

B8. Toitū te taiwhenua - Coastal environment

Te tere i uta

Te tere i tai

The shoals from the shallows and the shoals from the deep

B8.1. Issues

Auckland's coastal environment is a fundamental part of the region's identity. It has high natural, social and cultural values, and economic uses. It is one of the most desirable places in New Zealand for living and recreation.

Subdivision, use and development within the coastal environment need to be in an appropriate location and of an appropriate form.

Some forms of subdivision, use and development are dependent for their operation on the natural and physical resources of the coastal environment or on their location in the coastal environment, and provision needs to be made for these in appropriate locations.

B8.2. Natural character

B8.2.1. Objectives

- (1) Areas of the coastal environment with outstanding and high natural character are preserved and protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- (2) Subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment are designed, located and managed to preserve the characteristics and qualities that contribute to the natural character of the coastal environment.
- (3) Where practicable, in the coastal environment areas with degraded natural character are restored or rehabilitated and areas of high and outstanding natural character are enhanced.

B8.2.2. Policies

- (1) Identify and evaluate areas of outstanding natural character or high natural character considering the following factors:
 - (a) natural elements, processes and patterns;
 - (b) biophysical, ecological, geological and geomorphological aspects;
 - (c) natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, freshwater springs and surf breaks;
 - (d) the natural movement of water and sediment;
 - (e) the natural darkness of the night sky;
 - (f) places or areas that are wild or scenic; and
 - (g) experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea, and their context or setting.

- (2) Include an area in the coastal environment with outstanding or high natural character in Schedule 8 Outstanding Natural Character and High Natural Character Overlay Schedule.
- (3) Preserve and protect areas of outstanding natural character and high natural character from inappropriate subdivision, use and development by:
 - (a) avoiding adverse effects of activities on natural character in areas of the coastal environment scheduled as outstanding natural character; and
 - (b) avoiding significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment.
- (4) Avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects on natural character of the coastal environment not identified as outstanding natural character and high natural character from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- (5) Enable land use practices and restoration projects that will restore, rehabilitate or enhance natural character in outstanding natural character and high natural character areas in the coastal environment.
- (6) Provide for the use of transferable development rights to avoid inappropriate subdivision, use and development in or on land adjoining to areas of outstanding natural character and high natural character.

B8.3. Subdivision, use and development

B8.3.1. Objectives

- (1) Subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment are located in appropriate places and are of an appropriate form and within appropriate limits, taking into account the range of uses and values of the coastal environment.
- (2) The adverse effects of subdivision, use and development on the values of the coastal environment are avoided, remedied or mitigated.
- (3) The natural and physical resources of the coastal environment are used efficiently and activities that depend on the use of the natural and physical resources of the coastal environment are provided for in appropriate locations.
- (4) Rights to occupy parts of the coastal marine area are generally limited to activities that have a functional need to locate in the coastal marine area, or an operational need making the occupation of the coastal marine area more appropriate than land outside of the coastal marine area.
- (5) Uses and developments that have a need to locate on land above and below the mean high water springs are provided for in an integrated manner.
- (6) Conflicts between activities including reverse sensitivity effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

- (7) In areas potentially affected by coastal hazards, subdivision, use and development avoid increasing the risk of social, environmental and economic harm.

B8.3.2. Policies

Use and development

- (1) Recognise the contribution that use and development of the coastal environment make to the social, economic and cultural well-being of people and communities.
- (2) Avoid or mitigate sprawling or sporadic patterns of subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment by all of the following:
- (a) concentrating subdivision, use and development within areas already characterised by development and where natural character values are already compromised;
 - (b) avoiding urban activities in areas with natural and physical resources that have been scheduled in the Unitary Plan in relation to natural heritage, Mana Whenua, natural resources, coastal, historic heritage and special character; and
 - (c) ensuring that subdivision, use or development involving land above and below the mean high water springs can provide for any associated facilities or infrastructure in an integrated manner.
- (3) Provide for use and development in the coastal marine area that:
- (a) have a functional need which requires the use of the natural and physical resources of the coastal marine area;
 - (b) are for the public benefit or public recreation that cannot practicably be located outside the coastal marine area;
 - (c) have an operational need making a location in the coastal marine area appropriate and that cannot practicably be located outside the coastal marine area; or
 - (d) enable the use of the coastal marine area by Mana Whenua for Māori cultural activities and customary uses.
- (4) Require subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of activities above and below the mean high water springs, including the effects on existing uses and on the coastal receiving environment.
- (5) Adopt a precautionary approach towards proposed activities whose effects on the coastal environment are uncertain, unknown or little understood, but could be significantly adverse.

