

Tauranga City :: Landscape Study

A Review of the Landscape Study for the City of Tauranga

26 March 2011



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Introduction

This landscape study has been undertaken as a review of the previous landscape study, prepared by Boffa Miskell Ltd in 1995 and as part of the review of the Tauranga City Plan. The review has been prepared to identify outstanding natural features and landscapes, giving effect to the Regional Policy Statement.

This study has been undertaken at two levels; the first being the characterisation of the urban and rural landscape of Tauranga City, and secondly the evaluation of important and outstanding natural features and landscapes. The study comprises several parts including- the broader and more detailed characterisation of the City; the review and identification of outstanding natural features and landscapes; the identification of significant viewshafts from marae and public viewing points; and landscape management and protection strategies.

Landscape is a term that “a precise definition cannot be given to” (WESI vs QLDC(2000) NZRMA 59). It is accepted that landscape is more than just scenic landscape and that it is a reflection of the natural and cultural processes which influence its character and understanding. Landscape is interpreted and appreciated by all and it is not defined through landownership or tenure boundaries. Therefore landscape requires interpretation and provision of regulatory methods to maintain and enhance its amenity values and, where necessary, protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

The interpretation of landscape management can be described as:

- a) *avoiding the inappropriate erosion of the intrinsic characteristics and qualities that have built up over time through the interplay of natural and cultural processes; and*
- b) *enabling development and change to occur that avoids the loss of landscape coherence, diversity, cultural identity and meaning.*

Management of landscape is coupled with the Resource Management Act 1991, Section 6 and Section 7. The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and Regional Policy Statement introduce further policy and assessment criteria to identify outstanding natural features and landscapes, detailed through case law, (WESI vs QLDC(2000) NZRMA 59).

Objectives

The objective of this landscape study is to inform the landscape management mechanisms of the City Plan to protect special parts of the landscape from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Understanding landscape change is particularly important to those landscapes that are subject to constant pressure from subdivision, use and development. In particular the urban and peri-urban areas of Tauranga City are under ongoing pressure for change through greenfield development and redevelopment. Providing guidance for managing change is critical to enabling development that avoids the loss of the City’s inherent landscape character.

The key objectives of the character study are:

1. To provide an informative tool for Assessments of Environmental Effects to aid in assessment of planning applications.
2. To inform the development of policy matters involving the Tauranga City landscape.

Scoping and Familiarisation

Tauranga City forms a central part of a wider coastal landscape that is bounded by Western Bay of Plenty rural and peri urban landscapes. Well known for its coastal activities, the City comprises oceanside and harbourside activities, whilst also supporting a variety of rural based activities.

Extensive documentation exists on Tauranga City, much of it produced through District and Regional based studies, including those prepared for District and Regional Plan reviews. Iwi management plans also provide an understanding of the cultural interpretation of the landscape values and historical associations to Tauranga.

Community perception of the Tauranga landscape is visually represented through a variety of artworks and photography, including those published in district and regional publications. At a national level the representation of Tauranga City is through the visual depiction of Mauao, Mount Maunganui, as a dominant volcanic cone adjoining a popular beachside tourist destination.

Executive Summary

Landscape Characterisation

The landscape characterisation reviewed the existing character units within the 1995 study and classified the City into 25 specific character units within the urban and rural landscapes of Tauranga City. Each character unit provides an understanding of the landform, land cover, land use, drainage, ecological and urban processes and patterns which combine to form the city's landscape. The classification of landscape into units provides a pragmatic approach to responding to the scale of the city's landscape and the natural and manmade features which form its character. Given the scale of the city and the extent of urbanised landscape, the broad scale characterisation forms an underlying framework for the character units, with the transition between units forming more discrete edges to character units.

Tauranga City comprises a considerable area of urban development which has resulted, in some cases, in significant modification to the landform and natural landscape patterns. The analysis of the character of Tauranga City utilised the broad scale character analysis undertaken through a SmartGrowth study in 2002 (*SmartGrowth Phase 2, Biophysical Constraints Research Brief: Landscapes and Natural Features, Boffa Miskell Ltd*) and this review of the existing character study. This resulted in modification to several character units with the boundary adjustments of these units resulting from analysis of the natural landform and the current urban character.

Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes

Part 2, Section 6b, of the Resource Management Act 1991 sets out matters of national importance that Council must recognise and provide for, including:

"The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development."

The evaluation of outstanding natural features and landscapes has been undertaken by applying the criteria set out under the Regional Policy Statement. The criteria required to be considered comprise:

- the natural science factors (geological, topographical, ecological and dynamic components of the landscape);
- its aesthetic values including memorability and naturalness;
- its expressiveness (legibility); how obviously the landscape demonstrates the formative processes leading to it;
- transient values: occasional presence of wildlife; seasonal flowering; or its values at certain times of the day or the year;
- Shared and recognised values: whether the values are publicly acknowledged, shared and recognised;
- Maori values; and
- its historical associations.

The review of the existing outstanding natural features and landscapes identified in the 1995 Tauranga District Landscape Study was undertaken and those landscapes were assessed against the criteria set out under the Regional Policy Statement. Further analysis of other landscapes through the character study considered other potential landscapes significant to Tauranga City, however no further outstanding natural features or landscapes were identified.

Of the 14 outstanding natural features and landscapes assessed, five features and landscapes were identified as having important, but not outstanding, values to Tauranga City. These landscapes and features have been assessed and are considered to comprise important amenity values to Tauranga.

Part 2, Section 7c, sets out other matters for managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources, having regard to: *"The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values."*

The identified features and landscapes are detailed within **Part Three** of this document.

Significant Viewshafts

Through studies undertaken for SmartGrowth, an identified outcome was the need to identify that significant sightlines to outstanding natural features and landscapes from marae and arterial roads, was adopted. Significant field work has been undertaken to further determine the viewshafts for these sightlines from public viewing points and, utilising existing research and GIS data sets, for the identification of viewshafts from marae to Mauao.

The analysis of viewshafts from public viewpoints to outstanding natural landscapes and features focused on those viewshafts that are high quality, distinctive and memorable. Those viewshafts that are at low risk of being lost through obstruction of the view by buildings and/or structures, whilst considered significant, were not carried forward, due to the existing physical and planning parameters already placed on these views.

The identified significant viewshafts are detailed within **Part Four** of this document.

Part 1 :: The Broader Landscape

Characterisation of Tauranga City



The Broader Landscape

Landscape Characterisation

Landscape characterisation, follows on from the scoping and familiarisation stage of the study and provides a delineation and description of the landscape types and character units. This assists in providing a spatial framework that responds to both the physical and cultural landscape elements. In some cases the character units are, in essence, local character areas within a larger unit. This is largely due to the urbanised nature and cultural patterns which have influenced the Tauranga landscape.

The broader scale characterisation of landscape has been determined through a study undertaken for SmartGrowth (*SmartGrowth Phase 2, Biophysical Constraints Research Brief: Landscapes and Natural Features, Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2002*), which characterised the wider Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty Districts into six landscape character types:

- Coastal;
- Foothills;
- Harbour;
- Plains;
- Plateau;
- Ranges.

This characterisation of landscape types utilised interpretation of the geomorphology and topographical components of the landscape and provides a broad scale understanding of Tauranga City. Within each of the landscape types an analysis of the Natural Character values of the harbour margins was undertaken to identify the levels of natural character throughout the harbour.

Much of the non urbanised harbour margin is considered to comprise high natural character values (Rangataua Bay, Matapihi), with the residential harbour margin comprising moderate values (Otumoetai, Waikareao, The Avenues, Waimapu Estuary and Welcome Bay Estuary). The commercial and industrial harbour margin areas comprise low natural character values (Tauranga CBD and Port of Tauranga).

Landscape types provide a generic interpretation of the landscape whilst landscape character units identify the unique and more localised patterns and features which form the identity for the area.

The characterisation study utilised the existing landscape study for the base delineation of character units. Field work, GIS analysis and desk top review has enabled refinement of the character units.

Geomorphology

Within each of the six landscape types the Tauranga landscape can be divided into a series of landforms comprising; five peninsula, volcanic cones, three main river valleys, ridgelines and plateau and coastal plains. The coastal edge comprises a linear coastal dune environment of some 100km ranging from rural, residential, commercial to industrial (including the Port of Tauranga). Tauranga is also known for its shallow harbour and sensitive saltmarsh and coastal wetland margins.

Volcanic cones form distinctive features and include Mauao, Hopukio, Mangatawa and Upuhue. Large extensive ridgelines extend down from the Pyes Pa / Ohauiti to form the distinctive inner harbour peninsulas of Otumoetai, Matua, Bethlehem, Te Papa (CBD), Windermere and Maungatapu, with the Matapihi peninsula forming a plateau peninsula from the coastal plains of Arataki.

The harbour margin, at large, has been highly modified through a variety of land use, including the Port of Tauranga, reclamation, residential, wastewater (Te Maunga), roading, rail corridors and other infrastructure. Small areas of the unmodified harbour margin remain and have been protected from modification through lack of accessibility and existing planning protection mechanisms including Special Ecological Areas.

The landscape of the Papamoa coastal plains and Wairoa River forms distinctive low lying land that, for the former, have been extensively modified through rural and urban land use.

The foothills of the Papamoa Hills and Ohauiti area support rural and peri-urban land use where residential development has extended along the lower ridgelines within Welcome Bay. This landscape comprises steep ridgelines with deep incised valleys that fall to meet the coastal plateau of the harbour margin.

Hydrology

The valleys support a large number of rivers and streams with the most distinctive river systems being the Kaituna, Wairoa and Waimapu rivers. The Kaituna and Wairoa rivers form the eastern and western boundaries for the city at the coastal edge. Within the river valleys there are large floodable river plains which create distinctive plains unique to the City.

Vegetation

As with many urban centres a significant amount of remnant indigenous vegetation has been lost within the City with small pockets of coastal edge and bush vegetation remaining. These are mapped by identifying Category 1 and Category 2 Special Ecological Areas. Category 1 ecological areas are the best quality or only remaining representative examples of indigenous vegetation or indigenous flora in the City and need to be protected. Category 2 Ecological Areas are highly modified areas that contain more common vegetation types that are not nationally rare.

Indigenous vegetation patterns respond to the underlying landscape, therefore, through the modification of vegetation patterns some of the understanding of the natural processes and patterns has been lost. Urban and rural land use has modified the natural environment and vegetation patterns found within the City are largely amenity and productive based. Within the suburban and urban areas, the private property vegetation patterns contribute to a large extent to the vegetation cover within the City.

Land Use

Contributing to the City's landscape character is the existing land use patterns. The extent of change to the landscape patterns and processes and resultant landscape character is influenced, to a large extent, by the planned zoning and interplay between different land uses; for example industrial vs open space (recreation) or residential activities.

The management of development on ridgelines, valleys, coastal dunes and harbour margins has shaped Tauranga City's character. The topography of Tauranga District provides an extensive number of vantage points, creating many perspectives of the City's landscape and its urban form. Areas that are not highly visible within the immediate landscape can be visible from a varying number of vantage points across the City.

The Port of Tauranga defines a significant edge of the Tauranga Harbour as a working landscape. Residing largely on reclaimed land, at the end of the Te Papa peninsula, the natural landform of the Tauranga Harbour has been lost with Otamataha and the escarpment providing the remnant indicator of the original harbour edge.

