

PART 5 - NATURAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Isthmus' natural and physical characteristics have affected the history of the district and the shape and direction of physical growth. This overriding influence will continue. While urban development has masked some of the former features of the environment, there are a number of notable attributes which require considered attention and for which particular resource management responses have been formulated for inclusion in this Plan.

This Part addresses matters related to the natural and physical environment. In the sub-sections which follow, the Plan provisions relating to natural resources, heritage elements, the coastal environments, and hazardous facilities are set out. Through these provisions, the Plan comprehensively addresses the purposes and principles of the Act to the extent they apply to the natural and physical environment. (See below).

NATURAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

NATURAL & PHYSICAL RESOURCES	ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	HABITATS & THEIR INTRINSIC VALUES	PROTECTING ECOSYSTEMS
* These refer to sections of the Resource Management Act 1991	5(2)(c) Avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment. 7(f) Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.	6(c) The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.	5(2)(b) Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems. 7(d) Intrinsic values of ecosystems.
	MAORI CONSIDERATIONS	HERITAGE VALUES	COASTAL ENVIRONMENT
5(2)(a) Sustaining the potential natural and physical resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations.	6(e) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga. 7(a) Kaitiakitanga. 8 Treaty of Waitangi.	5(2)(a) Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations. 6(b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. 7(e) Recognition and protection of the heritage values of sites, buildings, places or areas.	6(a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands and rivers and their margins. 6(d) The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes and rivers.
7(b) The efficient use and development of natural and physical resources.			
7(c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values.			
7(g) Any finite characteristics of natural and physical resources.			



5.2 NATURAL RESOURCES

The Isthmus' natural resources - water, air, land, soil, habitats, energy and minerals, shape its essential character. The Isthmus is in a relatively favourable position in respect of the present overall quality of these resources although improvements can be effected. The Plan adopts measures to manage use and development in the district so as to prevent adverse impacts and to maintain and enhance these natural resources.

5.3 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

The physical resources of the City include its buildings, structures, infrastructure and services. It is a function of the Plan to sustain the potential of these physical resources. The Plan adopts measures to protect the viability of the existing physical resources and to ensure that development does not exceed infrastructure capacity. It recognises established patterns of development. It identifies and protects the character and amenity of the district, particularly places and features of heritage value.

5.4 COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

The coastline defines the extent of the Isthmus. Its varied and attractive character gives the Isthmus a distinctive pattern of physical and scenic variety which offers recreational value, residential quality and economic opportunity.

Much of the coast is sensitive to development. There is also the necessity to be aware of the existence of archaeological sites protected under the Historic Places Act 1993 which are located over extensive areas of coastline. For reasons of landscape, conservation, scenic or scientific value, changes to the coastline are subject to limits set by considerations of amenity and environmental quality. While there are opportunities for further development, this must be accomplished with complete understanding of and sympathy for the constraints imposed by the scarce coastal land resource.

Accordingly the provisions of the Plan establish a framework whereby the natural character of the coastal environment and associated habitats are protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development and are preserved for future generations. Development within the coast is subject to review and control in order to secure amenity and opportunities for the future.

5.5 HERITAGE FEATURES

The heritage of the Isthmus consists of a unique combination of natural features and the built environment. Individually, and collectively such elements as the volcanic cones, the coastal margin, the historic buildings and places of archaeological significance uniquely identify and act as reference points for the definition of the district. In totality, these elements comprise a rich and imposing legacy of the past, thus giving the district its distinctive identity.

The heritage provisions of the Plan reflect the Council's determination to exercise strong environmental management over the district. The individual controls of the Plan seek to secure the conservation and enhancement of landscape features, buildings and objects, and heritage sites and areas.

5.6 HAZARDS

The sustainable management of the district requires consideration of the dynamics of the environment. The nature and characteristics of the physical attributes of the district imparts to the Isthmus a potential for environmental events and occurrences which may unexpectedly modify the environment at collective or individual cost.

This Plan examines those natural hazard conditions which could arise and which may adversely affect the district. It contains provisions which seek to provide information, minimise risk and enable well-planned and robust development.

Principal areas for assessment include sea level rise, coastal erosion, flooding and land instability. In each case, this Plan provides an understanding of the process, an appreciation of the risks and knowledge of the responsibilities of the Council.

Concerns arising from the operation of hazardous facilities are also addressed. An examination of these matters provides the basis for a set of policy measures which are directed at the safe and responsible operation of these facilities.

5.7 SUMMARY

The matters relating to the natural and physical environment are the basis for the development of resource management objectives and policies. Provisions based on consideration of the natural environment, ensure that the conduct of activities at the individual property level can be regulated so as to



secure the maintenance of essential and non-negotiable environmental outcomes.

The Parts which follow outline the techniques which the Council will use in order to secure quality environments for living, working and recreation. Specific techniques such as zoning, development controls, economic instruments and public education are all part of the Council's inventory in respect of achieving environmental outcomes and managing the resources of the district.

