

Coastal hazards report FAQs

What is Council's role in managing coastal hazards?

Council manages the risks from coastal hazards and the effects of climate change for the benefit of the whole district. Our role is to safeguard community infrastructure, but we are also legally required to alert existing and future property owners to issues that may affect them, including by noting hazards on property LIMs ([Land Information Memoranda](#)).

Council made a commitment to our community to work on coastal and climate change challenges because they affect the services and lifestyle of our whole district and impose costs on all of us.

Why has Council commissioned this 'coastal hazard susceptibility and vulnerability assessment'?

We know our coast changes over time. We need to identify areas susceptible to current and future coastal erosion and inundation and understand how these will interact with other hazards in the coastal environment. This information is needed before possible options for managing or adapting to the changes can be considered.

What will the information in the report be used for?

This information will be used to:

- raise community awareness of the nature and extent of coastal erosion and flooding
- help the Council and community plan how to respond to these hazards, including what options are available to us and when to act or change tack
- inform management strategies for Council coastal infrastructure and property
- to provide base hazard data for future District Plan change processes
- provide information for property owners and potential buyers about coastal hazards that might affect their land in future, as required by law.

What community infrastructure and assets are vulnerable to sea level rise and coastal hazards?

Key council community assets like beach accessways, signage, seawalls, roads, pipes, parks, reserves, and playgrounds will potentially be affected.

Who did the assessment?

The assessment was done by Jacobs New Zealand Ltd, an international coastal engineering and environmental consultancy company. Their coastal science team specialises in coastal hazard assessments and has led similar projects in New Zealand and internationally. Their work has been independently and expertly peer reviewed by Beca and Greater Wellington Regional Council. The report methodology reflects both national and international best practice and meets central government requirements.

What scientific and technical data is the assessment based on?

Jacobs' assessment incorporates [Coastal hazards and climate change: Guidance for local government](#) issued by the Ministry for the Environment (2017). This outlines the approach local governments should use to assess and plan for coastal hazards in the future. This guidance recommends the use of sea level rise projections developed by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the assessment also accounts for additional local adjustments with vertical land movement on the Kapiti Coast. Jacobs' assessment uses data collected on the Kapiti Coast (e.g. aerial imagery, beach profiles, LiDAR) to understand changes that have happened on our coastline historically, and to inform

modelling the estimates the effect of relative sea level rise on our coast in the future for both inundation and erosion hazards.

What is 'relative' sea-level rise?

'Relative' sea-level rise accounts for the fact that while Kāpiti is facing rising seas, the district is also subsiding by a rate of 1 to 3 mm a year as the Pacific tectonic plate dips under the Australian plate.

What are the overall relative sea-level rise projections for Kāpiti?

- 30 years – 0.2 m to 0.4 m
- 50 years – 0.3 m to 0.7 m
- 100 years – 0.6 m to 1.65 m

What is the significance of the 30, 50 and 100-year timeframes used in the assessment?

- 30 years is how far we plan ahead when managing council assets
- 50 years is the expected lifetime of a building for consent applications, and
- 100 years is the minimum timeframe government requires us to consider in planning for climate change.

Why does the report look at such high scenarios as RCP8.5+

We need to consider the full range of possible scenarios to assess whether we are doing enough to invest wisely and adapt to climate change.

The Ministry for the Environment's 2017 climate change planning guidelines for councils tells us to consider the total range of international greenhouse gas concentration trajectories (called RCPs), from RCP2.6 to RCP8.5+. These describe different climate futures, all of which are considered possible depending on the volume of greenhouse gases emitted globally in the years to come.

The guidance says this upper scenario needs to be considered by decision-makers to 'stress test' greenfield development (new suburbs or towns) or major new or upgraded infrastructure projects because of their anticipated lifetimes.

How will the community be involved in coastal adaptation?

