

- (iii) *urban intensification at selected locations is provided for and encouraged. Selection of these places will take into account, amongst other things, any significant adverse effects which arise from the interaction with any regionally significant infrastructure and other significant physical resources;*
 - (iv) *expansion of rural and coastal settlements outside the limits of existing urban zones and settlements (at the time of notification of the RPS or as shown or provided for in the RPS) is not permitted;*
 - (v) *the identification and provision of areas for future urban growth are managed through an integrated process on a regional basis and are consistent with the Strategic Direction.*
4. *Countryside living is to be subject to constraints as to location, scale and extent so as to avoid remedy or mitigate adverse effects.*
 5. *The subdivision, use and development of rural land is to be managed so that:*
 - (i) *the life supporting capacity of rural soils is safeguarded so far as is practical;*
 - (ii) *the ability of rural resources to meet the needs of future generations is maintained;*
 - (iii) *future options to accommodate urban development are not prematurely foreclosed or compromised;*
 - (iv) *significant adverse effects on the environment, including effects on the rural character of rural areas and on regionally significant environmental values, are avoided; and where avoidance is not practicable, adverse effects are remedied or mitigated;*
 - (v) *the creation of conflicts between quarrying (and similar activities dependent on locationally specific natural resources) and other incompatible activities are avoided.*
 6. *Provision is to be made to enable the safe and efficient operation of existing regional infrastructure which is necessary for the social, and economic wellbeing of the region's people, and for the development of regional infrastructure (including transport and energy facilities and services) in a manner which is consistent with this*

strategic direction and which avoids, remedies or mitigates any adverse effects of those activities on the environment.

7. *The use, development and protection of the Region's natural and physical resources is to be managed in an integrated manner, so that adverse effects, including significant cumulative adverse effects, that range across resources or cross jurisdictional boundaries are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*
8. *Resource management processes in the region are to be carried out in ways which ensure that affected parties are consulted at an early stage, and in particular Tangata Whenua involvement as kaitiaki of the Region's natural resources is to be facilitated.*

2.5.3 Reasons

Central to practically all resource management issues in the Auckland Region is the management of growth and development. The imperative of ensuring the Region has the capacity to meet the demands of population and economic growth is placed alongside the necessity of protecting the Region's resources. The Strategic Direction, which sets the broad aim for the Region, links these two requirements: to ensure the Region has the capacity to accommodate growth and development, and at the same time to protect the quality and efficient use of the natural and physical resources.

The Strategic Direction protects the Region's natural resources from significant adverse effects of urban development. These resources include coastal environments, natural and cultural heritage areas, outstanding natural features and landscapes, taonga, prime land, mineral resources and rural values. It also protects urban development from flood prone or unstable areas, and protects pollution-sensitive estuaries and harbours from the effects of urban development. It is designed to avoid the adverse effects of urban Auckland on areas beyond the metropolitan areas, and to mitigate those effects, where they occur inside urban limits. The effects of intensification will need to be managed by public and private sectors through careful design of developments, appropriate provisions in district and regional plans, transportation policy, upgrading of infrastructure and the provision of appropriate services and open space.

The Strategic Direction is intended to improve the efficiency of urban Auckland by encouraging development at locations that will promote cost-effective servicing by transportation systems, utility network systems and other works and services of regional significance. In addition, the Strategic Direction recognises factors, such as private and public transport costs, sustainable use of non-renewable resources, the emission of greenhouse gases, and the need to protect and enhance valuable physical resources such as infrastructure, investment, buildings and community facilities throughout the Region.

The Strategic Direction recognises that degradation of some regionally significant natural resources has already occurred due, for example, to polluted stormwater runoff, sewer overflows and ageing sewerage systems. Remediation of affected ecosystems is only possible over the long term and requires, amongst other things, expensive upgrading of infrastructure and monitoring to prevent toxic spills into waterways.

In rural areas, the Strategic Direction seeks to sustainably manage the resources of rural areas, and to avoid prematurely foreclosing future options for accommodating the Region's urban growth needs. Achievement of these outcomes, and the avoidance, remediation or mitigation of cumulative adverse effects, requires that policies and regulatory regimes for rural areas at the local level must be formulated with careful regard to their long term implications, and also that they be consistently administered.

In some circumstances, provision for countryside living is consistent with the Strategic Direction. The demand for this is generated by urban populations but provided in rural areas. Unless limited in location, scale and extent, countryside living has the potential to undermine the policies of containment and sustaining the potential of rural resources as well as undermining the character and amenity values of rural areas. Therefore, countryside living must be subject to a number of constraints.

Within the Region, there are special areas such as the Hauraki Gulf and islands, estuaries subject to development and density pressures, river catchments, the coastal environment, the Kaipara, Manukau and Waitemata harbours and the Firth of Thames which, because of their nature, require an integrated approach in their management. The Hauraki Gulf, for example,

has many qualities that require an integrated management approach which:

- recognises that the resources of the Gulf cannot be managed in isolation from each other;
- recognises that the special values associated with the natural and physical resources of the Gulf provide areas for conservation and for the diverse social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the people;
- recognises the many activities associated with the Gulf such as recreation and tourism (e.g., boating swimming, fishing and ecotourism ventures); rural production (e.g., agriculture and horticulture); commercial fishing and marine farming; accessways for shipping to the Port of Auckland; transport between Auckland and the islands; residential lifestyles; and conservation;
- recognises the extensive DoC land holdings and provides for inter-agency co-operation whereby organisations such as TAs, ARC, DoC, Ministry of Fisheries, Maritime Safety Authority, Iwi and community organisations work together to meet agreed objectives;
- recognises the environmental and social value of focussing development in small communities;
- recognises the need for an integrated approach to transportation planning and the protection of key transport nodes (gateway wharf and airport facilities) while avoiding the effects of unsustainable growth demand that improved transport will bring;
- recognises that, on Waiheke, urban development is limited to the western end of the island in recognition of the significant landscape values and natural environment of eastern Waiheke;
- recognises the need to relate rural living and settlement to environmental constraints and capacity;
- recognises the need for alternative technologies and innovation to provide infrastructure and services.

