

# 1.0 PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 MAP OF HAURAKI DISTRICT



## 1.2 ABOUT THE HAURAKI DISTRICT

### 1.2.1 LOCATION

The Hauraki District lies at the base of the Coromandel peninsula, bordered on the east by the Pacific Ocean, on the west by the Firth of Thames and Hauraki Gulf. The district covers an area of 1,144 square kilometres and incorporates the townships of Waihi, Paeroa, Ngatea and surrounding rural communities. There are also a number of smaller settlements located throughout the District – Kaihere, Karangahake, Kerepehi, Mackaytown, Patetonga, Turua, Waikino, Waitakaruru and Whiritoa. South east of Auckland, the District borders the Western Bay of Plenty, Matamata-Piako, Waikato and Thames-Coromandel Districts with the Firth of Thames in the north and the Pacific coastline to the east.

The Hauraki District benefits from its central location, and enjoys a ‘clean-green’ environment with a wide range of outdoor activities, impressive scenery, arts, crafts, wineries, history and heritage, and outstanding sports facilities all located in the Hauraki District. The primary activity is dairy farming and tourism is also a major activity with a number of well known tourist facilities such as the Lemon and Paeroa Bottle, Karangahake Walkway, Ngatea Water Gardens, and the Waihi Gold Mine amongst numerous others.

### 1.2.2 HISTORY

The Hauraki District and surrounding region show evidence of human settlement dating back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The area has a rich heritage of culturally significant sites, including food gathering areas, pa, walkways, canoe landing and sacred places.

The Hauraki District is rich in resources from both the sea and land. The historical abundance of seafood is evident in the coastal areas of the Hauraki Gulf on the northern district boundary, and Whiritoa on the eastern boundary. The coastal foreshores and their environs reveal many details of early Maori settlement with shell midden, terraces pits, pa sites and urupa.

The land was well known for the cultivation of flax and kumara, as well as the abundance of fowl and other wild animals, berries and ferns (rongoa) from forested inland areas.

The tangata whenua that are still here today are Ngati Hako, Ngati Paoa, Ngati Tamatera, Ngati Tara Tokanui Koi, Ngati Whanaunga and Ngati Maru.

The arrival of Europeans led to changes in the landscape character of the district. As well as land clearing and drainage to allow livestock farming in the areas surrounding Paeroa and Ngatea, gold-mining in and around Waihi contributed to the physical change.

Originally a thriving river port, Paeroa was first laid out in the 1870’s. Between 1902 and 1917 5.3 hectares of flat and swampy land was set aside for public recreation, an area now known as the Paeroa Domain. The Paeroa Bowling Club

constructed a pavilion there in 1903, with the Paeroa Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club following suit with their own pavilion being built in 1904.

Waihi was the centre for gold mining in the district, becoming established during the boom years of the 1870's – 1880's. A Recreation Ground, originally named the Parehuia Domain, comprising 4.9 hectares was established during the early 1900's. Bowlers first used the reserve in 1905, and Croquet followed in 1911.

When the then Lands Department planned the Hauraki Plains District, there was no provision made for the township of Ngatea. The first school was established in Ngatea in 1912. By 1930, some 17,400 hectares of Crown Land had been opened up for farming. Ngatea was established to service the growing farming population; however, early inhabitants of the town were at a disadvantage recreationally as no land had been set aside for recreation. In 1946, two hectares of land was made available for use as a football ground. In 1952 an additional 7 hectares was purchased. The area was known as the Ngatea Domain.

### 1.2.3 ENVIRONMENT

Hauraki District is bordered in the west by the firth of Thames, part of the Hauraki Gulf. This area is characterised by estuarine margins with vast intertidal areas providing important habitat for a variety of flora and fauna.

As well as the Piako and Waihou River mouths, smaller rivers and streams deposit sediments out into the firth, resulting in a shallow seabed with constantly changing sandbars, extensive mudflats and fringing mangrove swamps.

