

Horowhenua

Development Plan



June 2008

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4	6	DEVELOPMENT AREAS	40
1.1	Vision.....	4	6.1	Process.....	40
1.2	Purpose.....	4	6.2	Evaluation Criteria	41
1.3	Scope.....	5	6.3	Identified Urban Growth Areas.....	42
1.4	Relationship to Other Strategies and Plans.....	5	7	SETTLEMENTS	43
2	BACKGROUND.....	7	7.1	Levin	43
2.1	Staging.....	7	7.2	Foxton Beach	69
2.2	State of Play: Growth and Change	7	7.3	Foxton.....	83
2.3	Population Composition and Change	7	7.4	Tokomaru	91
2.4	Households and Dwellings.....	13	7.5	Shannon	97
2.5	Residential Growth Rate.....	13	7.6	Waitarere.....	104
2.6	District Economy	14	7.7	Hokio Beach.....	118
2.7	Land Use and Zone Capacity	15	7.8	Ohau.....	124
2.8	Infrastructure.....	18	7.9	Waikawa Beach	137
2.9	Cultural Heritage	21	7.10	Manakau.....	142
3	CONSULTATION.....	23	8	RURAL	147
4	BASIS OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN.....	24	9	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.....	158
4.1	High Level Growth Management Principles.....	24	10	APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION NOTES	166
4.2	The Broader Planning Context	26			
5	DEVELOPMENT PLAN STRATEGY	31			
5.1	Framework	31			
5.2	Growth Strategy.....	34			
5.3	Understanding Density: Transect Diagram	38			
5.4	Understanding Density: Housing Types	39			

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Horowhenua District Council has prepared this Development Plan for the whole district. It looks ahead, planning how to manage the development of the Horowhenua over the next 20 years and beyond. The Development Plan reflects the Council's desire to provide a proactive framework for managing growth in the future.

In preparing this Plan, Council undertook a significant level of consultation to inform the process and determine the community's aspirations for managing growth. The consultation included a series of meetings with individuals and interest groups, comments from landowners in potential growth areas, and a series of open days and community meetings in most settlements.

The Growth Strategy

The Development Plan applies an overall strategy for managing the nature, location and structure of development in the future. The strategy is based on a set of principles, which will guide future decision making.

The key features of this Strategy are:

- Define the location of different types of development clearly so its effects (positive and negative) can be better planned for.
- Encourage a range of housing types and living environments (e.g. townhouses) in specific locations and with a community based format to better meet changing needs;
- Increase density within settlements in defined locations focused around existing town centres to better utilise existing urbanised land and minimise future infrastructure costs;
- Place less emphasis on ad-hoc infill throughout residential neighbourhoods to avoid loss of residential amenity;
- Assist business and employment opportunities by providing new locations for growth;
- Limit development to where infrastructure can be readily expanded/upgraded, has good accessibility to transport connections and will avoid areas of natural hazards;
- Avoid ad-hoc spread of rural-residential development by identifying suitable locations for it and manage the efficiency of it with a new "greenbelt" residential format.
- Retain the open rural landscape for its capacity to supply food and other resources, its contribution to the economy and landscape values;
- Protect the natural character of the coastal environment by limiting the expansion of settlements.

- Recognise the significant contribution of the natural environment –hills, rivers, lakes and coast - and heritage as essential elements of the District's identity.

Implementing the Development Plan

The Development Plan emphasises a more proactive approach for managing future growth in the Horowhenua District. The Plan will have an over-arching role in setting the course for many of the existing tools Council uses for managing growth (e.g. District Plan, Engineering Standards, Asset Management Plans). Amendments to these tools will be required to reflect the principles and outcomes sought by the Development Plan. Many of these amendments are recognised by the Implementation Plan at the rear of this Development Plan. The Implementation Plan also prioritises the different actions, which would be implemented over time inline with Council resources.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Vision

The Horowhenua District has an outstanding natural environment of coastline, plains, ranges, rivers and lakes. It is valued for its relaxed living, sunny climate, rich soils and recreational opportunities. The vision for the Horowhenua is a district with a vibrant community spirit, thriving economy and outstanding natural environment that follows an integrated, sustainable approach to development and the management of the district's resources.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Horowhenua Development Plan is to provide the strategy to direct future growth in the Horowhenua District.

The process of preparing the plan has involved a review of existing planning / infrastructure studies and information, an assessment of land demand and supply, and the synthesising of findings into a single strategy – the Development Plan - which establishes a future form and function for the district's urban and rural areas. The Plan has a time horizon of 20+ years.

Philosophically the Horowhenua Development Plan has meant a shift in the way that the Horowhenua District Council addresses growth. The Council is seeking to provide greater leadership about the nature and location of growth, moving from a reactive to a proactive approach to growth management and the development of the district.

The Horowhenua Development Plan takes a pragmatic view of Council's role in managing development growth of the district based on the three assumptions:

- That there will continue to be development in the district
- That Council has responsibilities to take action in respect of managing development
- That there is a community expectation that Council will take an integrated and proactive approach to managing development

The purpose of the Horowhenua Development Plan is to establish clear, effective direction for the management of the district's growth over time, so that:

- Council demonstrates leadership on growth management on behalf of the community
- There is a strategy for the development of existing settlements, new subdivisions and the rural environment
- Infrastructure is provided in an efficient, affordable, and timely manner
- The social cohesion and cultural diversity of communities are strengthened
- The quality of the natural and built environments is maintained and improved
- The economy is sustained and encouraged to thrive

The Horowhenua Development Plan is needed to provide the overall direction and coordination so that all of these elements are considered in an integrated manner.

1.3 Scope

The Horowhenua Development Plan will inform the people of the Horowhenua as well as others with an interest in the District about the degree of change they can expect to see over time in any particular area and within the wider district.

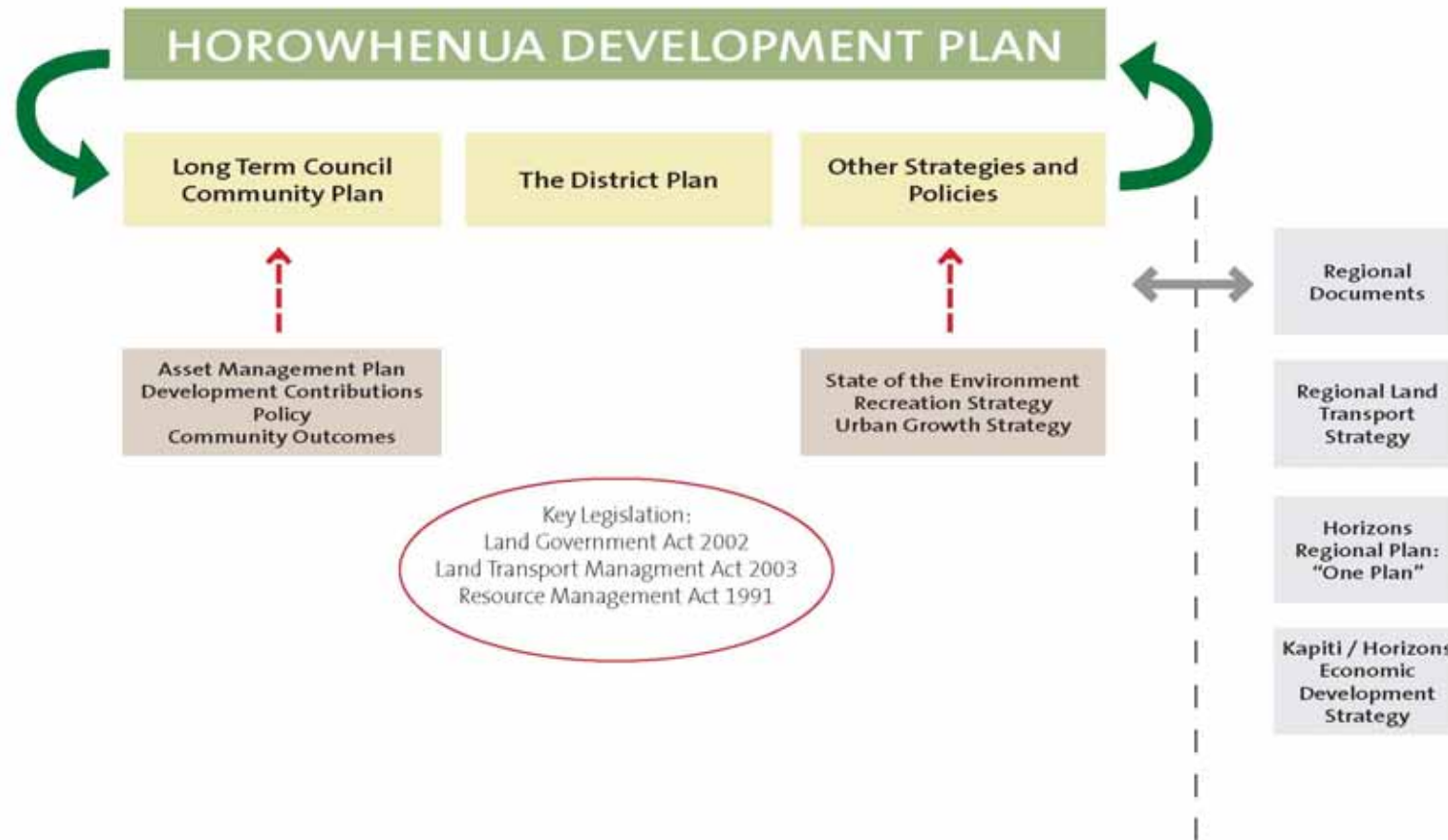
It will provide greater certainty to the development sector and infrastructure providers so that strategic decisions regarding the timing, funding, and provision of infrastructure can be made with confidence.

It will give people making decisions about location for investment (i.e. should I start a business in Horowhenua or some other place?), future living environment choice (i.e. should I move to Horowhenua or some other place?) a basis to understand the opportunities offered in the District.

The Development Plan will be used by Council to guide further planning to manage growth. That planning will involve a range of strategies, policies, and plans developed under the Local Government Act 2002, Land Transport Management Act 2003, and Resource Management Act 1991. The Plan will also inform Council's partnerships with other key agencies, organisations and central government.

1.4 Relationship to Other Strategies and Plans

The following diagram outlines the relationships between the Development Plan, other Council and Regional strategies and plans, and relevant legislation. In essence the Development Plan provides strategic planning direction at the local level. In a regional and national sense the Plan could be used as an advocacy tool to influence planning and decision making as it relates to the District.



2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Staging

The Development Plan has been formulated in two stages:

- **Stage One – The ‘State of Play’** - investigated growth trends and drivers, demographic projections, growth capacity and constraints, and provided an overview of the current environment. This stage was completed in February 2007.
- **Stage Two – The Horowhenua Development Plan** - consultatively developed a District vision, strategy and principles to apply to the management of growth, identified options to accommodate growth, and compiled this as a Development Plan including implementation actions.