The Strategic Direction also recognises the important role of Tangata Whenua as kaitiaki of the Region's natural resources. The provisions in the RM Act to achieve integrated management require resource management agencies to work closely with Tangata Whenua in order to co-ordinate policies and activities.

2.6 Regional Development

The regional development policies regarding urban containment and consolidation; rural areas; countryside living; and regionally significant infrastructure or services which follow give effect to the Strategic Direction set out in 2.5 in ways that meet the requirements of Part II of the RM Act. The overall intent is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources of the Region. Policies on other aspects of the Strategic Direction such as the coastal environment, air quality, water quality and heritage resources are set out in subsequent chapters of the RPS.

2.6.1 Policy: Urban Growth Management

1. *The growth of metropolitan Auckland is to be managed with reference to a 30 year time horizon, in a manner which gives effect to the Purpose and Principles of the RM Act, is consistent with the Strategic Direction, and has regard to:*
 - (i) *the rate of urban development occurring in, and forecast for, the whole Region and sectors of the Region;*
 - (ii) *the capacity realistically available for further urban development, including*
 - (a) *provision for metropolitan urban expansion*
 - (b) *the potential for intensification within the urban area*
 - (c) *the growth capacity, and contribution that may be made by rural and coastal settlements*
 - (iii) *the need to recognise and provide for areas of significant natural and physical resources requiring protection from urban development in existing and future urban areas and rural areas;*
 - (iv) *areas where provision should be made for future urban development, and priorities for, and sequencing of development;*
 - (v) *an explicit evaluation (as required by Section 32 of the RM Act) of the costs and benefits of alternative forms of development to accommodate Auckland's growth;*
 - (vi) *the use of financial contributions as provided for in section 108 of the RM Act.*
2. *Urban development shall be contained within the defined limits (including the metropolitan urban limits and the limits of rural and coastal settlements – referred to in Strategic Policy 2.5.2-3) shown in the RPS from time to time, and its form shall be planned and undertaken through an integrated process on a regional basis and in ways that are consistent with the Strategic Direction and:*
 - (i) *provide for urban intensification around selected nodes and along selected transport corridors;*
 - (ii) *provide for higher intensities of urban activities at selected locations within areas of new development;*
 - (iii) *bring about patterns of activities that will mitigate the effects of increased travel and improve the energy efficiency and convenience of urban areas (refer to Chapter 4 – Policy 4.4.1-2, and Chapter 5 – Policy 5.4.1-3);*
 - (iv) *enable the operation of existing regional infrastructure and the provision of necessary new or upgraded regional infrastructure which is operated and developed in a manner which ensures that any adverse effects of those activities on the environment are avoided, remedied or mitigated;*
 - (v) *facilitate efficient provision of services (including utility services, transportation facilities or services, and community facilities and services, such as schools, libraries, public open spaces) through the utilisation or upgrading of existing facilities, or the provision of new ones;*
 - (vi) *maintain and enhance amenity values within the existing urban area, and achieve high standards of amenity in areas of new development;*
 - (vii) *do not give rise to conflicts between incompatible land uses;*
 - (viii) *avoids, remedies, or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.*
3. *Countryside living (see Appendix D) may be provided for in rural areas to the extent that provision will:*

- *give effect to Part II of the Act and*
- *be consistent with the Strategic Direction, and with the relevant provisions of Chapters 3 to 18 inclusive of this RPS and*
- *take into account and make appropriate provision for the following matters:*
 - (i) *The extent to which natural resources are protected and or enhanced;*
 - (ii) *the avoidance of significant adverse effects (including cumulative adverse effects) on:*
 - (a) *the environmental values protected by defined limits to metropolitan Auckland and defined limits of rural or coastal settlements*
 - (b) *the safe and efficient operation of existing regional infrastructure*
 - (c) *the necessary upgrading of existing regional infrastructure*
 - (d) *the provision of new regional infrastructure*
 - (e) *the rural character of the region.*

Where significant adverse effects cannot be avoided, they shall be mitigated or remedied.

