

2. CONTEXT



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The motorway extends approximately 18.5km from the Johnstone’s Hill tunnels to rejoin the existing SH1 just north of Warkworth. It is parallel to, but west of, the existing SH1. It traverses mainly hilly rural country, and bypasses the western outskirts of Warkworth. This ULDSP describes the stretch of motorway between the Johnstone’s Hill tunnels northwards to the approximate vicinity of Mahurangi West Road.

The focus of this ULDSP is three-fold; firstly, it describes the entire southern length of motorway, which is the area from the Johnstone’s Hill tunnels northwards to the approximate vicinity of Mahurangi West Road which is between chainage 59420 and 65020 (the chainage is the location reference referring to metres applied to the Sector Plans in section 7). The second specific aspect covered in this ULDSP is the viaduct over the Ōkahu inlet (Te Arawhiti ki Ōkahu), with a specific focus on the approach embankments (chainage 64300 to 64500). The third specific aspect covered in this ULDSP is the visual screening of both the motorway and temporary construction yard when viewed from the area on the eastern side of Pūhoi River.

The plans in section 7 show the entire Pūhoi sector and demonstrate the sector specific elements as they relate to the ULDF [D33].



Viewing Ōkahu inlet from Hibiscus Coast Highway



Ōkahu inlet and wider surroundings

Pūhoi

The Pūhoi sector continues from the Northern Gateway toll road with undulating ground intersecting with coastal areas before transitioning to steeper terrain as it heads north.

Relevant characteristics include:

- The Ōkahu Inlet, and the western end of the Pūhoi River tidal estuary, which makes the Pūhoi sector unique in being the only coastal sector
- The tidal river winding between the mangrove forest mudflats as the main feature, leading the eye down the estuary toward the coast- a valley enclosed by bold hills with bush stands and pasture
- Stands of secondary bush at Ōkahu Estuary, on the ridge west of SH1, and on the north bank of the Pūhoi River where it intersects Pūhoi Road
- The Ōkahu Inlet, which lies within rural pasture. Pockets of coastal forest, a small wetland and an area of kauri forest remain
- The river mouth area including Maungatauhoro headland (an important pā and urupa), the adjacent flat land (Te Akeake sandspit, Te Rapa kāinga), Mahurangi Island and kāinga at Te Muri to the north, which are particularly significant to Mana Whenua
- Multiple Māori settlement areas within the larger Pūhoi area, with newly uncovered archaeological evidence that demonstrates layers of occupation over generations
- Two pā, Te Pā o Te Hēmara Tauhia and Te Kāinga Tawhito o Ngā Tūpuna, in and adjacent to the designation in the vicinity of Ōkahu Creek, with both cultural value to Mana Whenua and intact archaeological features
- Wenderholm Regional Park (2km downstream of the designation) and Pūhoi River as a well-known kayaking route
- Pūhoi village (1km upstream of the designation), a place with historic character and located within a quiet, picturesque valley setting that is separated from the highway

East of the Pūhoi River

This ULDSP also specifically covers the flat, low-lying area on the eastern side of the Pūhoi River, identified as 517 State Highway 1, Pūhoi 0983 (CT NA37A/148). This area is hugged by SH1 to the east and Pūhoi River to the west, which is separated from the Pūhoi Close residents by the river and conservation reserve.

The area east of Pūhoi River is a sensitive and diverse part of the corridor. It is rich in landscape character – the nearby existing rural village of Pūhoi, the Pūhoi River, Te Araroa Trail and the border of the Ōkahu Inlet – and is of cultural, historical and ecological significance. The floodplain created by the bend of the Pūhoi River in this location provides an opportunity to undertake landscape planting to improve aesthetics and ecological values.



Pou Whenua at Wenderholm Regional Park



Forest gecko to be relocated to a predator controlled area



Ngā Pa o Te Hēmara Tauhia facing Pūhoi River



Forestry dominated landuse

ULDF Summary of Human and Natural History

2.1 NATURAL HISTORY

The Moir Hill Road ridge splits the Project into two catchments. North of Moir Hill Road the land drains toward the Mahurangi Catchment, and south of Moir Hill Road it drains toward the Pūhoi catchment. The Pūhoi catchment is within the Rodney Ecological District.

Geologically, this sector traverses hill country formed either of sandstone/siltstone (Pakiri Formation), alluvial valley floor material or more weathered material (Northland Allochthon).

