

Riverhead

STRUCTURE PLAN

Prepared for

Rodney District Council

by

Boffa Miskell Limited

July 2008

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

CONTENTS

1.0	PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW.....	3
2.0	BACKGROUND	3
3.0	SCOPE / KEY ISSUES / PROCESS.....	4
3.1	What is a Structure Plan and why is it necessary?.....	4
3.2	Key Issues.....	5
3.3	Scope	6
3.4	Process	7
4.0	COMMUNITY VISION.....	7
5.0	PLANNING CONTEXT.....	8
5.1	Vision Rodney	9
5.2	Regional Policies and Plans.....	9
5.2.1	Regional Policy Statement - Plan Change 6.....	9
5.3	Regional Land Transport Strategy (2005).....	10
5.4	Rodney District Plans	11
5.5	Summary	12
6.0	ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES	13
6.1	Population Projections.....	13
6.1.1	Population Growth	13
6.1.2	Growth Projections	13
6.1.3	Regional Growth Strategy	14
6.2	Land Availability	15
6.3	Rate of Growth	15
6.4	Land Characteristics.....	16
6.5	Infrastructure	18
6.5.1	Social Infrastructure.....	18
6.5.2	Physical Infrastructure	20
6.6	Development Staging	22
6.7	Summary – Issues and Opportunities	22
7.0	DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS.....	23
7.1	Guiding Urban Design Principles	23
7.2	Common Elements.....	23
7.3	Growth and Development Options	24
7.3.1	Scenario 1 – Highway Strip	24
7.3.2	Scenario 2 – Southern Village Centre	25
7.3.3	Scenario 3 – Town Triangle.....	25
8.0	EVALUATION	26

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

9.0	RIVERHEAD OPEN DAY	28
10.0	FINAL STRUCTURE PLAN	30
11.0	NEXT STEPS.....	31
12.0	REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY	33

1.0 PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

The purpose of this report is to provide a Structure Plan to guide future growth and development of the village of Riverhead, Rodney District. This report focuses on planning and urban design, and has been developed through a collaborative process involving Council officers, the Riverhead Residents and Ratepayers Association (RRRA), key local landowners, other stakeholders, and the Riverhead community.

This report summarises the statutory and non – statutory planning framework, background research, process, consultation, community response and recommendations for growth management in Riverhead. A proposed urban design concept for the future of Riverhead is presented in a Structure Plan diagram.

Related technical, financial and infrastructure studies will supplement this document as a technical appendix. The appendices include an Integrated Traffic Management Plan for the Riverhead area, an assessment of the demand for retail floorspace in Riverhead, and continuing investigation into wastewater treatment and potable water supply.

This document does not have statutory (legal) status. To give effect to the recommendations of this document further local plan policies will be required. Any associated capital expenditure will need to be incorporated into the Council Long Term Community Plan (LTCCP).

2.0 BACKGROUND

Riverhead is a rapidly growing rural village in Rodney District, located at the head of the Waitemata Harbour on the Coatesville Riverhead Highway between Kumeu and Coatesville (**Figure 1**).

For Maori, Riverhead was the Kaipara landing place. It served as the eastern entrance to the Riverhead-Kumeu-Helensville canoe portage between the Waitemata and Kaipara Harbours. It is unlikely that there was any permanent Maori settlement in the area but camp sites may have been located along the shoreline.

Organised British/ European pioneer groups never systematically settled in Riverhead prior to 1841. Part of the land that comprises Riverhead town was acquired by the Crown in 1841, with the remainder being acquired between 1851 and 1867. Kauri milling took place in the vicinity as early as the late 1840's but early settlement of the town appears to have been largely related to the development of a Flour Mill in around 1855, followed by a Paper Mill in 1900. The Paper Mill was closed in 1923

The town was originally surveyed in the 1860s by early colonial surveyors in an offset grid of rectangular lots, mostly 66 feet (20 m) by 132 feet (40 m) averaging 800 m² in area. This plan (**Figure 2**) was never fully implemented due to limited population growth and lack of infrastructure, especially a centralised sewage system.

A Structure Plan for Riverhead was completed for Rodney District Council (RDC) in 1994. This plan proposed the completion of the original plan and expansion of the village to the north and south, while retaining areas to the west as 'rural' (**Figure 2**). This expansion was again stymied by limited infrastructure, although detailed technical investigations and costing

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

of alternate sewage systems was completed. This Structure Plan is therefore outdated and was not included in the *Proposed Rodney District Plan 2000* (Section 13.9 Appendix 13A).

The northern and western expansion of Auckland has placed Riverhead under increasing pressure, with corresponding local concern about ad-hoc development, potential loss of community character, and lack of an up to date strategic plan for the town.

In 2006, a community visioning project was initiated by RRRA. This established a common vision for the future, provided a basis for the RRRA's submission to the Rodney District Council's LTP and paved the way for a revised Riverhead Structure Plan.

Funding from the Rodney District Council was obtained and Boffa Miskell Ltd was engaged to help undertake a collaborative visioning exercise with the Riverhead community. This was summarised in the document *A Vision for Riverhead* (May 2006), which formed an essential basis for the Structure Plan.

Based on this shared vision, a review of the 1994 Structure Plan for Riverhead was commissioned by Council in partnership with the RRRA and a number of local landowners.

This report sets out:

- An overview of the project.
- The process followed for the review.
- The community vision and consultation.
- The policy context for the area.
- The growth pressures and trends facing Riverhead.
- The main options for growth management.
- A proposed Structure Plan concept / diagram.
- Recommendations.

3.0 SCOPE / KEY ISSUES / PROCESS

3.1 What is a Structure Plan and why is it necessary?

Rodney District Council's *Structure Plans: a template for self-help by specific communities* provides an overview on what constitutes a Structure Plan and why one is needed for Riverhead:

'The Council prepares Structure Plans for several reasons. Firstly, Structure Plans are a key part of the Council's process of planning for growth. Structure planning requires consideration of the natural and physical resources of the area, including its values, the location and state of infrastructure, the strategic context and community views and identifies the future likely position of significant land uses based on a consideration of alternatives. The result is an agreed vision or plan for that area. As such, structure planning allows the Council to hear from the community at large what its views on growth are. It also allows the

RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN

Council to integrate its planning for the future provision of infrastructure such as roads, water supply, wastewater treatment and disposal, stormwater treatment, parks and reserves and community facilities in the widest sense. This then provides a basis for the Council's long term budgeting process, and provides direction for how it might deal with land it owns. It also assists other agencies such as power companies and Government agencies to plan for the longer term for services, e.g. schools that they provide. Structure Plans also provide some guidance for landowners who want to know what the future may hold for their land.

The second reason is that various statutory imperatives require structure planning. The Auckland Regional Policy Statement requires structure planning where significant "greenfield" areas are to be developed (for urban purposes) or where existing urban areas are to be intensified. The policy statement also requires Structure Plans in rural areas in certain circumstances, e.g. where countryside living is to occur.

Where District Plan changes to rezone land for more intensive purposes are proposed, having a Structure Plan completed first enables some of the statutory tests in the Resource Management Act to be more readily met when the plan change is assessed against the statutory provisions.'