Council established the [Takutai Kāpiti](#) coastal adaptation project in 2019. The project set up an independent community-led [Coastal Advisory Panel](#) (CAP) led by former Prime Minister and Waikanae Beach resident Jim Bolger to be the voice of the community and iwi.

The Takutai Kāpiti Coastal Advisory Panel design and scope was co-designed by a working group of our iwi partners, ratepayer lobby groups Coastal Ratepayers United and North Ōtaki Beach Residents Group, Waikanae Estuary Care Group, and local and regional council staff.

Who is on the community panel and how were they selected?

As recommended by the working group, applicants for the Takutai Kapiti community coastal advisory panel went through an independent recruitment process with an external agency. The [panel](#) includes six community members. All live in the district and have a range of complementary skills and backgrounds including community engagement, climate and environmental science, governance, IT and business. Biographies of the panel members appointed so far have been published on the Council website. Further iwi representatives will be appointed in due course.

The panel members are paid in line with Council's usual fees for non-elected members. This is \$206 a meeting for members and \$575 for the chair. This fee covers meeting preparation and attendance.

What is the community panel's role?

The coastal advisory panel will look at the issues, work through options with community input, and present recommendations on coastal adaptation options to Council. The community will have multiple opportunities to engage with the CAP before they make their recommendations to Council.

What else is Council doing about climate change?

Council is responding to community concerns about climate change in a variety of other ways. In May 2019, we declared a climate emergency on the Kāpiti Coast then in August 2021 Council adopted a Climate Emergency Action Framework which sets out the overarching vision, objectives, and principles we follow when we make decisions about climate change. You can read more about the Council's response to climate change at www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/climate-change.

What are the implications for the Te Urihi project?

Jacobs's assessment shows the site chosen for Te Urihi is in a section of the coastline that has been growing (accreting) since 1948. Te Urihi's location next to Tikotu Stream means it may have higher exposure to flooding in large storms, but this is mitigated through the design of the floor level and access routes to the building. The building is being designed with to cater for the possibility it may need to be relocated in future. The nearby dunes also provide good protection from coastal erosion and inundation under the future scenarios considered. Read more about Te Urihi at [Building Te Urihi - Kāpiti Coast District Council \(kapiticoast.govt.nz\)](http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/building-te-urihi)

FAQs for property owners

How is this assessment different from those in 2008 and 2012?

Council has previously done scientific and technical work to assess the impacts of future coastal erosion and inundation hazards on our coastline. A review in 2014 found our approach was sound but questioned some of the technical aspects. Those have been fully addressed in the updated report. We've kept the community informed about the project, and obtained two independent expert peer reviews prior to releasing the report. We've been able to take our time to get it right and followed the *Coastal Hazards and Climate Change Guidance for Local Governments* issued by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) in 2017. Numerous coastal adaptation projects have occurred internationally and nationally in the past few years. We are drawing on these projects and following best practice to refine our approach for Kāpiti. This report also takes into account feedback from the Coastal Ratepayers United lobby group on the methodology used in the results report. The methodology report was released in June 2021.

What's the LIM note on my property report going to say?

All LIMs in the district already have information on coastal erosion hazards. It says:

"Coastal Erosion and Inundation Hazards

Information on coastal erosion and inundation hazards on the Kapiti Coast is available on our website <https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/our-district/our-environment/coastal-adaptation/>

The Council has commissioned a coastal hazard report titled "Kāpiti Coast Coastal Hazard Susceptibility and Vulnerability Assessment" from consultancy firm Jacobs. Volume 1: The Methodology report, developed to provide technical information on the methods of how the areas susceptible to present and future coastal hazards are being calculated, is now

available. LIM information will be updated with Volume 2: The results report, once it becomes available.”

Why is this information on my LIM?

Council is legally required to note information about hazards affecting a property on its LIM. All LIMs in the district already contain links to information on coastal erosion, earthquakes, tsunamis, and flooding. We are updating the coastal erosion link with the Jacobs assessment as this is the most up-to-date and comprehensive technical information available.

