

Proposed Lake Whakamaru Plan Change

Social Impact Assessment

Prepared for J & T Quigley Ltd

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Authors

Rebecca Foy

rebecca@formative.co.nz

021 181 5210

Tom Worley

tom@formative.co.nz

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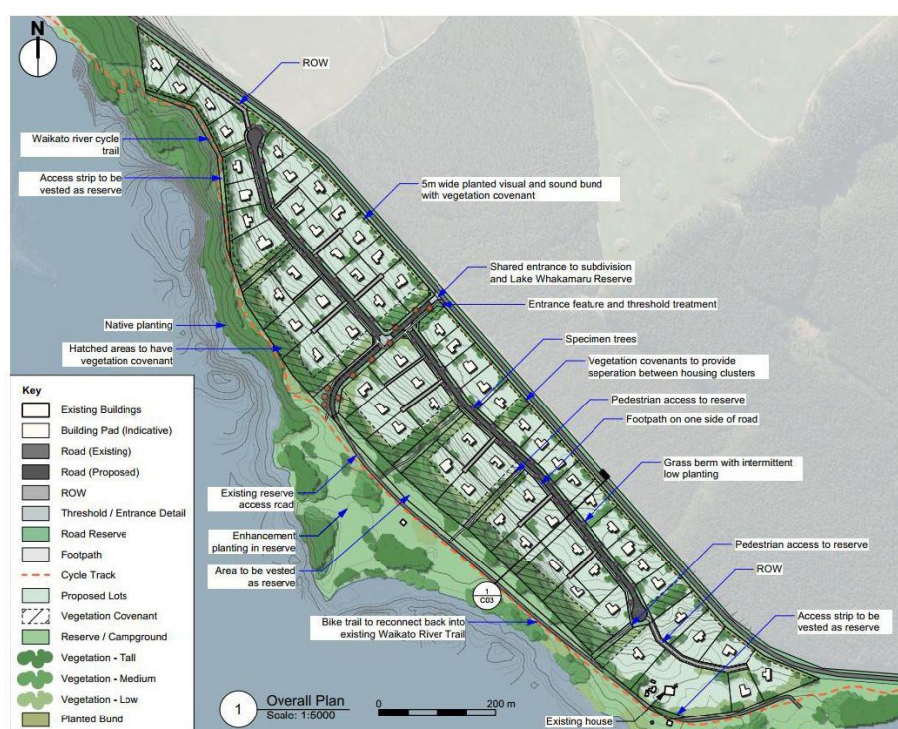
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1 Introduction

1.1 Lake Whakamaru plan change

J & T Quigley propose a private plan change (“PPC”) to rezone a 31.68ha site at 1861 Ongaroto Road (State Highway 30), Whakamaru (“the site”) from Rural to Rural Residential with some site-specific alterations to the South Waikato District Plan (“DP”). The Rural Residential zoning sought would enable a new lifestyle subdivision, indicated in the PPC request to yield 66 lots (dwellings). The section 32 assessment anticipates that the dwellings will accommodate a mixture of permanent (45%) and holiday residents (55%)¹. The indicative lot sizes range from 2,500m² to 12,660m², with an average of 3,674m² (excluding lot 62).

Figure 1.1: Lake Whakamaru PPC Overall Plan²



The site is located along the north-eastern shores of Lake Whakamaru which is approximately 30km south of Tokoroa and 55km north of Taupō. The closest small towns are Whakamaru (2.5km) and Mangakino (9km). The site is currently mainly covered by juvenile plantation forestry, and the surrounding area consists of plantation forestry to the east and agricultural production (dairy and dry

¹ Derived from the Urban Economics Report

² Feathers Planning, 2023. Application for a Plan Change in respect of Lot 9 DP 425239 and Part Lot 1 DP 24479 – 1861 Ongaroto Road, Whakamaru.

stock grazing) to the north. To the south is Lake Whakamaru which was created as part of the hydroelectric scheme and provides recreational and amenity benefits.

The purpose of this report is to provide a social impact assessment (“SIA”) for the PPC to help understand the likely positive and negative effects of the proposal. Council has requested that a SIA is provided to describe the potential effects of the PPC on existing Whakamaru Village residents, lake and reserve recreational users, and the Whakamaru and Mangakino townships and surrounding communities. Key issues identified for inclusion in the SIA include any effects on amenity, recreation, reverse sensitivity, and additional demand for community infrastructure.

1.2 What is a social impact assessment?

1.2.1 What are social impacts?

Social impact assessment (SIA) is a process that provides information to decision makers and affected people when planning for change.³ It includes analysing the intended and unintended consequences of policies, plans, programmes and projects on people and communities.⁴ Social impacts refer to changes to individuals and communities resulting from proposed changes that will alter the day-to-day way in which people live, work, play, relate to each other, organise to meet their needs, and generally participate as members of society⁵. Social impacts can involve changes to people’s ways of life including⁶:

- ❖ How people live, for example, the number of people and their demographic characteristics, urban/rural uses of land, urban form, and provision of adequate housing.
- ❖ Livelihoods; how people work, e.g., access to a range of employment options and working conditions and their ability to collect, catch, grow, and exchange food⁷.
- ❖ How people play, including access to leisure and recreation activities (indoors and outdoors).
- ❖ People’s daily interactions and social connectedness.
- ❖ Community elements, including composition, cohesion, character, functionality, and sense of place.

³ Taylor, C.N. and Mackay, M. (2022). Social Impact Assessment: Guidelines for Thriving Communities and Regions. Building Better Homes Towns and Cities, Wellington, New Zealand.

⁴ Vanclay, F., Esteves, A. M. and Franks, D. M. (2015). Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for Assessing and Managing the Social Impacts of Projects. USA: International Association for Impact Assessment. Available at https://www.iaia.org/uploads/pdf/SIA_Guidance_Document_IAIA.pdf

⁵ Burdge, R.J. 2004. Social Impact Assessment: Definition and Historical Trends, in Burdge, R.J (2004) The Concepts, Process and Methods of Social Impact Assessment.

⁶ NSW Department of Planning and Environment (2017). Social Impact Assessment Guideline.

⁷ Taylor, C.N. and Mackay, M. (2022). Social Impact Assessment: Guidelines for Thriving Communities and Regions. Building Better Homes Towns and Cities, Wellington, New Zealand.

- ❖ Access to, and use, of infrastructure, services, and facilities, for example transport options, three-waters, flood protection, telecommunication including internet, hospitals, schools, retail, services, and public agencies.
- ❖ Culture, including shared beliefs, customs, values and stories, and connections to land, places, and buildings.
- ❖ Health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health and personal safety.
- ❖ Surroundings, including access to, and use of, ecosystem services and the natural and built environment, and its aesthetic value and/or amenity, public safety, and security.
- ❖ Resilience to risks and threats and the ability to adapt to change.
- ❖ Personal and property rights, including economic livelihoods, and relative disadvantages or civil liberties.
- ❖ Decision-making systems, including leadership and political systems, particularly the extent to which people can have a voice in decisions that affect their lives, and access to mechanisms for complaint, remedy, and grievance.
- ❖ Fears and Aspirations, related to one or a combination of the above, or about the future of their community.

1.2.2 Key elements of a Social Impact Assessment

A social impact assessment is the documentation and processing of a broad range of social, cultural, demographic, and economic consequences of activities and possible alternatives for all major stakeholders (individuals, groups, communities, and sectors of society), that have an interest in, or are likely to be affected by a proposed action. This process assists decision makers to balance economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

An SIA attempts to address the following questions:

- ❖ What will happen if a proposed action were to be implemented – why, when, and where?
- ❖ Who will be affected?
- ❖ Who will benefit and who will lose?
- ❖ What will change under different alternatives?
- ❖ How can adverse impacts be avoided or mitigated, and benefits enhanced?

Social impacts vary in their nature, and can be⁸:

- ❖ Positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse).
- ❖ Tangible or intangible.
- ❖ Direct, indirect, or cumulative.

^{8 8} NSW Department of Planning and Environment (2017). Social Impact Assessment Guideline.

- ❖ Directly, indirectly, or partly quantifiable, or only able to be described and assessed in qualitative terms.
- ❖ Experienced differently, by different people and groups, by different communities and at different stages of the project (short-term, long-term, one-off, multiple, localised, widespread, reversible, irreversible, low probability or high probability).

Impacts can kick-start a chain of impacts that can often start with an impact that is not obviously social. For example, water pollution in a stream can in turn affect the stream's ecology, and as a result people may stop using the stream to collect water or kai, swim, or fish.

SIA helps decision makers balance the outcomes sought from a change by⁹:

- ❖ Exploring the social impacts ahead of decision making
- ❖ Designing mitigations that will reduce negative impacts and enhance positive aspects.
- ❖ Managing social impacts once change occurs.
- ❖ Monitoring longer term community outcomes.

The SIA process includes milestones and deliverables such as reports and plans during the change cycle. The process should start as early as possible, at the inception stage (prior to implementation), during the delivery and after the change is implemented.

The key steps to understanding the SIA process for Lake Whakamaru were:

- ❖ Scoping the SIA. This step sought to understand the proposed changes, including the background technical information and reports providing justification for the proposed changes, and the geographic context for those who will be impacted. For this assessment we reviewed the community engagement feedback provided to Feathers Planning through written feedback and from a community survey and drop in meetings to help identify some of the social impacts identified by the community.
- ❖ Analysis of the current situation (social baseline) and planning overview. We have described the key planning objectives and policies which are relevant to this SIA. The analysis of the baseline situation includes population and households, employment activity, social infrastructure, and demographics such as age, ethnicity, income, education, employment status and home ownership. The social baseline describes the social conditions, community, and way of life before any effects of the proposed changes.
- ❖ Estimation of effects. In this step the potential effects from the PPC are estimated with reference to social impacts literature. The impact assessment compares the current situation with the expected effects of developing the site for rural-residential activity. This

⁹ Taylor, C.N. and Mackay, M. (2022). Social Impact Assessment: Guidelines for Thriving Communities and Regions. Building Better Homes Towns and Cities, Wellington, New Zealand.

step also helps to identify any further strategies to avoid, reduce, enhance, or remedy the likely outcomes.

1.2.3 Treasury Living Standards Framework

We have used the Treasury Living Standards Framework (LSF) to guide our assessment and included the four Capital stocks that support wellbeing. The LSF represents a shared understanding of the building blocks needed to grow and support New Zealanders' wellbeing, now and into the future. The LSF consists of 12 domains of current wellbeing, the four Capital stocks which support wellbeing, and risk and resilience. The four Capital stocks are ¹⁰:

- ❖ Human - encompasses people's skills, knowledge and physical and mental health which enable people to participate fully in work, study, recreation and in society more broadly.
- ❖ Financial and physical- includes both financial and man-made physical assets which make up the country's produced assets and have a direct role in supporting incomes and material living conditions. This includes things like houses, roads, buildings, hospitals, factories, equipment, and investments.
- ❖ Social - describes the norms and values that underpin society which influence the way people live and work together and experience a sense of belonging. It includes things like trust, the rule of law, the Crown-Māori relationship, cultural identity, traditions and the connections between people and communities.
- ❖ Natural - refers to all the interconnected aspects of the natural environment needed to support life and human activity. It includes soil, land, water, plants, and animals, as well as minerals and energy resources.

