

5.17 MARTHA MINERAL ZONE

5.17.1 BACKGROUND

Martha Mine has been operating as an open pit gold and silver mine in Waihi since 1988. From its commissioning to the end of 1994, it has produced approximately 500,000 ounces of gold. It directly provides employment for approximately 150 people (including earthmoving contractor), its wages bill in 1994 amounted to \$6 million and payment for goods and services amounted to \$35 million.

The mine operates subject to the terms and conditions of Mining Licence 32 2388, issued under the Mining Act 1971 and various water rights granted under the Water and Soil Conservation Act 1967. The mining licence was granted in 1987.

The licence covers an area of approximately 400 hectares, comprising two main elements, an open pit and the processing and waste disposal area, linked by conveyor. The open pit is situated generally within the urban confines of Waihi township.

It is appropriate that the District Plan recognises and provides for the Martha mining project as currently consented to. Therefore the District Plan contains a zone, the Martha Mineral Zone, the boundary of which equates to the boundary of the existing mining licence. Within this zone open pit mining and ancillary activities, are Permitted Activities, subject to meeting set performance standards. These performance standards are identical to the conditions set out in the current mining licence.

The project consented to under the mining licence has a defined open pit, the perimeter of this having been set in 1987, based on the then proven extent of the mineral resource.

The licence, and the licence area, reflects the project as defined in 1987, based on the then known ore reserves. Since then, mining activities have improved confidence in the extension of ore zones beneath the open pit. If these resources are utilised, the life of the project will be significantly extended to the social and economic benefit of the district's residents.

Should any proposal to extend the present mine involve activities beyond the present zone boundaries, a change to the District Plan will be required (open cast mining is a prohibited activity in the urban and rural residential zones adjoining the Martha Mineral Zone).

Council will consider any application for such a Plan Change in terms of the requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991.

Although Council is generally aware of the nature, scale and location of any possible extension to the mine, it is not feasible to confirm whether or not any or all of the performance standards applying to the present operation are appropriate to effectively avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects on the environment of the activities proposed to be undertaken. Additional and/or revised performance standards may be required.

(Refer also to Section 8.3 - EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY).

5.17.2 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Minerals are included in the definition of natural and physical resources under the Resource Management Act 1991. The purpose of the Act is to promote the sustainable management of these resources. The Act recognises the non-renewable nature of minerals and therefore excludes minerals from the definition of sustainable management. However, the Act also requires that the mining of mineral resources be undertaken in a way which ensures the sustainability of other natural and physical resources (ie land, water, air, soil, energy, plants, animals and structures).

Three key issues are relevant to the Martha mineral resource:

1. The need to recognise in the Plan the existing mining project and to provide for it by way of a special zone.
2. The need to provide a mechanism in the Plan to consider any proposal to extend the mine beyond the present zone boundary.
3. The need to ensure that mining and associated activities are carried out in a way which enables the people of the District to provide for their economic, social and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while ensuring the tests of sustainability set out in S5 (2) (a)-(c) of the Act are met.

5.17.3 ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The anticipated environmental results for the Martha Mineral Zone are:

1. To provide for the social and economic well being of the residents of Waihi and the wider District as a consequence of the utilisation of the Martha mineral resource in a manner that promotes the sustainable management of resources.
2. To ensure that the rehabilitation of the area once mining is completed is such that the long term uses of the area within this zone provide an appropriate and sustainable environment for Waihi and environs.
3. To ensure the residential amenities and the natural environment are afforded appropriate protection.

5.17.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Objective 1

To recognise and provide for the existing licensed Martha mining project.

Policies:

Objective 1 will be achieved by the implementation of the following policies:

1. Delineating in the District Plan a zone to accommodate the mining project established by way of Mining Licence 32 2388.
2. Within this zone allowing mining, processing and ancillary activities as permitted activities in accordance with the provisions of Mining Licence 32 2388.
3. Requiring that all permitted activities be subject to performance standards, as set out in the licence conditions and specified in this Plan.

Objective 2

To recognise the value of the mineral resource and provide for its utilisation in a sustainable manner.

Policy:

Objective 2 will be achieved by the implementation of the following policy:

1. Providing for the social, economic and cultural well being of the people of the District and for their health and safety.

Objective 3

To ensure that the amenity values of Waihi and the wider community are protected.

Policy:

Objective 3 will be achieved by the implementation of the following policy:

1. To require that activities comply with performance standards.

Reasons for all Objectives and Policies

The Martha Mine is an economically and environmentally significant development in the District. It is subject to a Mining Licence issued under the former Mining Act 1971. Given these circumstances, specific recognition of and provision for the activity is necessary in the Plan. The special purpose zone for the Martha Mine is also included in recognition of the value of the Martha mineral resource and decisions already made to develop that resource.

Note: Only those Mining Licence conditions which are resource management matters within Council's responsibility under the RMA are deemed to be performance standards for the purpose of this zone.

5.17.5 METHODS TO IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

1. Zone the existing licence area as Martha Mineral Zone, with mining and ancillary activities being afforded Permitted Activity status.
2. Incorporate the existing conditions of the mining licence as Performance Standards in the Martha Mineral Zone.
3. Considering any proposal for an extension to the Martha Mine by the mechanism of zone extension by plan change.

5.17.6 ACTIVITIES

5.17.6.1 Permitted Activities

Any activity conducted in terms of Mining Licence 32 2388.

5.17.6.2 Controlled Activities

There are no controlled activities.

5.17.6.3 Discretionary Activities

The following are discretionary activities:

1. Any activity provided for in Mining Licence 32 2388 that does not comply with the performance of a condition of Mining Licence 32 2388.

5.17.7 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The performance standards for activities carried out in the Martha Mineral Zone are the conditions applying to Mining Licence 32 2388. These standards are set out in Appendix 1 (Performance Standards - Martha Mineral Zone) to the District Plan (separate volume). Copies are available at the Hauraki District Council offices, Paeroa. All permitted activities in the zone shall meet these performance standards.