd, Matakana Rd and Leigh Rd. These roads form the major conduits to and from Auckland's north-eastern coastlines and they have a major role to play in shaping public and visitor perceptions of those landscapes. Consequently, the overtly 'residential' (non-rural and productive), nature of the CSLZ would be repeatedly exposed to a very broad audience, effectively promoting the idea of the Kaipara Flats, Warkworth hinterland, Matakana periphery and still highly productive Point Wells Flats as a low density, dormitory 'suburb'.
114. Although some pockets of rural-residential development could be integrated into parts of this extensive landscape quite successfully – hence my comments in relation to the area near Goatley Rd – the very scale and pervasive nature of the CSL zoning proposed would have massive landscape implications. Indeed, the very scale of such a zone change makes it difficult to appreciate the nature and scale of effects associated with it, let alone the mechanisms that might needed to be developed to address those effects. It is, in fact, doubtful that many parts of such a broad CSLZ would remain free of the environmental change, fragmentation of landscape patterns and amenity degradation that such sweeping development opportunities would inevitably carry with them.
115. In effect, the relevant submissions support a form of development that ignores any responsiveness to environmental factors by providing for uniformly high levels of development intensity, regardless of the different types of landscape subject to such development and the different amenity characteristics and sensitivities associated with individual catchments and sub-areas. This is the very antithesis of the selective process adopted to date in the identification of CSL Zones.
116. As a result, I do not support the relief sought in the relevant submissions.

## ALGIES BAY

117. Submission 1317-1 requests that a small pocket of Rural Production land at 598 Mahurangi East Rd be re-zoned CSL. The subject property is located at the eastern end of the combined Snells Beach / Algies Bay settlement, on the ridge that divides the Kawau Bay catchment from the Mahurangi Harbour catchment (**Annexure 18**). It climbs up to the high point on which Ridge Rd – the route to Scotts Landing – is located, and it provides a point of arrival for Algies Bay. An area of Future Urban zoning is proposed across Mahurangi Rd, directly opposite the submitter's landholding, but whereas the application site falls towards the Mahurangi Harbour, the FUZ slopes downhill to the north, towards Kawau Bay.
118. In conjunction with other Rural Coastal land flanking the Mahurangi Harbour, it is part of a swathe of open, pastoral land, dissected by stream courses and stands of remnant bush, that creates an attractive frame for the harbour margins. That 'frame' also maintains a sense of separation between both coastal settlements – which have a conventional, suburban aesthetic – and the open waters of the inner harbour. Furthermore, while the subject property is not particularly distinctive or notable in its own right, it remains an important part of the landscape 'gateway' in and out of Algies Bay – maintaining a strong sense of demarcation between the settlement and the rural areas that, in turn lead to the highly valued landscapes associated with the Mahurangi Harbour and its outer coastline, including Scandretts Regional Park and a suite of regionally important coastal landscapes captured by ONLs 39, 40, 41 and 42. In addition, some of the bush on the subject property closer to Ridge Rd has a more direct association with the tracts of bush within ONL41, which runs southwards from Ridge Rd and Martins Bay Rd towards the Te Kapa River / estuary.
119. While I also recognise that there may well come a time in the future when the Mahurangi Harbour catchment assumes greater importance in relation to the development of both Algies Bay and Snells Beach, the broad band of Rural Coastal land down the western side of the Snells / Algies Peninsula at present reinforces the greater historic focus on Kawau Bay. It maintains the aesthetic qualities of the harbour, addresses its particular landscape / natural character

sensitivities, and augments the contained character of the combined settlements. For the present, these policies remain important in terms of the character of both settlements and the values of the harbour and its margins.

120. As a result, it is my assessment that Rural Coastal zoning should be applied to the subject landholding.

**WARKWORTH SOUTH – NEAR SANDPSIT RD, THOMPSON RD, PERRY RD & HEPBURN CREEK RD**

121. Submission 4419-3 seeks CSL zoning for landholdings north of Sandspit Rd, while Submissions 1732-4, 2919-9, 3467-1 and 6939-1 request similar zoning either side of Perry Rd abutting SH1, and Submissions 6775-1 and 3257-12 seek the same zoning change for land east of Thompson Rd. Finally, Submission 1436-1 requests that a large parcel of land bisected by Hepburn Creek Rd, next to the Mahurangi River and estuary, be rezoned from Rural Coastal to CSL (**Annexure 19**). All but the first of these four zoning changes would affect ONL43 that extends inland from the Mahurangi Harbour, crossing SH1 just north of Perry Rd.

Sandspit Rd

122. The subject property is very large. It extends from Golf Rd, which provides access to the Warkworth Golf Course, to within 500m of Sandspit Rd and occupies land that climbs towards a reasonably prominent ridge that meanders down its western boundary. That ridge, together with side spurs and gullies falling towards the adjacent golf course is dominated by open pasture, although it has in the past been used for the growing of walnuts, other trial cops and a scattering of pines.
123. Regardless the very open nature of the land is still apparent and it is directly exposed to those using the neighbouring golf course. In fact the ridge profile of the subject property and its upper slopes are also visible in views from Matakana Rd across the golf course and (to a more limited degree) over the intersection with Golf Rd. Stands of bush, pines and other trees lining the course's fairways help to conceal the property's lower lying, western slopes, but development

across its upper mantle of ridges would still be quite prominent in views from the west – much less so from around Sandspit Rd.

124. Currently, but for a pocket of development on Golf Rd next to Warkworth Golf Course's main facilities, those views remain essentially rural in character. The interplay of open space – both pasture and golf course fairways – with both native and exotic trees is, again, a feature of the outlook over the intervening valley, and even though the landscape exposed to public viewing is less than spectacular or 'outstanding', it is still very pleasant. Both the golf course and far skyline of hills on the subject property attract attention, to varying degrees.
  
125. In a more strategic vein, the southern end of the site is anchored by the proposed Future Urban zone next to Sandspit Rd. However, I now understand that the Council's position is to retract the Future Urban zone in this location due to a number of concerns, including a bridge crossing over the Mahurangi River – a prerequisite for urbanisation near Sandspit Rd. I have addressed those concerns in my EIC on Topic 016. This means that it is unclear if the proposed CSL site would indeed be attached to an area of future urban development, and even with the Future Urban zone confirmed, most of the subject land would remain surrounded by a Mixed Rural Zone that reflects the productive nature of the rural landscape stretching towards Sandspit. That land is occupied, for the most part, by a mixture of dairy farms and vineyards. Although the visitor facilities at the likes of the Ascension and Herons Flight vineyards are clearly evocative of a 'lifestyle' aesthetic, the fact remains that the landscape around such facilities remains essentially productive and it is still characterised by both rural activities and rural landholdings. The golf course is somewhat of an aberration in this respect, but that alone does not change the fundamental nature and values of the surrounding land.
  
126. Taking these various factors into account, it is my opinion that the subject land should be zoned Mixed Rural.

#### Perry Rd

127. Parts of the Perry Rd landscape are already significantly affected by rural-lifestyle

development, which has fragmented some of the bush cover across a series of inland hills at its terminus and tracts of bush following local stream corridors. That development has also broken up much of the mixture of pasture and horticultural blocks that, until the late 2000s, provided a strong feeling of attractive counterpoint with the bush and stream corridors that I have just referred to. The proposed change from Rural Production to CSL would compound this transition, further fragmenting both the forest cover and residual open spaces that contributed so significantly to the original delineation of ONL43. This transition would be carried to the margins of SH1, opposite Satellite Valley Rd.

128. I recognize that this landscape is already significantly subdivided into the horticultural blocks that I have just described, complete with large hedgerows and small woodlots; however, the locality still derives much of its appeal from its fundamentally rural, productive, character and it still exhibits a high level of amenity that complements the residual landscape values of ONL43.

#### Thompson Rd & Hepburn Creek Rd

129. In relation to both other areas subject to CSL submissions adjoining Thompson Rd and both sides of Hepburn Creek Rd, I have already provided evidence on the subject areas under Topic 020 (ONLs and Natural Character) and Topic 16 addressing the RUB around Warkworth. In response to detailed evidence from landscape architect Jan Woodhouse on these areas, I commented as follows:

1. *Looking at ONL43 as a whole, and taking an approach that is consistent with the Auckland Region's other ONLs, it is my opinion that ONL43 remains anchored by two key features:*
  - *The Mahurangi Harbour and its margins; and*
  - *The combination of hill country terrain and bush remnants that feed down from the likes of Thompson Rd and Parry Kauri Park (off Thompson Rd) towards the harbour.*
2. *Even so, I acknowledge that some of the bush / pasture sequences, which provide linkages from the inland ridges and hills to the sea, are more tenuous than was previously the case. In addition, as*

*acknowledged in my EIC, some of the ridge landscape around Thompson Rd has also been modified with the creep of rural-residential development along its brow. Nevertheless, it is clear from aerial photography and the sequence of photos found in my **Annexures 15, 16 & 17** that a substantial body of native bush, interacting with areas of pasture, still forges a link south of Warkworth that remains worthy of protection. It is not pristine or devoid of development, nor is it consistently dramatic and spectacular, but it nonetheless represents a type of landscape and landscape sequence that remains both highly important and – overall – outstanding.*

3. *Taking into account both my assessment and that of Ms Woodhouse, I have therefore recommended changes to ONL43, as shown on my **Annexure 18**. The modifications proposed in my Topic 19 Rebuttal avoid most areas of recent residential development on the slopes and alluvial terraces framing the river / harbour environment, and focus more directly on those core elements that first contributed to the identification and delineation of ONL43. Importantly, Thompson Rd retains an ONL boundary on part of Thompson Rd.*
4. *In relation to the RUB, this also means that Thompson Rd continues to offer an important topographic line of demarcation between the township of Warkworth and the quite discreet sequence of catchments that, following local stream corridors, fall towards the Mahurangi River and estuary. It also marks a point of transition into a landscape that remains significant, both in its own right and in terms of section 6(b) of the Resource Management Act. Relevant objectives and policies in the RPS section of the PAUP (Chapter B4.3.2) address the need to both avoid direct effects on ONLs and the requirement to avoid impacts that ‘spill over’ into ONLs from adjacent areas.*
5. *As I have already indicated Thompson Rd offers a clear line of division between ONL43 and Warkworth’s peri-urban margins; it also offers a buffer that helps to protect the naturalness, aesthetic appeal and other qualities of the ONL. In my opinion, therefore, Thompson Rd should continue to mark the outer extent of Warkworth’s future urban area.*

130. I stand by these findings. In my opinion, rural lifestyle development around Hepburn Creek Rd has eroded some of the landscape and natural character value previously associated with this part of Mahurangi Harbour's coastal hinterland. New CSL type development, as proposed, would further erode the distinctive landscape character of the Mahurangi Harbour's margins and its higher order values, including those still associated with the Hepburn Creek Rd catchment.
131. In a similar, vein, development at the end of Thompson Rd has already degraded the bush / forest margins of that area and its essential rural character. Fortunately, to date, such effects have been more limited than around Hepburn Creek Rd. Yet, the proposed CSL Zones on the eastern (forested) side of Thompson Rd would rapidly change this situation by further eroding the physical coherence and visual continuity of the bush tracts near Parrys Kauri Park. This would lead to additional encroachment on ONL43, which relies on those forest remnants – together with complementary areas of open pasture – to retain much of its distinctive patterning and landscape / amenity appeal.
132. In my opinion, such effects are not consistent with the protection of the PAUP's ONLs or the avoidance of significant effects within the Coastal Environment as per Policies 13(1)(b) of the NZ Coastal Policy Statement. Accordingly, I cannot support the proposed CSL zoning proposed for all four locations south of Warkworth.

#### **SOUTH HEAD TREATY SETTLEMENT & MAORI LAND**

133. Much of the land behind Muriwai Beach, stretching from near the South Kaipara Lagoon to Muriwai Beach settlement is Maori Land and Treaty Settlement Land. Submissions from iwi seek that the coastline's zoning be changed from Rural Coastal to Rural Production. Currently all of Muriwai Beach, including the high dunes at South Kaipara Head and the lagoon are identified as being part of ONL6, while ONL7 covers the Coastal Marine Area and beachfront, ONL4 addresses Lake Kereta, and ONL5 focuses on Lakes Kuwakatai and Rototoa (**Annexures 20 & 21**). In addition, the dunes and lagoon at South Kaipara Head



are identified as being at the Core of Outstanding Natural Character Area 8, while the Tasman Sea CMA, beachfront, dunes and dune lakes are located within HNC Areas 17, 18, 22 and 27.

134. In my primary EIC on Topic 019, I also indicated that, in the future, the Council needs to explore the potential to incorporate areas of manuka-dominated, coastal forest and coastal shrublands within ONL7. In my opinion, the identified values of the coastal margins and hinterland features highlight the sensitivities of the Muriwai coastline as whole, despite the obvious presence of coastal pine forestry as the main backdrop to the beachfront. That forestry is underpinned by a series of dune systems and massive dune ridges that extend through to areas of pastoral farming down much of the South Kaipara Head Peninsula, and which continue to follow the beach down past Parakai towards Muriwai.
135. In addressing the area of 'Kaipara South Head and Harbour' at Section 6.4.3 of the PAUP, the special qualities of the Muriwai coastline are commented on, and related objectives and policies supported by the Council are described – as follows:

*South Head and the coast of the Kaipara Harbour while generally meeting the above description are noted as areas which are also recognised as being under pressure for development that is not directly related to rural production activity due to the coastal location and proximity to metropolitan Auckland.*

*However, there are areas of significant landscape – identified in the overlays as ONC, HNC, and ONL, which are considered to be at risk of degradation. Control over the built environment in these areas is considered prudent in order that the semi-remote character and the rural/coastal landscape, environmental and amenity values present are retained.*

*To recognise these qualities the whole area is included in the Rural Coastal zone with particular development and subdivision controls that enable rural production activities to continue as permitted activities, albeit subject to environmental controls.*



### **Objectives**

1. *The special and distinctive coastal and rural character of the West Coast area is retained.*
2. *Land-based activities and development are managed to protect the area's Outstanding and High Natural Character and landscape values, and its ecological, recreation and amenity values.*
3. *The relationship between the land, the Tasman Coast and the Kaipara Harbour, and the physical, ecological, landscape, amenity and production connections between the two is recognised and maintained.*
4. *Significant Māori associations with the Kaipara Harbour area recognised and provided for.*

### **Policies**

1. *Enable rural production activities, particularly pastoral farming and forestry, for their economic and social contribution to Auckland and for their role in retaining a remote rural and coastal character.*
2. *Maintain a low intensity of built development, where buildings are for farming and forestry purposes rather than for rural lifestyle purposes.*
3. *Require buildings for intensive farming to be sited to minimise visual impacts on natural character and landscape values.*
4. *Retain a range of land holding sizes, particularly those larger land holdings used for pastoral farming activities.....*
7. *Require subdivision and land use activities to enhance and protect the distinctive special character and sensitive environments of the policy area.*

136. In my opinion, the description and related provisions are still directly relevant to the Muriwai Beach coastline. They clearly reflect it very special values, particular

identity and specific sensitivities. As a result, the Rural Coastal Zone assists to address the coastline as a holistic entity, not as a series of disparate and separate features or areas of heightened value and sensitivity.

137. By contrast, the greater focus on productivity within the Rural Production Zone would reduce the integrated nature of this management. It would promote a retrograde movement towards management of the coastal landscape's component parts rather than its 'greater whole'. I do not agree with this approach and, accordingly, do not support the change from Rural Coastal to Rural Production zoning.

### **KAUKAPAKAPA**

138. Submissions 302-1 and 5397-3 have requested that CSL zoning be applied to blocks of land within the proposed Mixed Rural Zones abutting Kaukapakapa village and within the Rural Production Zone around McLachlan Rd north-west of Kaukapakapa – facing towards the Kaipara Harbour (**Annexure 22**).
139. The Mixed Rural zoned land near Kaukapakapa is steep and rises rapidly up from the current village margins. Several remnant stands of bush on steep land above and behind Kaukapakapa village, including one on the land which is the subject of submission 302-1, provide a visible extension to the native forest and regenerating shrubland within the nearby Kaukapakapa Estuary Scientific Reserve, overlooking the Kaukapakapa Reserve. In addition, ONL8 extends beyond the reserve, towards both the village and Pinchgut Rd, reinforcing this connection. The combined sequence of bush affords an important backdrop to the Kaukapakapa River and village that is exposed to SH16.
140. Although the ONL is limited to south of Pinchgut Rd, it is clear that the wider patterning of open pasture and bush that follows SH16 northwards remains important in terms of local landscape and amenity values. However, CSL zoning would accommodate extensive changes to this landscape, including the clearance of less valued bush across those parts of the subject sites that are more accessible from Alpine Rd, Maddies Rd and SH16, leading to further fragmentation of bush areas and margins that are already 'frittered' by pockets of

residential development behind Kaukapakapa village. The related 'in-filling' of much of the visible open / pastoral space below the residual bush line by rural-residential development, as well as on skyline sites off Alpine Rd, would exacerbate these changes to the local landscape. This would 'soften' the margins of the current village and push further development onto elevated ground that dominates the SH16 corridor through Kaukapakapa.

141. Maddies Lane provides access to a terrace on the subject property, elevated well above SH16. It is largely screened by a stand of eucalypts at present, while other vegetation and landforms lower down – between the highway and submission site – help to further isolate that land from public viewing. However, the site is quite steep in general, with relatively few natural building platforms. Moreover, the loss of the mature vegetation cover closer to the highway (on other properties that might be developed in the future) would suddenly open up much clearer views from the highway to those platforms. This would result in future development seeming elevated well above the valley floor, without any sense of being anchored to the village centre. It would also disrupt the flow of landforms, bush and pasture that is such an important part of the Kaukapakapa landscape vernacular.
142. As a result, I do not support a change to CSL zoning across the subject property.
143. In relation to the property on McLachlans Rd, much of the land proposed for subdivision comprises two stands of pines, some bush undergrowth and two stream courses that run through and past this vegetation cover. Although development could be located on rising ground closer to McLachlans Rd itself, most of the land around the subject site comprises open pastoral farmland or rural-residential blocks that are generally much larger than 2.0ha, together with ribbons of bush and stream gullies. Introduction of the CSLZ to this catchment would result in a paradigm shift for rural-residential development within the broad catchment around McLachlans Rd and Hafton Rd, as well as below Oyster Point Rd.
144. Unfortunately, the very open nature of much of this landscape, with clear views across its internal catchments, means that there are relatively few anchoring

points or integrating elements that can help to 'bed in' new dwellings and their curtelage. Although the pines provide some potential in this regard, I suspect that they would soon disappear to accommodate views from elevated parts of the site towards the nearby harbour. Much of the site would be exposed to views from above and behind regardless, and the concentration of development within this rural catchment would still be at odds with surrounding pattern of lower density development.