3.2 Key Issues

A visioning exercise was undertaken with residents of the Riverhead community in March 2006. As a result of this exercise an action plan was established. Management of growth was a key item on this action plan and a revision of the 1994 Structure Plan for Riverhead was proposed.

The 1994 Structure Plan broadly identifies 'future urban' development north and south of the existing town centre. While these future urban areas are identified in the Proposed District Plan 2000, these have never been given an urban zoning. As discussed in section 6.5.2, the technical and financial implications of providing the infrastructure needed to service this development sustainably have yet to be resolved.

Some of the key issues (identified in the *Vision for Riverhead*) driving this updated Structure Plan includes:

a) Residential Land Use, Density and Character:

Local residents expressed concern during the visioning process about the effects of growth and in particular more intensive development on the existing character of the town. There are increasing development pressures in and around Riverhead and several subdivision schemes have been proposed for the future urban zoned areas. There is uncoordinated infill development, including a significant number of relocated houses, all on septic fields.

Larger scale subdivision and development applications are on hold until the Structure Plan has been progressed as there is a need for proposed developments to integrate with the existing village and town centre. Infrastructure and linkages with existing roading and open space networks are major considerations.

b) Town Centre / Commercial Land:

During the visioning exercise it became apparent that residents were concerned there is currently no defined 'town centre'. There is an opportunity to create a business and community focal point for Riverhead, and the appropriate location and extent of this centre needs to be identified. To identify commercial and retail land requirements Council commissioned a report on demand for retail floorspace until 2026. This report identified that 2,719m² of sustainable retail and service land floorspace is required in Riverhead.

c) Infrastructure:

Local residents want to ensure that 'hard' infrastructure (sewer, water, transportation) is put in place; but also that 'soft' infrastructure (education, community services, recreation) also keeps pace with future population growth.

Wastewater infrastructure is intended to be provided to Riverhead. The prospect of wastewater reticulation in Riverhead means that there is potential for increased residential density within the existing urban area. The Proposed District Plan currently allows for establishment of dwellings on much smaller lot sizes (800 m², down from current 1,500 m²) once wastewater infrastructure is provided.

More dwellings and increased densities will help fund the sewage system and provide a range of housing types. Local residents are concerned, however, about the effects on local character, services and amenities.

This revision to the Structure Plan includes consideration of the following elements: land use; density and lot size; roading connections and requirements; open space and walkway networks; integration of future urban areas with the existing urban environment; creation of a village centre; 'hard' infrastructure (water, stormwater, wastewater) and 'soft' community infrastructure; and phasing of development.

3.3 Scope

The District Plan supports the use of Structure Plans as a basis for growth management; especially with respect to "*areas of land that have not yet been developed for urban purposes*". Section 13.9 describes the Structure Plan process and status, and Appendix 13A describes a number of adopted Structure Plans. As noted earlier, the 1994 Riverhead Structure Plan is not one of these.

Best practice in structure planning is defined at a higher level on the MfE Quality Planning website (www.qualityplanning.org.nz) and in the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) publication *Structure Planning – Regional Practice and Resource Guide 2000*.

The scope of work for this Structure Plan was limited to:

- Confirming the conclusions of the 1994 Structure Plan as to the appropriate growth boundaries for Riverhead.
- Confirming alignment with regional and local planning directives (e.g. Northern and Western Sectors Agreement, Auckland Regional Growth Strategy, Auckland Regional Policy Statement, Vision Rodney, A Living Vision for Rodney's Economy, Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy).

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

- Providing for community values identified through the Riverhead “visioning” exercise described in section 4.0.
- Identifying the extent and location of potential reserves.
- Identifying any staging of growth that may be required.
- Developing an urban design concept in the form of a Structure Plan Diagram.

This is comparable to some of the other Structure Plans adopted in Appendix 13A of the District Plan and has undergone extensive consultation. The proposed sewage treatment system and associated costs, financial contributions, and staging remain undetermined at this point.

In the interim, it is recommended that this document form a valuable basis for LTCCP and Annual Plan budgeting; the development of the Rodney Open Space Strategy (including potential land acquisition); and as the basis for the preparation of specific rules for the District Plan.

3.4 Process

The process that has been followed is aligned with the Council’s generic structure planning process and is illustrated in **Figure 3**:

This process included:

- Phase 1: Visioning, Briefing, Project Initiation.
- Phase 2: Background Report and Base Mapping.
- Phase 3: Constraints and Opportunities.
- Phase 4: Generate and Discuss Options.
- Phase 5: Refine Preferred Plan.
- Phase 6: Public Open Day.
- Phase 7: Finalise Plan / Report.

4.0 COMMUNITY VISION

A visioning exercise was undertaken with members of the Riverhead Community in March 2006. This exercise developed the following vision for the community.

“Our Riverhead will be:

- *An involved and caring community*
- *A compact rural village with a defined village centre*

- *Well-served in terms of infrastructure and community facilities*
- *‘Green’ – with parks connected to its forest and rural setting*
- *A place with a unique character that people want to visit*
- *A place that respects and builds on its history and heritage*
- *Dynamic and growing, where new development occurs according to a defined plan*
- *A community with a wide range of housing choice that avoids both sprawl and over-development*
- *Highly connected with its river, services and amenities through its pedestrian and road network*
- *A friendly and safe place to live!”*

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

There are a number of statutory and non-statutory documents, which influence the Structure Planning process. These include the Auckland Regional Policy Statement including Plan Change 6, the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy and the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement. These guide where future population growth should be accommodated, and allocate future growth.

Within the Rodney District, the Council Vision Statement *Vision Rodney*, is important in identifying a broad, strategic direction to growth. The provisions of the Operative and Proposed District Plan that aim to implement this strategic vision are discussed further in section 5.4.

In determining how suitable an area is for future urban development there is a need to recognise and provide for the specific values ascribed to the place. Constraints to development must also be analysed. (e.g. significant ecology, stormwater management requirements, cultural or historic heritage). In many instances these values and constraints have been identified in the various planning documents relevant to the area.

Values and constraints are identified and discussed in section 6.0. In identifying these, reference has been made to the following documents:

- Auckland Regional Policy Statement (including Plan Change 6)
- Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water
- Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal
- Proposed Rodney District Plan 2000

5.1 Vision Rodney

Vision Rodney is the Vision Statement, which was formally adopted by the Rodney District Council in July 2003. The Strategy identifies high-level outcomes that Council seeks to achieve by 2030:

1. Keep and build on every town's
2. Put an edge around every town and village
3. Make all towns and villages viable

The identity of Riverhead has been clearly articulated through the community visioning exercise, and it is apparent from this that the community supports *Vision Rodney*. In addition, the requirement for a defined edge is supported by the Regional Policy Statement and associated strategies and agreements.

5.2 Regional Policies and Plans

The Auckland Regional Policy Statement (ARPS) provides direction to guide growth within the greater Auckland Region, and states that, urban growth should be within the Metropolitan Urban Limit (MUL) or within existing rural settlements.