An important contribution of the Treasury framework is understanding that these elements are intrinsically linked, requiring policy makers to consider different dimensions of wellbeing. Fostering intergenerational wellbeing means growing the four elements to be strong individually, but also collectively, and being aware of the ways each influences the others.

1.3 SIA broad social indicators

The following broad indicators were defined for the social impact assessment (as discussed in section 3):

- i) **Urban form** – types, density and cost of housing, infrastructure and services and the functionality of urban form in relation to economic and social life.

¹⁰ The Treasury (2019). Our living standards framework. Retrieved from <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/our-living-standards-framework>

- ii) **Environment** –consequences of changes in the physical and natural environment for people and communities, and the ability to govern and sustain natural systems in culturally appropriate ways.
- iii) **Access and connectivity** - to goods and services, health, education, training, employment, and consumption (retail, business activity, etc.), including the ability and costs of moving about (connectivity)
- iv) **Social Cohesion** – the ability of all people, including Treaty partners, to form cohesive social and cultural relationships in spatially defined places.
- v) **Livelihoods** – people and households’ access to places of work, business opportunities, investments, and incomes and the resulting patterns of employment and income options, including risks to material wellbeing through damage to property access and earning potential.
- vi) **Health and safety** – people’s ability to live safely, and the physical and mental health outcomes resulting from avoiding risks from coastal hazards.
- vii) **Social equity** – the distribution of positive/negative effects, for different types of household and social groups, including vulnerable groups.

1.4 Objectives and scope

The primary objective of this report is to identify the likely range of effects on social wellbeing that may arise from the conversion of rural land to rural residential uses for the PPC area, on the northern edge of the Waikato River by Lake Whakamaru.

1.5 Report structure

The remaining parts of this report are structured into the following four sections:

- ❖ Section 2 describes the relevant planning considerations regarding conversion of rural land to rural residential activities at Lake Whakamaru. The social areas of influence are defined and mapped, and a description of the current demographic composition and likely changes are described for those areas.
- ❖ Section 3 provides an assessment of the seven social wellbeing elements that have been assessed for this project. Firstly, the key considerations have been described in relation to international literature. Secondly, the likely effects of the PPC are described. The final section for each wellbeing element provides a summary of the likely positive and negative effects of the PPC.
- ❖ Section 4 provides an overall conclusion of the SIA and compares the likely positive and negative outcomes that may arise from alternative development or no change scenarios.

2 Baseline situation

This section describes the planning considerations, demographic characteristics, social issues, and social infrastructure present in each of the social areas of influence.

2.1 Planning considerations

2.1.1 Land use zoning

The PPC seeks to change the zoning of the site from Rural Zone to Rural Residential Zone.

South Waikato District's Rural Zones are areas where production activities that are reliant on the land resource are encouraged and managed in a way that protects the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River. Notable rules in that regard in the Rural Zone include:

- ❖ Dwellings and visitor accommodation are permitted activities, but buildings can only cover 5% for sites of 1ha or larger.
- ❖ A maximum of two dwellings are permitted on sites that are between 4ha and 70ha.
- ❖ Accommodation buildings can cater for up to 8 guests.

The Rural Residential Zone is designed to give people the choice to live in rural environments but not engage in primary production, and a smaller minimum lot size is permitted in the Rural Residential Zone than the Rural Zone to facilitate this. There are three main locations for rural residential living in the District near Tokoroa, Tīrau, and Putāruru, along with several locations near Council reserves adjacent to the Waikato River. It is anticipated that subdivision in Rural Residential zones will be clustered and will not detract from the natural, landscape and ecological values along the Waikato River.

2.1.2 Social wellbeing provisions in planning documents

The DP has specific policies and objectives relating to the social wellbeing of communities living and using resources in the district. The key matters include:

- ❖ Issue 1 recognises that the Waikato River is an important resource that provides for the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of the district's people and communities and good management is essential to prevent degradation of the river. These principles are also acknowledged in Waikato Regional Council's Regional Policy Statement ("RPS").
- ❖ Issue 2 acknowledges the importance of the Waikato River to tangata whenua as a source of spiritual, cultural, social, and physical sustenance. Other social issues considered in Issue 2 include access to and affordability of housing and ensuring that good air quality prevails.

- ❖ Issue 3 supports enhancing the vibrancy of the district's towns and ensuring that towns are prosperous to enable them to provide the range of community facilities and services that the population needs access to.
- ❖ Issue 4 maintains that the productive potential of rural areas should be safeguarded as significant parts of the district's economy are located there.
- ❖ Issue 6 describes the importance of infrastructure, communications, and major industrial sites in providing for the community's social and economic needs. This is also acknowledged in the RPS.

2.2 Social areas of influence

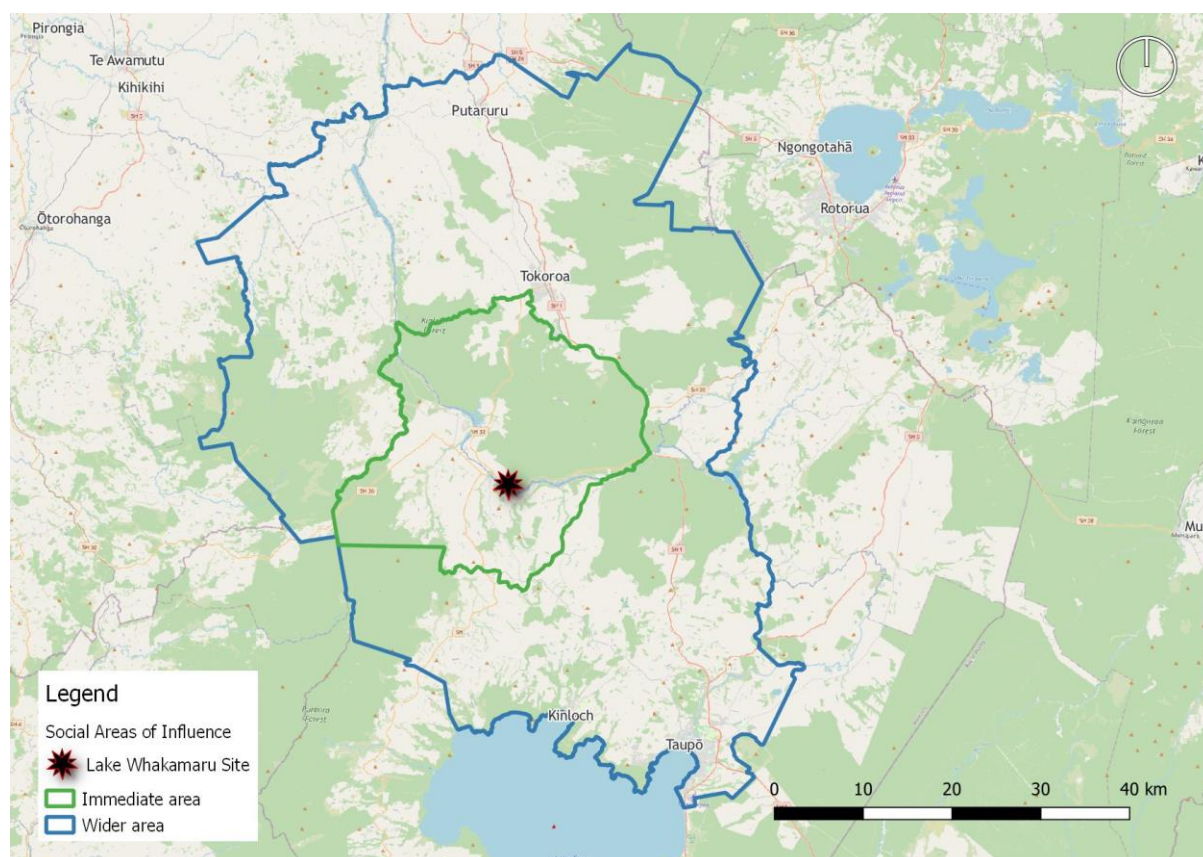
Lake Whakamaru is located in South Waikato District, with the nearest villages being at Whakamaru (2.5km) and the larger Mangakino centre (9 km). The site's closest larger centres are at Tokoroa (30km) and Taupō (55km).

For this assessment we have defined two areas of social influence ([Figure 2.1](#)), due to the property owner initiating the PPC for their landholding only. The social areas of influence are defined by grouping Statistics NZ's Statistical Area 1 definitions. These have been chosen because most demographic information is available at this spatial scale from Statistics NZ.

The *Immediate Area* extends to include the northern and southern rural areas surrounding the site and include the towns of Whakamaru and Mangakino. The *Wider Area* (which includes the Immediate Area) extends to north of Putāruru, midway between Tīrau and Putāruru, and includes Arapuni. The western extent is defined by Pureora Forest, and the eastern extent is to the east of State Highway One part way to Rotorua and the southern extent includes Taupō, and runs along the northern edge of Lake Taupō, including the coastal settlements of Acacia Bay and Kinloch. The two main centres within the wider catchment are Taupō, with a resident population of approximately 29,600 people in 2023, and Tokoroa, approximately half the size of Taupō (14,600 people). The patterns for these two areas have been compared with trends and patterns for Waikato Region and New Zealand as a whole.

Lake Whakamaru is a tourist destination with a camping ground and many holiday homes which are used by people that enjoy the lake, and especially for water skiing activities. Therefore, some of the affected people will come from a much wider catchment, depending on where their permanent homes are located.

Figure 2.1: Social areas of influence for Lake Whakamaru SIA¹¹



2.3 Community situation

This section provides information about the social conditions, community, and way of life in Lake Whakamaru and the surrounding localities (social areas of influence) before lodgement of the PPC application.

2.3.1 Directly affected properties in Lake Whakamaru SP area

The site is 31ha, located 2km east of Whakamaru village on the southern shore of Lake Whakamaru. The property is solely owned by J. & T. Quigley Ltd.

2.3.2 Population and household growth

The population in the immediate area is currently 2,050 people, with growth rates between 2023 and 2048 in the immediate area (9.3%) expected to be broadly similar to South Waikato District (9.7%) (Figure 2.2). Whakamaru Village currently has an estimated population of around 180 people and is expected to grow to around 200 residents over the next 15 years (without the PPC). The wider area

¹¹ Defined using Statistics NZ SA1s

(which includes areas outside of South Waikato District) has a population of 58,930 people and is expected to grow by 10.6% by 2048.

Figure 2.2: Medium population growth projections in social areas of influence for Lake Whakamaru SIA¹²

Study Area Population	2018	2023	2028	2033	2038	2043	2048	2023-2048 %
Whakamaru	175	184	190	194	197	199	199	7.9%
Immediate Area	1,940	2,050	2,110	2,170	2,200	2,230	2,240	9.3%
Wider Area	55,110	58,930	60,880	62,340	63,680	64,590	65,150	10.6%
South Waikato District	24,810	26,140	26,880	27,450	27,980	28,390	28,670	9.7%
Waikato Region	475,620	519,910	549,180	574,490	597,770	618,830	638,860	22.9%
New Zealand	4,900,820	5,149,310	5,354,330	5,564,610	5,753,120	5,923,740	6,077,740	18.0%

There are currently 770 households in the immediate area, including 69 in Whakamaru Village. Household growth by 2048 is expected to be around 100 households in the immediate area, and 3,060 households in the wider area. South Waikato District is expected to grow by 1,210 households for the same period if current patterns persist.