- (6) Consider the purposes for which land or water in the coastal environment is held or managed under any enactment for conservation or protection purposes and:
- (a) avoid adverse effects that are significant in relation to those purposes; and
 - (b) avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects in relation to those purposes.
- (7) Set back development from the coastal marine area, where practicable, to protect the natural character and amenity values of the coastal environment.

Ports

- (8) Recognise the national and regional significance of the Auckland ports and the need for them to be located within the coastal environment by all of the following:
- (a) enabling the efficient and safe operation of the ports and their connection with other transport modes;
 - (b) enabling the safe navigation and berthing of vessels, including by dredging; and
 - (c) avoiding or mitigating the adverse effects of activities that may compromise efficient and safe port operations.

Reclamation

- (9) Avoid reclamation of land in the coastal marine area unless all of the following apply:
- (a) land outside the coastal marine area is not available for the proposed activity;
 - (b) the activity which requires reclamation can only occur in or adjacent to the coastal marine area;
 - (c) there are no practicable alternative methods of providing for the activity; and
 - (d) the reclamation will provide significant regional or national benefit.

Aquaculture

- (10) Provide for aquaculture activities in appropriate places and forms and within appropriate limits in the coastal environment, taking into account all of the following:
- (a) the quality of water required for the aquaculture activity;
 - (b) land-based facilities and infrastructure required to support the operation of aquaculture activities; and

(c) the potential social, economic and cultural benefits associated with the operation and development of aquaculture activities.

(11) Recognise that the extraction of minerals and renewable marine energy generation can have social and economic benefits and can be appropriate activities in the coastal environment.

B8.4. Public access and open space

B8.4.1. Objectives

- (1) Public access to and along the coastal marine area is maintained and enhanced, except where it is appropriate to restrict that access, in a manner that is sensitive to the use and values of an area.
- (2) Public access is restricted only where necessary to ensure health or safety, for security reasons, for the efficient and safe operation of activities, or to protect the value of areas that are sensitive to disturbance.
- (3) The open space, recreation and amenity values of the coastal environment are maintained or enhanced, including through the provision of public facilities in appropriate locations.

B8.4.2. Policies

- (1) Subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment must, where practicable, do all of the following:
 - (a) maintain and where possible enhance public access to and along the coastal marine area, including through the provision of esplanade reserves and strips;
 - (b) be designed and located to minimise impacts on public use of and access to and along the coastal marine area;
 - (c) be set back from the coastal marine area to protect public open space values and access; and
 - (d) take into account the likely impact of coastal processes and climate change, and be set back sufficiently to not compromise the ability of future generations to have access to and along the coast.
- (2) Provide for a range of open space and recreational use of the coastal environment by doing all of the following:
 - (a) identifying areas for recreational use, including land-based facilities for those uses, where this ensures the efficient use of the coastal environment;
 - (b) enabling the provision of facilities in appropriate locations that enhance public access and amenity values;
 - (c) enabling Māori cultural activities and customary use; and

- (d) managing uses to avoid conflicts and mitigate risks.
- (3) Restrict public access to and along the coastal marine area, particularly walking access, only where it is necessary to do any of the following:
 - (a) protect public health and safety;
 - (b) provide for defence, port or airport purposes;
 - (c) protect areas with natural and physical resources that have been scheduled in the Unitary Plan in relation to natural heritage, Mana Whenua, natural resources, coastal, historic heritage and special character;
 - (d) protect threatened indigenous species;
 - (e) protect dunes, estuaries and other sensitive natural areas or habitats;
 - (f) have a level of security necessary to carry out an activity or function that has been established or provided for;
 - (g) provide for exclusive use of an area to carry out an activity granted an occupation consent under section 12 of the Resource Management Act 1991;
 - (h) enable a temporary activity or special event; or
 - (i) in other exceptional circumstances sufficient to justify the restriction.

