

November 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan

1. Why do we need a structure plan for Whenuapai and Redhills North?

Whenuapai and Redhills North have been identified as areas for growth in Auckland in the Auckland Plan, the Future Urban Land Supply Strategy 2015, the Whenuapai Structure Plan 2016 and the Future Development Strategy 2023.

A structure plan is a blueprint for how an area can grow over time to create a sustainable community. It is an opportunity for residents, businesses and other stakeholders to have a say on how they would like to see their area grow and develop.

It includes guidance on the different types of activities and where they should locate, so there are places for people to live, work, and play. It's also an important opportunity to pinpoint any constraints to development, like areas of flooding and coastal erosion, and a way of mapping out the infrastructure the area will need. This includes roads, water and wastewater pipes, as well as social infrastructure like parks, recreation facilities and walking and cycling pathways. Sketching this out ahead of time means the council can work out how infrastructure will be paid for and planned in future budgets and long-term plans.

We developed a structure plan for Whenuapai in 2016. The draft Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan has been prepared to reflect and respond to new information, strategic directions and planning considerations and has been expanded to include Redhills North an area that was not previously captured by the 2016 Whenuapai Structure Plan. Following the public consultation period, and where required, the draft Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan will be tweaked to respond to feedback. It is intended that the final Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan will replace the 2016 Whenuapai Structure Plan.

The structure plan helps ensure urban development happens in a coordinated way, aligning land use with the provision of transport, water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, while protecting natural features and identifying locations for centres, schools, parks and community facilities. The structure plan also establishes the pattern of roads, open space connections and future neighbourhoods to create a well-

functioning urban environment and support the long-term growth of Auckland's north-west. Without a structure plan, there is a risk of fragmented development, inefficient infrastructure investment and poor connectivity between neighbourhoods and surrounding centres.

2. What is the difference between a structure plan and a plan change?

A structure plan sets out how land could be used, and where the transport network and services could go within an area. A structure plan is usually the step before a private or council-initiated plan change can happen. It does not have legal status or statutory effect until it is included in a statutory planning document, such as a district or regional plan, like the Auckland Unitary Plan. The Auckland Unitary Plan is Auckland's rulebook for how land can be used, developed, and how to manage effects and features that require protection.

A plan change is used to update or amend a district or regional plan and can be initiated by either the council or a member of the public (through a private plan change). The plan change process involves research, evaluation and consultation and typically relates to the rezoning of land, amendments to rules, implementing Government directions and/or adding or amending a schedule for items like heritage buildings/sites, notable trees. Part 2 of the Planning Act 2026 (formerly Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)) outlines the plan change requirements and process that the council must follow to initiate a plan change or process an application for a private plan change. The plan change process includes community involvement (e.g. pre-engagement, consultation, notification and submissions) and hearings. The level of community involvement and consultation process will depend on the nature of the plan change.

3. How does the Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan relate to Plan Change 120?

The Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan and Plan Change 120 – Intensification and Resilience (PC120) are separate planning processes, but they are being progressed at around the same time.

PC120 aims to amend the rules in the Auckland Unitary Plan to enable further intensification of housing, mainly around centres and rapid transit stops across Auckland. It largely replaces Plan Change 78 – Intensification and must implement government requirements for greater building heights and housing capacity, as required by the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and recent amendments to the RMA. PC120 goes through a separate statutory process to the structure plan, and decisions on the plan change will be made independently of the Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan.

The Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan aims to help guide future planning decisions in Whenuapai and Redhills North.

Information and decisions arising from PC120 may be considered as part of the Structure Plan to help ensure growth, infrastructure, transport, environmental management and open space planning are coordinated across the wider Whenuapai and Redhills North area. For example, some submissions on PC120 relate to future urban zoned land in Whenuapai and Redhills North. While PC120 does not propose changes to the Future Urban zone or other rural zones outside the urban environment, some PC120 submissions request that some future urban zoned land in Whenuapai and Redhills North be rezoned for urban development. These submissions will be heard by the independent PC120 hearings panel, who will

make recommendations to the council on how to proceed with each submission. The council will then decide whether to accept or reject the recommendation.