145. As a result, I do not support the proposed CSLZ next to McLachlans Rd.

### **TAYLOR ROAD, WAIMAUKU**

146. Submissions 4406-1, 4410-1, 4416-1 and 3277-1 seek a change from Rural Production to Countryside Living for the northern end of Taylor Rd, Waimauku. Three of those submissions focus on specific properties at no.s 157, 169 and 179 Taylor Rd, while submission 3277-1 seeks expansion of the same zoning up the length of Taylor Rd, to its intersection with Old North Rd (**Annexure 23**).
147. Rural residential development within the first three properties would sit below the road corridor on land that is already visually 'subdivided' by stands of remnant bush, shelterbelts and variable terrain. However, the northern half of Taylor Rd, including the subject landholdings, is covered by ONL 3, precisely because of the interplay between open space and stands of bush on the ridges and slopes that frame the Wharauoa Stream valley to the west and part of the Waikoukou Valley to the east. This patterning of the landscape by residual natural elements also raises the issue of differentiation from other properties further up Taylor Rd, with much the same 'patchwork' of pasture and bush remnants, rolling terrain and downcut stream courses that is found within ONL3 continuing to across many of the properties further north, subject to Submission 3277.
148. In this context, the potential for future suburban creep is very real. I also note that the landscape in general becomes more open and pastoral in the vicinity of 192 Taylor Rd, and from there northwards, as well as across the Wharauoa Stream – on the western side of the valley system that is occupied by the submitters' properties. Consequently, a range of landscape / amenity values and sensitivities

are directly applicable to the landholdings that are the subject of the submissions I have described.

149. As a result, it is my view that the current CLSZ boundary should be retained.

## **WAINUI & SURROUNDING AREAS**

150. Submissions 1824-2, 2512-29, 2707-7 and 4810-3 request that a number of large landholdings near Wainui that are currently subject to Rural Production zoning be re-zoned CSL (**Annexure 24**). This area, to the west of Silverdale, comprises a mixture of gently rolling to rolling, pastoral farmland and foothills, most of which is imbued with a very strong sense of being both remote and 'rural'.
151. Wainui itself, comprises little more than a road intersection, an adjoining maintenance yard, garage and spray painting premises – all within one building – and a loose scattering of rural-lifestyle properties on rising slopes down the western side of Weranui Rd. The landscape framing this valley junction is dominated by pastoral farming across ridges and slopes, while nearby three ONLs cover increasingly dissected terrain that almost surrounds Wainui: ONL48's kauri forest and hill country to the south-east, ONL9 with its increasingly dramatic escarpment profile and associated forest to the west, and ONL47 extending towards the headwaters and upper catchment of Waiwera River to the north.
152. While the hills and bush of all three ONLs are clearly part of Wainui's wider contextual 'frame', it is the predominance of open farmland on rolling slopes, climbing towards bush-lined ridges that defines the more immediate character of the locality. This is particularly apparent north and west of the Waitoki Rd / Wainui Rd intersection, in respect of a number of large farm properties that are the subject of Submissions 1824-2, 2512-29 and 2707-7.
153. A scattering of rural-lifestyle properties is also apparent close to many of the area's roads, including further up Weranui Rd and towards Waitoki, but the broad phalanx of hills beyond this intermittent margin of residential development still retains all the characteristics of a rural landscape and displays a high level of rural amenity. Indeed, even though Wainui is little more than 6km from the western

edge of Orewa / Silverdale and less from the areas of proposed CSL around Upper Orewa Rd that I support, it has the real sense of being much more isolated from metropolitan Auckland and its margins – like other proposed CSL areas south and west of Kahikatea Flat Rd, closer to Dairy Flat.

154. Accordingly, it is my assessment that the land around Wainui should remain zoned Rural Production.

## **COATESVILLE**

155. Submissions 1254-1, 3042-1, 7187-1, 7215-1, 4315-1 and 7240-1, together with a large number of other submissions request that the Rural Production zoning applied to the western side of the Coatesville Riverhead Highway – extending through to Yelavich Rd, Sergeant Rd, Robinson Rd and Sunnyside Rd – should be changed to CSL zoning to match that on the eastern side of highway (**Annexure 25**).

156. However, properties along the western side of the highway between the margins of Riverhead and Sunnyside Rd are significantly more pastoral and rural than most of the landscape across the highway – above and closer to the Paremoremo Escarpment. Pockets of pasture straddle the upper reaches of the Riverhead River, then the Rangitopuni Stream Marginal Strip. Both the residual farmland within this area and the existing rural-lifestyle properties on its margins are also exposed to the adjoining Riverhead Forest. Its production forestry margins and harvested areas are directly exposed to this part of the Coatesville catchment.

157. Further north, beyond Sunnyside Rd's intersection with the Coatesville Riverhead Highway, the land west of the highway becomes much steeper, with a sequence deeply incised valleys framed by sharply defined ridges. Within this area – extending northwards towards Green Rd and the Coatesville Scenic Reserve – the landscape is traversed by stands of remnant bush and forest, together with a series of stream courses. The clearly articulated landforms within this area, in combination with this interplay between bush and open pasture, laid the foundation for the identification of ONL49, which stretches across the northern half of the subject landholdings. The sequence of bush-clad escarpments that run

through the wider Coatesville catchment, help to both mark the ONL's passage through the local landscape and provide a backdrop to the areas of more intensive residential occupation closer to the highway and east of it.

158. I have already referenced some of the more utilitarian qualities associated with that part of Coatesville closer to the Riverhead Forest; however, some of those qualities also reach into the margins of the more northern area that I have just described. The southern side of Robinson Rd is directly flanked by pines on the edge of the Riverhead Forest, and even though most of the slopes facing that road to the north are covered in bush and regenerating native forest, a quarry is also evident near the road's end. Consequently, the western side of the Coatesville area is notable both for its higher order landscape and amenity values – largely attributable to the interplay of landforms and pastoral open space with stands of bush – and some key landscape components that display more functional, even utilitarian, qualities.
159. In my view, retention of lower development / residential densities within this area responds to its positive qualities, insofar as such controls help to maintain the minimum levels of 'open space' and 'naturalness' that underpin ONL49, as well as the wider appeal of the area. In parallel, they also help to address some of Coatesville's more utilitarian characteristics by maintaining separation from forestry operations and local quarrying. As a result, I do not support the extension of CSL zoning proposed by various submitters.

#### **DAIRY FLAT – SOUTH & WEST OF KAHIKATEA FLAT RD**

160. Submissions 3773-3, 6391-1, 7601-3, 5471-1, 4793-1 and others seek to extend the area of CSL within Dairy Flat west and south of Kahikatea Flat Rd, and around both Horseshoe Bush Rd and Blackbridge Rd (**Annexure 26**). The latter is a key route from Dairy Flat to Kaukapakapa, the Kaipara Harbour and SH16, while I have already indicated my support for a change to CSL zoning east of Kahikatea Flat Rd – within broad basin around, and south of, Pine Valley Rd.
161. However, the proposals that I am now addressing are located within different physical catchments that push the bounds of potential rural-lifestyle development

well beyond the periphery of proposed urban and peri-urban areas within Silverdale and Dairy Flat. Of some note, such development near Horseshoe Bush Rd would wrap around the margins of the major Dairy Flat landfill site, before climbing into the hill country at the outer edge of the Dairy Flat catchment that currently retains a strong rural ambience: a rolling sequence of pastoral foothills, ridges and gullies, intersected by stands of bush, shelterbelts and stream courses. Near the end of Blackbridge Rd, this pattern segues into the margins of the Riverhead Forest, with low-lying pasture flanked by both stand of pines and areas of past harvesting and regrowth.

162. This area is not notable for its own landscape values, although Blackbridge Rd is not far from the northern periphery of ONL49 that was discussed in relation to the Coatesville area and Kahikatea Flat Rd runs south of ONL48 that was discussed in relation to the Pine Valley Rd area. Between these two 'poles', the rising land captured by the relevant submissions has sufficient topographic variation, natural components and patterning to be reasonably distinctive and have some appeal; in particular, the emerging strands of bush around the more elevated sections of Horseshoe Bush Rd and flanking parts of Blackbridge Rd contribute to the wider appeal of the hill range at the western edge of Dairy Flat, without coming close to being outstanding in a regional context. Nevertheless, as with parts of Coatesville, the landscape structure afforded by both the area's underlying landforms and the interplay of vegetation with pastoral open space, contributes very significantly to its rural character and appeal.
163. Although I have concentrated on the central and southern areas of the area subject to CSL submissions, this description and analysis applies equally to the catchment close to Kahikatea Flat Rd: as the landscape starts to falls gently towards the upper reaches of the Kaukapakapa River and Auckland's west coast. This change in orientation and outlook – reflecting the transition from the physical catchment of 'Pine Valley' into a quite different one over Kahikatea Flat Rd ridge – is very marked. In addition to introducing those using Kahikatea Flats Rd to a much more overtly 'rural' landscape, it creates a very strong sense of 'departure' from metropolitan Auckland and its periphery. I also recognise that the area around Kahikatea Flat Rd and Waitoki contains pockets of existing rural-lifestyle development, but they are quite dispersed, and even the 'hamlet' of Waitoki



comprises little more than a local primary school, small petrol station and a line of houses along Kahikatea Flat Rd.

164. In response to these various considerations, it is my opinion that the areas subject to most of the CSL submissions should still be zoned Mixed Rural, with the catchment south of Blackbridge Rd remaining as part of the wider Rural Production that includes western Coatesville.

#### **SOUTH OF MARAETAI TO WHITFORD FOREST**

165. Submissions 5371-2, 7121-4 and others seek to change parts of the Mixed Rural Zone proposed for the area south of Maraetai to a CSLZ – or even a Future Urban / Single House zone (**Annexure 27**). ‘Up zoning’ to Countryside Living would change the zoning for large blocks of land that run down the centre of the broad ‘peninsula’ that is flanked by the Whitford Precinct on its western side and part of the proposed Rural Coastal Zone (together with Maraetai Coast Rd and North Rd) down its eastern flank. Duder Regional Park also lies to the east of this area, near Umupuia Beach and the mouth of the Wairoa River.
166. The adjacent Whitford Precinct largely adopts the framework provided by the proposed CSLZ provisions for its Sub-precincts A and B. However, it does so, with one important difference (addressed in Section One of my statement): the Whitford controls accommodate lots down to 3.5 and 5.0ha on average, not the 2.0ha lot average generally applicable under the CSL provisions. Furthermore, the CSL zones lack the environmental overlays that were fundamental to the protection of coastal margins, stream course margins, road corridor views, etc within the Whitford Precinct. Consequently, the submissions seeking CSL zoning across the central spine of land between that precinct and the Rural Coastal Zone would give rise to markedly increased residential development potential and lot yields within the subject landholdings.
167. Currently, the area around most submission sites retains a markedly rural character, with large areas of rolling pasture interspersed with production forestry blocks, pine woodlots and residual pockets of native bush in gullies and following stream courses. A much more extensive tract of native forest / bush east of

Pukekawa Hill falls towards Umupuia Beach and Duder Regional Park – above Maraetai Coast Rd and North Rd – with pine forest running down much of its western flank. However, the main focus of the current submissions is the rolling plateau landscape extending through to the Whitford Precinct and the rolling coastal terrain closer to Maraetai.

168. This coastal hinterland is relatively 'self-contained' within rolling uplands, terraces and basins that are set well back from the coast, the subject landholdings are also expansive, with open views across much of this landscape. A patina of gullies, often filled with bush remnants that are in some cases connected to the large tract of bush just described (in turn, linked to coastal ONL68) helps to break up parts of this landscape. But the sequence of gullies and remnant bush also helps to enhance its fundamentally rural character and, in places, amenity.
169. On the other hand, the large Whitford production forest south of Okaroro Drive, and the large block of pine forest near Pukekawa Hill, east of the Te Puru Stream, lends a much more utilitarian aesthetic to the local landscape. This is exacerbated by the presence of oxidation ponds at the end of Okaroro Drive, together with related infrastructure, and these activities clearly have an impact on the inherent appeal and amenity of the local environment.
170. In looking at the subject area as a whole, it is unclear to me how quite intensive rural-lifestyle development would address the relative openness of much of the elevated rural landscape south of Maraetai and the reverse sensitivity issues associated with both the neighbouring production forests and sewage treatment plant. Moreover, there would be a significant mis-match between the development intensities and resulting patterns of development evident inside and outside the Whitford Precinct. This would give rise to quite different landscape and amenity outcomes, with the greatest level of residential intensity attributed to that part of the Maraetai / Whitford environment which still exhibits the highest level of productive rural character at present.
171. Overall, therefore, I am concerned by the discontinuities that the current submissions would generate, with marked differences between the types of environment created by the various zones currently under review. In my opinion,

the Mixed Rural Zoning currently proposed is also more aligned with the productive nature of the landscape around the submission sites and the reverse sensitivity issues associated with neighbouring and nearby activities.

172. Accordingly, I cannot support the submissions seeking CSL zoning for the area between Maraetai and Clevedon.

### **BROOKBY**

173. Multiple submissions, including 1630-1, 5021-1, 5164-1 and 5170-1 seek to change the Mixed Rural zoning proposed for areas around Fitzpatrick Rd, Twilight Rd and West Rd and Zone to CSL (**Annexure 28**).

174. This rolling to steeply rolling, in places quite dissected, landscape frames the northern side of the Clevedon Valley. It is notable for its picturesque interplay of remnant stands of native forest with pockets of pasture and a low-density matrix of rural-lifestyle development. Around West and Twilight Roads, the sequence of bush and remnant forest becomes more marked, following the broad path of a sequence of ridges and escarpments that overlook Clevedon's lowland margins. Shelterbelts and amenity planting, including European exotic trees – oaks, poplars, etc – add to this landscape mix, creating a landscape that is notable for its variability, strong repetition of natural elements and intimate spatial structure.

175. In addition, the patchwork of native bush and pockets of pasture on rising ground around Fitzpatrick Rd, Twilight Rd and West Rd are exceptionally prominent in views across the Clevedon Valley. It is both a point of interest and attention in its own right, and affords a backdrop to the wider valley environs. The native remnants, especially, provide attractive counterpoint to, and contrast with, the more productive properties spread across the valley corridor, while the more elevated terrain around West Rd acts as both a landmark and point of reference near Clevedon.

176. The array of elements that I have described lends the area around Brookby a highly appealing, bucolic, quality. Indeed, even though the locality is not attributed ONL status, it is one of Auckland's most distinctive landscapes, displaying an

exceptionally high level of amenity. However, this aesthetic is also extremely sensitive to potential imbalances: the loss of more native vegetation or a marked increase in the built content of this landscape would undermine its fundamental 'rurality'. In particular, a marked increase in the intensity of residential development around Brookby has the potential to rapidly erode the enduring naturalness and interplay of open space with vegetated areas that is so central to much of the locality's enduring appeal.

177. Development to a 2.0ha average site size would, in my opinion, have a profound effect on Brookby's core qualities – both as experienced from 'within' and 'without', in views across the Clevedon Valley. Although new planting, revegetation and micro-siting of buildings might help to limit the degree and pervasiveness of such effects, they would not offset the loss of open space, the increased compartmentalisation of the Brookby landscape and the diminution of its existing natural remnants.
178. In light of these considerations, it is my opinion that the Brookby area should remain subject to Mixed Rural zoning, as proposed in the PAUP.

#### **CLEVEDON VALLEY & KAWAKAWA RD**

179. Multiple submissions, including 2008-1, 5023-2, 5416-1 and 5579-1, request that landholdings around the village of Clevedon, the wider valley and rural land near Clevedon Kawakawa Rd be zoned CSL, instead of the proposed Mixed Rural and Rural Production zones (**Annexure 29**).
180. Although parts of this landscape, notably around Ardmore Airfield and the valley margins, are visually subdivided by a mixture of shelterbelts, amenity planting, stands of kahikatea, totara and other native species, and even the local terrain, enduring impressions of the Clevedon area are of a largely planar landscape dominated by large open fields. Many of these are lined and criss-crossed by hedgerows and the aforementioned shelterbelt of various types and sizes, but the valley corridor still retains an appreciable feeling of openness and visual permeability – more so than some neighbouring areas like Brookby. This

expansive quality becomes even more marked at the eastern end of the valley system, near Clevedon village, as well as across the coastal margins and foothills beyond the Clevedon Polo Grounds. Although the local terrain becomes more variable as one progresses towards Kawakawa, the coastal margins and terraces remain, as with much of the Clevedon Valley, essentially open and in terms of landscape character – markedly ‘rural’.

181. In addition, to having a distinctive character of its own that is largely defined by the flat to gently undulating topography of its valley system and kahikateas (especially), Clevedon’s rural landscape also serves the important function of containing the Ardmore airfield, with its phalanx of related industries and activities, and of helping to define Clevedon Village. Assisted by the upper reaches of the Wairoa River running past the village’s eastern margins and the forest-covered reserve to its immediate north, the swathe of rural farmland otherwise wrapped around Clevedon helps to maintain its feeling of compactness and clear demarcation from the countryside around it.
  
182. I also appreciate that much of the adjoining valley floor and river margins have considerable ability to potentially absorb new development; albeit less so, once east of the Wairoa River. Yet such development or intensification would come at the ‘cost’ of some of the more natural qualities associated with the Wairoa River and its Rural Coastal margins and – more generally – a reduction in the productive rural character of the Clevedon Valley. Many of the qualities that I have described – including its openness (even if this is variable), its strong demarcation of both Ardmore Airfield and Clevedon Village, its limited stock of residual natural elements and features (mostly pockets of native vegetation), and its essential ‘rurality’ – would be diminished by any such changes.
  