2.2 State of Play: Growth and Change

The State of Play provides an outline of the existing district environment in terms of its natural and physical resources, demographics, community, built environment and existing residential, rural, commercial and industrial activity.

An understanding of past changes and present circumstances provides the basis for consideration of the likely trends for the future. Some of the information on change was drawn from Statistics NZ sources or Council records. Equally important was information sourced from consultation with groups in the community.

Essentially, the State of Play report provides an indication of the growth pressures and forecasts for the next 20+ years as well as showing up areas where there are development issues and opportunities.

2.3 Population Composition and Change

The in-depth population information for the Horowhenua Development Plan was derived in part from the March 2001 Census and the first level results from the 2006 census.

Statistics combined with information from other sources can be used to understand changes and trends in growth pressures. These sources can include indicators such as house prices, and subdivision and residential building permit records. Anecdotal information and comment about the changes are also considered.

There will be some challenges in predicting future growth given the difficulties in predicting migration (what makes people decide to come and go from a place). However, there are some trends that assist in making assumptions about migration and these are noted below.

2.3.1 CURRENT POPULATION

Horowhenua's current population is 29,868 people (2006 census usual resident population). This is set in the context of the Census population figures in Table 1.

Area	1991	1996	2001	2006
Levin	15,789	15,651	15,510	15,507
Foxton	2,847	2,856	2,724	2,715
Foxton Beach	1,791	1,890	1,893	1,731
Shannon	1,557	1,446	1,407	1,371
Waitarere	570	636	582	588
Tokomaru	561	591	549	516
Rural	6,696	7,077	7,155	7,443
Total	29,811	30,147	29,820	29,868
Intercensal Change		+336	-327	+48

The table above shows the Horowhenua population has been relatively static in the last 15 years with an additional 57 people now resident since 1991.

One noticeable trend from Table 1 is the relative number of people in either urban or rural locations. There is a shift to greater proportions of the population with rural rather than urban residential locations. This is the opposite to the general national trend of increasing urban populations and reducing rural populations. The increasing number of rural-residential (lifestyle properties) around the periphery of Levin and Ohau are two of the areas where this increase in rural population is occurring.

2.3.2 AGE DISTRIBUTION IN THE POPULATION

In respect of the age distribution in the population, Table 2 shows a distinctive trend towards an increasingly older population in the Horowhenua compared to the New Zealand average. Notable is the very high percentage (27.7% and 33.0%) of the population in Levin and Foxton Beach aged 60+ compared with the national average of 16.1%.

Although the opposite situation exists in Tokomaru, this is the exception and it is anticipated the trend towards an older population as a percentage of the district total population is likely to continue and in fact rise in the future unless influenced to change in some way (such as by more younger people arriving or older people leaving).

Area	Age Group			
	0 – 19	20 – 39	40 – 59	60+
New Zealand 2006	29.0%	27.1%	27.2%	16.8%
Manawatu-Wanganui Region 2006	29.7%	24.6%	26.7%	19.0%
Horowhenua 2006	27.9%	18.9%	26.9%	26.3%
New Zealand 2001	29.8%	28.5%	25.6%	16.1%
Manawatu-Wanganui Region 2001	30.7%	26.7%	24.7%	17.9%
Horowhenua 2001	28.8%	22.1%	25.0%	24.1%
Foxton 2006	29.8% (807)	18.9% (513)	24.0% (651)	26.5% (720)
Foxton Beach 2006	21.6% (372)	15.5% (267)	28.0% (483)	33.8% (582)
Shannon 2006	32.8% (450)	20.5% (282)	24.0% (330)	18.1% (249)
Waitarere 2006	21.4% (126)	12.2% (72)	27.6% (162)	27.6% (162)
Tokomaru 2006	35.1% (180)	26.3% (135)	28.7% (147)	9.9% (51)
Levin 2006	28.1% (4344)	18.4% (2853)	23.3% (3609)	29.8% (4602)
Rural 2006	25.5% (1896)	19.0% (1413)	33.6% (2493)	18.2% (1353)

In respect of migration as the other factor (to deaths and births) that influences population the overall trend for the District has been negative with more departures than arrivals – the year ended to June 2006 resulted in a net decrease of 62 people to the District¹.

¹ Statistics New Zealand *Horowhenua District Quarterly Review* June 2006

In addition, there are an increasing number of non-resident dwellings in the district, especially in the beach settlements. These are holiday homes or second homes, where people reside primarily during weekends and the summer months. This seasonal fluctuation of people living in the beach communities is not necessarily reflected in the available statistics.

2.3.3 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Horowhenua Development Plan seeks to understand from existing information and the trends of the past what the likely future population will be in the district in order that planning can occur to provide for this future population's needs.

Furthermore, if the trends are not those the district wishes to see, the Plan can be used to encourage (it cannot make it) a different trend for the future by, for example enabling different development opportunities.

The medium population projection from Statistics New Zealand anticipates a decrease of around 700 people in the District to the year 2026.

Even this medium population projection may be optimistic from the data as in recent times migration has been negative (more people have left than arrived). Without a change in the factors that influence people's decisions about coming to, or leaving the District, the population may reduce even more than the 700 projected in Table 3.

With the aging population in the Horowhenua, mortality rates are also likely to exceed fertility rates. Again, without a change to the resident population (say by in-migration) to establish a larger younger and thus fertile age group, it is expected births per year will continue to decrease, while deaths will slightly increase (Graph 1).

TABLE 3: POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2006 – 2026
Source: Statistics New Zealand

Growth Scenario	Year	Horowhenua
Base	2006	30,600
(latest census)	2006	29,865
High (high fertility, low mortality, high migration)	2026	32,500
Medium (medium fertility, medium mortality, medium migration)	2026	29,900
Low (low fertility, high fertility, low migration)	2026	27,400

It is known that net migration (arrivals minus departures) is not constant across age groups in the Horowhenua District. Although there are arrivals and departures in every age group the net result in recent times has been an inflow of the older ages and an outflow of young adults and the young working ages. (Graph 3).

A large component of the increased residential development growth is within rural environments as evidenced by the locations (Gladstone, Manakau, Papaitonga, Levin East, Opiki/Tokomaru) in Graph 2. A total of 1433 rural lots have been consented to by Council over this period from

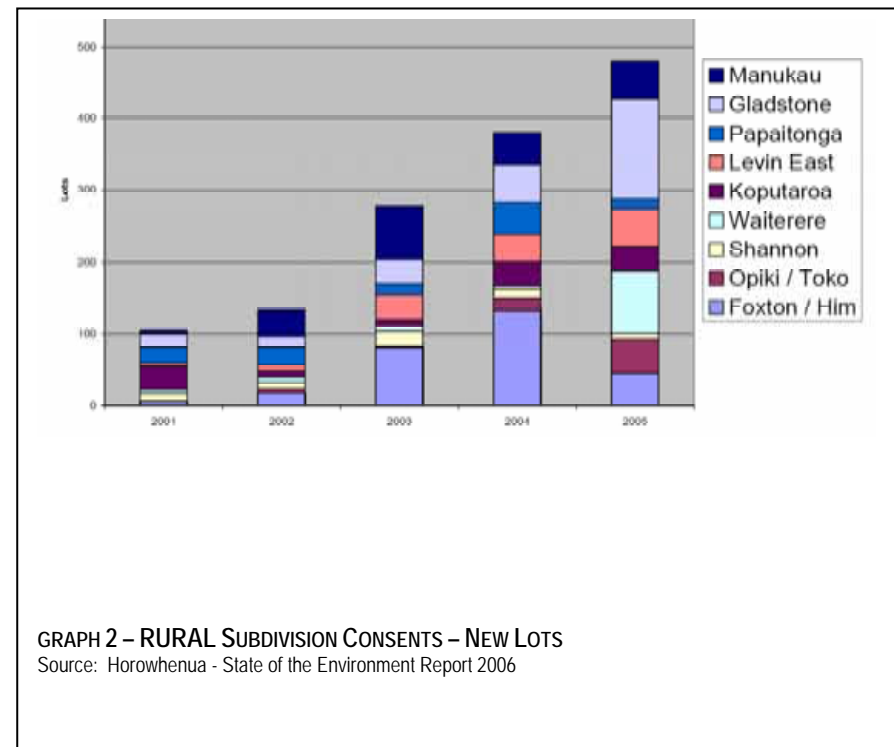
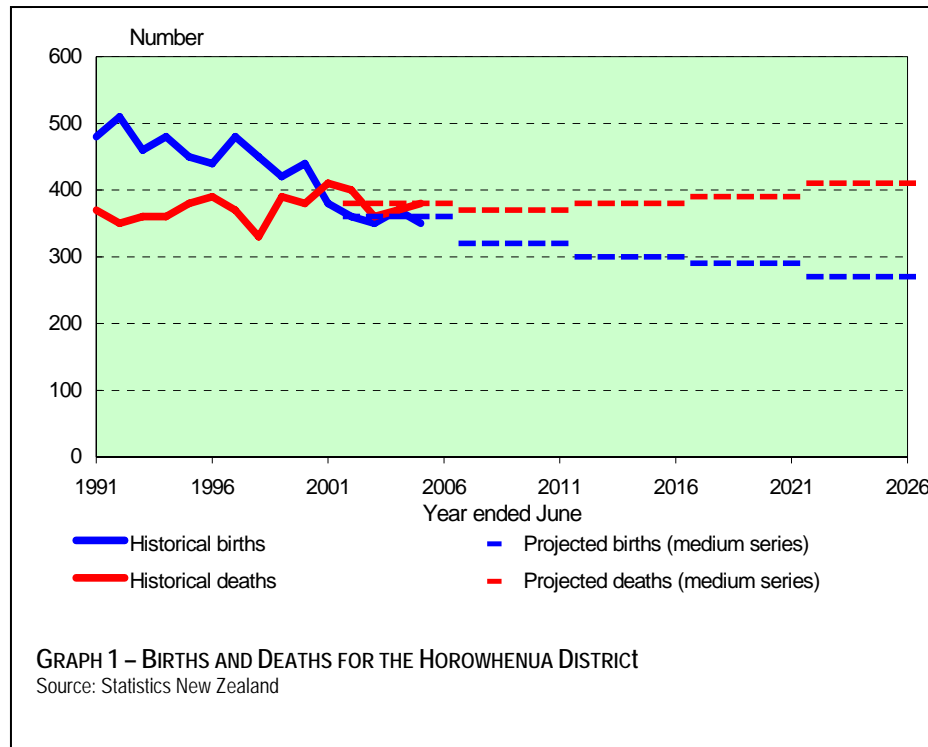
2001 to 2005². Considering the apparently static population growth described above relative to the high level of growth in subdivision the assumptions that can be made are that:

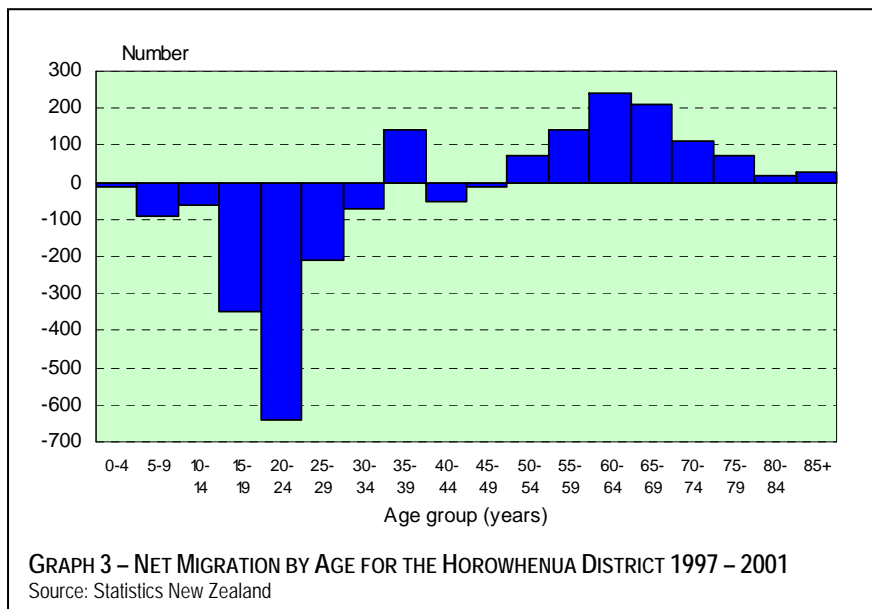
- There is a large amount of subdivision occurring that is not providing homes for permanent residents (e.g. second or holiday homes).
- There is a large amount of subdivision which is occurring now to provide homes for people in the future. This is at least partly evidenced by comparing building consents data with subdivision consents for the same year – in 2003 there were some 200 building consents for new dwellings but close to 300 lots created by subdivision for the same period.
- There is a large amount of subdivision that will provide a supply for a considerable time into the future and which will see an uptake over time of new dwellings.
- There are an increasing number of households to reflect a reducing household size (i.e. the same number of people distributed over more houses).

The application of the data together with the above assumptions indicates that although there is a relatively static overall population the use of households rather than population will be a more useful indicator for the

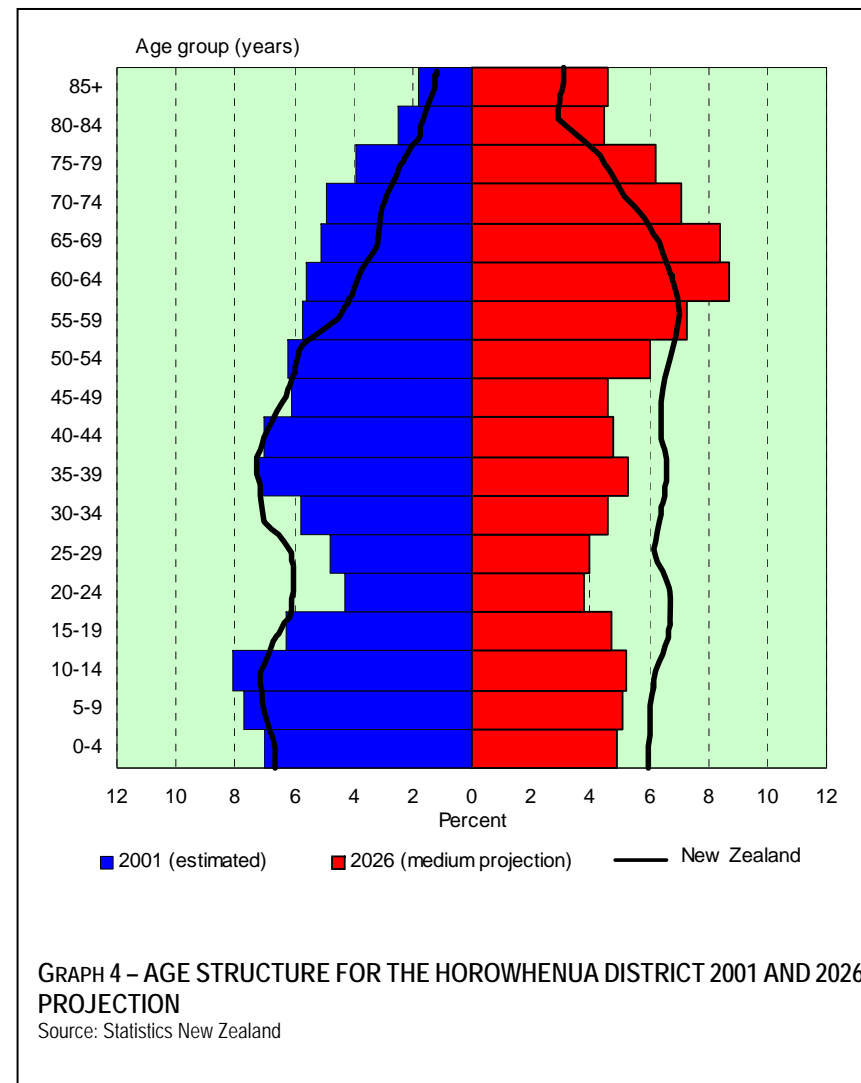
² Horowhenua - State of the Environment Report 2006

future and the Development Plan's directions. This is because although population overall appears not to be changing significantly, the number of households is increasing.





The 2006 census highlighted the existing older population in the Horowhenua compared to all of New Zealand. 20.0% of people in the Horowhenua are aged 65 and over, compared with 12.3% nationally. The national trend for the population age structure is anticipated to undergo significant changes, with fewer children, more older people, and further ageing of the population. Half of New Zealand’s population will be older than 45 years by 2051, compared with the median age of 35.9 years in 2006. The population aged 65 years and older is expected to grow the fastest in the future (Graph 4).



2.4 Households and Dwellings

The average household size in the Horowhenua District (2006 Census) was 2.4 people per house, compared with 2.7 for New Zealand. Nationally household sizes have been falling and are expected to continue to.

As well as household size, the number of households forming over time also gives an indication for the future. In 1991 there were 10,657 households in Horowhenua; 11,163 in 1996, 11,532 in 2001, and by 2006, 12,027. As noted earlier, this increase belies the static population growth and reflects reducing household sizes and changing living choices.

Most households are single-family (66.3% compared with 69.1% for New Zealand). In Horowhenua, almost 29.3% are single-person households, compared with 23.0% for New Zealand. In 2006, 61.1% of dwellings in Horowhenua were owned with or without a mortgage, compared with 54.5% for New Zealand. The remainder are rented or “tied” to a job.

2.5 Residential Growth Rate

Three information sources have been used to identify the rate at which residential development in the Horowhenua District is likely to advance:

- Building consent/permit records (how many have been issued and what are the trends over time?)

- Subdivision consent records (what lot sizes, where is it occurring and what are the trends over time?)
- Population and household size projections (what is the population expected to be and how many houses are likely to be needed to accommodate it?).

As noted previously, the projected population growth to 2026 indicates that the population will remain relatively static. However the current and predicted building permit rate indicates a growing demand for new houses.

The sustained rate (i.e. when considered over a period) of building permits for houses issued is 120-150 per annum. This equates to an additional 2400 – 3000 houses required over the 20 year period of this Plan.

There will be variances in the rate of development (highlighted by 236 permits for houses in 2006/07) as the economy, mortgage rates or cost of building changes for example. However, it is important for the Development Plan to not exaggerate or underestimate growth and take a reasoned path as important decisions will be made on the basis of it.

The location for new houses is also important to consider. The trends indicate new houses will be constructed in a 50/50 split between the rural and urban areas. This trend appears to be driven by rural-residential ‘lifestylers’ and beach holiday or second home demand.

2.6 District Economy

The following points summarise the economy:

The Horowhenua district economy is experiencing positive growth and there are strategies to sustain and increase economic growth.

The key drivers for the economy are predominantly natural resource based – dairying, pastoral, cropping and horticulture. Manufacturing and professional services have had variable economic conditions, but have been increasing in recent times.

There is a significant reliance in the economy on the quality of the environment, and the ability to produce a range of crops based on the natural characteristics (soil, climate and water) of different areas within the district.

Some communities are reliant on a small number of large employers. The closure or downsizing of these businesses makes these communities vulnerable in changing economic conditions.

External factors may also contribute to the economic drivers in the district, such as increasing land values in nearby areas making the Horowhenua comparably more affordable, and limited available land in neighbouring areas for development.

The Kapiti/Horowhenua Economic Development Strategy identifies four big opportunities for the Kapiti/Horowhenua region. These opportunities are in the industries of apparel and textiles, food production and processing, tourism and events, and Maori enterprise.

There is little empirical information available with which to project growth in the economy. However, from the economic drivers and trends the following are likely to be key considerations for the Development Plan:

- Maintaining the quality of the environment whilst enabling growth – the ability to accommodate the projected residential growth and sustain the quality of the environment are important considerations.
- The open and productive land area is important for primary production and tourism. Changes that encroach on the ability to maintain production will impact on economic growth. Protection of productive land is important to the economy.
- The land transport system enables goods to be moved through the district. State Highway 1 (SH1) is strategically significant and rail and road traffic is expected to play an important role in the economy.
- There are limited areas of industrial land available in the district to accommodate new business and industries. New areas of

industrial land need to be found that recognise the land use and infrastructure implications.

- The needs of different types of industry – local and district scale- will need to be recognised and provided for.
- There is strong competition (nationally and globally) for qualified and skilled workers. The workforce that can add value to the primary production and manufacturing based economy is mobile, and is influenced in its location decisions by the quality of the urban and natural environment. The district needs to position itself to be a place of choice for new business by creating a great place to live.
- A balance needs to be found between providing for the “lifestyle” choice in rural areas (which can attract qualified and skilled workers) and the continued functioning of the primary production activities (a major contributor to the economy of the district).

2.7 Land Use and Zone Capacity

This section of the Horowhenua Development Plan identifies the principal land uses in the Horowhenua District and describes the capacity of the existing urban area to accommodate growth based on the projections set out in the preceding sections.

2.7.1 URBAN FORM

Urban form is derived from the combination of a town’s ‘footprint’ (the area it covers), density, street pattern, distribution of open space, and building heights. Urban form is integral to the planning of any settlement as it influences the accessibility, liveability, sustainability and adaptability to change of the place.

The first part of this section relates to all urban areas, as there is a high degree of commonality in their urban form.

