

Supporting Information for a Referral Application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

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Auckland Council (Healthy Waters and Flood Resilience Department)
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Ngā Wairau Stage 1
2 December 2025



Supporting Information for a Referral Application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

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Executive summary

This report is submitted in support of an application made by Auckland Council's Healthy Waters and Flood Resilience Department (Healthy Waters) (the applicant) for referral of the Auckland Council's Making Space for Water – Blue-Green Network Ngā Wairau – Stage 1 A F Thomas Park (the 'Project') under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTA Act).

The proposal is for:

- (a) flood resilience infrastructure works; and
- (b) reserve reinstatement, including site stabilisation, landscaping, new footpaths/boardwalks, and formal and informal recreation,

at A F Thomas Park (the Project) located at 21 Northcote Road, 17, 17A, 17B and 17C Silverfield Lane, Wairau Valley, Auckland.

During the 2023 Auckland Anniversary floods, the Wairau catchment (including Wairau Valley, Milford, Glenfield and Tōtara Valley) experienced severe flooding and damage, particularly in residential areas of Tōtara Vale, Sunnynook and Nile Road, and commercial areas on Wairau Road and upstream of A F Thomas Park. There were two fatalities in the catchment during this weather event.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the FTA Act. The purpose of the FTA Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. This is such a Project, for the reasons stated in this report.

During the development of the Project, the applicant and its representatives have undertaken consultation with Auckland Council in its regulatory capacity, the Parks and Community Facilities Department, Urban Forest Team who are the asset owner for public trees within the legal road reserve and within open space parks, and the Area Operations team in the Parks and Community Facilities Department. Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Pāoa are partners to the Project, while consultation has also been undertaken with other relevant iwi authorities. Consultation was undertaken with the relevant Adminstrating Agencies, which in this case are the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and Department of Conservation (DoC). The objective of this consultation was to discuss the Project and proposed works, understand any issues that may exist with the site, locality and development, as well as the information requirements needed for the application. This consultation meets the requirements of s 11 of the FTA Act.

The proposal requires consent for approvals relating to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) under the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) (AUP(OP)), the National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health (NES-CS) and the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-F). Approval is also sought for a Wildlife Permit to relocate fauna under the Wildlife Act 1953.

This application and supporting documents have been prepared in accordance with s 13 of the FTA Act. The application provides a description of the proposal, as well as an explanation of how:

- (a) the Project is consistent with the purpose of the FTA Act; and
- (b) the Project meets the criteria specified in s 22 of the FTA Act.

In short, the Project satisfies both limbs of the s 22(1) acceptance criteria, having regard to the considerations identified in s 22(2):

- (a) **Significant regional benefits (s 22(1)(a))**

The Project delivers regionally significant flood management infrastructure (approximately 550,000m³ storage capacity) that responds directly to the 2023 Auckland Anniversary floods which caused two fatalities and severe damage across the Wairau catchment. The Project reduces extreme rainfall flood risk by 30%, protects critical national infrastructure, and addresses a demonstrated and urgent community safety need. The Project is assessed as positively addressing the following s 22(2) considerations (noting that it engages with two aspects of the consideration at (2)(a)(ii)):

- i. priority project status ((2)(a)(i));
- ii. delivery of new / additional flood storage infrastructure of a regionally significant scale ((2)(a)(ii));
- iii. assisting in enabling the continued functioning of **existing** regionally significant infrastructure (Watercare Services Limited (Watercare)'s wastewater assets) and nationally significant infrastructure (State Highway 1 and Vector Limited (Vector) / Transpower New Zealand Limited (Transpower) infrastructure) ((2)(a)(ii));
- iv. contribution to well-functioning urban environments ((2)(a)(iii));
- v. potentially significant economic benefits ((2)(a)(iv));
- vi. climate change adaptation, natural hazard risk reduction, and support for recovery from events caused by natural hazards ((2)(a)(viii));
- vii. consistency with local and regional planning documents ((2)(a)(x)); and
- viii. significant environmental enhancement / benefits ((2)(b)).

(b) Fast-track facilitation (s 22(1)(b))

The FTA Act process reduces consenting timeframes significantly, enabling construction by September 2027 – a potential time saving of **at least two years**, and potentially longer, compared with the normal RMA process. This consolidated approach provides certainty for a complex multi-consent application (RMA, NES-CS, NES-F, Wildlife Act), and delivers urgent flood management infrastructure potentially years earlier than standard processes would allow – noting the risk of delay associated with standard consent processes with merits appeals to the Environment Court and the possibility of further appeals to the superior courts.

Referring the Project to the fast-track approvals process is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

The Project involves no ineligible activities and presents no s 21 grounds for declining the referral, as addressed in Section 4.4.

We also provide a high-level assessment of actual and potential effects on the environment consistent with the requirements of Schedule 5 of the FTA Act. The Project's potential adverse effects on the environment can be appropriately mitigated and managed to an acceptable level. The Project will not involve any significant adverse effects on the environment.

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Acronyms

Term	Meaning
ACPCF	Auckland Council Parks and Community Facilities
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
Auckland Plan	Auckland Plan 2050
Auckland Climate Plan	Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri, Auckland's Climate Plan (2020)
AUP(OP)	Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part)
BCR	Benefit Cost Ratio
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CHI	Cultural Heritage Index
CMA	Coastal marine area
CNVMP	Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan
DoC	Department of Conservation
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
ESCP	Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
Formative	Formative Limited
FTA Act	Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
GDP	Gross domestic product
GD05	Auckland Council Guideline Document 2016/005 <i>'Erosion and Sediment Control Guide for Land Disturbing Activities in the Auckland Region'</i>
HAIL	Hazardous Activities Industries List
Hato Hone St John	The Order of St John Northern Regional Trust Board
Healthy Waters	Healthy Waters and Flood Resilience
HGMPA	Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000
ICNZ	Insurance Council of New Zealand Te Kāhui Inihua o Aotearoa
MfE	Ministry for the Environment

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MJ	Martin, Jenkins & Associates Ltd
MP	Member of Parliament
MRA	Milford Residents Association Inc
NES-CS	National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health
NES-F	National Environmental Standards for Freshwater
NIFFCo	National Infrastructure Funding and Financing
NPS-FM	National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management
NPS-IB	National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity
NPS-UD	National Policy Statement on Urban Development
NSTGL	North Shore Takapuna Golf Limited (also referred to as Takapuna Golf Club in the Feasibility Report)
NZCPS	New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement
NZTA	New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
PC120	Auckland Council Plan Change 120: Housing Intensification and Resilience
Project	Blue-green Network Ngā Wairau – Stage 1 A F Thomas Park works
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
RTC	Regional Tree Consent
SACI	Shore Archery Club Incorporated
SEA	Significant Ecological Area
SNA	Significant Natural Areas
Transpower	Transpower New Zealand Limited
Urban Ngahere Team	Auckland Council's Park and Community Facilities, Urban Forest Team
Vector	Vector Limited
WCAG	Wairau Community Advisory Group

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Watercare	Watercare Services Limited
WSP	WSP New Zealand Limited

1. Introduction

This report is submitted in support of the applicant's application for referral of the Project. The proposal is for:

- (a) flood resilience infrastructure works; and
- (b) reserve reinstatement, including site stabilisation, landscaping, new footpaths/boardwalks, and formal and informal recreation,

at A F Thomas Park located at 21 Northcote Road, and 17, 17A, 17B and 17C Silverfield Lane, Wairau Valley, Auckland.

In summary, the proposed works to increase flood storage at A F Thomas Park include the following:

- Vegetation removal;
- Bulk earthworks;
- Creation of a wetland and dry flood storage;
- Reducing the height of an existing (unnamed) dam, increasing the flood storage capacity and providing an additional spillway for the existing consented dam on the site;
- Stream reclamation and diversion of an existing (unnamed) stream; and
- Recreation reserve reinstatement, including site stabilisation, landscaping, walkways, boardwalks and other park infrastructure.

This application and supporting documents have been prepared in accordance with s 13 of the FTA Act.

The application provides a description of the proposal, as well as an explanation of how:

- (a) the Project is consistent with the purpose of the FTA Act; and
- (b) the Project meets the criteria specified in s 22 of the FTA Act.

There are no reasons for declining the referral application in terms of s 21(3)-(5) of the FTA Act, as addressed in Section 4.4.

A high-level assessment of actual and potential effects on the environment consistent with the requirements of Schedule 5 of the FTA Act is also provided. The Project's potential adverse effects on the environment can be appropriately mitigated and managed to an acceptable level. The Project will not involve any significant adverse effects on the environment.

2. Description of the Environment

2.1 Site Location

The site is made up of several land parcels as outlined in Table 2-1 and the Records of Title are provided at **Appendix A**. The total site area is approximately 50.91 hectares. The site is known as A F Thomas Park, which is an Auckland Council owned asset and held under the Reserves Act 1977 as a recreation and local purpose reserve. The land parcels comprising the site are managed in accordance with the Kaipātiki Local Parks Management Plan (adopted on 21 February 2024).

Table 2-1: Legal descriptions and land status

Address	Legal Description	Record of Title	Owner	Lease holder	Land status ¹
21 Northcote Road	Lot 1 DP 150598, Lot 3 DP 150598, Lot 4 DP 150598, Lot 8 DP 150598 and Lot 8 DP 101760	NA92B/923, NA92B/930, 71418	Auckland Council	Takapuna Golf Course Limited	Recreation reserve, Local purpose (parking and community use) reserve, Local purpose (accessway) reserve, Local purpose (community building) reserve
17 Silverfield Lane	Lot 2 DP 150598	NA92B/924	Auckland Council	Eventfinda Stadium	Local purpose (community building and wastewater purposes) reserve
17A Silverfield Lane	Lot 5 DP 150598	NA92B/927	Auckland Council	Hate Hone St John	Recreation reserve
17B Silverfield Lane	Lot 6 DP 150598	NA92B/928	Auckland Council	Sunnybrae Bowling Club	Recreation reserve
17C Silverfield Lane	Lot 7 DP 150598	NA92B/929	Auckland Council	Shore Archery Club	Recreation reserve
Nil	Part Allot 103 PSH OF Takapuna	NA56A/68	Auckland Council	Eventfinda Stadium	Local purpose (community building) reserve

There is a listed Interest on the Titles (for all sites) – “Subject to Part IV A Conservation Act 1987” (which relates to marginal strips). There are no marginal strips identified on the title plan and/or survey plan. Healthy Waters will continue to engage with DoC through the referral application process and the development of the Project.

2.2 Project boundary and surrounds

The proposed works will take place within A F Thomas Park which is an open space reserve. The Project boundary is shown in Figure 2-1 below and also depicted in the Project footprint plan provided at **Appendix B**. The majority of the site currently operates as a golf course, with a club house, driving range and carpark accessed from Northcote Road. The carpark is also utilised by adjacent businesses and is a public carpark that is not solely dedicated to golf course patrons. In the northern part of the site is a bowling club and an archery

¹ Kaipātiki Local Park Management Plan

club, Eventfinda Stadium and a building leased to Hate Hone St John. Access to those facilities is from Silverfield Lane and Argus Place and includes a carpark.

Further north of the site is an industrial area, to the east is the Northern Motorway (State Highway 1), the Smales Farm precinct and Westlake Girls High School and north-east is Westlake Boys High School. To the south is Northcote Road, the Barfoot & Thompsen Netball Centre (Netball North Harbour), and Smith's Bush and Auckland Council reserve. To the west is a residential area and a block of retail / mixed use businesses adjacent to Northcote Road.

A F Thomas Park Project Boundary

Scale 1:4500 @ A3



Figure 2-1: A F Thomas Park Project footprint and legal descriptions prepared by WSP

A variety of public infrastructure assets are present in the surrounding area. Transpower's and Vector's Wairau Substation and Grid Exit Point are located to the north, which provides electricity to the surrounding suburbs and the entire North Shore and were upgraded as part of the North Auckland and Northland Project. Vector's local electricity distribution lines run along the eastern boundary of the site. Watercare has a number of wastewater transmission pipelines (Wairau Branch Sewer TS4 and TS6, Northcote Diversion Branch Sewer TS8 and Hillcrest A Branch Sewer TS15A) that transect the site, while a local water pipeline for Eventfinda stadium and bowling club building is also present. In addition, the Silverfield Storage Tank is also located within the car park off Silverfield Lane.

In terms of vegetation, the Project Arborist (The Tree Consultancy Company) has undertaken a preliminary tree assessment. They have identified that the site features an extensive and diverse tree population, both in species, health and maturity.

The Project Ecologist (Beca) has undertaken a preliminary ecological assessment which identifies that the site consists of potential ecosystem extents with Kahikatea, pukatea forest (WF8), Kauri, podocarp, broadleaved forest (WF11), and Pūriri forest (WF7) present. The Project Ecologist further notes:²

"... WF8 ecosystems are strongly associated with topographic depressions and high water tables, described in Singers et. al. as a 'swamp forest' (2017). The extent of this potential WF8 across A F Thomas Park aligns with a remnant vegetated low-land area which persists in the northwestern corner of the site from 1940-1983 (New Zealand LINZ historical aerial imagery). This area can be clearly seen in aerial imagery dated 1960-1970, and alignment with potential WF8 suggests that it likely contained persisting wetland conditions."

Regarding freshwater ecological values, the Project Ecologist has identified:³

"In addition to wetland areas, historic aerial imagery indicates the presence of natural streams throughout the site (1940-1941), however, by 2000, the majority of these natural channels had been reclaimed by additional developments, incorporated into the piped stormwater network, or subject to intensive modification and realignment. ..."

A F Thomas Park presently has a mix of exotic and native vegetation, several ponds and channelised watercourses. These watercourses are within the Wairau Valley catchment of Wairau Creek, which flows north-east towards Castor Bay and the Hauraki Gulf (Tikapa Moana).

The site is not a Significant Ecological Area (SEA) under the AUP(OP). The closest SEA is located approximately 150m to the south-east of the site, and is known as Smith's Bush.

2.3 Zoning and special features

The site is predominately zoned Open Space – Sports and Active Recreation Zone, while 17 and 17A Silverfield Lane (Eventfinda Stadium and the adjacent carpark) are zoned Special Purpose – Major Recreation Facility. The surrounding area features a range of zones, being Strategic Transport Corridor, Business – Light Industry Zone, Residential – Single House, Residential – Mixed Housing Suburban, Residential – Mixed Housing Urban and Open Space – Sports and Active Recreation. Zoning of the site and surrounds is shown in Figure 2-2.

Plan Change 120 (PC 120) has proposed re-zoning of some land across Auckland⁴. This does not impact the zone of the site but there are zoning changes east and west of the site in the surrounding environment. In the surrounding environment, the proposed zoning changes vary – there are some proposed areas for upzoning and some areas with no changes to zoning. The proposed zoning changes do not have immediate legal effect.

The following additional restrictions apply to the site under the AUP(OP) and are shown in Figure 2-3 and Figure 2-4:

- National Grid Corridor Overlay – National Grid Substation Corridor. This overlay intersects a portion of 17 Silverfield Lane (i.e., the carpark adjacent to Eventfinda Stadium). The purpose of the National Grid Corridor Overlay is to manage sensitive activities and potential incompatible development (including land disturbance) within proximity to the National Grid. The proposed works may involve land disturbance within this overlay, but the works will be undertaken in a manner that avoids compromising any National Grid infrastructure.

² Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by Beca, page 3.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Plan Change 120 map viewer, notified 3 November 2025.