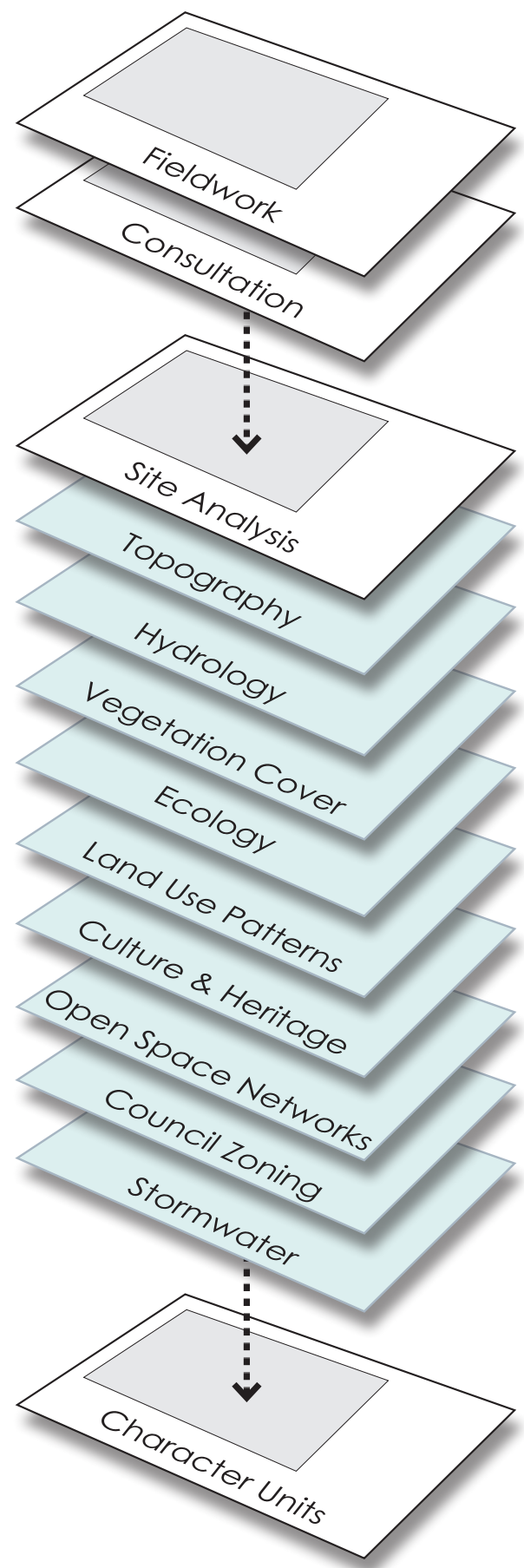
The provision of open space, both public, private and crown land contributes to the interpretation of the landscape. Access to the harbour margins and coastal edge are considered important recreational assets to the City and contribute to the management of these important margins.

Analysis

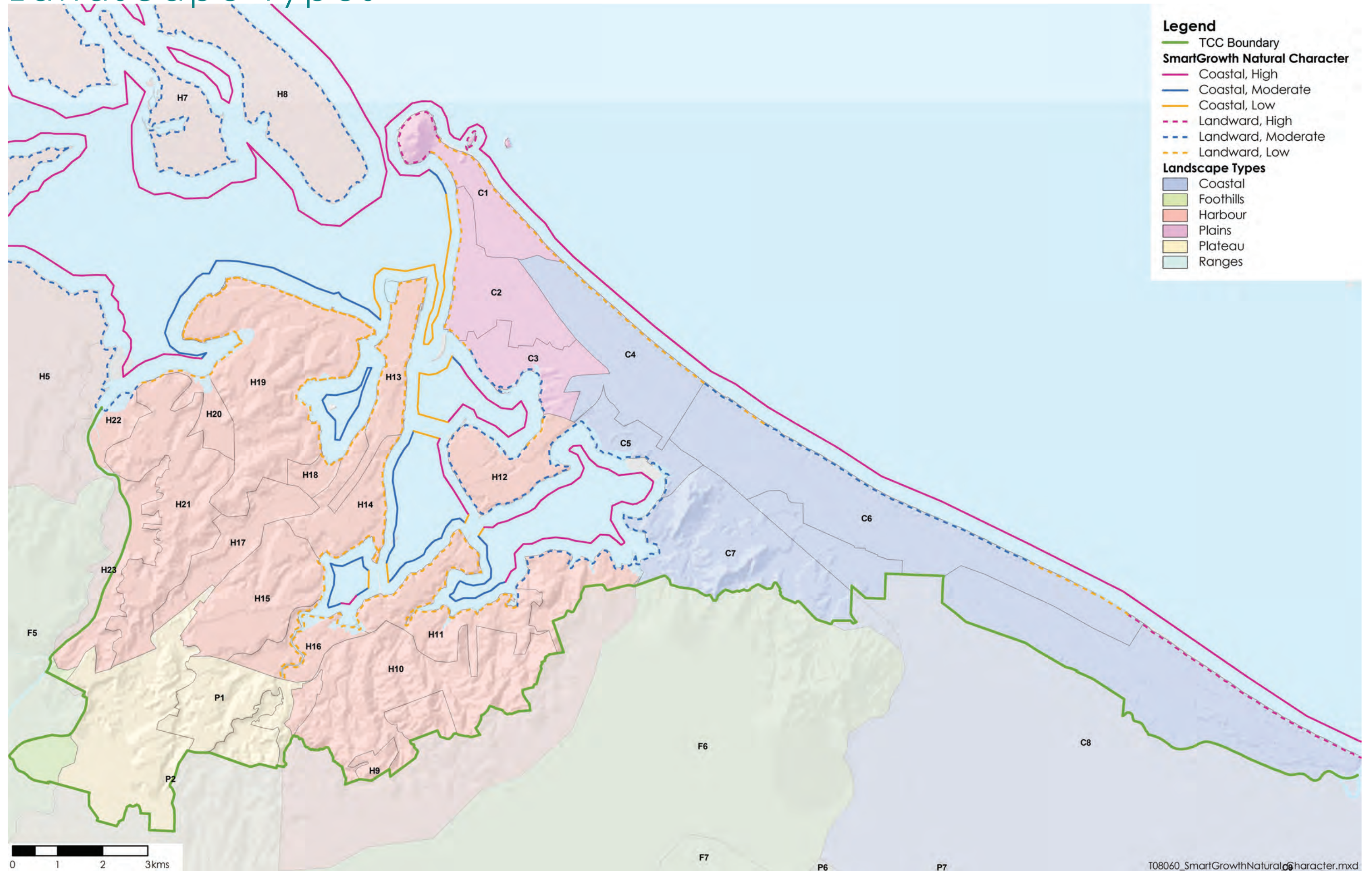
Understanding the landscape is achieved through providing an analysis of the layers which form the landscape, from natural physical elements and natural processes to the cultural influences that are particularly evident within the City.

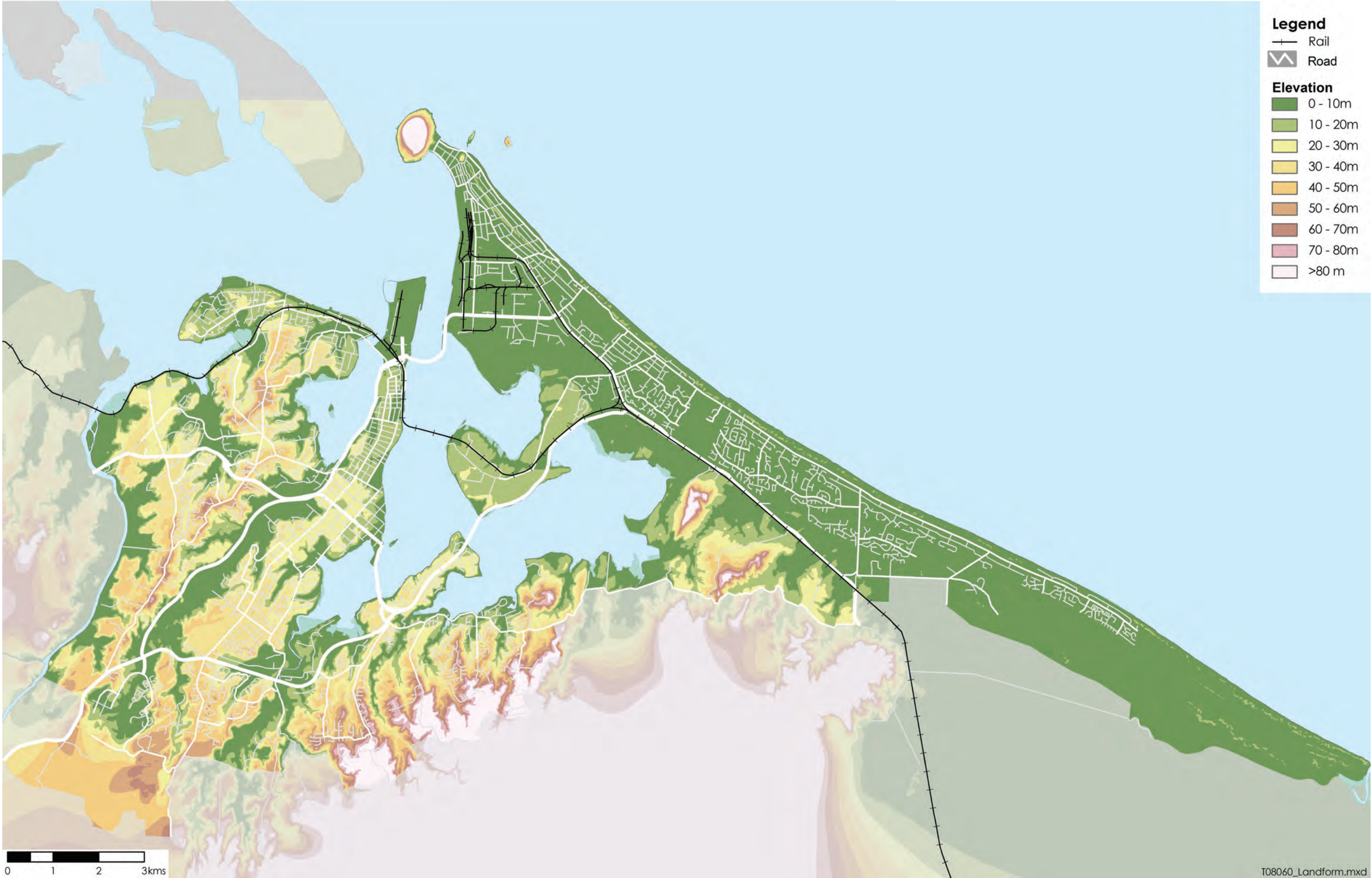
From the analysis of the landscape, the character units have been determined. The units also provide an identification of 'uniqueness' that may vary between units.

The management techniques identified have been developed to guide management of the landscape at public and private levels through regulatory and non-regulatory means. The management mechanisms will guide site development from subdivision through to structure planning exercises.