B8.5. Managing the Hauraki Gulf/Te Moana Nui o Toi/Tikapa Moana

B8.5.1. Objectives

- (1) The management of the Hauraki Gulf gives effect to sections 7 and 8 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000.
- (2) Use and development supports the social and economic well-being of the resident communities of Waiheke and Great Barrier islands, while maintaining or, where appropriate, enhancing the natural and physical resources of the islands.
- (3) Economic well-being is enabled from the use of the Hauraki Gulf's natural and physical resources without resulting in further degradation of environmental quality or adversely affecting the life-supporting capacity of marine ecosystems.

B8.5.2. Policies

Integrated management

- (1) Encourage and support the restoration and enhancement of the Hauraki Gulf's ecosystems, its islands and catchments.

- (2) Require the integrated management of use and development in the catchments, islands, and waters of the Hauraki Gulf to ensure that the ecological values and life-supporting capacity of the Hauraki Gulf are protected, and where appropriate enhanced.
- (3) Require applications for use and development to be assessed in terms of the cumulative effect on the ecological and amenity values of the Hauraki Gulf, rather than on an area-specific or case-by-case basis.
- (4) Maintain and enhance the values of the islands in the Hauraki Gulf.
- (5) Avoid use and development that will compromise the natural character, landscape, conservation and biodiversity values of the islands, particularly in areas with natural and physical resources that have been scheduled in the Unitary Plan in relation to natural heritage, Mana Whenua, natural resources, coastal, historic heritage and special character.
- (6) Promote the restoration and rehabilitation of natural character values of the islands of the Hauraki Gulf.
- (7) Ensure that use and development of the area adjoining conservation islands, regional parks or Department of Conservation land, does not adversely affect their scientific, natural or recreational values.
- (8) Enhance opportunities for educational and recreational activities on the islands of the Hauraki Gulf if they are consistent with protecting natural and physical resources, particularly in areas where natural and physical resources have been scheduled in the Unitary Plan in relation to natural heritage, Mana Whenua, natural resources, coastal, historic heritage and special character.
- (9) Identify and protect areas or habitats, particularly those unique to the Hauraki Gulf, that are:
 - (a) significant to the ecological and biodiversity values of the Hauraki Gulf;
and
 - (b) vulnerable to modification.
- (10) Work with agencies and stakeholders to establish an ecological bottom line, or agreed target, for managing the Hauraki Gulf's natural and physical resources which will do all of the following:
 - (a) provide greater certainty in sustaining the Hauraki Gulf's ongoing life-supporting capacity and ecosystem services;
 - (b) assist in avoiding incremental and ongoing degradation;
 - (c) co-ordinate cross-jurisdictional integrated management and effort to achieve agreed outcomes;
 - (d) better measure the success of protection and enhancement initiatives;
 - (e) assist in establishing a baseline for monitoring changes;

- (f) enable better evaluation of the social and economic cost-benefits of management; and
- (g) provide an expanded green-blue network linking restored island and mainland sanctuaries with protected, regenerating marine areas where the ecological health and productivity of the marine area will be enhanced.

Providing for the relationship of Mana Whenua with the Hauraki Gulf

- (11) Work in partnership with Mana Whenua to protect and enhance culturally important environmental resources and values of the Hauraki Gulf that are important to their traditional, cultural and spiritual relationship with the Hauraki Gulf.
- (12) Incorporate mātauranga Māori with western knowledge in establishing management objectives for the Hauraki Gulf.
- (13) Require management and decision-making to take into account the historical, cultural and spiritual relationship of Mana Whenua with the Hauraki Gulf, and the ongoing capacity to sustain these relationships.