Underlying the ARPS is the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), which provides a vision for what Auckland could be like in 2050, with a population of 2 million people. The purpose of the RGS is to ensure that growth is accommodated in a way that minimises environmental effects and meets the best interests of the inhabitants of Auckland, and minimises environmental effects. Key principles are:

1. A compact urban form with the majority of growth accommodated in existing urban areas
2. Limited expansion into greenfields
3. Protection of the coast and natural environment

As a member of the Regional Growth Forum RDC is committed to achieving the outcomes sought by the RGS. Sector agreements have been produced to help identify where growth will occur. Riverhead is located in an area identified for residential growth in the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement (NWSA). The NWSA identifies future population growth capacities and allocates growth accordingly.

The NWSA indicates that the Rodney District has sufficient land area available within the MUL and rural towns until at least 2021, although it does indicate that growth can occur beyond the defined limits (the urban zones that existed in 1999), provided that it occurs in an integrated manner. A structure planning process is one method of ensuring this integration occurs.

5.2.1 Regional Policy Statement - Plan Change 6

In March 2005, Plan Change 6 to the RPS was notified. The purpose of the plan change is to give affect to the regional growth strategy and ensure that land use and transport is integrated. The Plan Change was required by the Local Government (Auckland)

Amendment Act, 2004. (LGAAA). Territorial authorities were required to amend district plans to give effect to land use and transport integration.

This plan change has effectively strengthened requirements for an integrated approach to development and for consolidation of existing urban areas. It specifically requires that the RGS supports compact, sustainable urban form and sustainable urban land use intensification (including location, timing and sequencing issues, and associated quality, character, and values of urban form and design).

5.3 Regional Land Transport Strategy (2005)

The Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy (RTLTS) plans a transport network that supports and responds to the objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS).

The RGS seeks to limit the sprawl of urban Auckland, protect the natural environment and promote accessibility within the metropolitan urban area. The roading and passenger transport system outlined in the RTLTS support the RGS by providing access to areas identified for increased densities and mixed use development within existing urban areas; existing and developing employment areas; greenfield areas for future urban development; and small rural and coastal towns identified for limited growth.

The RTLTS identifies the way forward for the region's transport system for the next 10 years (till 2015) and outlines regional objectives and policies that provide a framework for the development of transport systems.

As Riverhead is a relatively small rural town, many of the policies detailed in the RTLTS are not directly relevant to this Structure Planning process. While the future development of the Riverhead urban area has been factored into future public transport requirements by way of the Northern and Western Sectors Agreements, rural towns have not been provided for in the current funding period. The population is not sufficient to trigger any specific funding of public transport.

However, Policy 3 of the RTLTS, to manage travel demand, is particularly important when determining where the location of future development areas. Policy 3 seeks to reduce the demand for travel, particularly by private vehicles.

While the RTLTS recognises that car travel will remain an important part of Auckland's transport system, it aims to "reduce car trips and to encourage more people to walk, cycle, catch public transport, carpool, and to work, shop and play locally".

To create an environment where people can be encouraged to work locally requires both an increase in population and development density. While the majority of employment opportunities available to Riverhead residents will remain outside the town in the short to medium term, there are opportunities available to improve walking and cycling within the town. These will become more important as population increases so need to be provided for sooner rather than later in any future development scenarios. These include:

- Encouraging formation of a town centre within walking distance to the greatest population densities.
- Making walking a more popular transport choice, by investing in better footpaths, lighting, safer crossings and more pleasant walkways.

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

- Providing for cyclists.
- Improving and completing road links within the existing town and ensuring that these link well with future development areas.

Aligned with the RTLS, are the draft RDC Walking & Cycling strategy (“Walking and Cycling for Sustainable Transport 2005 – 2025” and related Action Plan, and the Rodney Physical Activity Strategy (July 2006).

The Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA) and the subsequent Auckland Amendment of the LTMA(2004) also requires Councils to consider walking and cycling as part of their overall transport solution.

Development of a well-connected open space network within Riverhead clearly aligns with this objective.

5.4 Rodney District Plans

Several statutory planning documents are relevant to the Riverhead area and to the structure planning process. These are:

- The Rodney District Proposed District Plan 2000
- Variation 58 to the Proposed District Plan (relevant to medium and high intensity urban zones)
- Variation 60 to the Proposed District Plan (relevant to infill development in existing urban areas)
- The Operative Transitional District Plan 1993
- Plan Change 26 to the Operative Plan (relevant to residential development)

These documents generally control how development will occur within the district and should be consistent with the guiding policy documents of the region.

Consideration of the district planning documents, and their implementation strategies is relevant both in terms of the existing town centre and to the future urban areas. A key implementation tool is zoning, which applies different rules to various areas so as to address any environmental issues and to achieve District Plan objectives and policies.

Aspects of District Plans that are particularly relevant in terms of future development in Riverhead are:

- Residential zonings, particularly in terms of development intensity (lot size).
- Commercial or business zonings and the types of activities these provide for.
- Potential mixed commercial / residential zoning.
- Open space zonings and the types of activities these zones allow.

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

- Spatial development strategies, particularly in terms of development of future urban areas.

Current zoning of the town is shown in **Figure 4**.

(a) Residential zones

Currently the majority of the Riverhead urban area is zoned 'Residential M' (Medium Intensity) under the Proposed District Plan and 'Medium Intensity Residential Activity Area' (Township Policy Area) under Plan Change 26 to the Operative District Plan. In terms of residential lot size, or development intensity, Variation 60 (which seeks to provide for lower intensity development in existing town areas) also applies. Subject to the provision of wastewater reticulation the minimum lot size is 800 m². Without wastewater reticulation the minimum lot size is 1,500 m².

(b) Business zones

Under the Proposed District Plan, several land parcels on the eastern side of the Coatesville-Riverhead highway are zoned for "Retail Service". The Transitional District Plan identifies these same sites as "Commercial 1".

Both these zones generally provide for a wide range of retail and commercial services and facilities with the principal activity being retailing. There are no industrial zones in the town.

(c) Open Space

An Open Space 1 zoning is generally applied to conservation zones and esplanades. Esplanade reserves around the town are zoned Open Space 1.

An Open Space 2 zone, for passive and informal open space, neighbourhood reserves, public accessways to these reserves and utility reserves, is located to the north of the town.

Open Space 4, for active recreation and multi-use/community facilities, is applied to the Riverhead War Memorial Reserve.

(d) Spatial development

The Operative Plan details the requirements of subdivision layout in relation to urban areas and, together with the Proposed Plan provides useful guidance in terms of the layout of future urban areas.

5.5 Summary

To achieve the outcomes desired by the community, and to be consistent with the statutory framework, Riverhead will need to grow in both geographical size (to 'fill' some of the future urban areas) and in population density.

All relevant strategies, policies and plans are trying to achieve increased urban densities within and around existing centres in order to:

- Provide support for the passenger transport system and reduce vehicular trips.

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

- Provide sufficient urban capacity to meet the growth projections of the Regional Growth Strategy and NWSA, while protecting the natural environment of the Auckland region.
- More efficiently utilise the physical and social infrastructure contained within sub-regional and town centres.
- Assist in development of more active and vital town centres.

6.0 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

A number of matters need to be considered in order to confirm the area for future development, and to identify potential town layouts. These include growth projections to help determine any development staging, and also any physical limitations to growth, or assets that should be protected during future development (e.g. ecology, significant landscape features and open space).