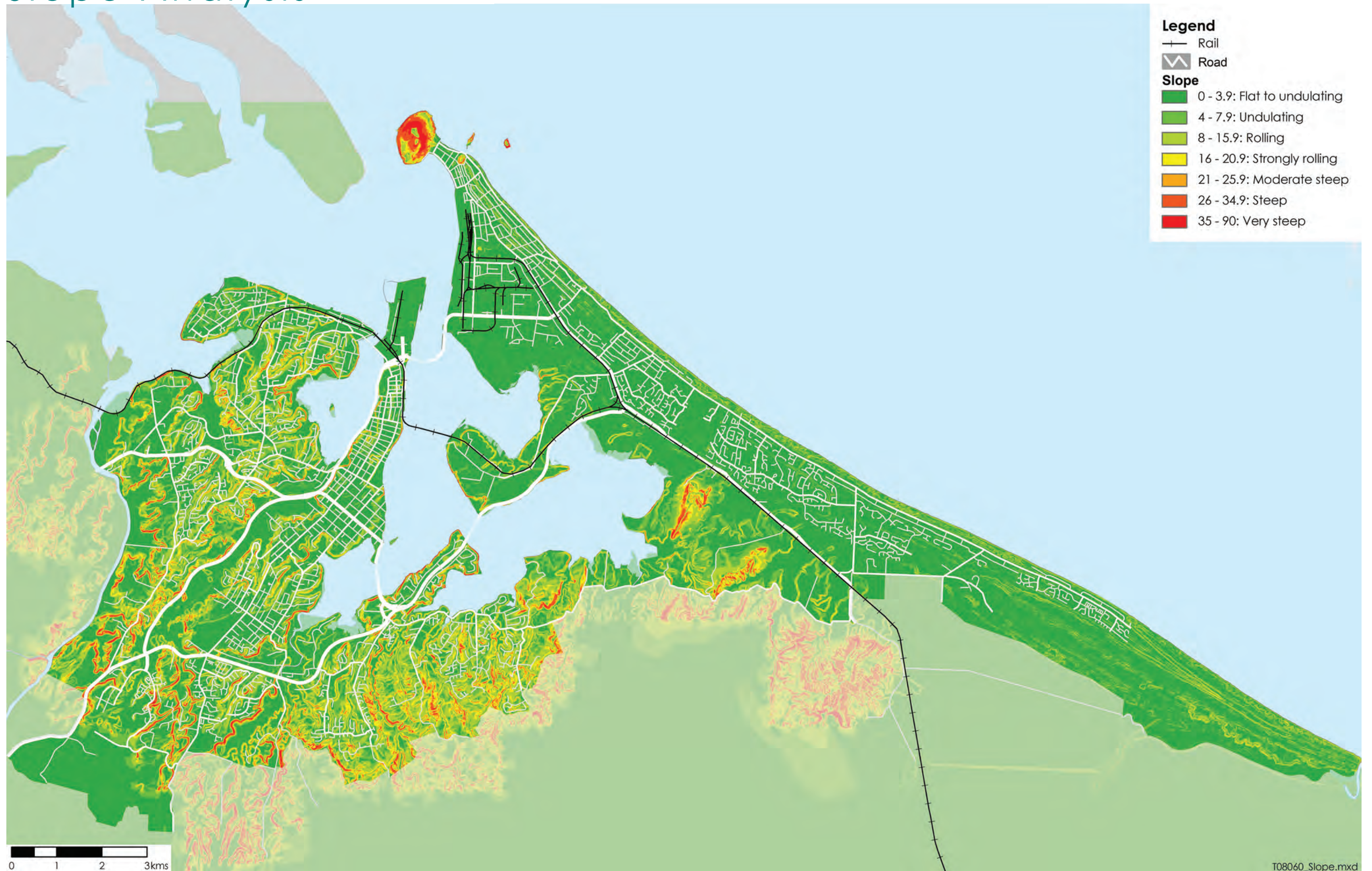


Landscape Types





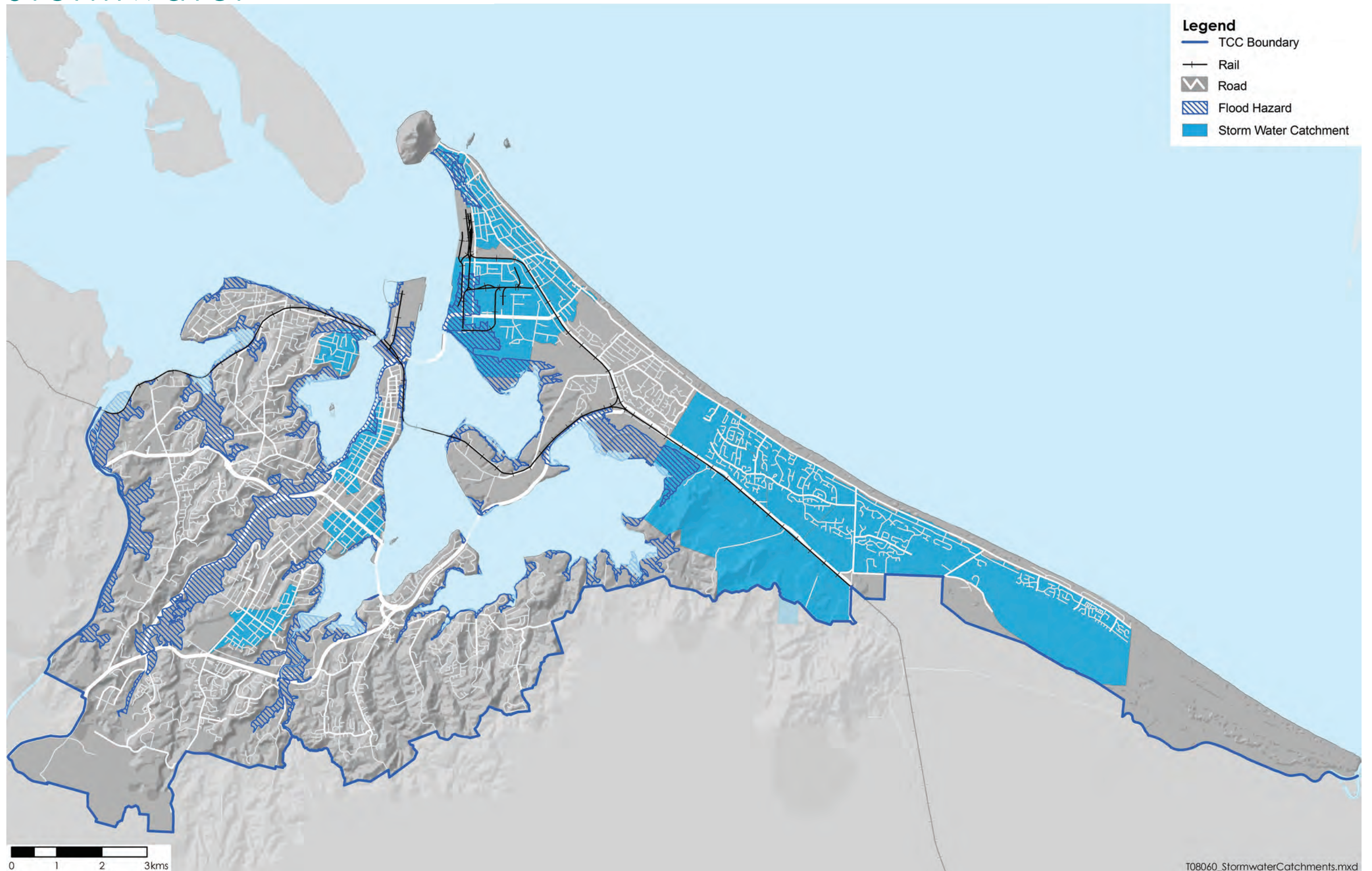
Slope Analysis



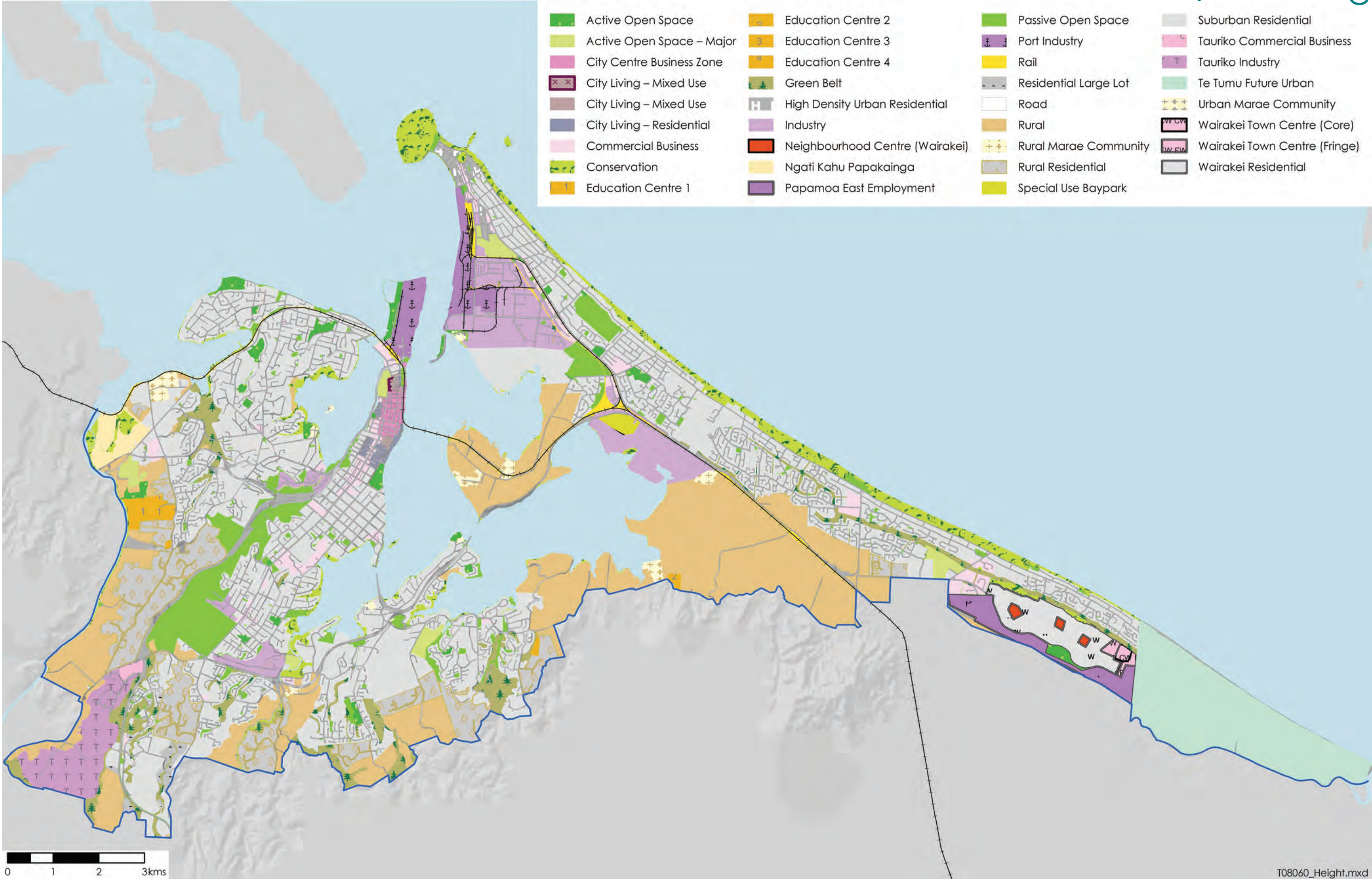


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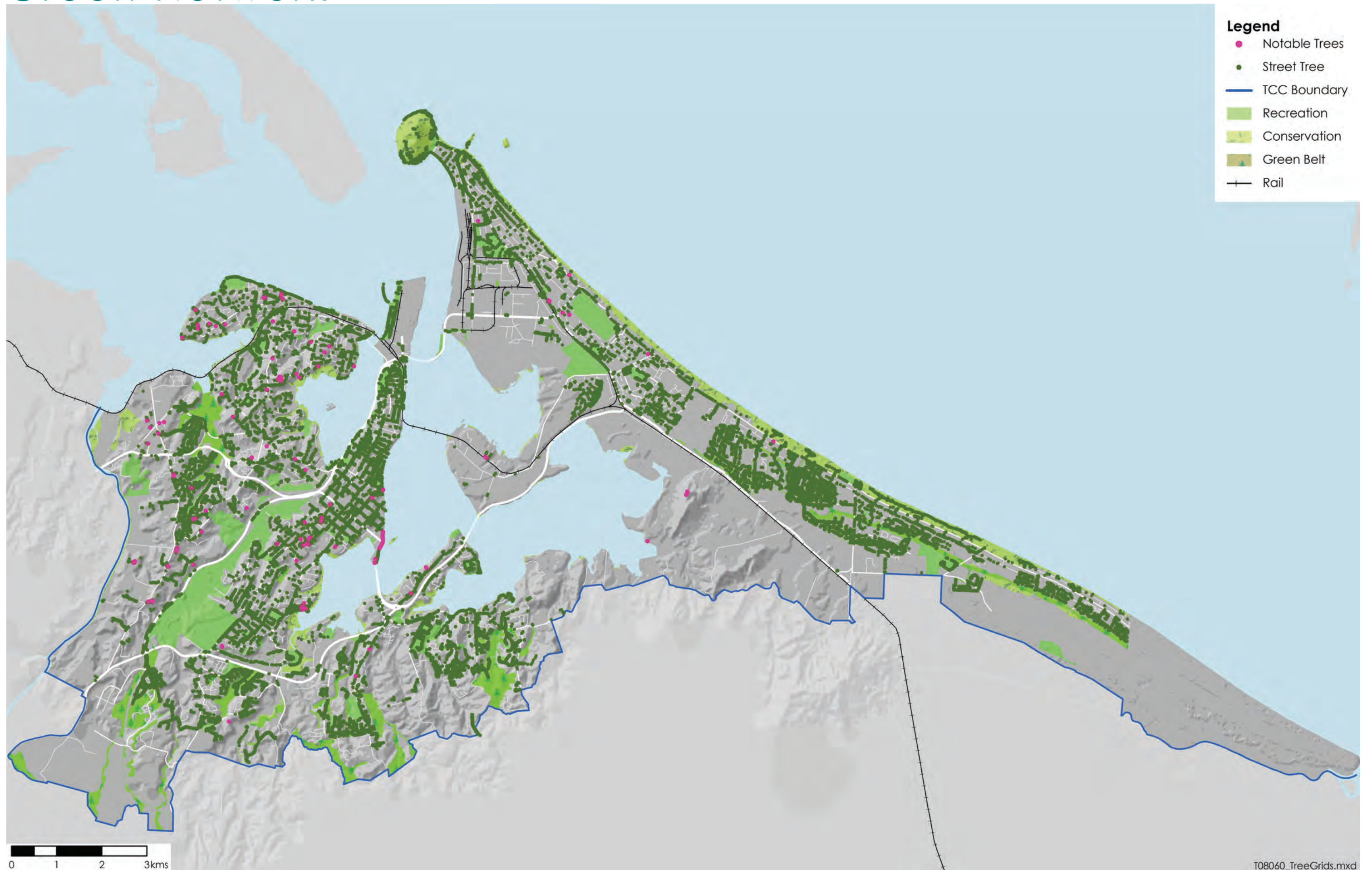
Stormwater