- Macroinvertebrate Community Index – Urban control. This control covers the proposed works area. However, the proposal will not affect this control.
- Arterial Road controls - Northcote Road is identified as an arterial road.
- Vehicle Access Restriction Control - Motorway Interchange Control. This control applies to Northcote Road, but no new vehicle accesses are proposed off Northcote Road. Rather, the works will utilise existing access points to the site.
- Designation 4311 – Defence purposes – protection of approach and departure paths (Whenuapai Air Base). The Requiring Authority is the Minister of Defence. This designation restricts structures that impede the air space. The proposed works will not involve aboveground structures that would impede the air space.

The following restrictions apply to immediately adjacent sites:

- Designation 8531 – Wairau Road Electricity Substation. The Requiring Authority is Transpower. This designation abuts the northern boundary, and no works are proposed within this designation.
- Designation 8885 – Substation. The Requiring Authority is Vector. This designation abuts the northern boundary, and no works are proposed within this designation.
- Designation 6751 – State Highway 1: Auckland Harbour Bridge to Albany. The Requiring Authority is New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA). This designation abuts the north-eastern boundary of the site, and no works are proposed within this designation.



Figure 2-2: AUP(OP) Zoning of the site and surrounds, the Project boundary is indicatively shown in red (Source: Auckland Council GeoMaps)

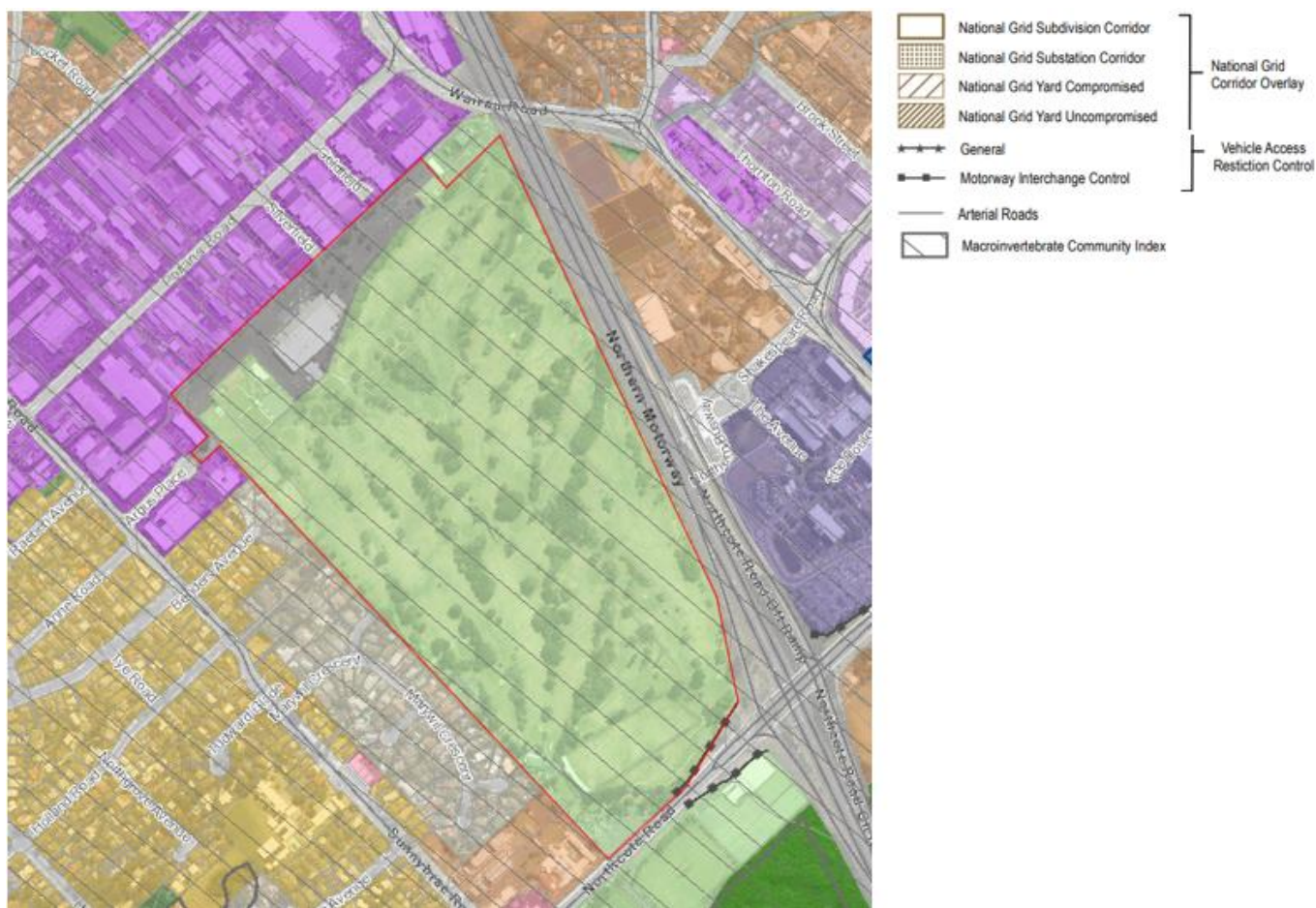


Figure 2-3: AUP(OP) Controls of the site and surrounds, the Project boundary is indicatively shown in red (Source: Auckland Council GeoMaps)

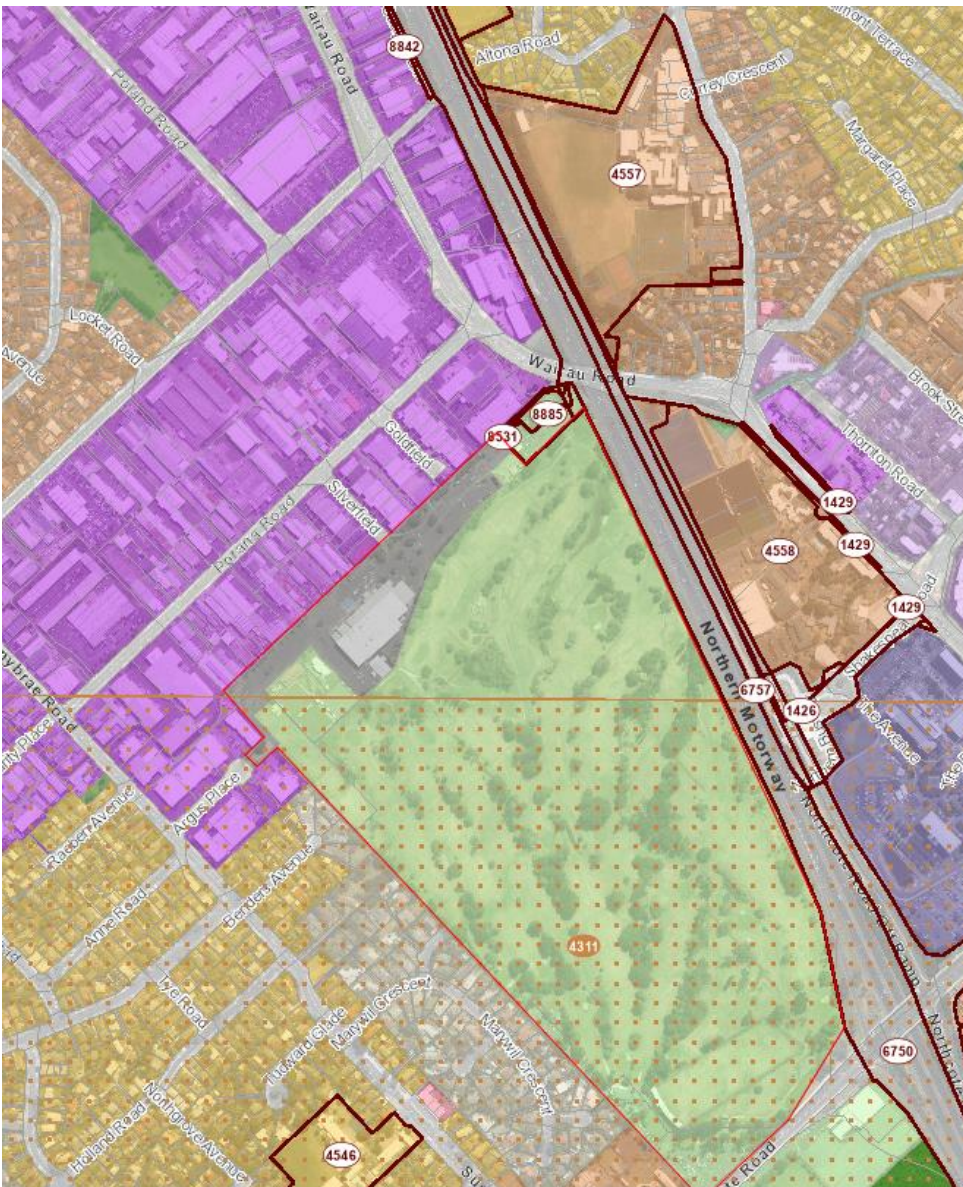


Figure 2-4: Designations on the site and surrounds, the Project boundary is indicatively shown in red (Source: Auckland Council GeoMaps)

2.4 Cultural and historic features

A review of the New Zealand Heritage Pouhere Taonga List indicates that there are no listed or identified heritage places within the site. A review of Auckland Council's Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI) List indicates that there are no identified heritage sites on the site. Further, through Healthy Waters' partnership with Mana Whenua, no cultural or historic features have been highlighted on the site.

The site is not subject to a Statutory Acknowledgement Area.

2.5 Hydrological features

According to Auckland Council's GeoMaps, the site is located within the 1% AEP floodplain, with multiple overland flowpaths entering the site, as shown in Figure 2-5. The Project area has been identified as being within a floodplain, and the natural hazard areas have been further categorised into hazard classification based on the depth and velocity of floodwater under PC 120. The Project area is located within low, medium,

high and very high flood hazard area, as shown in Figure 2-6. There are a number of watercourses present on the site. The preliminary flood hazard assessment prepared by WSP outlines the key flow contributions and hydrological features on and to the site, including:

- Overland flow from the commercial area flows south-east towards the site. The majority of the flow to Wairau Creek comes from the commercial area of the catchment.
- There is a tributary to the north of the site referenced as Porana tributary that conveys flows from the west and is the second largest contributor to the Wairau Creek at this location.
- There are a numerous stormwater pipelines and overland flow paths that are present on the site.
- There are two culverts located at the northern end of the site adjacent to the substation that drain the site to Wairau Creek. A small bund separates the substation and the site. The flow in Wairau Creek downstream of the two culverts draining the site is lower compared to the upstream inflow due to attenuation provided by the significant ponding area within the site.

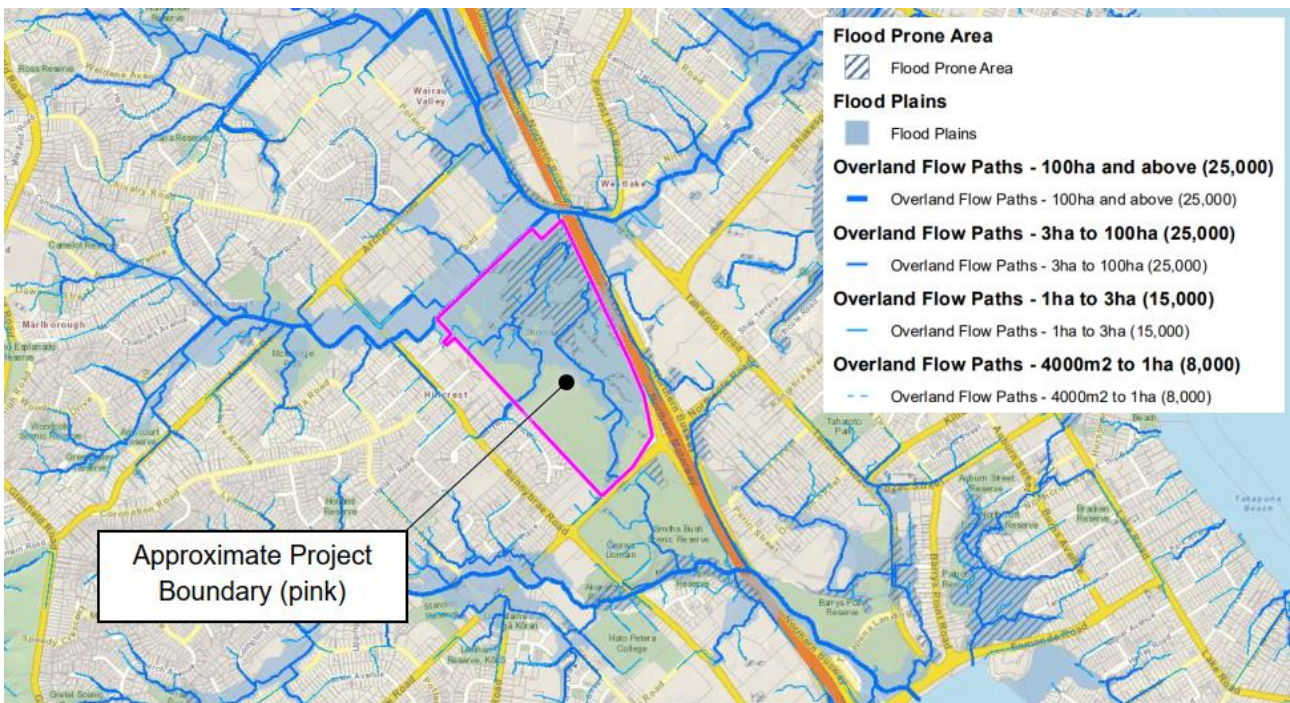


Figure 2-5: Hydrological features (Source: Preliminary Flood Hazard Assessment)

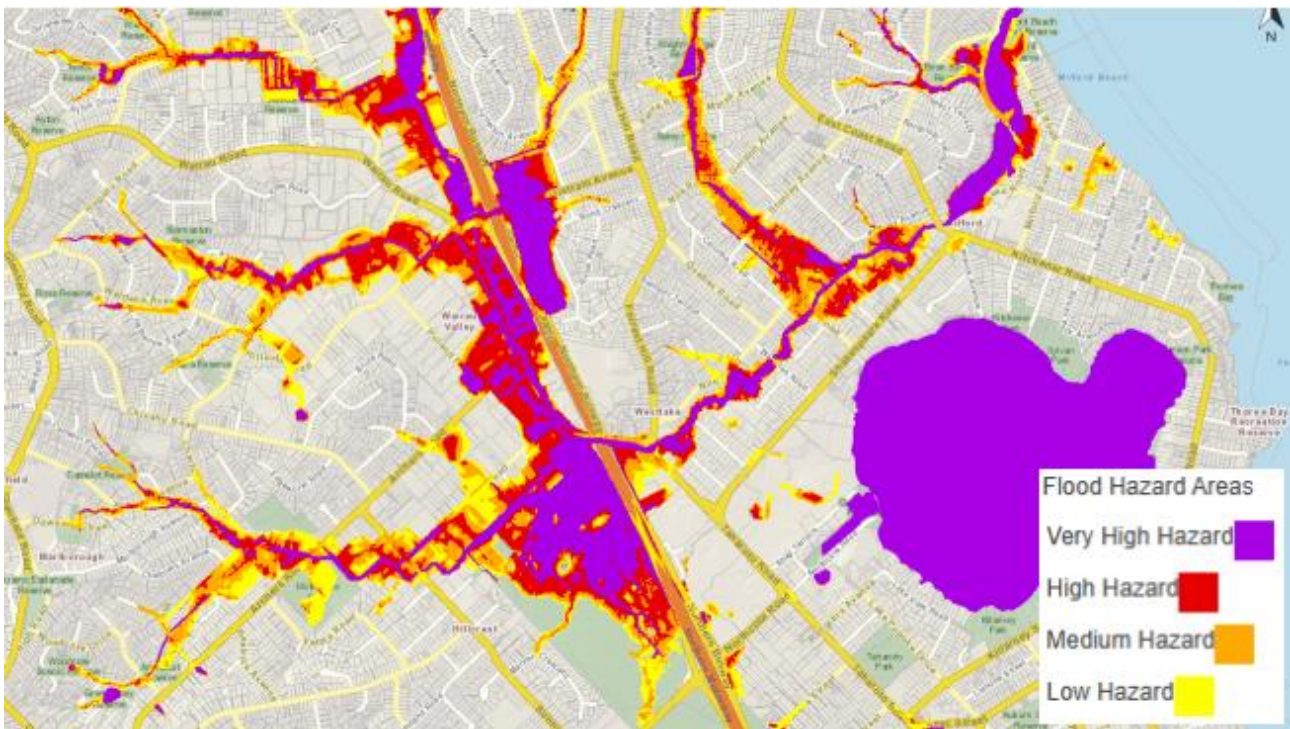


Figure 2-6: Flood Hazard Areas (Source: Preliminary Flood Hazard Assessment)

3. Proposal

3.1 Overview

The Project is part of Auckland Council's Making Space for Water – Blue-Green Network programme and is focused on the key areas within the Wairau catchment that were impacted by the 2023 storm events. Given the large scale of the Wairau catchment, the Ngā Wairau project is being delivered in three stages. This proposal covers Stage 1, which involves increasing the existing flood storage at A F Thomas Park, together with reserve reinstatement. The stormwater detention capacity created through Stage 1 works is critical to enabling future Stages 2 and 3. Further design development and funding confirmation is required for Stages 2 and 3, and they therefore do not form part of this proposal.