Figure 2.3: Household growth in social areas of influence for Lake Whakamaru SIA¹³

Study Area Households	2018	2023	2028	2033	2038	2043	2048	2023-2048 %
Whakamaru	65	69	72	74	76	76	76	10.4%
Immediate Area	720	770	800	830	850	860	870	13.0%
Wider Area	21,190	22,970	23,950	24,740	25,440	25,750	26,030	13.3%
South Waikato District	9,300	9,910	10,290	10,570	10,890	11,000	11,120	12.2%
Waikato Region	176,290	194,700	206,560	217,210	226,640	234,030	241,700	24.1%
New Zealand	1,795,440	1,905,650	1,991,650	2,083,400	2,160,840	2,221,660	2,283,610	19.8%

We understand there is very little stock currently available for rent in Whakamaru and Mangakino. A local letting agent has advised that there have been only two properties at any time this year listed for rent in Mangakino¹⁴ and our search of Trade Me confirms that there is very limited stock available, with one rental listed in each of Mangakino and Whakamaru.¹⁵

2.3.3 Lake Whakamaru Areas of Influence demographics

Understanding the types of individuals and households that are likely to be impacted by the PPC is an important consideration, and especially in relation to social equity. Appendix One includes tables showing the proportions of the population for each demographic variable from the 2018 Census of

¹² Defined using Statistics NZ SA1s

¹³ Defined using Statistics NZ SA1s

¹⁴ Westerman Property Solutions (2023) Mangakino Rental Information 2023

¹⁵ Trademe (2023) Rental Search as at 6 June 2023

Population and Dwellings for each of the areas of social influence in comparison to the South Waikato District, Waikato Region, and national averages.

Population profile

The population in the immediate area broadly reflects the regional age distribution, although with slightly smaller shares of retirement aged people and slightly larger shares of children. By comparison, the wider surrounds have higher than average shares of retirement aged people (18%) and lower shares of young working aged people (15-29 years old) ([Figure 2.4](#)).

Interestingly, males make up 52% of the population and females 48% of the immediate area, while across the broader social areas of influence, through to the national average, females account for just over 50% of the population and males just under 50% - perhaps reflecting local job opportunities that are of more interest to males.

In the immediate area 55% of people identify as NZ European, much lower than the regional average of 64%. The immediate area also has the highest Māori population proportion with 34%, compared to 29% in South Waikato District, 21% in Waikato Region and just under 15% nationally. The immediate area has a low proportion of Pacific People (2.7%) compared to South Waikato district (10%), but a higher proportion of Asian people (5.5%) compared to the South Waikato District (3.4%).

The immediate area has a less settled population than the district and region overall, with low shares of people living at their usual residence at the last census. The immediate area also has a higher proportion of residents who were living overseas five years ago (5.9%) compared to South Waikato District (2.5%) and Waikato Region (5.4%). There were higher than average shares of people who had been living in their homes for less than a year (28%).

Figure 2.4: Population profiles in areas of influence, 2018¹⁶

	Immediate Area	Wider surrounds	South Waikato District	Waikato Region	New Zealand
Age					
Children (<15 yrs)	23%	22%	23%	21%	20%
Young working (15-29)	19%	18%	19%	20%	21%
Older working (30-64)	44%	43%	42%	43%	45%
Retirement aged (65+)	14%	18%	15%	16%	15%
Ethnicity					
NZ European	55%	63%	56%	64%	62%
Māori	34%	25%	29%	21%	15%
Pacific Peoples	3%	6%	10%	4%	7%
Asian	6%	4%	3%	8%	13%
MELAA and Other*	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Sex					
Male	52%	50%	50%	49%	49%
Female	48%	50%	50%	51%	51%
Years at Usual Residence (U.R.)					
0 years	28%	21%	19%	21%	20%
1-4 years	34%	35%	32%	35%	34%
5-9 years	13%	16%	15%	16%	17%
10+ years	26%	29%	33%	27%	29%
U.R. 5 Years Ago					
Same as UR	33%	38%	42%	37%	40%
Elsewhere in NZ	51%	50%	46%	49%	45%
Not born five years ago	10%	8%	9%	8%	7%
Overseas	6%	4%	3%	5%	8%
No fixed abode	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*MELAA is Middle Eastern, Latin American and African

Household profile

Household incomes in the immediate area are on average higher than the South Waikato District averages, with 67% of households earning over \$50,000 per year, compared to 61%. This share is also higher than the rates seen in Waikato Region (64%) and nationally (66%). However, it should be noted that this is primarily due to the immediate area having the highest proportion of households earning between \$50,000-\$100,000 (38%) rather than seeing households at the upper end of the income spectrum of over \$100,000 annually ([Figure 2.5](#)).

¹⁶ Statistics NZ Census of Population and Dwellings, 2018

Figure 2.5: Household profiles in areas of influence, 2018¹⁷

	Immediate Area	Wider surrounds	South Waikato District	Waikato Region	New Zealand
Household Income					
<\$30,000	17%	21%	21%	20%	19%
\$30,001-\$50,000	15%	18%	18%	16%	15%
\$50,001-\$70,000	19%	16%	16%	15%	13%
\$70,001-\$100,000	20%	17%	17%	17%	16%
\$100,000+	28%	28%	28%	33%	37%
Household Type					
One person household	23%	25%	25%	23%	23%
Couple only	27%	28%	28%	27%	26%
Couple with child(ren)	30%	25%	25%	27%	27%
One parent with child(ren)	6%	9%	9%	9%	9%
Multi-family	13%	12%	12%	15%	16%
Dwelling Tenure					
Owned or partly owned	53%	65%	63%	64%	65%
Not owned	47%	35%	37%	36%	36%
Sector of Landlord					
Private	87%	93%	92%	88%	83%
Local Council	5%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Housing NZ	0%	3%	2%	8%	12%
Iwi, hapu or Maori land trust	6%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Other community housing provi	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other state owned enterprise oi	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

The immediate area has higher shares of households consisting of couples with children (30%) compared to South Waikato District (25%) and Waikato Region (27%). Correspondingly there are lower shares of single parent houses (6%), couple only houses (27%) and single person households (23%) in the immediate area. The balance is made up of multi-family households (13%) which is slightly higher than South Waikato District (12%) but lower than Waikato Region (15%).

In the immediate area 26% of households were considered unoccupied private dwellings, which is significantly higher than the wider surrounds. South Waikato District had 5% of dwellings unoccupied, Waikato Region had 9% of dwellings unoccupied and the national average was 5%. This suggests over a quarter of dwellings in the immediate area are used as a secondary/holiday home. Across all areas the proportion of unoccupied dwellings is decreasing.

¹⁷ Ibid

The immediate area of influence has lower home ownership rates (53%) than both South Waikato District (63%) and Waikato Region (64%), and correspondingly the immediate area has the highest proportion of renters (47%), compared to 36-37% for the broader areas of influence.

Employment, education, and income profile

The immediate area of influence has employment characteristics similar to the wider surrounds, with 63% of people employed full- or part-time, 5% of people unemployed and 32% not in the labour force. There were higher shares of employed people in comparison to the South Waikato District average (58%), but the shares were broadly similar to the regional average. Similarly, 44% of people living in the immediate area sourced their income from paid employment. However, the immediate area of influence differentiates itself slightly with a higher proportion of people in self-employment – 13% compared to 11% for the other areas ([Figure 2.6](#)). The immediate area also has a lower proportion of people generating income from investment sources. This perhaps reflects the predominance of households in middle income bands.

The immediate area also had the highest proportion of people who work in the trades and labouring sector, with 40% of workers, compared to 43% for the South Waikato District, 32% in the Waikato Region and 29% nationally.

Agriculture and farming was the dominant local employment sector, accounting for 42% of jobs (19% in South Waikato District, 10% for Waikato region and 6% nationally). Manufacturing, construction and education were the next biggest employment sectors with approximately 8% each.

In terms of education, the immediate area of influence has 57% of residents with secondary school or work qualifications, compared to 59% for the wider surrounds, 55% for Waikato region and 51% nationally. However the immediate area of influence has the lowest proportion of people (13%) with a university or overseas qualification, and additionally has the highest proportion of people with no qualification (30%), the same as the South Waikato District figure.

Figure 2.6: Employment, education and income profiles in areas of influence, 2018¹⁸

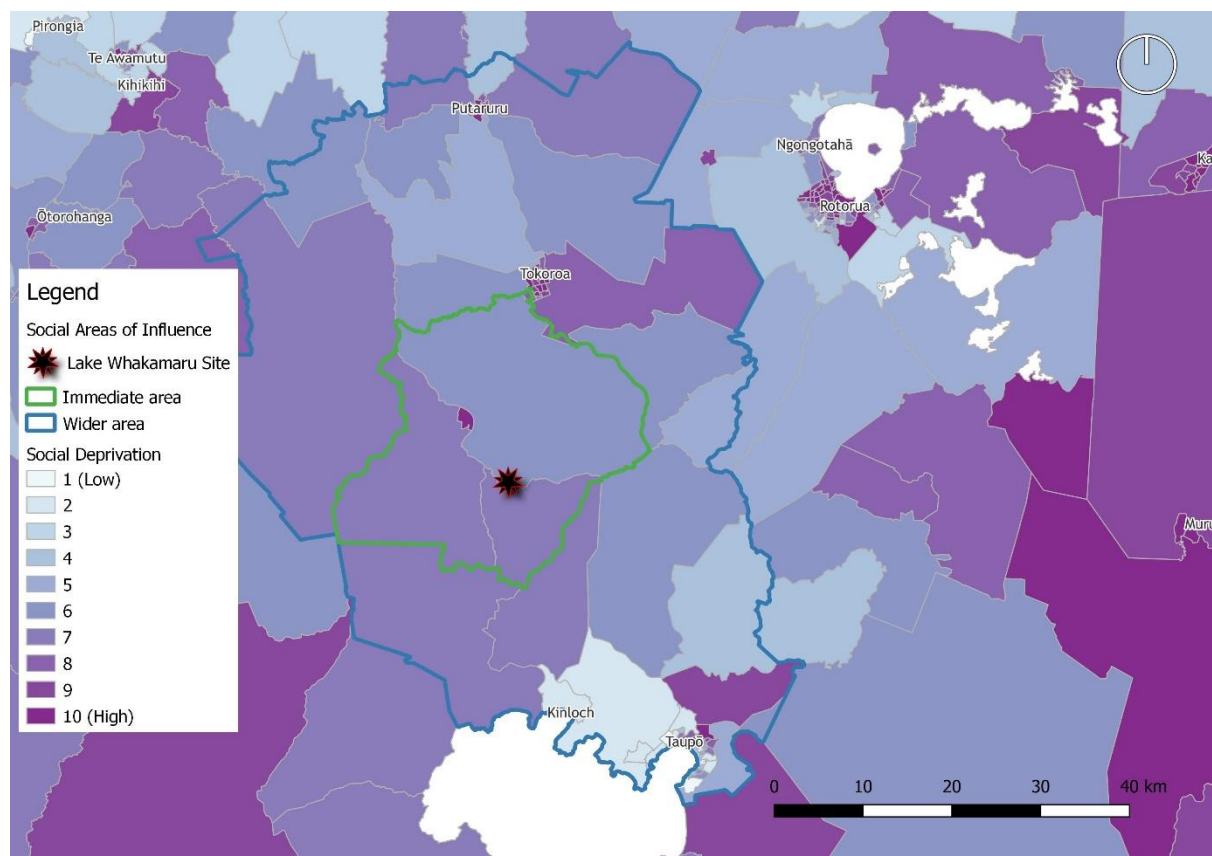
	Immediate Area	Wider surrounds	South Waikato District	Waikato Region	New Zealand
Employment status					
Employed (FT or PT)	63%	63%	58%	64%	65%
Unemployed	5%	4%	6%	4%	4%
Not in Labour Force	32%	33%	35%	32%	31%
Occupation type					
Manager/ prof.	42%	35%	32%	40%	41%
Trades and labourers	40%	38%	43%	32%	29%
Services, clerical, sales and ad	18%	28%	25%	28%	30%
Study Participation >5yrs					
Full time	20%	19%	20%	21%	21%
Part time	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Not studying	77%	79%	78%	76%	76%
Highest qualification					
None	30%	24%	30%	21%	18%
Secondary School and Work Qu	57%	59%	57%	55%	51%
University	10%	14%	10%	20%	25%
Overseas	3%	4%	3%	4%	6%
Source of Income					
Paid Employment	44%	42%	42%	43%	44%
Self Employment	13%	11%	9%	11%	11%
Private Investents	7%	11%	8%	11%	12%
Benefits and Allowances	31%	32%	37%	30%	28%
No Source	5%	4%	5%	4%	5%
Occupation by Industry					
Agriculture Forestry and Fishin	42%	14%	19%	10%	6%
Mining	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Manufacturing	8%	12%	18%	11%	10%
Electricity Gas Water and Wast	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Construction	7%	8%	7%	10%	9%
Wholesale Trade	3%	3%	2%	4%	5%
Retail Trade	3%	9%	7%	9%	9%
Accommodation and Food Servi	4%	9%	5%	6%	7%
Transport Postal and Warehou	1%	5%	5%	3%	4%
Information Media and Telecon	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Financial and Insurance Servi	0%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Rental Hiring and Real Estate S	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Professional Scientific and Tecl	4%	6%	5%	8%	10%
Administrative and Support Ser	5%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Public Administration and Safe	3%	4%	3%	5%	5%
Education and Training	8%	7%	8%	9%	8%
Health Care and Social Assistar	5%	7%	8%	10%	9%
Arts and Recreation Services	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Other Services	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%