The Pūhoi River tidal estuary connects the area to the coast and extends inland with many small wetlands.

Historically, the Pūhoi sector would naturally have comprised northern kauri-podocarp-broadleaf forest, dominated by tōtara forest, with areas of kauri on the ridges and tarairi on the lower slopes. However, the area has been extensively cleared, and is now occupied by scattered areas of pasture, pine plantation, fragments of kauri-podocarp-broadleaved forests and regenerating kānuka/mānuka forest and native broadleaved scrub.

2.2 HUMAN HISTORY

The Pūhoi area has a long and interesting history of Māori occupation that predates European settlement by many centuries. The designation traverses a region that is commonly referred to as Mahurangi, book-ended by the island pā Mahurangi in the south, and Waihē Awa (Mahurangi River) in the north. Māori kāinga (villages) at the mouth of Te Awa Pūhoi (Pūhoi River) took advantage of the coast's famous shark fisheries and the harvesting grounds of the nearby gulf islands while maintaining connections inland towards the Kaipara harbour via the river.

Tribal histories about Pūhoi portray a society dominated by the relationships between the families of Haumoewhārangi, of Ngāti Whātua and Makinui, of Te Kawerau, who both lived in the 1600s. Pūhoi Awa and its surroundings are particularly associated with many events of considerable importance in the traditions of Ngāti Manuhiri, the tribe formed by Manuhiri, a son of Maki and his senior wife Rotu. The designation takes in two pā near the junction of Te Awa Pūhoi and Ōkahu Creek estuary, one of which is named Te Pā o Te Hēmara Tauhia, after the rangatira (chief) Te Hēmara, a descendant of both Maki and Haumoewhārangi, who led the people in this area until his death in 1891.

Te Hemara and his kin were instrumental in helping to establish a Bohemian settlement in the 1860s beside Te Awa Pūhoi as part of New Zealand's 'Special Settlement Scheme'. The settler's early livelihood revolved around timber felling and subsequent pastoral farming. The community was dependent on shipping along the tidal river until the 1920s. Pūhoi is translated as 'slow moving', and the village itself has an unhurried character. There are several historic buildings, including a pub, church, library, school and a number of villas.

2.3 LAND USE

The land types in the Pūhoi sector include moderate hills and valleys (Pūhoi Valley), a small area of steep hill country dominated by pine plantations (to the north of this sector), and coast/mangrove forest mudflats. One of the distinguishing features of this sector is the proximity of the Project to the coastal marine environment, the related water-bodies and the saline and transitional ecology. The Ōkahu Inlet is bordered by two pā and settlement areas. The Pūhoi River winds through the sector and out through Wenderholm Regional Park, to the ocean. The Pūhoi sector hosts the Pūhoi rural-residential settlement. The Pūhoi village is located further upstream from the motorway. The other land uses in the Pūhoi sector include moderate hills and valleys which are farmed, forested or residentially occupied.

2.4 CIRCULATION

The existing state highway runs parallel to the east of the Designation and there are two patterns to the local road network in the area traversed by the Designation. In the south, circulation is dominated by the north-south spine along SH1 with local roads branching off SH1, typically following the north-west to south-east ridges. Local roads and tracks such as Pūhoi Road, Watson Road and Billing Road will be aligned with the motorway to maintain access for local residents and the public.

Te Araroa – New Zealand's long distance walking trail has both kayaking and walking areas through the Pūhoi sector; the kayaking route is a distinctive section of the national trail and travels Pūhoi River between Pūhoi village and Wenderholm Regional Park. It is heavily used and a well-loved recreational kayaking route. The walking section of the Te Araroa trail, climbs the hill north of Pūhoi and follows the unformed Cook Road along the ridge adjacent to, and west of the Designation.

The Pūhoi northbound off-ramp will provide the gateway into Pūhoi town; it will connect the motorway to Pūhoi Road and overlooks Pūhoi River. Pūhoi Road will run underneath Te Arawhiti ki Pūhoi and connect to SH1 to allow Pūhoi residents and visitor's access to travel north and south, or to enter back onto the motorway (Pūhoi southbound on-ramp) to travel back towards Auckland or exit the motorway if travelling from Auckland.

¹Clough, R., G. Farley, S. Phear and Z. Burnett. August 2013. Pūhoi to Warkworth Heritage Assessment Report