The works proposed under Stage 1 enable the delivery of flood resilience in the catchment by increasing flood storage within A F Thomas Park, initially for the downstream residential area and undertaking additional stormwater improvement works.

The proposed works to increase flood storage at A F Thomas Park include the following:

- Excavate the park to increase the existing flood storage to reduce flood flows and flood levels. Formalisation of a wetland on the northern end of the park where water naturally ponds as a result of the works, and dry detention in other areas of the park. At this stage the earthworks on the site are indicatively estimated to be in the order of 700,000m³ – 800,000m³ (cut and fill) to achieve a flood storage volume of approximately 550,000m³. All excavated material is to remain onsite unless unsuitable.
- The proposed flood storage changes will require changes to the consented dam. At this stage, the proposed changes may include reducing the dam height, increasing the flood storage capacity and providing an additional spillway.
- Construct a new spillway channel linking the existing channel north of A F Thomas Park that flows east under State Highway 1 to A F Thomas Park to optimise storage and release of flood flows in the park to maximise benefits.
- Stream reclamation and diversion of an existing (unnamed) stream.
- Reshaping ground using cut material to convey flood flows between proposed raised areas.
- Vegetation removal is required to facilitate the works.
- A temporary construction laydown area will be established on-site (location TBC).
- Reinstatement of A F Thomas Park and constructing new multi-use maintenance accessways.

This referral application includes indicative technical parameters to inform the s 22 assessment (e.g. estimates of storage volume, cut and fill etc). However, as design is ongoing, the applicant seeks referral on the basis of the following "Project description":

- (a) *flood resilience infrastructure works; and*
- (b) *reserve reinstatement, including site stabilisation, landscaping, new footpaths/boardwalks, and formal and informal recreation,*

The substantive application (if the Project is referred) will include final design specifications, earthworks quantities, and detailed construction methodologies.

3.2 Options assessment

This Section 3.2 provides an overview of the assessment of options for the Project. The full options analysis and concept design reports are provided at **Appendices C-1, C-2 and C-3**.

3.2.1 Catchment-Wide Options Analysis

A comprehensive catchment-wide flood risk options review was undertaken, documented in the Wairau Catchment Flood Reduction Options Summary (WSP, March 2025) at **Appendix C-1**.

The types of options considered included:

- Attenuation of floodwater in multi-functional open space;
- Increasing conveyance capacity through naturalising and widening engineered channels;
- Diversion of flood flows through safer overland routes;
- Upgrades, replacement or removal of infrastructure that exacerbates flood risk;
- Property purchase for properties with Intolerable Risk to Life;
- Upgrades to existing storage schemes; and
- Maintaining the status quo (do minimum) as a baseline scenario.

Auckland Council's Wairau Catchment Flood Hazard Model was used to test options and understand potential benefits.

3.2.2 Selection of A F Thomas Park as Stage 1

As noted at page 2 of the A F Thomas Park Concept Feasibility Report (August 2025) at **Appendix C-2** (Feasibility Report), the A F Thomas Park detention scheme was selected as the most effective short-term solution for reducing flooding in the Wairau catchment and essential for enabling future flood mitigation in Nile Road and the Wairau Valley commercial/industrial area. Without the A F Thomas Park detention scheme, later stages of the wider Ngā Wairau Project (i.e., stages 2 and 3) would not be viable.

Stage 1 works would:

- Reduce 'high flood risk danger' for 19 residential properties;
- Reduce flood risk over 10 hectares (including over 200 homes and 3 housing for elderly villages); and
- Provide significant flood resilience benefits to power, water, wastewater and transport infrastructure.

3.2.3 Alternative Proposal Assessment

On 3 April 2025, North Shore Takapuna Golf Limited (NSTGL) presented an alternative option to the Transport, Resilience and Infrastructure Committee (the committee) that included maintaining 18 holes of golf alongside required stormwater detention. The committee resolved that Healthy Waters undertake a technical assessment of NSTGL's proposal including feasibility and cost-benefit analysis.

A comprehensive feasibility assessment was undertaken, documented in the Feasibility Report at **Appendix C-2**. The assessment evaluated technical feasibility, constructability, consentability, cultural values alignment, and operation and maintenance for both the Healthy Waters concept design and NSTGL's alternatives (TGC-R0 and TGC-R1).

3.2.4 Key Findings

The Feasibility Report found (page 10, Appendix C-2):

"Due to the significant convergence of the schemes, both options are deemed feasible to achieve the required stormwater detention outcomes."

Both options include wetland recreation areas, dry detention recreation areas, storage capacity of minimum 550,000m³, and fill retained in the southern area. However (page 9):

"... the critical difference is the assertion from NSTGL [TGC] that:

- *18-holes of golf can be accommodated within the future recreation areas*
- *It is reasonably practicable to maintain golf operations throughout construction."*

The assessment concluded (page 10):

"... there appears to be insufficient evidence and site information available to support the assertion that 18-holes or continuous golf operations are feasible without additional risk to the construction programme, cost or functionality."

The Feasibility Report concludes (page 11):

"Due to the significant similarities and convergence between the two proposals, and urgency to progress these works, Healthy Waters will progress developed design based on the converged proposals."

3.2.5 Concept Design Development

Concept design development was undertaken by WSP and Boffa Miskell, documented in the A F Thomas Park Concept Design Option Report (November 2025) at Appendix C-3. The Concept Design Option Report addresses benefits, and key risks and mitigation. The report states that the proposed option:

- *Meets the **primary objective of reducing flood risk to homes** by storing approximately 550,000m³ of flood water (equivalent to 220 Olympic-sized swimming pools) during extreme rainfall.*
- *Has a **multitude of secondary benefits** including a revitalised urban park providing equitable recreation opportunities, environment benefits and enhanced pedestrian and cycling connectivity outcomes.*
- ***Retains all excavated material onsite** unless deemed unsuitable, significantly reducing costs, waste and carbon.*
- *Can be **delivered within the programme** outlined in the business case, enabling the government's 62% cost contribution to be fully leveraged."*

3.3 Indicative construction methodology

The flood resilience works require bulk earthworks, along with supporting works such as wetland construction, dry detention, stormwater outfalls and extension, underground services and the construction of new multi-use maintenance accessways. Upon completion of the flood resilience works, reserve reinstatement works will be carried out, allowing for future recreational use of the park (which is to be determined by the Local Board in early 2026). The proposed flood resilience works will not preclude development (i.e., the future recreational use of the park) and will allow for future use consistent with the underlying AUP(OP) zoning.

WSP has prepared an Indicative Construction Methodology, and this is provided at **0**.

3.4 Construction period

The works are scheduled to commence in September 2027 to coincide with the earthworks season (October to March). The proposed works will be undertaken across three earthworks seasons. It is anticipated that the flood resilience works will require two earthworks seasons, followed by the reserve reinstatement works that will require a planting season (May to September) and an earthworks season (over 3 years excluding maintenance).

WSP has prepared an indicative programme, and this is provided at **Appendix E**.

3.5 Consultation

The applicant has undertaken consultation with the persons and groups required under s 11 of the FTA Act, and has undertaken additional consultation with other relevant stakeholders.

As required by s 13(4)(k) of the FTA Act, a summary of consultation undertaken for the proposal to date is provided below, addressing not only the consultation required by s 11, but also additional consultation undertaken by the applicant. The summary explains how consultation has informed the Project, as required by s 13(4)(k)(ii).

Letters of support from persons and groups consulted by the applicant are included in **Appendix F-1**, with letters received from:

- Insurance Council of New Zealand
- Milford Residents Association
- National Infrastructure Funding and Financing
- New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
- Te Kawerau ā Maki
- Vector Limited
- Watercare Services Limited.

3.5.1 Mana Whenua

The relevant iwi authorities (Mana Whenua in the Auckland Region) in relation to the site are:

- Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki
- Ngāti Maru
- Ngāti Pāoa
- Ngāti Tamaterā
- Ngāti Te Ata
- Ngāti Whanaunga
- Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara
- Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei
- Te Ākitai Waihoua

- Te Kawerau ā Maki
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whātua.

Healthy Waters commenced engagement with Mana Whenua in April 2023 for their wider Making Space for Water Programme, which includes Blue-Green Network projects across the region, including the Ngā Wairau Project.

For the Ngā Wairau Project specifically, all the iwi authorities listed above were approached in October 2023 following a presentation from Healthy Waters to the Kaitiaki Forum. Email confirmation of this and the presentation can be found at **Appendix F-3**. The following four Mana Whenua groups expressed an interest in the Ngā Wairau Project:

- Te Kawerau ā Maki
- Ngāti Paoa
- Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki
- Te Ākitai Waiohua.

Healthy Waters commenced specific engagement with Mana Whenua groups that were interested, and a Wairau Working Group was formed in October 2024.

Through this process, Healthy Waters has formed a partnership with Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Paoa for the Ngā Wairau Project.

Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki confirmed support for the proposed approach, but advised that they have limited capacity and requested to only be copied into minutes and would not attend meetings. Email confirmation of this can be found at **Appendix F-3**.

Te Ākitai Waiohua initially registered an interest. However, following discussions with Healthy Waters, they removed themselves from the working group.

The Project name Ngā Wairau was gifted to Healthy Waters by Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Paoa alongside a whakatauki:

WAIHŌ MĀ TE WAI E RERE KI TŌNGA TAUNGA

Roughly translated, this refers to the memory of water and that eventually it will find its path home again. It also captures the importance of reconnecting the natural systems of the catchment as a means of healing both land and community.

The Wairau working group has provided ongoing input into a long-term intergenerational approach to the Ngā Wairau programme which included inputting into the programme's guiding purpose, principles and outcomes. They have supported ongoing engagement activities and design refinement and Te Kawerau ā Maki have provided a position statement. An equivalent statement is pending from Ngāti Paoa.

Meetings, hui and general correspondence with the Wairau Working Group have occurred from September 2024 to date and will be ongoing for the duration of the Project. Te Kawerau ā Maki prepared a letter of support for the Ngā Wairau Project (**Appendix F-1**).

3.5.2 Urban Ngahere Team

Healthy Waters has undertaken consultation with Auckland Council's Parks and Community Facilities, Urban Forest Team (Urban Ngahere Team). This is the Auckland Council team who are the asset owner for public trees within the legal road reserve and within open space and parks. A project briefing meeting was held on

16 April 2025, and an additional meeting was held on 12 August 2025, to discuss Urban Ngahere Team's ongoing input in the Project. Engagement with the Urban Ngahere Team is ongoing as the design develops for the Project. Particular consideration will be given to retaining existing trees and/or relocation if feasible.

3.5.3 Kaipātiki Local Board and Devonport-Takapuna Local Board

Healthy Waters is committed to ongoing consultation with the Kaipātiki Local Board and Devonport-Takapuna Local Board. The Project is located within Kaipātiki Local Board area but the impacts following the severe weather events and benefits of the Project are also realised in the adjacent Devonport-Takapuna Local Board area. Therefore, consultation has been undertaken with both local boards as they have relevance to the Project. Meetings have been held between 1 August 2023 and 27 August 2025 to discuss proposed design approaches, progression of the Project, feedback, timeframes, community resilience and general project details. Ongoing informal feedback has been provided by the local boards to inform the project approach. Kaipātiki Local Board approved the consultation approach in October 2025 outlining the open space and recreation consultation approach and parameters. Consultation with Kaipātiki Local Board and Devonport-Takapuna Local Board will continue throughout the duration of the Project.

3.5.4 Auckland Council Parks and Community Facilities Department

Engagement with the Area Operations team at the Auckland Council's Parks and Community Facilities Department (ACPCF) has been ongoing. Meetings have been held between 12 March 2024 and 19 September 2025 to discuss the Project generally, including the preferred approach and key partners / stakeholders. Ongoing informal feedback has been provided by ACPCF to inform the project approach; Healthy Waters will continue to work in partnership with ACPCF throughout the duration of the Project.

3.5.5 North Shore Takapuna Golf Limited

North Shore Takapuna Golf Limited (NSTGL) operates the golf club on the land that is leased from Auckland Council (Lot 1 DP 150598 and Lot 8 DP 150598 - refer to **Appendix B** Project Footprint). The land is currently leased on a month-by-month basis. As part of tenancy and Local Park Management Plan discussions in 2024, it was indicated to NSTGL that Auckland Council were going to review the stormwater options in A F Thomas Park.

Consultation with NSTGL has been ongoing throughout the duration of the Project. An initial meeting was held on 24 February 2025 with NSTGL to introduce the Project and the potential effects on the golfing community. A public engagement event was held at Takapuna Golf Course on 8 March 2025 to provide the group with an update on the Project.

The feedback from the event was incorporated into the Initiate Business Case. On 21 March 2025, another meeting was held to outline the key design parameters for the Project. NSTGL requested the ability to provide a draft flood detention alternative proposal due to their lack of support of the Project. NSTGL presented an initial alternative design option on 3 April 2025 at the Transport Resilience and Infrastructure Committee meeting, which was passed on to Healthy Waters to undertake a technical feasibility assessment of the alternative design.

NSTGL subsequently presented multiple alternative design proposals to Healthy Waters and WSP between April and June 2025 for feedback and feasibility review. Following design refinement by NSTGL it was determined that the final alternative design presented by NSTGL was similar to the Healthy Waters design, and Healthy Waters determined that the preferred option was to proceed on the basis of the converged designs. Multiple meetings were held on 15 April, 5 May, 7 May, 9 May, and 18 June 2025 to discuss the feasibility of NSTGL's alternative designs. Correspondence via email and phone calls has also been ongoing between Healthy Waters and NSTGL from February 2025 to present.

3.5.6 Eventfinda

Eventfinda owns the Eventfinda Stadium which is located on land that is leased from Auckland Council (refer to **Appendix B** Project Footprint). The stadium is located within the Project area. Initial engagement with Eventfinda began on 12 March 2024, to discuss the challenges currently faced by the stadium, and impacts on the stadium in relation to flooding. Healthy Waters engaged with a representative from Eventfinda on 24 September 2025 to discuss potential future building footprint locations that would be flood resilient. The implications of the proposed stormwater works were discussed, along with the process for Eventfinda to explore future stadium plans in parallel to the Project. No specific feedback has been provided by Eventfinda at this stage that informs the Project.