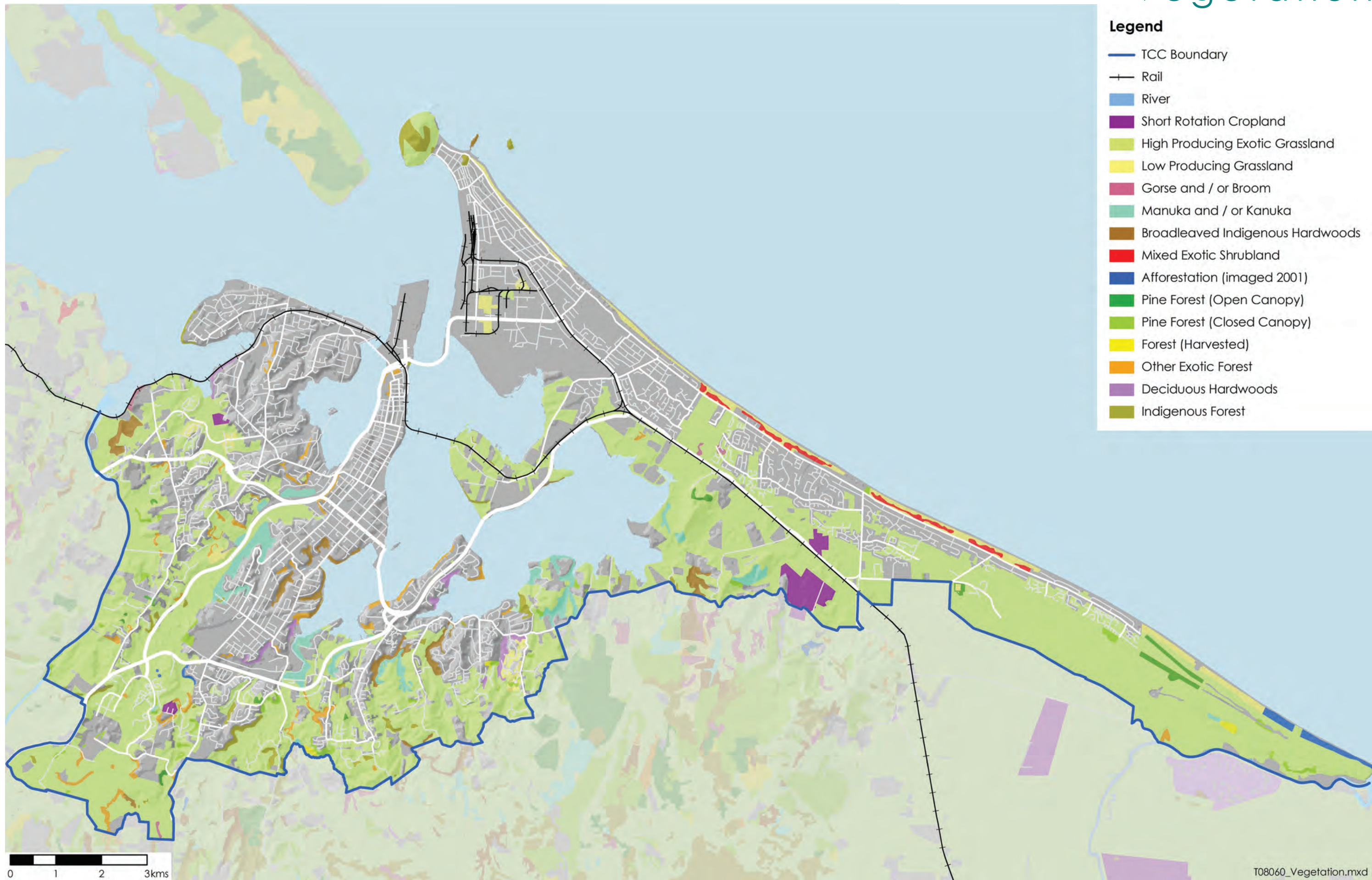
Land Use / Zoning



Green Network

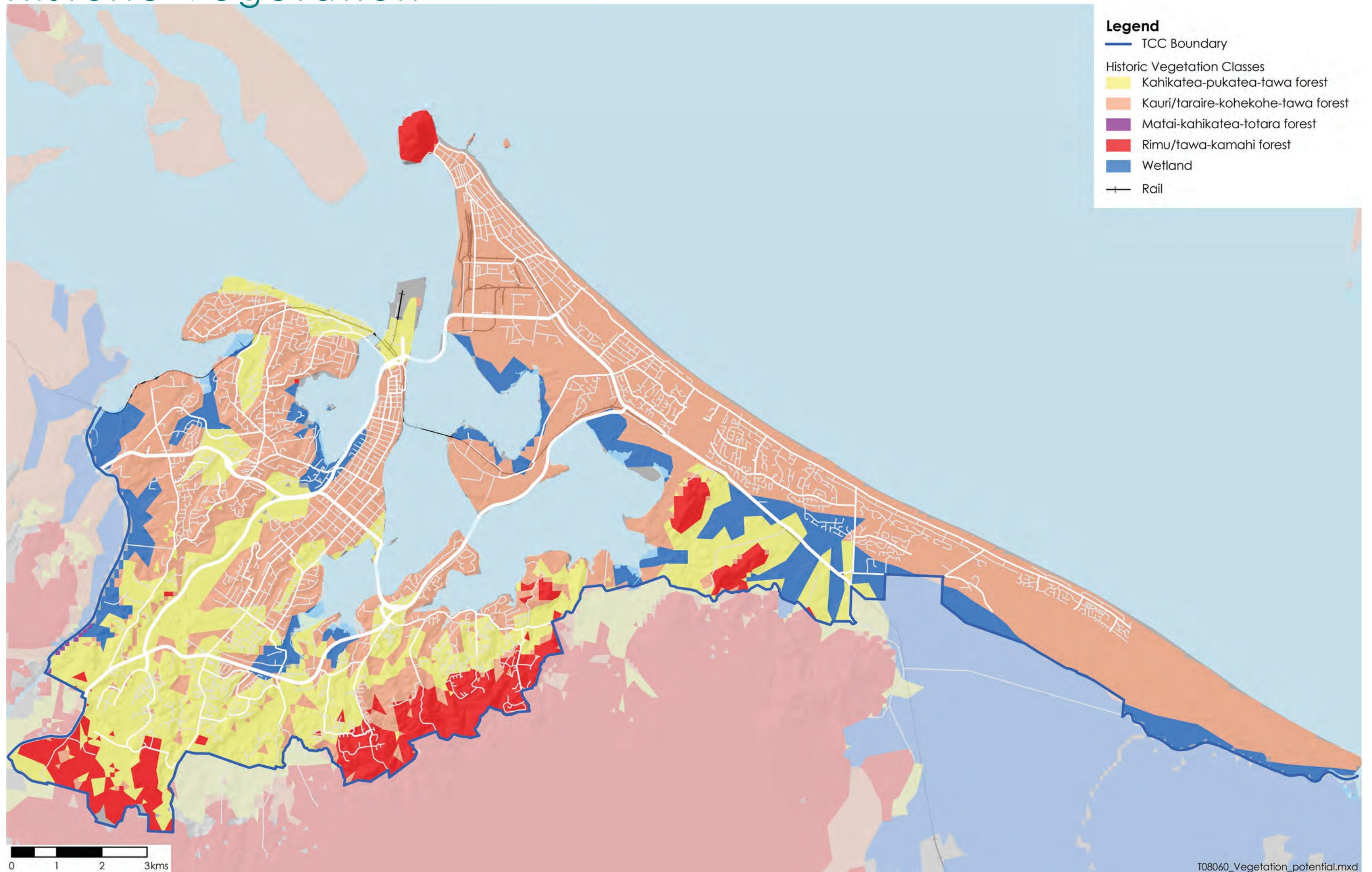


Vegetation



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Historic Vegetation

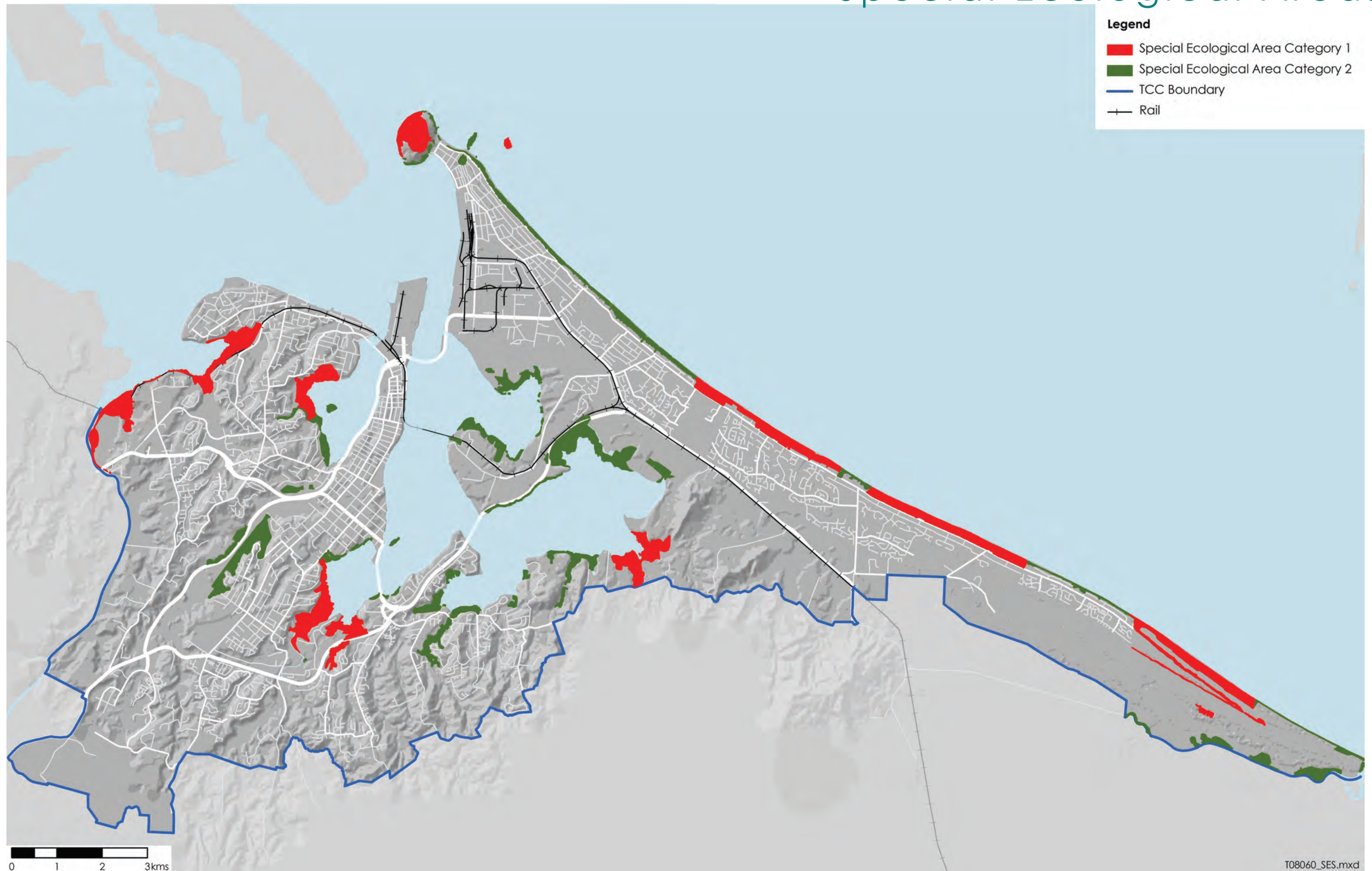