2.7.2 FOOTPRINT AND DENSITY

Table 4 identifies the relative size of the main urban centres in the

TABLE 4: URBAN AREAS FOOTPRINT			
Urban Settlement	Population (2006 Usually Resident)	Urban Land Area* (approx ha)	Settlement Density (People per ha)
Levin	15,507	890.78	17.41
Foxton	2,715	220.49	12.31
Foxton Beach	1,731	152.71	11.34
Shannon	1,371	118.71	11.55
Waitarere Beach	588	81.67	7.20
Tokomaru	516	27.23	18.95

** note this does not include zoned land not yet developed
Source: HDC GIS Data*

Horowhenua District. The table shows that relative to the other settlements of Foxton, Foxton Beach and Shannon, Levin is significantly larger in its 'footprint' and has slightly higher density than its neighbours. The density of Levin and all other settlements are still relatively low and typical of New Zealand settlements that have developed as an urban area in an age when motorised transportation has enabled high levels of personal mobility.

The mobility afforded to people by motor vehicles has enabled people to live on relatively large lots and to move about by car to access employment and services, schools and recreational locations.

Within Levin, there has been a recent trend to more "infill" residential development of existing residential properties, resulting in slightly higher densities. The majority of this infill development has occurred around the central area of Levin (within walking/mobility scooter distance of the CBD). The infill housing is appealing to retired people, who are 'downsizing', and seeking smaller properties and lower maintenance.

The quality and design of the infill development is mixed, with some poor examples in terms of on-site amenity, visual effects and streetscape changes. Foxton Beach has also experienced some infill residential development.

The other urban areas in the Horowhenua have seen limited infill residential development, mostly due to low market demand. It is noted the current subdivision rules for Waitarere Beach restrict infill, which may have limited this form of development in this urban area.

There are no examples of higher density developments, such as "joined up" townhouse, terraced housing or apartments in the Horowhenua urban areas.

The generally low density pattern of settlement has generated planning issues for consideration in the Horowhenua Development Plan.

These issues will be important for the Development Plan to address and include:

- the suitability of large houses on large lots for a decreasing household size and aging population.³
- heavy reliance on the private motor car for mobility and aging population.⁴
- The zoning of activities into separate areas has generated a requirement for multiple vehicle trips to satisfy day to day needs (work, school, home, recreation).⁵

³ Approximately 34% of the population in the District will be 65+ years by 2026

⁴ 21% of people aged 65 and over do not drive due to declining health, preference, and concerns with safety – when added to the percentage of people aged under 15 with no ability to drive (legally) this is a large number of people with impaired accessibility – in the Horowhenua District this currently equates to about 30% of the population.

⁵ 60% of our vehicle trips in NZ are now for distances of less than 5 km

- expansion of reticulated services to provide services to houses which are further and further from core infrastructure.⁶
- ecological effects from the hardening of land surface and consequent increasing extent of runoff.
- the use of rural land at the periphery of settlements that could be productive or has landscape value and how to manage that edge to encourage a more efficient use of existing urbanised land.⁷

There is a growing realisation that:

- A choice in the type of living environment (e.g. smaller houses and sections along with the existing larger ones) is helpful to meet the changing needs of the existing resident population and to attract people to the area.
- A more compact form of development that has higher density around centres (or nodes) that provide day-to-day needs is helpful in providing for less vehicle trips and better accessibility.
- Retrofitting and using more efficiently the existing urban areas to provide for increasing population saves rural land being urbanised and allows better use of existing infrastructure.
- Identifying growth areas where key transportation routes are located and including employment opportunities at each

settlement reduces the need for work trips, or enables these to be more efficient where they occur.

- Linking together green spaces to allow for recreational opportunities and stormwater management is better than isolated green pockets and (at least conceptual) town belts enable a town urban edge to be defined and maintained as open space either productive or public (or a combination).

2.7.3 STREET PATTERN

The street pattern of most urban areas (beach settlements excepted) is generally based on a regular grid (orthogonal) pattern (although some later subdivision development follows a cul-de-sac pattern). This street pattern reflects the historical model of subdivision from the time the towns were first planned (mid to late 1800's).

This linked and orthogonal form of street pattern favours easy accessibility and movement – it has a high degree of connectivity. This 'block' street pattern also allows a high level of future adaptability to accommodate change in use, traffic flows and density in the future.

The main transport links of road (State Highways) and rail running through the centre of most urban areas in a roughly north to south

⁶ Levin for example already has 102km of wastewater pipe reticulation

⁷ 21% of subdivisions 2001-2005 have been in peri-urban areas

direction has been the basis on which the street patterns in several of the towns have developed.

However, the linear nature of these transport corridors has created some planning issues today, with the significant increase in traffic movements along these routes creating barriers to easy movement across settlements from east to west.

Around the periphery of the urban areas, where most of the recent development has occurred, a less joined up cul-de-sac format has been adopted, which limits accessibility, the ability to make logical extensions, and easy way-finding (legibility).

2.7.4 SCALE

The buildings of the urban areas generally have a low level height, with the central area buildings being those with a greater height. In the commercial areas, buildings are typically two storey.

Historically, two storey commercial buildings consisted of a retail shop on the ground floor, with either living quarters on the first floor or professional offices. More recent commercial development has continued two storey facades with larger premises using the height for internal

volume and others using the height to provide opportunities for external signage.

The scale of newer buildings in the industrial and commercial areas is larger. Recently larger format retail buildings have been constructed around the central area of Levin and Foxton. These are challenging uses to accommodate in the centre of settlements in respect to their effects on the quality of the urban environment. Without careful planning and decision making they can be 'out of scale' (large open car parks at front, large blank external walls, lack of detail) to the human scale qualities of the public environment (such as streets) in urban areas that make them a comfortable place for people to enjoy and want to spend time in.

2.8 Infrastructure

2.8.1 TRANSPORT

The Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS- March 2006) identifies the need to create a four-lane State Highway 1 between Otaki and Levin and a bypass of Levin. While this may be desirable, these projects are currently outside the envelope of available funding. However, it is an important consideration for the Development Plan to recognise this strategy.

If coastal settlements such as Waikawa, Hokio, Waitarere and Foxton Beaches are to grow, pressures on access roads and intersections with State Highway 1 would need to be considered.

Further development in town centres bisected by State Highways, particularly Levin, will result in additional local trips on or across the State Highway which could impact on its capacity and function. Additional commercial and retail activity in town centres on the State Highway route will increase the issues around congestion and effects on the quality of that space for people using the street as a public place.

Consideration will need to be given in the longer term to ensuring that the need for travel on strategic roads is reduced. This could be through the provision of community facilities, public spaces and shops in development areas, off the main highway, or construction of link roads that enable local traffic to move without using the State Highway network.

Travel demand management (TDM) measures may need to be considered to reduce the impact of additional growth in road traffic movement. This could include providing for greater local facilities and shops, travel planning, provision of walking and cycling facilities and provision of additional public transport services to development areas.

The North Island Main Trunk (NIMT) railway line is a strategic infrastructure asset for the district. There is the potential for freight and passenger services to increase in the future as alternative modes of transportation to those currently predominating, become more attractive. Double tracking and electrification of the railway line would increase the efficiency of the network and increase the options for the lines' use. Development of the land areas adjoining the rail corridor needs to be carefully managed to not preclude the opportunities for the railway line to be upgraded into the future.

2.8.2 WATER SUPPLY

The key issues identified for the reticulated water supply are:

- Horowhenua District Council is currently only committed to supplying water to Levin, Foxton, Foxton Beach, and Tokomaru with a review for supplying Waitarere planned.
- There are upgrading improvements planned or underway for the reticulated water supply systems of the townships in the District which by 2016 are expected to provide an acceptable water supply in terms of quality and quantity. Significant water supply development due to growth in excess of the levels typical of the last 10 years will be funded and/or provided by developers.
- Following supply issues in 2005, a moratorium was placed on new connections in areas outside of urban systems designed to

cope with new demands. It is stated that developers must pay for system extensions.

- Greater demands are expected in the Beach settlements. There is the potential to service expanded settlements with additional bores and extended reticulated systems. However, with increasing demand for groundwater from a range of users, water conservation initiatives should also be adopted.
- Water treatment capacity in the smaller settlements has the ability to be increased depending on the extent and location of the growth. Existing resource consent conditions for water takes allow for only limited growth, and future growth would need to be factored in to water take applications.
- Water demand planning should be undertaken in conjunction with prioritising development areas to anticipate water requirements and reticulation requirements to service growth directions, as that will have implications for funding any future extensions.
- Waitarere Beach does not have a reticulated water supply, but this will need to be reviewed if growth proceeds here.

2.8.3 WASTEWATER

The following key issues have been identified for wastewater:

- Sewage treatment systems are to be upgraded for some settlements to meet resource consent requirements. In time, reducing inflow and infiltration will optimise capacity issues and should allow for further development. There are upgrades and/or relocations planned for Levin's sewage treatment plant and pumping station to increase capacity and remove a significant environmental risk for Lake Horowhenua.
- Moves to land based disposal systems such as irrigation will be environmentally beneficial and will provide scope for further extension and development.
- Any properties that have no public water supply or sewerage system are exposed to some level of risk because of septic tank discharges to soil.
- Council could consider all new properties connected to the wastewater network incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) technology and possibly wastewater attenuation to limit impacts on existing infrastructure.

2.8.4 FLOOD RISK AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The main stormwater and flood hazard issues are identified as:

- There are flood risk issues identified by the 100 year Return Period Storm Flood Hazard Maps of the District that will affect the urbanised parts of Foxton, Foxton Beach and to a lesser extent,

Shannon, Levin, Hokio Beach and areas outside of the townships that are currently undeveloped. Ponding areas are located to the northwest of Levin and north of Foxton. Development is unlikely to be permitted within the identified flood and ponding areas. The HDC District Plan identifies key infrastructural assets that are currently at significant risk.

- Horizons Regional Council plan to model and map the flood risks from Manakau Stream and Ohau River. In time, other water ways may be modelled for their flood risk, providing better information for land use planning.
- There are stormwater capacity issues which relate to flood risk and the potential for new land uses in flood prone areas. There is limited reticulation in the townships and no identified treatment of stormwater.
- Increasing public expectations, higher environmental standards, climatic change and greater awareness of Tsunami risk will result in greater requirements for land use planning, better and more extensive stormwater management, collection and disposal systems.
- Significant development will increasingly focus on alternative forms of stormwater management and treatment to improve water quality and mitigate the impacts of climate change and Tsunami risk.

- Greater consideration of sea levels and the effects on coastal areas including estuaries and river mouths will be required in considering requirements of further development.
- There are opportunities to improve stormwater management and flood risk in association with new growth and development by avoiding the flooding and ponding areas and maintaining and extending the stormwater systems.

2.9 Cultural Heritage

There are layers of cultural heritage in the Horowhenua derived from human presence, use and development over many centuries. These layers can be seen in the landscape by the buildings, landforms, trees, distribution of settlement, and archaeology.