Behind this lies the Hauraki Plains, extensively drained by a system of rivers, streams and man-made canals into land suitable for farming and agriculture. The Kōpuatai Peat Dome, the largest naturally occurring peat bog in the Southern hemisphere, stretches from Ngatea in the west to Patetonga in the east.

In pre-European times, vegetation on the plains comprised vast stands of Kahikatea (*Podocarpus dacryoides*), Cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*) and harakeke or flax (*Phormium tenax*). Because of the range of habitats in the District, native forests vary widely with environmental conditions and the variety of landforms found in the District.

Land drainage and clearance has left little evidence of the original flora, with only pocket remnants remaining. Some of these are contained within reserve areas, e.g. Speedy's Reserve. The District has coastal and freshwater wetlands, and away from the edge of the rivers there are scattered stands of kahikatea dominated swamp forest.

In the east of the district, the coastal community of Whiritoa is characterised by a steep sandy beach located between two coastal headlands. The beach is subject to erosion. In 1993, in a partnership between the community, Hauraki District Council and Environment Waikato saw the establishment of New Zealand's first dune care group, Whiritoa Beachcare, to protect and enhance the beach environment.

The Waitawheta and Ohinemuri Rivers have their headwaters in the west and east of the Waihi Basin, respectively. The Waitawheta meets the Ohinemuri in the Karangahake Gorge, and then flows through Paeroa before meeting the Waihou. These rivers have long been used as waterways, sources of food and water, as well as places of settlement.

### 1.3 DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF A RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Hauraki District Council manages a large area of public land that includes approximately 310 hectares of reserves. Council is involved in managing reserves because of community desire for areas for sports, passive recreation and scenic purposes. The retention and management of reserves provides significantly towards the vibrancy of the community, recreational pursuits, economic strength and enjoyment and protection of the environment for both current and future generations. Historically, local authorities have been charged with this task as they are better suited to respond to local needs.

The Reserves Act 1977 requires the development of Reserve Management Plans and a formal planning process for the management of public reserves in New Zealand. The management plan shall:

*“provide for and ensure the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection, and preservation, as the case may require, and, to the extent that the administering body’s resources permit, the development, as appropriate, of the reserve for the purposes for which it is classified, and shall incorporate and ensure compliance with the principles set out...” S41 (3)*

The aim of the Reserves Act is to ensure that reserves are well planned for, and take into account the needs of the public. This management plan outlines the intention for the management, use, development, operation and maintenance of Council-managed reserves, and guides decision-making about each reserve.

A management plan provides the community with certainty about the function and management of each reserve. It also makes the day-to-day management of reserves more streamlined, because public notification or ministerial consent is not then required for routine matters.

This plan establishes clearly defined objectives that are compatible with the Act’s requirements, community interests, and the character and qualities of each reserve.

Importantly, although not bound by the Reserves Act, Council has included all reserves it manages into this Reserve Management Plan, so they can be managed consistently. Not all of Council’s reserve land is administered under the authority of the Reserves Act 1977. The Hauraki District Council has acquired other reserve land through purchase, or gifting for example Gilmour Reserve in Waihi. In addition, reserve management plans are not required for local purpose reserves. For the purposes of this Plan however, all reserves are given consistent planning treatment.

To maintain relevance to changing circumstances and increased knowledge reserve management plans are required to be reviewed regularly.

Values which Council wishes to develop, maintain, protect or preserve for its reserves are:

- amenity
- cultural and heritage
- ecological
- recreation
- community
- landscape

## **1.4 PLANNING FRAMEWORK AND COUNCIL'S ROLES**

Several planning elements have influenced the development of the District Reserve Management Plan. Some guidance is provided at national level, such as by legislation and central government policy; some at a regional level and Hauraki District Council has also developed key guiding policy and planning documents. Many of these were developed through public consultation processes prior to the Local Government Act 2002, and have provided direction and information in drafting this District Reserve Management Plan.