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part one

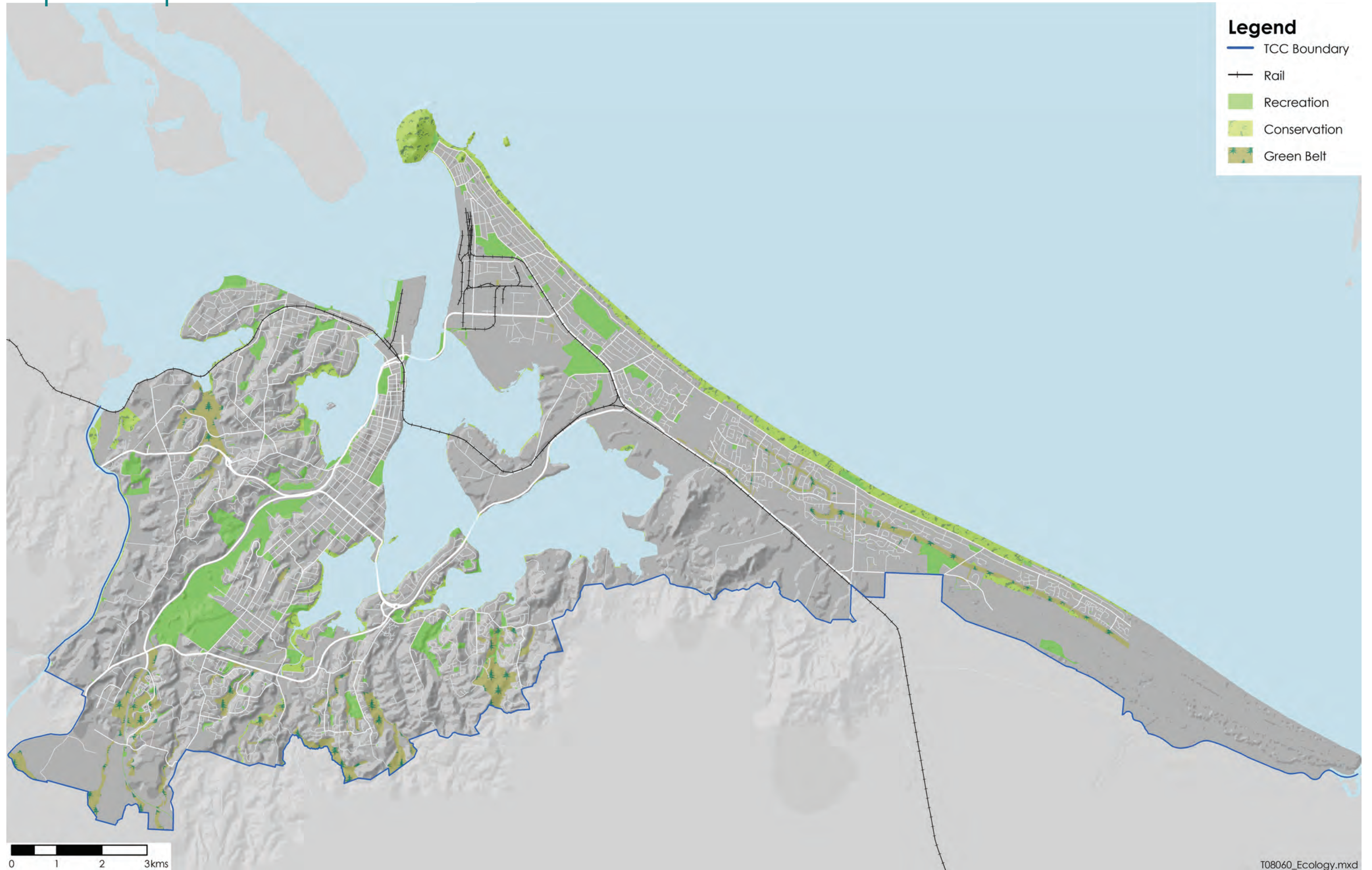
Special Ecological Areas



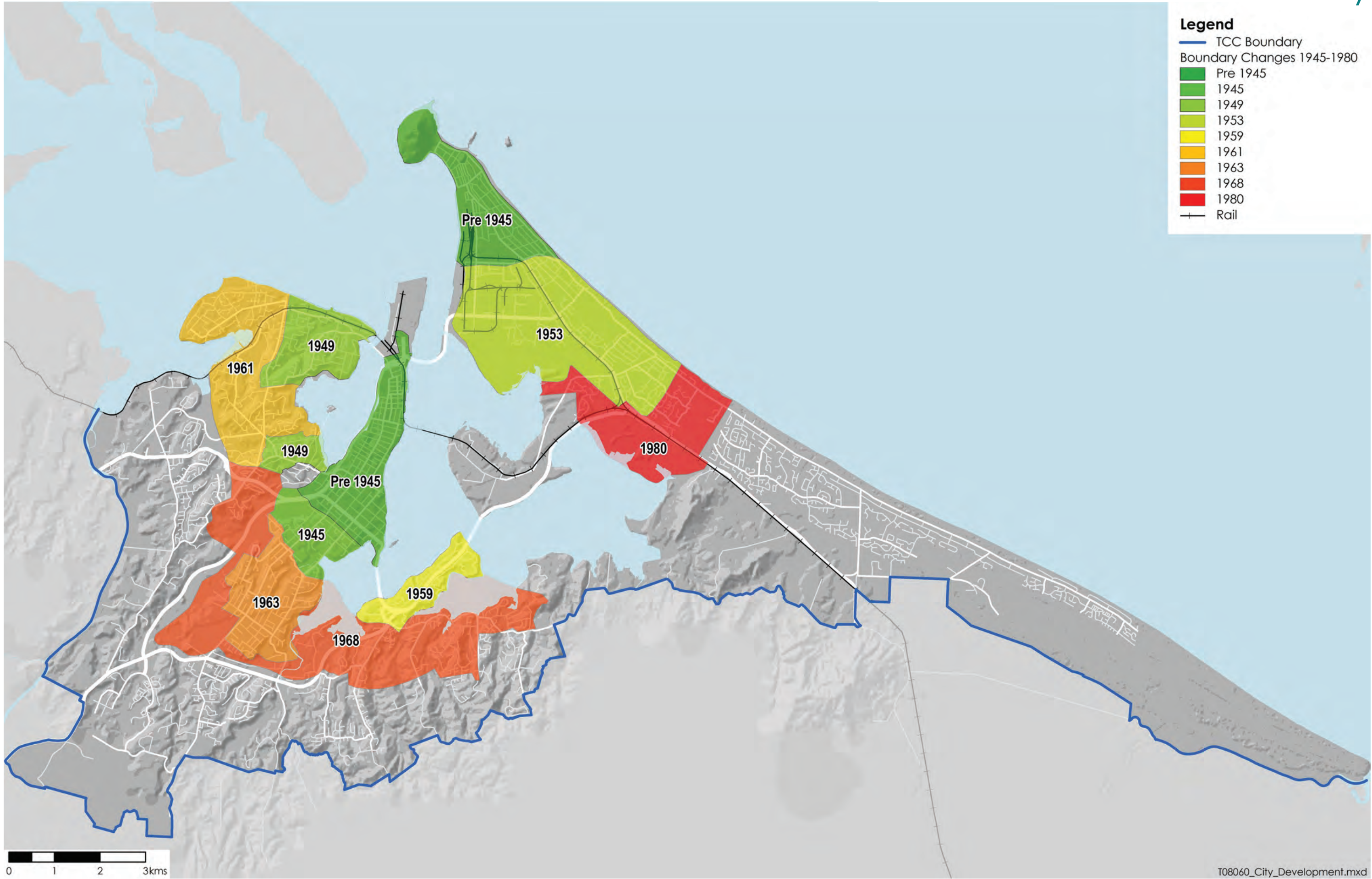
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Open Space