3.5.7 Shore Archery Club Incorporated

Shore Archery Club Incorporated (SACI) are a leasing tenant within A F Thomas Park (refer to **Appendix B** Project Footprint). A meeting was held with the group on 14 October 2025 to discuss the Project and its potential effects on leasing tenants. SACI has submitted a request to present their feedback on recreational outcomes on 13 November 2025. No feedback has been provided on the Project.

3.5.8 Sunnybrae Bowling Club Incorporated

Sunnybrae Bowling Club Incorporated (SBCI) are a leasing tenant within A F Thomas Park (refer to **Appendix B** Project Footprint). A meeting was held with SBCI on 14 October 2025 to discuss the Project overall and the direct and indirect effects on leasing tenants. SBCI have provided feedback to Auckland Council in terms of recreational outcomes, and no feedback has been provided on the Project.

3.5.9 Hato Hone St John

Hato Hone St John (The Order of St John Northern Regional Trust Board) is a leasing tenant within A F Thomas Park (refer to Appendix B Project Footprint). A meeting was held with Hato Hone St John on 14 October 2025. The meeting included discussion on the Project including flood mitigation and golf course updates, along with direct and indirect effects on leasing tenants. Hato Hone St John has been asked to provide feedback to Auckland Council in terms of recreational outcomes, and no feedback has been provided on the Project.

3.5.10 Watercare Services Limited

Consultation has been ongoing with Watercare given the proximity of their assets to the Project. An introductory meeting was held with representatives from Watercare and Healthy Waters on 26 May 2025 to clarify the required coordination and mitigation for works for Watercare assets. Additional meetings were held on 20 August 2025 and 12 September 2025 to discuss the timeframes, further coordination regarding Watercare's assets within AF Thomas Park, and the Wairau diversion project. Consultation with Watercare will be ongoing throughout the duration of the Project.

A letter of support in principle has been provided by Watercare for the Project (**Appendix F-1**), in which Watercare confirms:

- (a) That Watercare acknowledge the urgency and importance of this initiative in response to the severe weather events of early 2023;
- (b) Given the critical nature of the wastewater assets within the Project area, proper consideration must be given during detailed design and construction stages to ensure their protection;
- (c) Watercare has plans to upgrade this section of the wastewater network. Noting that the timeframe for this is not expected within the next 20 years and will not precede the flood resilience works proposed

by Healthy Waters. There is potential opportunity to co-ordinate the planned future flood resilience works proposed as part of this Project and wastewater upgrades within A F Thomas Park;

- (d) Watercare's support is subject to the detailed design and construction methodology demonstrating appropriate protection of their assets.

Other than the above, no specific feedback has been provided by Watercare at this stage that informs the Project. Healthy Waters will continue to work with Watercare as the design develops for the Project to ensure that consideration is being given to their critical assets.

3.5.11 Vector Limited

Healthy Waters has undertaken consultation with Vector regarding the proximity of their assets within the Project area. An initial meeting was held on 24 September 2024. Another meeting was held on 22 July 2025 with representatives from Vector, Healthy Waters, and WSP to discuss Vector's assets and the potential impacts of a proposed easement. There was a historic easement but there is no current easement. On 19 August 2025, another meeting was held to discuss the coordination of the proposed Vector easement, which is planned for summer 2025. Consultation with Vector will be ongoing throughout the duration of the Project.

A letter of support has been provided by Vector for the Project (**Appendix F-1**), in which Vector confirms:

- (a) That Wairau Zone Substation is a strategic asset linking Transpower's transmission network to Vector's network supplying the entire North Shore, and was significantly damaged by flooding in early 2023;
- (b) Its support for the Wairau flood resilience project, which will protect and reinforce the electricity network by significantly reducing flood waters around the Zone Substation; and
- (c) Its support for the Blue-Green Network team's design, which includes consideration of future relocation of existing electricity assets to ensure ongoing network resilience and enable a cost-effective solution for Auckland.

Other than the above, no specific feedback has been provided by Vector at this stage that informs the Project.

3.5.12 Transpower

Healthy Waters emailed Transpower on 29 October 2025 and 17 November 2025 providing an overview of the Project and an offer to meet to discuss the Project further. Healthy Waters subsequently met with Transpower on 21 November 2025 to discuss the Project. In the meeting Healthy Waters provided an overview of the project and the timeline. Following the meeting Healthy Waters shared the project website link and public documents, and Healthy Waters to continue engagement with Vector regarding easements. Transpower are to share the cable layout/ access maps for developing the design. It was agreed between both parties that they would reconvene after March 2026 when design is more developed.

3.5.13 New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi

NZTA has been engaged with regarding the Project due to the proximity of their assets (i.e. State Highway 1 Northern Motorway) to the project area. An introductory meeting was held with NZTA's Harbour Crossing Team on 16 July 2025 to introduce the Project and discuss any required coordination. Another meeting was held on 8 August 2025 with NZTA to introduce the Project and seek input into the Shoal Bay Diversion⁵. A letter of support for the Project dated 2 October 2025 was received from NZTA (**Appendix F-1**).

NZTA's letter of support for the Project confirms:

⁵ The Shoal Bay Diversion was a potential alternative option that was proposed by NSTGL.

- (a) Its support for the proposal on the basis that it reduces the risk of flooding on State Highway 1 (particularly in a 1% AEP event), the motorway, busway, and local road network, which experience significant flooding and disruption during climate events;
- (b) That the proposed walking and cycling link enables improved access to the Smales Farm busway station and maximises NZTA's investment in rapid transit; and
- (c) That the proposal aligns to its long-term plans for State Highway 1, the busway and a future walking and cycling link, and that it supports the use of the fast-track approval process to enable timely implementation given the demonstrated climate-related flood risks to nationally important transport infrastructure.

Other than the above, no specific feedback has been provided by the NZTA at this stage that informs the Project. Healthy Waters will continue to work with NZTA as the design develops for the Project.

3.5.14 Members of Parliament

The site lies within the Northcote electorate, although it is adjacent to the North Shore electorate.

Healthy Waters and the Member of Parliament (MP) for North Shore, Hon Simon Watts (also, Minister of Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for Local Government and Minister of Revenue) engaged in a meeting on 1 November 2024 to discuss the Project, next steps, and flooding impacts within the community. A community meeting was co-hosted with the MPs on 6 December 2024. An additional meeting was held on 7 September 2025 with MPs Dan Bidois (Northcote) and Hon Simon Watts to provide an update of the Project. Project updates were sent via email to the MPs between May and October 2025. No specific feedback has been provided by either MP at this stage that informs the Project.

3.5.15 Milford Residents Association

Milford Residents Association (MRA) has had ongoing involvement in the Project. Meetings, community events and workshops were held on 2 February, 1 May, 20 June and 27 July 2025, to provide details of the Project and facilitate relationship-building and networking opportunities. MRA involvement will continue to be invited as the Project progresses and the co-chairs of MRA are members of the Advisory Group (noted below).

A Letter of Support has been provided by the MRA for the Project (**Appendix F-1**) confirming that the MRA supports the project and utilising the fast-track approval process because of the significance of the flooding problem in Wairau, in particular providing residents throughout the catchment with "safety and peace of mind". Other than this letter, no specific feedback has been provided by the MRA at this stage that informs the Project.

3.5.16 Wairau Community Advisory Group

Wairau Community Advisory Group (WCAG) was established as a result of the Project. The WCAG includes the Milford Cruising Club, Pupuke Bird Song, GM Sunnynook Community Centre, Age Concern Auckland Trust (North Shore Branch, Milford), Westlake Boys, Westlake Girls, Pest Free Kaipatiki, Milford Residents Association, North Shore Business Association, Harbour Sports, local business owner / resident and Youthtown.

Meetings have been undertaken with the WCAG between 17 June 2025 and 25 September 2025. No specific feedback has been provided by the WCAG at this stage that informs the Project.

3.5.17 Insurance Council of New Zealand

The Insurance Council of New Zealand Te Kāhui Inihua o Aotearoa (ICNZ) is the representative organisation for general insurance companies in New Zealand. Their members collectively write more than 95% of all

general insurance in New Zealand and protect over \$2 trillion of New Zealand's assets. A letter of support for the Project dated 4 November 2025 was received from ICNZ (**Appendix F-1**).

ICNZ's letter of support for the Project confirms:

- (a) ICNZ advocates to sustain a strong and affordable insurance sector, and to enhance the safety and protection of all New Zealanders by strengthening resilience and reducing the risks of climate change to communities and the economy;
- (b) ICNZ members received approximately 1,000 claims from homes and businesses in the areas around the golf course, after the severe weather events in 2023; and
- (c) From an insurer perspective, investments in natural hazard mitigation avoids substantial claims volumes for loss and damage, not only reducing the disruption of people's lives, but also have a future bearing on the cost of insurance for consumers.

Other than the above, no specific feedback has been provided by the ICNZ at this stage that informs the Project.

3.5.18 Auckland Council Regulatory

Auckland Council Regulatory is the department of Auckland Council that processes resource consent applications and monitors approved resource consents. Its role in the fast-track application is to provide advice before the application is submitted, provide the EPA with comments on the application, and monitor approved resource consents. Healthy Waters have engaged with the Council's Premium Team regarding this Project. An introductory meeting was held on 21 August 2025 including an overview of the Project, the consenting strategy, timeline for the referral application and key specialists involved. Additional meetings were held between 25 September 2025 and 20 November 2025, as well as regular email correspondence.

Draft specialist memoranda were shared with Auckland Council Regulatory between 25 September and 13 October 2025, and feedback was returned between 16 October and 18 October. The feedback provided by Auckland Council Regulatory was primarily regarding the documentation required to support a substantive fast track application and no concerns were raised, with the exception of feedback on the economics assessment. A meeting was held on 28 October 2025, to discuss the stormwater and flooding feedback, in particular the meeting discussed the flood modelling parameters and further context was provided on the existing dam. No specific feedback was provided in the meeting that informed the referral application.

Auckland Council Regulatory engaged Formative Limited (Formative) to undertake a peer review of Healthy Waters August 2025 economics assessment by MartinJenkins (Martin, Jenkins, & Associates Ltd) (MJ), which was based on a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) approach. Formative's memo acknowledged that a comprehensive CBA is still to be developed, but made recommendations as to additional information. Formative also noted that such additional information is unlikely to change the overall findings of the MJ report and would most likely indicate that the net positive benefits from the CBA are higher, with the Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) likely to be above 1. MJ has prepared an addendum to its original August 2025 report, which addresses matters raised by Formative where appropriate. The economics assessment and addendum prepared by MJ and the peer review undertaken by Formative is provided at **Appendices H-1, H-2 and H-3**.

3.5.19 Department of Conservation

Healthy Waters emailed the DoC on 14 October 2025 outlining their intent to lodge a referral application under the FTA Act. The email covered the resource consents required under the RMA and permits under the Wildlife Act, a summary of the proposed works and how the Project meets the criteria of s 22 of the FTA Act.

General correspondence between DoC, Healthy Waters and Auckland Council Regulatory was undertaken between 15 October and 25 November including providing shapefiles and the preliminary ecological report; and confirming that the Project Ecologist (Beca) has advised that it's considered unlikely that protected fish

are within the site. However, Beca have the required permits from Fisheries New Zealand that allow capture for surveys and relocation of freshwater fish, including protected species if they are present. Further, at this stage, Healthy Waters do not think any conservation approvals are required.

A 'pre-lodgement consultation' letter was received from DoC on 25 November 2025 (**Appendix F-2**), outlining the following:

- Freshwater Fisheries approvals may be required and should be considered as part of a future application.
- It is understood that a Wildlife approval for lizards may be sought out of caution. Further field work/surveys may inform this position further.
- As the site is held under the Reserves Act 1977, DoC's interpretation of the FTA Act is that it would be considered Public Conservation Land (PCL). As such, DoC may be required to prepare a s 19 report as part of the referral process. This will require further consultation with council as part of that process, acknowledging the reserve is council managed and owned.
- DoC has undertaken a very high-level assessment of the proposal but notes there may be further conservation matters to consider as the process is ongoing.
- DoC encourages further engagement with council prior to lodgement of a substantive application if the project is referred.

Healthy Waters will continue to engage with DoC through the referral and substantive application process.

3.5.20 Ministry for the Environment

Healthy Waters emailed MfE on 14 October 2025 outlining their intent to lodge a referral application under the FTA Act. The email covered the resource consents required under the RMA and permits under the Wildlife Act, a summary of the proposed works and how the Project meets the criteria of section 22 of the FTA Act.

A 'Section 11 Letter' was received from MfE on 21 October 2025 (**Appendix F-2**), outlining that the referral application will need to provide an assessment of the Project against any relevant national policy statement, national environmental standards, and if relevant, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

Section 7 below includes an assessment of the Project against the relevant national policy statement, national environmental standards, and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

3.5.21 National Infrastructure Funding and Financing

The National Infrastructure Funding and Financing (NIFFCo) is a national infrastructure agency and Crown-owned company created by the New Zealand Government to attract funding and financing for infrastructure projects in New Zealand and addressing the country's infrastructure deficit. NIFFCo are acting for the Crown as a funding partner for the Project. A letter of support for the Project dated 27 November 2025 was received from NIFFCo (**Appendix F-1**).

NIFFCo's letter of support for the project confirms:

- (a) The timely delivery of the Project is a high priority for Crown under the Auckland North Island Weather Events funding agreement between Crown and Auckland Council. The Project is co-funded under the Cyclone Recovery Programme with a Crown investment which is administered by NIFFCo on behalf of the Crown.
- (b) This Project will reduce the risk of flooding across 10ha of residential properties and other nationally important infrastructure such as roading, power and utilities.

- (c) NIFFCo supports the use of the fast-track approval process to enable timely implementation of this important infrastructure project, given the demonstrated climate-related flood risks.

Other than the above, no specific feedback has been provided by the NIFFCo at this stage that informs the Project.

3.5.22 Conclusion

The applicant has undertaken consultation not only with the persons and groups specified in s 11 of the FTA Act, but with a number of other relevant stakeholders as outlined above.

The ways in which consultation has informed the Project have been addressed above.

Engagement and consultation with the parties listed above will be ongoing throughout all phases of the Project. Any formal feedback will be considered and incorporated into the proposal as required.

4. Section 22 of the FTA Act:

The following sections address the criteria in s 22(1)(a) and (1)(b) of the FTA Act for assessing referral applications, including the considerations identified in s 22(2).

In short, the Project satisfies both limbs of the s 22(1) acceptance criteria:

(a) Significant regional benefits (s 22(1)(a))

The Project delivers regionally significant flood management infrastructure (550,000m³ storage capacity) that responds directly to the 2023 Auckland Anniversary floods which caused two fatalities and severe damage across the Wairau catchment. The Project reduces extreme rainfall flood risk by 30%, protects critical regionally and nationally significant infrastructure, and addresses a demonstrated and urgent community safety need. The Project is assessed as positively addressing the following s 22(2) considerations (noting that it engages with two aspects of the consideration at (2)(a)(ii)):

- i. priority project status ((2)(a)(i));
- ii. delivery of new / additional flood storage infrastructure of a regionally significant scale ((2)(a)(ii));
- iii. assisting in enabling the continued functioning of **existing** regionally significant infrastructure (Watercare) nationally significant infrastructure (Vector / Transpower infrastructure and State Highway 1) ((2)(a)(ii));
- iv. contribution to well-functioning urban environments ((2)(a)(iii));
- v. potentially significant economic benefits ((2)(a)(iv));
- vi. climate change adaptation, natural hazard risk reduction, and support for recovery from events caused by natural hazards ((2)(a)(viii));
- vii. consistency with local and regional planning documents ((2)(a)(x)); and
- viii. significant environmental enhancement / benefits ((2)(b)).

