

The Pirirākau rohe (Te Puna, Huharua, Whakamarama, Apāta, Aongatete) – proposed future planning required

It is proposed that the Smartgrowth Strategy identifies Te Puna and Huharua (Plummers Point) as potential future urban and the District Plan is pending review.

Pirirākau planning documents – Pirirākau Environmental Management Plan – Nga Taonga Tuku Iho 2004 and the Pirirākau Hapū Management Plan 2017 recognises the Pirirākau rohe as being contained within the Wairoa River, the Waipapa River, the Kaimai Mamaku Ridgeline and the Tauranga inner harbour.

¹Pirirākau Treaty Settlement Maps (Wai 227 September 1998 seen on page 4) demarcates the Pirirākau rohe extending from the Wairoa River to the Aongatete River and the map recognises Ngāti Pango and Ngāti Rangī in the lower lying areas alongside the Wairoa River. Over the past 25 years the Pirirākau rohe boundaries have adjusted and they are required to be reset in accordance with the map supplied. During this 25 year period Ngāti Pango and Ngāti Rangī have been further displaced within contemporary planning and they are seeking due recognition of their rohe.

What is considered to be the Pirirākau rohe is subject to future planning. Rural residential is pepper potting throughout the Pirirākau rohe and this has occurred by way of Western Bay of Plenty District Council discretion and the wealth affordability of landowners seeking to develop land. Pirirākau are confronted with subdivision applications rising at an unprecedented level where focus and attention has been given to Ōmokoroa and this has been a time of distraction and unawareness to the balance of the rohe.

The Wairoa River from the existing State Highway 2, Te Puna Station Road to the entrance is remarkably different to the banks of Bethlehem where land development has been maximised. Pirirākau actively protect this position of natural character as the original occupation of Ranginui (Ngāti Ranginui) was founded here. What we know as Pukewhanake today (corner of Clarke Rd and Te Puna Station Rd) was part of a much larger original landscape extending along the ridge known as Clarke Rd to Te Rangituanehu (the Minden) as an ancestral maunga. Nothing can be done in this regard, Te Rangituanehu is largely developed with very little protection existing of the skyline or summit from being further developed as a protected viewshaft. The ridgeline of Clarke Rd retains rural character, and this requires careful consideration protecting viewshafts and ensuring setbacks for sea level rise, manage and retreat.

Developers are purchasing large rural lots and one of the 4 large lots between Clarke Rd and Te Puna Station Rd is proposed to subdivide from rural to rural residential creating 17 Lots. If Councils discretion is going to allow for these arrangements because developers have wealth that we as hapū and local community cannot challenge. What is a traditional rohe of a higher tangata whenua population becomes further marginalised to be further displaced. Our traditional rohe has natural features we seek to protect as well as a natural environment that requires

¹ https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt_DOC_93494460/Wai%20215%2C%20C002.pdf

more careful management. We wish to secure a level of retention of cultural character by identifying and being part of zoning changes and no go areas as we understand blanket approaches of no go zones are unrealistic. We understand the race of Councils to increase ratepayers to better service locality and the organisation of this. As we look to the maximised urbanisation of Ōmokoroa we are observing very poor stormwater management and discharge to the Waipapa River. Pirirākau sought to protect the gully systems to utilise these as part of stormwater management processes but larger culverts with almost direct discharge has been preferred. The effects of this is not taken seriously rather it is simply accepted that land use discharge has taken its toll on kaimoana resources as irreversible, so we seek greater awareness and investment into higher level planning and schemes for discharge treatments. Both Regional and District Councils are short sighting the care of natural watercourses with very little ability to clean prior to discharge.

The Takitimu North Link has severed the Pirirākau rohe imposing managed pathways of natural watercourses and larger concentrated discharges to rivers and streams (surface water). Groundwater and its contamination is not very well understood by Councils relying on modelling without confirmed or accurate information. Tangata whenua and local community have experts and they have naturalised solutions with more to offer than desktop or modelling propositions. We propose an act of coming together with Council planners to identify better informed topics for planning outcomes. This is where protection for future generations of original occupants can take their place and assist others to provide for nga taonga tuku iho of that which has been passed down. We acknowledge that Pirirākau and local community representatives are at times recognised as an annoyance feature, but we remain as the best informed people of our areas.

We seek support within the SmartGrowth Strategy and the WBOPDC District Plan Review processes to form a working group of 4 tangata whenua and 4 local community members with Council/s and their staff focusing on future planning of Te Puna, Huharua, Whakamarama, Apata and Aongatete to consider;

1. Special character zones and rules
2. Rural residential zones and rules
3. Rural zones and rules retaining food productivity
4. Wai – setbacks and treatment rules
5. Cultural sites buffers, interpretation and rules
6. Viewshaft zoning and rules
7. Recreation zoning and rules
8. Local roading, multimodal transport options and rules

Proposed start up members – Monique Neenee (Manaaki Taiao), Sari Eru (Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand Incorporated), Beth Bowden (Te Puna Heartlands), Julie Shepherd (Pirirākau Tribal Authority). This would involve public meetings of hapū and community with wananga to formulate a draft. Many community members have not attended Marae which we see as a necessary enhancement to better

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collective understanding which will involve schools. Bay Conservation will also be approached as Pirirākau currently partner in schools environmental programs. Council to further plan and present back as a proposed plan.

Figure 2 : MAP OF PIRIRAKAU ROHE AND BOUNDARIES
 Source: Adapted from Pirirakau Report, p21