- (iii) *Avoiding prematurely foreclosing, or compromising options for accommodating the further growth and development of urban areas.*
- (iv) *The avoidance, remediation or mitigation of significant adverse effects on the regional roading network.*
- (v) *Avoidance of the creation of conflicts between quarrying (and similar activities dependent on locationally specific natural resources) and other incompatible activities.*
- (vi) *Avoidance of conflicts between incompatible activities. Where such conflicts cannot be avoided they shall be remedied or mitigated.*
- (vii) *Minimising the loss of versatility and productive potential of soil resources. Where it is necessary for the better achievement of the purposes of the RM Act to compromise the versatility and/or productivity of the soil resource, the greatest protection shall be given to the most versatile soils.*

2.6.2 Methods

1. *In consultation with the Minister for Environment, TAs, and other interested parties, the ARC will maintain an ongoing Programme of urban growth monitoring and management. This process (which has already commenced) will give effect to Policy 2.6.1. To the extent necessary and appropriate the results of the Programme will be implemented from time to time by appropriate statutory changes to the RPS, and/or the notification of a regional plan. In addition, the outputs from the Programme may include non-statutory guidelines.*
2. *Within two years from the date on which all references to the Environment Court in this Chapter of the RPS have been resolved, changes to the RPS will be notified (unless as a result of the process set out in Method 2.6.2-1 it is unnecessary or inappropriate to do so), and if necessary a regional plan may also be notified, to implement the first outputs from the Programme of urban growth monitoring and management.*
3. *To promote the implementation of Policy 2.6.1-1, the ARC will, in consultation with the TAs, prepare a non-statutory strategic report or a regional plan which identifies the following features:*
 - (i) *major regional infrastructure features and other important physical resources;*
 - (ii) *major regional transport corridors;*
 - (iii) *areas with regionally significant environmental constraints to urban (re)development;*
 - (iv) *areas considered suitable for residential and employment intensification.*
4. *The Policies in 2.6.1, shall be given effect to the extent necessary and appropriate, through the provisions of any relevant regional plan, changes to the RPS, district plans, and the RLTS, and should be reflected in the annual plan process and any strategic planning process undertaken by a TA.*
5. *Policy 2.6.1-3 will be implemented through the following processes:*
 - (i) *Each TA shall set out within its District Plan issues, objectives, policies and methods for enabling Countryside living.*

This shall:

- (a) *be an integrated consideration of the relevant issues ;*
 - (b) *be integrated with the urban and rural components of the District Plan ;*
 - (c) *not be inconsistent with the RPS and will need to take into account:*
 - *potential effects (adverse or beneficial) on the environment*
 - *cumulative effects that may accrue when considered together with the effects of other activities elsewhere in the district or in adjoining districts*
 - *the possible provision of mechanisms aimed at achieving amalgamation of titles (e.g. transferable development rights) in surrounding rural areas.*
 - (ii) *Consent authorities having regard to the policies in assessing resource consent applications and/or plan changes.*
6. *Provision shall be made in district plans for urban development of metropolitan Auckland to be contained within the metropolitan urban limits shown on Map Series 1, and any other geographical limits shown or provided for in the RPS from time to time.*
7. *Each TA shall set out within its District Plan issues, objectives, policies and methods for enabling the management and development of rural and coastal settlements.*

This shall:

- i) *be an integrated consideration of the relevant issues;*
- ii) *be integrated with the urban and rural components of the District Plan;*
- iii) *not be inconsistent with the RPS.*

Where this method has been complied with, expansion of rural and coastal settlements in district plans beyond the limits applying at the date of notification of the RPS shall be deemed to have been provided for for the purposes of strategic objective 2.5.2.3(iv) and policy 2.6.1.2 of the RPS.

8. *Significant new areas proposed for urban development, existing urban areas proposed for significant re-development, or significant new areas proposed for countryside living purposes are to be provided for through the Structure Planning Process (or other similar mechanism).*

(Refer also to Policy 8.4.5-2 in the Water Quality chapter).

2.6.3 Reasons

Growth Management

The Region's sustained growth is accompanied by ongoing development and redevelopment with consequent effects on natural and physical resources. Historically, Auckland's growth has mainly taken the form of urban expansion. This has been managed through containment of metropolitan urban development within defined limits, and the orderly sequencing of development within those limits. Infilling within the urban area and intensification of urban development have played a part, though a lesser one.

Now, however, the options for simple, relatively low cost, urban expansion of metropolitan Auckland are limited. Servicing and natural resource constraints limit the contribution to be made by suburban intensification, and the role of central city housing, though increasing, is relatively small in the overall housing supply. Consideration of these factors indicates that the stock of development opportunities within presently defined Metropolitan Urban Limits is sufficient for 15 to 20 years.

The Strategic Direction sets out objectives and policies which provide a strategic framework for management of the Region's growth. It is necessary at a more detailed level however, to identify the form and direction for development in the Region in the longer term – with reference to a thirty year time horizon. This work is now underway. Technically, an urban model has been developed, which involves:

1. Projecting the likely magnitude of future population and economic growth, and postulating alternative forms of development to accommodate it.
2. identifying and evaluating the effects which these alternative growth forms are likely to have on the Region's environment.

Outcomes from the model will then assist in reviewing and formulating policies and plans to guide development in the region toward the form which will best give effect to the purposes and principles of the RM Act.

It will also be necessary to monitor ongoing growth and development in the region and, within the broad framework of the Strategic Direction, to ensure that the detailed policies continue to make appropriate and effective provision for the Region's growth.

To support this technical process, and to provide an environment in which commitment will bring about a co-ordinated and consistent approach to management of growth in the region, the ARC has formed a Regional Growth Strategy Forum. The Forum comprises of representatives of the ARC and the Region's constituent TAs, and functions as a standing committee of the ARC. Its role will be to implement a strategy for the Auckland Region which ensures growth is accommodated in a way that enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing, whilst protecting environmental quality.