(b) Fast-track facilitation (s 22(1)(b))

The FTA Act process reduces consenting timeframes significantly, enabling construction by September 2027 – a potential time saving of at least two years, and potentially longer, compared with the normal RMA process. This consolidated approach provides certainty for a complex multi-consent application (RMA, NES-CS, NES-F, Wildlife Act), and delivers urgent flood management infrastructure potentially years earlier than standard processes would allow – noting the risk of delay associated with standard consent processes with merits appeals to the Environment Court and the possibility of further appeals to the superior courts.

Referring the Project to the fast-track approvals process is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

For completeness, it is noted that the Project involves no ineligible activities and presents no s 21 grounds for declining the referral.

In addition, **0** outlines the Information Requirements for a referral application under the FTA Act.

4.1 Assessment Framework

Section 22(1) of the FTA Act establishes two criteria that must both be satisfied for the Minister to accept a referral application.

The first criterion under s 22(1)(a) requires assessment of whether the Project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits.

Section 22(2) provides a non-exhaustive list of matters the Minister may consider when assessing whether a project has significant regional or national benefits in terms of s 22(1)(a). These include whether the Project:

- (i) *has been identified as a priority project in a central government, local government, or sector plan or strategy (for example, in a general policy statement or spatial strategy), or a central government infrastructure priority list.*
- (ii) *will deliver new regionally or nationally significant infrastructure or enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure.*
- (iii) *will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020).*
- (iv) *will deliver significant economic benefits.*
- (v) *will support primary industries, including aquaculture.*
- (vi) *will support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum.*
- (vii) *will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions.*
- (viii) *will support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards.*
- (ix) *will address significant environmental issues.*
- (x) *is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies.*

The Minister may also consider any other matters considered relevant under s 22(2)(b).

The assessment in Section 4.2 below demonstrates the Project satisfies seven separate s 22(2)(a) considerations and presents additional relevant matters under s 22(2)(b).

The second criterion under s 22(1)(b) requires assessment of whether referring the project to the fast-track approvals process:

- would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes that the fast-track process would enable more timely and cost-effective processing than normal processes; and
- is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

The assessment in Section 4.3 below demonstrates that both elements of the second criterion are satisfied through substantial timeframe reductions (at least 2 years) and process efficiencies, without imposing undue burden on the fast-track system.

4.2 Significant Regional Benefits

This section demonstrates that the Project satisfies the s 22(1)(a) criterion by positively addressing seven s 22(2)(a) considerations and presenting additional relevant matters under s 22(2)(b) in relation to the Project's significant proposed environmental enhancement. Each relevant consideration is assessed in turn below.

4.2.1 The Project has priority project status (s 22(2)(a)(i))

The Project is assessed as meeting this criterion for the following reasons:

- The Blue-Green Network Ngā Wairau Project is listed in the 2025/2026 Auckland Council Annual Plan (Volume 1, page 22), confirming its status as a priority project in a local government plan.
- This formal recognition reflects the Council's commitment to funding and delivering the Project in a timely manner to address urgent flood resilience needs identified following the 2023 severe weather events.
- In terms of whether the Project is recorded on a "central government infrastructure priority list", the applicant notes that central government has approved a Crown funding contribution of 62% of the total project costs.
- The letter of support from National Infrastructure Funding and Financing states that the "timely delivery of this project is a **high priority** for Crown under the Auckland North Island Weather Events funding agreement between Crown and Auckland Council" (**Appendix F-1**, emphasis added in bold).

4.2.2 The Project delivers regionally significant infrastructure, and enables continued functioning of other existing regionally / nationally significant infrastructure (s 22(2)(a)(ii))

There are two aspects to the consideration in s 22(2)(a)(ii).

The first aspect relates to whether a project delivers regionally or nationally significant infrastructure.

Delivery of regionally significant infrastructure

The Project satisfies this criterion by delivering regionally significant flood management infrastructure through approximately 550,000m³ of additional flood storage capacity.

During the 2023 Auckland Anniversary floods, the Wairau catchment experienced severe flooding and damage. Two people lost their lives in the catchment. Severe damage occurred in:

- Residential areas of Tōtara Vale, Sunnynook and Nile Road;
- Commercial areas on Wairau Road and upstream of A F Thomas Park.

These fatalities and the widespread damage demonstrate that the flood risk is not theoretical – it is real and has already resulted in loss of life. The communities affected remain vulnerable to similar events until this infrastructure is delivered. The Project directly addresses this demonstrated natural hazard risk, and supports recovery from the 2023 events by providing permanent flood management infrastructure.

Enables the continued functioning of existing regionally and nationally significant infrastructure

The second aspect of s 22(2)(a)(ii) relates to enabling the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure.

The Project also satisfies this aspect of the criterion:

- The Project has critical nationally significant infrastructure immediately adjacent to the site, namely the Transpower substation and Vector electricity lines, which provide key power supply to the North Shore Hospital and the entire North Shore area, while the Transpower assets support power supply to Northland as part of the national grid.
- Vector's letter of support (**Appendix F-1**) describes the Wairau Zone Substation as a strategic asset linking Transpower's transmission network to Vector's electricity network supplying the North Shore, and notes that it was significantly damaged by flooding in early 2023.
- The Project also has critical nationally significant infrastructure immediately adjacent to the site, namely the Northern Motorway (State Highway 1).
- As noted in the summary of NZTA's letter of support (**Appendix F-1**), the Project will reduce climate-related flood risks to State Highway 1 (particularly in a 1% AEP event) – infrastructure NZTA accurately describes as "nationally important".
- The Project has regionally significant wastewater infrastructure within the site that are strategically important assets for Watercare (Wairau Branch Sewer, Milford Branch Sewer and the Silverfield Storage Tank).
- These regionally and nationally significant assets rely on the Project to provide long-term resilience and continued operation.

4.2.3 The Project will contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (s 22(2)(a)(iii))

The Project is assessed as meeting this criterion as, although housing is not proposed, the works will contribute to a well-functioning urban environment under Policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD).

There are three aspects to this:

- The first aspect relates to **climate resilience**: the Project directly engages with Objective 4 and Policy 1(f) of the NPS-UD as the works will improve resilience to the likely current and future effects of climate change. Refer to the discussion in Section 4.2.5 below.
- The second aspect relates to **climate change**: the Project directly engages with Objective 8 of the NPS-UD as the works will improve resilience and reduce risk to flooding in the present day and under accepted climate change scenarios. Refer to the discussion in Section 4.2.5 below.
- The third aspect relates to **accessibility and open space**: the Project directly engages with Policy 1(c) of the NPS-UD, which relates to "good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport". It does so by:
 - Creating 14.9 ha of wetland providing natural space and ecological amenity, with a dual open space with informal recreation around the proposed wetland.
 - Retaining the remainder of the site (30.7 ha) for sport and active recreation consistent with the underlying zone. This proposal has the opportunity upon reinstatement of the reserve to create an open space environment that would benefit multiple needs within the community.
 - Providing walking and cycling connections adjacent to the Northern Motorway and linking to Northcote Road, enhancing active transport accessibility.

The Project exemplifies resilient urban design that accommodates both infrastructure and community amenity within a single asset, contributing to a well-functioning urban environment that is both accessible and climate resilient.

4.2.4 The Project will have potentially significant economic benefits (s 22(2)(a)(iv))

Section 22(2)(a)(iv) allows the Minister to take into account whether a project will deliver “significant economic benefits” when assessing the overall requirement in s 22(1)(a). It is considered here as one contributory factor among the suite of s 22(2)(a) matters relied on in this section, alongside the additional relevant matters addressed under s 22(2)(b).

In this respect, the Fast-Track Panel for the Waihi North project observed in its recent draft decision that the term “significant”, in the context of “deliver significant economic benefits”, does not require appreciable (or “game-changing”) changes to national or regional gross domestic product (GDP) or to tax revenues. Rather, it is an indication of scale within the relevant regional context.⁶ The Panel also clarified that “regional” is not a reference to the boundaries of a regional council but is to be construed in a more general sense – in that case, the area in and around Waihi.⁷

The economic evidence addressed below demonstrates that the Project can reasonably be expected to deliver meaningful economic benefits to the Wairau catchment and the Auckland region at this regional scale.

Two economic assessments prepared by MJ accompany this referral application and are included at **Appendices H-1 and H-3**:

- (a) The first, from August 2025, provides a peer review of a CBA undertaken by WSP for the Project. The August report calculated the BCR by comparing two scenarios: one where AF Thomas Park included flood-protection wetlands, dry detention areas, and related amenities, and one where no flood mitigation was carried out. The BCR presented in the August report ranged from 0.5 to 1.4. It was presented using a range to avoid overstating the level of certainty because the design of the flood protection was at concept stage. The August report noted that a comprehensive CBA would be developed and that this should result in a narrower BCR range because of greater certainty about the inputs.
- (b) The second, from November 2025, builds on that review in response to a Formative peer review assessment (commissioned by the Council in its regulatory capacity) and updated information, and provides an indicative “reasonable BCR” to support decision-making at the referral application stage. A full and detailed CBA will be prepared next year as part of the substantive fast-track application.

Formative’s independent review – also included at **Appendix H-2** – supports MJ’s analytical approach and notes that several features of the August analysis – such as the discount rate, temporal sensitivities, climate-risk interpolation, and treatment of future development – tend to understate benefits. Formative considered that a baseline BCR “might be greater than 1.0” and that the BCR range is “likely to be mostly above 1.0” when updated assumptions are applied.

In the November 2025 MJ report, following feedback from Formative, MJ replicated one of the scenarios used to develop the BCR range in the August report, to produce what it describes as a “BCR that could be reasonably expected” at this stage. This scenario results in a BCR just over 1.0, meaning quantified benefits exceed costs.

⁶ Draft Waihi North decision, Part F, paragraph 91.

⁷ Ibid, paragraph 93.

Based on the two MJ reports, the Project can reasonably be expected to generate economic benefits of real and material significance at the regional scale.

These benefits include avoided fatalities and injuries, avoided residential property and infrastructure damage, reduced disruption to households and businesses, and improved continuity of essential services. The human impacts documented in the MJ November report underscore the significance of these avoided losses: the 2023 events resulted in two fatalities within the Wairau catchment and six across Auckland, with the economic cost of lost life in the catchment alone estimated at \$16.6–\$25 million based on standard Value of Statistical Life measures.

For completeness, the application does not depend on this criterion. Economic benefits under s 22(2)(a)(iv) are just one of several considerations relevant to assessing significant regional or national benefits under s 22(1)(a). Nevertheless, the available evidence indicates that the Project's BCR is likely above 1, meaning quantified benefits outweigh quantified costs. Again, a full CBA will be completed in 2026 to support any substantive fast-track application.

4.2.5 The Project will support climate change adaptation, reduce natural hazard risk, and support recovery (s 22(2)(a)(viii))

This criterion is assessed as being strongly met by the Project. The Project is fundamentally an initiative that will support climate change adaptation by reducing risks arising from natural hazards and supporting the recovery from the 2023 severe weather events.

As noted, the 2023 Auckland Anniversary floods resulted in two fatalities in the Wairau catchment, along with severe flooding and damage across residential and commercial areas including Tōtara Vale, Sunnynook, Nile Road, and Wairau Road. This event demonstrated that the flood risk to these communities is not a remote possibility. Without the proposed flood management infrastructure, it is anticipated that similar weather events will produce similar severe outcomes.

The proposal directly responds to the risk of climate change and natural hazards through the management of flooding hazards. The approximately 550,000m³ storage capacity is designed to manage extreme rainfall events that are becoming more frequent and severe under climate change projections. Providing this flood storage, slowly releasing floodwaters downstream⁸:

- Lowers the flooding risk from the 'main' Wairau Creek by 30% in an extreme rainfall event;
- Reduces the exposure to 'high danger flood risk' for 19 dwellings, 5 commercial buildings and reduces flood risk for 200 other homes;
- Reduces the risk of flooding across 10 ha of residential properties, three retirement villages, as well as road flooding to Nile Road, Waterloo Road and Alma Road and road access to schools and North Shore Hospital;
- Significantly reduces risk to other existing nationally critical infrastructure, as addressed in Section 4.2.2 above (e.g. nationally significant NZTA and Vector/Transport assets, and regionally significant Watercare assets).

It also reduces the risk not only of property and infrastructure damage, but also the risk of injury and loss of life.

⁸ A F Thomas Park Concept Design Option Report prepared by WSP, **Appendix C-3**.

The Project represents an urgent and appropriate flood management infrastructure response. It provides the permanent solution necessary to support recovery from the 2023 events, since communities cannot fully recover while remaining vulnerable to similar future events.

4.2.6 Consistency with planning documents (s 22(2)(a)(x))

The Project is consistent with this criterion, due to close alignment with local and regional planning and spatial strategy documents:

- **National Policy Statements**

The Project aligns with the NPS-FM, the NPS-IB and the NZCPS.

- **Auckland Unitary Plan - Regional Policy Statement**

The Project is consistent with key RPS objectives and policies including in the following sections of the AUP(OP):

- B2 Urban Growth and Form (well-functioning urban environments, climate resilience);
- B3 Infrastructure (resilient and effective infrastructure delivery);
- B7 Natural Resources (freshwater quality protection); and
- B10 Environmental Risk (natural hazard risk reduction, contaminated land management).

- **Auckland Unitary Plan - Regional and District Plan Provisions**

The Project aligns with relevant objectives and policies across key chapters including water quantity and allocation (E2), lakes/rivers/streams/wetlands (E3), land disturbance (E11/E12), vegetation and biodiversity (E15), infrastructure (E26), and natural hazards and flooding (E36).

- **Strategic Planning Documents**

The Project is consistent with Auckland Plan 2050 (Auckland's spatial plan under s 79 of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009), particularly outcomes relating to environment and cultural heritage, homes and places, and being responsive and future-focused. The Project also aligns with Auckland's Climate Plan, delivering climate adaptation infrastructure that reduces natural hazard risks and builds community resilience.

As noted above, the Project is listed in Auckland Council's 2025/2026 Annual Plan as a priority project.

The Project is consistent with the Kaipātiki Local Board Plan 2023, which is a strategic plan that guides local board activity, funding and investment decision, particularly outcomes relating to the natural environment and the built environment and the people living in Kaipātiki. The Project also aligns with the Kaipātiki Local Park Management Plan, which provides direction on Kaipātiki local park use, protection and development.

The Project demonstrates strong consistency across the planning framework hierarchy. Further detail on planning document consistency is provided in Section 7 below.

4.2.7 Other relevant matters – the Project will deliver significant environmental enhancement / benefits (s 22(2)(b))

The Project generates substantial environmental benefits that are relevant to assessing regional significance under s 22(2)(b). Specifically:

- The proposal provides the opportunity to create a wetland thereby restoring the ecological values that were present before urbanisation.
- This will restore approximately 14.9 ha of wetland and create positive environmental effects on local biodiversity, habitat and ecosystem functioning.
- The remainder of the site (approximately 30.7 ha) will provide the opportunity to create an open space environment to accommodate the needs of the local community.
- Walking and cycling connections will also be provided adjacent to the Northern Motorway and connecting to Northcote Road.

The wetland creation represents a significant environmental enhancement. While the primary driver is flood management infrastructure, the Project design integrates ecological restoration that delivers lasting environmental value alongside infrastructure function.

This dual-benefit approach is a relevant consideration for assessing the Project's overall regional significance under s 22(2)(b).