Maintaining and enhancing social, cultural and recreation values

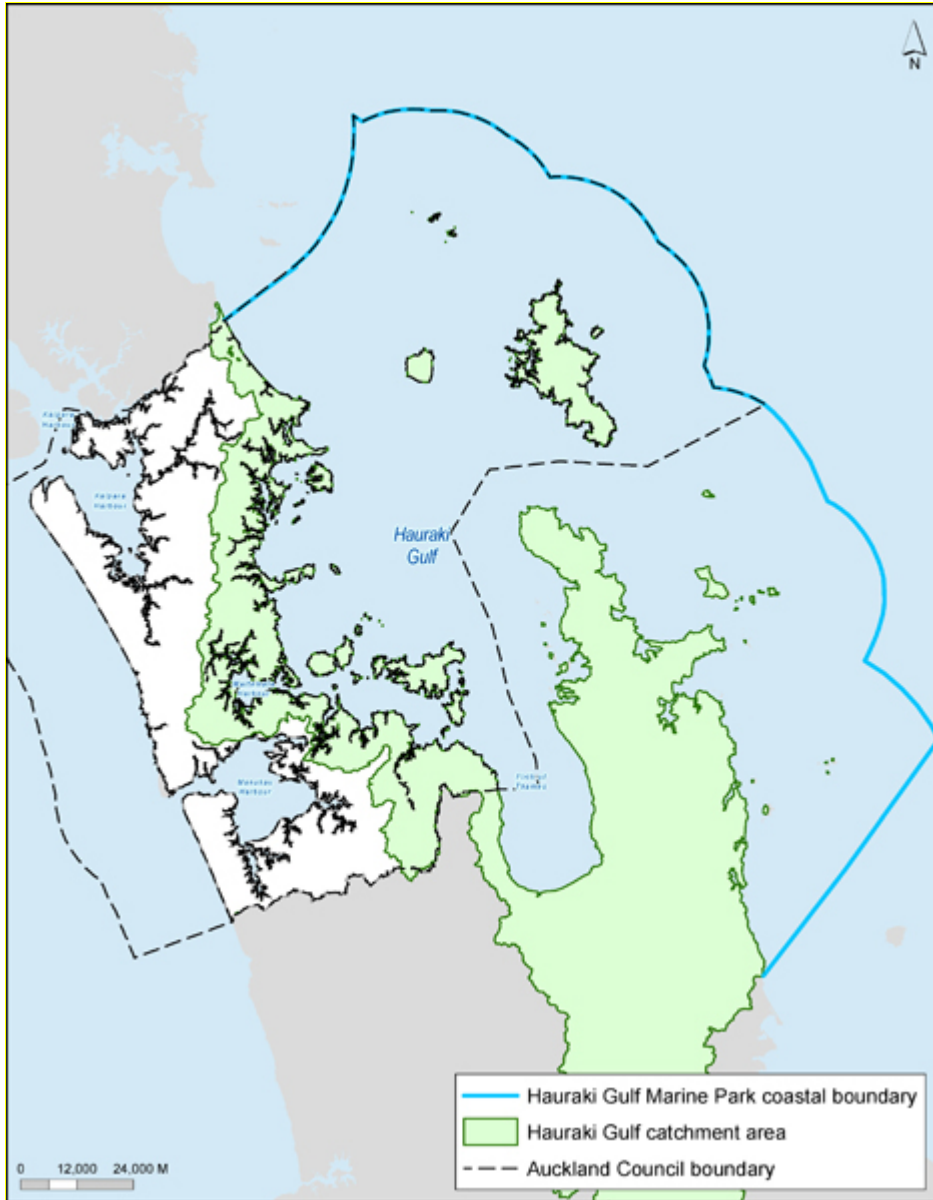
- (14) Identify and protect the natural and physical resources that have important cultural and historic associations for people and communities in and around the Hauraki Gulf.
- (15) Identify, maintain, and where appropriate enhance, areas of high recreational use within the Hauraki Gulf by managing water quality, development and potentially conflicting uses so as not to compromise the particular values or qualities of these areas that add to their recreational value.
- (16) Encourage the strategic provision of infrastructure and facilities to enhance public access and recreational use and enjoyment of the Hauraki Gulf.

Providing for the use of natural and physical resources, and for economic activities

- (17) Provide for commercial activities in the Hauraki Gulf and its catchments while ensuring that the impacts of use, and any future expansion of use and development, do not result in further degradation or net loss of sensitive marine ecosystems.
- (18) Encourage the strategic provision of infrastructure and facilities that support economic opportunities for the resident communities of Waiheke and Great Barrier islands.
- (19) Promote economic development opportunities that complement the unique values of the islands and the Hauraki Gulf.
- (20) Promote the national significance of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park by:
 - (a) supporting the development of Auckland's waterfront as the gateway to the Hauraki Gulf; and

(b) promoting the Hauraki Gulf as a visitor destination.