It is intended, within two years from the date of resolution of the referrals to the Environment Court which relate to this chapter of the RPS, that the first outputs of the Growth Strategy Forum (referred to above) will be promulgated by way of Change or Variation to the RPS, and (if necessary and appropriate) a regional plan.

Urban Containment

Policy 2.6.1 provides for the containment of urban development within the metropolitan urban limits and sets the limits to rural and coastal settlements. These limits have been defined to minimise adverse effects of urban development on regionally significant resources, including:

- areas of high amenity value;
- natural heritage and cultural heritage features and areas;
(Refer to the Iwi, Heritage and Coastal chapters and Appendix B of the RPS, and to the Proposed Regional Plan: Coastal for further information on the protection of significant heritage);
- prime land;
- vulnerable ecosystems;
- areas where the quality of the environment is already degraded and requires improvement;

- areas prone to the impact of natural hazards such as flooding or land instability, and areas which if urbanised are likely to induce flooding or instability elsewhere;
- strategic infrastructural facilities such as airports/airfields.

The definition of the metropolitan urban limits also takes account of:

- historical commitments to urbanise certain areas such as east Tamaki in the south, and Albany and Greenhithe in the north;
- the amount of land available for peripheral expansion having regard to the strategic direction of urban containment and intensification. Currently, this represents capacity for 15 to 20 years' urban growth;
- the need to promote efficient use of existing urban infrastructure and where necessary to enable the provision of new infrastructure;
- the incompatibility of urban uses with activities such as airports, intensive horticulture or activities storing or processing hazardous substances.

The above factors are also consistent with the provisions of the NZCPS which addresses the use, development and protection of land in the coastal environment. In addition, the definition of metropolitan urban limits takes account of the need to maintain a clear differentiation of character, especially visual character, between urban and rural areas. This should also be taken account of when defining the limits to rural and coastal settlements.

It is also important that any provision for expansion or intensification of rural towns and coastal settlements gives consideration to whether residential development could readily outstrip growth in employment opportunities, resulting in long and energy inefficient commuting trips into metropolitan Auckland.

Urban Intensification

More intensive forms of development should not be limited to infill development. Peripheral land development also offers opportunities for a wider range of subdivisional forms, housing types and densities than have historically been attempted in greenfields situations in Auckland. Achieving higher densities of development

on undeveloped urban land will mean that the current reservoir of urban land will be able to accommodate the Region's growth for a longer period of time.

The Strategic Direction supports intensification, including infill development, within the urban area, so that better utilisation is encouraged of the substantial reservoir of under-utilised land within the urban area. Much of this land is in areas where the existing utility systems and the transport network have capacity to service more intensive, or infill development. Intensification can enable more efficient use of physical resources including infrastructure and also shift the emphasis of development of metropolitan Auckland toward an urban form which is more efficient in transport and energy terms. Such development has the potential to play a greater part in meeting Auckland's future needs for housing, jobs and services, and also to bring about a more varied supply of housing types and densities, thus achieving a better match between housing supply and need.

Infill and intensification needs to be carefully planned however, to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects which can stem from loss of trees and bush, overloading of utility systems (especially drainage and stormwater), traffic congestion, and reduction of space around buildings. Where possible, necessary refurbishing or replacement of urban utility services should be planned and programmed to fit in with provision enabling infill or intensification. With careful planning and programming, infill and intensification may be co-ordinated with, and help to fund, necessary improvements to services so that natural resource values are protected and amenity values maintained or enhanced.

Planning for intensification should also encourage activity patterns which enhance the amenity values and convenience, thus contributing to community wellbeing through clustering of social and community facilities at accessible locations often in association with commercial centres. It is also important that residential areas be segregated from incompatible activities (such as those handling hazardous or toxic substances). Allowing residential activities, or activities involving assemblies of people, in close proximity to noxious or dangerous industries (as may occur in 'mixed use' zones) may not only have adverse effects on the health or safety of residential communities, but may also adversely affect

the economic and safe operation of such industries. Major areas of industrial and business activity which are important to the regional economy should not be compromised by the introduction of incompatible activities.

Planning for intensification must also take account of features or places of cultural significance to Maori, or of historical significance to the Region or nation. These may be important to the identity of the Region or locality.

Changes should be planned and managed so that activity patterns which provide appropriately for social, economic and cultural wellbeing and the health and safety of the community are reinforced, and opportunities to make better provision for those matters and to improve amenity values, are realised.

Countryside Living

Historically, complex and liberal provisions in district plans for control of the subdivision of rural land have provided in an unplanned manner for the desire of urban Aucklanders to live in rural areas. This largely urban generated use has had a range of adverse effects on the Region's environment. As well as having the potential to undermine the policies of urban containment and intensification, and to reduce the sustainability of urban settlement, the adverse effects of subdividing rural land into small lots, can include the following:

- i) reduced versatility of potential use of rural land and mineral resources
- ii) compromised natural resource values (native vegetation, habitat, and water quality), cultural heritage values, rural landscape and amenity values, and a change to the character of rural areas
- iii) increased demands arising in some areas for the provision of urban-type services which are costly and inefficient to provide at rural-residential densities.

These effects are inconsistent with the objectives of the RPS which aim to bring about the sustainable management of the Region's urban and rural lands.