4.3 Fast-Track Facilitation

As outlined in s 22(1)(b)(i) and (ii), part of the determination for accepting a referral application includes assessing whether the FTA Act process would facilitate a more efficient and timely delivery of the Project, while being unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track process:

- (b) *Referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –*
 - i. *Would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and*
 - ii. *Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.*

The Project satisfies both aspects of s 22(1)(b), as explained further below.

4.3.1 More timely and cost-effective processing (s 22(1)(b)(i))

The FTA Act process will facilitate significantly more timely and cost-effective delivery of the Project compared to standard consenting processes.

The reasons for consent are outlined in Section 5 below, with a range of resource consents required (land use consent, regional consent, works on the bed of a stream, damming and diversion of water and a discharge consent) from the AUP(OP), NES-CS and NES-F, and a specific approval under the Wildlife Act 1953 for an Authority. The ability to apply for a comprehensive range of consenting requirements within one application, to be considered by one Panel, offers significant efficiencies in planning and specialist inputs into managing and navigating the consenting process.

The Project sits squarely within the intended scope of the FTA Act – a regionally significant infrastructure proposal with demonstrated urgent need. The 2023 Auckland Anniversary floods resulted in two fatalities in this catchment, and severe damage to residential and commercial areas. The affected communities remain exposed to this flood risk until the infrastructure is delivered. Given climate change projections for increased rainfall intensity and frequency, the potential time saving from the FTA Act process of at least two years (if not longer with potential appeal processes etc), provides earlier protection against recurring severe weather events.

The FTA Act process also provides the following benefits, while still ensuring that the proposal is thoroughly assessed:

- Single consolidated application to one Expert Consenting Panel;
- Integrated assessment across RMA and Wildlife Act requirements;
- Statutory timeframes with a streamlined process (and potentially no hearing); and
- Limited appeal rights preventing potentially years of delay.

By contrast, under the standard RMA process, it is anticipated that this proposal would be subject to a challenging and complex consenting pathway, with the application likely to be publicly notified. Potential merits appeals to the Environment Court (with possible further appeals to superior courts) create substantial delay risk.

A programme has been prepared to compare consenting through the FTA process and the standard consenting process (**Appendix E**):

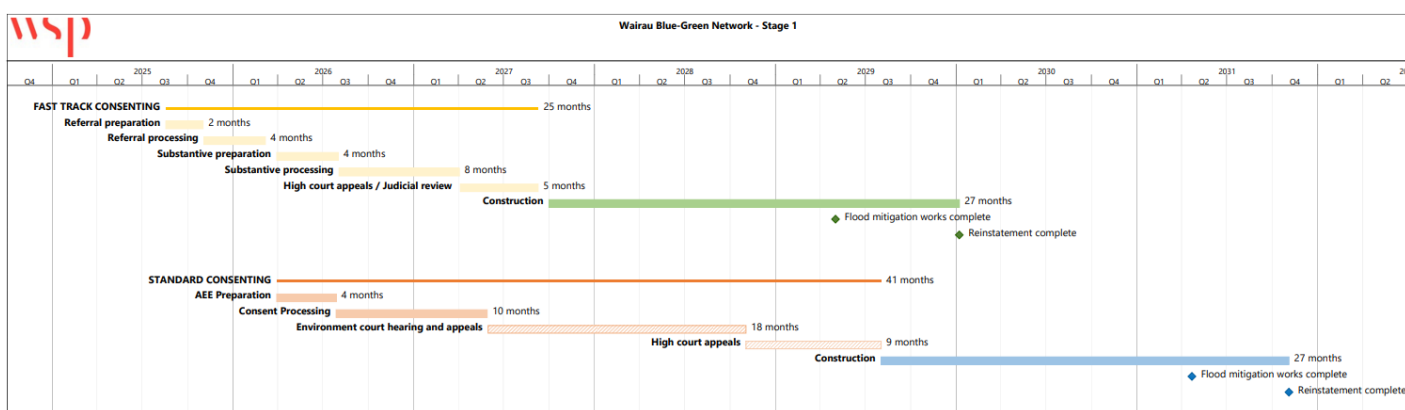


Figure 4-1: Programme

This programme shows there are significant benefits for the Project from a timeliness perspective, in particular by enabling the works to occur in September 2027. By comparison, under a standard consenting approach, works may not commence until September 2029 or significantly later in the event of appeals.

In this latter regard, the timeframes allocated to Environment Court and High Court appeal processes in the programme above are indicative. Timeframes for Court proceedings are subject to a range of variables, which can materially affect timing (e.g. protracted case management processes, Court scheduling limitations, judgment delivery timeframes etc). The programme also does not account for potential further appeals beyond the High Court.

4.3.2 Efficient operation of fast-track process (s 22(1)(b)(ii))

The FTA Act process is considered the right process for this type and scale of Project, and the Project will not materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process impact on the intent of the FTA Act process. Several matters are highlighted in this regard:

- Technical matters (hydrology, engineering, ecology, planning etc) fall within established and well understood disciplines.
- Comprehensive technical assessments and management plans will be provided to support the substantive application (preliminary assessments accompany this referral application) in accordance with best practice.

- The applicant is suitably resourced (noting also the central government funding contribution) and has extensive experience with delivering major infrastructure.
- No novel legal or policy questions are anticipated.
- The substantive application will therefore be complete and well-supported.
- The Project is broadly supported by Mana Whenua, in particular Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Paoa.
- The Project exemplifies appropriate FTA Act use – regionally significant infrastructure with demonstrated urgent need, clear public benefit, well-defined technical matters, and established assessment methodologies.

4.3.3 Summary of s 22(1)(b) assessment

Both elements of s 22(1)(b) are satisfied. The FTA Act process delivers the Project at least two years earlier, providing critical time savings for communities where flooding has already caused severe damage and fatalities. The consolidated approach provides certainty, cost efficiency, and integrated decision-making. The Project will not burden the fast-track system and exemplifies the FTA Act's intended use for urgent, regionally significant infrastructure. Referral would enable this proposal to commence sooner allowing the economic, social, environmental and wider positive benefits to be realised earlier.

4.4 Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, the Project is assessed as comfortably satisfying both limbs of the s 22 acceptance criteria.

In addition, for completeness, it is noted that there are no reasons for declining the referral application in terms of s 21(3)-(5) of the FTA Act. Specifically:

- The Project does not involve an ineligible activity as defined in s 5 of the FTA Act;
- The Project would not be inconsistent with a Treaty settlement, the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019, the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, a Mana Whakahono ā Rohe, or a joint management agreement;
- It would not be more appropriate to deal with the matters that would be authorised by the proposed approvals under another Act or Acts;
- The Project will not have significant adverse effects on the environment;
- The applicant does not have a poor compliance history under a specified Act that relates to any of the proposed approvals;
- The Project area does not include land that the Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations considers necessary for Treaty settlement purposes;
- The Project does not include an activity that is a prohibited activity under the RMA;
- A substantive application for the Project would not have 1 or more competing applications;
- In relation to any proposed approval of the kind described in section 42(4)(a) (resource consent), there are no existing resource consents of the kind referred to in section 30(3)(a); and
- The referral application is considered to be supported by sufficient information to inform the Minister's decision.

5. Reasons for Consent

At this stage, we understand consent will be required under the rules listed below. This list is not exhaustive and is based upon the concept design and information available to date. The consent triggers will be confirmed as developed design progresses. This may include further consent triggers.

5.1 Existing approvals

Healthy Waters holds a region-wide network discharge consent (Council Reference: DIS60069613). This resource consent authorises the diversion and discharge of stormwater from the public stormwater network within existing urban areas. The Project complies with the network discharge consent conditions.

Healthy Waters holds an existing dam consent for the site (Council Reference: 33083). This resource consent authorises the damming and discharge of water under sections 14(1) and 15(1) of the RMA at A F Thomas Park. This consent expires on 31 October 2040. The consent decision specifies the dam height, catchment area and flood volume storage. The proposed flood storage changes will amend the consented dam. At this stage, the proposed changes may include reducing the dam height, increasing the flood storage capacity and providing an additional spillway. A copy of the existing dam consent is provided at 0.

Healthy Waters also holds the following region-wide consents which are not relevant to the proposal:

- Regional Tree Consent (RTC) (Council Reference: LUC60445514). This resource consent authorises work to protected trees (works within the protected root zone, tree trimming or tree removal) that fall within its scope. The scope of the RTC covers works undertaken by Healthy Waters to protected trees that fall within the tier framework. The scope covers a range of activities and works to protected trees. The proposed vegetation removal as part of this proposal falls outside of the scope of this consent and accordingly the RTC will not be relied upon.
- Region-wide fish passage consent (Council References: LUC60412848 and LUS60412849). This resource consent authorises fish passage remediation and improvements within the Auckland Region (excluding the Hauraki Gulf Islands). No fish passage remediation and/or improvements are required as part of this proposal.

5.2 Resource Management Act 1991

The proposal requires resource consent under sections 9(1), 9(2), 9(3), 13, 14 and 15 of the RMA as outlined below in Sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.

5.3 Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) (AUP(OP))

The proposal has been considered under the provisions of the AUP(OP), and the following relevant rules have been identified. These provisions are not subject to any appeals and hence are considered to be operative and therefore supersede any equivalent rules/provisions under legacy plan(s).

The proposed activities are considered to be network utilities / infrastructure works, as the proposed works are stormwater drainage works. This means that the infrastructure rules under Chapter E26 apply in the first instance over other Auckland-wide provisions⁹.

⁹ Infrastructure is provided for on the basis of Auckland-wide provisions. Additional infrastructure provisions (zones, overlays and precincts), such as the National Grid Corridor Overlay, Auckland Airport Precinct and the Strategic Transport Corridor Zone are also provided throughout the plan and should be referred to where applicable. The overlay and Auckland-wide provisions that are included in this section are set out in Table E26.1.1.1.

Chapter E26 – Infrastructure

- Rule E26.2.3.1 (A55): Stormwater detention / retention ponds / wetlands – **Controlled Activity**.
- Rule E26.3.3.1(A77): Vegetation alteration or removal within the riparian area that does not comply with Standards E26.3.5.1 to E26.3.5.4 – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.
- Rule E26.4.3.1(A84): Tree trimming or alteration that does not comply with Standard E26.4.5.1 – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.
- Rule E26.4.3.1(A88): Works within the protected root zone not otherwise provided for – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.
- Rule E26.4.3.1(92): Tree alteration or removal of any tree greater than 4m in height and/or greater than 400mm in girth within an Open Space Zone – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.
- Rule E26.5.3.1(A97): Earthworks greater than 2500m² other than for maintenance, repair, renewal, minor infrastructure upgrading – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.
- Rule E26.5.3.1(A97A): Earthworks greater than 2500m³ other than for maintenance, repair, renewal, minor infrastructure upgrading – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.
- Rule E26.5.3.2(A103): Earthworks greater than 50,000m² where land has a slope less than 10 degrees outside the Sediment Control Protection Area other than for maintenance, repair, renewal, minor infrastructure upgrading – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.
- Rule E26.5.3.2(A107): Earthworks greater than 2,500m² within the Sediment Control Protection Area other than for maintenance, repair, renewal, minor infrastructure upgrading – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.
- Non-compliance with Standards E26.5.5.2(12), (18), (19), (20), and potentially (22), (23) and (24) will require a resource consent pursuant to Rule C1.9(2): An activity that is classed as a permitted, controlled or restricted discretionary activity but that does not comply with one or more of the standards applying to that activity is a **restricted discretionary activity** unless otherwise specified by a rule applying to the particular activity.

Chapter E3 – Lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands

- Rule E3.4.1(A19): Diversion of a river or stream to a new course and associated disturbance and discharge – **Discretionary Activity**.
- Rule E3.4.1(A49): New reclamation or drainage, including filling over a piped stream – **Non-Complying Activity**.

Chapter E7 – Taking, using, damming and diversion of water and drilling

- Rule E7.4.1(A20): Dewatering or groundwater level control associated with a groundwater diversion authorised as a restricted discretionary activity under the AUP(OP), not meeting permitted activity standards or is not otherwise listed – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.
- Rule E7.4.1(A28): The diversion of groundwater caused by any excavation, (including trench) or tunnel that does not meet the permitted activity standards or not otherwise listed – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.

- Rule E7.4.1(A35): Dams not otherwise listed or not meeting the permitted activity standards or controlled activity standards – **Discretionary Activity**.

Chapter E25 – Noise and Vibration

- The proposed construction noise and vibration will require consent pursuant to Rule E25.4.1(A1): Activities that do not comply with a permitted activity standard – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.

Chapter E30 – Contaminated land

- Rule E30.4.1(A7): Discharges of contaminants into air, or into water, or onto or into land not meeting controlled activity Standard E30.6.2.1 – **Discretionary Activity**.

Chapter E36 – Natural hazards and flooding. Refer to commentary under Plan Change 120 below.

- Rule E36.4.1(A56): All other infrastructure in areas (in a 1% AEP floodplain) not otherwise provided for – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.

Chapter E40 – Temporary activities

- A temporary construction laydown area will be in place for approximately 27 months, which exceeds the 24 months which is provided for under Rule E40.4.1(A20), and therefore requires a consent pursuant to Rule E40.4.1(A24): Specific temporary activities that are not provided as a permitted activity in rules (A12) to (A23) – **Restricted Discretionary Activity**.

Activities in relation to Auckland Council PC 120:

Auckland Council is proposing significant changes to the AUP(OP). The changes respond to a government requirement to enable more opportunities for housing and development. PC 120 aims to achieve this by rezoning land in many parts of the city to allow for significant increases in building heights. The proposed changes are focused on locations close to the city centre and other commercial centres, train and busway stations, and along a number of main bus routes. Additionally, this plan change also proposes to strengthen the rules in the Auckland Unitary Plan that relate to building in areas prone to natural hazards (for example within flood plains and in some coastal locations).

In accordance with Section 86B (3) of the RMA, the provisions relating to natural hazards in PC 120 have immediate legal effect (as of 3 November 2025). The Project area has been identified as being within a floodplain, and the natural hazard areas have been further categorised into hazard classification based on the depth and velocity of floodwater. The Project area is located within low, medium, high and very high flood hazard area, as shown in Figure 2-6.

All sites across Auckland have a landslide susceptibility level assigned; the Project area has been assigned Very Low and Low landslide susceptibility level according to Auckland Council GeoMaps. Infrastructure works within Low landslide susceptibility is a permitted activity.

The relevant rule in relation to infrastructure within a flood hazard area under PC 120 *Chapter E36 - Natural hazards and flooding* is:

- Rule E36.4.1B (A107): All other infrastructure in flood hazard areas not otherwise provided for – **Restricted Discretionary activity**.

There are no other rules in PC 120 that are relevant to the Project.

5.4 National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soils to Protect Human Health (NES-CS)

The NES-CS applies to activities that disturb the soil if the relevant piece of land is, or has previously been, a HAIL site (as recorded on the Hazardous Activities and Industries List – Ministry for the Environment).

Auckland Council has identified the site as HAIL, specifically category A10 – Persistent pesticide bulk storage or use including sport turfs, market gardens, orchards, glass houses or spray sheds. No further HAIL activities have been identified by WSP who have prepared a Preliminary Site Investigation (**Appendix O**).

Soil disturbance will occur as part of the proposal in the order of approximately 700,000-800,000m³, which will not comply with the criteria under Regulation 8(3). Therefore, a resource consent will be required under Regulation 9(1) of the NES-CS as a **Controlled Activity**.

5.5 National Environmental Standard for Freshwater (NES-F)

The Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 (NES-F) and the subsequent amendments regulations (No 2) 2022 regulate activities that pose risks to the health of freshwater and freshwater ecosystems. Anyone carrying out these activities will need to comply with the standards. The regulations came into effect on 3 September 2020.

