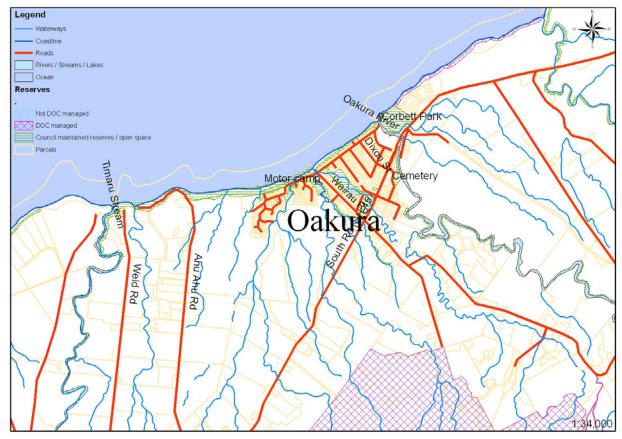## 7.8   Oakura

Oakura is a rapidly growing and popular coastal community to the south of New Plymouth city. Oakura Beach is a very popular recreation area and the camping ground is popular for both locals and visitors. The Oakura local area has generally been defined as being from just south of Otupoto Stream to St Andrews Redoubt in the north.

Oakura had a population of around 1,200 residents in 2001. In recent years there has been ongoing demand and growth in new dwellings (e.g. on average 10 new dwelling consents per year or 2% annual growth). Growth appears to be dominated by rural-residential development, particularly along roads to the coast and by urban renewal. The wastewater infrastructure will be expanded to Oakura in 2005-07.

There are a large number of reserves providing a range of activities including a campground at Oakura. The Reserves Management Plan for Oakura provides for both passive and active recreation. This includes open space of sufficient size to allow large organised public events to be accommodated. Recreation on the coast is inherent to Oakura's sense of place.

Legend

- Waterways
- Coastline
- Roads
- Rivers / Streams / Lakes
- Ocean

Reserves

- Not DOC managed
- DOC managed
- Council maintained reserves / open space
- Parcels

1:34,000

Oakura vision

"…where the sun lingers… to be a vibrant and distinct community celebrating links from mountain to sea"

(Community Workshop Vision)

7.8.1 Challenges and opportunities facing Oakura

- There is demand for residential growth within Oakura and the surrounding areas. At the same time there is a desire to retain the lifestyle values and community identity. The desire to retain distinctiveness was expressed in terms of a retaining a green belt around Oakura and maintaining an atmosphere of relaxed holiday living .

- The community are concerned that the location of future infrastructure within the coastal environment could impact on the values important to the community.

- There is demand for tourism within Oakura, which may impact on natural, cultural and social values.

- There are recreational activities that are impacting on the Oakura coastal environment, particularly from day visitors.

- The community consider that there are significant cultural sites that are not currently mapped in the District Plan.

- There is concern over the impacts of coastal erosion on community assets and infrastructure and as more development in Oakura occurs the risk to the community is likely to increase.

7.8.2 Goals for Oakura - what we want to achieve

OAG1 – Provide for growth within Oakura and environs in a manner that maintains and enhances the community's 'sense of place' as a vibrant village.

OAG2 – Encourage ecotourism within the coastal environment.

OAG3 – Plan and provide for new coastal infrastructure in a manner that is consistent with the desired nature, scale and form of Oakura.

OAG4 – Appropriately plan and manage use and provision of recreational facilities and open space to concentrate areas of high use in areas of minimal potential for environmental impact, while conserving natural values, etc.

OAG5 –Encourage a wider appreciation of Māori cultural heritage values within the coastal environment of Oakura.