Figure 8.5.3.1: Hauraki Gulf Marine Park



B8.6. Explanation and principal reasons for adoption

The coastal environment includes the coastal marine area, islands within the coastal marine area and the area landward of the line of mean high water springs determined by the natural and physical elements, features and processes associated with the coast, including vegetation, landscape, landforms, coastal processes and the other matters included in Policy 1(2) of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010. (Refer Figure 1).

Coastal areas all have their own distinct qualities, values and uses and share a rich history of Māori and European settlement. The coast is one of the earliest places of human settlement in New Zealand and continues to play a fundamental role in the character and identity of Auckland. The coastal environment and the resources of the coastal marine area comprise some of the most important taonga to Mana Whenua, who have a traditional and on-going cultural relationship with the coast.

Auckland's richly varied coastal environment is a finite resource with high environmental, social, economic and cultural values. Its coasts and harbours are among its most highly valued natural features. It is the location of New Zealand's largest commercial port and international airport. The marine industry, transport and aquaculture activities all contribute to social and economic well-being. The coastal environment also contains potentially significant renewable energy resources. It is a highly desirable location for often competing residential, commercial, industrial and recreational uses of both land and water. These demands will increase as Auckland grows.

The coastal marine area also provides a range of ecosystem services, including providing food, assimilating discharges from land into coastal waters and enabling a range of coastal uses that support the economic well-being of people and communities. Land-based activities have a significant effect on the health of the marine environment. Sediment, contaminants and litter that are carried by waterways or pipes into the sea affect water quality and the ecological health of the coast, and are major environmental issues.

The many uses made of the coast have to be managed to ensure that they do not threaten the life-supporting capacity of the marine environment, as a healthy marine environment is fundamental to many of the activities and values of the coast. There is a need to ensure integrated management of activities on both the land and sea to ensure the ecosystem services and values of the coastal environment are maintained.

The importance of the coastal environment is reflected in the statutory resource management framework, particularly as identified in sections 6 and 7 of the Resource Management Act 1991 and as set out in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010. The outstanding quality and diversity of the natural resources of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands has been recognised through their inclusion in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. In addition, section 10 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 requires that the national significance and management directives in section 7 and 8 of that Act be treated as a New Zealand coastal policy statement for the Hauraki Gulf and elevates the inter-relationship between the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments, and the ability of the

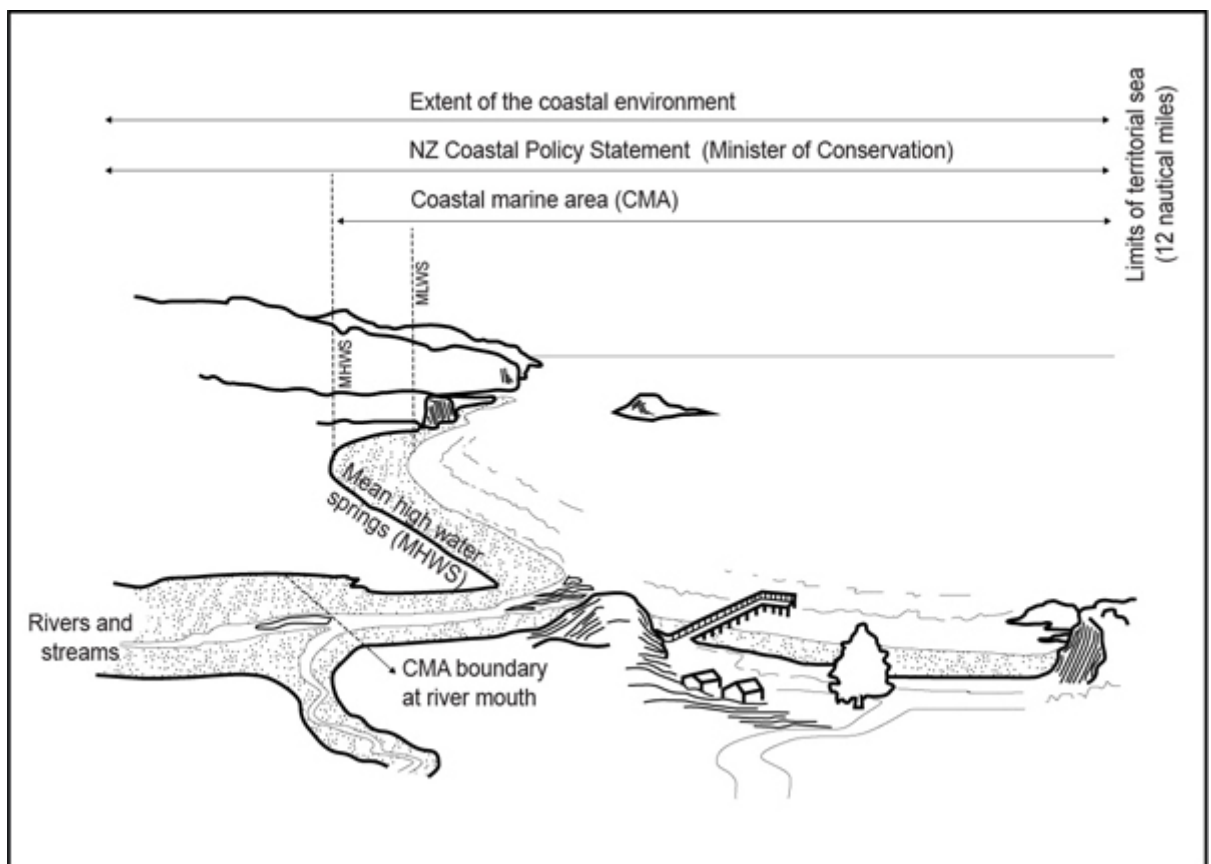
Gulf to sustain the life-supporting capacity of the environment of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands, to matters of national significance.