The Project Ecologist has identified a number of watercourses within the site that as a result of earthworks may require reclamation and/or diversion. In terms of the presence of wetlands, the Project Ecologist stated (refer to page 5 of the report at **Appendix K**):

“A desktop-based assessment for potential wetland areas on-site was conducted utilising current site topography, and Auckland Council flood plain and overland flow paths overlays. Historical (1990-2025) and current aerial imagery was also used to identify areas that showed visual characteristics of water retention (e.g., green vegetation during dry seasons, and potential surface water presence). While some potential wetland areas were identified during this desktop assessment, on-site investigation at the time of the initial site visit did not identify any potential ‘wetlands’, as defined in the RMA, or ‘natural inland wetlands’, as defined in the NPS-FM, which provides a more refined assessment framework. Wetland presence will be confirmed through the application of national wetland delineation protocols, to be carried out across the site during future ecological assessment.”

The preliminary findings will be confirmed with additional assessment. In the meantime, a conservative approach has been taken, with the following regulations of the NES-F identified as potentially applying to the Project:

- Regulation 57: Reclamation of the bed of any river is a **Discretionary** activity.
- Regulation 45(1): Vegetation clearance within, or within a 10m setback from, a natural inland wetland is a **Discretionary** activity if it is for the purpose of constructing specified infrastructure¹⁰.
- Regulation 45(2): Earthworks or land disturbance within, or within a 10 m setback from, a natural inland wetland is a **Discretionary** activity if it is for the purpose of constructing specified infrastructure.
- Regulation 45(3): Earthworks or land disturbance outside a 10 m, but within a 100 m, setback from a natural inland wetland is a **Discretionary** activity if it (a) is for the purpose of constructing specified

¹⁰ Specified infrastructure has the meaning given by the NPS-FM, which includes any public flood control, flood protection, or drainage works carried out by or on behalf of a local authority.

infrastructure; and (b) results, or is likely to result, in the complete or partial drainage of all or part of the natural inland wetland.

Overall, the proposed works will require a **Discretionary** Activity resource consent under the NES-F.

5.6 Wildlife Act 1953

The Project ecologist has noted (at page 7, **Appendix K**) that an authority may be required under the Wildlife Act 1953 to manage, relocate, or disturb protected fauna. Fauna surveys are currently underway and will be completed in the next couple of months to confirm the presence and location of protected species on site. Based on preliminary desktop assessments and habitat characteristics and initial site visits, protected herpetofauna (including copper skink and potentially ornate skink) may be present. Further surveys will inform the specific Wildlife Act authorities required.

5.7 Archaeological Authority

As outlined in Section 2.4, a review of the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero maintained by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and Auckland Council's Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI) confirms there are no listed heritage places or recorded archaeological sites within the Project area. Engagement with Mana Whenua has also not identified any specific cultural or historic features on the site.

On this basis, an Archaeological Authority is not sought for the Project.

6. Potential adverse effects on the environment

The following sections set out an assessment of potential adverse effects on the environment. It is considered that potential effects in relation to the following matters are relevant to the proposal:

- Land disturbance / Earthworks;
- Flood Hazards;
- Ecology;
- Natural Character, Landscape and Visual Amenity;
- Arboriculture;
- Groundwater;
- Contamination;
- Construction Noise and Vibration; and
- Cultural Values.

Overall, it is assessed that:

- (a) The Project's potential adverse effects on the environment can be appropriately mitigated and managed to an acceptable level; and
- (b) None of the potential effects identified can be considered 'significant' in terms of s 21(5)(c) of the FTA Act.

While this section focuses on potential adverse effects, it is appropriate to record that the Project will have a broad range of positive effects on the environment, which will be relevant to assessment of the substantive application – as broadly addressed in Section 4 above.

6.1 Land Disturbance / Earthworks

Bulk earthworks have the potential to adversely affect the environment via sediment runoff to the downstream receiving environment and dust generation. The works are planned to occur predominately during the earthworks season (October to March). During construction, erosion and sediment control measures will be utilised to avoid related adverse environmental effects. All proposed sediment and erosion control measures will be designed in accordance with Auckland Council Guideline Document 2016/005 '*Erosion and Sediment Control Guide for Land Disturbing Activities in the Auckland Region*' (GD05). All material will remain onsite unless unsuitable (e.g. contaminated). Overall, the implementation of erosion and sediment control measures, the use of a wider construction management plan and an erosion and sediment control plan (ESCP), will ensure that any adverse effects associated with earthworks will be appropriately managed.

6.2 Flood Hazards

A Preliminary Flood Hazard Assessment has been prepared by WSP and is provided as **Appendix J**. The key findings of this memorandum are:

- The Project significantly increases flood storage through the bulk excavation of A F Thomas Park.

- By storing approximately 550,000m³ of water in an extreme event, the Project is predicted to reduce flood levels upstream in the commercial area by up to 700mm and for the downstream Milford area by up to 450mm during a 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) design event.
- The proposed works show no significant increase in water levels outside of A F Thomas Park.
- During construction, there will be interaction between flood hazards (overland flow and floodplains) intersecting and active earthworks. Careful consideration and mitigation during construction by the contractor will be required, including monitoring of weather forecasts, bunding, progressive reinstatement and storing where possible goods and materials outside of the 1% AEP floodplain area. Many of these measures will form part of the ESCP to be prepared to support a substantive application.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed works will reduce flood hazard effects and potential effects on flood hazards arising from construction will be appropriately managed.

6.3 Ecology

A Preliminary Ecology Assessment is provided at **Appendix K**. The key findings of the assessment include:

- Part of the site is likely located within a historical wetland environment, based on historical imagery and modelled flood data, predominantly in the northeastern corner of the site. Terrestrial features included native vegetation, moderate habitat value for native birds and low value potential habitat for native lizards. The existing freshwater ecological features include watercourses, such as modified natural watercourses, artificial drains and two ponds. The Project Ecologist concluded that habitat for native freshwater fauna within on-site watercourses is of Low to Moderate value. In terms of the presence of wetlands, the Project Ecologist states (at page 5, **Appendix K**):

"... While some potential wetland areas were identified during this desktop assessment, on-site investigation at the time of the initial site visit did not identify any potential 'wetlands', as defined in the RMA, or 'natural inland wetlands', as defined in the NPS-FM, which provides a more refined assessment framework. Wetland presence will be confirmed through the application of national wetland delineation protocols, to be carried out across the site during future ecological assessment."

- Potential short-term adverse effects of the proposal that are anticipated include removal of native vegetation and freshwater features, habitat loss, risk of harm to native fauna, and sedimentation and erosion impacts arising from earthworks on downstream ecosystems.
- The proposal is anticipated to result in longer term positive impacts including the restoration of a historical wetland ecosystem and opportunities for the creation of on-site stream habitat. Alongside the flood hazard and improved stormwater filtration benefits of the creation of a wetland, it will also result in positive effects on local biodiversity, habitat and ecosystem functioning.
- There may be a requirement to seek Wildlife Act Authority permits under the Wildlife Act 1953, in addition to the implementation of fauna management plans, in order to appropriately mitigate impacts on native fauna. The most likely scenario in which a permit will be required, in this case, is if protected herpetofauna species are found on-site during further ecological assessments.

In summary, the proposed works will result in positive environmental effects and potential short term adverse effects including risk of harm to native fauna. Management of these impacts will be achieved through the proposed construction of a wetland environment within the site, incorporation of sitewide landscaping, implementation of fauna management plans, and application of erosion and sediment control measures.

6.4 Natural Character, Landscape and Visual Amenity

A preliminary Natural Character, Landscape and Visual Amenity Assessment has been prepared by Boffa Miskell and is provided at **Appendix L**. The key findings of the memorandum include:

- Landscape effects will largely be associated with temporary construction activities, such as earthworks and vegetation removal. Upon completion of the reserve reinstatement works, landscape effects are expected to be neutral or positive following the establishment of the planting plan and other park infrastructure.
- There are a range of audiences surrounding the site, including Northcote Road to the south, industrial land and stadium to the north, the Northern Motorway to the east, and residential audiences to the west. Visual effects will be most pronounced during construction and will substantially reduce following the completion of the construction works. As the planting establishes over time it will provide screening and filtering of view of the residential audiences' outlook towards the Northern Motorway.
- The natural character of the site will be altered by the construction works, particularly on the existing watercourses and other hydrological features. Upon completion of the construction, there will be a long-term improvement to the functionality, character and quality of the site's natural character.

Overall, it is considered that following the completion of the works, the anticipated long-term effects would be neutral / positive overall due to the retained open space amenity and the opportunities to improve the landscape and natural character of the site.

6.5 Arboriculture

A preliminary Arborist Assessment has been prepared by The Tree Consultancy Company and is provided at **Appendix M**. The key findings of the memorandum include:

- The site currently consists of an extensive and diverse tree population. The age class of the trees varies widely from juvenile to mature specimens and are a mixture of exotic and native species. In terms of the condition of the trees, the majority can be described as having fair to good vitality, and there are trees which are considered arboriculturally good specimens. The Project Arborist utilised Auckland Council's Open Data GIS website, and specifically the 2024-2025 infrared aerial images, and a high-level assessment of these images, noting that *"it appears at least 10% of the trees are in poor condition, and further 20% are in a fair condition"*.
- The Project Arborist has utilised iTree Canopy software and the total tree canopy is estimated to be about 26% of the site's land area.
- The proposed bulk earthworks will result in vegetation removal. The exact quantum is still to be determined. Further work will be undertaken to look at opportunities and assess the likelihood of retaining some of the existing trees on the site, the relocation of high-quality trees within the site where feasible and replacement planting.

Overall, it is considered that while the proposed works will result in potential adverse effects from the loss of vegetation, this can be mitigated by retaining some vegetation on-site or relocation if feasible. Where unfeasible, replacement planting will be undertaken to mitigate adverse effects.

6.6 Groundwater

A Preliminary Hydrogeology Assessment has been prepared by WSP and is provided at **Appendix N**. The key findings of this assessment include:

- The proposed works will involve excavations and the installation of a permanent drainage system to enable the creation of dry and wet storage detention.
- Groundwater levels are expected to be drawn down by up to 3.5m locally, and drawdowns could be more than 2m beyond the project area. The existing wastewater pipeline may be at risk of damage due to land settlement induced by groundwater drawdown. Careful design consideration regarding the bulk earthworks and groundwater drawdown will be undertaken as the design develops. Additional field investigations and technical assessments are required to determine whether other buildings or structures could be affected by land settlement.
- No water quality effects are expected and no increase in flood risks due to construction dewatering discharge are anticipated, either during construction or in a permanent state.
- No effects on baseflows of nearby streams and wetlands are expected. Groundwater level monitoring is recommended to confirm if groundwater level drawdown is within the expected range.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed works have the potential for land settlement beyond the site, and further investigation is required to determine the anticipated effects. This will be undertaken in conjunction with the developed design. Any potential effects from groundwater drawdown and settlement risk will be appropriately managed through the implementation of mitigation and a groundwater and settlement contingency monitoring plan.

6.7 Contamination

A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) has been prepared by WSP and is provided at **Appendix N**. The key findings of the PSI include:

- A HAIL activity has more than likely occurred on the site. HAIL activity A10 – Persistent pesticide bulk storage or use including sport turfs, market gardens, orchards, glass houses or spray sheds. The soil contamination risk has been assessed as moderate.
- It is recommended that a Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) be undertaken, which will include soil sampling in the earthworks areas. Results of the DSI will be used to confirm consent triggers and requirements for contaminated site management plans during works. Preparation of a Contaminated Site Management Plan (CSMP) to manage any identified contaminated soil on the site will be required before the start of works. Soil management controls will be implemented on site to minimise offsite soil disposal and maximise onsite reuse of soil.

Any potential effects from soil disturbance of contaminated land and any associated discharge can be appropriately managed through the implementation of mitigation measures and a CSMP.

6.8 Construction Noise and Vibration

A Preliminary Construction Noise and Vibration Assessment has been prepared by WSP and is provided at **Appendix P**. The key findings include:

- There are a number of receivers that have been identified surrounding the site. The risk gradings range from Low to High.
- There are likely be some high high-risk noise producing activities as part of the works that include piling, bulldozing, chainsaw operation, and isolated rock breaking / blasting (if required).
- It is recommended that a Construction Noise and Vibration assessment be undertaken during the substantive application stage, to assess the noise and vibration from the works, and a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP) is prepared and implemented to mitigate potential noise and vibration effects from the proposed works.

Any potential effects from noise or vibration can be appropriately managed through the implementation of mitigation measures and a CNVMP.

6.9 Cultural Values

A summary of consultation undertaken with Mana Whenua, and how that consultation has informed the Project to date, is provided in Section 3.5 above.

Healthy Waters are working in partnership with Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Pāoa. Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Pāoa have noted their support for the proposal. Engagement and consultation on this proposal will continue throughout the life of the Project, including ensuring that their values and outcomes are realised throughout the design and construction of the proposal.

The proposal will not occur on land returned under a Treaty Settlement. The Project footprint is also not located within a Statutory Acknowledgement area.

7. Statutory Documents

Section 7.1 is provided in accordance with clause 2(1)(a)(i) – (iii) of Schedule 5. This requires that applications include an assessment of the activity against the relevant provisions and requirements of the following statutory documents:

- (a) Any relevant national policy statements: see sections 7.1.1 to 7.1.3 below.
- (b) Any relevant national environmental standards: an assessment against national environmental standards is provided above in Sections 5.4 and 5.5, and Sections 6.3 and 6.7.
- (c) If relevant, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement: see section 7.1.4 below.

Sections 7.2 to 7.3 provide an assessment against the relevant local and regional planning documents including spatial strategies (as referred to in s 22(2)(a)(x) of the FTA Act).

7.1 National Policy Statements

7.1.1 National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM)

The NPS for Freshwater Management 2020 – Amended October 2024 (NPS-FM) is considered relevant to the Project as they involve the management of stormwater and streamworks activities. The relevant objectives and policies of the NPS-FM include:

- **Policy 2:** Tangata whenua are actively involved in freshwater management (including decision-making processes), and Māori freshwater values are identified and provided for.
- **Policy 3:** Freshwater is managed in an integrated way that considers the effects of the use and development of land on a whole-of-catchment basis, including the effects on receiving environments.
- **Policy 15:** Communities are enabled to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being in a way that is consistent with this National Policy Statement.

The proposal accords with the NPS-FM for the following reasons:

- Mana Whenua have been partners throughout the development of the proposal and will continue to be involved;
- The proposal considers the whole-of-catchment and the effects on receiving environments and communities; and
- The proposal will protect the health and safety of the community whilst providing for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

For the above reasons, the Project also achieves **Objective 1** of the NPS-FM, which is *“The objective of this National Policy Statement is to ensure that natural and physical resources are managed in a way that prioritises: (a) first, the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems, (b) second, the health needs of people (such as drinking water), (c) third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being, now and in the future.”*

7.1.2 National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB)

The NPS-IB is relevant to the Project. The relevant objectives and policies of the NPS-IB include:

- **Policy 1:** Indigenous biodiversity is managed in a way that gives effect to the decision-making principles and takes into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- **Policy 2:** Tangata whenua exercise kaitiakitanga for indigenous biodiversity in their rohe.
- **Policy 4:** Indigenous biodiversity is managed to promote resilience to the effects of climate change.
- **Policy 6:** Significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna are identified as Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) using a consistent approach.
- **Policy 15:** The importance of maintaining indigenous biodiversity outside SNAs that support specified highlight mobile fauna is recognised and provided for.