2.9.1 MAORI VALUES

There are four Iwi in the Horowhenua; Muaupoko, Rangitane, Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Apa. The natural environment relationship is paramount for local iwi, in terms of the use and development of the natural resources. There are values inherent in these natural resources – streams, lakes, estuaries, air, and soil and their life supporting characteristics that will need to be recognised and provided for in growth options as they are considered.

2.9.2 SITES OF SIGNIFICANCE

The cultural heritage of the Horowhenua is varied, based on the diversity of historical occupation. There are a range of sites relating to social, historical, technological, spiritual and use values. The Horowhenua District Plan identifies some of these places for a level of protection or management. However, there are heritage places or areas that are not recognised by the District Plan but which should be recognised for their values in the Development Plan.

In particular, there is no coverage of archaeological sites (Maori and European) identified by the District Plan. As a starting point, data from the NZ Archaeological Association will be used as a guide to the likely presence of archaeological sites. However, a cautionary approach to new development areas needs to be taken to recognise potential for the presence of sites not yet identified.

The New Zealand Historic Places Act (1993) requires that any pre 1900 site could be of archaeological interest and as such needs to be considered by the NZ Historic Places Trust. In a district such as the Horowhenua, European settlement was well established by 1900 and Maori use and development in the area will have left a legacy of many sites which are undeclared.

The urban area of Foxton contains a number of features where the heritage values are evident. The District Plan currently does not identify these values on an area basis, rather, it relies on protecting individual buildings and structures. Recognition of heritage values outside of those identified currently will be an important factor, particularly in any options in the Development Plan that seek to redevelop within the existing urban area.

3 CONSULTATION

The preparation of the Horowhenua Development Plan has involved consultation with a range of persons and groups at different steps in the process. The process and consultation steps have included:

- Review background reports prepared by HDC and from other sources on the Horowhenua District;
- Identify significant growth pressures from reports and discussion with Council officers and key local parties;
- Review capacity of existing zoned land for residential, commercial and industrial activity;
- Identify the economic and demographic profile of the District, including consultation with businesses;
- Estimate growth trends for the future demographic profile;
- Interview a selection of local people with social, business, cultural and professional interests as to key issues and opportunities;
- Identify potential growth concepts and areas for development for each settlement;
- Consultation (Stage 1) with landowners in the identified potential growth areas;
- Open days in Levin and Foxton Beach to discuss potential growth options and seek feedback;
- Develop implementation methods for realising the study outcomes;
- Prepare Draft Development Plan for public submissions;
- Consultation (Stage 2) with the community, including a series of public open days in main settlements over a four month period (November 2007 – February 2008). Also, a number of individual meetings were held with individual property owners and community representatives;
- Call for submissions on the Draft Development Plan, and invite submitters to be heard by Council (non-statutory process).
- Make the appropriate changes to the options as appropriate and confirm the implementation methods.
- Adopt the final Development Plan.

The Development Plan will be used to inform a range of Council and other agency actions including the District Plan (and other Plans) changes, investment, and new initiatives as part of its implementation over time.

Further information about the nature of and issues raised in consultation is contained in Appendix 1.

4 BASIS OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.1 High Level Growth Management Principles

There are a number of principles that provide the basis for formulation of the strategy guiding the Horowhenua Development Plan:

4.1.1 SETTLEMENT PRINCIPLES

- Plan for settlement growth at key nodes (such as existing settlements) on transport routes.
- Provide housing choice - range of lot sizes/densities. Higher densities around centres (e.g. 25-50dw/ha) and larger lots at edges.
- Recognise and provide affordable housing choices for people with a low income.
- Ensure neighbourhoods have a focal point or 'heart' which is a people friendly place.
- Avoid areas of development where there are hazards and recognise the effects of sea level rise.
- Maintain the 'village' character of smaller settlements (e.g. Tokomaru, Ohau, Manakau).
- Maintain the 'beach' character of coastal settlements (e.g. Waitarere, Hokio and Waikawa Beaches).

- Recognise and provide for retention and reuse of heritage buildings.
- Address in any new growth directions the potentially disconnecting influence of main roads.

4.1.2 STREET AND MOVEMENT PRINCIPLES

- Provide safe and comfortable streets for walkers, cyclists, cars and other transport.
- Provide for 'walkability' and cycling as healthy, sustainable and affordable ways of moving around.
- Ensure streets are interconnected to assist with efficient movements, walk-ability and way finding.
- Improve the use of street trees to provide scale, shade, visual amenity and definition of street hierarchy.
- Establish clear hierarchies in street design arterial roads (e.g. State Highway), distributor roads, local traffic to collector roads and residential traffic to neighbourhood streets.
- Encourage the transport system to provide adequately for the community's long term transport needs.
- Recognise the influence of State Highways economically to the settlements and of the railway for movement of people and goods for the future.

4.1.3 RURAL PRINCIPLES

- Recognise the different environments that exist within the landscape framework from the hills to the plains to the coast, and the natural and physical opportunities and constraints that apply to defined areas.
- Retain the open rural landscape and protect the versatility of productive rural land, and maintain the “right to farm”.
- Provide for a range of productive uses that utilise the natural assets of the locality.
- Protect outstanding landscapes, natural habitats and areas with significant heritage and cultural values.
- Plan for rural living opportunities around settlements - contribute to community life, maintain open/productive land, servicing opportunities.
- Accommodate rural living in the rural environment only where it is compatible with the character and function of the locality, and recognises the natural and physical constraints of the area.

4.1.4 OPEN SPACE PRINCIPLES

- Provide for the formal and informal recreational needs of people in towns – sports and casual use.

- Provide for definition to the neighbourhoods by local parks and linkages, such as along waterways.
- Maintain a low density of development and thus more open landscape around towns to define the urban/rural boundary and to protect the versatility of productive rural land.
- Provide a linked network of open space for alternative movement network for walkers, recreational use, and ecological corridors.
- Recognise the natural values in the hills, plains and coastal environments and the recreational opportunities in these.
- Ensure that public open space is safe and comfortable for public use.

4.1.5 INFRASTRUCTURE PRINCIPLES

- Provide water, sewer, stormwater to an adequate standard to reflect Council strategies
- Plan and develop infrastructure which minimises energy use, discourages emissions, and reduces waste.
- Minimise stormwater and over flow management by environmental design, especially in sensitive catchments (Lake Horowhenua, Lake Papaitonga and Manawatu River Estuary).
- In non-reticulated areas, adopt best practice solutions for on-site disposal of wastewater and the supply of potable water.

4.2 The Broader Planning Context

The Horowhenua District's long term planning must have regard to influences from the wider international, national and regional environment.

4.2.1 INTERNATIONAL

International trends can have a broad scale influence on the District's development. The world continues to urbanise rapidly. Urban migration is occurring at rates three times faster than population growth. Expansion of urban areas has a range of impacts including pollution, habitat loss, loss of open space, loss of high quality productive soils, reducing transport mode connectivity, and escalating infrastructure costs.

Sustainable development has been brought to international attention by Agenda 21 and the Rio Earth Summit, which focused on the issues that will need to be resolved if the environment, the economy and communities are to flourish in the 21st century. Impacts such as climate change, loss of forest, declining biodiversity, and burgeoning waste generation have created a growing awareness of the cumulative global impacts of development and a desire to take action at local level.

Quality of life has become a primary factor in long term planning. A basic premise of a more connected national and global economy is that talented

people can locate anywhere, so they go where the living is good. This means that places must be creative as they strive to attract and retain talented people.

In parts of the Western World, notably in the US, Canada and Australia, initiatives have been taken to shift policy toward a greater concern for quality of life with initiatives such as 'Liveable Communities'. These initiatives seek a more comprehensive and integrated approach to growth-related policy development to ensure high quality of life for current and future generations, as well as the protection and enhancement of natural systems.

In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development reviewed implementation of key sustainable development objectives and secured a renewed commitment to the broader aims of sustainable development.

4.2.2 NATIONAL

National or central government policies need to be taken account of as they guide decision making at a higher level, influence funding sources and regulation. They provide a point of reference for local government, business and communities. Some of the more salient national level policy is set out on the following page.

<p>New Zealand Land Transport Strategy (2002)⁸. Ministry of Transport</p>	<p>This is the first transport strategy that recognises all modes and users of transport, those who provide transport, and those affected by transport. It is also the first transport strategy to respond directly to the broader social, economic and environmental needs of the country.</p>
<p>New Zealand Housing Strategy (2005)⁹ Housing New Zealand</p>	<p>The strategy sets out the vision and strategic direction for housing in New Zealand for the next 10 years. It takes a collaborative approach recognising the roles of central and local government, Iwi/Maori, Pacific groups and the wider housing sector ability to provide affordable, quality, and sustainable housing for all.</p>
<p>New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (2005)¹⁰</p>	<p>The Protocol is a Government programme addressing how good urban design can contribute to the development of NZ towns and cities. It provides the framework for a series of actions by government and other stakeholders that will lead to practical outcomes and positive change in the way we approach the design of our urban areas.</p>
<p>Sustainable Development of New Zealand (2003) Ministry for the Environment</p>	<p>This programme of action for sustainable development is the government's view of the way forward. It sets directions and outlines the initial actions the government will be taking. It focuses on the issues of water quality and allocation, energy, sustainable cities, and child and youth development.</p>
<p>New Zealand Tourism Strategy (2015) Ministry of Tourism</p>	<p>Adopting and funding the recommendations outlined will conservatively enable international growth expenditure to \$9.4 billion (a 74% increase) and by overnight domestic visitors to an estimated \$6.3 billion (a 50% increase) by 2010. The opportunity exists to grow total expenditure to \$26.8 billion. The large growth of tourism will be significant for places where tourism is a key sector in the economy.</p>
<p>Tourism and Hospitality Workforce Strategy (2006)</p>	<p>This strategy seeks to address the challenge of up-skilling people and lifting productivity and profit to further the quality of the experience offered to visitors in New Zealand. For the Horowhenua the issue of workforce skills and tourism opportunities makes this a useful reference.</p>
<p>New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement</p>	<p>This statement establishes national policy on coastal environments and these are enshrined in the RMA. All district and regional policy must be consistent with this.</p>

⁸ From Ministry of Transport website

⁹ Housing Corporation of NZ website

¹⁰ Ministry for the Environment website

4.2.3 REGIONAL

The primary regional influences on the Horowhenua District are from its relationship to the immediate neighbouring areas of Palmerston North City and Manawatu District to the north, and the Kapiti Coast District and Wellington City to the south.

Palmerston North has a relatively strong influence with this being the largest main centre in close proximity to the Horowhenua and provides employment, commerce, education, cultural and transport (air) opportunities. For example, the educational opportunities and links to land based production education at Massey University and research centres in Palmerston North are (at least anecdotally) strong. The Manawatu generally and Horowhenua share a strong agricultural base, geography and social profile.