Careful planning is necessary in order to ensure that provision is made for countryside living in a manner that gives effect to Part II of the RM Act, and is not inconsistent with the Strategic Direction and with all relevant provisions of this RPS. The RPS does not indicate priorities as to the significance to be attributed to the

different outcomes described in Policy 2.6.1.3. This will depend on giving effect to Part II of the RM Act, and on the context within the region and district. An evaluation is, however, required to include specific reference to how each of the stated outcomes are dealt with, the decision making process including the weightings and reasons for weightings given to each, and on what basis the final decision is made. Where a proposal is evaluated and found to be consistent with the policies, though not actively promoting them, such a proposal may be considered to have made appropriate provision for the policies.

In order to achieve integrated management an evaluation of Policy 2.6.1-3 (i) (which cross references to other chapters of the RPS) shall include the following matters:

Chapter 3 – Iwi concerns; the existence of features and qualities of significance to Maori;

Chapter 4 – the cumulative effects on the Region’s transport network, and the effects of intensification of rural settlement patterns on the safe and efficient functioning of local roads;

Chapter 5 – the cumulative effects within the region of low intensity settlement patterns in terms of energy use and especially of transport energy;

Chapter 6 – the existence of features or qualities which are significant in terms of natural or cultural heritage; the quality and sensitivity of the landscape, and the effects on it of more intensive subdivision and settlement;

Chapter 7 – effects on the coastal environment, and the need to preserve the natural character of the coastal environment;

Chapter 8 – the effects of intensification of rural land use on the quality of natural water bodies with particular reference to stormwater and wastewater treatment and disposal;

Chapter 11 – the need to avoid or mitigate the effects of natural hazards including land instability and flood risk;

Chapter 12 – protection of versatility and productivity of the Region’s soils with greatest protection to the most versatile soils;

Chapter 13 – avoidance of unnecessarily compromising regionally significant mineral extraction activities and mineral deposits;

Chapter 17 – avoidance of contaminated sites, or provision for remediation or mitigation of their adverse effects.

The provision of Countryside living can also assist in achieving positive environmental effects. An evaluation of Policy 2.6.1-3. (ii) shall include consideration as to whether providing for countryside living may offer benefits, by enabling environmental degradation which has already occurred to be remedied, or by enhancing the quality of the environment (for example, through revegetation of riparian strips, or fencing and formal protection of important remaining areas of native vegetation).

Policy 2.6.1 Urban Growth Management establishes the matters that need to be considered when addressing the issue of urban growth. Countryside living has the potential to undermine any urban management policies or methods that may arise from consideration of Policy 2.6.1. For example the expansion of a particular settlement in a certain direction may be controlled in order to preserve an area of open space. Any provision for Countryside living should be subject to the same assessment.

An evaluation of Policy 2.6.1-3(iii (b)) shall include consideration as to whether providing for countryside living may prejudice the safe and efficient operation of existing infrastructure. For example, countryside living adjoining or close to a regionally significant airfield, even at low densities, can result in conflicts arising.

The provision of countryside living can change the landscape and character of an area from one of open space to a more intimate and intense and less open character.

The provision of countryside living may prevent opportunities for future urban expansion. Prior to identifying countryside living opportunities, particularly those adjoining urban areas, an assessment will be required as to the preferred form of development in any given area. This should include consideration of whether urban development may be the more appropriate option. This will require integration with the relevant settlement growth strategy. (refer Method 2.6.2.6(b)) Where urban growth is the preferred option for the future use of that land consideration should be given to ensuring compatibility with Council’s rating policies.

The provision of countryside living results in people who are often still dependent on commuting to regional centres living in those areas. This can add to the increasing pressure on the regional roading system. In assessing the effects on the regional roading system consideration

needs to be given to cumulative effects (in combination with other development opportunities) including cross-boundary implications.

Countryside living can result in conflicts between the expectations of people living in the area for lifestyle and the production based activities occurring in these areas. One way of mitigating these conflicts is to confine countryside living to specific areas and hence reduce the points of contact. Where countryside living is provided by way of scattered opportunities throughout a rural area the potential for conflict may be greater.

The policy and methods do not specify how countryside living shall be provided, for example whether it be by way of defined areas or by way of scattered opportunities or by some other method. Neither is the extent of countryside living that is appropriate specified. However, consideration must be given to the cumulative effects that provision of countryside living will have in conjunction with other developments (including other countryside living opportunities, and urban living opportunities) both within the district and where appropriate within the Region.

If the life-supporting capacity of versatile soils is valued for future generations and options exist for directing development onto poorer soils, countryside living should be located on the poorer soils and the versatile soils avoided.

It is also expected that structure plans be prepared to guide the development of defined Countryside living areas so that adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated. (Method 2.6.2-7) This may offer a means of giving effect at a local level to Part II of the Act, and to achieving the outcomes which are referenced in Policy 2.6.1-3.

(Refer LUC Map Series)

2.6.4 Policy: Rural Areas

1. The use, development and protection of natural and physical resources and the subdivision of land in the rural parts of the Region (except as provided by Policy 2.6.1-3) is to be managed in an integrated manner, that:

- gives effect to Part II of the RM Act;
- is consistent with the Strategic Direction and with the relevant provisions of Chapters 3 to 18 inclusive of this RPS;

○ *takes account of and makes appropriate provision for the following matters:*

(i) *The avoidance of significant adverse effects (including cumulative adverse effects) on:*

(a) *the environmental values protected by defined limits to metropolitan Auckland and defined limits to rural or coastal settlements*

(b) *the safe and efficient operation of existing regional infrastructure*

(c) *the necessary upgrading of existing regional infrastructure*

(d) *the provision of new regional infrastructure.*

(e) *the rural character of the region.*

Where significant adverse effects cannot be avoided they shall be remedied or mitigated.