It is considered that the proposal accords with the NPS-IB objectives and policies for the following reasons:

- Mana Whenua have been partners throughout the development of the proposal. No concerns have been raised in regard to indigenous biodiversity;
- The proposed works are not occurring within a SEA. The closest SEA is located approximately 150m to the south-east of the site and protected fauna may utilise A F Thomas Park as a stepping stone; and
- The site does not present any features, fauna or flora habitats that present significant ecological values based on preliminary desktop findings.

For the above reasons, the Project also achieves Objective 1 of the NPS-IB, which is *“(a) to maintain indigenous biodiversity across Aotearoa New Zealand so that there is at least no overall loss in indigenous biodiversity after the commencement date; and (b) to achieve this: (i) through recognising the mana of tangata whenua as kaitiaki of indigenous biodiversity; and, (ii) by recognising people and communities, including landowners, as stewards of indigenous biodiversity; and, (iii) by protecting and restoring indigenous biodiversity as necessary to achieve the overall maintenance of indigenous biodiversity; and (iv) while providing for the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of people and communities now and in the future.”*

7.1.3 National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD)

The NPS-UD is relevant to the Project. Policy 1 of the NPS-UD requires that planning decisions contribute to well-functioning urban environments.

As addressed above, the relevant aspects of **Policy 1** that the Project positively addresses include:

- **Climate resilience:** Policy 1 requires that well-functioning urban environments "are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change". The Project directly satisfies this requirement by delivering flood management infrastructure that protects communities from climate-driven extreme rainfall events.
- **Accessibility and open space:** Policy 1 requires "good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport". The Project contributes to this requirement by:
 - Creating 14.9 ha of wetland providing natural space and ecological amenity;
 - Retaining 30.7 ha for sport and active recreation consistent with the underlying zoning; and
 - Providing walking and cycling connections adjacent to the Northern Motorway and linking to Northcote Road, enhancing active transport accessibility.

For the above reasons, the Project also achieves **Objective 1** of the NPS-UD, which is “*New Zealand has well-functioning urban environments that enable all people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future*” .

The Project also directly supports the following objectives and policies in the NPS-UD:

- **Objective 4 - climate resilience**

The Project aligns with Objective 4's requirement that “New Zealand's urban environments, including their amenity values, develop and change over time in response to the diverse and changing needs of people, communities, and future generations.” The Project will improve resilience to the likely current and future effects of climate change.

- **Objective 8 - Climate change**

The Project directly gives effect to Objective 8(b), which requires that New Zealand's urban environments “are resilient to the current and future effects of climate change”. The Project will improve resilience and reduce risk to flooding in the present day and under accepted climate change scenarios, responding to demonstrated climate-related flood risk.

- **Objective 6 and Policy 10 - Integrated infrastructure planning**

The Project aligns with Objective 6's requirement for local authority decisions to be “integrated with infrastructure planning and funding decisions”. The Project is listed in Auckland Council's Annual Plan 2025/2026 as a priority project, demonstrating strategic planning and funding integration.

The Project also aligns with Policy 10's requirement for local authorities to “engage with providers of development infrastructure and additional infrastructure to achieve integrated land use and infrastructure planning”. Consultation has been undertaken with infrastructure providers including Vector, Transpower, NZTA, and Watercare (as detailed in Section 3.5), with letters of support received from Vector, NZTA and Watercare.

7.1.4 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS)

The proposed works are consistent with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) given the capture of sediment and the employment of earthworks controls during construction. There are no works within the coastal marine area (CMA) or its immediate environs, with the CMA located approximately 1.7km to the north-east. The Hauraki Gulf is the ultimate receiving environment from Wairau Creek.

7.2 AUP(OP) Regional Policy Statement (RPS)

The relevant objectives and policies of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) are as follows, this includes changes as a result of PC 120:

- B2 Urban growth and form – B2.2.1(1A) and (1), B2.7.1(4); and B2.7.2(11). These objectives and policies relate to a well-functioning urban environment that enables all people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future. The proposal is consistent with this chapter of the RPS, and the provisions referenced, as it will improve resilience to the effects of climate change. In addition, the proposal provides for improved resilience to the effects of climate change in open space and associated recreation and biodiversity management. The discussion above of how the Project gives effect to Objective 1 and Policy 1 of the NPS-UD is also relevant to the proposal's consistency with B2 provisions directed at achieving a well-functioning urban environment.
- B3 Infrastructure – B3.2.1(1)-(8) and B3.2.2(1), (2), (8), (9). These objectives and policies relate to the provision of resilient, efficient and effective infrastructure and its benefits to Auckland. The

provision of infrastructure is recognised and enabled, whilst ensuring that adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated. The proposal is consistent with this chapter of the RPS as it will ensure resilient and effective infrastructure which will benefit the community and protect the public from health and safety risks. Any adverse effects will be adequately avoided, remedied and / or mitigated through the implementation of mitigation measures and management plans.

- B7 Natural Resources – B7.4.1(1)-(6) and B7.4.2(1)-(9). These objectives and policies relate to the quality of freshwater and seek to avoid, remedy and mitigate adverse effects on freshwater. The proposal is considered to be consistent with this chapter of the RPS as it will protect the health and safety of the community whilst avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects on freshwater bodies. The proposal gives effect to the NPS-FM, as noted in Section 7.1.1 above.
- B10 Environmental Risk – B10.2.1(1)-(2), (4)-(6) and B10.2.2(7), (12); and B10.4.1(1) and B10.4.2(1)-(3). These objectives and policies relate to natural hazards and climate change and contaminated land. Auckland is affected by a wide range of natural hazards, including flooding, coastal erosion (including the effects of sea level rise), freshwater erosion, landslides, wildfires volcano activity, tsunami, earthquakes, liquefaction and other meteorologically induced hazards such as cyclones, tornadoes, and drought. All of these hazards can affect people, property and the wider environment. Existing activities in areas prone to natural hazards may cause or worsen risk. New growth and intensification may also cause or worsen risk, depending on the degree to which natural hazards are avoided, mitigated or accepted during planning and development. Growth and development need to be managed to ensure that the risk from natural hazards is not increased and, where practicable, reduced. More recent development and future development, in the face of housing supply pressure and desired intensification, will result in more public and private assets being at risk from natural hazards if not managed appropriately. In relation to contaminated land, the use of chemicals and hazardous substances in a range of industries and activities has resulted in the contamination of sites within the region. Contamination of soil or groundwater can affect people's health and safety, limit land use, reduce land value, and degrade ecosystems. Contaminated sites need to be identified, assessed, managed and where necessary remediated to minimise risks to public health and the environment. The proposal is consistent with this chapter of the RPS as the proposal aims to reduce significant risks to people, property, infrastructure and the environment from flooding hazards in existing developed areas. The role and function of natural systems, including floodplains, is recognised and integrated into the Project's design. Further, the natural hazard risks on Māori values, rights and interests are managed in accordance with te ao Māori, mātauranga, and tikanga, including through the engagement with Mana Whenua. In addition, human health and the quality of air, land and water resources are protected by the identification, management and remediation of land that is contaminated, all of which can be practically accomplished.

7.3 AUP(OP) Objectives and Policies

The key regional and district plan objectives and policies of the following chapters include:

- E2 Water quantity, allocation and use – E2.2(1), (2), (5) and E2.3(7), (9), (13), (17)-(18), (20)-(21), (23).
- E3 Lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands – E3.2(1)-(6) and E3.3(2), (3)-(6), (10)-(13), (15), (18).
- E11 Land disturbance (regional) – E11.2(1)-(3) and E11.3(1)-(6).
- E12 Land disturbance (district) – E12.2(1) and E12.3(1)-(6).
- E15 Vegetation management and biodiversity – E15.2(1)-(2) and E15.3(1), (2), (6), (7).
- E16 Trees in Open Space Zones – E16.2(1) and E16.3(1)-(3).
- E25 Noise and Vibration – E25.2(1) and (4), E25.3(2), (7), and (10).

- E26 Infrastructure – E26.2.1(1)-(6) and (9) and E26.2.2(1)-(5).
- E30 Contaminated Land – E30.2(1) and E30.3(2).
- E36 Natural hazards and Flooding – E36.2(4) and E36.3(3) and (35).
- E40 Temporary activities – E40.2(2) and (3), E40.3(1), (3) and (6).

While a full assessment of the above objectives and policies is not included in this application, we have reviewed these matters and are of the opinion that the Project is generally consistent with the above provisions and overall policy framework, for the same reasons it is consistent with the RPS provisions (which the regional and district plan components of the AUP(OP) must give effect to).

7.4 Local Planning Documents

7.4.1 Auckland Plan 2050

The Auckland Plan is the key strategic document which sets Auckland Council's social, economic, environmental and cultural objectives. It is Auckland's spatial plan under s 79 of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009. A key component of the Auckland Plan is the Development Strategy which sets out how future growth will be accommodated up to 2050. The Auckland Plan focuses on six outcomes:

- Belonging and participation;
- Māori identity and wellbeing;
- Homes and places;
- Transport and access;
- Environment and cultural heritage; and
- Opportunity and prosperity.

Of relevance to this proposal is environment and cultural heritage, in particular adaptation to the effects of climate change. Auckland faces climate-related risks such as heat waves, droughts, tropical storms and sea level rise.

Auckland adopted an Auckland-wide climate plan: Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri, Auckland's Climate Plan (2020). Auckland's Climate Plan set goals to:

- Reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent by 2030;
- Achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and
- Adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Overall, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the strategic direction of the Auckland Plan and the Auckland Climate Plan by adapting to a changing climate that required flexibility and adaptation. These strategic objectives of the Auckland Plan are reflected in the AUP(OP) objectives and policies, as well as in other Council plans and strategies (e.g. the Long Term Plan).

7.4.2 Kaipātiki Local Board Plan 2023

The local board plan is a three-year strategic plan that guides local board activity, funding and investment decisions. The key outcomes from the Kaipātiki Local Board Plan that are relevant to the proposal are set out below:

- Te Whai Wāhitanga me te Oranga Belonging and Wellbeing – our people are engaged, connected, healthy, thriving and are proud to live in Kaipātiki.
- Te Taiao Environment – our natural environment is restored and protected for future generations to enjoy.
- Ngā Wāhi me ngā Takiwā Places and spaces – our built environment is vibrant, well-maintained, reflects the culture and heritage of Kaipātiki, meets our people's needs, and has a low impact on our climate.

The proposal is consistent with these desired outcomes and it is noted that they are generally addressed by the statutory planning documents applying to the area.

7.4.3 Kaipātiki Local Park Management Plan 2024

The Kaipātiki Local Parks Management Plan covers 170 local parks and around 540 hectares of land. The plan provides a policy framework that will guide decision-making over the next 10 years. It also provides direction on Kaipātiki local park use, protection and development. The key management intentions (Volume 2, pages 364 and 365) that are relevant to the proposal are set out below:

- Work with the golf club to enable safe pedestrian access through the golf course.
- Maintain the natural values and character of the park and improve park users' experience, and ability to connect with nature. This could include planting large trees.
- Support opportunities to improve the open watercourses in the park, including enhancing riparian environment and water quality.
- Investigate opportunities to improve the quality of drainage in the park to enable use year-round.
- Prior to expiry of the commercial golf lease, investigate and consult on the options for expanding recreational uses of, and public access to, the golf course area such as walking, cycling and running.
- Investigate ways to improve stormwater management within the golf course area.
- Enable improved walking and cycling connections through and to the park, including
 - a. Working with the golf club to enable safe pedestrian access through the golf course,
 - b. Investigating opportunities to deliver on the local board approved greenway plan, the Kaipātiki Connections Network Plan, and
 - c. Working with NZTA to implement Northern Pathway Plan to support access and connectivity between the park, local area and busway.

The proposal is consistent with the management intentions for A F Thomas Park as outlined above.

7.4.4 Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000

The purpose of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act (HGMPA) is to:

- (a) Integrate the management of the natural, historic, and physical resources of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments:
- (b) Establish the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park:
- (c) Establish objectives for the management of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments:

- (d) Recognise the historic, traditional, cultural, and spiritual relationship of the tangata whenua with the Hauraki Gulf and its islands:
- (e) Establish the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

The proposed works are consistent with the HGMPA, there are no works within the CMA or its immediate environs, with the CMA located approximately 1.7km to the north-east. The Hauraki Gulf is the ultimate receiving environment from Wairau Creek.

8. Conclusion

This report is submitted in support of the applicant's application for referral of the Project under the FTA Act.

The proposal is for:

- (a) Flood resilience infrastructure works; and
- (b) Reserve reinstatement, including site stabilisation, landscaping, new footpaths/boardwalks, and formal and informal recreation,

at A F Thomas Park (the Project) located at 21 Northcote Road, 17, 17A, 17B and 17C Silverfield Lane, Wairau Valley, Auckland.

This application and supporting document have been prepared in accordance with s 13 of the FTA Act and provides a description of the proposal and explains how the project is consistent with the purposes of the FTA Act. We also provide a high-level assessment of actual and potential effects on the environment consistent with the requirements of Schedule 5 of the FTA Act.

The proposal clearly satisfies both s 22 acceptance criteria. The Project:

- Will deliver regionally significant infrastructure (s 22(1)(a)) by providing additional flood storage of approximately 550,000m³;
- Responds directly to the responds directly to the 2023 Auckland Anniversary floods, which caused two fatalities and severe damage in the Wairau catchment, and supports recovery from those events;
- Reduces risks from natural hazards, specifically flooding risk, reducing extreme rainfall flood risk by 30%;
- Protects critical regionally and nationally significant infrastructure (Watercare infrastructure, State Highway 1 and Transpower/Vector electricity infrastructure);
- Addresses a demonstrated and urgent community safety need – affected communities may continue to be impacted by until the Project is delivered; and
- Satisfies numerous s 22(2) considerations including priority project status, infrastructure delivery, climate change adaptation, economic benefits, and environmental enhancement.

The FTA Act process reduces consenting timeframes significantly, enabling construction by September 2027 – a potential time saving of **at least** two years, and potentially longer, compared with the normal RMA process. As addressed earlier, the potential time saving may be significantly longer than two years, taking into account the risk of protracted appeals processes associated with standard RMA processes. The Project will not materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track process.

No s 21 grounds for declining the referral exist.

A full and comprehensive Assessment of Effects on the Environment, including fulsome specialist reports and draft management plans, will be undertaken for the substantive application.

The Minister can be satisfied that accepting this referral application serves both the purpose of the FTA Act and the urgent safety needs of affected communities for flood resilience infrastructure.

Appendix A. Records of Title

Appendix B. Project Footprint

Appendix C-1. Wairau Catchment Flood Reduction Options Summary

Appendix C-2. A F Thomas Park Concept Feasibility Report

Appendix C-3. A F Thomas Park Concept Design Option Report

Appendix D. Indicative Construction Methodology

Appendix E. Programme

Appendix F-1. Letters of Support

Appendix F-2. Section 11 Letter from MfE and letter from DoC

Appendix F-3. Consultation with mana whenua

Appendix G. Table of Information Requirements for a Referral Application

Appendix H-1. Cost Benefit Analysis August 2025

Appendix H-2. Cost Benefit Analysis August 2025 report review Formative

Appendix H-3. Cost Benefit Analysis Addendum November 2025

Appendix I. Dam Consent (Permit number 33083)

Appendix J. Preliminary Flood Hazard Assessment

Appendix K. Preliminary Ecological Assessment

Appendix L. Landscape and Visual Amenity Memorandum

Appendix M. Arborist Memorandum

Appendix N. Preliminary Hydrogeology Assessment

Appendix O. Preliminary Site Investigation

Appendix P. Indicative Construction Noise and Vibration Assessment