Deprivation Index

The Index of Multiple Deprivation¹⁹ is a measure of relative social deprivation expressed by combining variables such as employment, income, crime, housing, health, education, and access to services and comparing each suburb's score with the national distribution. The information provides a snapshot of the levels of social deprivation in 2018.

South Waikato is the only district in the Waikato region that ranks within the 12 most deprived districts in the North Island with 74.4% of their population living in areas falling within the 20% most deprived areas in NZ. This means that three quarters of South Waikato residents are experiencing severe socio-economic hardship.²⁰ South Waikato District is ranked as the fifth most deprived area in New Zealand, however, it should be noted that the most deprived areas are located in the town centres of Tokoroa and Putāruru, and not in the immediate area.

Figure 2.7: South Waikato District Social Deprivation



The immediate area to the north, overall ranks better than South Waikato District due to less deprivation in the areas of health and income in particular, but as it is not a main centre it has increased deprivation in terms of access and also a high deprivation index score resulting from crime.

¹⁹ <https://imdmap.auckland.ac.nz/download/>

²⁰ <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/assets/WRC/WRC-2019/TR202114.pdf>

While the immediate area to the south has a slightly higher deprivation score due to high levels of deprivation in access, health, education, and housing.

2.3.4 Social infrastructure

The site is situated in a part of South Waikato that has a very small local population. As such there are limited social facilities neighbouring the site except for outdoor, open space reserves and a recreational trail along the Waikato River. However, the location is only a short drive from larger town centres, including Tokoroa and Taupō, supporting various forms of social infrastructure that are accessible to the local community.

Within Whakamaru Village there are 15 businesses which support a local workforce of 22 people. These are small businesses in the hospitality (That Dam Café, Russmans), accommodation (That Dam Lodge), commercial services, automotive (G.A.S and Lake RV), industrial and rural sectors (South Waikato Veterinary Services, Ballance).

The local school is an important community node catering for primary school aged children. Access to the natural environment either on Lake Whakamaru or on land with various walking and cycling trails, and close access to the ancient Pureora Forest, provide good amenity and recreation opportunities for residents and holidaymakers.

The following key social infrastructure is available within the immediate area and wider surrounds:

- ❖ Shopping centres – There is one retail and hospitality store in Whakamaru (Whakamaru Store) and a petrol station (G.A.S). Residents will need to travel to nearby towns to support their broader retail and service needs. Nearby Mangakino has a slightly wider variety of options, with a Four Square, café, takeaway store, gym, accountant, real estate agent, and medical services. Tokoroa is the most accessible shopping centre (supporting 102 retail, hospitality and food outlets) based on proximity, with a larger centre in Taupō (supporting almost 400 retail, hospitality and food outlets).
- ❖ Supermarkets – the most accessible large supermarkets are located in Tokoroa, which has a Countdown and New World. Also within a short commute is Countdown in Putāruru and the Countdown and Pak’N Save supermarkets in Taupō. All these nearby town centres also have a range of specialist food outlets.
- ❖ Employment areas –Whakamaru Village provides a small level of local employment (22 jobs in total, including surrounding areas due to how statistical areas are defined geographically). The nearest significant employment centres are Tokoroa and Taupō, supporting 4,200 and 14,650 jobs each respectively across all employment sectors.
- ❖ Education

- ❖ Early childhood education centres – Whakamaru has Kiwisteps, while in Mangakino there is the Rangimokura Te Kohanga Reo centre.
- ❖ Primary schools and intermediate – in Whakamaru there is a primary school (years 1 to 8), and there is also a primary school in Mangakino.
- ❖ Secondary schools – There are four secondary schools that are available to students in South Waikato District. The closest schools are Forest View High School and Tokoroa College, both in Tokoroa. Additionally, there are two secondary schools in Putāruru – Putāruru College and Te Wharekura o Te Kaokaoroa o Pātetere. There is also a Teen Parent Unit in Tokoroa called Pa Harakeke Teen Parent Unit
- ❖ Tertiary and skills training – Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology has a campus located in Tokoroa, which focuses on training for local industries such as farming, forestry, timber, and paper. There is also a campus in Taupō, offering other subjects such as business administration, carpentry and construction, beauty therapy and automotive skills.
- ❖ Healthcare – The nearest medical centre, Mangakino Health Services, is located 2km north of Whakamaru in Mangakino. There is also a St John’s Ambulance service located there. In the surrounding town centres of Tokoroa and Taupō there are various medical centres and hospitals in each of these locations, alongside a broader range of health care services such as pharmacies, physios, etc. The closest major hospitals are in Rotorua and Hamilton.
- ❖ Libraries and community centres – There is a small library in Mangakino. South Waikato District’s largest library is located in Tokoroa. Other nearby libraries are located in Putāruru and in Taupō.
- ❖ Open space and playgrounds – Whakamaru Reserve is located on the opposite side of the river from the site. Part of the Waikato River Trails runs past the site and the divestment of land by the developer will further enhance this public asset through new connections. The Pureora Forest Park, an area of outstanding natural beauty, is also located nearby and is accessible for public use of walking and cycling trails.
- ❖ Active recreation
 - ❖ Outdoor activities – Whakamaru is well placed for its accessibility to outdoor recreation activities on the lake, particularly trout fishing (supported by Fish and Game New Zealand) and boat based activities such as water skiing and wakeboarding (supported by the Whakamaru Ski Club).
 - ❖ Recreation centres – The South Waikato Sports and Events Centre and South Waikato Indoor Pools are located in Tokoroa, offering various indoor and outdoor sporting facilities.
 - ❖ Sportsclubs – Whakamaru Ski Club is the closest local sports club, with Mangakino offering clubs that provide services for golf, rugby league and rowing. Tokoroa

nearby has several other clubs that are engaged in a range of sports across all age levels.

- ❖ Gyms – The nearest gym is the Mangakino Fit Gym. Tokoroa, Taupō and Putāruru all also offer various gym and fitness studio facilities.
- ❖ Airports – Tokoroa has a small airfield, but for most regional air travel residents need to travel to Rotorua, Taupō or Hamilton.

3 Assessment of social wellbeing effects

This section assesses the likely social impacts of the proposal for seven key social wellbeing elements. Each sub-section provides a broad overview of the key considerations for that well-being with reference to literature and planning documents, and then follows on with the assessment of effects and a short summary of the likely effects.

3.1 Spatial Urban Form

3.1.1 Spatial urban form considerations

Spatial urban form refers to the built environment, arising from the use of land for urban activities such as residential, commercial, industrial, rural, open spaces and transport infrastructure. For residential activity, urban form relates to the location, layout, and density of housing in relation to topographical features. A well-functioning spatial urban form helps to provide good options (capacity and affordability) and environments in which to live, work and play.

The RPS makes the following relevant objectives with respect to urban form:²¹

- ❖ Positive indigenous biodiversity outcomes are to be promoted.
- ❖ The natural character is to be preserved and protected.
- ❖ Land use and infrastructure planning is to be integrated.
- ❖ Regionally significant infrastructure is to be recognised and protected.
- ❖ Land use conflicts are to be minimised.
- ❖ Land use pressures that are arising from outside the Waikato Region are to be anticipated and responded to.
- ❖ Vibrant and viable town centres are to be supported.
- ❖ A range of commercial development to support the social and economic wellbeing of the region is to be provided for.

Since the Covid pandemic there has been a significant shift in how and where people, who would traditionally live in urban environments, want to live. Across Aotearoa New Zealand there has been a surge in interest and demand for low-density lifestyle blocks that provide people with a better lifestyle balance through larger, lower density housing options and proximity to recreational activities and nature.

Rural lifestyle and large lot properties bridge the gap between traditional urban residential lots and rural properties. Typically, rural lifestyle properties broadly follow urban/residential market trends,

²¹ Waikato Regional Council, RPS UFD-01 Built Environment.

but are their own clear sector and have different selling points. The sector has grown significantly in popularity since 2000, with market activity and values increasing significantly.

Rural lifestyle and large lot properties attract a wide range of residents, including professionals looking to relocate from urban locations, local families wanting to upgrade and gain more outdoor space, farmers looking to downsize but still stay connected to a semi-rural lifestyle, and retirees seeking their dream home out of the city.

Resilience to Natural Hazards

Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and scale of natural hazard events, particularly storms. The National Climate Adaptation Plan (2022)²² sets out strategies, policies, and proposals for managing future development in areas prone to risk. The plan has been developed by central government to enable better risk-informed decisions, target climate resilient development in the right places, and establish a range of adaptation options.

The RPS identifies setbacks from the Waikato River to ensure that properties are protected from the risks of flooding and erosion.

Visual Effects

The visual character of an area provides amenity to both residents and visitors, with changes often having impacting people's quality of life on an emotional level, even if there is no physical impact or disruption to people's regular day-to-day lives. In rural communities, the quality of life is often judged on its perceived differences from urban centres, for example wide open spaces and bush, so adding additional buildings to an area has the ability to affect quality of life.

3.1.2 Spatial form assessment

Urban Form

The proposed development on the site proposes 66 new lots/dwellings, ranging in size from 0.25-1.26ha, aligning with the broad definition of a lifestyle block. This is a significant change in spatial form for the site that is currently used for forestry as its primary purpose.