(ii) *Avoiding prematurely foreclosing or compromising options for accommodating the further growth and development of urban areas.*

(iii) *Significant adverse effects on the regional roading network are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*

(iv) *Avoidance of the creation of conflicts between quarrying (and similar activities dependent on locationally specific natural resources) and other incompatible activities.*

(v) *Avoidance of conflicts between incompatible activities. Where such conflicts cannot be avoided they shall be remedied or mitigated.*

(vi) *Management of the use of rural land with regard to the availability and sustainability of water resources.*

(vii) *Minimising the loss of versatility and productive potential of soil resources. Where it is necessary for the better achievement of the purposes of the RM Act to compromise the versatility and/or productivity of the soil resource, the greatest protection shall be given to the most versatile soils.*

(viii) Consideration of alternative locations (including locations in urban areas) for activities which give rise to significant adverse effects on the environment.

(ix) Environmental enhancement and or remediation opportunities.

2. ***In rural areas provision shall be made for marae, papakainga and customary uses of ancestral taonga in accordance with Policy 3.4.4, and with regard to the matters set out in Policy 2.6.4-1.***

2.6.5 Methods

1. *The ARC and TAs will not make provisions in district plans and regional plans which are inconsistent with Policies 2.6.4-1 and 2.*
2. *TAs whose districts contain significant areas of rural land (Franklin, Papakura and Rodney District Councils, and Manukau, Waitakere and Auckland City Councils) will, in consultation with the ARC, identify rural locations in which the existing or potential (i.e. haven't yet gone to title) subdivisional pattern is likely to result in outcomes that fail to give effect to Part II of the Act, and are inconsistent with the Strategic Direction, and with the matters set out in Policy 2.6.4-1.*
3. *In the localities identified pursuant to Method 2.6.5 – 2 TAs shall, in consultation with the ARC, manage activities to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects which could stem from the existing or potential subdivision pattern. Such management may include:*
 - (i) *transferable development rights, including the transfer of rights between TA's, provided such measures will contribute to achieving outcomes consistent with the Strategic Direction and Policies 2.6.4-1, and 2;*
 - (ii) *management of the erection of buildings (including dwellings) including where appropriate provision for the erection of buildings to be contingent upon the acquisition of TDRs;*
 - (iii) *where buildings are permitted, management of their location, size (through methods such as curtilage control), use and appearance, to the extent necessary to avoid, remedy or mitigate significant adverse effects (including cumulative effects) on the environment.*

4. *TAs will, in consultation with the ARC, evaluate the extent to which the provision of activities and rural subdivision approaches comply with Policy 2.6.4. Such an evaluation must consider the cumulative effects that provision for rural subdivision and activities will have in conjunction with other developments (including countryside living opportunities, and urban living opportunities) both within the district and where appropriate within adjoining districts.*
5. *Outcomes of the programme of urban growth monitoring and management identified in Method 2.6.2-1 may have an impact on the rural policies of this RPS. To ensure consistency with Method 2.6.2-2 changes to the rural policies of this RPS may be notified (unless as a result of the process set out in Method 2.6.2-1 it is unnecessary or inappropriate to do so).*

2.6.6 Reasons

The Strategic Direction of the RPS is dependent on the ability to manage growth and control adverse effects. This results in the separation of urban and rural areas, and is primarily achieved through the definition of urban limits and management of activities, including subdivision, in rural areas. It is designed to avoid any adverse effects of urban Auckland on areas outside the metropolitan area, protect the Region's natural resources from significant adverse effects of urban development, retain options for future use of resources and to improve the efficiency of urban Auckland by encouraging development at locations that will promote cost-effective servicing by transportation systems, utility network systems and other works and services.

People place different values on resources and the activities that are undertaken in rural areas. These values influence what people consider to be issues. Integrated resource management in rural areas requires trading off different values to achieve the purpose of the RM Act. Decisions cannot be based on the consideration of a narrow set of issues or values. Inevitably, when there are competing potential uses for the same resources, trade-offs will have to be made between those uses.

Part II of the RM Act (and the RPS policies) requires that a wide range of factors be considered when decisions are made about the use, development or protection of natural and physical resources in rural areas. The following are examples of the range of matters that the

policies require to be considered. It is not an exhaustive analysis.

Different resources and activities have differing degrees of flexibility as to their form and location. For example Class I and II soils, comprise approximately 120,900 ha of the region and are in fixed locations. Water resources also occur in fixed locations, but water can be piped from where it occurs to where it is needed. Because of the adverse effects of some activities on the versatility and productive potential of soils such activities may be more appropriately located on soils of lower versatility.

Some activities may be necessary for social, economic or cultural wellbeing of people and communities but may preclude alternative future uses and may reduce the options available to future generations. It is important that options for the future are not narrowed prematurely or unnecessarily.

Activities which fail to have appropriate regard to the value and vulnerability of soil and water resources may not only deplete the potential of those resources to provide for the needs of future generations but may also fail to safeguard their life-supporting capacity and adversely affect environmental quality.