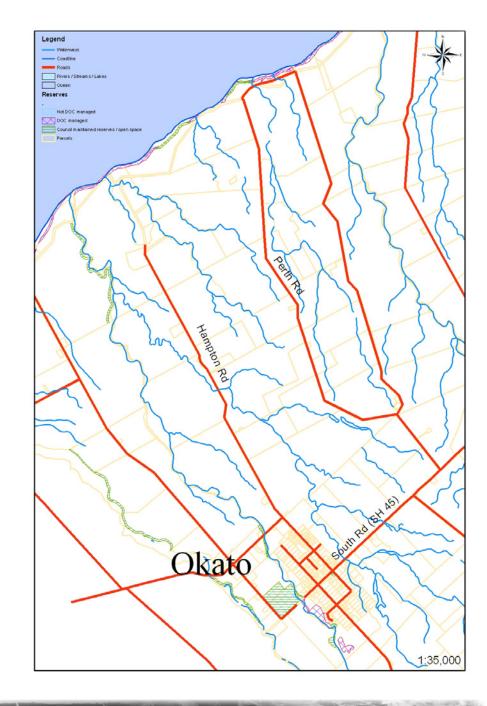Oakura Beach

7.8.3 Implementation for Oakura - what we aim to do

Actions for Oakura	Type	Lead (support)	Priority
OAA1 Prepare and adopt a structure plan for Oakura to guide future development. - Structure planning will consider land use, areas for residential growth, development form and infrastructure (prior to the planned wastewater connection).	P	NPDC	U
OAA2 Work with Ngati Tairi to identify and list sites and areas of significance and establish protocol for their protection and, where appropriate managed use. - Determine the best way to protect and/or promote the important cultural sites.	I/C	NPDC & Ngati Tairi	H
OAA3 Prepare a coastal erosion management plan for Oakura in consultation with the community. - To provide more direction on the management of coastal erosion in Oakura. - To be consistent with the district wide coastal erosion policy - Involve the wider Oakura community in decisions on managing coastal hazards. - Investigate options for obtaining financial contributions from existing developers of new land within hazard areas in Oakura to cover risk costs. - To include support for the ongoing work of the coast care group in protecting natural buffers.	P/C	NPDC *(TRC & local community)*	H
OAA4 Identify and formalise new access points where appropriate within Oakura. - To include Wairau Road as an option. - Utilise the existing reserves, such as Corbett Park and Matekai Park, to support linkages. - Work with other agencies/groups to provide opportunities for public use of the coastal area. - Undertake in accordance with the Coastal Access Action Plan.	P/C	NPDC	M
OAA5 Through reserve management planning, identify appropriate types and levels of use within Oakura reserves to meet long-term community goals and needs. - Direct passive and active recreational activities to appropriate areas, through reserve management planning - Investigate feasibility of provision of indoor recreation facilities.	I	NPDC	L

7.9   Okato

This rural area has a special sense of place associated with the farming community and heritage with defined linkages to the surf coast.

The Okato local community is generally defined as that area including the settlement of Okato and the surrounding rural areas from Stony River (Hangatahua) in the south to Lower Pitone Road in the north.

Heritage, cultural and environmental values define the sense of place of this community. The rural land uses surrounding the settlement of Okato contribute significantly to the social values of the township. The coastal area is a focus for recreation activities, such as surfing, connected to the coast via Surf Highway 45.

Okato vision

"…to be the hub of Surf Highway 45, connecting people to their heritage and to recreational pursuits"

7.9.1 Challenges and opportunities facing Okato

- There is desire for rural/residential development but this can change the nature of the landscape in Okato.

- There are community concerns about the impact of land use activities on the quality of the coastal water.

- There is concern about the rural/residential development occurring in, and surrounding Okato, and the impact on the natural, cultural and social values.

- Public access to the beach is limited in places, between the Stony River and Lower Timaru Road. The access to the coast is an important part of living and playing in this area and can be enhanced.

- Need to recognise and conserve the significant natural and cultural values associated with the Hangatahua (Stony) River.

- There are Māori and European heritage sites and landscapes in/on the land surrounding Okato that are important to the community.

7.9.2 Goals for Okato - what we want to achieve

OKG1 – Provide lifestyle choices in keeping with the natural character of the area.

OKG2 – Protect the ecological values of the Okato coast and the Hangatahua River by promoting appropriate riparian management in the wider catchment.

OKG3 – Make sure the infrastructure works are designed to take into account the sensitive coastal environment. This includes focusing recreational infrastructure in areas of high demand.

OKG4 – Identify options to improve access to coastal areas and the provision of recreation facilities so the coast is accessible to all whilst protecting the natural, heritage and social values important to the community.

OKG5 - Retain the sense of naturalness by creating a distance between hard infrastructure assets and the coastline.

OKG6 – Encourage a wider appreciation of Māori cultural heritage values within the coastal environment of Okato.

OKG7 - Recognise and account for existing rural uses when planning development (e.g., account for reverse sensitivities of residential development adjacent to farming activity).