Additionally, infrastructure requirements need to be considered in relation to future development.

6.1 Population Projections

6.1.1 Population Growth

The table below details population growth in the Riverhead Town Area based on census data from 2001 and 2006.

Census date	Usually resident population	Population increase from previous year	Percentage population increase from previous year
1991	885	-	-
1996	960	75	8.5
2001	1,089	129	13
2006	1,350	261*	24

* Note that between 2001 and 2006 census the area unit boundaries between Riverhead Town and Riverhead West appear to have altered (this is evidenced by a decrease in population in the Riverhead West area). Total population growth over both unit areas was 13% for the period.

6.1.2 Growth Projections

Population projections have been calculated by Rodney District Council based on 2001 census data for the Riverhead town. The table below details the RDC growth projections, the actual census information, population projections based on a 13% population growth between census periods (the recent growth rate as determined in the table above) and a maximum growth scenario of a 25 % increase in population every five years.

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

Table 2: Projected Population Growth (based on 2001 census results)

Year	1996 (as per census)	2001 (as per census)	2006	2011	2016	2021
Riverhead town (RDC projection – from 2001)	960	1089	1174 (8%)	1319 (9%)	1464 (7.5%)	1609 (7.5%)
Actual (Riverhead Town census results)	960	1089	1350			
Projection based on 13% (historical growth rate)	960	1089	1231	1391	1572	1776
Projection based on 25% growth (maximum probable)	960	1089	1361	1701	2126	2658

This implies the need to accommodate between 545 and 1297 new residents, or between 202 and 480 new homes (at the NZ average of 2.7 persons / dwelling).

The growth projections are based on the 2001 census data. Actual population growth appears to be above these targets in 2006, suggesting that demand could be greater than forecast, with increased growth pressures on Riverhead and surrounds. Population growth in the Riverhead Town area and surrounds (Riverhead East and Riverhead West), has been around 13% between census periods from 1996 to 2006.

Population growth in the area is, however, affected by related growth in adjacent areas. For example, Waitakere City Council is working to increase employment, retail and servicing in the west. Changes in land uses will require available residential land to service Waitakere City, and Riverhead is located within reasonable commuting distance from employment centres, including Westgate and North Harbour.

Given external pressures, current growth rates and changes in land use in surrounding areas it is apparent that there is a need to both utilise capacity within the existing village and release more land for residential development.

However, capacity for growth is limited by infrastructure, especially provision of wastewater infrastructure. Until infrastructure is provided, the Proposed District Plan limits lot size to 1,500 m² to allow for septic fields. This is resulting in highly inefficient use of land and piecemeal, ad hoc development.

6.1.3 Regional Growth Strategy

The objective of the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is to ensure that growth in the Auckland Region is accommodated in a way that meets the best interests of the inhabitants of the Region and minimises environmental effects. Sector based agreements have been formed to align district wide development with the RGS. The Northern and Western Sectors Agreement (2001) details how allocated growth capacity can be accommodated in appropriate locations, form and sequencing and provides a breakdown of the expected population capacity in the year 2021 for the main towns in Rodney District.

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

Total population capacity for Riverhead is mainly based on the land shown as 'future urban' in the Proposed District Plan being re-zoned as medium density residential (600 m² lot size). The NSWSA shows a population in Riverhead of 2991 and a forecast population at year 2021 of the same. This is more than other RDC population projections based on 7.5%, 13% and 25% growth rates (as indicated above), but is possible given external growth pressures.

For example, the NWSA indicates that while the Rodney District has available capacity for *total* projected populations, both Kumeu/Huapai and Helensville have *less* capacity than populations forecasted in the relevant Structure Plans. Any limits to the available residential land in these centres may create demand for development in Riverhead.

6.2 Land Availability

There is approximately 80 hectares of future urban zoned land to the north and south of Riverhead as shown in the District Plan based on the 1994 Structure Plan. Assuming that a minimum of 40% of this land is required for open space and roading, around 48 hectares is available for development. The table below provides an overview of the number of lots that could be created at a variety of lot sizes, and the population that can be accommodated, based on an average household population of 2.7 people.

Lot size (m²)	Possible lots	Population accommodated
600	800	2160
800	600	1620
1000	480	1512
1200	400	1395
1500	320	864

Table 3: Population capacity of future urban zoned land

Based on population projections and currently available land, and assuming no physical constraints to development, there is no requirement to provide for additional land in addition to the 'future urban' area already indicated in the District Plan. However, to achieve the targets in the RGS, wastewater and other infrastructure must be provided to service development.

6.3 Rate of Growth

Available land area and projected population growth has been detailed above.

Based on these projections, and the existing area zoned as 'urban' and 'future urban', there is sufficient land area to accommodate population growth until at least 2021 (the date used in the Regional Growth Strategy).

Timing of the release of land for future urban development will be dictated to a large degree by wastewater infrastructure.

6.4 Land Characteristics

Physical considerations for future development are considered mainly in relation to the existing urban and future urban zones. However, broader landscape values are also identified as they are relevant to the existing town. It can be seen from **Figure 5** that there are only limited topographic constraints within the study area; also that the town is well defined by physical boundaries (coastal edge and streams) to the East, South and North.

a) Physical limitations to development

The existing town area and future urban zones are defined to the east by the Rangitopuni Creek, and upper Waitemata Harbour. The Coastal Marine Area extends as far as the Coatesville-Riverhead highway bridge.

Creating a northern bio-physical limit to the town is the Wautaiti Stream. Beyond the stream and west of Cobblers Lane is the Riverhead Forest, identified in the Proposed District Plan as an area of significant natural vegetation (moderate rating). The Riverhead Forest is also identified in the Regional Policy Statement as having significant natural heritage values (Appendix B to the RPS). A small part of the significant natural area extends south into the future urban area, possibly providing some limits to development potential in the immediate area.

To the northwest of the future urban area is the Riverhead forest. The Wautaiti Stream provides a boundary between the future urban zoned land and the forest as far south as Duke Street.

The southern edge of the future urban zone is defined by an unnamed inlet and gully/stream feature (rated "Category 1" in the Proposed Auckland Regional Plan), the Huapai Golf course and the Hare Krishna temple site.

To the west there are few physical constraints to growth. The land is relatively flat and is generally agricultural. The Auckland Regional Policy Statement identifies the area as having a land use capability rating of 2, meaning that there are few limitations to production and that the area is suitable for a wide range of agricultural and horticultural purposes.

b) Topography

The existing township area is relatively flat, although there are localised slopes and gullies that may partially constrain development. These gullies are located within the existing development area (shown as Victoria Street on the Proposed District Plan map), and in the southern development area. The gullies have relatively steep banks and although this may not constrain development, preservation of gully features may be desirable in terms of creating an open space network and managing stormwater flows.

Parts of the coastal perimeter of the town are relatively steep, and possibly unstable, potentially requiring setbacks for future development.

Part of the future urban north land along Wautaiti Stream is low-lying and may be subject to flooding. This requires further investigation.

c) Hydrology

An undeveloped gully in the existing Riverhead urban area contains a Category 1 (continually flowing) stream. Part of the undeveloped road network is indicated within this gully feature (Victoria Street). Given the stormwater flow path contained within this gully, and Auckland Regional Council policy to maintain existing streams, completion of the road network in this location is unlikely.