183. As a result, it is my opinion, that the proposed Mixed Rural and Rural Production zonings should generally be maintained within the Clevedon Valley, around the periphery of the current village and along the coastal corridor extending out to Kawakawa Bay.

## SOUTH CLEVEDON / ARDMORE

184. Currently, most of Clevedon's lowland landscape, together with its foothill margins are subject to proposed Mixed Rural zoning, while a Rural Production Zone is applied to the land east of Creightons Rd and south of Tourist Rd in the south-eastern corner of the Clevedon Valley (**Annexure 30**). Submission 5321 requests that a number of landholdings south of Papakura Clevedon Rd – at the very edge of the alluvial plain, but also extending into neighbouring foothills near Creightons Rd and Ardmore Quarry Rd – be rezoned Countryside Living.
185. In my assessment, the lower lying parts of the 'site' are similar to many of the areas that I have just described within the floor of the Clevedon Valley. Although subdivision of this landscape by shelterbelts, hedgerows and the odd copse of amenity planting around dwellings subdivides this landscape, physically and visually, the large paddocks spreading south of Papakura Clevedon Rd offer relatively open and repeated views, across the subject land up onto the south Clevedon foothills. The pockets of 'openness' are large and screening elements tend to be clustered in pockets.
186. The more elevated parts of the subject landholdings closer to Creightons Rd and Ardmore Quarry Rd are, if anything, even more sensitive to change. They mostly comprise rolling pasture that is intertwined with strands of kahikatea-dominated bush and marginal vegetation following a series of stream courses that run down from higher up. The pockets and sequences of bush lend these slope faces considerable appeal – contrasting with the 'checkerboard' of much of the valley floor. They also dominate the southern side of the valley corridor, providing a natural point of focus in views across the valley and from key local roads like Papakura Clevedon Rd. They also provide a persistent backdrop to much of the valley below and activities within it.
187. In my opinion, both areas display appreciable sensitivity to CSL type modification, in part because both are exposed to a relatively large receiving environment and a mixture of both public and private audiences. However, the impact on the foothill slopes would be more marked: much of the intrinsic rural character and residual naturalness so apparent across this part of the subject landholdings would be

rapidly eroded, then lost altogether. In addition, the open views across this landscape would soon be fragmented, then displaced, by a mixture of development and planting – to demarcate boundaries, provide more shelter from the prevailing winds and to enhance individual properties.

188. Finally, I note that it is very difficult to differentiate the subject land from much of the valley area and foothill margins in its general vicinity. In my opinion, the landscape of the subject site looked very similar to other Mixed Rural and even Rural Production land on Creightons Rd and Tourist Rd, or even the northern end of Sky High Rd. In fact, I had a great deal of difficulty determining just how one might meaningfully separate the subject land from other landholdings in its general vicinity. This implies that any new CSLZ could well end up ‘creeping’ across much of Clevedon’s productive rural landscape and its margins.
189. In reality, I think the very landscape and amenity qualities that I have described suggest that the submitter’s property and adjoining landholdings are not suitable for CSL zoning.

#### **PART FOUR: OTHER ZONING MATTERS**

190. In this section, I address four matters that do not involve submitter requests for ‘up zoning’ or precincts. The first of these relates to an incorrectly coded submission that addresses High Natural Character Area 48 at Mt Pleasant Drive, Leigh while the second and third both relate to changes to the Rural Coastal Zone in South Auckland. The last matter pertains to the rural zoning around Kingseat, extending towards the mouth of the Pahurehure Inlet.

#### **MT PLEASANT DRIVE, LEIGH**

191. A submission from J Gottler and B Jacobsen seeks removal of the “Coastal Natural Character Zone” from their property at Lot 3, Mt Pleasant Drive, Leigh. In fact, they are referring to High Natural Character Area No.48, which stretches from the attractively confined bay at the foot of Mt Pleasant Drive across the series of massive coastal escarpments above Goat Island and the southern end

of Pakiri Beach. Furthermore, the Council has already submitted in favour of a change to the HNC Area (Submission 5716-171) that would address many of the issues raised in relation to the Gottler / Jacobsen property (**Annexure 31**).

192. In fact, HNC Area 48 embraces a highly significant part of Auckland's coastline, one whose character resonates with a sizeable proportion of Auckland's regional community. Leigh, Goat Island and Pakiri are synonymous with the striking uplifted landforms of the coastline that I have described, with landforms that rapidly transition from a dramatic series of steep, open, coastal escarpments into the intimate rocky bays and headlands of both Leigh and Mathesons Bay.
193. The vegetation cover draped across this rugged landscape is in many respects secondary to the underlying landforms, but nevertheless pohutukawa, puriri, totara, kauri and rimu and even some of the exotic amenity planting found on individual landholdings augment the perceived naturalness and overall value of this landscape. This includes the area around Mt Pleasant Drive, which follows the spine of a ridge above Omaha Cove, with bush and regenerating shrubland down the flanks both sides of the road and its headland terminus.
194. In my opinion, HNC Area 48 captures the essence and appropriate physical extent of the environment / landscape that I have just described. It is also physically contiguous with bush that extends around Cape Rodney onto the more exposed coastal faces above Goat Island. The proposed revisions to this HNC Area (as per Submission 5716-171) tighten up its physical coverage, so that it avoids the production forestry on the Gottler / Jacobsen property, together with their dwelling, other local buildings and most of the domestic curtelage both sides of Mt Pleasant Drive.
195. Accordingly, I now consider the HNC Area to be appropriately defined; I do not consider that it requires further amendment.



## THE RURAL COASTAL ZONE – AWHITU PENINSULA & SOUTH MANUKAU HARBOUR

196. In response to submissions which seek alignment of the Rural Coastal Zone with the extent of the Coastal Environment and coastal zoning applied in the operative Auckland Council District Plan (Franklin Section), a number of changes are now proposed to the boundary of the Rural Coastal Zone – covering the margins of the Awhitu Peninsula, the Waiuku River and its Glenbrook Arm, together with the southern Manukau Harbour coastline (**Annexure 32**). As requested, these alterations would bring that zoning more into line with the delineation of the Coastal Environment, as mapped by my practice in 2010 and 2013 and the provisions included in the Auckland Council District Plan (Franklin Section) through Rural Plan Change 14. The report “*Natural Character Assessment Auckland Region*”, January 2013 (amended in January 2014) shows the extent of the Coastal Environment, which was mapped with reference to criteria drawn from Policy 1 of the NZ Coastal Policy Statement 2010.
197. The proposed changes to the Rural Coastal Zone don't exactly mimic that alignment, as the zoning reflect cadastral boundaries, whereas those identified by my practice pertain solely to topography, vegetation cover, water catchments and headwaters, and other natural variables. In addition, future coastal management, via district plan provisions, also has to respect the reality that the Natural Character values of many parts of the Coastal Environment have already been irrevocably modified; even lost. As a result, there is little point in identifying some locations as being within the Rural Coastal Zone when the values associated with that zone have largely, or entirely, disappeared.
198. Nevertheless, other parts of the Awhitu coastline, display a range of attributes and qualities that remain highly significant. These are recognised, for example, through the identification of ONL55 down most of the Awhitu Peninsula's Tasman coastline and the identification of HNC Areas 43, 44, 46 and 47 around the Peninsula and HNC Area 45 off Elletts Beach.
199. Allowing for the factors described above, it is clear that the revised boundaries for the Rural Coastal Zone are more closely aligned with the extent of the Coastal

Environment, as mapped in Brown NZ's 2013 report and Appendix 6.1 to the PAUP. Importantly, this alignment is most obvious where the revised zone mapping addresses those areas considered to be significant: where Landscape and Natural Character values are more clearly expressed and are important in terms of public appreciation of the Coastal Environment.

### **THE RURAL COASTAL ZONE – MARAETAI TO MATINGARAHİ**

200. Similar adjustments have occurred in relation to mapping of the proposed Rural Coastal Zone between Maraetai and the Region's southern boundary on the Firth of Thames – again largely in response to a number of Submissions seeking alignment between the extent of the Rural Coastal zoning in the PAUP and that applied in the Auckland Council District Plan (Franklin Section) via Rural Plan Change 14. (**Annexure 33**). These changes are much more consistent with recent mapping of the Coastal Environment and, in particular, better reflect the extent of a number of High Natural Character Areas: no.144 – the rocky coastline and bush-clad foothills at the western end of Umupuia Beach; no.145 – Whakakaiwhara Point and Duder Regional Park; no.146 – Papanui Point to Puatiti Point; and no.s 162 and 163 – addressing Tapapakanga and Matingarahi / the Hunua Ranges coastline, respectively. The revised zones also embrace ONLs 62 to 68, which address much the same stretches of coastline in terms of landscape values.
201. Again, therefore, it is my view that the modified extent of the Rural Coastal Zone supports management of the important sequence of coastal environments / landscapes stretching from near the Wairoa River through to the Hunua Ranges.

### **KINGSEAT AND KARAKA**

202. Kingseat is subject to its own precinct and related provisions that set out to realise a village community at that location. However, the area around Kingseat – extending towards Elletts Beach and Karaka Point at the mouth of the Pahurehure Inlet – has long been subject to large scale pastoral activity and horticulture, with horse breeding intermixed with dairy farming and the growing of crops like corn / maize. For the most part, this coastal hinterland (**Annexure 34**) is gently undulating, with few significant visual and physical breaks apart from stream

courses, hedgerows and shelterbelts. Most of the area's native vegetation has long been cleared, so that the sequence of stream corridors that feed into both the Glenbrook arm of the Waiuku River and the Pahurehure Inlet, together with the much more open margins of the Manukau Harbour coastline around Clarks Beach and Elletts Beach, are the main repositories of any residual natural elements and natural character within most of this catchment.

203. Otherwise, the bulk of landscape patterns and features are man-made: dwellings, garages, barns, glasshouses, fencing, amenity planting, and the shelterbelts and hedgerows already referred to. As a result the south Manukau coastline is, in general, highly modified, developed and structured. It is dominated by human artefacts and activities.
204. Additionally, however, the closer one gets to the harbour, the more exposed, subject to coastal influences and visually open it also is. This contributes to a strong sense of interaction with the broad expanse of the Manukau Harbour even with the Awhitu Peninsula at the western end of it and both the Waitakere Ranges and Auckland's metropolitan area across it. The more natural components and qualities associated with this engagement give rise to the both the identified and Coastal Environment and modified Rural Coastal Zone that I have already addressed. Notably, HNC Area 45 at the western end of Elletts Beach is described as follows in Appendix 6.1:

*An extensive series of well defined elongated shell spits which sit along the south-eastern margins of the Manukau harbour. Patches of dune grasses occupy the spits which are highly expressive of the dynamic natural processes within the Manukau Harbour. The spits are also enhanced by and have a strong association with the expansive intertidal flats and open waters of the Manukau Harbour.*

205. Otherwise, however, much of the coastal landscape and its hinterland is largely devoid of natural elements, as I have already explained – resulting in rapid transition from variably natural harbour margins into a highly productive pastoral / cropping / horticultural landscape. Between these two 'extreme's though, the former Franklin District Council accommodated considerable rural-residential

development in the vicinity of Urquhart Rd, Bryant Rd, Glenfield Rd, Ellett Rd, Seagrove Rd, Clarks Beach Rd and many other points of access to the coast and near it – at Clarks Beach, Waiiau Pa and Elletts Beach. Between Kingseat and Karaka Point, this has left a legacy of dispersed rural / coastal lifestyle development that zoning also has to contend with.

206. In my assessment the Rural Coastal Zone is critical to both the retention and potential enhancement of the limited natural character elements and values that I have already described, while the Rural Production Zone still provides an appropriate 'fit' with the type of open pastoral / horticultural landscapes focused on inland Karaka, Te Hihi, Patumahoe and Kingseat. Between these two zones, the more mixed nature of the coastal hinterland – with its scattering of lifestyle properties, shelterbelts, amenity planting and smaller landholdings – is appropriately reflected in the Mixed Rural Zone currently proposed for this transitional area. Although it may well transition further in the future, to the point where CSL zoning starts to become more viable in this corridor, it is my assessment that this is less likely to happen near Kingseat in the foreseeable future. Its surrounds remain too dominated by large scale pastoral activities and it remains too distant from the Manukau Harbour to generate significant lifestyle appeal at present.
207. Overall, therefore, I consider the currently proposed zoning pattern in the Council's evidence for Topic 081, with it's layering of Rural Coastal, Mixed Rural and Rural Production zones back from the coast, to be appropriate.

**Stephen Brown**

29 January 2016





## *annexure 1.*

### **HATFIELDS BEACH:**

Looking towards the forest margins and hill country of ONL44 from near the intersection of the Hibiscus Coast Highway with Otanerua Rd (above) & looking down the beachfront towards the Hatfields North Peninsula (below)





## *annexure 2.*

### **HATFIELDS BEACH:**

The Hatfields Beach estuary / lagoon with the mixture of hill slopes and ridges, bush and pasture of ONL44 beyond



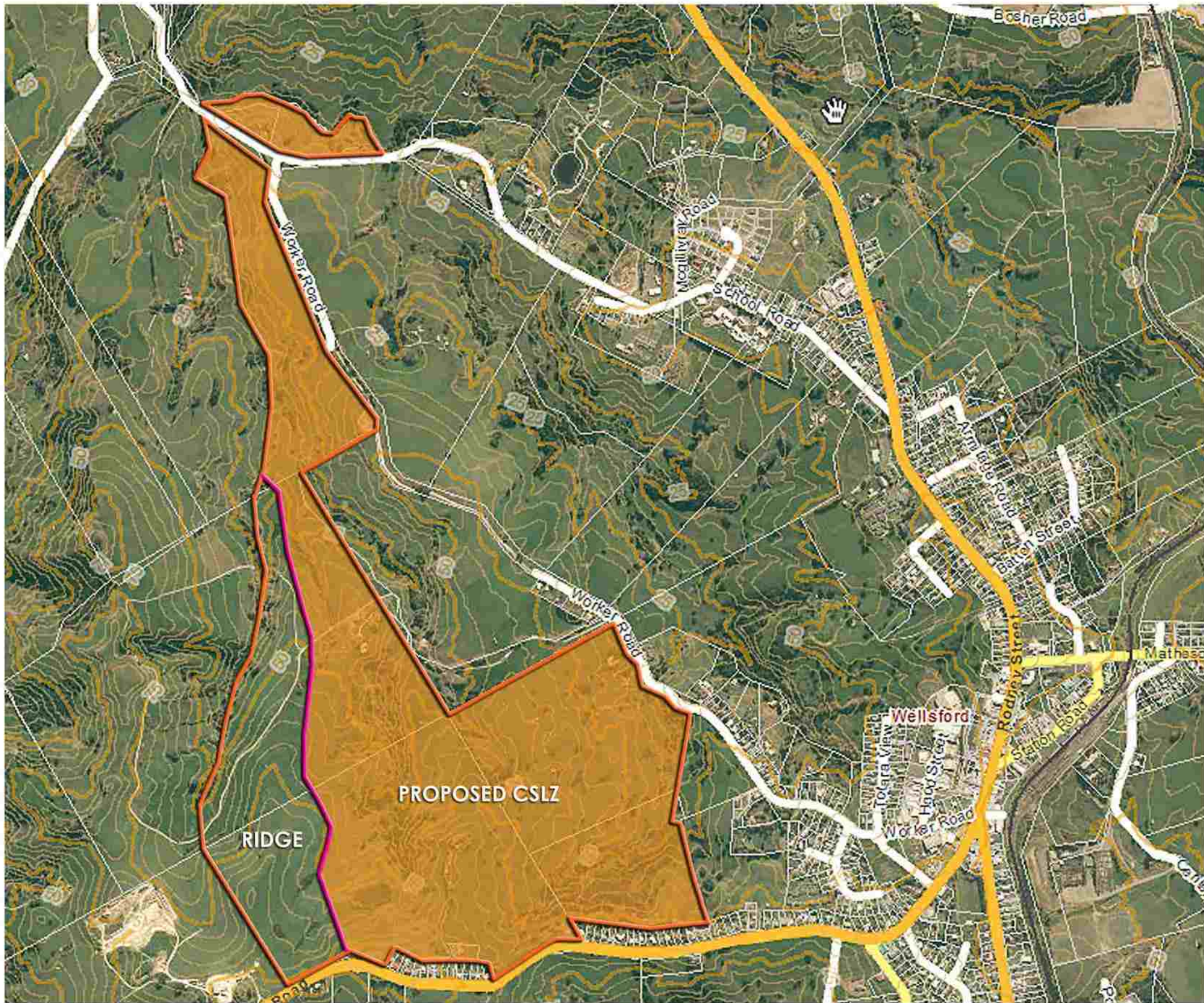


### *annexure 3*

#### **HATFIELDS BEACH:**

Looking from the Hibiscus Coast Highway and adjoining Hibiscus Beach Reserve towards the hills & native forest of ONL44