The proposal provides a new housing opportunity in South Waikato for property segments which have seen popularity grow in recent years.

Lifestyle blocks vary widely in size, but the general LINZ definition of what constitutes a lifestyle block is that it will be located:

²² Ministry for the Environment. 2022. Aotearoa New Zealand's first national adaptation plan

*generally in a rural area, where the predominant use is for a residence and, if vacant, there is a right to build a dwelling. The land can be of variable size but must be larger than an ordinary residential allotment. The principal use of the land is non-economic in the traditional farming sense, and the value exceeds the value of comparable farmland.*²³

Nationally, 8,887 lifestyle properties, worth \$8.2b (averaging just over \$900,000 each) were sold in 2020; 1,828 (26%) more than were sold in 2019.²⁴ In 2021 the growth trend continued, with 9,610 lifestyle properties sold in 2021²⁵, with a total value of \$10.11b, an average value of just over \$1 million. Market activity has eased slightly in 2022, with 7,378 lifestyle properties sold in the nine months to September, worth a total of \$9.1b, an average of over \$1.2m each.²⁶ This data shows strong growth in average sales values, and sustained demand that has remained well above annual sales in the pre-pandemic market across 2022. Median sales values of lifestyle properties have also continued to increase, from \$720,000 in September 2019 to \$820,000 in September 2021, and \$1.14m by August 2022²⁷, dropping back slightly from this market peak to \$1,000,000 in May 2022²⁸.

An assessment of new title creation dates²⁹ shows that there has been an increasing popularity of large lot parcels in the central North Island. These are all parcels, and are not limited to residential uses. Nevertheless, the data is useful as another indication of growth trends.

With activity in the housing market declining over the first half of 2023, there remains ongoing demand from people wanting to move to quieter, safer, and more affordable urban fringe or rural areas to escape some of the negative aspects of urban life, including congestion, crime, and higher land and housing costs. Transport infrastructure improvements, particularly with the completion of the Waikato Expressway in 2022, and changing workplace practices have made it easier for people to live further away from commercial centres and traditional employment areas and therefore have reduced costs and requirements for regular travel to work.

²³ LINZ 2010. Rating valuations rules 2008. Office of the Valuer-General, Land Information New Zealand, Wellington, NZ. LINZS30300

²⁴ Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (2020) Lifestyle Market Quarterly Report (December) Is the Current Market Sustainable?

²⁵ Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (2021) Lifestyle Market Quarterly Report (December) Volatility in the lifestyle Sector.

²⁶ Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (2022) Lifestyle Market Quarterly Report (September) Economic constraints impact lifestyle market.

²⁷ PGG Wrightson Real Estate (2022) Lifestyle Collection Spring 2022.

²⁸ https://www.reinz.co.nz/Web/Web/News/News-Articles/Market-updates/May_lifestyle_data_Winter_see_market_slow_before_upturn.aspx?name=May_lifestyle_data_Winter_see_market_slow_before_upturn

²⁹ LINZ Property Title data series ID 50804, retrieved from Koordinates.com

New housing stock in Whakamaru is also likely to lift the average value of properties in the community and potentially enhance the attractiveness of the town as a place to live over the long-term.

Additionally, the development provides a market-based response to a noted district-wide issue of a shortfall in quality housing stock. While this development may not directly address the areas of the housing market in the greatest need, it provides an opportunity for some existing residents to upgrade into fit for purpose housing, freeing up other housing stock to be on sold or available for use as rental properties.

However, 66 new dwellings on the site is equivalent to the number of dwellings that existed in Whakamaru Village in 2018, so the proposal represents a doubling of the housing stock in the general location. The RPS does allow for some Rural Residential zoning to be located adjacent to the Waikato River in other South Waikato locations, and so riverside location for rural residential activity is countenanced in the vicinity. The development is an addition of residential housing stock in a location that is outside the urban areas, and does not meet the compact urban form objectives of the RPS for that reason, though as mentioned above the RPS does anticipate some Rural Residential activity to be located alongside the Waikato River and providing for new types of growth is in integral part of the DP.

Resilience to Natural Hazards

An assessment of the potential for flooding to impact the development and generate potential cumulative effects for the Waikato River has been undertaken by Titus Consulting Engineers³⁰. That assessment has shown that properties are unlikely to be impacted by flooding in extreme weather events. The level of the Waikato River is controlled by the Whakamaru Dam (operated by Mercury Energy) and as such the flood risk at the site is low.

In addition, the geotechnical assessment has not identified any major constraints for property development, however ground work to address slope instability in some locations will be required to reduce future risks of slipping, or alternatively building restrictions applied to these sites.

Visual Effects

A Landscape, Natural Character and Visual Assessment Report was conducted by Mansergh Graham Landscape Architects³¹. This report concluded that while the development would be visible from a range of locations within the small local catchment, the overall impact, particularly once screening and buffer vegetation had established would be very low to low-moderate on the surrounding environment. This also partly facilitated by built height restrictions of up to 6m, along with a specified

³⁰ Titus Consulting Engineers, 2023. Site Suitability and Natural Hazard Report.

³¹ Mansergh Graham Landscape Architects , 2023 Landscape, Natural Character and Visual Assessment Report

tonal pallet from which buildings can be based off. The entire development will be screened from Ongaroto Road by a 5m wide and 2m high earth bund along the frontage of the site to help maintain the existing rural character.

3.1.3 Summary of effects on spatial form

A summary of the positive and negative effects of the PPC is provided in [Figure 3.1](#).

Figure 3.1: Likely urban form effects from Lake Whakamaru development

Positive effects	Negative effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provides for additional residential capacity in the form of lifestyle blocks. ❖ Provides housing choice. ❖ New high-quality housing added to the area and district, freeing up other homes. ❖ Development of sites is planned to be in areas that are not subject to risk from natural hazards. ❖ Visual effects have been considered and designed to minimise visual effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Potential for doubling the housing market in a previously unanticipated location, but the provisions are consistent with other objectives in the DP and RPS.

3.2 Environment

3.2.1 Environment considerations

The environment refers to both the natural and built environments. This section primarily focuses on the natural environment as the spatial urban form discussion in section 3.1 has already covered changes to the built environment.

Biodiversity effects

A well-recognised negative effect of greenfield development in rural settings is the potential loss of habitat for flora and fauna (biodiversity) and removal of green, open spaces from the countryside^{32 33}. This happens in two key ways; firstly native ecosystems are disturbed through development and changing land use, and secondly built environments have historically replaced native vegetation with

³² <https://www.earthsciencepartnership.co.uk/projects/greenfield-land-development/>

³³ <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2009/05/04/there-is-nothing-green-about-greenfield-development/>

³⁴ Scalenghe, R., and Marsan, F.A., (2009). The anthropogenic sealing of soils in urban areas in Landscape and Urban Planning 90, 1-10

non-native species in newly developed 'natural' areas. Light and noise pollution is also a potential effect from increasing residential density in rural environments. However, depending on the nature of the previous rural environment, land use development can also have a positive impact through removal of the need for fertilisers, especially near waterways, and less physical disruption of the environment once a community is established.

Other environment effects

A higher concentration of impervious surfaces can exacerbate storm water run-off during high rainfall events³⁵. Resilience to climate change has been discussed in section 3.1.

Pollution is likely to increase both during construction, for example noise, dust, vibration, and post completion due to increased traffic and noise. There is also the potential that pollution problems that did not previously affect an area can be created^{36 37}. Population size, residential density, location, and socio-economic factors all affect CO₂ emissions from a residential area in a complex set of relationships. Human health can be directly affected by high levels of CO₂ and potentially indirectly affected by exacerbating the effects of other pollutants.³⁸, in addition to longer term climate change impacts.

Increasing loads on top of slopes, or removal of vegetation cover, can have the effect of destabilising the ground, especially during heavy or sustained rainfall events. This may have the effect of increasing sediment runoff from the site and potentially into surrounding waterways. If not dealt with properly during the construction phase there is also a potential hazard for residents through localised land slips.

3.2.2 Environment assessment

Biodiversity

Historic land use on the site, primarily forestry until 2018, means that there is no significant established native habitat. However, it has still been noted that native birds are present on the site and utilise the established native trees for nesting and that the presence of bats, for commuting and feeding purposes, has been recorded on the site. The Ecological Assessment by 2AWA Ecology concludes that the development has the potential to have a moderate impact on these local fauna populations, however if appropriate mitigation measures are put in place, such as native linear buffer zones and timed vegetation removal for outside of breeding season, then the development impacts will be low.

³⁵ <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2009/05/04/there-is-nothing-green-about-greenfield-development/>

³⁶ <https://www.earthsciencepartnership.co.uk/projects/greenfield-land-development/>

³⁷ <https://www.pbctoday.co.uk/news/planning-construction-news/brownfield-vs-greenfield-construction/48170/>

³⁸ Mukin, W., and Roberts, M., (2023). Thriving: Making Cities Green, Resilient, and Inclusive in a Changing Climate. World Bank.

Additionally, it is also noted in the Ecological Assessment that the site has remnants of previous forestry activities such as debris, wood chips and old tree stumps. Removing these as part of the development, in conjunction with replanting as per the landscape plan, may enhance the levels of native vegetation and improve habitat availability compared to the baseline from previous forestry land use.

The concept plan for the PPC includes a planted buffer within all areas identified as a Vegetation Covenant. There will be significant ecological benefits, as well as providing for partial screening and visual separation of lots. The use of native trees in and around the development site will provide a net gain in native vegetation compared to previous land use practices.

Pollution

There are likely to be temporary negative noise, dust, runoff and vibration effects during the clearance and development of the site. However, minimal numbers of direct neighbours means that these effects are unlikely to cause meaningful distress to local residents. Effects can be minimised and mitigated through consent conditions and proposed development staging which is a common approach to managing temporary construction effects.

Currently, there are occurrences of roadside rubbish being dumped on the site including waste from households and building materials. Once developed, the site will be unlikely to be a dumping ground for other's rubbish which will improve the quality of the environment on the site.

With buffer zones in place there is unlikely to be additional runoff into the Waikato River, and additionally the site and its surrounding soil has been assessed to have a high soakage rate, which will likely be sufficient to capture stormwater runoff, pending a detailed investigation. This is in conjunction with appropriate storm water infrastructure as part of the development.

Additional light pollution will be associated with the residential housing development, however the low light design limit of 0.3 LUX at the boundary and planted buffer zone preventing spillover effects will minimise the impact for fauna and surrounding residents.

The treatment of wastewater is also a potential impact area, however plans provided by Ormiston Associates for on-site wastewater treatment indicate that any effects from this on the surrounding environment (Waikato River) will be less than minor. The Ormiston report also concludes that the conversion of production forestry to residential land represents a potential reduction in nitrogen discharge of more than 75%.

There will be an increase in noise associated with people living on the site and their associated movements. For this development, this is only likely to affect residents moving into the area itself, and not impact existing local residents in Whakamaru township. The most significant increase in noise

pollution is likely to come from increased participation in recreational activities on Lake Whakamaru during peak recreational times across the year, particularly the summer holiday season.