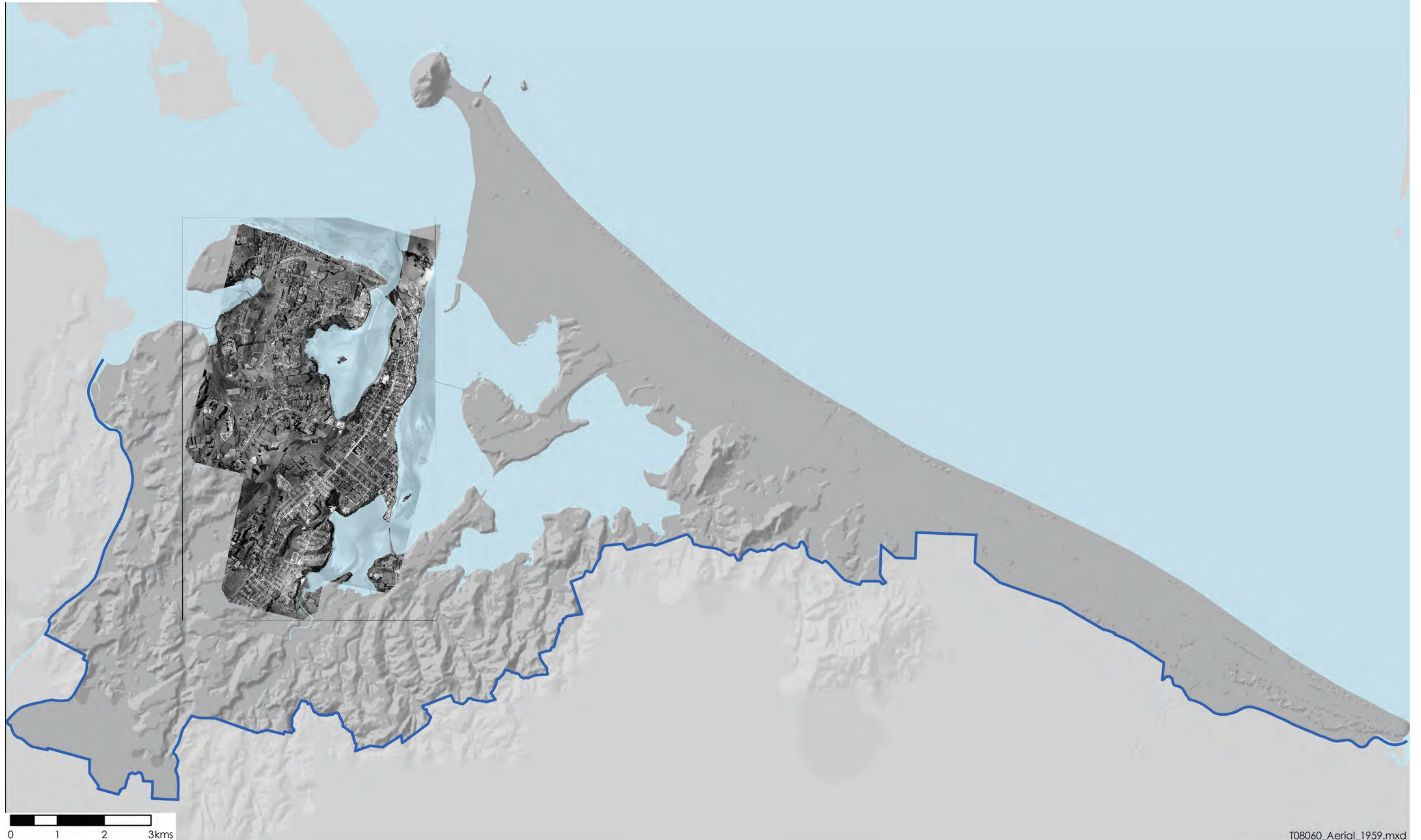
District Boundary



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Aerial Photo 1959

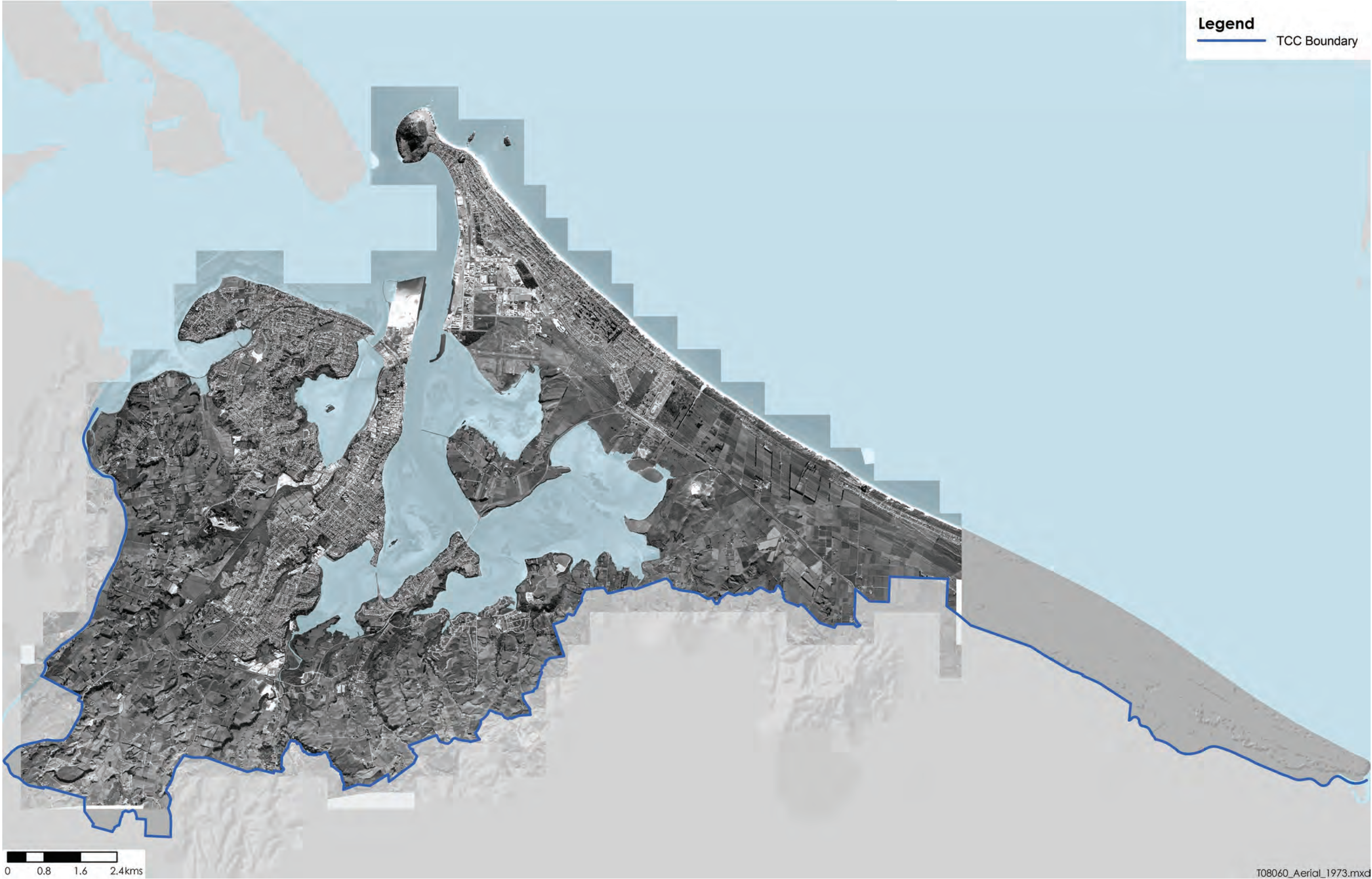
Legend
— TCC Boundary



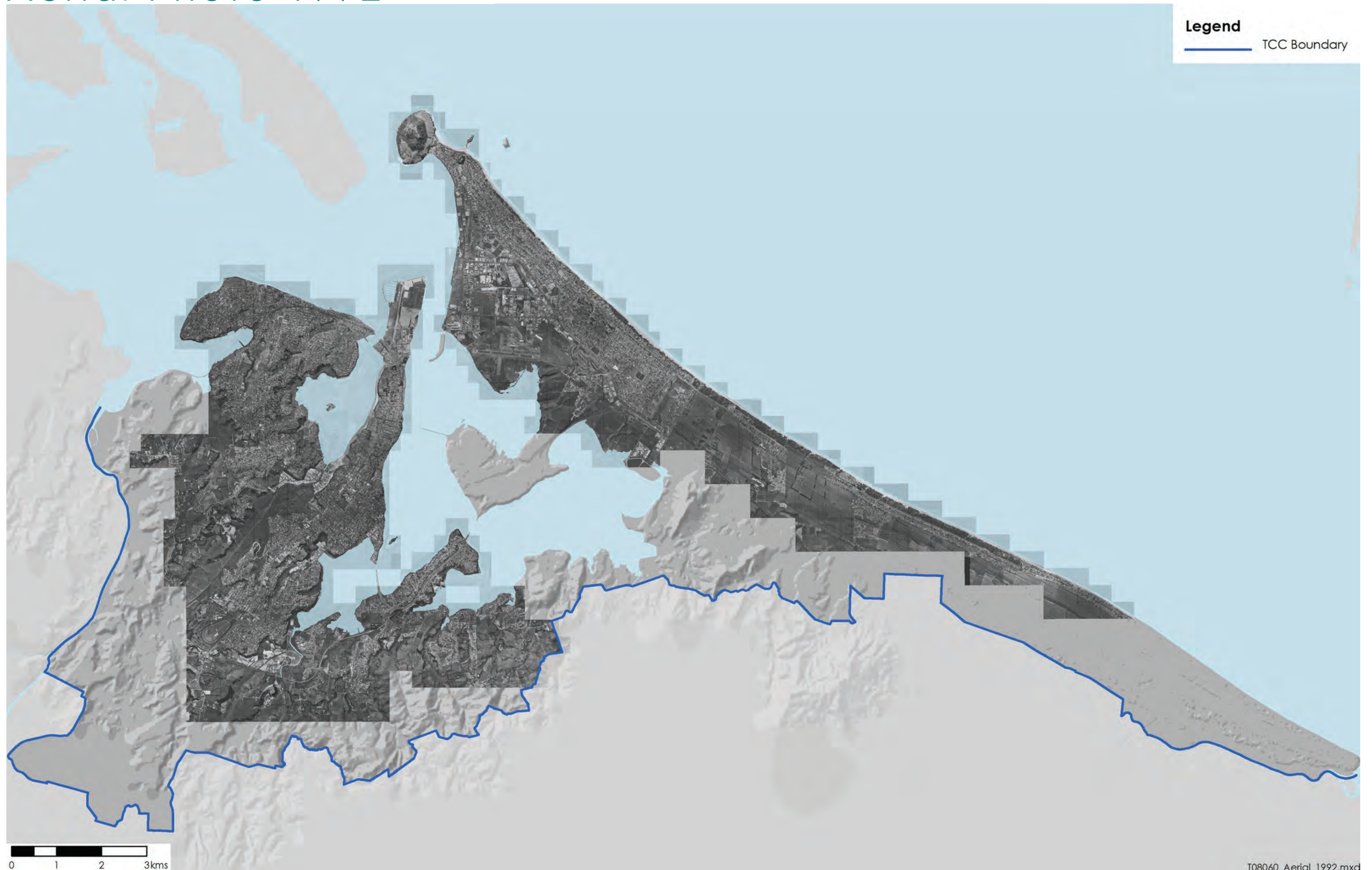
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Aerial Photo 1973