## annexure 4

**WELLSFORD WEST:**  
The proposed CSLZ west of Worker Rd and Wellsford's town centre

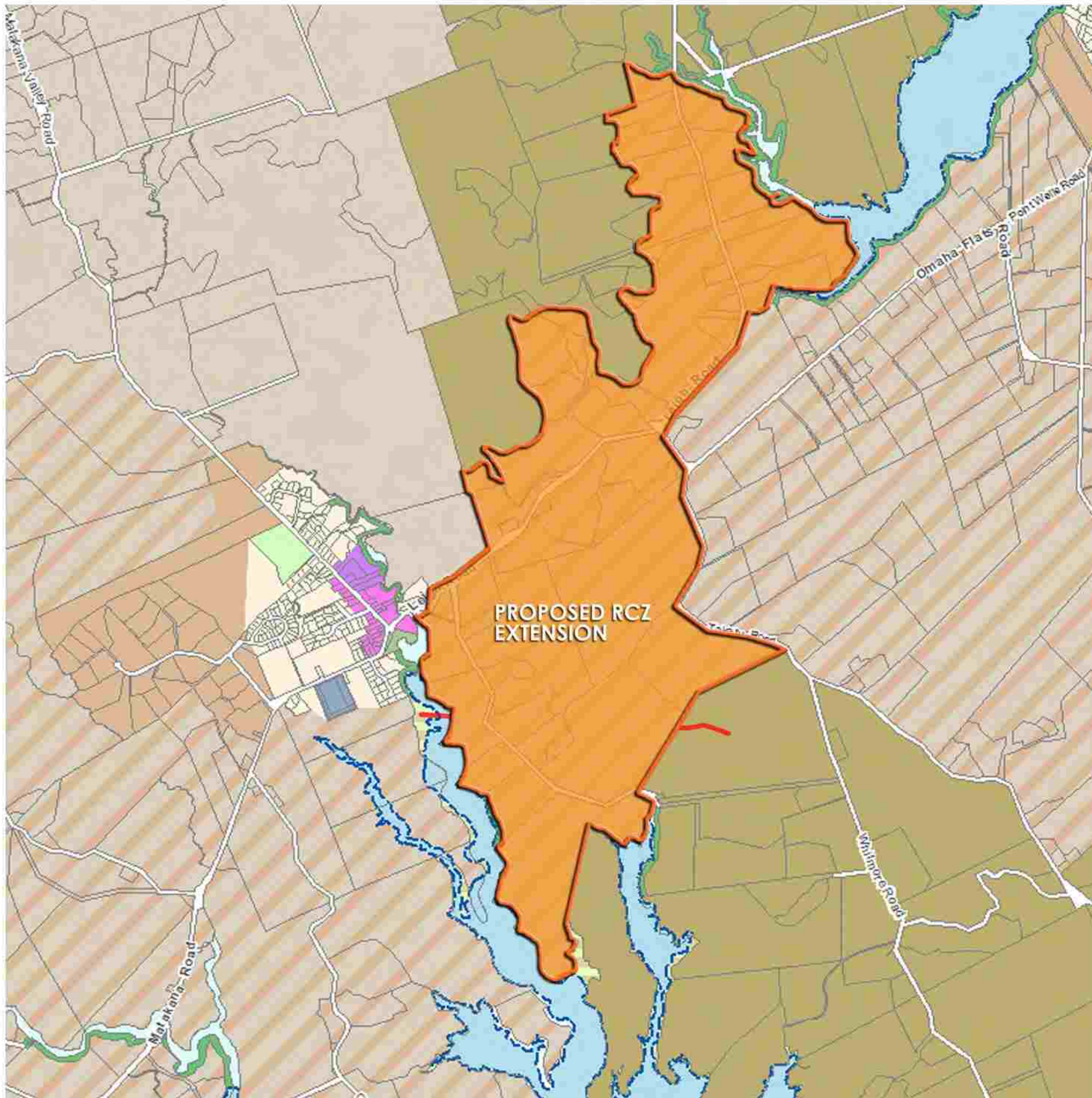




## annexure 5

**WELLSFORD SOUTH:**  
The proposed CSLZ extending south of Davies Rd and the existing town centre

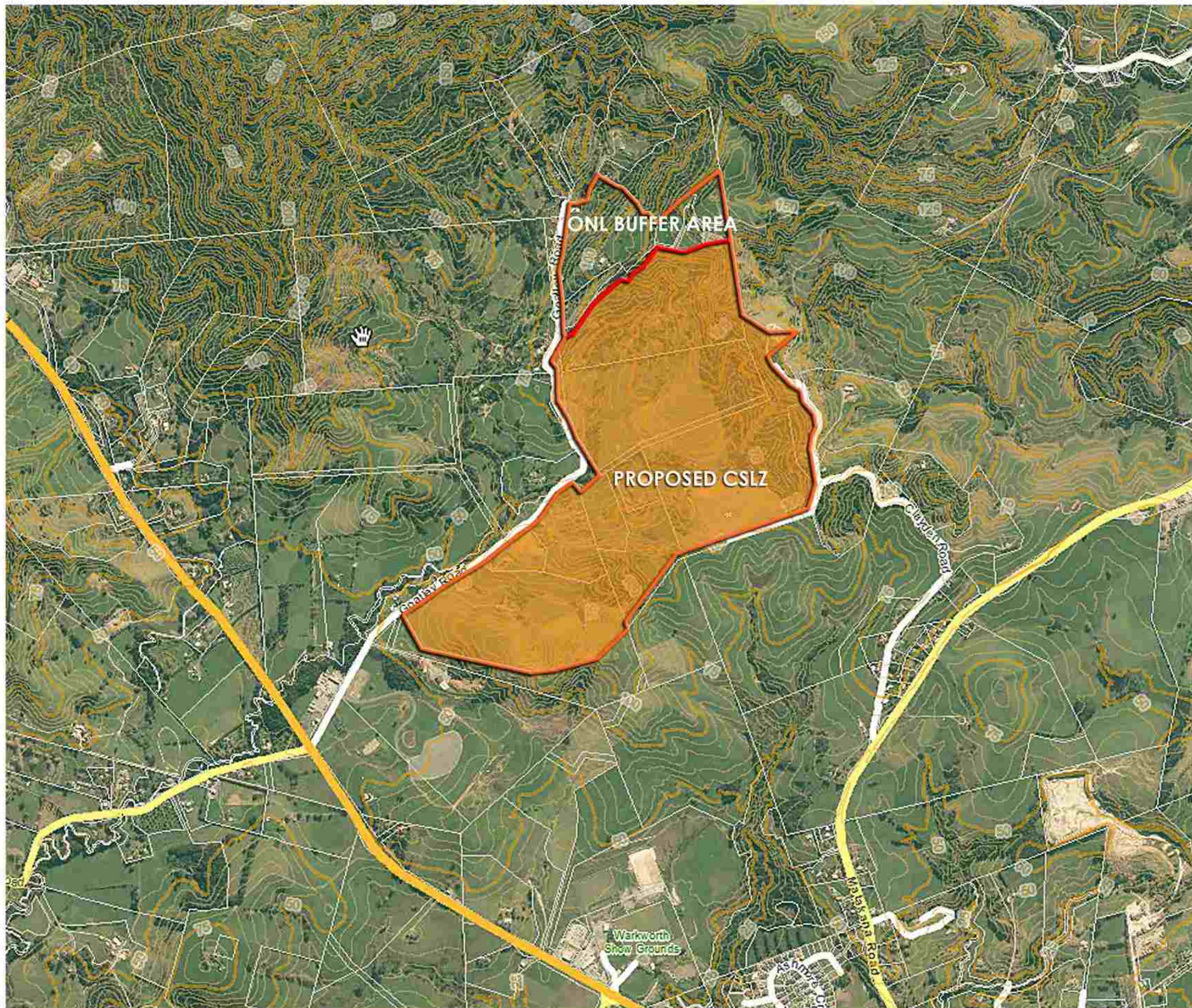




## annexure 6

**MATAKANA / WHANGATEAU:**  
The proposed extension to the Rural Coastal Zone east of Matakana

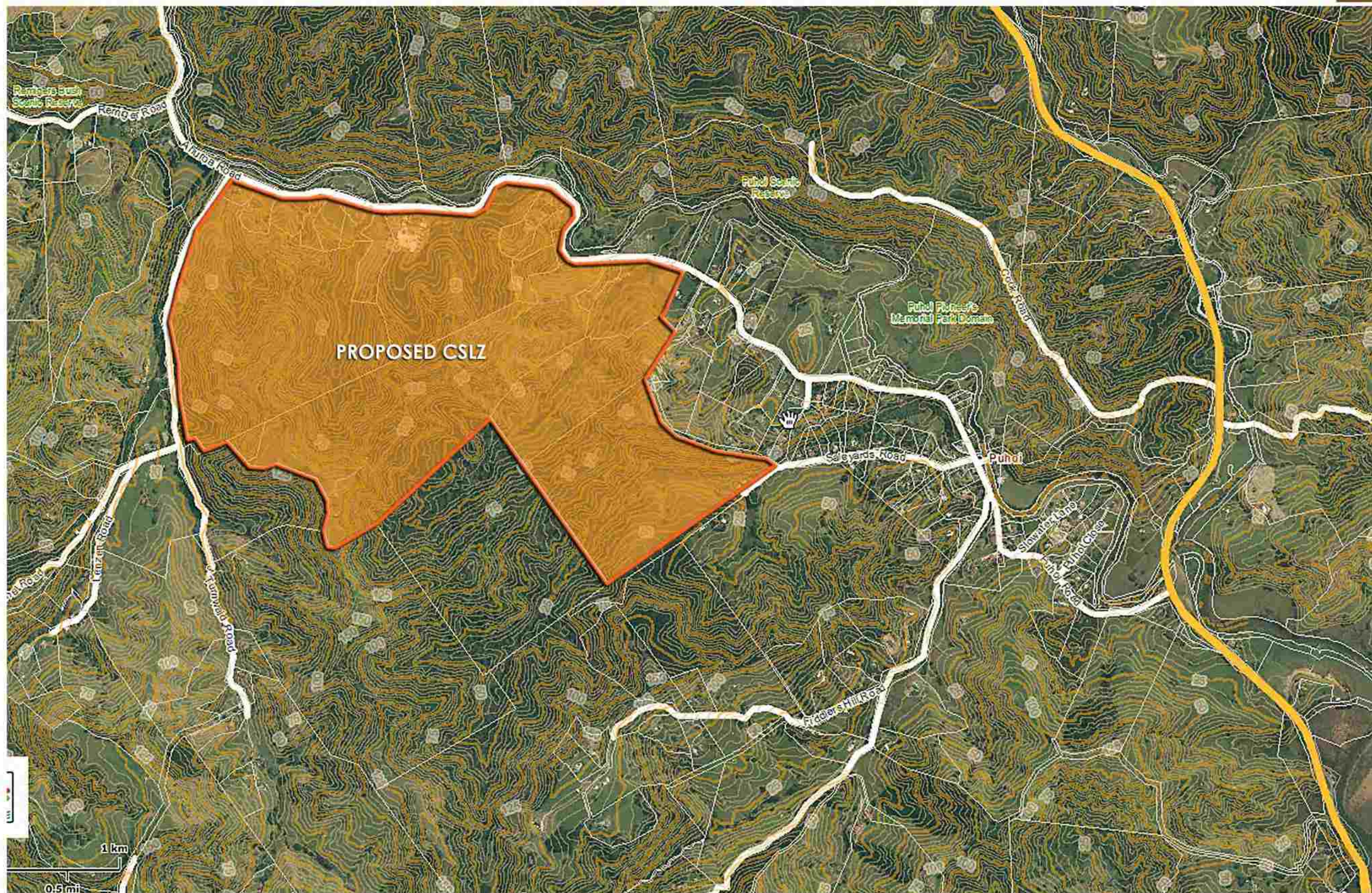




*annexure 7*

**WARKWORTH NORTH: GOATLEY RD:**  
The proposed CSLZ north of Warkworth extending up to Goatley Rd

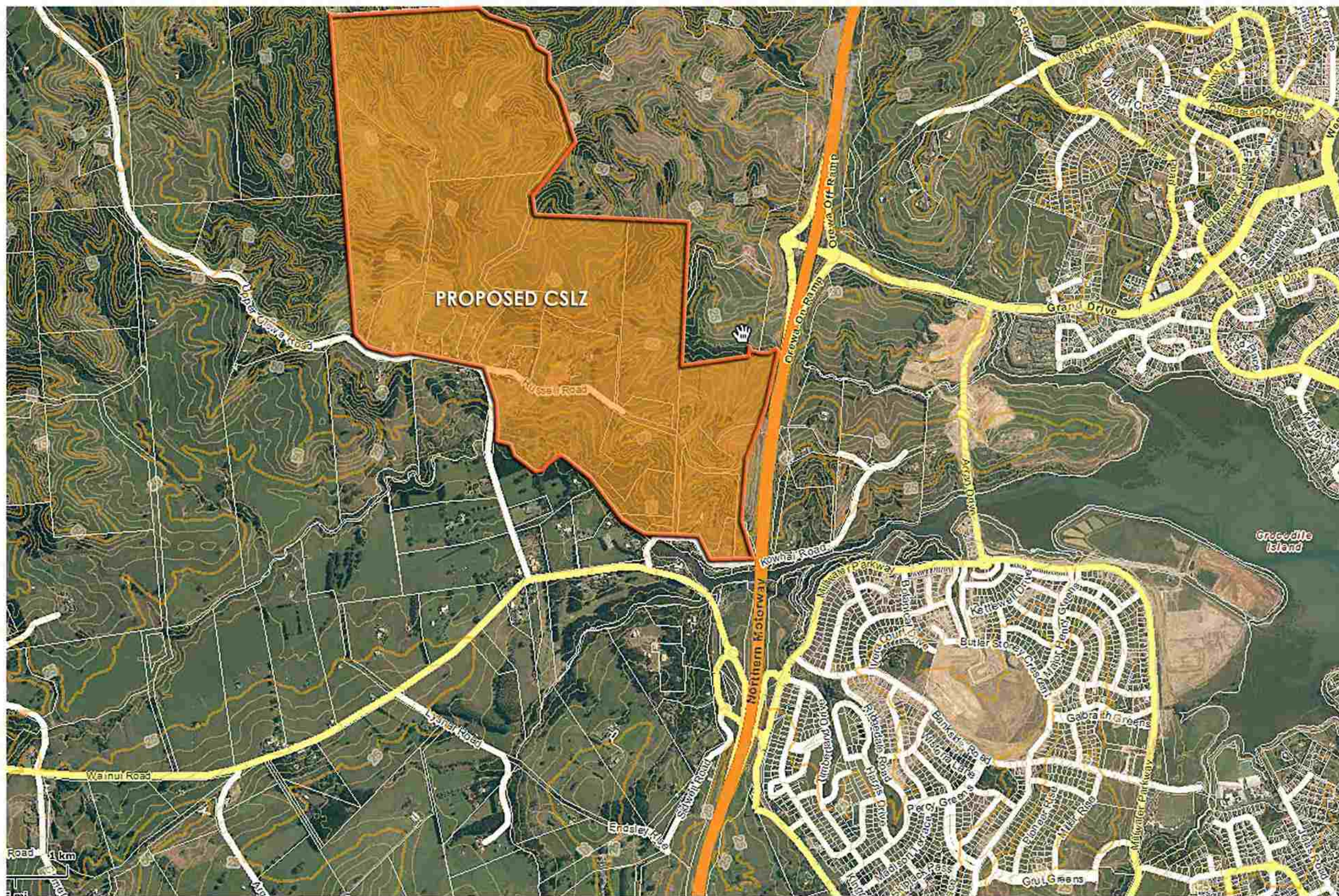




## annexure 8

**PUHOI - AHUROA RD:**  
The proposed CSLZ on the south side of Ahuroa Rd

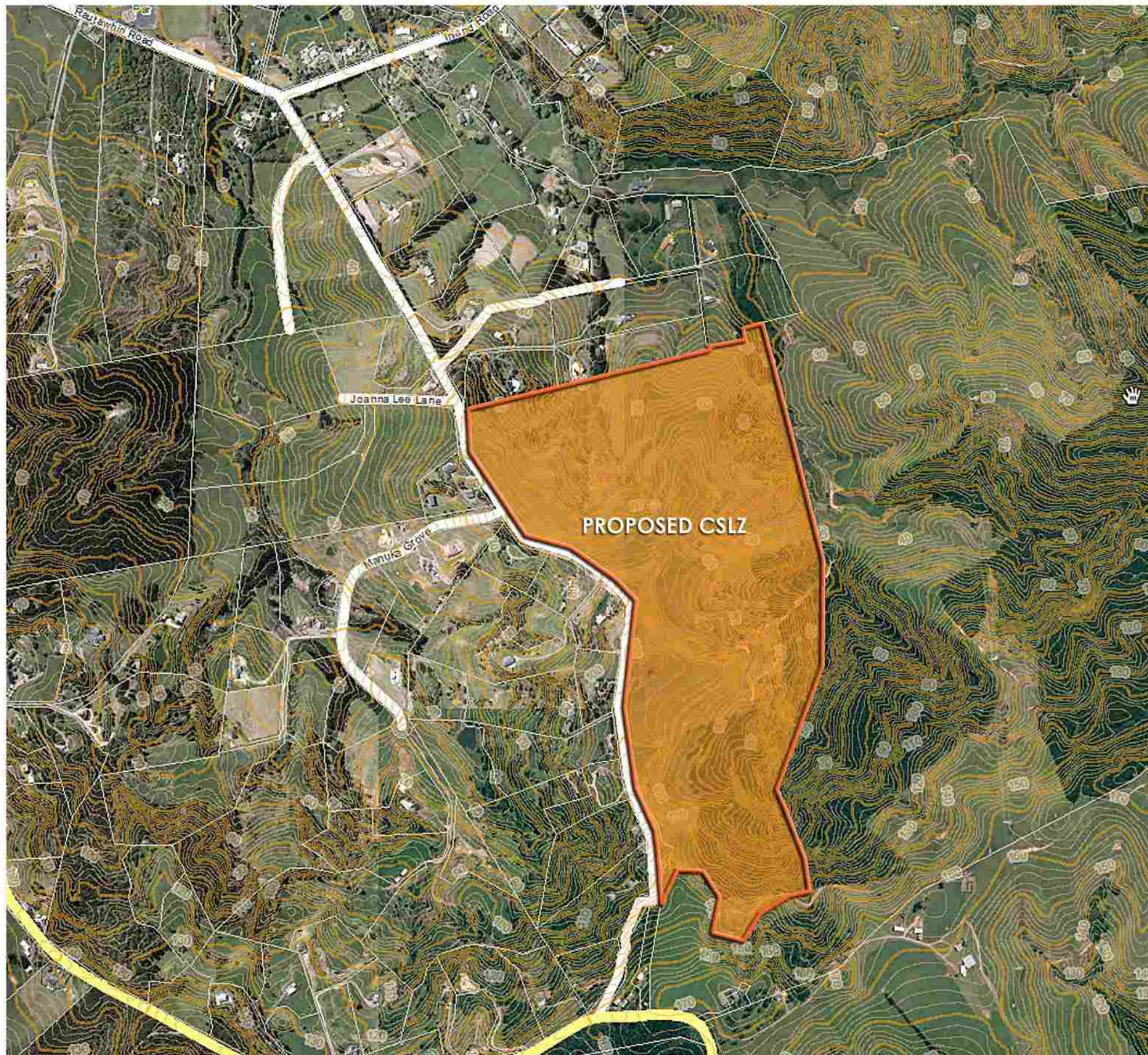