Kapiti Coast District as a whole has similar influences as Palmerston North City on the Horowhenua District. The northern area of the Kapiti Coast exhibits similar environmental qualities to the southern Horowhenua. The southern area of Kapiti is more intensively developed for residential and commercial purposes.

Wellington, further to the south, also influences the Horowhenua as this is the main city in the lower North Island with supporting employment,

commercial, education, political, transport and cultural opportunities. The phenomenon of young people shifting to larger centres (such as Wellington) for education, employment or cultural opportunities is significant for the Horowhenua District. This is evidenced in the departure statistics for the district (for example 62 people having left in the year ended June 2006).

However, as noted earlier in this report it is evident that there is a trend to people either establishing holiday or second homes in the Horowhenua. These people tend to be older and are seeking either a lifestyle change (say to rural-residential), coastal living, or taking advantage of the relatively close proximity of the coastal settlements to the larger metropolitan centres for easy to reach holiday houses.

The natural features of the coast, plains and mountains, and the associated climate, delineate the District into sub-areas, which are also present on a regional scale to the north and south of the Horowhenua.

The distances between settlements both within the District and regionally have been determined based on historical and social geographic development patterns and significantly influenced by the transport networks and modes of transport. Originally, the waterbodies, in particular

the Manawatu River played a pivotal role in the development of the Horowhenua.

Horowhenua's location along the main land transport routes (State Highway 1 and Main Trunk North Island Railway Line) ensures that a significant proportion of the North Island road and rail traffic passes through it. The relative proximity of Palmerston North City by road enables a journey time of 40 minutes from Levin, which is relatively comfortable for a daily commute. People also commute from Levin (and other surrounding settlements) to Wellington, with a 1 hour 25 minute train journey or 1 hour 15 minute to 2 hour car journey (depending on traffic conditions). With improvements to the road and rail networks between the Horowhenua and Wellington, these times may reduce further.

The district also has good access to international airports and ports. Freight is transported to both the Port of Napier and Port of Wellington. Air freight and international travel is accessible in Palmerston North and Wellington. The potential for an upgrade of the Paraparaumu airport would also have benefits for the Horowhenua.

A number of regional documents have been prepared. For the purposes of this study, the Regional Land Transport Strategy has been identified as a key document.

4.2.4 REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Horizons Regional Council has recently (March 2006) prepared a Regional Land Transport Strategy for the whole Manawatu-Wanganui region. The Strategy identifies the existing transport networks and their performance in terms of their safety and capacity, as well as recent trends in transport demand.

A series of actions have been identified in the Strategy, of which the following are specifically relevant to the Horowhenua (this list is not exhaustive, as more general actions also apply):

- Commence implementation of the Strategy for State Highway 1 Levin-Otaki Four-Laning and Levin Bypass by undertaking initial safety and level of service improvements and obtaining a bypass designation (Transit New Zealand, associated Territorial Authorities);
- Investigate and implement improved park and ride facilities at Levin Railway Station, in order to support increased use of the commuter train service between Palmerston North and Wellington (Rail network and service operators, Horizons Regional Council, Horowhenua District Council) by 2007.

4.2.5 "ONE PLAN" AND OTHER REGIONAL PLANS

Horizons Regional Council has a proposed "One Plan". It sets policy for the natural resources of the region including land, water, air, coast, natural hazards and living heritage. The One Plan will be considered in the formulation of the Development Plan for the Horowhenua. There are other Regional Plans that establish more definitive rules and objectives and policies within the region that will also be taken into account by the Development Plan.

4.2.6 MID-CENTRAL HEALTH – PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE 2005-2015

Based on health needs assessment for the health region (Mid central), the Board has developed guiding principles and 10 priority action areas to address the area's health issues. The 10 priority areas include: Maori Health, Rural Health, Child Health, Older person's Health, Diabetes, Cancer, mental health and several others. Although it may be considered peripheral to the Development Plan, the links between health and the form of our settlements and the quality of the environment are now more clearly drawn. For example, accessibility of schools or day to day needs by foot or cycle decreases the reliance of motor vehicle trips and increases daily exercise, which then reduces the propensity for health issues such as diabetes and obesity.

A new centralised Horowhenua Health Centre was opened in Levin in 2007, and investigations are underway for a health centre in Foxton. With

the aging population, these health facilities will provide a key role in the community.

4.2.7 TOURISM

Horowhenua and Kapiti Districts have recently been working together in investigating and promoting economic growth. The 'Enterprise Coast' organisation is the body which has been leading this work. The Kapiti/Horowhenua Economic Development Strategy identified tourism as one of the key opportunities for the region. The natural assets of the Horowhenua are a key focus of the tourism sector. Improving access to the Tararua Ranges, Manawatu Estuary and other DOC managed areas were seen as an important initiative. Horticultural based tourism enterprises were also seen as potential growth businesses, such as farm and orchard homestays. The historic heritage of small settlements, such as Foxton, Shannon and Manakau were recognised as having a valued character that needed to be protected and enhanced.

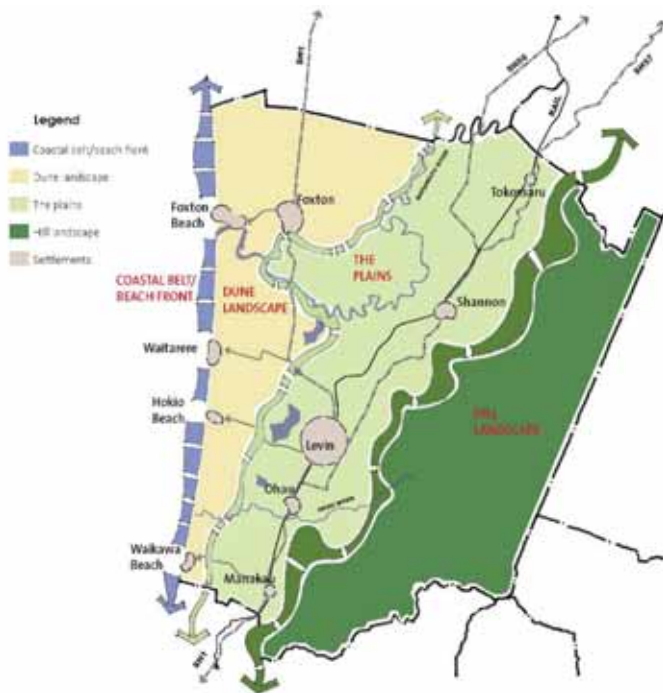
4.2.8 FARMING

The Horowhenua is a well established area for growing a wide variety of agricultural and horticultural crops. There are opportunities envisaged for adding value to these crops by processing them within the District. Matching the soil, climate and water conditions to the base agricultural and horticultural crops to maximise the economic potential of the farming industry, is important to the region.

5 DEVELOPMENT PLAN STRATEGY

There are a range of different strategies that can be considered in order to spatially distribute development growth. As a precursor to these strategies, the Development Plan has considered the existing broad landscape framework including settlements (refer Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 FRAMEWORK PLAN



5.1 Framework

The District has a framework of three base landscape areas; the dunes and coastal environment, the inland plains/river terraces and the hill country. Within these three base areas a more detailed makeup of rural land domains can be discerned by their respective distinctive characteristics (refer to Figure 3).

5.1.1 COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

The coastal environment varies in width from north to south in the District. At the northern end near Foxton Beach, the coastal landscape extends inland a significant distance, with the Manawatu River providing a clear delineation between the coastal environment and inland plains environment. At the southern end of the district near Waikawa Beach and Kuku Beach, the coastal landscape extends only a short distance until the inland plains become evident. Within the coastal environment are a range of natural features, including the Manawatu and Ohau River estuaries, dune lakes (including Lake Horowhenua and Lake Papaitonga), and smaller wetland areas. Since the early 1900's the dunelands have been reduced by 70%. Much of the remaining area of dunes contains locally threatened plant species, and some are considered national priority sites for conservation.

This coastal landscape is characterised by a series of sand dune formations, with dune ridges and low lying sandy flats in between. A dominant feature in the coastal environment is the large areas of plantation forestry.

The coastal settlements have been developed primarily as holidaying and retirement settlements. These urban areas have relatively low densities, with large areas of open space and small scale buildings. They are dominated by residential buildings, with a few isolated commercial and industrial activities, such as local dairy, school and accommodation facilities. The existing character of the coastal settlements reflects this relaxed, casual atmosphere in the built environment. Many of the older streets are informal and tend to follow the dune landforms. However, recent trends have indicated a more permanent population is starting to establish, with large dwellings being constructed. The coastal settlements connect back to the 'plains' settlements for the majority of their services. There is no direct road connection between the coastal settlements.

5.1.2 COASTAL ENVIRONMENT: GROWTH CONSTRAINTS

- Proximity to potential natural hazards associated with the coast (tsunamis, flooding and erosion).

- Lack of local services (schools, shops, libraries) and employment opportunities in some of the coastal settlements limits their ability to support permanent communities.
- Waikawa and Hokio have on-site sewerage systems (individual septic tanks). However, growth in these towns could be accompanied by a future connection to reticulated wastewater systems.
- Waitarere is served by individual bore water and rainwater tanks (salt laden air can make roof water supplies unsuitable for drinking). More development could lead to contamination affecting bore water quality. Council has indicated that they may look at water supply infrastructure provision in the future.
- Preservation of the ecological value of the dunes and coastal environment is important.

5.1.3 INLAND PLAINS

The inland plains, containing the rivers and streams which cross the landscape from the hills to the coast, contain areas of highly fertile sand and silt loams. Given the highly fertile nature of soils in these areas, the landscape is predominately of a farmed character reflecting the main rural land uses, being grazing, cropping and horticulture. The rivers and streams crossing this landscape are another key feature of the plains. There are limited areas of remnant indigenous vegetation on the inland plains and river terraces in terms of size. Most remnant areas are less

than 1.0 hectare in size, with the exceptions being the kahikatea forests near the Manawatu River west of Shannon/Opiki and Waiopehu Scenic Reserve east of Levin.

The plains based settlements have developed along the main transport routes offering good centres of activity and interregional connections. Levin forms the main administrative, cultural, social and recreational centre for the District. Foxton is the second largest urban area in the District and its development was based on its close proximity to the Manawatu River mouth, which was historically a strategic transport route. The small plains townships play an important role in the rural areas in which they are located, as they provide accommodation for workers, local schools for children and are rural social centres. The character of the plains settlements is derived primarily from the surrounding agricultural and natural landscape and the strength of the communities in each settlement. Some of the towns also have some worthy examples of heritage buildings, which add to the built character of these towns.