### **1.4.1 COMMUNITY OUTCOMES**

During 2005, the Hauraki District community worked together to identify what the future of Hauraki should look like, and developed some commonly-agreed local needs and priorities. These Community Outcomes have, and will continue to underpin the work that Council and other agencies in the community undertake.

### **1.4.2 HAURAKI COMMUNITY PLAN (LTCCP)**

The Hauraki Community Plan (also called the Long Term Council Community Plan) is a Council document which sets out the proposed short, medium and long term priorities for the Council across all of its activities. It is now the Council's key planning document. It links all of Council's other plans, provides a tool for lining up Council's activities with the Community Outcomes identified, and is a formal way for advising the community of Council's intentions over the subsequent 10 years. It includes Council's high-level goals for reserves.

### **1.4.3 HAURAKI DISTRICT PLAN AND WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN**

The Resource Management Act 1991 provides a tool for managing the use and development of our natural resources. The Regional Plan (Environment Waikato) and Hauraki's District Plan contain objectives, policies and rules covering the control of environmental effects as a result of use and development of resources. The Hauraki District Plan sets objectives, policies and rules to provide for the use of the District's natural and physical resources in a sustainable way, as required

by the Resource Management Act, 1991. Council's first District Plan was adopted in September 1997. Council is currently reviewing this plan and aims to adopt a Proposed District Plan in 2007. It will then go through public notification, consultation and Hearings. The new Operative District Plan may therefore not exist before 2008/2009.

#### **1.4.4 HAURAKI/THAMES-COROMANDEL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN**

The Hauraki District Council and Thames-Coromandel District Council have worked together to develop a Hauraki-Thames Coromandel Physical Activity Strategy and Community Facilities Plan in order to increase the nation's general wellbeing via physical activity levels. This document is part of a nationwide initiative by Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) and the New Zealand Recreation Association, to improve planning frameworks and the level of collaboration across physical activity promoters and providers.

#### **1.4.5 KARANGAHAKE GORGE STRATEGY**

The Karangahake Gorge and associated reserve lands are recognised by the Hauraki District Council as being areas of great natural beauty with high cultural heritage, landscape and amenity values. At present the majority of the area is administered by the Department of Conservation with the Hauraki District Council administering one small but important reserve within the Gorge which provides facilities for visitors and access into the Department of Conservation estate.

The current rapid growth in visitor numbers is expected to continue and as the facilities come under increasing pressure, and the Hauraki District Council will, over the next few years, have to address issues relating to access, parking and toilet facilities and also be involved with community initiatives for the development of heritage and recreation facilities. A strategy is being developed to provide a direction and positive way forward for the Gorge area in relation to developing the area as a "Definitive New Zealand Visitor Destination".

#### **1.4.6 WAIKATO REGIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT STRATEGY (2006)**

The aim of the Strategy is to increase physical activity and sport uptake in the Waikato Region, for health and enjoyment benefits. It is a key document for the ongoing development of sport, recreation and daily life physical activity in the region.

The key outcomes of "Inclusive physical activity opportunities are available to the whole community", "Effective delivery of sport", and "Activity-friendly environments for active outdoor recreation" are relevant to the District Reserve Management Plan as Councils are often the largest local provider of public recreational facilities which include reserves.