## annexure 9

**UPPER OREWA RD, WAINUI:**  
The proposed CSLZ both sides of Upper Orewa Rd

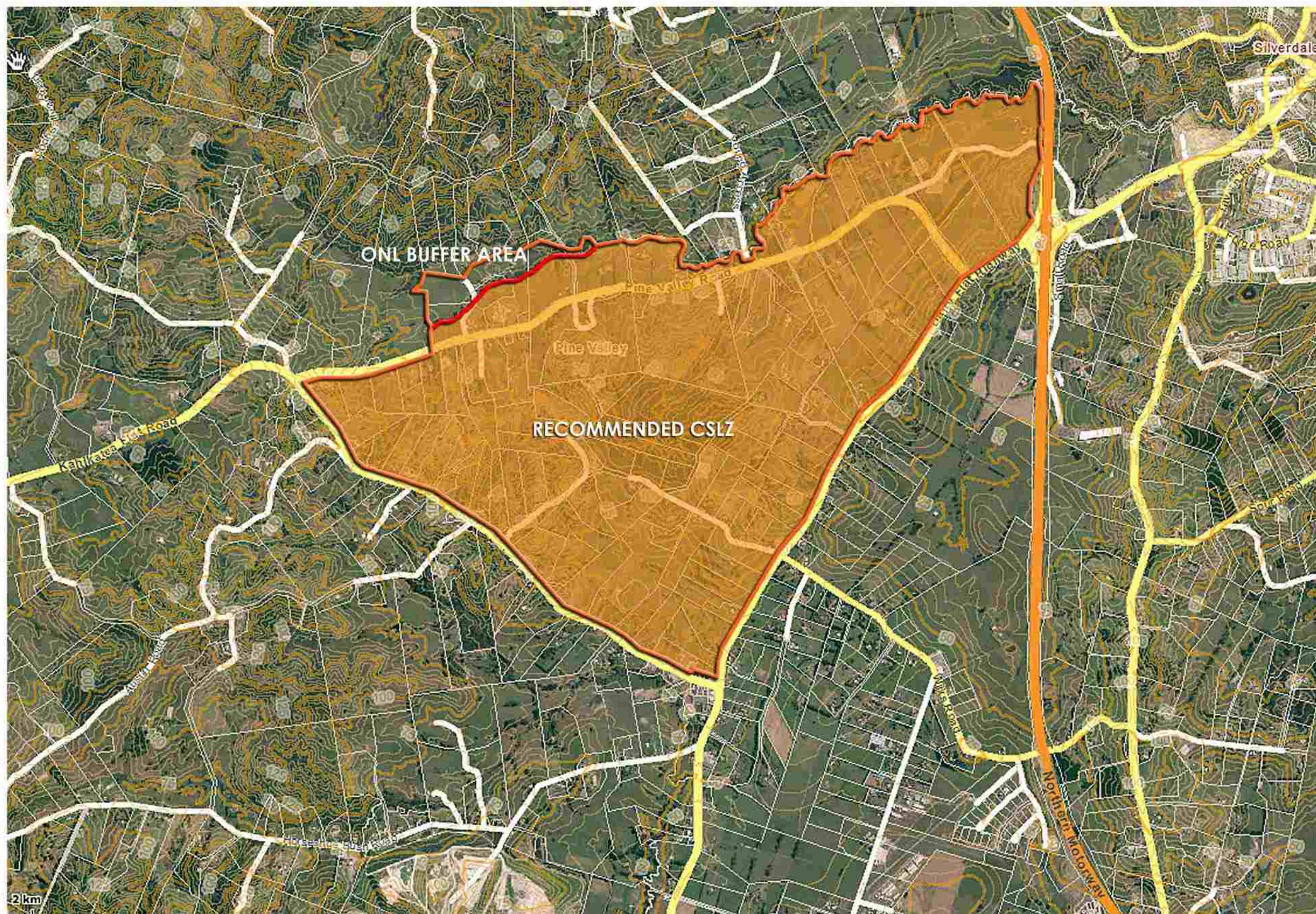




## *annexure 10*

**INLAND RD, HELENSVILLE:**  
The proposed CSLZ running parallel with Inland Rd





## annexure 11

### PINE VALLEY RRD, SILVERDALE:

The proposed CSLZ within a broad basin both sides of Pine Valley Rd





## *annexure 12*

**PCHENERY RD, WHANGAPARAOA:**  
The proposed Large Lot Residential zone next to HNC Area 92 and the Weiti River

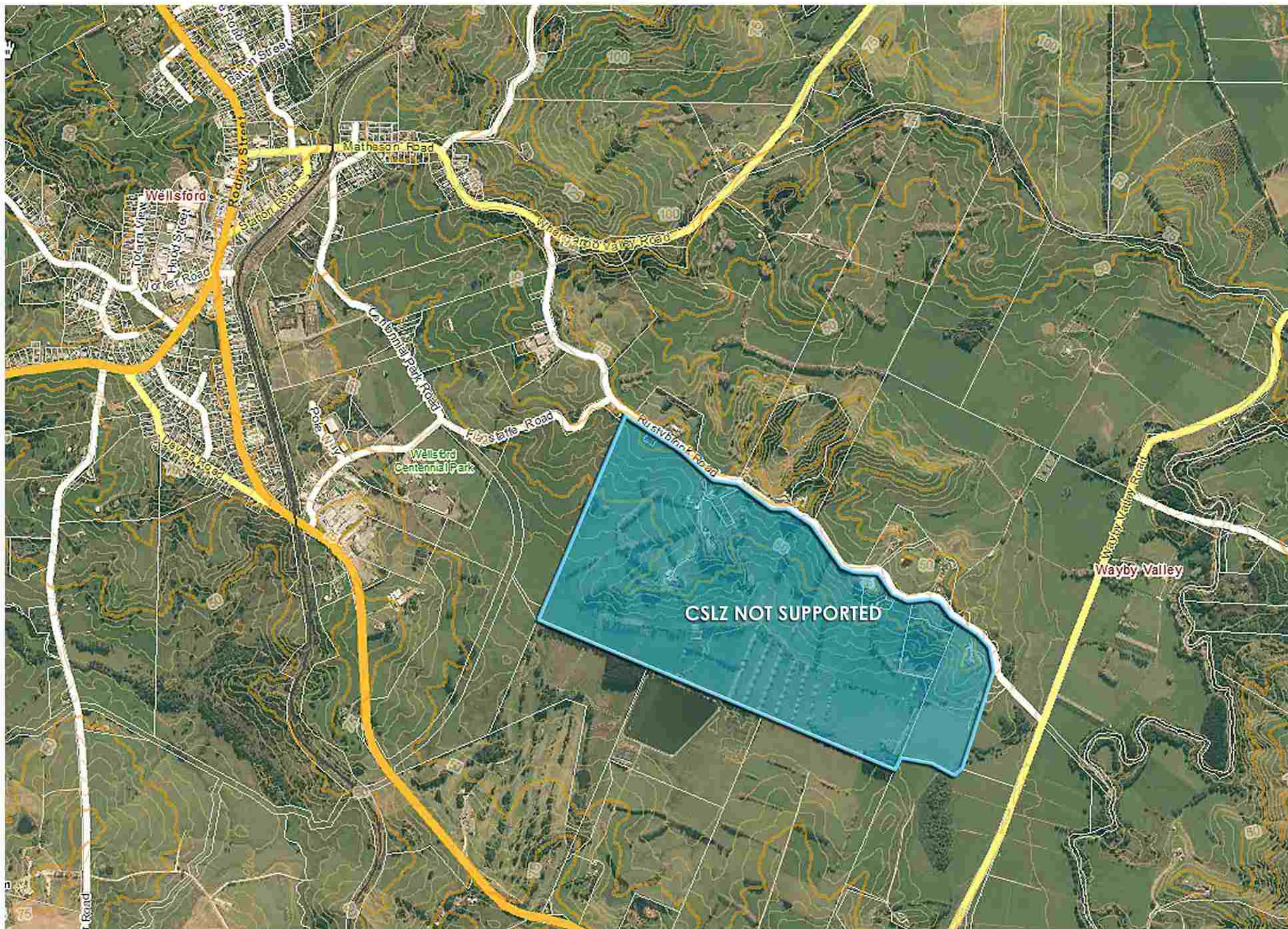




## annexure 13

**TE ARAI POINT:**  
Location of proposed CSL zone next to Ocean View Rd and Western Boundary Rd



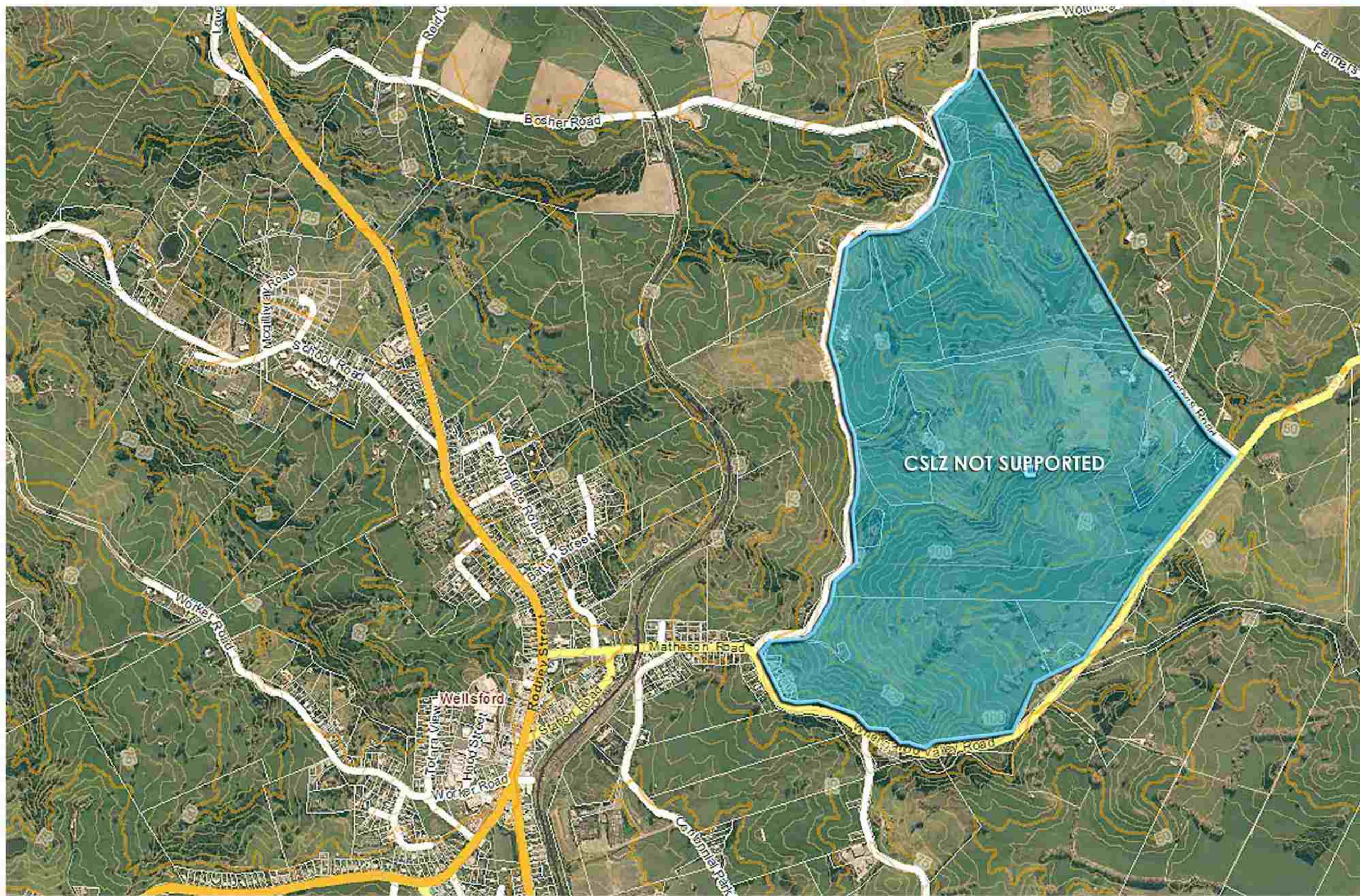


## annexure 14

### WELLSFORD EAST - WAYBY VALLEY RD:

The proposed CSLZ next to the Wellsford sewage treatment plant near Wayby Valley Rd