Apart from Wautaiti Stream, no major watercourses have been identified in the northern growth area, although several overland flow paths exist.

The growth area south of Kaipara Portage Road contains a Category 1 stream, which passes under Dinning Road.

The hydrology of the southern catchment is dominated by subsurface drains and groundwater, with few surface flowpaths or tributaries. The main stream extends as a continuous water body from the estuary to around the middle of the development area. Above this point it has been piped since the mid 1960's, although it is still an important surface flowpath during heavy rainfall. Two small, apparently spring-fed tributary streams feed the watercourse. They do not have continual flow or permanent pools, and are unlikely to support indicator biota. These tributaries were classified as Category 2. Development around the Category 1 stream will require riparian setbacks, both to maintain water quality and to provide for stormwater storage. Riparian margin widths of 20 metres are required for future development areas (pursuant to the Proposed Rodney District Plan).

Auckland Regional Council policy is to maintain flow paths and stormwater storage areas. However, due to site topography, the Riverhead catchments are small, limiting storage requirements. Aside from the maintenance of existing stream systems and upgrading culverts as part of development, no particular constraints to development have been identified in relation to stormwater. However, the comprehensive discharge consent, held by Rodney District Council for the Riverhead area, does not include the small area of land north of the existing urban area and east of Cobblers Lane. A variation to the discharge consent would be required from the Auckland Regional Council for development of this portion of land.

The Management Plan associated with the discharge consent identifies flooding in some urban areas. Condition 5 of the consent requires the consent holder to identify and protect overland flow paths capable of safely passing the 1% AEP event.

Where possible, it is preferable that Category 2 streams are also retained as watercourses or flowpaths. Where this occurs they will also require a buffer zone to protect their channels from encroaching activities. While Category 2 streams need not necessarily be planted for ecological purposes, there may be opportunities to integrate planted riparian buffers with recreation reserve planting.

Most new development will be required to meet the ARC standard TP10, which normally requires the construction of stormwater ponds.

d) Landscape significance

While no particular landscape values are associated with the Riverhead town area, the Riverhead Forest is indicated to be an area of significant vegetation, and having significant natural heritage values. The Auckland Regional Policy Statement also identifies the coastal

margin on both sides of the Rangitopuni Creek as having a landscape quality rating of 5. However, Proposed Plan Change 8 to the ARPS removes this notation.

e) Ecology

This report was unable to locate any ecological research within the Riverhead development area. However, vegetation around existing Category 1 streams may be worthy of protection and enhancement as part of the open space network in the town. Assessments to determine the significance of vegetation and maintenance requirements (e.g. weed removal) should be undertaken at time future resource consent applications/vesting of reserves.

Additionally vegetation along the coastal edge should be maintained to minimise erosion and help to maintain water quality.

The Proposed Auckland Regional Plan identifies a small portion of the Wautaiti Stream, adjacent to the future urban zoned land, as being a natural stream management area. This notation is generally due to retention of a significant amount of natural character in the form of indigenous riparian vegetation. The maps are indicative only and reference to the Proposed Regional Plan is needed to determine whether the natural stream management area notation is appropriate. If it is relevant then disturbance or removal of any indigenous vegetation in this area would need to be avoided.

f) Historical and Heritage Values

Riverhead was first surveyed in 1865. Development has never occurred to the density proposed at this time and a number of the proposed roads have never been formed.

Historical features in the town are largely based along the coastal edge/waterfront. The Riverhead Hotel is identified as a heritage building in the Proposed District Plan. The Coastal Plan shows two sites for cultural heritage protection; the Waitemata Flour Mill/Riverhead Paper Mill site near the Riverhead-Coatesville Bridge and a landing (portage) site between paper roads (indicated as Sussex Terrace and Kent Street).

It is possible that other historic and cultural sites exist in the vicinity, particularly along the coastal edge. Where possible, and in the proximity of recognised heritage sites, it would be appropriate to apply an Open Space 1 (Conservation) zoning. Recognition of sites in the District Plan may also be appropriate, particularly for the mill site.

More detailed cultural heritage investigation should be undertaken prior to any redevelopment of northern and southern development sites.

6.5 Infrastructure

Consideration of both the existing and future physical ('hard') and social ('soft') infrastructure is important in determining future development options for the town.

6.5.1 Social Infrastructure

a) Housing Types

The existing housing stock generally consists of individual homes on large lots. Density is based largely on the minimum lot size of 1,500 m²; required in Rodney District where there is no wastewater reticulation.

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

Given changes in housing demands, lifestyle changes and changes in population demographics (generally aging) it is appropriate to provide for a range of housing types. Housing choice was also supported by local residents in previous visioning exercise. Therefore, it would be appropriate to provide for a variety of development intensities within the existing town. However, there is a desire to retain the 'rural village' nature of the town.

b) Business & Employment

There is limited business zoned land in the Riverhead urban area at present. There is, however, considerable employment zoned land in Kumeu / Huapai. The Proposed District Plan provides for a narrow strip of "Retail Service Zone" along the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway. However, the small numbers of businesses in Riverhead are spread throughout the town and not all business zoned lots are currently utilised. There are a number of semi-industrial and storage uses that have existing use rights despite their residential zoning.

There is no industrial zoned land within the town. Within reasonable proximity to the town, however, are two industrial zoned sites; the one hectare Carters site and an additional eight hectare site.

Vision Rodney, (the Rodney District Strategy), details a commitment to providing jobs and opportunity in Rodney District. Currently there are relatively few employment opportunities within Riverhead. An increased population will likely require an increase in retail and commercial service activities within the town. However, the township is in close proximity to larger urban centres and employment opportunities might be more readily provided in these centres. This approach was supported by the local community in the previous visioning exercise and in subsequent consultation.

The 2005 report, *Provision of Industrial and Business Land in Rodney District*, identified a requirement for wider area consideration by Rodney District Council before it would be appropriate to re-zone land for any industrial purpose. This included consideration of the links between Kumeu / Huapai and Waitakere City. Given the expansion in business zoned land at Westgate and in the Hobsonville-Whenuapai Corridor, residential accommodation in Riverhead is likely to be required to support this growth.

On this basis, rezoning land for activities such as manufacturing is considered unnecessary, both from a planning and community perspective. Future needs are best focused on commercial services, offices and retail, and these are best provided for within the existing urban area at this stage. Provision for this has been made in the Structure Plan in the form of the proposed "mixed use" zone.

c) Community Facilities

Community facilities are predominantly located adjacent to the 'town triangle' of open space, aside from the school which is located at the northern end of the existing town.

Community facilities are generally considered adequate. However, growth will bring about additional needs.

Local perception is that the existing Riverhead Primary School is close to capacity. Given the projected population growth, a new school or extensions to the existing school may be required in the near future. However, until a specific needs-analysis has been undertaken to confirm requirements there is no reason to provide for education facilities within the Structure Plan area. The Ministry of Education has been contacted by RDC in this regard.

