

# Environment Court releases interim decision on Long Bay

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A plan to develop one of the country's most advanced environmentally friendly subdivisions has taken an important step forward.

The release this week of an interim Environment Court decision on the Long Bay Structure Plan will allow North Shore City and property developer Landco to go to the next stage in the development of a 360 hectare subdivision at Long Bay.

The council says its proposal for the development provides advanced measures to protect important environmental and landscape features such as streams; the protection of coastal and park edges; the concentration of development in around a new village centre; high priority on environmental management such as water retention tanks; and specialised stormwater management including permeable hard surfaces.

The Environment Court noted that the decision found the benefits of the Council's plan outweighed those of the competing Landco plan "by a substantial margin". The decision says it mostly achieves the purpose of the Resource Management Act and that plan change 6 should be based on this plan rather than Landco's proposed plan.

The Court released the decision this week after last year hearing evidence from 70 witnesses, and it anticipates that a final version of the land use strategy for the structure plan will be finalised by the end of March 2009.

North Shore City Council's city environment group manager Trevor Mackie stresses that the decision is interim only. He says the court has provided definite guidance for the development of policy and rules for the subdivision and

management of land uses, and the parties now have something positive to work with.

"We now need to discuss and work through the findings and judgements by the end of November with any outstanding issues referred back to the court."

"It is not a huge win or loss for either party, but the structure has been accepted by the court as the basis for proceeding. It includes for example additional houses along the southern and northern part of the structure plan area and the enhancement of a heritage zone."

Mr Mackie says the council's original application provided 1,800 to 2,000 sections, with the developer planning for 3,000 to 3,200, and the court's decision will come somewhere around the middle of those two figures.

Mayor Andrew Williams says it's a good result that the council's proactive approach on sustainability and natural value has been recognised by the court.

"The outstanding landscape and features of this area need to be looked after. It puts this development at the forefront for New Zealand subdivisional development with its proposals for the handling of stormwater, special areas of environmental interest, and riparian planting and protection," he says.

"The councils' structure plan is a better fit for the area's historic heritage. The plan is also more supportive of the subdivision and development of the coastal environment and margin of Vaughan's stream. It also provides better for the scale of development near the outstanding natural landscape of Hauraki Gulf," he says.

Key points in the court's interim decision are:

- Inclusion of a Heritage Protection Area covering the Awaruku Headland as generally defined in the Council's plan
- Retention of intensive residential development and a village centre south of the Vaughans Stream (north of Long Bay College)
- Inclusion of more intensive suburban development on the Awaruku Slopes north of Awaruku Stream
- Reassessment of the access into the structure plan area from Beach Road
- Inclusion of some suburban residential development on the north-eastern portion of Vaughans Slopes, north of the Vaughans Stream
- Inclusion of buffer areas along the Regional Park boundary north of Vaughans Stream, to protect views inland from the park, Grannies Bay and Pohutukawa Bay
- Support for the Glenvar Road extension into the structure plan area
- Inclusion of suburban zoning to the south of Glenvar Road extension and retention of the Council (large lot) zoning to the north of the road
- Inclusion of the stormwater provisions proposed by North Shore City
- Retention of the categories and mapping of North Shore City's landscape protection areas.