There will be an increase in GHG emissions off the site, primarily due to vehicle movements. Outside of providing infrastructure to support electric vehicles, and residents transitioning their vehicle preferences towards electric vehicles over time, there is limited capacity for a development of this nature to mitigate the emissions resulting from vehicle use. However, if the new residents spend more time working from home then this may have an effect of reducing emissions at the regional level. Residents will still need to travel further than urban residents to access goods and services, and this has been estimated as up to 561 vehicle trips per day by CKL. There is some opportunity for residents to access a limited range of goods and services in Whakamaru by accessing the adjacent Waikato River Trail, which will help to reduce the additional VKT. There is also the possibility that people owning baches will travel shorter distances to Lake Whakamaru than to other lakeside destinations depending on their origin.

On site there is currently no reticulated or stormwater system, however infrastructure will be put in place to collect and treat water on site³⁹ as part of the development.

Other environmental effects

Electricity use by residents will be sourced through on site renewable generation, reducing reliance on the national grid (and therefore no associated emissions). The most significant ongoing GHG impact from households is likely to come from on-site gas use for heating or cooking requirements, if installed by home owners. The impact from this will be no different compared to housing developments in other locations.

There are a range of Significant Natural Areas (“SNA”) that surround and partially cover the site, including the Waikato River, the Ongaroto Scrub (42.3ha), and the Whakamaru Conservancy Area on the opposite side of the lake which is DOC protected land. Together with the surrounding rural landscape, these areas contribute to amenity, and the proposed development will change the rural vista, though considerable effort has been planned to minimise the likely visual effects.

3.2.3 Summary of effects on the environment

A summary of the positive and negative effects of the PPC is provided in [Figure 3.2](#).

³⁹ Titus Engineering Consultants (2023), Engineering Assessment and Infrastructure Design Report

Figure 3.2: Likely environment effects of the Lake Whakamaru development

Positive effects	Negative effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Retention and improvement of ecological areas with a focus on improving the quantity and density of native vegetation. ❖ Removal of historic waste and debris from previous forestry activities. ❖ Development is designed to protect the Waikato River from stormwater runoff. ❖ Some potential for use of active modes to access goods and services in Whakamaru Village. ❖ Some potential for reduced VKT for bach owners choosing to live at Lake Whakamaru instead of other lakeside destinations – the scale of this effect would depend on the origin of bach owners. ❖ Solar powered development reduces reliance on electricity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Increase in short-term pollution arising from construction impacts, though generally the effects can be mitigated by developing site construction plans that include restricting hours of construction, compliance with noise standards, and using water carts to manage dust for example. ❖ Increase in VKT travelled to access jobs and goods and services. ❖ Increase in light pollution. ❖ Increase in noise pollution from additional residents/visitors undertaking recreational activities on Lake Whakamaru. ❖ The rural vista and outlook will be changed permanently by the residential activity, though the impacts are minimised through native plantings.

3.3 Access and connectivity

3.3.1 Access and connectivity considerations

Access and connectivity are important for economic activity, personal wellbeing, and social connection. Urban areas function more efficiently when they are designed with consideration for good connectivity, which can enhance liveability and sustainability of neighbourhoods.

Households' access to employment and goods and services

People need good connections to enable access to goods and services, such as retail, medical, education, employment, and recreational opportunities, in ways that reduce both time and monetary costs. For this reason, access and connectivity is directly related to a range of social welfare outcomes, including for work, consumption, recreation, health, education, social services, community-based activities, and social connections. A corollary is that poor connectivity can decrease social wellbeing and inclusion by making access to goods and services more difficult, especially for socially deprived groups or neighbourhoods.

Access to goods and services is priced into land and real estate values, where houses located further from central business districts are generally more affordable, although access to other environmental features may also have the effect of adding value to lifestyle properties. While it may be more affordable to buy lower cost land and/or housing outside of the urban centres, transport costs can impact household expenditure over the long term if residents are travelling longer distances to access jobs and goods and services.

Businesses access to labour and consumers

Access is also an important consideration for businesses, who require good access to employees, freight, and consumers. In rural settings, new lifestyle developments have the ability to attract skilled workers from outside the region, allowing local business to tap into this 'new' skilled market.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Regional movement patterns can also impact urban sustainability by contributing to higher or lower GHG emissions. Underlying the compact city planning approach is a desire to reduce VKT by encouraging active transport modes, and co-locating homes and jobs and services more closely.

3.3.2 Access and connectivity assessment

Access to goods and services

Overall, residents will need to travel further to access goods and services than urban residents would need to, although due to the increase in critical mass close to Whakamaru Village, there will be slightly more demand directed to that centre, which will help to increase the range of goods and services available, and will have flow-on benefits to existing Whakamaru Village residents.

The s32 assessment adopts the assumptions contained in the Urban Economics Report which assume that approximately 45% of dwellings would be permanent residents, which we estimate would be broadly equivalent to a small increase in sustainable retail floorspace in the Village of less than 50m². The other 55% of dwellings would not be permanently occupied (mostly holiday homes) which is much higher than the Census data for the immediate area (26% of dwellings were unoccupied). Therefore, the share of residents occupying homes in the development could be higher than the 45% assumed, nevertheless, that would still only support a small amount of additional floorspace at Whakamaru Village, with most spending going to larger centres with a wider range of goods and services such as at Tokoroa and Taupō, and in some cases Mangakino.

Access to employment

The location of Whakamaru lends itself to providing residents a relatively short drive to larger centres such as Tokoroa (where there are approximately 2,200 jobs), as well as Putāruru, Tirau and Taupō. For residents or visitors needing to commute to larger upper North Island centres such as Hamilton or

Auckland, Whakamaru is well connected by the recently completed Waikato expressway. Additionally, if residents intend to work from home to get a better work-life-balance the development will cater to this.

Access to Education

There is an existing local primary school in Whakamaru, and secondary school options in Tokoroa. There is pre-school education available at Whakamaru and Mangakino also. The small size of the proposed development and large proportion of holiday homes expected means the site is unlikely to be home to many school-aged children and indicatively probably fewer than 10. That means that the PPC would not place significant pressure on Whakamaru School (which has a roll of around 90 students aged 5-13.⁴⁰). Any arrival of new students to the school could result in positive outcomes for the school, in terms of securing increased government funding and staffing, allowing an expanded curriculum, and providing more students to take part in curricular and extracurricular activities, although given the small number of students likely to live in the PPC area, the scale of these positive effects would be limited.

Access to social infrastructure

Social infrastructure such as libraries, community centres and swimming pools are accessible most readily in Tokoroa and Taupō.

In terms of access to recreation, the Waikato River and Lake Whakamaru offer a range of opportunities, including for active recreation along the Waikato River Trail (pedestrians and cyclists), areas of bush and reserves, such as Lake Whakamaru Reserve used for camping, and at Lake Whakamaru (water-based activities). The PPC will vest a recreation reserve of approximately 11,923m² to the Council to enable the extension of the Whakamaru camping ground. The current camping ground is operated by the Council, on land that is leased from the Crown in an agreement that is subject to frequent renewals. By vesting this land directly to the council, this will ensure that public camping access is provided in perpetuity, even if the lease for the current camping ground is not renewed in the future.

Lake Whakamaru also has two boat ramps, providing recreational access onto the Waikato River. While there is an existing track that connects the site to the boat ramp, this is not legally required is rarely used due to manoeuvring constraints. The Applicant therefore has no responsibility to maintain that track. It's current use by the public is an act of goodwill by the Applicant.

Upon subdivision, the vehicular track will be removed and access to the boat ramp will be solely from SH30 via the existing vehicle crossing to the boat ramp, north-west of the site. Residents and visitors

⁴⁰ <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/find-school/school/population/age?district=®ion=&school=2080>

at the site and Reserve will be required to exit the site from the newly formed road onto SH30 and re-enter at the designated crossing for the lake/boat ramp.

3.3.3 Summary of effects on access and connectivity

A summary of the positive and negative effects of the PPC is provided in [Figure 3.3](#).

Figure 3.3: Likely access and connectivity effects of the Lake Whakamaru development

Positive effects	Negative effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Residents will have access to essential goods and services locally, with a wider range of goods and service available in surrounding town centres, though the increase will be marginal. ❖ There are labour markets within relatively short driving distances of the site. ❖ There are opportunities for active transport modes to access goods and services at Whakamaru Village. ❖ The Whakamaru camping ground can be extended, and future access ensured, through vesting of a reserve. ❖ Higher population supporting the local school and other community organisations and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ There will be an increase in VKT generated by residents to access good and services, employment, and education, which is anticipated by the RPS which provides for some rural residential activity to be located in appropriate locations along the Waikato River.

3.4 Social cohesion

3.4.1 Social cohesion considerations

The cohesiveness of communities reflects a sense of belonging and place, physical connectedness and accessibility, and the ability to establish and maintain social relationships. Urban planning can affect the level of cohesiveness that can be achieved in a community, so it is important to consider what measures can be used to encourage social connections.

Access and connectedness are key aspects of social cohesion in relation to urban form and sense of place. Establishing a *sense of place* is an important part of encouraging and maintaining community cohesion. Participation in community organisations and recreational groups and social capital ventures (volunteering and leadership) are all supported by good urban design including access. Urban

design has an important role in influencing the level of informal social interaction that can occur in safe settings in the streets and public spaces. Alternatively, if not designed well, urban spaces can become the stage for social conflict and negative social effects.

During and after development, the sense of place in a community may change, both temporarily and in the longer term, with implications for social cohesiveness. Reverse sensitivity issues may arise from competing land use practices and can lead to conflicts between farmers, lifestyle property owners and recreational users.

Uncertainty about proposed plan changes can cause stress and social division both for and against projects which can create community friction between certain groups. Community members' perceptions about proposals will vary over time and in relation to beliefs and personal experiences. Clear communication and engagement are ways to provide information about proposals and enable people to express their opinions about plans. It is important to provide opportunities for socially marginalised groups to participate in providing feedback, as well as including mana whenua particularly in relation to potential impacts on marae, wāhi tapu, urupā, mahinga kai, etc.

3.4.2 Social cohesion assessment

Sense of place

The development is likely to provide a high-quality lakeside environment that will “encourage a sense of neighbourhood and have spin-off of beneficial social aspects that are associated with a small community feel where care of the surrounding environment is fostered.”⁴¹

Achieving this vision will be dependent in part on the staging of the development and the mix of residents vs holiday home owners. If there is a high number of holiday homes then the sense of place may be impacted due to homes being unoccupied for large amounts of time which will prevent a community from forming cohesively. However, the co-location of dwellings on the site and the fit for purpose modern homes, even if many are holiday homes, will help achieve a sense of pride in the area and will likely result in the long-term upkeep of properties and neighbourhood features.

The impact on the town of Whakamaru also needs to be considered. With a development of up to 66 lots disconnected from the original town location by the Waikato River, there is a risk that a sense of ‘us versus them’ could develop within the area, especially if new dwellings on the site are primarily holiday homes. There will need to be consideration about how community facilities can be used to

⁴¹ Feathers Planning, 2023. Application for a Plan Change in respect of Lot 9 DP 425239 and Part Lot 1 DP 24479 – 1861 Ongaroto Road, Whakamaru.

encourage a sense of connected community or social events can be created to bring the community together.