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

Should new educational facilities be required there is sufficient land adjacent to the town, currently zoned rural. There are few physical constraints to development in this area, although it is outside the limits of the town as currently drawn.

d) Open Space Network / Recreation

Open space within the town is centred on the War Memorial Reserve, which is zoned Open Space 4 (multiuse/community). The Murray Jones Reserve and Riverhead Mill are located to the north of the town.

Various undeveloped residential sites within the existing town boundaries help to create a perceived sense of open space. Small portions of esplanade reserve and undeveloped road reserve exist along parts of the coastline. Areas of undeveloped private land along this coastal strip reinforce the impression of a more extensive esplanade reserve.

In the longer term there may be a need to provide additional sports fields within Riverhead as part of the Council's Open Space Strategy. This will depend on the role Riverhead plays in the provision of regional sports facilities and should be investigated as part of a larger recreational strategy. Any future requirement for playing fields would likely need to be located outside the existing urban area.

Much of the existing open space (bush) within the existing Riverhead town is located on unformed roads and undeveloped residential sections to the southwest. Dependent on ecological value and development potential of these sites, it may be best to maintain and enhance existing vegetation by using some of these areas as part of the open space network. Creation of formal walkway links through this area would help to improve access with the southern development area. Likewise, purchase of coastal areas (particularly between Wharf Road and Arthur Street would help to link public open space with the water, and this was strongly supported throughout the vision for Riverhead and Structure Plan consultation.

Currently there are few formed footpaths within Riverhead. Consultation suggests this is a major concern of residents. As population and traffic increases in Riverhead, provision of safe and efficient walking routes to community facilities (Riverhead Primary School in particular) will become increasingly important. The future development areas will need to link with existing town.

6.5.2 Physical Infrastructure

(a) Roading, transportation & access

One of Riverhead's attractions, according to residents, is its compact size and 'walkability'.

Transportation to other urban areas is based primarily on private vehicle use, although there is limited bus service.

While increases in population will have some impact on the surrounding road network, these are likely to be minor relative to the increasing through traffic levels. However, provision of walking and cycle ways, and future urban roads, need to be considered.

Although transportation studies were not part of this project brief, the key issues identified by the planning team are:

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

- *Walking and cycling access*; the roading network, as shown on District Plan maps, has not been completed. As has been indicated above, it is unlikely that development of all the legal roads would be feasible, cost efficient or desirable. This available public land provides opportunities for creation improved pedestrian access ways and cycle ways. Doing so would also align with the requirements of the Regional Land Transport Strategy.
- *Urban roads*; Future urban land will need to provide for a number of access ways, both onto the existing strategic road network and to the existing town. An increased number of vehicle access points improves permeability, helps to reduce vehicle speed and reduces pressure on existing intersections. Control of intersections would not be necessary until demand required it. However, as development extends south of the existing urban area, lower speed limits would likely be required.
- *Regional roading network*; Current vehicle usage of the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway is estimated at between 6,000 and 10,000 vehicle movements per day. It is possible that four-laning of the highway would be required when vehicle movements reached 20,000 per day. Additional traffic modelling would need to be undertaken to determine when this figure was likely to be achieved. Road upgrading should be considered within the next 10-15 years as increased population in the town, and increased through traffic could require it. There may need to be potential road-widening within the town, consider an alternative route around the proposed town centre, or install appropriate traffic calming measures so as to maintain pedestrian access in the town centre.

In order to accommodate for the additional traffic volumes an Integrated Transport Analysis will be undertaken before final adoption of the Structure Plan. This analysis establishes the hierarchy of the road network, prioritisation of the footpath and pedestrian accessways/cycleways and allowances for any public transport provisions.

- *Public transport*; Transport to and from Riverhead is limited to one bus service/day. An increase in population may support additional services in the future, particularly to provide links to Kumeu/Huapai and to Westgate. The provision of additional bus service and associated facilities (e.g. park and ride), needs to be investigated as part of transportation studies.

(b) Wastewater infrastructure

Wastewater infrastructure continues to be investigated by the Council. This will provide for increased densities and for development of future urban areas. Rodney District Council will be responsible for retro-fitting infrastructure to the existing town. Timing of this is to be determined, as is timing of an extension to the northern development area.

(c) Potable water

Currently there is no reticulated water supply in Riverhead. Rodney District Council is currently calculating demand requirements based on future development.

d) Stormwater management

A stormwater catchment management plan was adopted 1 January 1994 for Riverhead. The provisions of this plan and associated consent conditions were recently reviewed. The

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

management plan provides for the majority of future development areas as indicated in the Proposed District Plan. Minor upgrades of culverts will be required as part of future development, and stormwater flow paths need to be identified and maintained. Stormwater treatment would also be required. However, only limited storage would be necessary due to the small catchment areas.

An area east of Cobblers Lane is not included in the management plan/discharge consent; the discharge consent would need to be revised as part of the development of this area. (see note on Structure Plan diagram).

6.6 Development Staging

Timing of the release of land for future urban development will be dictated primarily by wastewater infrastructure. This remains unresolved.

Staging will also be dependent as to who is funding wastewater. If much of funding is to be through development contributions then a substantial area of land for development and / or residential density will be required to defray the costs.

6.7 Summary – Issues and Opportunities

In considering options for development the following parameters should be applied:

- the existing 'future urban' area remain appropriate
- there is a preference that industrial land be provided in Kumeu/Huapai rather than Riverhead
- future development should improve the walking/cycling network within the existing town and link this to future urban areas
- opportunities that exist for linking open space should be utilised
- provision needs to be made for maintenance of stormwater flow paths and the protection of existing waterways
- no particular requirement for significant open space areas (for active recreation) or for additional educational facilities has been identified as this time. However, further consideration may need to be given to these matters at a sub-regional level
- an enlarged and better defined 'town centre' including provision for offices, retail and commercial services is required.
- consideration should be given to various development densities and housing types to provide for a variety of housing choice
- it is likely that a certain critical mass of new development will be required to financially justify and support the proposed sewage and water systems

7.0 DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

7.1 Guiding Urban Design Principles

In relation to the above points, and in response to feedback from the community, the following urban design principles were used in developing options for future development of the town:

- *Greenfield development to respond to natural landform*
- *Protect streams and their margins from development*
- *Connect road network in existing village and extend the grid pattern into future urban areas*
- *Provide well connected pattern of open space across existing village and future urban areas*
- *Develop connected network of footpaths and walkways*
- *Front reserves and open spaces with public streets*
- *Low impact design of stormwater infrastructure*
- *Avoid eroding the character of existing residential areas*
- *Locate future village centre within walking distance of the greatest population*
- *Locate future village centre to feed off main highway*
- *Provide for good solar orientation of lots*
- *Provide for a range of housing choice/lifestyle while avoiding sprawl or over-development*

7.2 Common Elements

A number of 'constants' or common elements were also identified for all options based on various statutory documents, and the goals of the previous visioning. These include:

- Connecting and extending the road network
- Connecting and extending the open space network
- Protecting streams and their margins

7.3 Growth and Development Options

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate both existing and potential development.

Three generic options were developed to illustrate and 'test' alternative growth scenarios. The three main variables used to generate these options were:

- Density of development (minimum lot size)
- Distribution of density
- Location of town centre

These three options are illustrated in **Figure 8**.