PC120 also strengthens planning rules to build resilience to natural hazard risks across the region. Stronger natural hazard provisions were introduced region-wide in November 2025. While these rules sit within the Auckland Unitary Plan and are applied through future resource consent processes, they have also informed the Structure Plan's approach to growth. In particular, the Structure Plan seeks to ensure future growth, land use patterns and infrastructure planning take account of flood, coastal and climate-related risks from the outset. This includes making space for water, protecting natural flood pathways and aligning the location and intensity of development with areas that have no or few natural hazards.

4. How does the Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan relate to the masterplanning of the two sports parks in Whenuapai?

The structure plan takes a broad long-term view of how growth will be accommodated across Whenuapai and Redhills North, including identifying the need for open space, sports, community and recreation facilities, transport connections, and supporting infrastructure.

Recently, the Upper Harbour Local Board (part of Auckland Council) asked for feedback on the activities, facilities and experiences the community would like to see at two new sports parks in Whenuapai – one on Trig Road / Spedding Road and another on Brigham Creek Road. This will form a masterplan for the sports parks, focused on how the parks will be developed and used to meet the recreation needs of existing and future communities.

Information from the masterplanning process will help inform the Structure Plan, while the Structure Plan will provide a wider strategic framework to ensure the sports parks are integrated with future growth, transport networks and surrounding development.

We'll make sure any feedback is shared between the structure plan and masterplan teams where relevant, so both plans are shaped by community feedback and remain aligned.

5. How will transport and congestion be managed as Whenuapai and Redhills North grow?

Transport infrastructure, such as roads, public transport, footpaths and cycleways need to be planned alongside future growth of the areas to accommodate increased population and traffic over time.

The structure plan identifies the transport infrastructure needed to support growth, including new roads, road upgrades, intersection improvements, enhanced public transport, and improved connections across the wider north-west Auckland transport network. Transport information in the structure plan reflects and builds on the work that has been done as part of the Development Contributions Policy 2025 (DC Policy)[1]

[1] For more information on the DC Policy 2025, please refer to: https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/en/plans-policies-bylaws-reports-projects/our-policies/development-contributions-policy/development-contributions-policy.html and https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/content/dam/ac/docs/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/misc/inner-northwest-transport-assessment-rww-development-contributions-policy.pdf

and the Te Tupu Ngātahi – Supporting Growth Alliance[2] programme. The aim is to ensure the transport network can accommodate future development while improving travel choices and network connectivity.

The structure plan also aims to support more travel choices to reduce reliance on private vehicles. This includes improved walking and cycling connections, more frequent and reliable public transport services, connections to the rapid transit network and improved ferry access. Together, these improvements intend to support a safe, efficient and well-connected transport system as the area grows.

6. What natural hazards have been identified in Whenuapai and Redhills North and how does the structure plan address them?

The natural hazards that could affect Whenuapai and Redhills North include flooding and overland water flow, coastal inundation, coastal erosion and geotechnical hazards such as slope instability, soil compressibility, liquefaction and acid sulphate soils. Most of these hazards are mapped on the council's public Geomaps viewer (see: https://geomapspublic.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/viewer/index.html). Where they are not, they will be identified on the Land Information Memorandum for the respective property.

The Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan responds to these hazards through ensuring there is space for excess water through the protection of waterways, floodplains and natural drainage corridors. Areas for future development are planned around these features, to reduce the impact hazards could have on future homes. It provides for lower-density development along the coast to reduce risks of coastal inundation and erosion. This approach aims to reduce hazard exposure, supports environmental outcomes and improves the area's resilience to the effects of climate change[3].

7. How is the Royal New Zealand Air Force Whenuapai Airbase considered in the planning for Whenuapai and Redhills North?

The Royal New Zealand Air Force Whenuapai Airbase has been an established part of the area since 1937 and continues to play an important role both for Whenuapai and nationally. While the airbase itself is not identified for development through the Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan, the airbase needs to be considered when planning for the surrounding areas.

The Auckland Unitary Plan already manages aircraft noise and aviation safety to help ensure that future development is compatible with the continued operation of the airbase. This includes the management of aircraft noise through the Aircraft Noise Overlay, which manages the subdivision of land and the location of

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[2] For more information on Te Tupu Ngātahi – Supporting Growth Alliance, please refer to: https://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/te-tupu-ngatahi-supporting-growth and https://at.govt.nz/projects-initiatives/region-wide-auckland-projects-and-initiatives/te-tupu-ngatahi-supporting-growth#index-089a3f2d39659f5a57b9e0786ceed217910887f7d7fa73444c01771dd1be13eb

[3] Climate change means "a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and that is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods". This definition is from Part 1, Section 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991. Refer to: https://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1991/69/en/latest/#DLM230272

activities sensitive to aircraft noise[4] so that the continued operation of the airbase is not compromised and reverse sensitivity[5] issues are addressed.