One of the existing features of Whakamaru is the camping ground situated next to the development. There is a risk that traditional users of the campground may find the location less appealing if it is located next to a residential development, and especially during the earthworks and construction phase. While the camping ground's busy season is over the summer holiday period, mitigating the impacts, through planted buffer zones, is important, and limiting earthworks and construction to off-peak periods would also help to mitigate effects on campsite users. There is also some potential for new residents to find the behaviour of freedom campers objectionable. There are opportunities for social tension from both parties due to the co-location of these activities, though regular monitoring and complaints service can help to mitigate frustrations.

Opportunities for social connection

Similar to sense of place, with a higher residential population there is more opportunity to make social connections in the town, either through contact at recreational facilities, in local shops or at community events. There is also the potential for residents to interact with tourists using the campground and engage with and learn from them. However, adding a significant number of properties that are disconnected from the original town centre has the potential to form community sub-groups, especially if the new development requires a higher cost of entry that is unobtainable by many of the 'original' local residents.

Rural communities

Traditionally rural communities have been tight-knit and actively engaged. For many potential purchasers this may be an attraction to the area and they will help grow this sense of community. Alternatively if this type of development attracts people with different interests or agendas, combined with the loss of rural land, the community's structure may be impacted over the medium- to long-term. This is not to say the community will be worse off, but that traditional community values may shift.

Public engagement and mana whenua consultation

Community consultation has been undertaken by the planners and sentiments have been gathered from written letters. A community survey was undertaken by the Whakamaru Residents Association. There are a range of positive and negative aspects that have been raised by the surrounding community. It is clear that there is both support and opposition for the PPC from locals (51.9% of those surveyed are supportive or feel neutral). The community engagement exercise has provided the opportunity to share feedback and learn about what is proposed on the site. Key themes include:

Positive comments

- ❖ The PPC will enhance local economic development and growth should be supported.
- ❖ Fish and Game are supportive of provisions that seek to manage any reverse sensitivities that may arise from residential dwellings being located close to Lake Whakamaru due to noise generated by recreation activities.
- ❖ There are no known wāhi tapu, wāhi taonga or mahinga kai sites affected by the PPC.
- ❖ Onsite stormwater, wastewater and water management methods are supported as there will be no additional pressure on existing infrastructure.
- ❖ Support for the proposed planting scheme.

Negative comments

- ❖ There is some potential that residents may be affected by the activities at Kinleith Forests Ltd, which may include noise, dust, smoke and light, and there will be no avenues for complaint.
- ❖ Concerns about health and safety of lake users were raised.
- ❖ There are concerns about the negative effects on the health of the lake from additional users.
- ❖ Potential for increased traffic congestion.
- ❖ Loss of rural character and outlook and tranquillity of the lake is not desirable.
- ❖ Some people have raised concerns about potential social issues, including crime due to being a 'dormitory suburb', and services and infrastructure being overwhelmed (such as shops, doctors and emergency services).
- ❖ Adverse effects on birds and bats.
- ❖ Adverse effects from light pollution.
- ❖ Potential for reverse sensitivity issues to arise from adjacent campground.

Other comments

- ❖ A playground facility/water play area can be provided at Applicant's expense on the additional reserve land to be vested to Council.
- ❖ Comparisons between the PPC and the Waipamu development (which is much larger at 117ha) are considered inappropriate.

3.4.3 Summary of effects on social cohesion

A summary of the positive and negative effects of the PPC is provided in [Figure 3.4](#).

Figure 3.4 Likely social cohesion effects of the Lake Whakamaru development

Positive effects	Negative effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ High-quality sense of place likely to be created on the site. ❖ Opportunities for new community personalities to become involved in social and community groups and events. ❖ Certainty and understanding around how the community and environment will change for existing residents. ❖ Potential for changes to provide some locals with the opportunity to have good and positive social interactions. ❖ Opportunities for positive social interactions with campground visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Potential for newcomers to be treated differently and not welcomed into the community if they are markedly different from the surrounding community, e.g. more affluent. ❖ Uncertainty and fear around how the community and environment will change for existing residents. ❖ Some potential for conflict between existing residents and new residents. ❖ There is a small chance that reverse sensitivity issues may arise from time to time between new residents and campground users, however monitoring and mechanisms for complaints should help minimise issues and the campground is a well-established site.

3.5 Livelihoods

3.5.1 Livelihoods considerations

Changing urban form has a direct impact on people's livelihoods through new jobs and larger demand for local businesses and services. The ability of people to generate livelihoods and incomes requires individuals and households to have good access to a range of options, including working for an employer, self-employment, business operation, and a range of formal and informal opportunities to sell products and services and obtain income and other household resources⁴².

Smart growth planning strategies associated with urban environments encourage growth to occur where there is good physical access between residential properties and employment activities/opportunities to reduce travel times and any associated costs. However, in a rural community, and in an economy where working from home is becoming more usual, the transport

⁴² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/inclusive-cities>

costs may be outweighed by other social benefits, and poor physical access can be offset to some degree by good digital access.

Job creation

Job creation is delivered through the development and construction phase of a project, with long-term job creation supported through the spending behaviour of residents to support their lifestyle. The location of this job creation is dependent on the type of community the development is being built into, and in the case of rural developments job creation is more likely to be supported at a broader regional level, rather than in localised towns due to the wide range of specialist services required. Similarly for long-term jobs supported by residents' spending, the locations of these jobs will be broader geographically for rural developments than developments in larger urban areas, as residents will likely be required to shop for most goods and services in nearby urban centres, using local stores for convenience purchases. However, as more households develop in an area this will create a bigger market to enable local stores to expand, or alternatively attract new entrants into the market.

Work-life balance

Post-Covid there has been a shift towards people seeking a better work-life balance with closer access to nature and recreational activities, while spending less time commuting or in physical offices. The growing popularity of lifestyle properties has enabled people to move out of main centres and relocate to rural settings that provide them with more space and better access to natural environments. The ability to build a new house in a rural environment, often with a lower land cost than comparable properties than in urban fringe zones, allows people to design spaces that better facilitate the ability to work from home, easing the transition into the new environment.

Impacts on household spending

Additional infrastructure is often required in greenfield developments to service populations located in new areas. This can lead to requirements for increased local government spending, which is in turn recouped through rates or development contributions⁴³.

3.5.2 Livelihoods assessment

Job creation

The economic analysis⁴⁴ advises that if the site was used for forestry, as per its previous land use, it would result in 1 FTE job and would contribute \$0.2m to GDP. The proposal would result in an

⁴³ Dorsey, J.W., (2003) Brownfields and Greenfields: The Intersection of Sustainable Development and Environmental Stewardship, Environmental Practice, 5:1, 69-76

⁴⁴ Urban Economics (2021), Economic Cost-Benefit Analysis for: Proposed Private Plan Change for 1862 Ongaroto Road, Lake Whakamaru

estimated net benefit over the base case of 237 FTEs and \$22.7m contribution to GDP. This includes the estimated three year development and construction phase, as well as the GDP and employment contributions from the ongoing household expenditure over a 30 year period.

The development and construction phase, over three years, provides the largest impact, contributing 83 new full-time jobs (supporting 165 in total) and has an additional GDP impact of \$11.3m (\$22.7m in total). The ongoing household expenditure, over 30 years, contributes 155 full time jobs (supporting 310 in total) and has an additional GDP impact of \$8.5m (\$17.0m in total). Those jobs are likely to be created regionally rather than locally and may represent a transfer of workers from one location to another in Waikato Region. Additional GDP impact is also generated through financial contributions (\$0.9m) and rates (\$2.9m). That income will be utilised by Council to provide services that ratepayers will require such as rubbish collection, three-waters, roading, and provision of facilities such as libraries and recreation spaces in the larger towns.

The additional development will provide some limited support for existing community activities/businesses, enabling them to grow organically as a result of a slightly larger population base that will develop its own characteristics and local economic demands/requirements. There are also likely to be local benefits from tourism spending in local centres that will be generated by the new dwellings in the PPC area, albeit that we acknowledge these positive effects are likely to be small in scale, given the small number of dwellings that would be enabled in the PPC area.

Creation of new housing stock

While the development is expected to attract new residents from around the North Island and wider Waikato Region, it is likely some residents will relocate from elsewhere in South Waikato District, and especially bach owners may be looking for newer housing stock than currently exists in places such as Mangakino. We note that the Urban Economics Report estimates that the market price would be in the range of \$1.5m to \$2.0m, which would be relatively unaffordable to most South Waikato residents. However building new stock could potentially have flow on effects by freeing up existing housing stock for first-home buyers, for renters, or new bach owners. This has the dual effect of growing the district's population, while also providing more or alternative housing options.

Infrastructure impacts

Costs to meet onsite servicing requirements will be met by the developer, and will not be passed onto council and ratepayers. This is primarily because the majority of infrastructure requirements (potable water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, and stormwater capture and discharge) will be managed through on-site systems.

Equally, no further roading networks will need to be built to connect the development, with the proposed intersection upgrade and on-site roading network managed by the developer.

Existing landowners and residents

The proposed development, enabling up to 66 additional dwellings will increase the number of people living in Whakamaru and using the local infrastructure and natural resources. That population growth is unlikely to cause more demand than can be met by local services and facilities because it will be quite limited in scale, even when considering increased peak demand levels for recreational facilities and features (especially the lake and boat ramps).

Increasing the supply of new purpose-built homes in the area will also boost the attractiveness of Whakamaru as a location for residents and holidaymakers, which in turn will have an overall impact of boosting property values, benefiting existing property owners.

3.5.3 Summary of effects on livelihoods

A summary of the positive and negative effects on livelihoods of the PPC is provided in [Figure 3.5](#).

Figure 3.5: Likely livelihoods effects of the Lake Whakamaru development

Positive effects	Negative effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Supports employment in the construction sector across South Waikato District.❖ Some limited support for local shops and services, with greater shares of new spending likely to be targeted to bigger towns (Tokoroa, Taupō and Mangakino).❖ Creation of new housing stock, boosting district population slightly and providing more choice.❖ Potential for increased tourism spending from those staying in holiday homes.❖ Bulk infrastructure costs will be financed by the developer.❖ Other surrounding landowners may experience increases in land values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ There may be some slight increases to existing property owners rates if land values increase.

3.6 Health and safety

3.6.1 Health and safety considerations

In an urban environment a core focus of health and safety concerns relating to new developments is how physical form and transport options have direct and indirect impacts on the physical health of communities due to air emissions, noise, GHG emissions, alongside opportunities for physical activity using active modes such as cycling and walking. There are risks around air pollution that can lead to health issues such as respiratory illnesses and cardio-pulmonary diseases, and can consequently affect mortality and morbidity. In a rural greenfields development, these issues are also important, but the focus of health and safety concern typically shifts more to safety issues and the number of people present in a community. For example, new developments often connect to rural roading networks which function as highways with high speed limits, and/or have limited width or shoulder space to accommodate cars slowing down and turning. If transport infrastructure is not well designed, there are higher chances of accidents causing serious injuries than on suburban streets.

Provision of open green spaces and living in quiet and scenic locations with good air quality and amenity has been linked with improvements to people's mental and physical wellbeing. However, the benefits of living in locations with those attributes, such as rural residential areas, are usually balanced to some degree by costs of being less accessible, such as costs arising from spending more time commuting to work that reduces the amount of people's time that can be used for active and passive recreation purposes.

There could also be negative health impacts if housing (in any location, not just rural areas) is developed in areas that are likely to be prone to flooding, including through loss of life, injuries, and illness. New developments should be designed in a way that anticipates risks and allows hazards to occur without endangering people and property, potentially by incorporating nature-based and resilient infrastructure.