Some activities produce outputs which are economically or socially important but are accompanied by adverse effects which extend beyond site boundaries. Examples include orcharding, which can give rise to spray drift and noise or intensive animal farming which can generate odour and wastes which potentially can pollute nearby streams.

Failure to:

- choose suitable locations for such activities, and sites of appropriate size and land quality or;
- impose or enforce necessary operating conditions or;
- segregate such activities from sensitive neighbours or vulnerable resource features

can result in adverse effects to health, reduce amenity values, or may diminish the quality of the environment.

The temporal dimension of sustainable management must also be considered. Future users of the Region's resources cannot participate in today's market, and this means that the current market values for resources may not accurately reflect their long term value. Therefore,

resource management agencies, when making decisions which commit resources in rural areas in ways that are not easily changed at a later time, must carefully consider the potential needs of future generations. For example, when considering options for future urban growth or countryside living or the location of urban related activities, the financial return from such development will generally exceed even the most profitable farm crop, and in the absence of resource management processes the most versatile soils might well be inappropriately urbanised or used for urban related development. However, if the life supporting capacity of versatile soils is valued for future generations, and options exist for directing development onto poorer soils, sustainable resource management could mean urban development is located on the poorer soils and the versatile soils are avoided.

In considering the life supporting capacity of rural resources (refer policy 2.6.4-1 (vii)) reference may be made to the productive potential of the resource. Such potential may or may not include uses that are economically advantageous. But all such uses should be ecologically sustainable.

With regard to the subdivision of rural land and the subsequent erection of buildings this has resulted in the fragmentation of significant areas of rural land. In addressing the issue of rural subdivision the policies require that a comprehensive approach is adopted to ensure that as far as possible options for future generations are maintained. Matters that will have to be taken into account include:

- The size of the lots so that they are capable of accommodating a range of activities. At the district level this may mean ensuring that a variety of lot sizes are available.
- The quality and quantity of the soil and water resources.

Activities, including land development and land use changes which follow consequentially from land subdivision, can affect rural landscapes in a variety of ways. In some instances the changes can be beneficial but in others they can be adverse. It is important that the use, development and protection of rural land is managed with regard to the quality and sensitivity of the landscape, as provided by Policy 6.4.19.

In some parts of the Region there is an underlying subdivision pattern of unoccupied titles which have not, to date, been built on. There may be a need in such areas to mitigate as far as possible the adverse effects of excessive fragmentation of land titles. Such adverse effects include impacts upon rural character and amenity and a reduction in the versatility of such lots for a range of productive activities. Mitigation may be achieved by a number of methods, one of which is by introducing a system of transferable development rights. This technique may take various forms, and generally involves establishing a regime in which subdivision to, for example, provide for countryside living or expansion of rural or coastal settlements is dependent on acquiring a development right created by the amalgamation of small lots in rural areas into lots of greater area. This approach is provided for by Method 2.6.5-3. To be effective, it will require co-operation between TAs. Management of the natural and physical resources of the rural parts of the islands of the Hauraki Gulf is driven primarily by the high quality of the heritage, landscape and amenity values of the islands, rather than their agricultural potential or mineral resources. The values which give priority to protection of the heritage and landscape qualities also prevent exploitation of mineral resources, except to meet local needs.

Land quality and historic access limitations have constrained primary production activities on the Gulf islands. Recently however, particular combinations of climate and land quality have led to the establishment of specialist elements of the wine industry on parts of Waiheke. While Policy 2.6.4-1(vii) gives priority to protection of natural resource quality, heritage resources and landscape values, primary production activities of this sort should be enabled.

A greater commitment is also needed to developing databases on such subjects as the nature, volume and value of primary production, land values, land holdings and cadastral information as a basis for identifying rural trends and monitoring the effectiveness of plan provisions (see 2.8 Monitoring).

In order to achieve integrated management an evaluation of Policy 2.6.4-1. (i) (which cross references to other chapters of the RPS) shall include the following matters:

Chapter 3 – Iwi concerns; the existence of features and qualities of significance to Maori;

Chapter 4 – the cumulative effects on the region's transport network, and the effects which intensification of rural settlement patterns have on the safe and efficient functioning of local roads;

Chapter 5 – the cumulative effects within the Region, of low intensity settlement patterns, in terms of energy use, and especially of transport energy;

Chapter 6 – the existence of features or qualities which are significant in terms of natural or cultural heritage; the quality and sensitivity of the landscape, and the effects on it of more intensive subdivision and settlement;

Chapter 7 – effects on the coastal environment, and the need to preserve the natural character of the coastal environment;

Chapter 8 – the effects of intensification of rural land use on the quality of natural water bodies, with particular reference to stormwater and wastewater treatment and disposal;

Chapter 11 – the need to avoid or mitigate the effects of natural hazards, including land instability and flood risk;

Chapter 12 – protection of versatility and productivity of the Region's soils, with greatest protection to the most versatile soils;

Chapter 13 – avoidance of unnecessarily compromising regionally significant mineral extraction activities and mineral deposits;

Chapter 17 – avoidance of contaminated sites, or provision for remediation or mitigation of their adverse effects.

The evaluation (2.6.5-4) is required to include specific reference to how each of the stated outcomes are dealt with, the decision making process including the weightings and reasons for weightings given to each, and on what basis the final decision is made. Where a proposal is evaluated and found to be consistent with the policies, though not actively promoting them, such a proposal may be considered to have made appropriate provision for the policies.