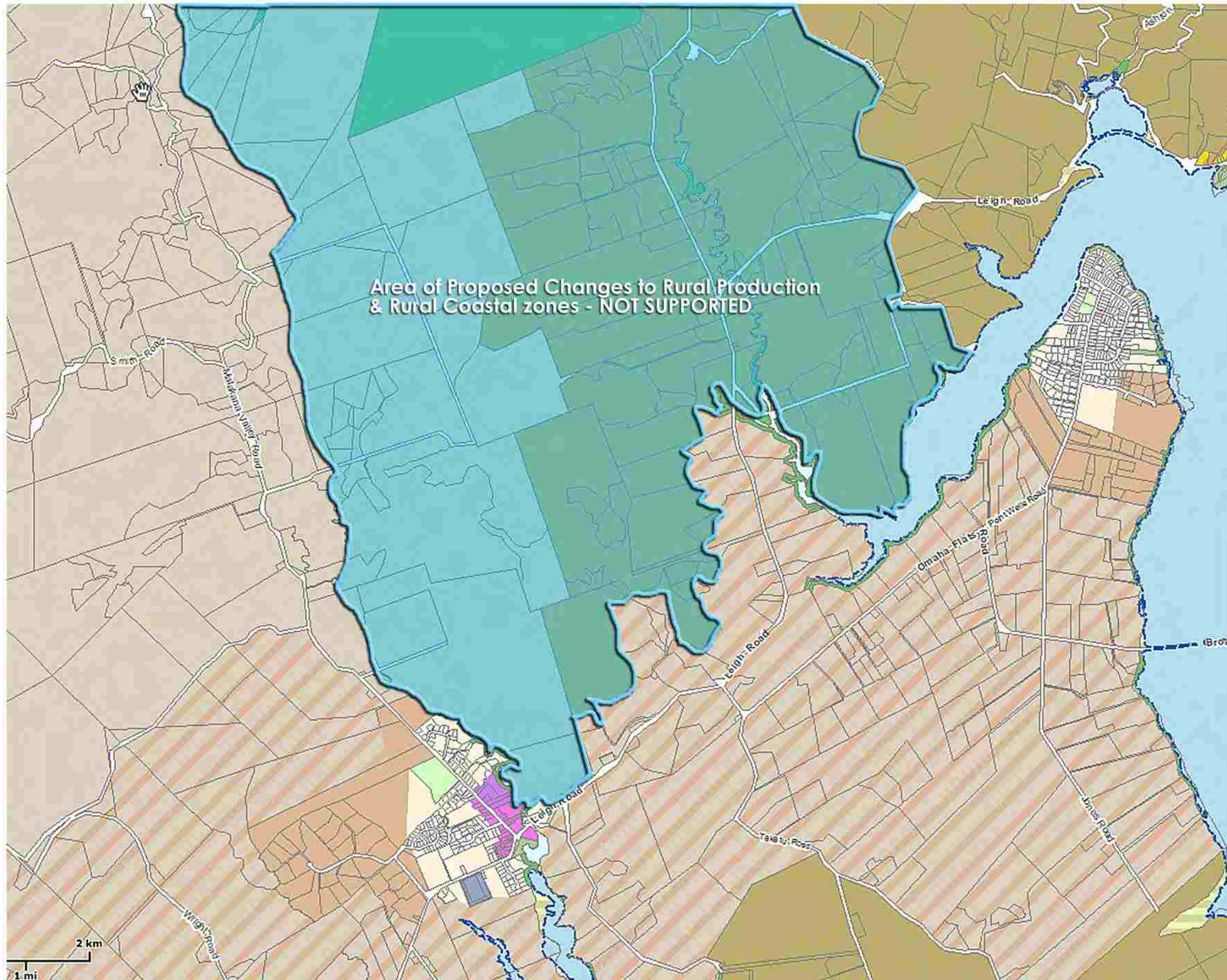




## annexure 15

**WELLSFORD EAST - WHANGAPIRO VALLEY RD:**  
The proposed CSLZ on elevated terrain next to Whangaripo Valley Rd

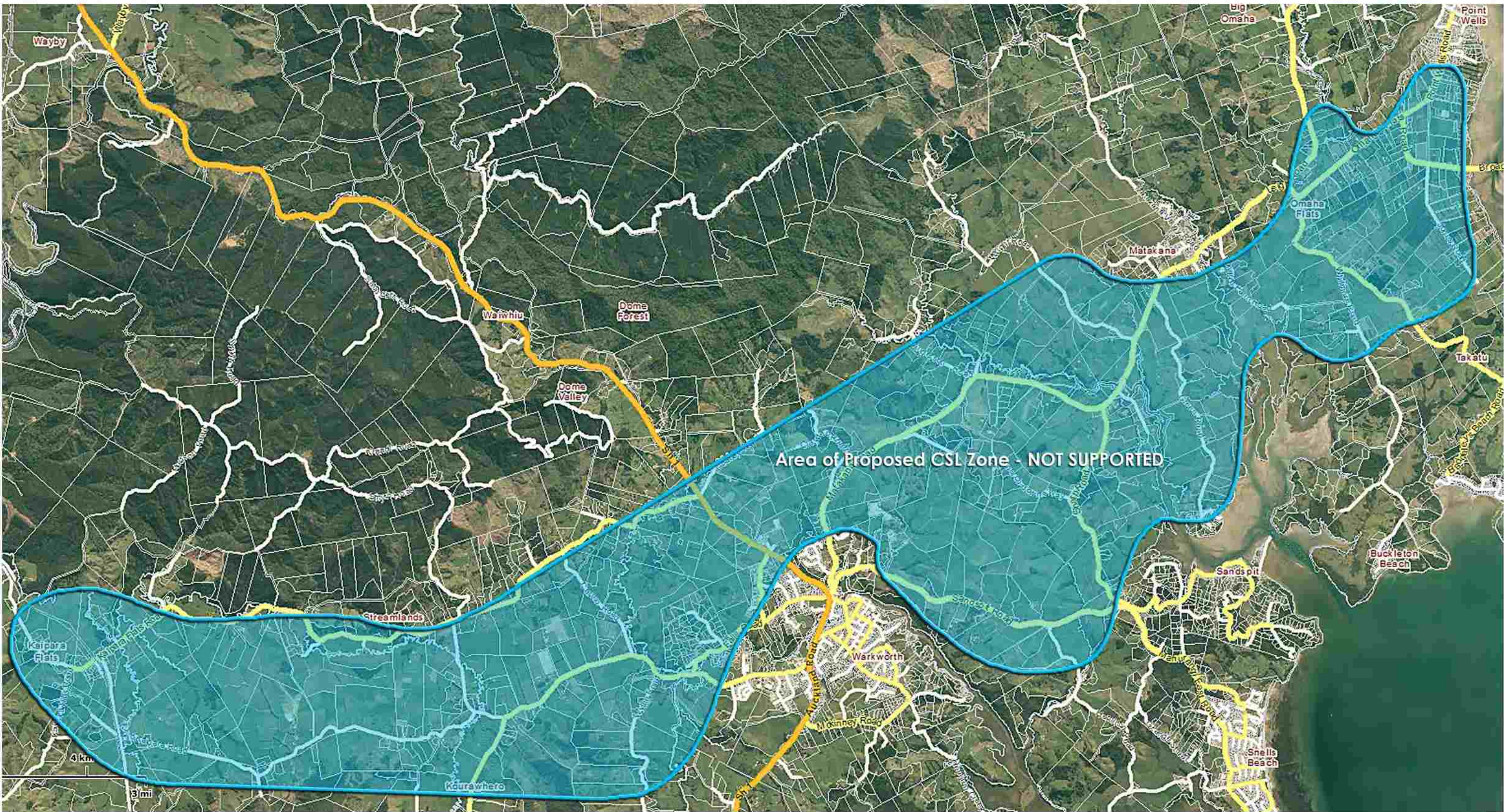




## annexure 16

**MATAKANA HILLS & OMAHA VALLEY:**  
Areas of proposed changes to Rural Production & Rural Coastal zoning



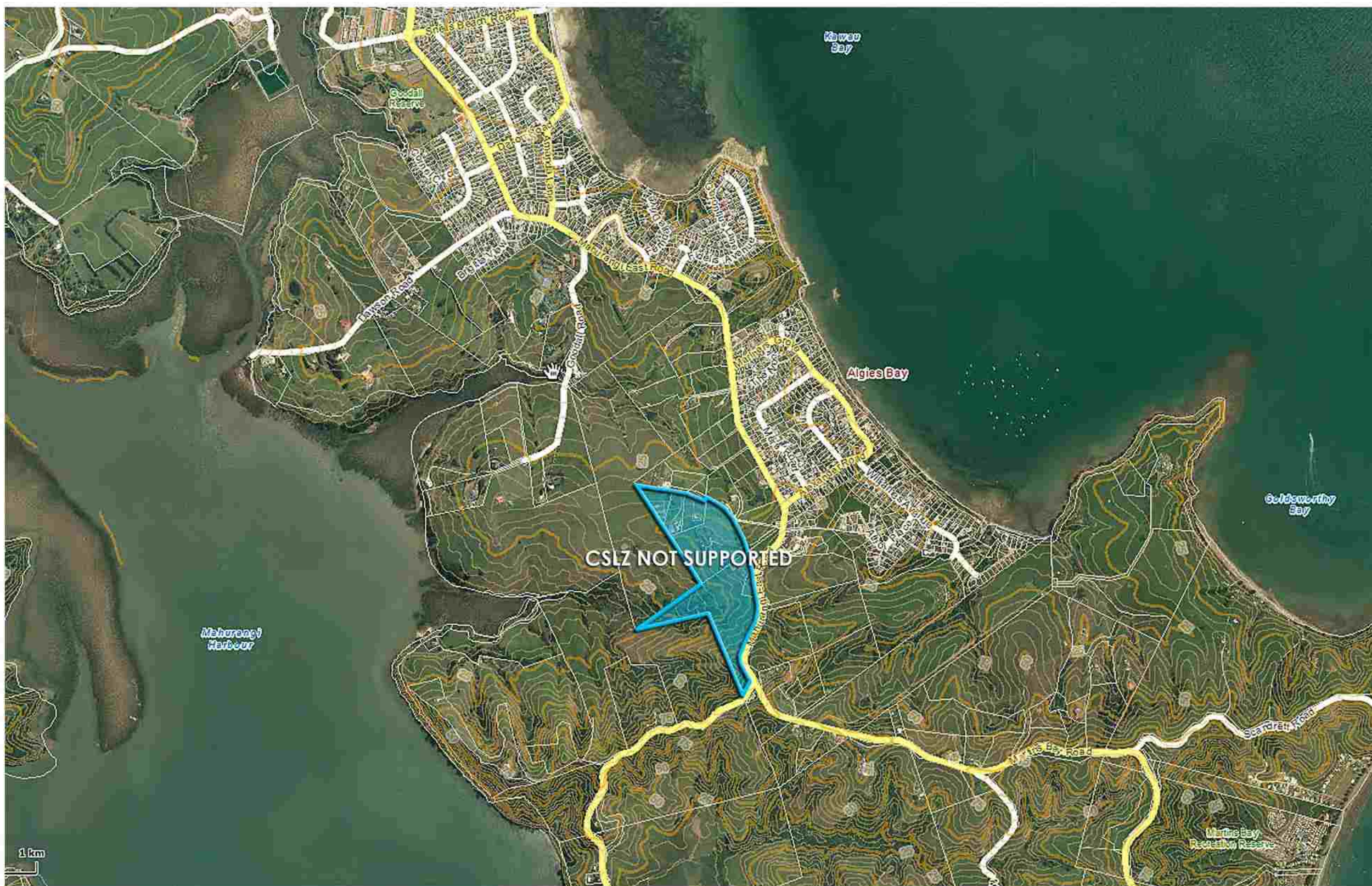


## annexure 17

### KAIPARA FLATS TO MATAKANA COAST:

Broad band of proposed CSLZ stretching from the settlement of Kaipara Flats to Point Wells

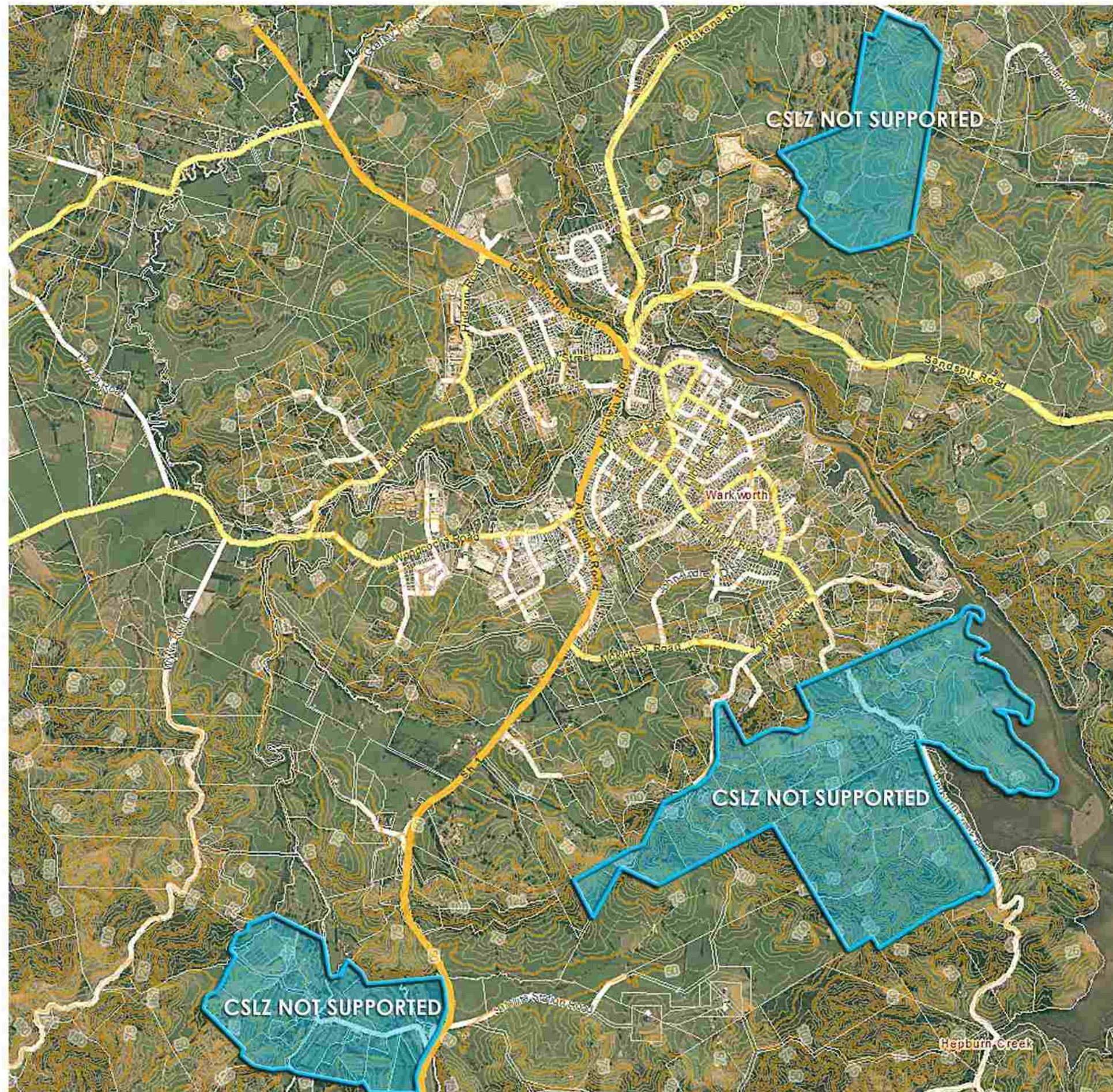




## annexure 18

**ALGIES BAY:**  
Location of proposed CSL zone next to Mahurangi East Rd, Algies Bay





*annexure 19*

**WARKWORTH:**  
Locations of proposed CSL zones near Sandspit Rd, Perry Rd, Thompson Rd and Hepburn Creek Rd

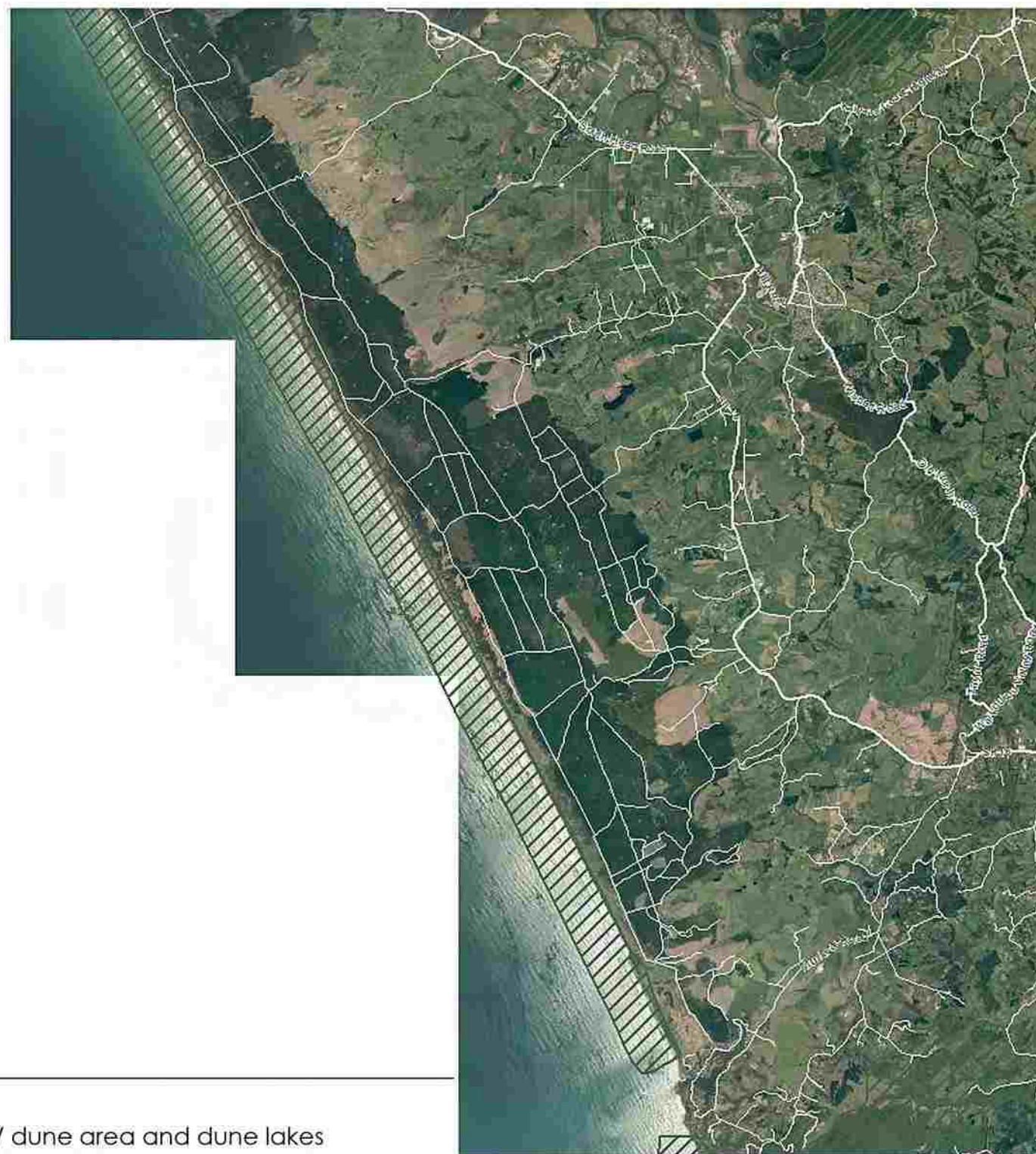




## *annexure 20*

**SOUTH HEAD & MURIWAI BEACH COASTLINE:**  
Areas of Outstanding Natural Character (South Head) & High Natural Character (beach / dune area & dune lakes)

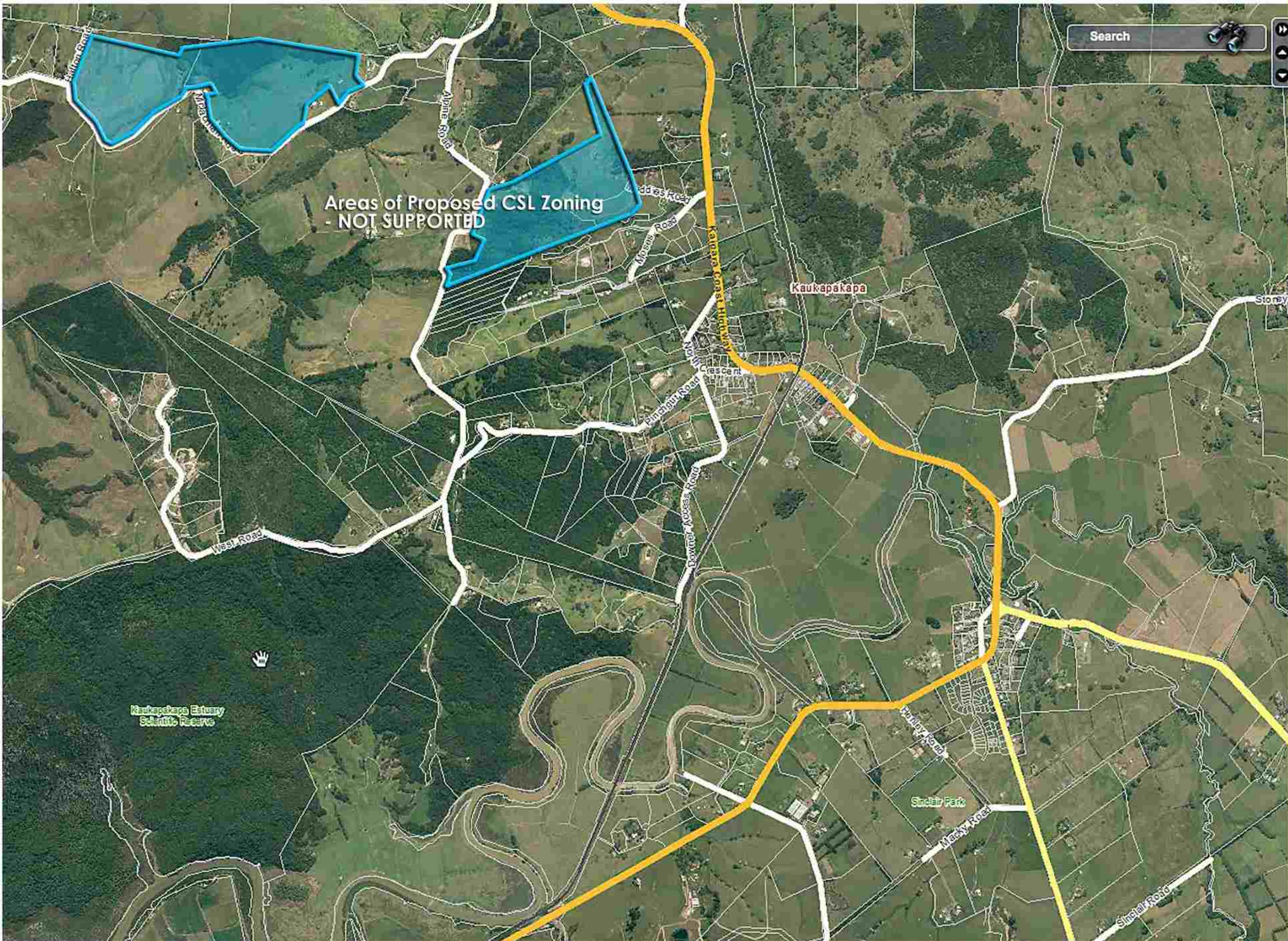




*annexure 21*

**SOUTH HEAD & MURIWAI BEACH COASTLINE:**  
Areas of Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONLs) covering South Head, the beach / dune area and dune lakes