Mental wellbeing can also be affected by stress, and perceptions of the impacts of proposed plan changes on people's lives. Symptoms of stress can include fatigue, confusion, anxiety, depression, impaired concentration, gastrointestinal upsets, changes to sleep patterns and appetite, and substance abuse⁴⁵. Mental wellbeing effects are commonly experienced during the planning and decision-making phases, as well as across the development phase (short-medium term), but these effects, and the associated perceptions and anxiety can change over time and can be positively influenced by clear communication.

⁴⁵ Lindell, M.K. and Prater, C.S. (2003). Assessing Community Impacts of Natural Disasters in Natural Hazards Review Vol 4(4).

3.6.2 Health and safety assessment

Long-term wellbeing

Residents will have access to the Waikato River Trails for walking and cycling, which can lead to long-term health benefits from regular exercise. Additionally, the use of the lake for recreational purposes will also have positive physical and mental health benefits. Due to the dwellings being purpose-built and built to current building codes, dwellings are more likely to be healthier and warmer homes than some of the existing older stock in the district.

Natural Hazards

From a natural hazards perspective, households in the PPC area will not be located in places that are likely to be exposed to flooding in extreme weather events, which will mean that they will not be exposed to potential loss of life and injuries. Where site stability issues may exist, appropriate measures are being analysed and will be addressed during the construction phase, which will remove this as a potential hazard for new residents.

Community

Existing residents in the immediate area who are resistant to change and uncertain about how the community may look in the future, and what perceived impact there may be on property values, are likely to experience anxiety and stress. Only a small proportion of the district population are affected due to the small resident population of Whakamaru and surrounds, however as a township the scale of the proposed new development may have a significant impact on a large proportion of the resident community.

Transport

A new intersection will be constructed at the entrance to the site to mitigate potential road safety concerns, including the provision of a right turn bay to assist vehicles turning right into the site across oncoming traffic. Additionally, the new intersection will be located approximately midway along the site frontage to SH30, providing enhanced visibility to SH30 users travelling at a higher speed.

Lake users

There is considerable concern from existing residents about safety of lake users with higher numbers of people likely to be wanting to use the lake for recreational activities in peak periods. There is potential for conflict and safety issues if the number of users exceeds the available space with competition for space for a range of water-based activities. These effects are only likely to occur over short periods during peak summer months, and on good days, and the levels of congestion are unlikely to be similar to much larger lake and beach destinations. If boat users abide by rules, there is clear

signage, and the Harbour Master visits the site during peak periods and monitors the situation, the chances of safety issues should be low.

3.6.3 Summary of effects on health and safety

A summary of the positive and negative effects of the PPC provided in [Figure 3.6](#).

Figure 3.6: Likely health and safety effects of the Lake Whakamaru development

Positive effects	Negative effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Provision of new, warmer and healthier homes.❖ Access to active modes and recreation adjacent to the site.❖ Limited safety concerns around natural hazards due to design.❖ Mitigation of potential road safety concerns due to design.❖ People may benefit from being part of a larger community and having greater social interaction improving their mental and physical wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Small number of existing residents may be negatively impacted by stress and anxiety about how the community may change in the future.❖ Some potential for increased risk of injuries to Lake Whakamaru recreational users if users do not abide by established boating rules. The situation can be monitored and some education of lake users may be required from the Harbour Master.

3.7 Social equity

3.7.1 Social equity considerations

Social equity is an important wellbeing factor when considering the distribution of positive and negative social effects. Different types of households and social groups will be affected by the proposed development in different ways.

Certain segments of the population are more vulnerable to the potential negative effects of policies and planning, such as low-income households, large families, children, older people, people with disabilities, non-English speaking individuals, those with lower educational attainment, women, and other marginalised groups. Well-designed places accommodate all members of society.

Generally higher income households are more likely to be able to locate closer to employment and transport opportunities in urban areas, while lower income households tend to be pushed towards the fringes due to lower housing costs, resulting in lower income households experiencing higher transport costs (as discussed in section 3.3), and having poorer access to places of work, education, shopping, entertainment, recreation.

3.7.2 Social equity assessment

Supporting new local household typologies

The PPC would enable development that will be aimed at the upper end of the regional market.

The economic assessment anticipates that the site would be attractive to retirees and lifestyle location seekers for either permanent residents or as secondary homes. The mix of permanent versus part-time residents is compared to the Waipamu Station development, located across Lake Whakamaru on the southern side. That development is comprised of around 50 individual lots scattered across a large (approximately 180ha) farming property, where 45% of residents are permanent and 55% are used as holiday homes.

However, since Waipamu Station was launched 10 years ago, the demand for lifestyle properties as permanent residences has increased significantly and the higher-density suburban nature of the PPC area (a similar number of dwellings enabled would be located on only 32ha) may lend itself more to people looking for a permanent residence or a mix of permanent residents and baches. In effect, this may mean there will be a higher full-time resident population more broadly aligned with the current Whakamaru Village population.

Alongside retirees, anecdotal evidence of recent take up of lifestyle properties suggests that it is becoming the property style of choice for a range of households, including young families, tech business owners and entrepreneurs, farmers downsizing and young couples who have the ability to predominantly work from home. Additionally, residents may opt to live at the address for the majority of the week, but relocate to larger centres for 1-2 days week, as required by their jobs.

There is some limited potential for conflict between freedom campers and campers staying at the adjacent (free, and council-managed) camping ground and homeowners due mainly to noise and waste issues, although the campground is somewhat removed from the PPC area and the likelihood of this is remote. The concept plan has been designed to provide a buffer between the campground and the residential lots through planting buffers, but regular campers may feel that the environment has changed from what they are used to.

3.7.3 Summary of effects on social equity

A summary of the positive and negative effects on social equity of the development is provided in [Figure 3.7](#).

Figure 3.7: Likely social equity effects of the Lake Whakamaru development

Positive effects	Negative effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ New household types may be attracted to the area due to the selling price point of the new homes.❖ Some limited potential for freeing up of housing stock as local residents upgrade to new homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Limited potential for conflict between freedom campers and new residents on both sides.

4 Conclusions

The proposed Lake Whakamaru development would result in a range of positive and negative effects for social wellbeing. This report has identified that the scale of the proposal would mean that both positive and negative effects arising the PPC **will be relatively limited in scale and geographical extent**.

The positive effects would arise mainly due to the introduction of new community members that would add vibrancy to the community, and sustain an increased range of goods and services and support businesses in the nearby Whakamaru Village and Mangakino. The PPC would also support greater choice for higher end residential dwellings in the district, with the related benefits that locally resident, higher income households bring. New housing choice could free up existing housing stock and would provide more choice. The proposed development is a relatively small scale in an area of high natural amenity which would make it attractive to both permanent residents and short-term visitors.

The main negative effects that are likely to arise from the PPC are related to widespread concern and some opposition to the development from locals who are concerned about how the changes will impact upon the natural and rural character of the area and concerns about congestion and safety of Lake Whakamaru users. However, careful consideration has been given to the design of the site to enhance environmental benefits (through buffer indigenous planting) and mitigating adverse environmental effects through screening the development from the road using bunds and servicing the site with on-site solar power and three water solutions. The changes to the site can be expected to occur in a staged manner in line with market demand and availability of construction labour force, this means that change will be gradual, and any adverse effects can be addressed as they arise (for example Lake Whakamaru boating issues).

[Figure 4.1](#) summarises the key positive and negative outcomes that could arise from alternative development options for the site. The conclusions arising from this table show that the PPC is likely to have the best balance of outcomes of any of the alternatives.

Overall, while there are likely to be a range of limited negative social wellbeing effects arising from the PPC, the positive aspects of the proposal will enable individuals and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and health and safety. The concept plan has been carefully developed to mitigate as many negative effects as possible, and there are opportunities for less formalised ways of ensuring new residents are accepted into the community and lake usage issues are minimised. For these reasons, from a social impact perspective, we are supportive of the proposal.

Figure 4.1: Assessment of social effects of alternative development options

	Option 1 Maintain rural land (status quo)	Option 2 Rezone to Rural Residential & bespoke rule changes(66 lots)	Option 3 Retain status quo (rural zone) and apply for resource consent	Option 4 Compliant rural lots (5 lots)	Option 5 Compliant rural residential lots (51 lots)	Option 6 Half number of lots proposed in rural-residential zone
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal costs associated except those associated with maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural productivity on the site ceases Some (very small) increased pressure on local services Development cost to land owner. Possible social tension between PPC area residents (as new entrants) and other locals and campground/recreational users. Higher VKT to access goods and services, education and employment Increase in short term pollution during development. Increase in ongoing light and noise pollution. Changes to the rural vista and outlook. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for Option 2 – though development costs may be expected to be shared with Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for Option 2, but at significantly reduced scale due to much fewer lots, and development costs may be expected to be shared with Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for Option 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for Option 3, but at reduced scale

	Option 1 Maintain rural land (status quo)	Option 2 Rezone to Rural Residential & bespoke rule changes(66 lots)	Option 3 Retain status quo (rural zone) and apply for resource consent	Option 4 Compliant rural lots (5 lots)	Option 5 Compliant rural residential lots (51 lots)	Option 6 Half number of lots proposed in rural-residential zone
Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of status quo for existing residents. • Campground users may benefit from more rural setting • Preservation of existing landscape • Reduce local community concerns about increasing pressures from recreation activities on Lake Whakamaru • Agricultural productivity on the site is maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More fit for purpose housing options in South Waikato District • Facilitating housing growth in Whakamaru • Supports construction sector employment • Allocation of land for public use and connecting Waikato River Trails is provided to Council. • Significant investment and consideration of design for biodiversity and environmental benefits (on-site water treatment and solar power). • Bulk infrastructure funded by the developer. • Removal of forestry waste and debris. • Property values in Whakamaru likely to increase. • Increased demand for local retail and service operators, supporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 2, but at reduced scale due to lack of overall design concept plan (and biodiversity, three waters, visual benefits, Waikato River Trails connections), once consents approved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 2, but at significantly reduced scale and lack of overall design concept plan and bespoke conditions would lead to an inferior outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 3, but at reduced scale

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		business function and growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some potential for accessing daily goods and services in Whakamaru by active modes using the Waikato River Trails. • Larger population will support the school, community organisations and events. • High quality sense of place likely to be developed on site. • More diverse population base likely. 				
Efficient/ Effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inefficient use of low productivity rural land in a high amenity (lake-edge) setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient use of low productivity rural land in a high amenity (lake-edge) setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 2, but at reduced scale, once consents approved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 2, but at significantly reduced scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 3, but at reduced scale
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in opportunity to grow local community, and no alternative development areas become available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over subscription of users for recreational activities on Lake during peak season • Residential development does not proceed, or is limited through lack of market attractiveness or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 2, but at reduced scale, once consents approved due to fewer developable lots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 2, but at significantly reduced scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 3, but at reduced scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Option 3, but at reduced scale

	Option 1 Maintain rural land (status quo)	Option 2 Rezone to Rural Residential & bespoke rule changes(66 lots)	Option 3 Retain status quo (rural zone) and apply for resource consent	Option 4 Compliant rural lots (5 lots)	Option 5 Compliant rural residential lots (51 lots)	Option 6 Half number of lots proposed in rural-residential zone
		developer financial situation				