There are also aviation safety requirements, including height controls for buildings, cranes and vegetation within aircraft approach and departure paths that are signalled under the Auckland Unitary Plan Airspace Restriction Designation 4311.

In some locations, development may need to undertake additional measures to ensure compatibility with ongoing airbase operations, aviation safety and to reduce potential reverse sensitivity effects. This may include controls to manage lighting, glare, and reflectivity, as well as reduce the risk posed to aircraft from bird strike. Examples of such controls can be seen across some of the precincts in the area – such as the Whenuapai 3, Whenuapai Business Park and Hobsonville Grove Precincts.

8. How does the Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan affect my property?

The structure plan provides a long-term vision for how growth, infrastructure, transport, open space and environmental management could be coordinated across Whenuapai and Redhills North. It does not by itself change the zoning, require development or alter property rights. Any future changes affecting individual properties would generally occur through separate statutory planning processes, such as a plan change, which would involve further assessment and opportunities for public input. These processes would be guided by the structure plan.

9. A road, park or esplanade reserve has been identified through my property on the structure plan – what does this mean?

If the road is not already designated in the Auckland Unitary Plan, its location on the structure plan is indicative only. Similarly, if the council does not own the underlying land for a park, then it remains indicative. The identification of a road or park as part of the structure plan also does not automatically authorise construction or a change in ownership.

If an esplanade reserve is shown on the Structure Plan, it indicates a potential future open space corridor along a waterway or coastal edge that may be required as part of future urban development. Its location is indicative and does not require any changes to your property nor does it automatically mean public access will be provided across your land. The purpose and requirements for esplanade reserves (and esplanade strips) are set out in Part 3 of the Planning Act (formerly sections 229 to 232 of the RMA), as well as Chapters E38 and E39 of the AUP concerning urban and rural subdivision.

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[4] Activities sensitive to aircraft noise is defined in Chapter J of the AUP as "Any dwellings, boarding houses, marae, papakāinga, integrated residential development, retirement villages, supported residential care, care centres, education facilities, tertiary education facilities, hospitals, and healthcare facilities with an overnight stay facility."

[5] Reverse sensitivity refers to the legal or operational vulnerability of an established, lawful activity to complaints, restrictions or obstacles caused by a new, incompatible land-use establishing nearby.

10. How have mana whenua been involved in the Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan?

Consultation with mana whenua has been ongoing in developing the draft Whenuapai and Redhills North Structure Plan. Two iwi with mana whenua customary interests over the structure plan area have been engaged with the council. They are Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara. Both Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara had a direct influence in developing the objectives, principles and key actions associated with the Cultural Environment theme identified in the structure plan.

Feedback to inform the draft structure plan has also been sought from: Manuhiri Kaitiaki Charitable Trust, Ngāti Te Ata, Ngāti Paoa, Te Ākitai Waiohua, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Ngāti Maru, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whātua and Ngāti Tamaterā.

The relevant iwi management plans are reflected in the structure plan, including the Kawerau ā Maki Trust Resource Management Statement (1995) and Te Wahapū o Kaipara Manaakitanga - South Kaipara Takiwa: Environmental Protection and Management Plan (2009). These plans provide guidance on matters including the protection of waterways and the mauri of the whenua, coastal and natural environments, heritage, indigenous biodiversity, and the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of mana whenua. Te Kawerau ā Maki has prepared a Cultural Values Assessment and supporting memoranda to inform the Structure Plan. Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara has sought recognition of its legal rohe across the area and emphasised the importance of ongoing involvement in future planning and development processes within Whenuapai and Redhills North. Both iwi have expressed a strong interest in continuing to be engaged and work with the council, other infrastructure providers, public agencies and developers to help shape the area's future growth and development.

Overall, the cultural values, aspirations and advice provided by mana whenua have helped shape the Structure Plan, including its objectives, principles and actions relating to cultural values, waterways, the coastal environment, open space, infrastructure and urban design.