Auckland's coastal environment is used for a range of recreation activities and valued as an open space resource. There is a public expectation of rights of use and access to and along the coast as recognised and provided for in the Resource Management Act 1991 and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 and under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011. However there can be needs to restrict public access in certain circumstances, including for safety, security and biosecurity reasons, or to enable the carrying out of activities, such as port or marine industry.

In addition to the objectives and policies in this section, the values of the coastal environment are recognised and provided for in the objectives and policies of the regional policy statement relating to:

- natural heritage (section B4)
- built heritage and character (section B5)
- natural resources (section B7)
- Mana Whenua (section B6)

Figure 1: Extent of the coastal environment



Natural character

Outstanding natural character areas are the iconic, scenic and wilderness areas where the sights, features, and sounds are those of nature and where human-made influences are absent or minor and subservient in the context of the natural environment. These areas provide an important touchstone with nature for an increasingly urbanised population. Areas of high natural character often include rural land used for primary production. Although these areas may lack the same wilderness value as outstanding areas, there is still a significant predominance of naturalness.

Areas of outstanding or high natural character are an increasingly scarce and valuable resource. Auckland's growing population, together with the desire to live near the coast, means that land in the coastal environment is highly valued. It is important that future use and development of largely unmodified freshwater areas is managed to ensure their values are retained for the enjoyment of future generations.

Section 6(a) of the Resource Management Act 1991 requires the Unitary Plan to recognise and provide for the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and the protection of it from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. To do that, policy 13 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 directs that areas with high and outstanding natural character value be identified, that the adverse effects of activities on the natural character of these areas be avoided and that in all other areas significant adverse effects of activities on natural character be avoided.

Land within the coastal environment, including some areas identified as having high natural character, is often used for primary production purposes. The ongoing use of this land for such activities is enabled. Changes that would affect the values of these areas need to be managed to ensure these values are retained in the long-term.

Highly modified areas of the coastal environment still contain elements or features that contribute to their natural character. This may be vegetation, a significant landform, or in areas such as the waterfront, tidal movement and sights and sounds of the sea. Use and development in such areas should avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other effects on the elements or features that contribute to the natural character value of that area.

Subdivision, use and development

The objectives and policies recognise that the coastal environment is a finite resource with a range of values that need to be provided for. As Auckland grows the coastal environment is under increasing pressure for use and development and its natural and physical resources must be used efficiently to ensure it is able to sustain the needs of future generations.