Aerial Photo 1992



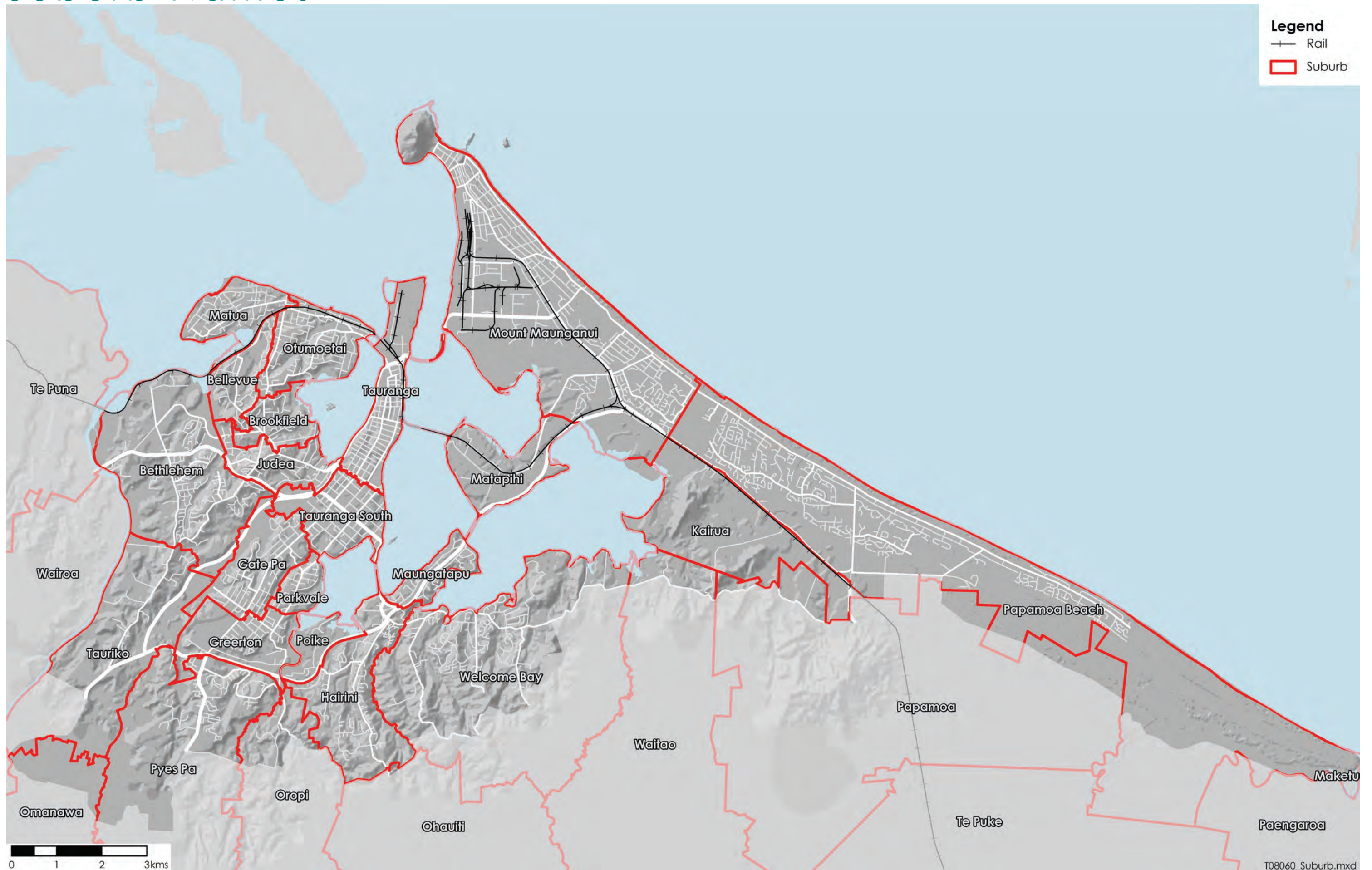
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Legend
TCC Boundary



Suburb Names



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Part 2 :: Landscape Character Units

Unit Characterisation of Tauranga City



Landscape Character Units

Tauranga City comprises several broad scale character types which form the overall landscape on which the City and its rural areas are sited. The analysis of the landscape character areas was driven initially from a desktop review of the existing character units and analysis of the landform patterns and natural processes, with ground truthing through field assessment. Within an urban landscape, such as Tauranga City, the urban built form and its relationship to the underlying landform and landscape patterns generates the character of areas within the City.

Boundaries to character units have been derived from a combination of natural landform, infrastructure and distinctive changes in built form. The transition of built character is found in many cases as the change from residential to industrial or commercial activities.

The review of the 1995 Tauranga District Landscape Study character units has resulted in the change to some of the boundaries. This is largely due to the change in landuse, zoning and the introduction of new greenfield development and infrastructure.

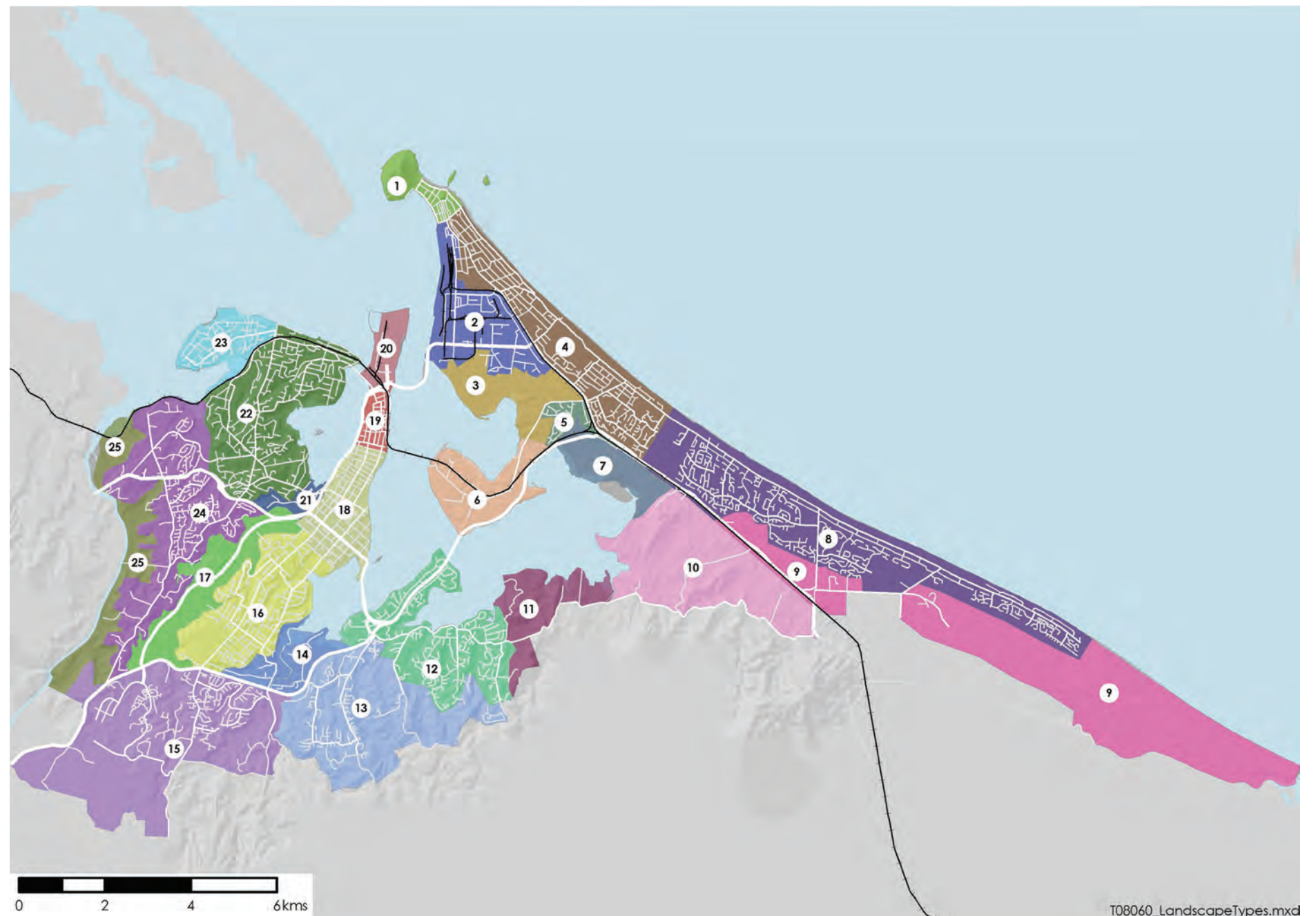
Each local character unit has a description of the area, with the defining elements, views, landscape patterns and processes including ecological and the landuse patterns identified. Amenity values are described at a broad level for each unit with opportunities to enhance the character and threats to the degradation of the identified character. Management guidelines have been derived from the analysis to inform both Tauranga City Council and the public for future development and use.

Twenty-five Character areas have been reviewed and modified from the 1995 landscape study and these comprise:

1. The Mount
2. The Mount Industrial
3. Tauranga Airport
4. Omanu - Arataki
5. Bayfair Park
6. Matapihi
7. Rangataua Bay Industrial

8. Papamoa East and West
9. Papamoa - Kaituna
10. Mangatawa - Kairua Road
11. Welcome Bay Rural
12. Maungatapu - Welcome Bay
13. Oropi - Ohauiti - Kaitemako
14. Waimapu Lowlands
15. Pyes Pa - Tauriko
16. Greerton
17. Kopurererua Valley

18. The Avenues
19. CBD - Central Business District
20. Sulphur Point
21. Judea Industrial
22. Otumoetai
23. Matua
24. Bethlehem - Tauriko
25. Wairoa Lowlands



The Mount: Landscape Character Description

Stretching between Mauao, at the northern end, and Banks Avenue, to the south, this character unit supports the retail core and high density urban residential housing of Mount Maunganui. Mauao is a prominent landscape feature and landmark for the City and the relationship between its conical mass and the sweeping curve of Pilot Bay is of particular visual significance.