#### **1.4.7 PARKS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

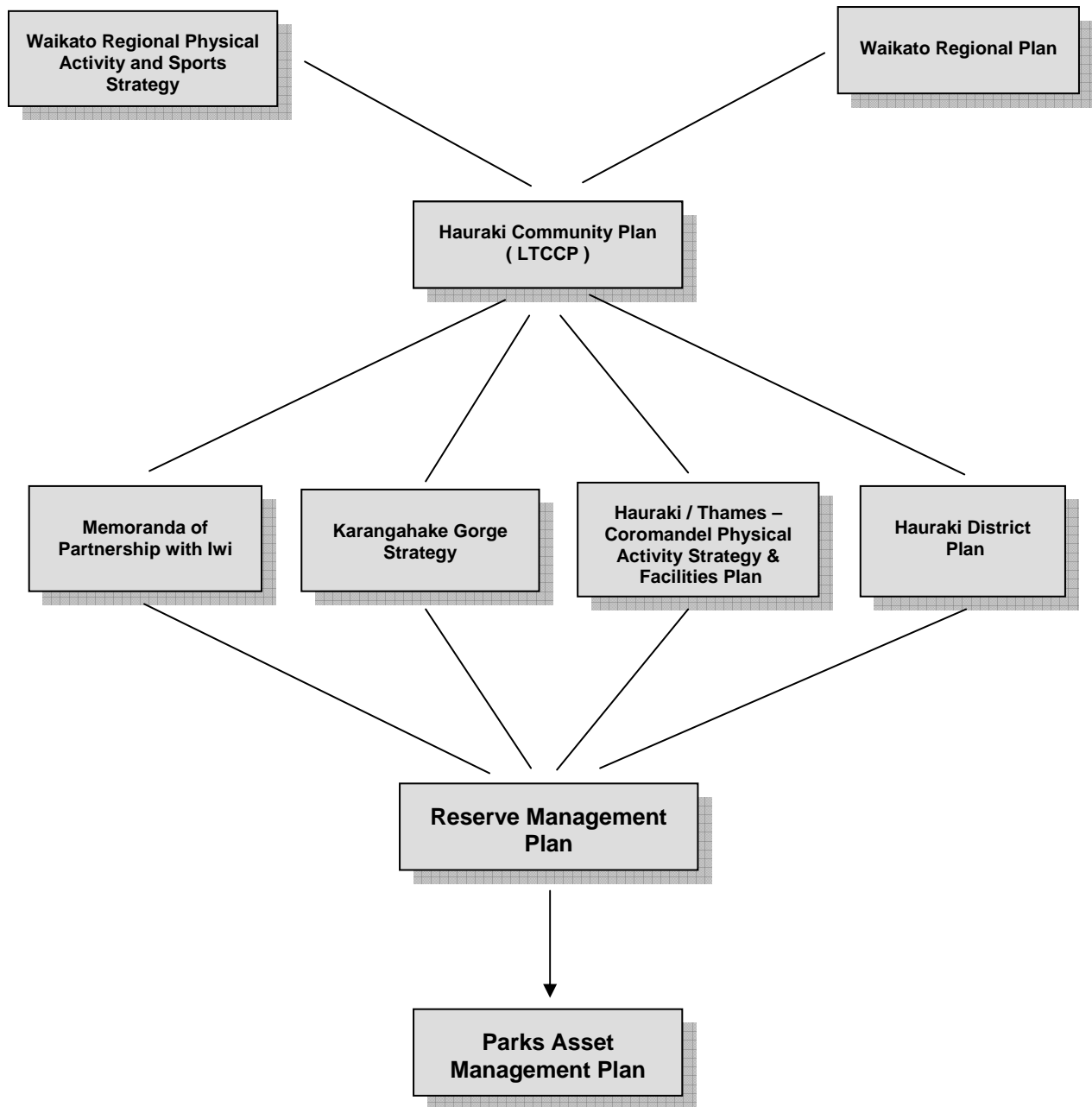
Council has developed and is continually developing Asset Management Plans for Parks and Reserves. The plan details systems in place for managing, monitoring and reporting on the performance of assets over a 10 year period.

#### **1.4.8 LIAISON WITH IWI**

The Local Government Act places additional responsibilities on Council to consult with Maori and to involve Maori in decision-making, especially in Local Government. The development of a District Reserve Management Plan is acknowledged to be of interest to Hauraki Iwi, and Council will work with Iwi through individual Memorandum of Partnerships to develop appropriate means of consultation for this project.