Why put coastal hazards information on my LIM when I live a long way from the shoreline?

Like earthquakes, tsunamis and flood hazards, coastal hazards have the potential to impact the whole district. We all bear the cost of protecting against, remediating, mitigating, or adapting to coastal erosion and inundation. These hazards also potentially affect the wider community by restricting the use of and access to and from the coast and other parts of the district, making them a district-wide concern.

Will having the assessment noted on my property file affect Council decisions on building consents and resource consents?

When considering an application for a building consent, the Building Act requires Council to consider all information that is relevant to the property and proposed building work. This will include assessing if a natural hazard is considered to exist on the land, in particular where the proposed building work is going to take place.

When considering an application for a resource consent the RMA requires the Council to have regard to anything that is relevant to the property in question, including any increase in risk from any natural hazard. Information with legal weight must be given effect to, while other information will also be considered depending on the nature of the application in relation to the nature of the hazard that has been identified. Any application for a resource consent will need to contain information about the hazard and whether the proposal will increase the risk of the hazard and how any effects can be mitigated.

Will having this information on my LIM affect my property value or insurance?

All LIMs in the district already contain information on coastal erosion hazards. You will need to seek advice on property values or insurance from a property valuer or your insurance company. We know the insurance sector around the world is taking a close interest in the impact of climate change on coastal property. The Insurance Council of New Zealand has produced a paper outlining its position on climate change. [Read it here](#) on [the Takutai Kāpiti website](#).

How will having this information on my LIM affect my council rates?

All LIMs in the district already contain information on coastal erosion hazards. An explanation of how Council rates are calculated is on our website [\[here\]](#). It says:

“Where a property’s revaluation increase is larger than the average increase, the property will have a slightly higher rates increase than average. A property that has a revaluation increase lower than average will have a slightly lower rates increase than the average.”

What are our property rights with the buildings and land already in potentially affected zones?

Under the RMA Section 10(1), certain existing uses in relation to land are protected and may therefore be used in a manner that contravenes a rule in a proposed district plan. This is subject to the conditions specified in Section 10 of the RMA.

What if I'm near the coast but not on it, but directly connected to the sea through an accessway for example?

Flooding in coastal storm events is more likely to occur in areas which are close to the coastline and have a direct connection to the sea, such as at river mouths. However, areas that are disconnected from the sea could still be vulnerable to flooding in coastal storm events when combined with high river flow, intense rainfall, or high groundwater.

I don't live near the shoreline – what do I need to know?

We all pay for protecting, mitigating, remediating, or adapting to coastal erosion hazards through our rates so coastal communities need a common understanding and a cohesive response.

The whole district will be affected one way or another. Rising sea levels will have increasing implications for 'everyday life' for all of us. Sea level rise may affect road access to properties or townships, the ability of our utilities to function, access to coastal recreation reserves, and the potential loss of sacred sites or coastal habitats. There may also be other natural hazards that should be taken into consideration, such as stormwater, river flooding and/or elevated groundwater levels that may become more prevalent as sea levels rise. So as part of developing a long-term adaptive strategy we will need to consider the wider implications and a 'whole of community' response.

Even if your property is not likely to be directly impacted by coastal erosion or flooding, we want your input in developing a community approach to adapting to climate change in our district.

What are the implications for district planning?

The report does not create new 'hazard lines' in any regulatory sense – it's simply information. But we may use the Jacob's report as supporting evidence for future plan changes. One imminent example is the upcoming intensification plan change which will generally enable greater density in residential zones across our district, except in locations where greater density might create more problems than it solves.

Will services be removed from coastal properties? If so, when?

We're a long way from even considering these kinds of options. We still need to receive the report, then get the community panel to do its work, and for Council to consider and make decisions on any recommendations the panel might make.

Is council considering managed retreat?

Council has no policy on managed retreat. A range of different options will be explored by the Takutai Kāpiti community Coastal Advisory Panel. The wider community will be updated throughout and given opportunity to feed into the process.