Lower Greenwood Rd

7.9.3 Implementation for Okato - what we aim to do

Actions for Okato	Type	Lead (support)	Priority
OKA1 Investigate development and implementation of rules for regionally significant landscapes.	P	NPDC *(TRC)*	H
OKA2 Continue to provide support for riparian margin management to improve water quality[5]. - Build on existing programme for encouraging riparian planting by focusing specifically on the coastal environment in the Okato area.	E	TRC	H
OKA3 Develop specific guidelines for coastal infrastructure to encourage sensitive infrastructure design and location both within Okato and the rural surrounds. - This is to include power and telecommunications.	E	NPDC *(infrastructure providers)*	L
OKA4 Build relationships with local hāpu, to promote opportunities to improve public knowledge, protection and management of cultural heritage sites. - To include interpretation sites and heritage trails.	E	Local hāpu & NPDC	M
OKA5 Identify options for new passive recreation opportunities and access. - Develop an action plan for expanding public access in Okato surrounds through the Coastal Access Action Plan. - Work with other agencies/groups to identify options, including the potential for a regional park. - In close consultation with the community of Okato, identify areas where public access and esplanade areas shall be restricted for specific reasons of value protection.	P	NPDC *(local community)*	L
OKA6 Identify the important heritage sites that require further protection in close consultation with the community. - This is to include supporting voluntary methods for protection. - Investigate options for economic incentives and assistance for heritage protection and management (e.g. fencing or rates relief).	I/E & P	NPDC *(NZHPT & NZAA)*	L

---

[5] The TRC riparian management programme is region-wide.

7.10 Structure Plans

A structure plan is a concept for local areas that addresses the protection, use and development of land and resources in a local area or community. In other words, the structure plan is a broad physical plan (or map) identifying areas for growth, protection, parks and other infrastructure and community requirements over the next 20 years. A variety of other planning tools such as community plans, infrastructure plans and urban design guides may also offer solutions for coastal communities in the district.

The structure plans set out how to implement the vision of the New Plymouth Coastal Strategy at a local community level. Varying levels of growth may be set for different areas (e.g. rural-residential, residential).

The following two areas are proposed as structure planning areas and will be used to test their relevance to the other settlements in the district:

- Oakura.

- Urenui.

The following steps are proposed to undertake and complete the first two structure plans. The structure planning process will be undertaken following the completion and adoption of the New Plymouth Coastal Strategy by the council.

1. Confirm direction for local areas and initially define structure plan boundaries.

2. Collate and map existing constraints and opportunities within the defined structure plan area. Mapping will include:
    - Aerial photographs of structure plan area, current zoning and designations.
    - Identification of sites of ecological, heritage and cultural significance, protected areas and other sensitive areas.
    - Identification of land ownership type (e.g. public reserves, māori land).
3. Workshop with community to identify key structure plan challenges and opportunities, concepts and identification of desirable outcomes.

4. Validate the structure plan direction with the local management area visions and desired outcomes.

5. Develop concepts for the structure plan including mapping and identification of infrastructure components.

6. Workshop with the community to review the structure plan maps, infrastructure components and outcomes. Identify and develop implementation measures and programmes.

7. Develop implementation programmes, including timeframes and statutory changes.

8. Finalise structure plan and present to council for adoption.

8. Glossary

Access

Means providing an opportunity for the public to have the ability to use the coastal environment, whether through informal or formal entry points. This includes walkways, public roads, paper roads, esplanade strips and reserves, public parks and reserves and over private property where an agreement between the property owner and the council or other agency is in place.

Active recreation

Recreation activities that are higher impact, such as mountain biking. Those leisure activities that encourage social or individual participation provide a sense of fun and are physically active[6].

Active reserves

Active reserves provide space for organised sport and associated facilities, such as playing fields, modified surfaces like tennis courts and club buildings. An active reserve can also fulfill a passive reserve function, but its primary purpose is not to provide for passive leisure opportunities.

Asset Management Plans

Asset management involves balancing desired levels of service and asset standards against costs and risk. Council Asset Management Plans (AMP) outline how Councils will manage assets to deliver their strategic outcomes and that the assets provide a specified level of service in the most cost-effective manner. AMP's also identify and prioritise spending on an asset and provide a basis for monitoring of the performance of an asset.

---

[6] Sourced: Christchurch City Council.

Coastal Marine Area

The area below Mean High Water Springs, including the wet part of the beach, the foreshore and seabed.

Esplanade Strips

These retain private ownership of land but provide for a public access-way of fixed width from the coast. This width is retained regardless of whether land along the coast is lost as a result of erosion or added to through accretion.

Foreshore

The 'wet' area of land, reef and beach between the high tide and low tide marks.