## Influences on the Hauraki District Reserve Management Plan

# COMMUNITY OUTCOMES



### 1.4.9 ROLES FOR COUNCIL IN PROVIDING PARKS AND RESERVES

Council can contribute to Community Outcomes through the provision of parks and reserves in a variety of ways:

Community Outcome;

- Vibrant and sustainable businesses and business economies in our District – Council is a Partner and Implementer
- Integrated provision of quality health and social services throughout our District – Council is Implementer
- Cultural values of the Tangata Whenua throughout the District are respected and supported through further development of consultation, participation and partnerships – Council is Implementer
- Management of our natural and physical environment in a sustainable manner – council is Partner, Leader, and Implementer
- We encourage increased opportunities to participate in recreational, sporting and cultural activities – Council is Implementer

## 1.5 ADMINISTRATION

### 1.5.1 DECISION-MAKING

Decision-making under the Reserves Act 1977 is complex, and divided between Council and the Department of Conservation. Any decision to be made will first require determining which body has the relevant authority.

Many of the reserves Council administers under the Reserves Act are ‘vested’ in Council. Vesting authorises the Council as the administering body to “hold and administer the land and expend money thereon for the particular purpose for which the reserve is classified” in trust. It applies to Recreation and Local Purpose Reserves only. Land held in fee simple as reserve is also treated as ‘vested’. Reserves which are held by Council under an appointment to control and manage remain vested in the Crown for the purposes of the Act, with the Minister of Conservation retaining decision-making powers.

As the administering body for reserves held under the Reserves Act 1977 the Council has unique and independent powers as well as general administration powers. Some of these are subject to the consent of the Minister of Conservation, who also has powers to make other decisions affecting the administration and management of reserves.

Decisions made by Council must be within the powers conferred by the Act. In practise, for some decisions, the Act overrides other legislation. For example, “full Council” as the administering body only can make resolutions about:

- declarations of reserves
- exchange of land
- classification

- revocation or change of purpose
- approval of Management Plans

Some of the powers conferred on the Minister of Conservation have also been delegated to Council, for example granting rights of way under Section 16 (1). Under this authority, “full Council” must make the decisions and not delegate them to a committee.

Some delegations from the Crown are conditional on there being an approved Reserve Management Plan. The intention is to streamline decision-making, and recognises that there will be many activities compatible with the purpose of the reserve which has already been addressed in the Management Plan.

Council as the administering body may delegate decisions about the following to a committee or sub-committee:

- appointing honorary rangers
- initiating public consultation
- preparation, review, and notification of Management Plans
- leases, licenses, and concessions for short term use of reserves
- easements

Decisions to be made by Council officially as the administering body cannot be delegated to staff.

Those pieces of land owned by Council and not classified as reserve are not subject to the constraints of the Reserves Act for decision-making.

Some reserves have their own committees which have usually derived from the former Domain Boards. These reserve committees provide a community forum for the needs of users to be conveyed to Council. Their key delegations are:

- maintenance and operation of the reserve
- letting of facilities
- setting of hireage fees

In practise, for the majority of cases, initial contact from the public about reserves will be to a staff member. Staff are responsible for reserve maintenance and implementing the Management Plan.

The Minister of Conservation has delegated all of his powers under the Reserves Act to officers of the Department of Conservation. Council refers decisions to be made by the Minister under the Act to the Waikato Conservancy.

Public consultation is required:

- when a Management Plan is being prepared
- if, once a Management Plan has been adopted, there was a proposal to do something not contemplated in the Management Plan.

### 1.5.2 RECORDING INFORMATION

Council keeps records of the portfolio of reserves it manages so that it can properly exercise its functions and duties as an administering body. This includes information on the status of each piece of land, lease details, classification etc. Records are updated when the status of a reserve changes.

Council would also add to the historic backgrounds of each reserve excerpts from past events both Maori and New Zealand era or communities to provide interesting and informative reading for Hauraki residents where authentic information was contributed from the community.

Council will acquire from the Land and Information Office the historical ownership details of any reserve whenever the need arises for that information. This information will be recorded within Section 5: Reserve Information, in order to provide information that may assist the public in understanding the origins of the reserves.