5.1.4 PLAINS ENVIRONMENT: GROWTH CONSTRAINTS

- Desire to maintain highly fertile soils in the areas surrounding the existing settlements as agricultural land.
- Unconnected suburban development threatening the efficient functioning and sustainability of settlements.

- Infrastructure constraints in some settlements.
- Maintenance of the unique character of each settlement whilst accommodating growth is important.
- Preservation of heritage character in some settlements is important.

5.1.5 HILL COUNTRY

The eastern part of the District is dominated by the Tararua Ranges, with the majority of this land publicly owned, as it is part of the Tararua State Forest Park. These ranges provide a 'backdrop' for the whole district, as they traverse from the northern to southern boundary of the district. The foothills to the main ranges provide a clear distinction between the 'natural' ranges and the 'productive' plains. The foothills have a mixed land use pattern, with areas of remnant indigenous forest vegetation, regenerating indigenous scrub vegetation, pastoral farming and forestry blocks. The foothills are relatively undeveloped, with only a small number of buildings and other structures constructed in this area.

5.2 Growth Strategy

Drawing on the demographic and economic profile, planning principles and international and regional influences as well as the landscape character, two interrelated strategies are applied. Firstly, a strategy has been developed for managing growth associated with the existing urban areas, and a second strategy is managing growth in the rural environment. For the urban areas, the strategy is to consolidate these and provide a green belt edge, and for the rural areas, the strategy is to retain these as open and productive.

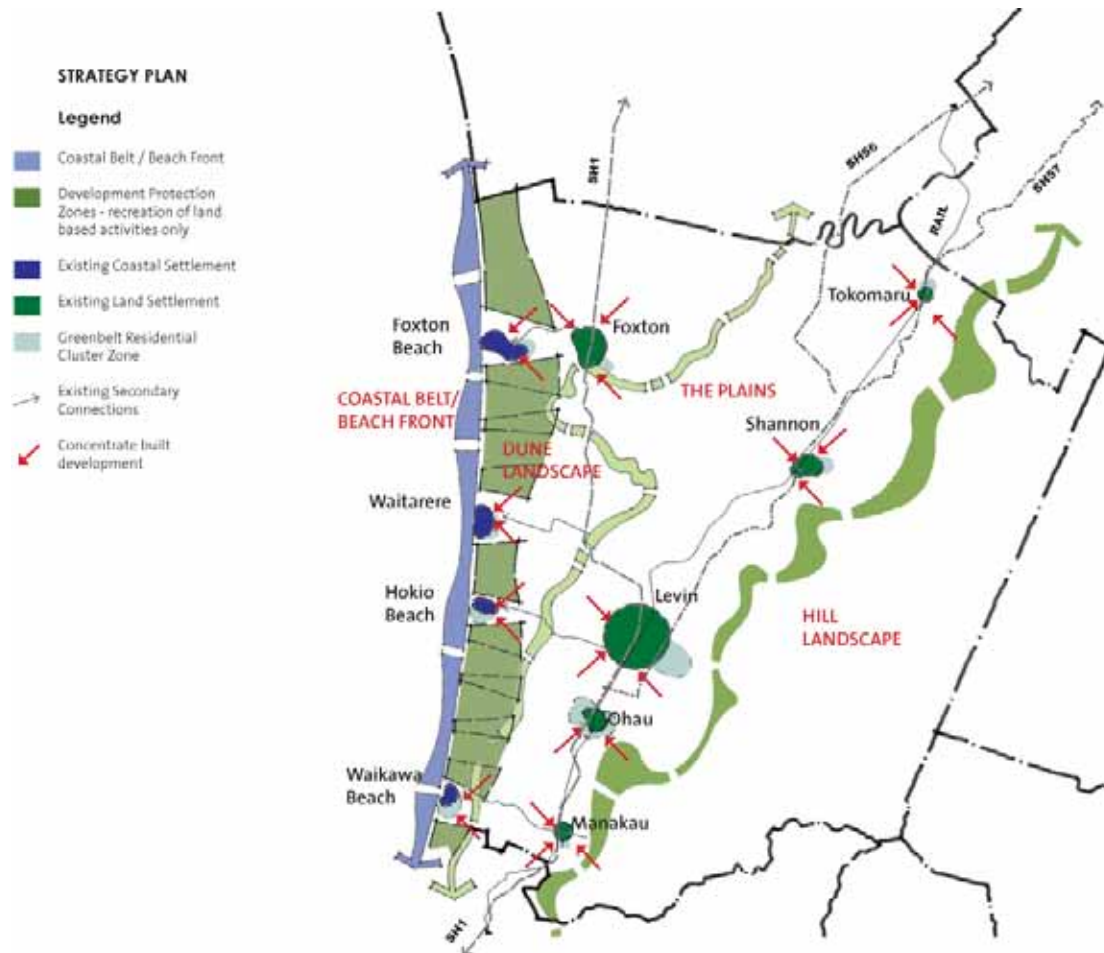
5.2.1 URBAN STRATEGY: CONSOLIDATION AND GREEN BELT

The existing urban areas of the District are of varying sizes. They also have different characteristics, influenced by historical development patterns, their location, topography, climate and the range of activities they accommodate. However, despite these variations in character, they are all places where, with the application of high level growth management principles, some improvements can be made which will enhance their provision for current residents and future generations.

The following spatial strategy (refer to Figure 2: Urban Strategy Plan) applies to the urban areas:

- Increase density within settlements in defined locations to better utilise existing urbanised land and minimise future infrastructure costs.
- Support the commercial and social service facilities in the existing settlements through carefully managed increases in density and so provide some economic and social benefits to the local community.
- Encourage the diversification of the range of housing types and living environments available in the District.
- Provide a 'Green Belt Residential' peri-urban zone of connected clusters of housing to meet the demand for fringe larger lot living closely connected to settlement centres and facilities.
- Contain settlements within limits set by greenbelts to maintain the scale and 'village' character of each settlement.
- Limit overall size of urban areas and avoid ad-hoc rural development to protect the land and soil resource.
- Utilise natural landscape features to guide the pattern of development and retain features that contribute to 'the sense of place'.
- Protect the natural character of the coastal environment by limiting the expansion of settlements. Most of the coastal environment is to be retained in its natural state and/or primary production focus.

FIGURE 2 URBAN STRATEGY PLAN



5.2.2 RURAL STRATEGY: OPEN AND PRODUCTIVE

The rural area is a strong element in defining the character of the Horowhenua. The District values its rural productive land for its contribution to its economic, environmental and social wellbeing.

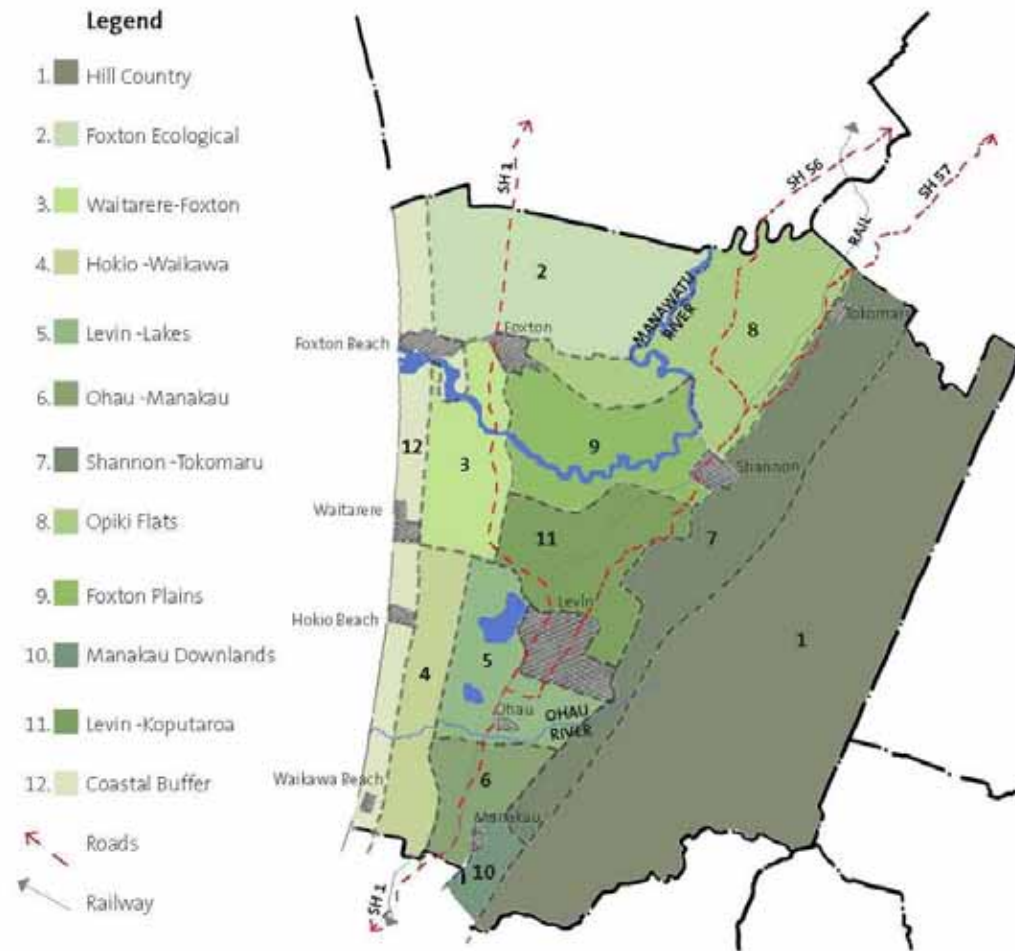
The rural environment accommodates a range of primary production activities and ancillary activities which support horticultural, agricultural, forestry, and other rural enterprises. Although the open and productive nature predominates, the rural environment has also experienced a growing level of residential activity within rural residential or 'lifestyle' developments.

The types of rural activities being undertaken in the rural area are influenced by the characteristics of the District including soil type, slope, climate and location relative to urban areas.

The following spatial strategy (refer to Figure 3: Rural Strategy Plan) applies to rural areas:

- Retain the open rural landscape and productive capacity of the land.
- Enable primary production activities to continue to function ("right to farm") without being compromised by rural living.
- Recognise that a wide range of activities are undertaken in rural areas which have compatible attributes and qualities.
- Recognise parts of the rural environment are subject to natural and physical constraints, such as natural hazards, soil fertility, topography, access and infrastructure.
- Manage the rural environment based on the natural and physical opportunities and constraints of different localities, and recognise the varying landscape character and amenity of the rural area.
- Accommodate rural living opportunities which are associated with primary production activities (e.g. farm worker accommodation).
- Accommodate land development and subdivision where there would be environmental enhancement, such as protection and enhancement of natural habitats.
- Utilise natural landscape features as spatial organisers.
- Protect the natural character of the coastal environment by limiting rural living opportunities. The rural coastal environment is to be retained in its natural state and/or primary production focus.
- Sensitively manage activities and development in areas of historical and cultural significance.
- Recognise the importance of waterbodies in the rural landscape.