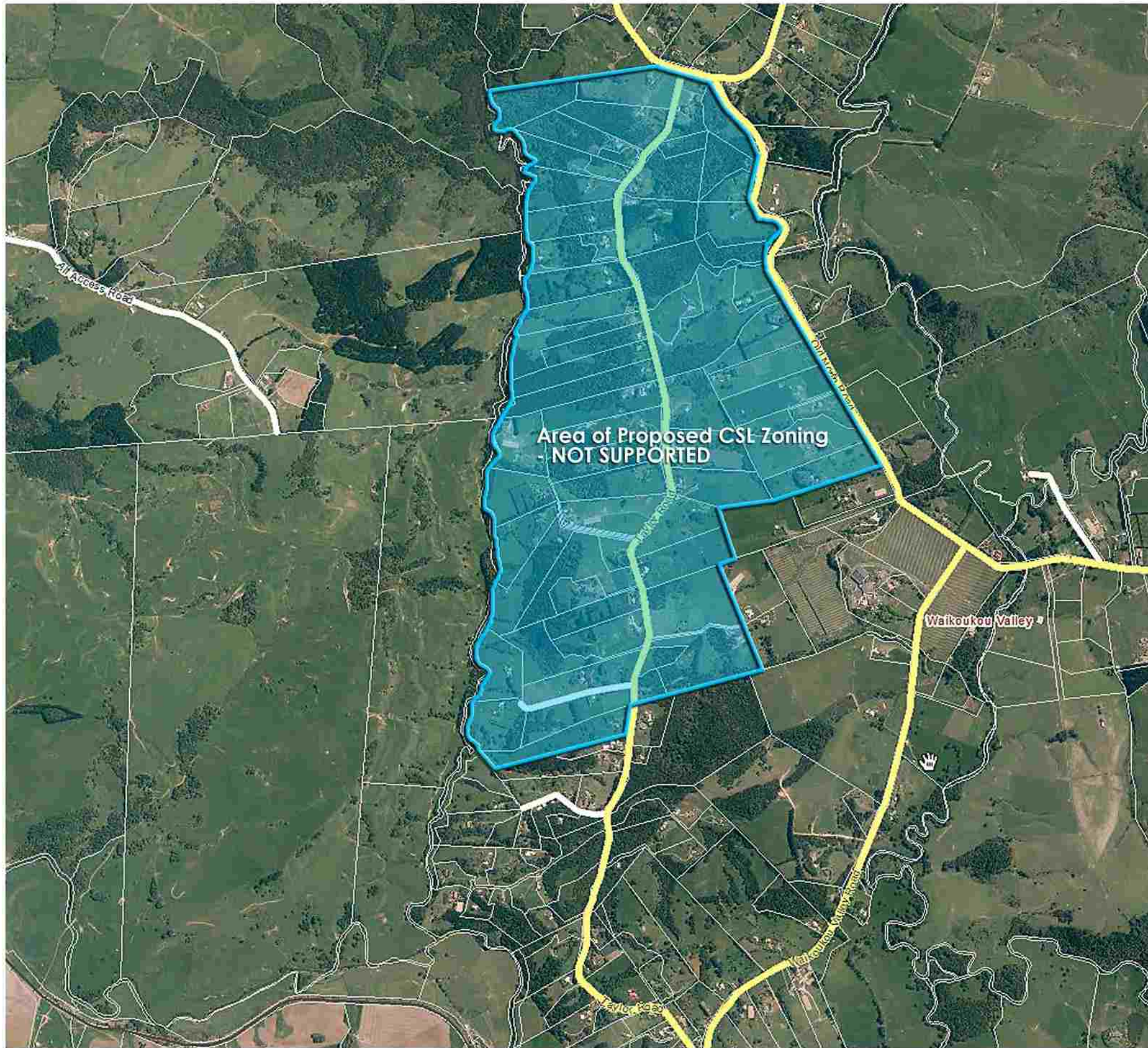




*annexure 22*

**KAUKAPAKAPA:**  
Proposed locations for CSL zoning at Kaukapakapa

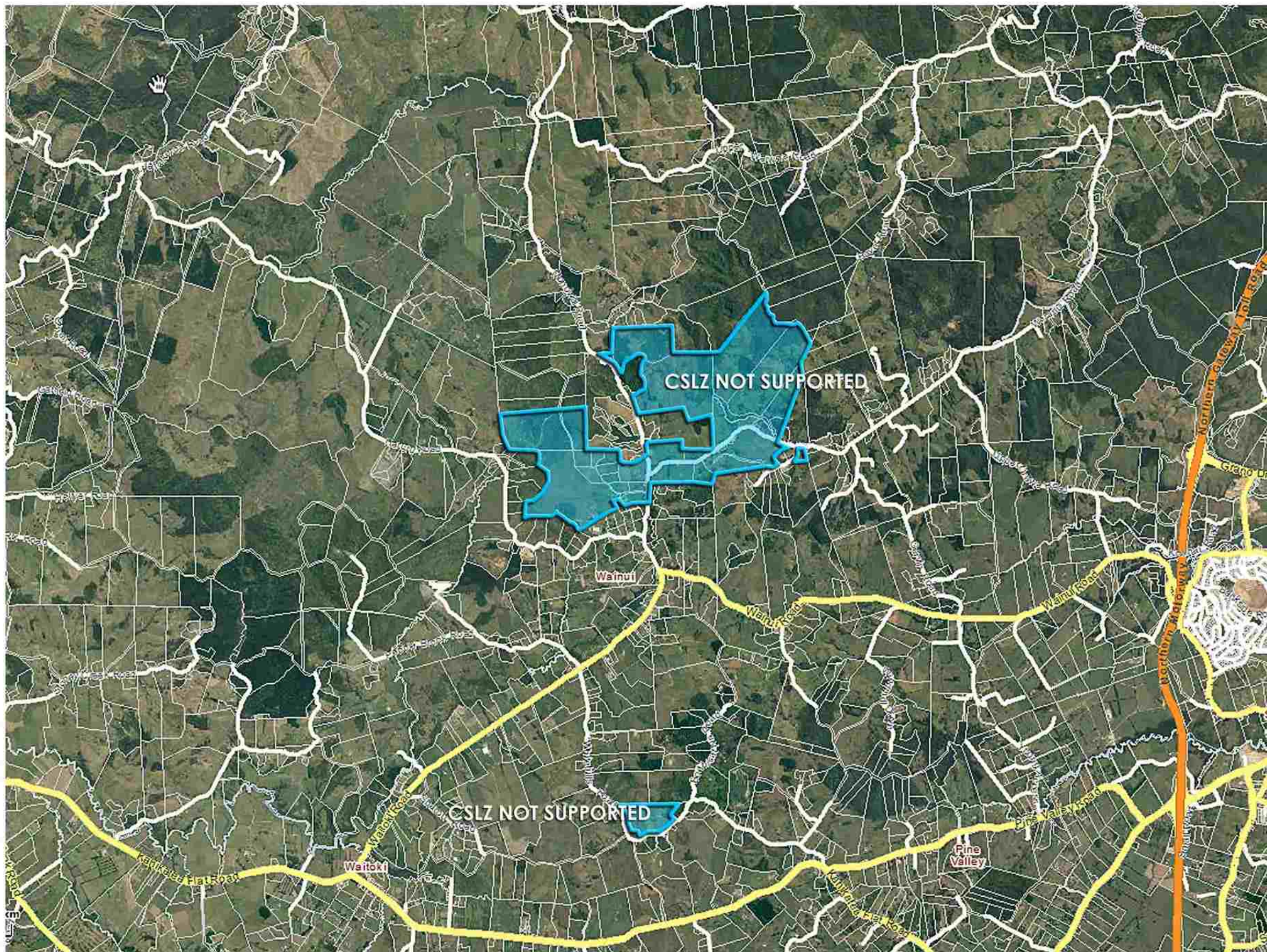




*annexure 23*

**TAYLOR RD, WAIMAUKU:**  
Proposed locations for CSL zoning at the northern end of Taylor Rd

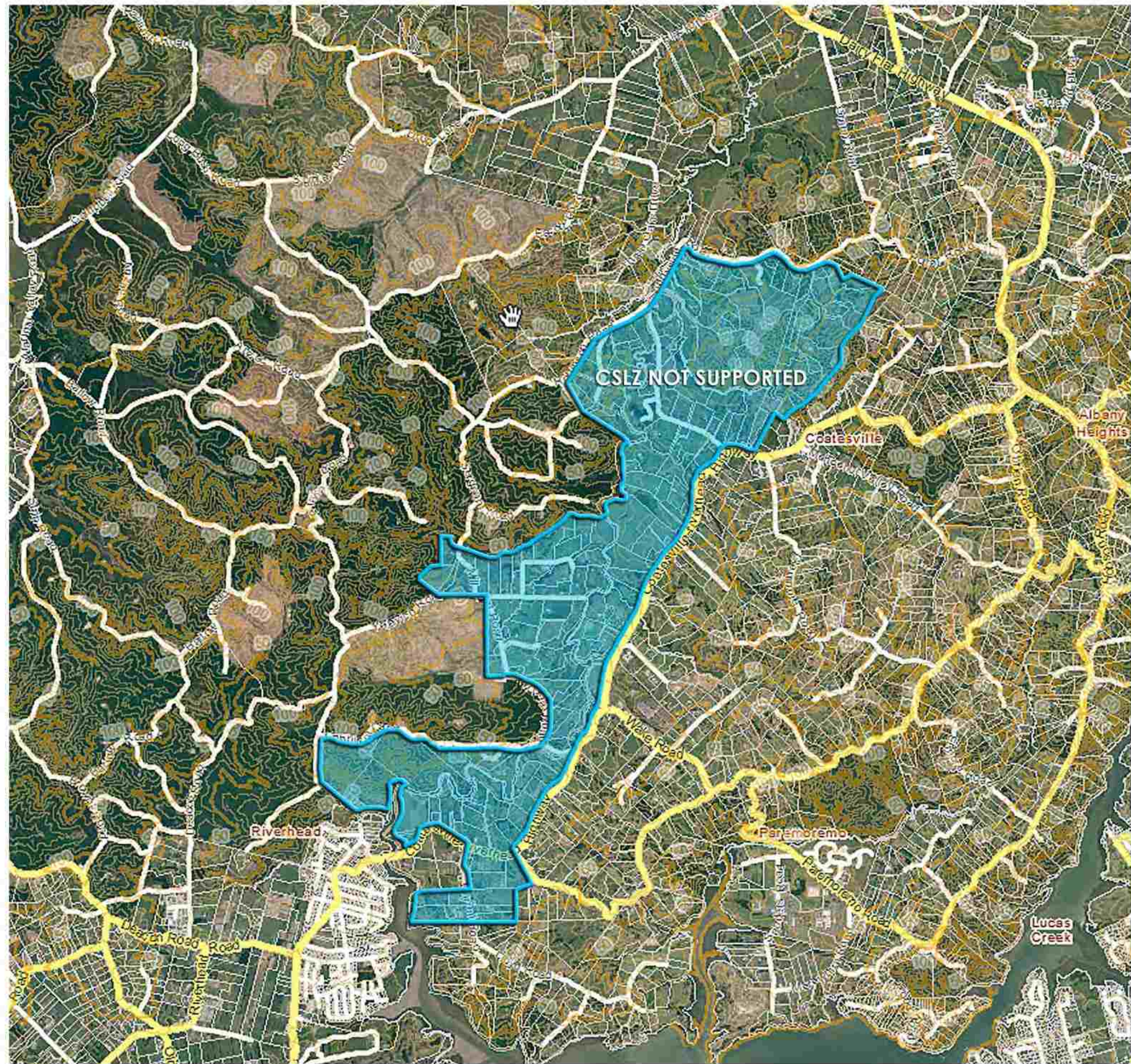




## annexure 24

**WAINUI:**  
Locations of proposed CSL zones at Wainui

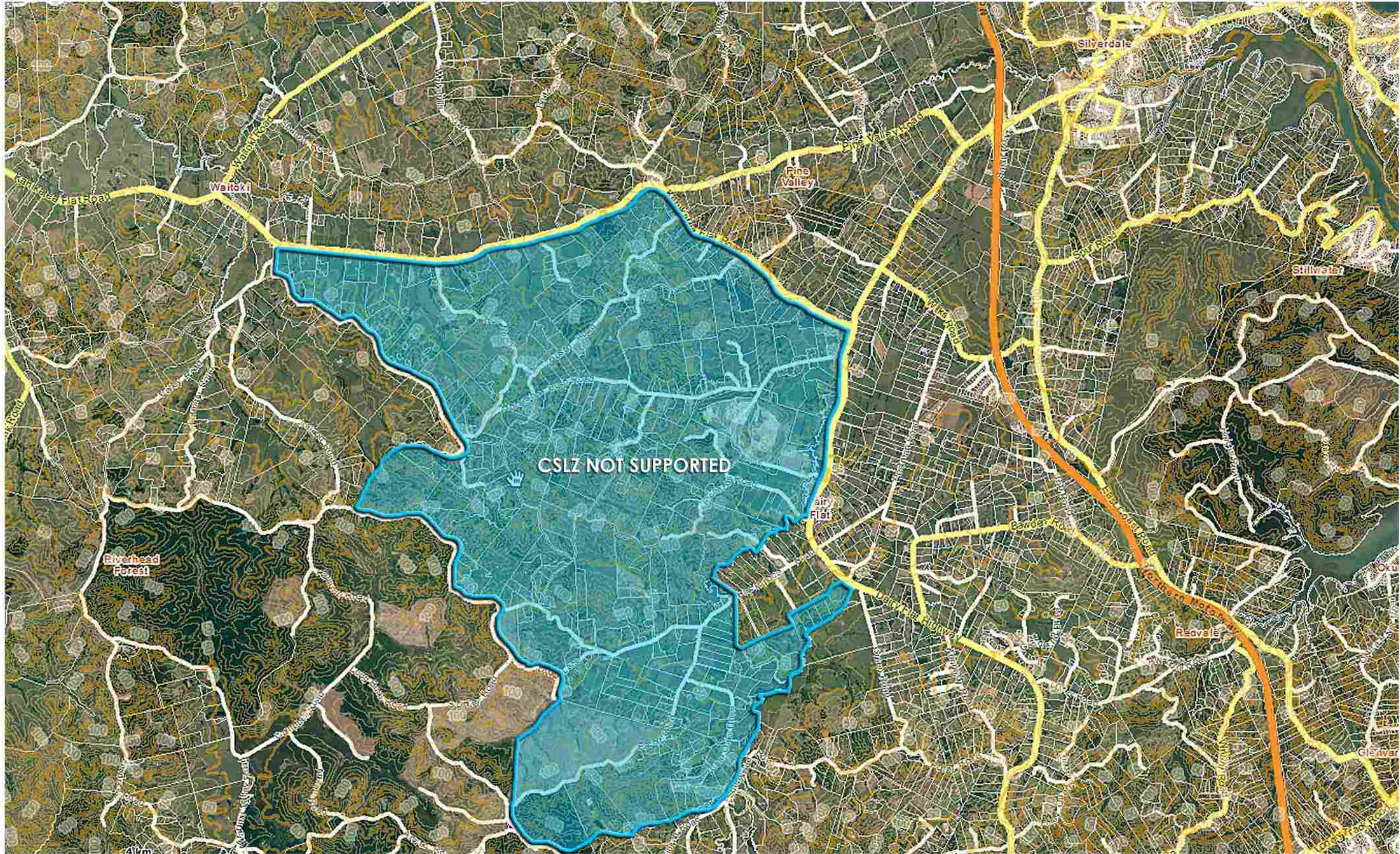




*annexure 25*

**COATESVILLE:**  
Locations of proposed CSL zones on the western side of the Coatesville Riverhead Highway





## annexure 26

**DAIRY FLAT:**  
Locations of proposed CSL zones south and west of Kahikatea Flat Rd

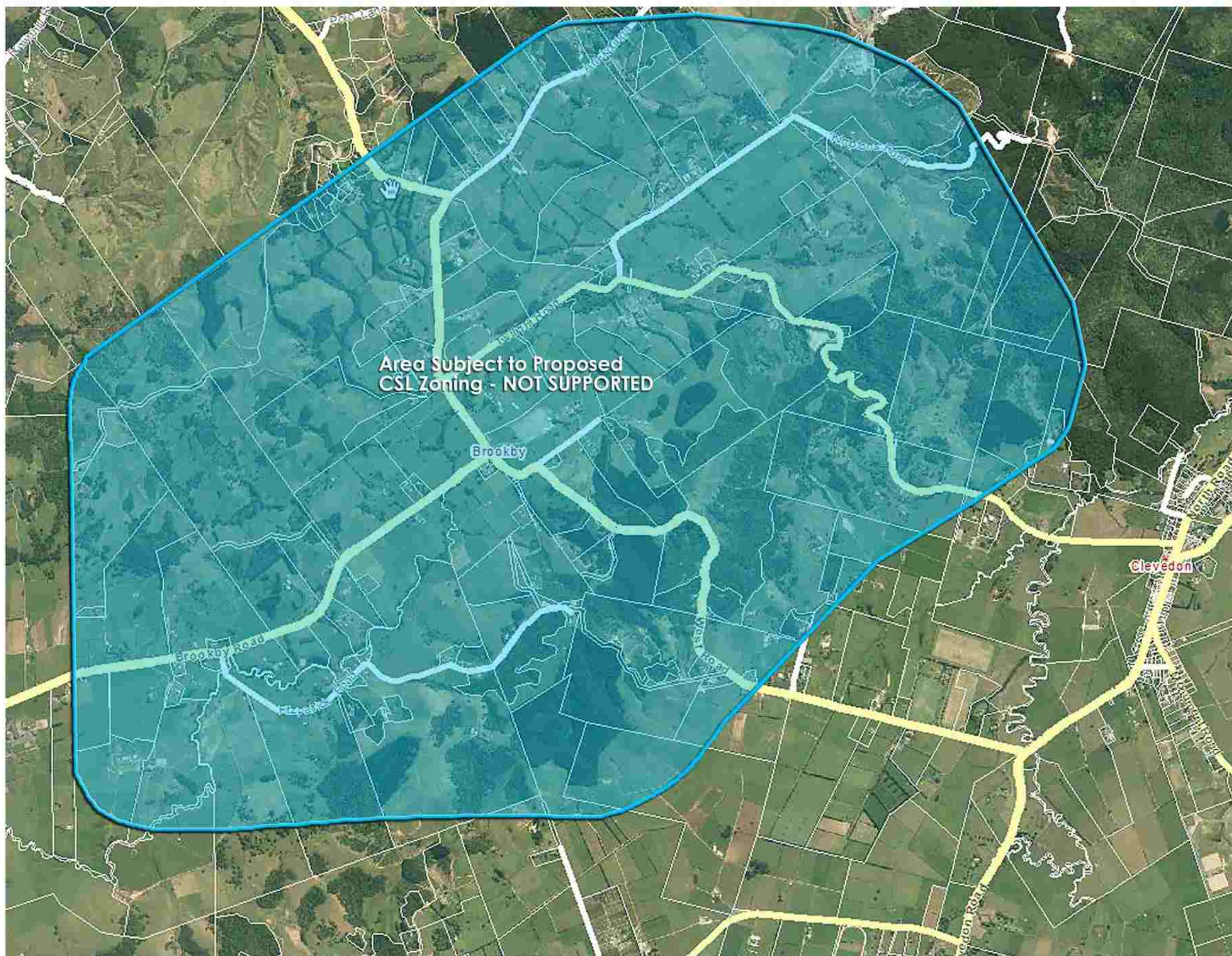




*annexure 27*

**SOUTH OF MARAETAI TO CLEVELAND:**  
Indicative location for proposed CSL zoning south of Maraetai

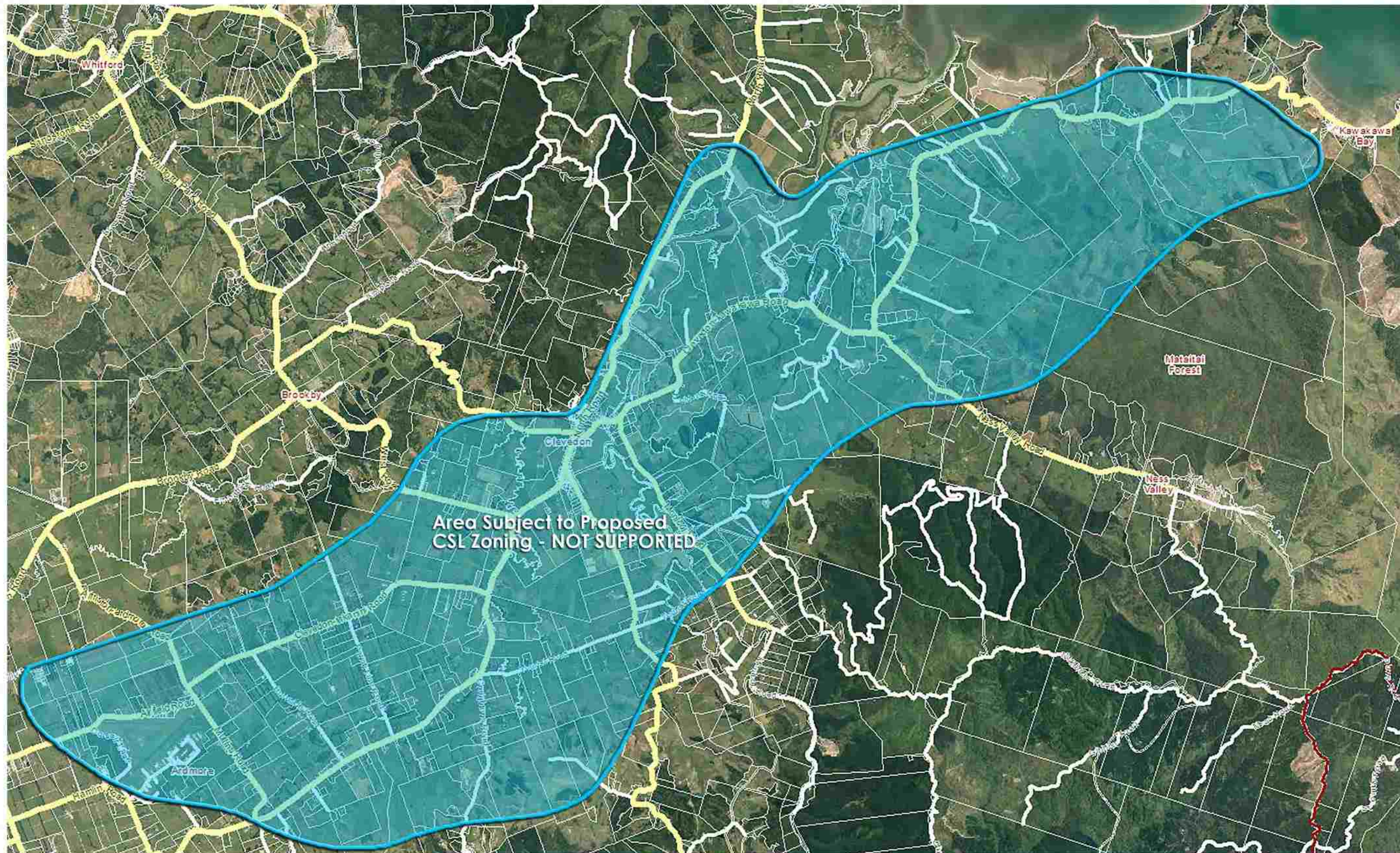