Infrastructure

The means for delivering physical services to communities, including roads, septic tanks, power lines and stormwater pipes.

Iwi/Hāpu Management Plan

An iwi/hāpu management plan is any planning document recognised by an iwi management authority. These plans may be a formal planning document or they may be a statement of iwi/hāpu policies in a less formal and detailed memo or report. These plans are a vision of how the management and protection of natural and physical resources can be achieved based on the cultural and spiritual values of tangata whenua.

Mana Whenua

Those with customary authority exercised by an iwi or hāpu in an identified area. The term is used instead of tangata whenua to take the emphasis away from separate iwi/hāpu.

Mean High Water Springs

The average line of spring high tide.

Natural character

The degree of naturalness of an area. Natural character depends on the extent of modification of landforms, ecosystems and natural process and the presence of structures and buildings. A landform having a low level of human modification is considered as having a proportionally higher natural character.

Passive Recreation

Recreation activities that are low impact and not generally formally recognised, such as walking, running, jogging. Passive reserves provide space for casual play, relaxation, family activities and other forms of 'informal' leisure.

Retreat (from hazards)

When a community, infrastructure or property is at risk from a coastal hazard (managed) retreat involves moving away from the area of risk, as opposed to other hazard management options including promoting natural buffers, constructing structural defences or designing buildings to minimise the likelihood of damage.

Reverse sensitivity

Recognises the impact a new activity (e.g. residential housing) may have on an established activities (e.g. farming). In such cases the new activity may request inappropriate controls be established to limit the impact of the older activity on the new activity.

Riparian Management

Management of the margins of rivers and streams to protect coastal water quality and in-stream habitats.

Risk

Refers to coastal hazards and considers the probability that a hazard event (e.g. storm surge) will occur and the potential cost or consequence of this event on communities, infrastructure, land and/or property.

9. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those people who participated in the workshops, provided input into the preparation of the New Plymouth Coastal Strategy and provided feedback during the development of this document. In particular, we recognise the inputs and contributions from the following organisations:

- Taranaki Regional Council.

- Department of Conservation.

- The representatives of the Mana Whenua Reference Group.

- All those organisations and community representatives that attended council's Coastal Strategy Forum in March 2005.

- All those people who attended the following community meetings/ workshops/hui:

    - Tongaporutu, March 2005.
    - Okato/Oakura, Thursday, March 2005.
    - New Plymouth/Bell Block, March 2005.
    - Waitara, March 2005.
    - Urenui, March 2005.
    - Muru Rauputu Hui, April 2005.
    - New Plymouth/Fitzroy/East End, July 2005.
    - Oakura/Okato, July 2005.
    - Waitara/Bell Block, July 2005.
    - Oakura Hui, July 2005.
    - Tongaporutu/Urenui/Onaero, July 2005.
    - Muru Rauputu Pa Hui, July 2005.

- All those people who attended the Coastal Strategy Open Day at Puke Ariki in July 2005.

- All those people who provided comment and feedback throughout the Coastal Strategy process, including those people surveyed during the Coastal User Survey in March 2005, the respondents to the Consultation Document in March 2005 and the Discussion Document in July 2005 and all other parties who wrote to us with comments, views and valuable suggestions.

A summary of the consultation process, including feedback from the workshops and the surveys is provided in the New Plymouth District Council Consultation Report.

9.1 Coastal Strategy Project Team

The Coastal Strategy Project Team for the New Plymouth Coastal Strategy included:

- Juliet Hickford – Manager Regulatory Policy, NPDC.

- Teresa Gordon – Senior Policy Analyst, Parks and Recreation Assets, NPDC.

- Rowan Williams – Team Leader Subdivision, NPDC.

- Rory Palmer – Manager Corporate Policy and Planning, NPDC.

- Aroha Chamberlain – Cultural development Co-ordinator – POU Kaiwhakaahu, NPDC.

- Willem van Blerk – Team Leader – Asset Strategy and Performance, NPDC.

- Ralph McDermmott – Advisor-Asset Performance and Process, NPDC.

- Hannah Horn – Senior Policy Analyst, Parks and Recreation Assets, NPDC.

- Laura Hernandez – Senior Policy Analyst, Regulatory Policy, NPDC.

- Steve McGill – Department of Conservation.

- Fred McLay – Taranaki Regional Council.

- Mana Whenua Reference Group (refer to Section 1.7 for list of iwi/hāpu represented).

The Project Team were assisted by Beca Planning in the development of the Coastal Strategy.