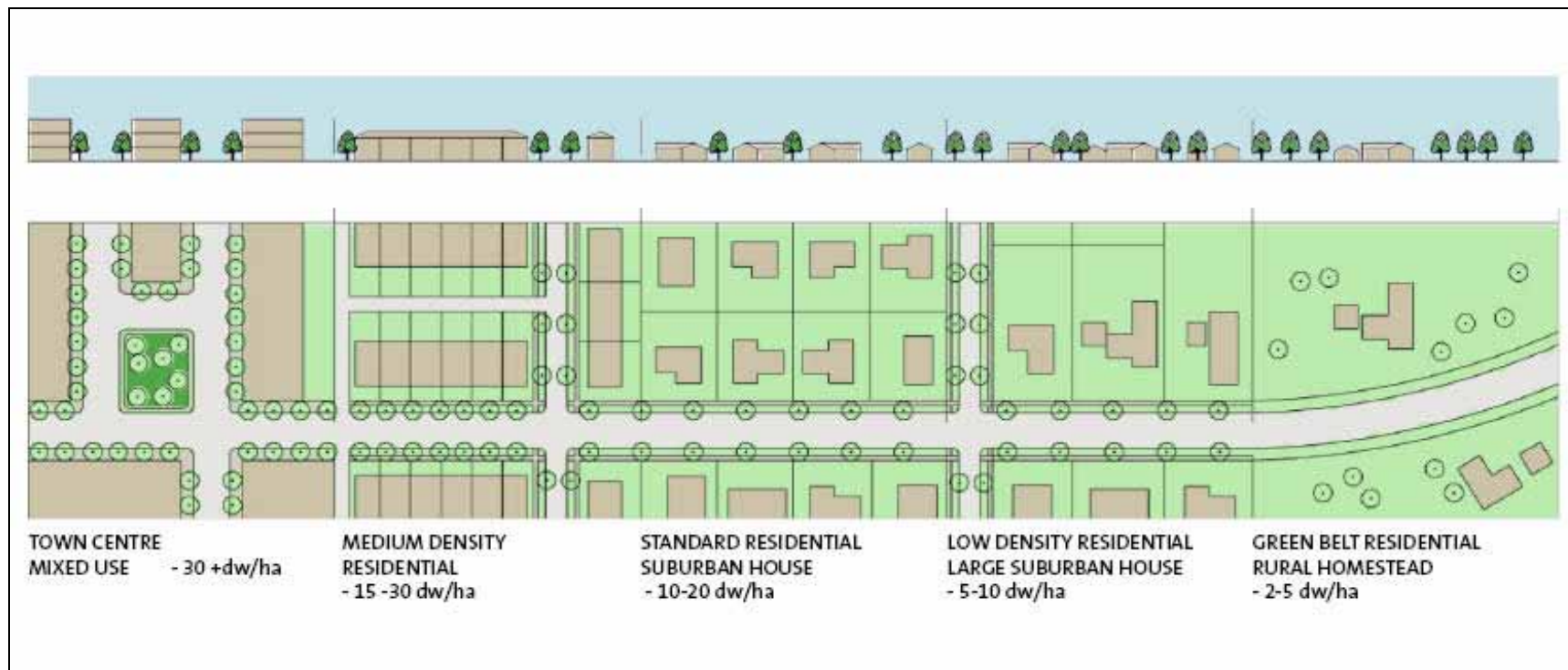
FIGURE 3: RURAL STRATEGY PLAN



5.3 Understanding Density: Transect Diagram

Towns traditionally have a cross section that shows a transition of residential densities from highest in the town centre through to lowest at the rural edge. This can be described graphically in the 'transect diagram' below (refer to Figure 4). The transect describes that at the town centre there is a mixed use approach which enables residential and commercial development at the greatest intensity which could be described as high density, through to the townhouse type of development - medium density, through to a standard suburban density with the lower densities at the edge of town. This range is shown as gross dwellings per hectare which includes roads and open space in the calculation and images of the types are described on the following pages.

FIGURE 4 TRANSECT DIAGRAM



5.4 Understanding Density: Housing Types

TOWN CENTRE - high density mixed use

Mixed use development combines commercial and residential functions in the one building. Located in the town centre, the mix of uses brings more vitality to the central streets both during and outside commercial hours. Residents in these areas have the convenience of good access to retail and community facilities and local businesses have increased patronage. Different housing types allow for a greater diversity of household structures and incomes.



MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL town houses or terraced typically 150-350m²

Dwellings are joined together by a shared party wall in a terrace or semi detached form. A garage for one car may be part of the structure. Open space on site is limited to a small private courtyard or balcony or a communal garden. Located close to the town centre, these dwellings are within walking distance of retail and community facilities. House types have benefits of low maintenance and cheaper heating/service bills. Diversity of housing types and sizes allows for different household structures and incomes.



STANDARD RESIDENTIAL suburban house typically 500 - 1000m² lots

Single detached dwellings in a garden setting. Houses suited to a traditional family structure. Open space large enough to accommodate family leisure activities and a garden. Garages for one or two cars can be accommodated on site. Car is main form of transport to retail and community amenities.



LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL large suburban house typically 1000 - 2000m² lots

Single detached dwellings in a garden setting. Houses suited to traditional family structure. Open space large enough to accommodate family leisure activities and a large garden. Garden may have some productive value such as fruit trees or vegetable patch. Large garages can be accommodated on site.



GREEN BELT RESIDENTIAL 2000 - 5000 m² lots

Green belt residential can meet the demand for rural lifestyle blocks while maintaining the open rural production land that is a valued quality of the district. Single detached houses can be clustered together with a common vegetation belt (preferably native planting) that also functions as a public access easement. This vegetation belt will be defined by an easement coordinated by a structure plan. The lots have a semi rural character with dense planting and views to the larger rural surrounds, while utilising the benefits of proximity to the town.



6 DEVELOPMENT AREAS

6.1 Process

A range of residential, rural residential, commercial and industrial land use options were considered. A deliberate strategy in the process was to put forward at the outset a considerably greater number of development options than the future demand for growth would require. This was to recognise that consultation and comparison with the high level planning principles and evaluation criteria would enable refinement to preferred options.

Comments were received in response to the consultation (Appendix 1) and the options refined as appropriate. A number of options were removed and some new options proposed. A further round of public consultation was undertaken and similarly evaluated.

Submissions were received on the draft Development Plan, including an opportunity for submitters to speak to their submissions. In response to these submissions, the growth strategy and identified growth areas were refined.

The preferred set of development areas are presented in this Development Plan.

The Development Plan focus for accommodating future growth has been on existing settlements where the potential for change and the opportunities for growth can be sustained. However, there is also recognition of the rural area and there is a strategy for its future development within the Development Plan.

Broadly the Development Plan strategy is to direct focus towards Levin, Foxton, Foxton Beach, Ohau and Waitarere Beach, as these are the areas experiencing the greatest growth pressures and highest projections for future growth. They are also places where the greatest numbers of people live in concentration, where the urban issues are most complex, and where the qualities of those urban environments influences the greatest number of people in the District.

However, some of the District's smaller villages are also experiencing growth. In some villages, this growth could help revitalise the village and provide more employment opportunities. While in other areas growth could bring change that would adversely affect the existing character of the village and therefore limited options have been proposed. Although the growth may not be quantitatively large, the potential for changes that can benefit the village viability and quality of life for residents has suggested some development recommendations as part of this plan.

6.2 Evaluation Criteria

To evaluate each of the growth areas (areas where land use is proposed to change from one use to another) a set of evaluation criteria were developed based on the strategic vision and principles.

Assessment Criteria	Description
Urban Form	<p>Urban form is an overall condition which is derived from the combination of a town's footprint (the area it covers), density, street pattern, distribution of open space, and building scale. Urban form is integral to the planning of any settlement as it influences the accessibility, liveability, sustainability and adaptability of the place.</p> <p>New growth areas located adjacent to existing urban areas or along key transport corridors have the potential to link well with existing urban areas. In contrast, new growth areas that may be greater distances away or poorly connected to transport corridors tend to undermine social cohesion, make infrastructure provision more expensive and reduce the sustainability of urban areas.</p>
Proximity to key transport networks	<p>Transport networks are important for enabling people to move throughout urban areas to schools, work, commercial centres, and other activities. They are likely to become more important in the future as more of the population seeks to utilise public transport. For these reasons transport corridors can be seen as a crucial factor in shaping urban areas.</p>
Proximity to reticulated infrastructure	<p>The proximity to and ability to connect easily with reticulated infrastructure can reduce the economic and environmental costs of new development.</p>
Proximity to activity centres and community facilities	<p>An activity centre is where people shop, work, relax and socialise. It provides the focus for services and social interaction. Community facilities include libraries, community halls, schools, hospitals and parks.</p> <p>The proximity of potential growth areas to activity centres and community facilities is important in ensuring social cohesion, reduced vehicle trips and stronger communities.</p>
Location of natural hazards, such as flooding, ponding and erosion	<p>Some areas are potentially subject to natural hazards which provide significant risks associated with occupation of the land. These effects cannot easily be mitigated, so growth areas that avoid them are favoured over those that are affected.</p>

Assessment Criteria	Description
Proximity to incompatible land use	As urban areas grow there are increasing instances where relatively sensitive residential areas come into contact with incompatible land uses such as factories, airports or wastewater treatment plants. This results in residents raising concerns about noise and air emissions, odour and traffic. These incompatible land uses are vital to the functioning of the overall urban area and are often limited in where they can locate. As a result it is considered more desirable to direct residential growth away from these incompatible land uses.
Proximity to outstanding landscape or natural features.	Growth areas that affect outstanding landscapes (as identified in the District Plan) are considered less preferable than those that might not. However, in some instances specific development proposals can be designed to complement these broader landscapes.
Area of heritage or cultural features.	Growth areas should avoid impacting on heritage buildings or cultural features.
Topographical limitations	It is possible to build urban areas over relatively steep ground, but it is significantly cheaper to develop on level ground. For this reason, potential growth areas are preferred on flatter ground (slope under 15°)
Location of highly versatile soils	Highly versatile (LUC Class I and II) soils are valued in the community for their productive purpose as they are highly fertile and require less irrigation or fertiliser. Therefore areas containing these highly versatile soils should be protected from residential development.

6.3 Identified Urban Growth Areas

The Development Plan identifies the location of urban growth areas for each of the settlements. Each urban growth area has been evaluated based on the above assessment criteria. While some areas have been identified as being suitable for urban growth, there may be constraints or requirements that need to be addressed prior to the areas being developed. The Implementation Plan in Section 7 of this Plan identifies some actions that are required to enable the growth areas to be developed, including District Plan changes, infrastructure investment and further technical assessments.