2.6.7 Policy: Regionally significant infrastructure or services

(See definition of 'infrastructure' – Appendix D).

The safe and efficient operation of existing Regional infrastructure and the provision of necessary new Regional infrastructure is to be enabled, planned and undertaken in ways that:

- **give effect to Part II of the RM Act;**
- **are consistent with the Strategic Direction, and with the policies and methods for Urban Growth Management (2.6.1) and for Rural Areas (2.6.4);**
- **consider and make appropriate provision for the following matters:**
 - (i) **The avoidance of significant adverse effects (including cumulative adverse effects) on:**
 - (a) **the environmental values protected by defined limits to metropolitan Auckland and defined limits to rural or coastal settlements**
 - (b) **amenity values throughout the whole of the Region and the rural character of rural areas in the Region.**

Where significant adverse effects cannot be avoided they shall be remedied or mitigated.
 - (ii) **Avoiding prematurely foreclosing, or compromising, options for accommodating the further growth and development of urban areas.**
 - (iii) **Consideration of alternative locations (including locations in urban areas) for utility service facilities which give rise to significant adverse effects on the environment.**
 - (iv) **Environmental enhancement and/or remediation opportunities.**

2.6.8 Methods

1. Policy 2.6.7–1 shall be given effect through the provisions of district plans and the designation process (Part VIII of RM Act) and through the Regional Land Transport Strategy (Transit NZ Act).
2. Policy 2.6.7–1 should also be reflected in TA strategic plans and annual plans and in any strategies, plans and programmes of major operators or providers of regional infrastructure and services.

2.6.9 Reasons

The social and economic wellbeing and health and safety of the Regional community are dependent on the availability and efficient operation of necessary services, and the Region's sustained growth brings with it requirements to upgrade, expand or provide services. How and where this is done not only affects natural and physical resources but also can facilitate or inhibit directions of urban development and promote or inhibit intensification. It is of key importance to ensure that investment in provision, expansion or upgrading of infrastructure is, as far as practicable, consistent with the Strategic Direction, and does not undermine the integrity of the metropolitan urban limits and is consistent with strategies for planned expansion of rural towns and coastal rural towns and coastal settlements.

The policy requires that the whole range of effects (including potential cumulative effects on development patterns in the Region) should be considered when changes are proposed to, and future sites designated for, regionally significant infrastructure, facilities or services. Decisions within the context of the RM Act, regarding changes to or the identification of future sites for regionally significant infrastructure, should have regard to the matters set out in Policy 2.6.7-1, and especially to the consistency of any such proposal with the Strategic Direction. Not only is it essential that these provisions be reflected in district plans, but (as provided by section 104 of the RM Act) consent authorities must also have regard to them when considering applications for resource consents for regionally significant proposals to provide, extend or upgrade regionally significant infrastructure or services.

It will be desirable for service providers to consult with local authorities, and especially with the ARC, in the course of preparing proposals for regionally significant infrastructure facilities or services. Service providers should also consider ways of providing services more efficiently including (where practicable) the shared or multiple use of facilities.

2.7 Environmental Results Anticipated

1. Auckland's population growth and economic development will be accommodated while retaining the Region's intrinsic natural qualities.

2. The land supply available for peripheral expansion and urban intensification will be used efficiently in the long term.
3. There will be a shift of emphasis from continued peripheral development to greater levels of urban intensification.
4. Urban development will occur at such locations and in such a way as to promote cost-effective servicing by transportation systems and networks and public utility services.
5. Development in the Region will be managed so that it does not constrain the efficient and safe operation of Regionally significant infrastructure and facilities.
6. A strategic approach will be implemented to deal with the impacts of urban intensification, taking into account stormwater runoff on a catchment basis, infrastructure requirements, amenity values, open space and community services.
7. Those features which give Auckland its unique sense of place, such as the coastal environments, outstanding natural features and landscapes and its natural and cultural heritage will continue to be protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
8. Urban development will be directed away from areas prone to flooding, from geologically unstable areas and from catchments draining into pollution sensitive estuaries and inlets.
9. Adverse effects including the cumulative effects of development on the environment will be minimised.
10. Subdivision and development of rural land for urban purposes will be managed.
11. Sporadic urban-related development in rural areas will be managed to avoid remedy or mitigate adverse effects.
12. Countryside living and similar development will be focused into areas where the rural natural resource values and the values protected by the urban containment strategy will be maintained.
13. The soil resources of the region, particularly prime and elite land, are protected.
14. Water pollution, air quality concerns, adversely affected ecosystems and contaminated land sites, will be reduced in the long term.
15. Relationships between resource management agencies and Tangata Whenua will be enhanced.

2.8 Monitoring

1. The ARC will monitor and report annually on the form and direction of Regional development, and will monitor the performance and effectiveness of regional policies.
2. Every five years the ARC will collate and interpret Census data which is relevant to assessing the Regional development objectives.
3. The ARC will periodically collate and report on results of monitoring undertaken by TAs in the Region, with regard to the extent to which the provisions of district plans result in outcomes which are consistent with the Strategic Direction and the Regional Development Policies, and also with reference to:
 - (a) take-up of the development capacity of residential and employment activity within TA districts;
 - (b) the cumulative effects of development in rural areas on rural resources.
4. The ARC in consultation with utility providers and TAs will monitor and report on the co-ordination of development in the Region with the provision of infrastructure.