7.3.1 Scenario 1 – Highway Strip

This scenario assures that:

- (a) The minimum lot size for Riverhead is decreased to 600m², and
- (b) A double-sided "main street" is created along both sides of the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway between Arthur Street and Maude Street.

The key advantages of this scenario are that:

- This would make more efficient use of land and provide for longer term growth.
- The costs of providing infrastructure (especially reticulated sewage), would be spread over more dwellings, thereby altering economics of scale.
- The proposed town centre would capitalise on existing shops (for example, the existing Four Square) and commercial zoning.
- A double-sided main street is standard, well-proven town centre typology for settlements such as Riverhead.

The disadvantages of this scenario, as suggested in the consultation panels are that:

- Significant infill development in existing Riverhead could erode the character of the town. Effectively three 800m² lots (2400m²) could be re-subdivided into four 600m² lots.
- There is the potential for the "main street", (unless very carefully designed), to become automobile-oriented strip development (similar to Kumeu), with poor levels of amenity and pedestrian safety and impacts on traffic.

7.3.2 Scenario 2 – Southern Village Centre

This scenario was developed in response to suggestions by some that the future town centre should be closer to potential future development, south of Kaipara Portage Road.

In terms of density, this scenario minimised keeping an 800m² minimum lot area in existing Riverhead (in line with Council Variation 60), but allowing 600m² lots in future development areas. This potential density “transect” would be contrary to usual urban design practice.

The advantages of this scenario would be that:

- New development areas north and south of the existing settlement could be developed more efficiently, with the same benefits as Scenario 1.
- The existing 800m² lot pattern of “old” Riverhead, would help maintain its character: a key objective of many local residents.

The key disadvantages of this scenario included:

- Locating higher density (but still suburban), residential development north and south of the existing settlement, would tend to create abrupt transition with both the existing settlement and the surrounding rural landscape.
- A town centre location that benefited new development to the south, but would be inconvenient to most existing residents, future residents to the north and separated from existing shops.
- A town centre location that would be likely to develop as a single “shopping centre” (similar to that proposed in Waimauku), rather than a true “town centre”.

7.3.3 Scenario 3 – Town Triangle

This scenario, as described in **Figure 8**, envisioned a combination of 800m² lots (existing village); 600m² lots (new development areas); and 1200m² lots (rural edges).

It was proposed to focus the future town centre around the “town triangle” at the intersection of Great North Road and Queen Street.

Finally, this scenario proposed the idea of a new “mixed use” (commercial-residential) zone, fronting onto the Riverhead War Memorial Reserve.

Key advantages of this scenario were that:

- It provided a lower density transition to rural areas to the south and west, while achieving adequate residential yield to meet growth requirements.
- The town centre location built on existing shops and services, commercial zoning and providing the most central location of the three options.

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

- The proposed mixed-use zone, if properly regulated, could accommodate a combination of residential and employment uses that would reinforce the town centre.

8.0 EVALUATION

These alternatives were evaluated relative to the design principles and criteria summarised previously. This evaluation is graphically illustrated in Table 4.

In general, it can be seen that Scenario 3 was ranked most highly against the evaluation criteria by the project team.

In short, this Scenario was judged to:

- Provide the best response to landform and potential protection of stream / coastal margins by providing a “feathered” transitional density of larger lots fronting Wautaiti Stream and the stream forming the southern growth boundary.
- Build on the open space network of Scenarios 1 and 2 by providing a green buffer to protect rural character along the southern entrance to the town and on its southern edge.
- Provide the greatest potential housing choice and (equal to Scenario 2) protect the character of the existing village.
- Provide the best location and configuration of the proposed town centre.

This scenario was then developed into a preliminary Structure Plan Diagram (**Figure 9 - 9** October 2007) as a basis for community consultation.

Table 4 - Evaluation of Structure Plan Options

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Urban Design Principles			
Response to landform	○	●	●
Protect stream margins	○	●	●
Connect road pattern / grid	●	●	●
Open space network	●	●	●
Pedestrian network	(not shown)	(not shown)	(not shown)
Front open spaces with streets	●	●	●
Low impact storm water	(not shown)	(not shown)	(not shown)

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

Protect existing character	○	●	●
Village centre within walking distance of most people	○	○	●
Village centre to feed off highway	●	●	●
Solar orientation	(not shown)	(not shown)	(not shown)
Provide a range of housing choice	○	●	●

○ = Partly meets the principle / criteria.

● = Meets the principle / criteria.

● = Best meets the principle / criteria

9.0 RIVERHEAD OPEN DAY

The draft Structure Plan diagram (**Figure 10**) proposed the following:

- Rezoning of the existing “‘urban north’ and ‘urban south’ areas to allow a range of lots from 600 to 1200m² (minimum).
- Completion of existing ‘paper roads’ and creation of a new secondary roading grid within the urban north and south areas.
- A new town centre focused on the ‘town triangle’ open space.
- A proposed mixed use and industrial zone.
- Provision for comprehensive development on larger sites.
- Development of an interconnected open space system.

A public open day was held in the Riverhead Community Hall on Saturday 13th October, 2007. A series of display panels depicting the proposed Structure Plan for the future development of Riverhead were shown along with additional information detailing the planning process concepts necessary to understand the Plan (See Appendix B).

Additional meetings were held with Rodney Council staff and key stakeholders.

The Open Day attracted an excellent turnout and over 75 people providing completed feedback forms. In addition, people marked up a large plan with specific comments and suggestions for improvement. The feedback forms and written comments were summarised and analysed as a basis for refining the Plan.

This workshop was extremely positive, with strong support expressed for the presentation, communications and process.

A detailed summary of the feedback together with copies of the feedback forms are included as **Appendix A**.

People who provided responses strongly supported the:

- Extent to which the Plan reflects the previously developed vision for Riverhead
- Proposed urban design principles
- Incorporation of design guidelines or controls for future development in Riverhead
- Proposed connections between the town and new developments.
- Proposed open space network

Areas which received only mixed support; or were identified by respondents as needing further work, included:

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

- The extent / location of the proposed mixed use zone as illustrated in the Plan
- Provision for comprehensive developments on larger lots (for example retirement housing)
- The extent to which the proposed Structure Plan avoids overdevelopment
- Helping Riverhead avoid eroding the character of the existing residential areas

Participants were invited to make general comments regarding areas they felt required further clarification, had been overlooked, or represented improvements to the Structure Plan. We have used these comments to compile a list of issues and opportunities. Each issue or opportunity identified in this report received multiple mentions.

The specific strengths of the preliminary plan identified by respondents were:

- Location of the Village Centre
- Connections between the existing town and areas of future development
- Providing an open space network throughout Riverhead
- Locating the Village Centre within walking distance of most residents in Riverhead (this had the highest level of “great” ratings)
- Providing a range of housing and lifestyle choice

The aspects of the Plan that garnered the least level of agreement reflected participants’ written comments, i.e. whether the proposed Plan would avoid creating a feeling of over-development and adequately protect the existing character of residential areas.

While the final Structure Plan was modified to respond to these comments, it is suggested that these concerns can equally well be addressed in the way that future zoning provisions are crafted. For example, ‘discretionary’ or ‘restricted discretionary’ status with assessment criteria area often used by Councils to deal with qualitative issues such as neighbourhood character and development quality.