The objectives and policies provide guidance to ensure that subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment is appropriate by:

- ensuring it is located in appropriate areas, taking into account the values identified and the strategic direction for managing subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment, in addition to the values of the coastal environment that need to be considered in other parts of the plan;

- recognising that some forms of use and development rely on the use of the natural and physical resources of the coastal environment, for example renewable energy generation, and that this should be provided for in appropriate locations;
- recognising that the coastal marine area is a limited and highly valued public resource, and that use, development in the coastal marine area should be for activities that have a functional need to be undertaken below mean high water springs and cannot be undertaken on land such as wharves, jetties, aquaculture and moorings;
- providing for activities associated with the on-going operation of infrastructure and existing activities in the coastal marine area, including Auckland's largest commercial port and airport recognising the social and economic benefit they provide, subject to managing the adverse effects;
- requiring the impacts of land use activities on the coastal marine area be taken into account, including impacts on water quality, and that the effects on established coastal marine area activities like aquaculture, port activities, and recreational use; and
- requiring that both the landward and seaward aspects of use and development be considered in an integrated manner, for example the parking and access on land that may be required as part of providing for an activity in the coastal marine area.

Subdivision, use and development, including redevelopment, needs to take into account the risk of being affected by coastal hazards, including the effects of climate change, and avoid increasing the future risk of social, environmental and economic harm.

Public access and open space

Both the Resource Management Act 1991 (section 6(d)) and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (Policies 18 and 19) recognise the national significance of maintaining and providing public access, particularly walking access, to and along the coast, and to recognise the significant open space values of the coast.

The coast is one of Auckland's most highly used and valued open space areas. It is used for a range of recreational activities and will be subject to increasing pressure as Auckland grows. To meet these growing needs it will be necessary to work towards linking walking access around the coast and to provide facilities such as boardwalks and boat ramps in appropriate locations. In parts of the coast it may be appropriate to identify areas for a particular recreational activity, in order to make the most efficient use of coastal space and to avoid conflicts between activities.

Public access needs to be restricted in some circumstances to ensure public health and safety, enable the safe use and operation of activities provided for in the coastal marine area, and to protect sensitive areas. This is consistent with Policy 19 (3) of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010.

The objectives and policies recognise that:

- subdivision, use and development can have a significant impact on public open space and access. They may enhance access through the provision of esplanade reserves and open space areas, or the design and form of development can limit or detract from open space value and public access;
- the likely future impact of coastal erosion and sea level change needs to be taken into account in considering the appropriate width of reserves and setbacks from the coastal edge, particularly for new greenfield development. There is otherwise a risk that coastal reserves will erode and access will be lost, or that foreshore protection works will be required, if they are to be retained in the long term;
- the provision of facilities, including boardwalks, boat ramps and pontoons can considerably enhance public access and amenity values. Facilities should be enabled in locations where there is high recreational use and it would enhance public access and use of the coast;
- as Auckland grows and there is greater intensification and less private open space it will be important to ensure that there continue to be areas that people can still 'escape' the city and experience wilderness values. These areas need to be managed to ensure changes to access, including car-parking, or changing nature of access (e.g. low-impact walking tracks to formed accessways or vehicle access) do not result in losing the wilderness experience these areas are valued for; and
- restrictions on public access to or along the coastal marine area may need to be limited where it is necessary to protect public health and safety or the values of areas sensitive to disturbance. Restrictions may also be necessary to enable the efficient operation of activities undertaken in the coastal environment, including port, airport and marine industry activities, including access restrictions necessary for customs, security and biosecurity requirements. Some activities in the coastal marine area are granted rights of occupation under section 12 (2) of the Resource Management Act 1991, for example aquaculture or moorings, which require public access to be restricted or limited in parts of the coastal marine area.

Managing the Hauraki Gulf/Te Moana Nui o Toi/Tikapa Moana

The provisions of section 55 of the Resource Management Act 1991 apply as though sections 7 and 8 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 were a national policy statement and a regional council or a territorial authority must take action in accordance with that section.

The objectives and policies provide guidance on giving effect to the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 by:

- recognising the need to integrate the management of the natural, historic, and physical resources of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments;
- promoting restoration efforts on islands and maintaining the values of conservation islands;

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- supporting protection of areas of significant ecological value, including linkages between land and sea;
- promoting use and development that provides for social and economic opportunities while avoiding further degradation of the marine environment of the Gulf;
- recognising the significance of the open space, recreation and heritage values of the Gulf;
- working with Mana Whenua in managing the Gulf; and
- recognising the need for collaboration in achieving the outcome sought for the Gulf as management of the catchments, marine area and islands is split between different councils and agencies and controlled under different legislation.