Traditional development in the unit was centred around small-scale holiday homes and accommodation, with a street pattern that reflected the linearity of the coastal edge. More recent development in the past 15 years has resulted in residential housing (up to 38.5m in height) and increasing numbers of high rise apartments.

The retail and commercial core of the Mount is found between Pacific Avenue and Banks Ave and is closely connected to the landform of Hopukiorie (Mt Drury). Generally two and three storeys in height, the commercial area is beginning to expand from a compact hub to a more sprawling, linear format. The dispersal of commercial land uses has the potential to impact upon the surrounding residential character. Likewise, increased height in the retail core requires careful management to ensure that nearby landforms such as Hopukiorie (Mount Drury) remain dominant features.

The balance between the landform, vegetation and the built environment is delicate and requires careful consideration. The Norfolk Pines provide a distinctive and recognisable feature of the Mount area. These trees assist in the integration of the medium and high rise apartments into the landscape. The relationship between Mauao and Hopukiorie provides a distinct line for the management of built form height and this is reflected in the current planning provisions.

Recent enhancement of the coastal edge with the restoration of the sand dunes and inclusion of a boardwalk promenade, connecting to the Mauao base track, generally provide a high quality coastal and recreational environment. Key streetscapes edging the coast and harbour are in poor to moderate condition and this interface requires consideration in any future upgrades.

The lack of integration of built form between separate residential sites results in a disjointed suburban character. The increased density of residential housing has also resulted in the loss of private tree cover. There is an opportunity for streetscape environment to be enhanced through tree planting to improve the amenity values and assist in the integration of built form into the landscape.



Landscape Character Values

Defining Elements:

- The land formations of Mauao, Hopukiorie and Moturiki.
- Large outcrops of Pohutukawa on these land formations, along the coast and within reserves.
- Dominant row of Norfolk Pine along Pilot Bay and the Main Beach.
- Medium to high density living.
- Coastal and harbour beach environments for recreation.
- Coastal dune environment.

Viewshafts to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes:

- Mauao.

Amenity Values:

- Mixed use development.
- Pedestrian prioritised coastal and harbour edges.
- Views to landscape features.
- Active street interface between public and private space.

Opportunities to Enhance Landscape Character:

- Large coastal specimen tree planting (e.g. Pohutukawa) and pedestrian prioritised environment.
- Restriction of vehicle parking along The Mall (Pilot Bay) and Marine Parade and breaking up long stretches of parking with trees and landscaping.
- Improvement of landward edge of The Mall and Marine Parade.
- Enhancement of street and / or pedestrian connections to open space and coastal / harbour edge.
- Enhancement of key views from roads and open space to Mauao and Hopukiorie.
- Encourage high amenity streetscapes to offset the dominance of built form, particularly in medium and high density areas.

Threats to Degrade Landscape Character:

- Further loss of remaining vegetation cover in the area.
- Loss of vegetation cover on Mauao, Hopukiorie and Moturiki.
- Loss of street interface due to non commercial or liveable ground floor (e.g. car parks) dominating the streetscene.
- Built form not relating to the dominant land formations of Mauao and Hopukiorie.

Management Guidelines:

- Provide for protection of identified viewshafts to landscape features.
- Increase public tree planting to enhance amenity values.
- Provide for liveable ground floor space and active edges to the street.
- Encourage low boundary fence / wall interface on street boundary.



THE MOUNT : landform & hydrology



Landform:

Mauao (Mount Maunganui), Hopukiorie (Mount Drury), Moturiki, Mussel Rocks and Motuotau Island are remnants of lava domes formed by the upwelling and outpouring of viscous rhyolite laval about four million years ago (Moore, 1994; Gibb, 1995).

The summit of Mauao is encircled by rocky cliffs and comprises two domes with an undulating central area with the highest point being to the south east.

Mauao, Moturiki and Hopukiorie are connected by a sand plain (tombolo) that has desposited over the last few thousand years. Historically Moturiki supported a quarry site in the early 1900's and in the latter 1900's a leisure facility (pools and waterslides), resulting in gradual modifications to the landform.

Modifications to the landform on Mauao, Hopukiore and Moturiki have been a result of cultural interaction, both Maori (pre-european) and European (Reserve Management Plan, 1998).

A remnant dune ridge extends northward from the south between Rita and May Streets. Historically the coastal dunes extended further inland with recent dune restoration work over the past 10 years resulting in a significant enhancement in the management and protection of the dunes.

Significant alterations to the secondary dune systems have occurred as a result of urban development, including the levelling of the frontal dune system along the Mount Main Beach.

Hydrology:

This area is subject to strong coastal processes with storm surges being recorded during the Wahine Storm (1968) and a wave storm in July 1978 (Gibb, 1994; Gibb, 1995 - Mauao, Hopukiore and Moturiki Reserves Management Plan).

Open Space:

The open space areas of the Mount are dominated by the coast and significant land formations which comprise:

- Marine Parade.
- The Mall.
- Hopukioe.
- Mauao.
- Banks Avenue Reserve.
- Moturiki.
- Extensive walking tracks on Mauao connect to Pilot Bay, Adams Ave and the Main Beach boardwalk.

Trees:

The majority of vegetation cover is found on the Mount, Mount Drury and the Coastal Reserves. There are limited street trees and private property supports minimal vegetation cover. The loss of vegetation cover appears to be the result of the higher density living and loss of private open space suitable for large tree cover.

Mature Norfolk Pines dominate the coastal edge on The Mall (Pilot Bay) and Marine Parade (Main Beach) areas. These exotic species provide a significant contribution to the built environment and are both regionally and nationally recognisable.

Native Vegetation Cover:

The coastal edge along Marine Parade has been enhanced over the past 10 years through the Environment Bay of Plenty Regional Council Coastcare program. This focuses on low dune planting cover, with few large native trees.

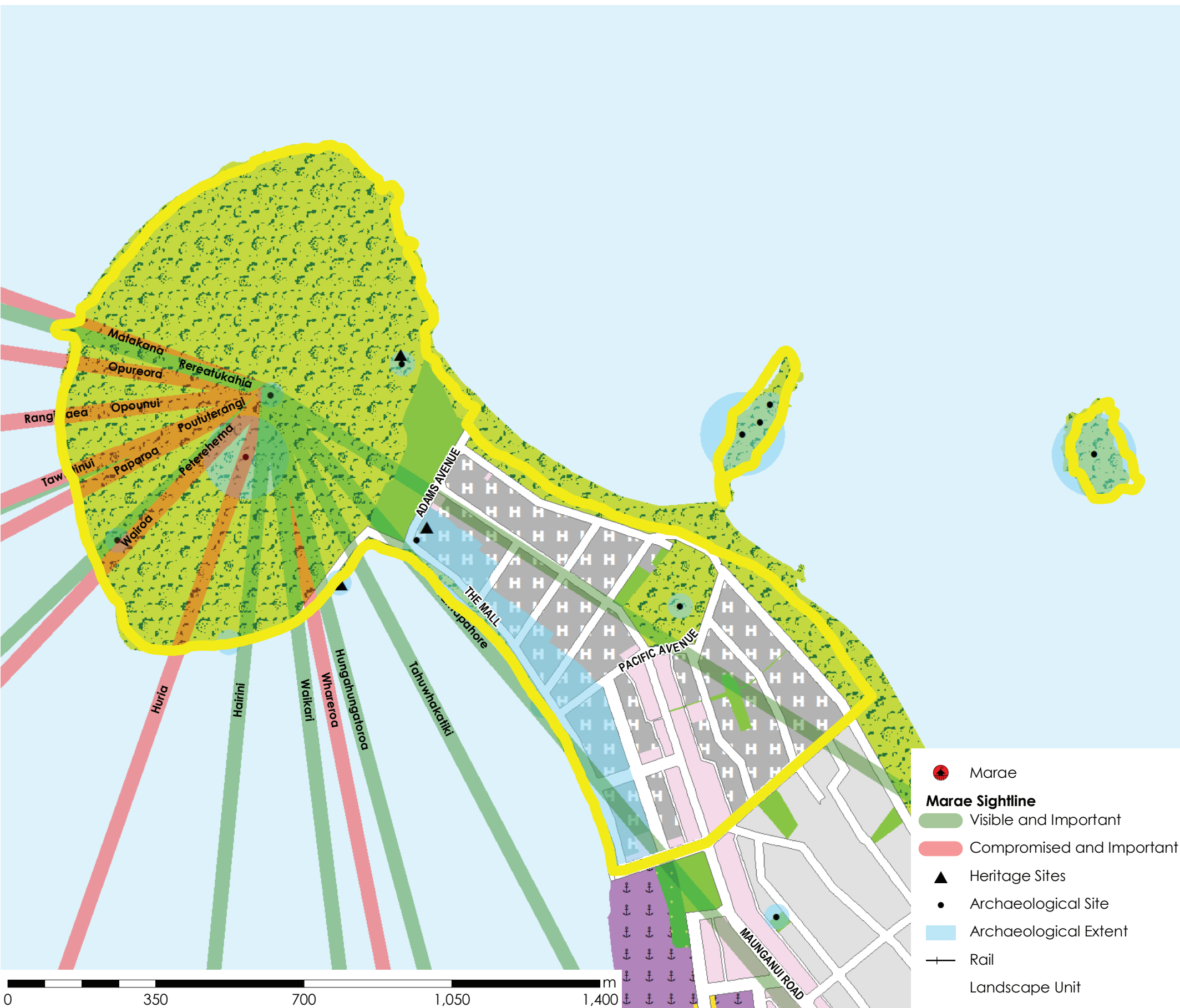
Mauao supports the largest area of mass native vegetation cover. Historically grazed in the early 1900's, the lower slopes of Mauao remain grazed with the upper slopes revegetated with native bush cover.

Over the years several uncontrolled fires have resulted in significant loss of native vegetation on Mauao. Restoration of these areas has been undertaken with the installation of fire breaks.

Hopukioe also supports a significant stand of pohutukawa, with Moturiki supporting lower growing native vegetation.



THE MOUNT : people



Zoning:

Predominantly zoned Residential H, this unit provides for high rise apartment housing with a graded height control extending from 38.5m adjacent to Mauao to 19.0m adjacent to Hopukioire (Mount Drury).

The housing types are generally high density apartments adjacent to Mauao, with medium density apartment housing extending southward toward and around the Central Business District area. At the southern most end of The Mall and Salisbury Avenue, large apartment buildings are sited.

Critical to the protection of the natural landscape and the character of the area is the relationship of built form to significant natural landscape features.

Archaeological / Heritage Values:

Mauao and the entire unit have been subject to extensive archaeological research. Cultural history of the area is rich with Maori and European settlement and use and recently Mauao has been returned to tangata whenua ownership. Mauao is of significant importance to Ngati Ranginui, Ngaiterangi and Ngati Pukenga, being a taonga which symbolises the identity of each iwi.

Viewshafts from Marae to Mauao:

(Refer to Part 4 - Significant Viewshafts)

Numerous marae have sightlines to Mauao, as depicted in the adjacent diagram. Many views are significant and support the connection Mauao has to each iwi.

Viewshafts to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes

(Refer to Part 4 - Significant Viewshafts)

Mauao

- Viewshaft 13 - Maunganui Road