## *annexure 28*

**BROOKBY:**  
Indicative location for proposed CSL zoning around Brookby



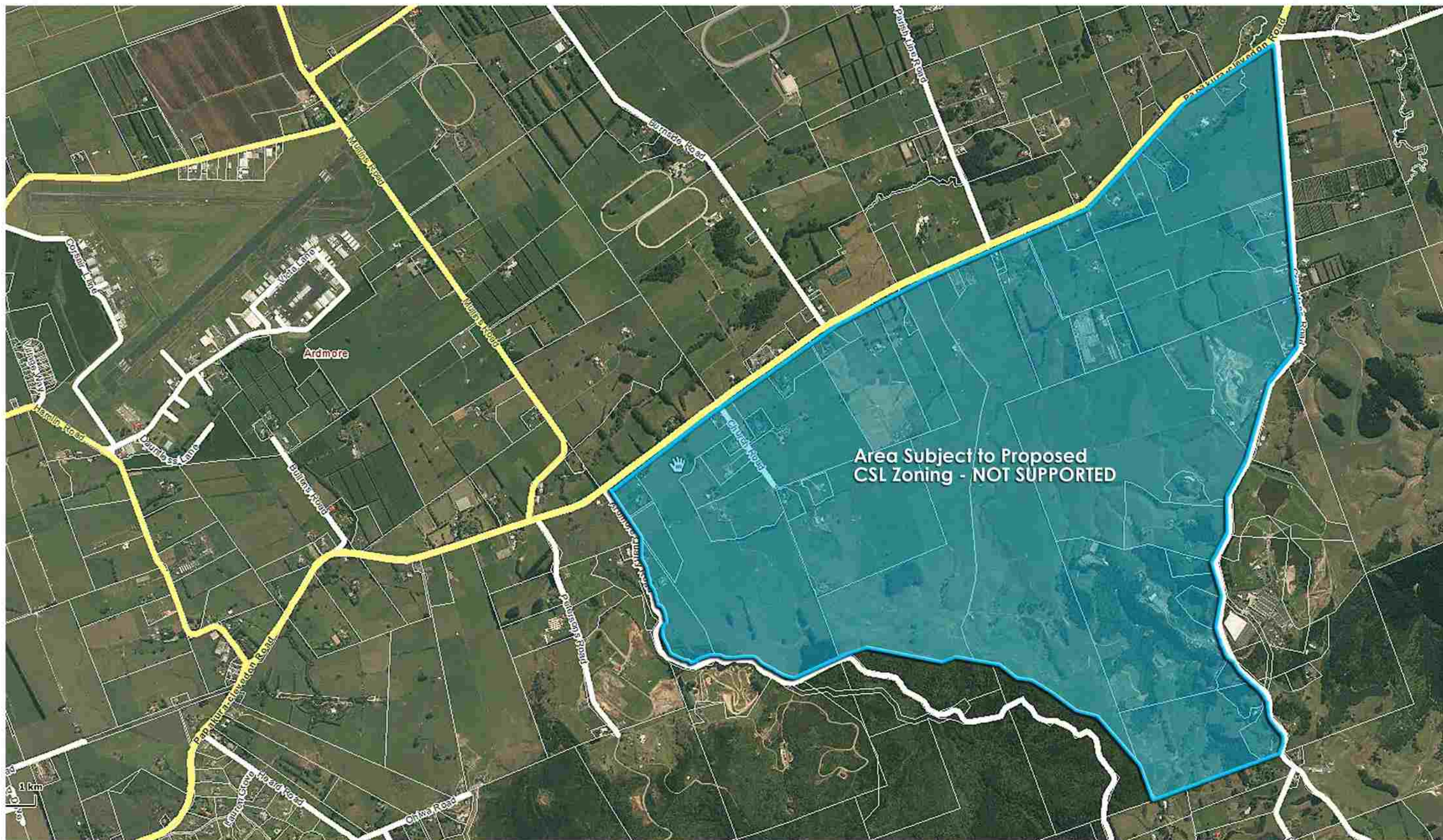


## annexure 29

### CLEVEDON VALLEY:

Indicative location for proposed CSL zoning within the Clevedon Valley, around Clevedon Village & extending towards Kawakawa Bay





## annexure 30

**SOUTH OF CLEVEDON / ARDMORE:**  
Proposed location for CSL zoning on the edge of the Clevedon Valley





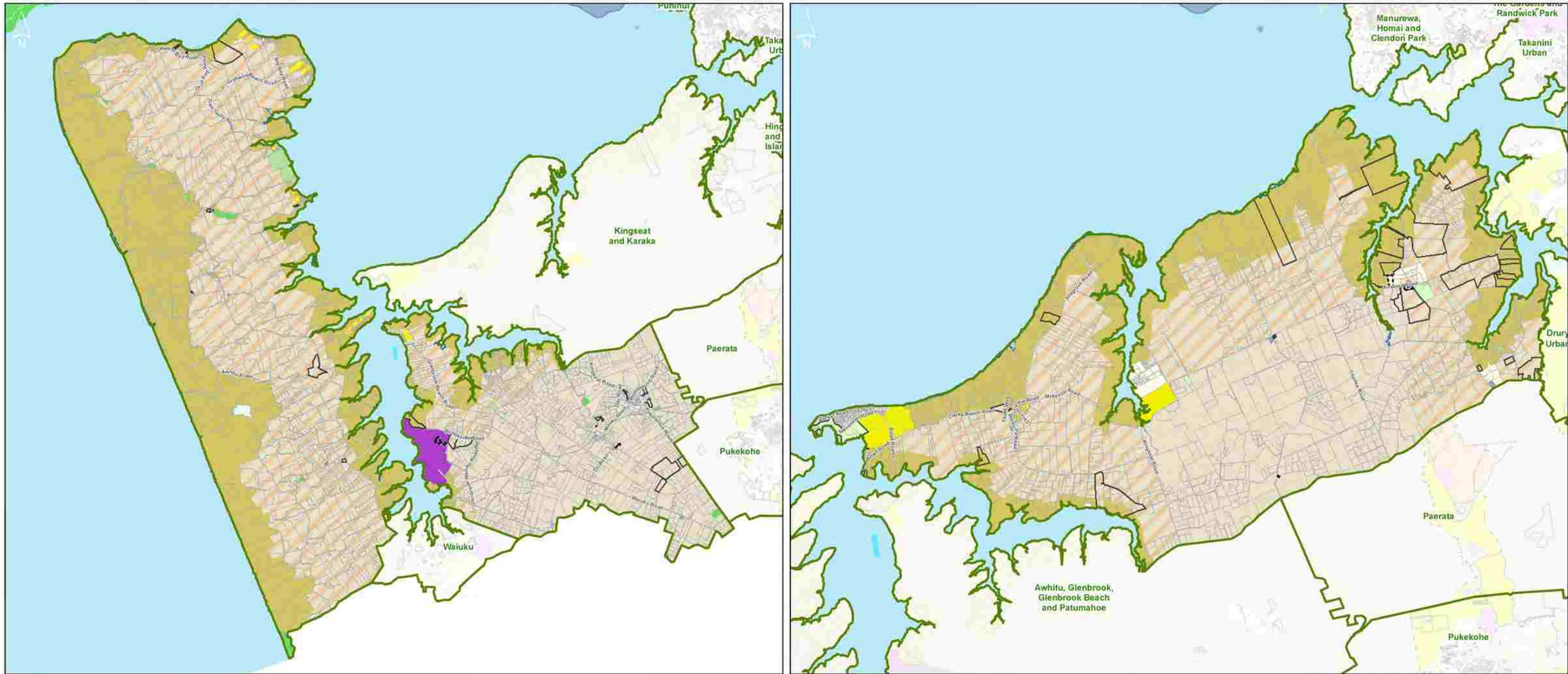
*annexure 31*

**MOUNT PLEASANT DRIVE (PART 2)**

BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS

NATURAL CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - AUCKLAND REGION | JANUARY 2014

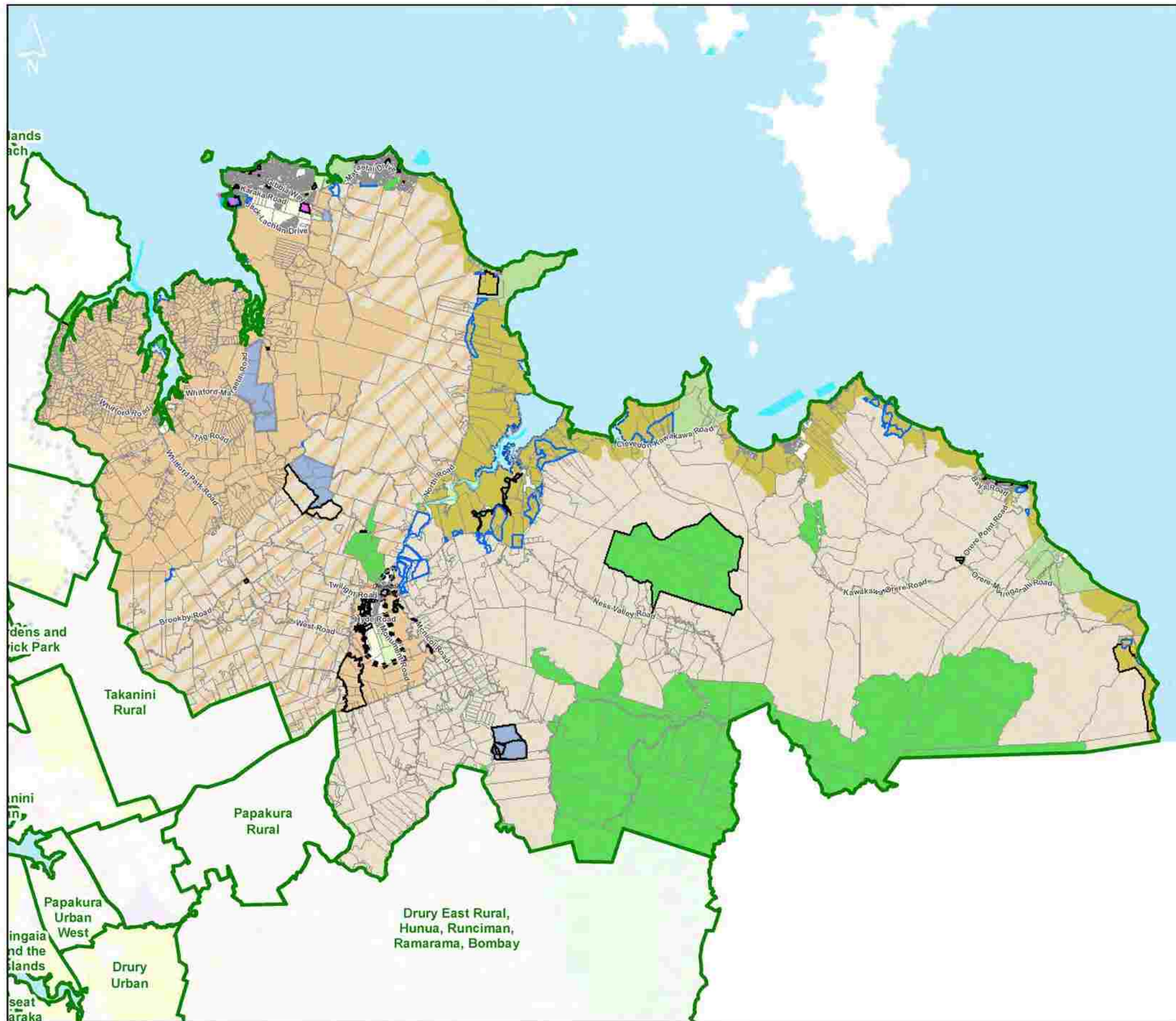




## annexure 32

**AWHITU & SOUTH MANUKAU HARBOUR RURAL COASTAL ZONE:**  
Revised extent of the Rural Coastal Zone





## annexure 33

**EASTERN MANUKAU RURAL COASTAL ZONE:**  
Revised extent of the Rural Coastal Zone from Maraetai to Matingarahi



