

# Contents

## Rural Development

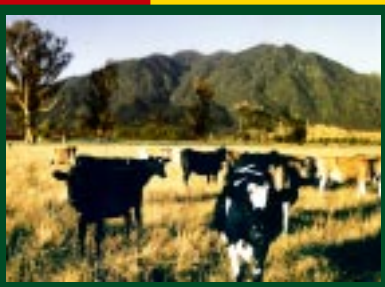
|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>OBJECTIVES AND VISIONS</b>              | <b>2</b> |
| <b>OVERVIEW</b>                            | <b>2</b> |
| <b>PRESSURES</b>                           | <b>3</b> |
| <b>KEY ISSUES</b>                          | <b>3</b> |
| <b>STATE</b>                               | <b>4</b> |
| Subdivision in the rural zone              |          |
| Development on classes I, II and III soils |          |
| <b>RESPONSE</b>                            | <b>4</b> |
| <b>CASE STUDY</b>                          | <b>6</b> |
| Karapiro Heights                           |          |

# Rural Development

## OBJECTIVES AND VISIONS

To manage all activities in a manner that maintains and enhances the District's good quality soils and to ensure that the productive capability of rural land is not compromised.

To limit fragmentation of titles and the establishment of houses on high quality soils so as to conserve the land for the use of future generations.



## OVERVIEW

### MAINTENANCE OF PRODUCTIVE CAPABILITY

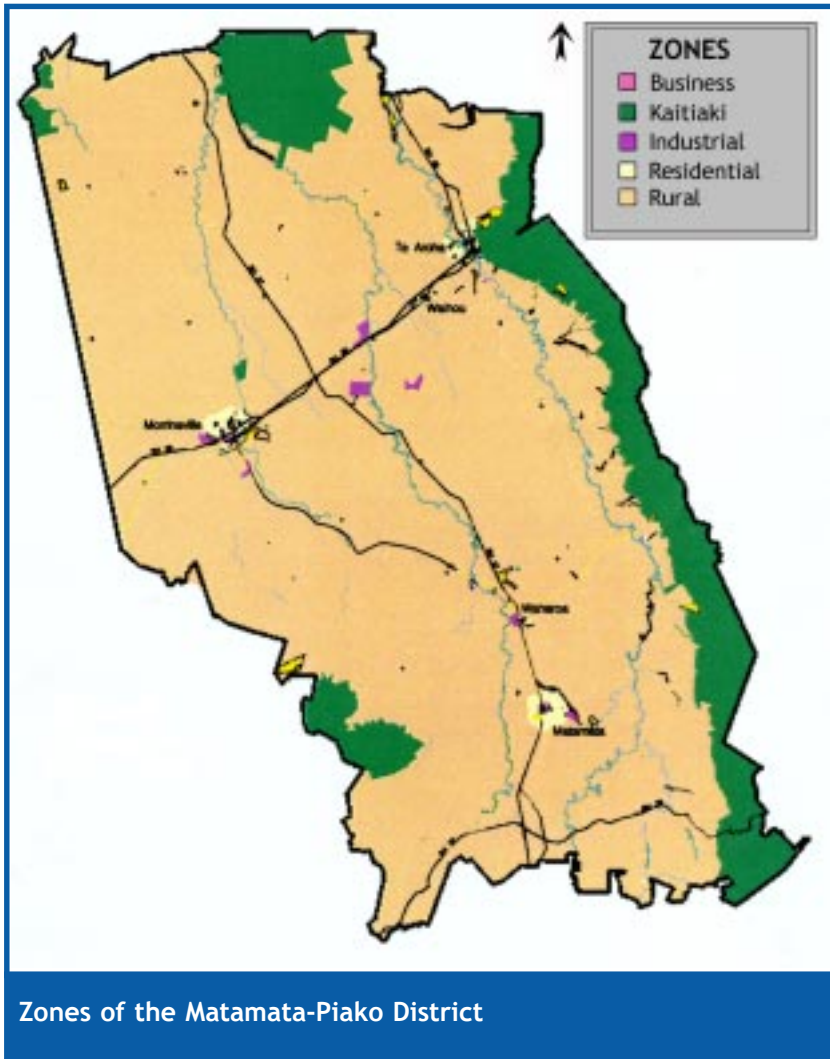
The area of highly productive soils available for farming and horticulture is decreasing, however much of the development is occurring on land that has been identified for development. There are 116,278 ha of class I, II and III soils in the district for productive uses.



### LIMITATION OF RURAL LAND FRAGMENTATION

There is subdivision occurring in the rural area. Lots are being created for residential purposes.





## Pressures

The demand for residential properties in rural settings and life style blocks can create considerable pressure on rural land, particularly land close to townships. Areas of rural land are purchased and subdivided into smaller lots for residential and lifestyle purposes.

The diversification and intensification of activities in the rural area also means that rural land is being divided into smaller and smaller lots. Land fragmentation can result in a shortage of properties of suitable size for viable farming and horticultural units in the future. In addition, the adverse effects of farming activities are becoming more recognised due to rural/residential development in rural areas.