### 1.5.3 APPLICATION OF REVENUE

Under the Reserves Act, Council has the ability to charge for admission, leases, licenses and concessions, and use of facilities on reserves. All revenue from reserves held under the Reserves Act must be applied for the purposes of the Act – such as developing, managing and maintaining those reserves.

During 2006-08 Council will be reviewing its policy on Development and Financial Contributions to ensure inter-generational equity issues are addressed and that subdividers contribute towards costs of the demand /expansion effects on the existing capital assets. This review is detailed in Volume Two of the 2006 Hauraki Community Plan.

### 1.5.4 COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

It is important to acknowledge that many individuals and groups in the community, as users of reserves, are interested in being involved in reserve development and maintenance. They have already made important contributions in terms of knowledge, experience and time. By involving stakeholders from the development stage, huge community ownership can be built which often results in the provision of services and facilities on a volunteer basis.

## 1.6 PROCESS TO DEVELOP THE PLAN

The Reserves Act requires a standard process for the development of a Reserve Management Plan. The 2006 District Reserve Management Plan has been prepared having considered:

- the history and development of reserves so far
- current and anticipated future trends in use

- the value of sport and recreation in the development of the District and its people
- relevant laws
- Council's long-term visions and 2006 -16 community outcomes
- Long-term direction for reserves in the District overall
- The 2002 Draft District Reserve Management Plan and submissions received on it

In preparing a Reserve Management Plan Council must first give notice of its intention to prepare a Plan calling for comments. This was done in 2002. Council then prepared a Draft and advertised that for submissions.

Consultation was also undertaken with iwi representatives, and draft documents were posted to a comprehensive database of key stakeholders during the formal phase of consultation.

A total of 42 submissions were received. These were processed, however due to the introduction of the Local Government Act in December 2002 the Plan was put on hold so that staff could concentrate on meeting those new statutory requirements. All of the submissions received in 2002 have now been included.

Recently the 2002 Plan has been updated having regard to more recent planning activity such as the Hauraki/Thames-Coromandel Physical Activity Strategy and Facilities Plan and the development of community outcomes for the District.

All reserves which Council administers must be classified before Council advertises for submissions.

Council is now calling for final comments or objections on the 2006 District Reserve Management Plan. Once submissions close, public hearings will be held following which Council will finalise the Plan and approve those parts for which it has delegated authority.

Council can approve the parts of this Management Plan which relate to recreation reserves for which it is the administering body, local purpose reserves, and any reserves on Council-owned land. All other mandatory parts of the Management Plan must be submitted to the Minister of Conservation (delegated to the Department of Conservation) for approval.

Once a Reserve Management Plan is adopted, Council is required to comply with it, and can exercise statutory powers that are expressed as being tied to the management plan. For example, Council may lease out a reserve without the consent of the Minister of Conservation, as long as the lease is consistent with, and allowed by the Management Plan.

## 1.7 HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

### Part 1

Explains what the District Reserve Management Plan is all about, how it fits together with the other activities of Council, outlines the process used to put the Plan together, and maps the reserves in the District.

### Part 2

Outlines all of the planning issues considered in the development of the Plan.

### Part 3

Sets out an overall long-term strategy for reserves in the District, describes the different types of reserve, notes the principles underpinning the Reserves Act 1977 and outlines Council's goals for each type of reserve.

### Part 4

Contains general policies for all reserves in the District.

### Part 5

Lists each reserve with a description, objectives and development plans.

### Part 6

Provides supplementary information by way of appendices.

### Part 7

Provides a list of all the reference material used to develop the Plan.

## 1.8 PLAN MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW

Section 41(4) of the Reserves Act provides that Council must keep its management plan under continuous review, so that the Plan is adapted to changing circumstances or in accordance with increased knowledge.

This Management Plan may be subject to minor alterations from time to time and will accordingly be updated. Should a major change in policy be proposed then a review of the management plan would take place. Any such change should be notified to give the public the opportunity to make submissions to Council.

The District Reserves Management Plan will be reviewed every five years to ensure details about the reserve and reserve users is kept current.