10.0 FINAL STRUCTURE PLAN

On the 28th February 2008 the Council received an officer report setting out the key issues from the Community Consultation process and resolved to allow submissions to be made on the approved final Draft Structure Plan. The submissions received contain a number of shared themes as well as some site specific concerns but can be broadly categorised as follows:

- What is the most appropriate minimum section size for the existing settlement?
- What is the most appropriate section sizes for the "Future Urban Land" north & south of the existing settlement
- What is the most appropriate location and amount of land allocate for the retail town centre & other commercial services.
- Ensuring the provision of adequate community facilities
- Making the best use of the river frontage
- Creating good linkages within the settlement and to the new 'Future Urban Land'
- Phasing and delivery

Following careful consideration of the submissions it was decided a number of changes should made to the Draft Structure Plan

- The minimum permitted individual section size (excluding the provisions of the Comprehensive Residential Overlay Zone) be 800m2 within the existing settlement of Riverhead as defined on Figure 10 Riverhead Structure Plan.
- Subject to drafting and suitable testing of development controls to address issues such as front, rear and side yards, built form and site coverage, a discretionary 10% tolerance for subdivision of larger sites 800m2 shall be applied throughout the area of the existing settlement as defined on Figure 10 Riverhead Structure Plan.
- The 'Comprehensive Residential Overlay Zone' be retained as an element of the Riverhead Structure Plan but applied to the area of the existing settlement only as defined by Figure 10 Riverhead Structure Plan. The zone will also be subject to detailed development controls to ensure a suitable standard of development is achieved relative to its context within Riverhead.
- The 1,000m2 zones indicated in the Draft Structure Plan be rezoned for 800m2 minimum section size as shown on the revised Figure 10 of the Riverhead Structure Plan.
- A landscape buffer zone is created for the southern boundary (to be detailed in future Design Guidance) of the former 'Future Urban South' land as shown on the revised Figure 10 of the Final Riverhead Structure Plan.
- That the extent of Retail Zoned land be amended in accordance with the revised plan at Figure 10 Riverhead Structure Plan.
- That the land at 2 Alice St be zoned as suitable for residential development as in the Proposed District Plan 2000.

**RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN**

- That the Structure Plan show future 'pocket reserves' at certain locations (to be finalised through detailed design process) adjacent to the river in the case of the former Future Urban North land instead of the continuous river side walkway.

These changes to the Draft Structure Plan will have an effect on the overall development yield for Riverhead. The Table below sets out the estimated yield for the Riverhead Structure Plan Area

Table Showing Revised Development Yield Figures for Structure Plan Area

	Gross Land Area	Gross Area (but excluding local roads, drives etc)	Est Dwelling Yield inc infill where appropriate	Population Yield (@2.7)	Gross Dwellings per Hectare (gross)
Riverhead Existing	95 Hectares	unknown	630*	1,701	6.6
Future Urban South	60 Hectares	41.8 Hectares	574	1,549	9.5
Future Urban North	17 Hectares	11 Hectares	137	370	8
Total	172 Hectares	-	1,341	3,620	8 Av

* These figures do not include any calculation for residential development above shops in the town centre nor any higher than normal yield by developments in the 'Comprehensive Residential Overlay Zone'.

11.0 NEXT STEPS

- Adopt this Structure Plan with the additional technical appendices;
- Consider requiring further geotechnical and archaeological survey and an audit of cultural heritage information prior to any redevelopment of northern and southern development sites;
- Develop character statements and design guidelines/codes to ensure new development within areas adjacent to the existing settlement respects the character of Riverhead and conforms to urban design best practice;
- Draft and notify a Variation to the Proposed District Plan to initiate the formal consultation process and to give effect to the Structure Plan.

RIVERHEAD
STRUCTURE PLAN

ACTION PLAN FOR RIVERHEAD				
Implementation Area	2008	2009	2010	2011 - 12
Write Draft Variation (new rules) for the District Plan to give effect to the Structure Plan	Peer Review Draft Variation incorporating Urban Design guidelines	Notify Draft Variation & invite feedback. Publicly 'notify' Variation	Variation Operative	
Wastewater	Council Decision on preferred wastewater option. Confirm changes to the Long Term Community Plan. Commence 'spot zoning' to allow for use	Confirm 'spot zoning' Submit for Resource Consent	Commence Construction	Construction complete
Transportation	An Integrated Transportation Plan (I.T.P) has been completed. The I.T.P recommendations & other transport related studies have been included in the LTP			
Stormwater	Review and confirm scope of existing discharge consent Identify areas for upgrade Confirm changes to the Long Term Community Plan		Implement infrastructure	
Potable Water	Investigate feasibility of bore water option	Compare bore water with Watercare option	Choose best value water supply option	

12.0 REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Auckland Regional Council (1999) Auckland Regional Policy Statement. 31 August 1999.
- Auckland Regional Council (1999) Auckland Regional Growth Strategy: 2050. *A Vision for Managing Growth in the Auckland Region*. November 1999.
- Auckland Regional Council (2001) Northern & Western Sectors Agreement. Auckland Regional Growth Strategy. *A Joint Agreement on Managing Sub-regional growth to 2021*. September 2001.
- Auckland Regional Council (2005) An ARC Guide to Structure Planning: *A Regional Practice and Resource Guide 2005*. 24 March 2005
- Auckland Regional Transport Authority (2006) Integrated Transport Assessment Guidelines & Supplementary Documents. October 2006.
- Barry Rae Consultants (1994) Centre Plan: Riverhead (*Chapter 8 - Riverhead Structure Plan*) Prepared for Rodney District Council
- Boffa Miskell Ltd (2006) A Vision for Riverhead. Prepared for Riverhead Residents & Ratepayers Association. May 2006.
- Boffa Miskell Ltd (2007) Classification of Stream Permanence in the Proposed Riverhead Growth Area. Prepared for Rodney District Council. May 2007.
- Clough & Associates Ltd (2004) Riverhead Mill Conservation Plan. Prepared for Auckland Regional Council. September 2004.
- Harrison Grierson Consultants Ltd (2007) Riverhead CMP. *Review of Conditions*. Letter to Kim Buchanan, Rodney District Council 7 June 2007.
- Phil McDermott Consultants Ltd (2006) Industrial & Business Land in the Rodney District Review and Update Draft. Prepared for Rodney District Council 8 May 2006.
- Rodney District Council. Rodney Transitional Operative District Plan 1993
- Rodney District Council. Rodney Proposed District Plan 2000
- Rodney District Council (2003) Vision Rodney. *A Strategy for the District's Future*. July 2003.
- Rodney District Council – Structure Plans – A template for self-help by specific communities – October 2006
- Rodney District Council Walking and Cycling for Sustainable Transport 2005 – 2025. Adopted September 2007.
- Rodney District Council Website. Rodney Physical Activity Strategy 2006 – 2009. Site visited 9 October 2007.
- Statistics New Zealand Website. 2001 and 2006 Census. Site visited 9 October 2007.

Appendix A: Feedback forms

Appendix B: Summary of comments/issues and responses