## KEY ISSUES

- Demand for residential properties in rural settings and lifestyle blocks resulting in development of smaller lots of high quality rural land.
- Diversification and intensification of use of rural land resulting in land fragmentation and creation of non-viable farming lots.

**T**he Matamata-Piako District has a finite resource of good quality rural land. The district's economy relies on highly productive soils for horticulture and rural pasture land for grazing of dairy herds and cattle. The loss of high quality rural land to residential development could in the future compromise the ability of the district to support the extensive farming and horticultural industry on which much of the community relies.

The rural environment is important to the district for economic, cultural and social reasons, and it is important that this precious resource be managed appropriately to conserve the land for the use of future generations. Council is therefore encouraging subdivision on the poorer quality soils throughout the district.

---

## State

### Subdivision in the rural zone

The Matamata-Piako District is made up of six zones; Rural, Residential, Rural Residential (still proposed), Industrial, Business and Kaitiaki (Conservation). The rural zone consists of large areas of productive soils and pasture. Traditionally these areas have been used for dairy farming, cattle farming, horticulture and other primary production activities. With an increase in the demand for land for residential and other non-productive uses, particularly in a rural setting, some of this highly productive rural land has been developed into smaller lots making them unviable as farming units.

Currently 116,278 ha of land is zoned rural with potential for productive use. This comprises 66% of the total area of the district. It is important that this land is not fragmented by development for housing or other non-productive uses. Council controls subdivision and development in the rural zone to prevent this from occurring.

The District Plan has rules controlling development in the rural area. These rules are designed to discourage the development of smaller lots (less than 8ha) in the rural zone by requiring resource

| Year    | Subdivisions of lots below 8 Ha |                   | Subdivisions of lots below 1 Ha |                   |
|---------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
|         | Rural                           | Rural Residential | Rural                           | Rural Residential |
| 1996/97 | 65                              | 2                 | 28                              | 1                 |
| 1997/98 | 83                              | 9                 | 30                              | 9                 |

Subdivision of land in the Rural and Rural Residential Zones of the Matamata-Piako District

---

consent to be obtained for subdivision for lots below this size. In 1997/98 30 new lots of 1 hectare or less were created in the rural zone and 9 in the rural residential zone. The Table above summarises the rural and rural residential subdivisions created in the District. There was only one resource consent for subdivision in the rural zone declined in 1998.

### Development on classes I, II and III soils

Class I, II and III soils are very fertile and highly productive for farming and horticulture. There are 116,278 ha, or 66%, of the district is zoned rural and is of class I, II or III soils. These soils are an important resource for the district farming and horticultural activities and support the District's wider community.

In 1997/98 there were 131 new lots of less than 8 ha created on class I, II and III soils in the rural and rural residential zone. The average lot size for properties in the rural zone is 18ha. There were

no applications for resource consents for non-productive activities on class I, II and III soils in 1998.

The figures indicate that subdivision and development is occurring in the rural and rural residential areas in the District. This means that areas of the highly productive class I, II and III soils are being divided up into small lots for housing development.

---

## Response

Council responds in a number of ways to the pressures on rural development. This includes requiring resource consents for subdivision resulting in the creation of lots of less than 8ha in the rural area. In addition Council continues to monitor development in the rural area to determine the extent of residential development.

In addition to the Council's response, Environment Waikato encourages the maintenance of the quality of the land by promoting good

soil management practices to maintain the health of the land within the Region. Care groups also operate throughout the region and work on a range of projects and issues, many related to the protection and enhancement of soil health.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

---

If you wish to live in the country consider buying land on the lower slopes of the Kaimai Ranges or Western Ranges of the District where the poorer quality soils are found.



## CASE STUDY

# Karapiro Heights

---

The Karapiro Heights Rural-Residential subdivision is an example of the creation of lifestyle lots on the poorer quality soils of the District. The landowners took an alternative approach to the design of their proposed subdivision. Rather than trying to fit the lots into the “controlled activity” criteria in the District Plan, the philosophy adopted was based on the Resource Management Act provisions. This involved evaluating the properties natural and physical characteristics and designing lots which minimised environmental effects, while providing the optimum use of the diverse land resource.

This approach meant that the proposed subdivision became a non-complying activity in respect of the District Plan and required public notification. The physical limitations of the property included:

- Two plateau areas separated by a steep bank
- Significant native bush stands
- A line of borrow pits in an east west direction across the southern side of the block and an historic pa site.



## CASE STUDY

The lots were designed to protect these physical attributes of the land, while enabling the creation of lots suitably sized for farming, horticulture or any other intensive land use including a building platform for a dwelling. The applicant's proposed subdivision was designed to provide 12 lots of varying sizes with extensive views over Lake Karapiro and its environments, at the same time as preserving the natural features of the land.

The bush stands and archaeological sites (pa and borrow sites) have been specifically included as part of the subdivision consent conditions so that the new landowners and any future landowners will be aware of their obligations to protect these sites.

