



# PIRONGIA TOWN CONCEPT PLAN

*Draft Analysis*

October 2009

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*Prepared by Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd  
for Waipa District Council*

## Pirongia: PART 1 ANALYSIS

This analysis report summarises the findings of fieldwork carried out in January 2009 and outcomes of meetings with the community. Streets were driven and walked, photographs taken, and notes made on base maps reflecting observations and discussions during this exercise.

The following diagrams and comments reflect the community and consultant team's views of the important elements and issues for Pirongia. These are supplemented by future character statements and strategies developed from the outcomes of the community workshop held in May and June 2009.

The staged analysis (including community feedback) that has formed the foundation for the design stages of the Pirongia Town Concept Plan has included:

- Step 1, identification of the urban framework (land uses including character areas and activity nodes, vehicle and pedestrian networks, public open space, building (built form) scale, and significant opportunity sites).
- Step 2, consideration of the appropriate building (built form) character in Pirongia.

This report documents:

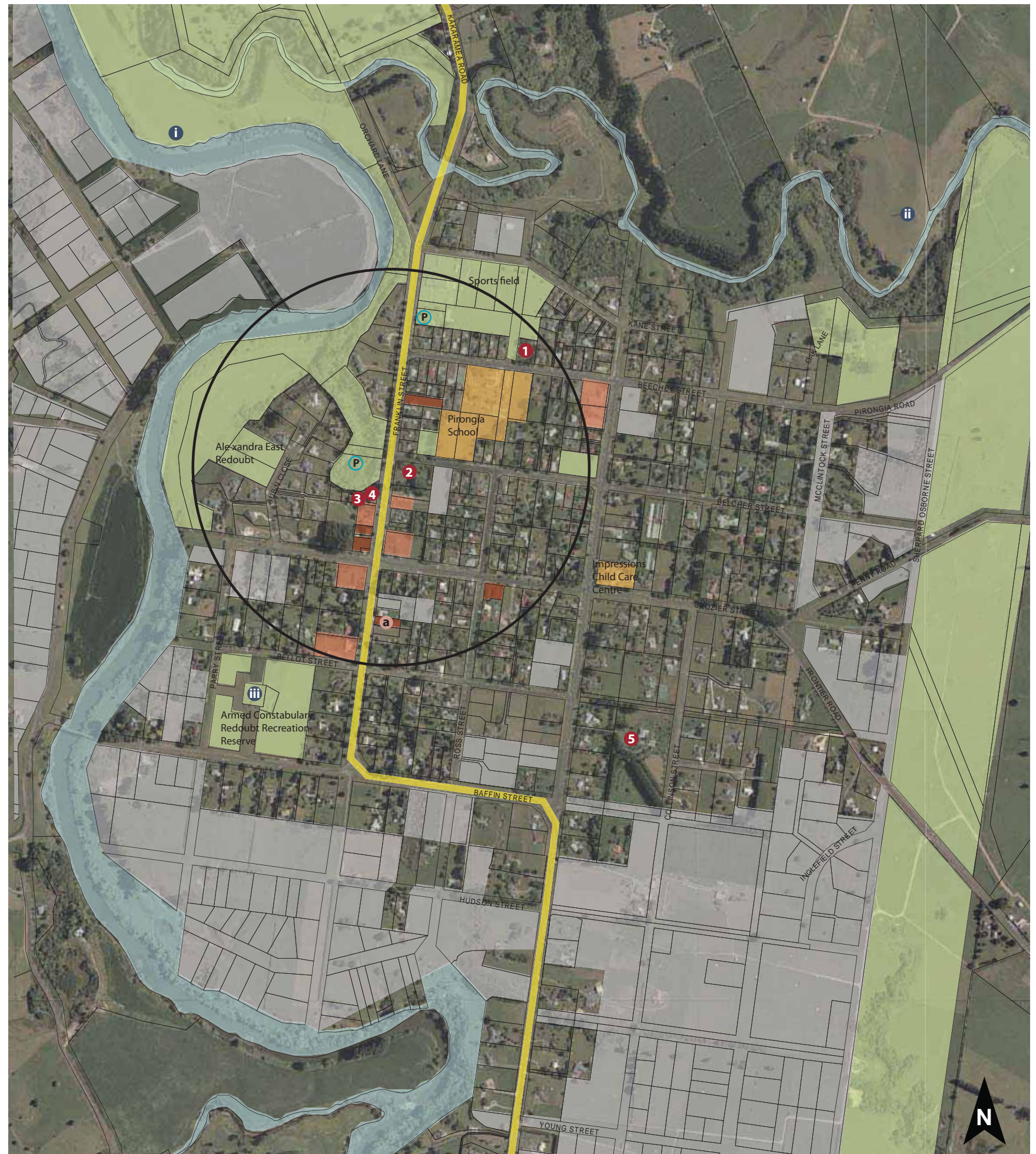
- Land Use and Zoning
- Views and Vistas
- Heritage and History
- Buildings and Streetscape Character
- Issues and Opportunities
- A suggested Spatial Vision



# Pirongia land use

The land use plan reflects the land uses identified in the site visits in January 2009.

- KEY**
- Open Space
  - Education Facilities
  - P Playground
  - Public Services
  - Retirement Facilities
  - Industrial
  - Retail / Town Centre
  - Other
  - Vacant
  - Parking
  - One-Storey
  - Two-Storey
  - State Highway
  - Footpath
  - Formal Pedestrian Crossing
  - Informal Crossing / Desire Line
  - Through Site Link
  - Awnings
  - Railway Line
  - 1 Historic Buildings / Elements
  - i Archaeological sites
  - a Character Buildings / Elements
  - Vista
  - 400m radius indicative 5 minute walk



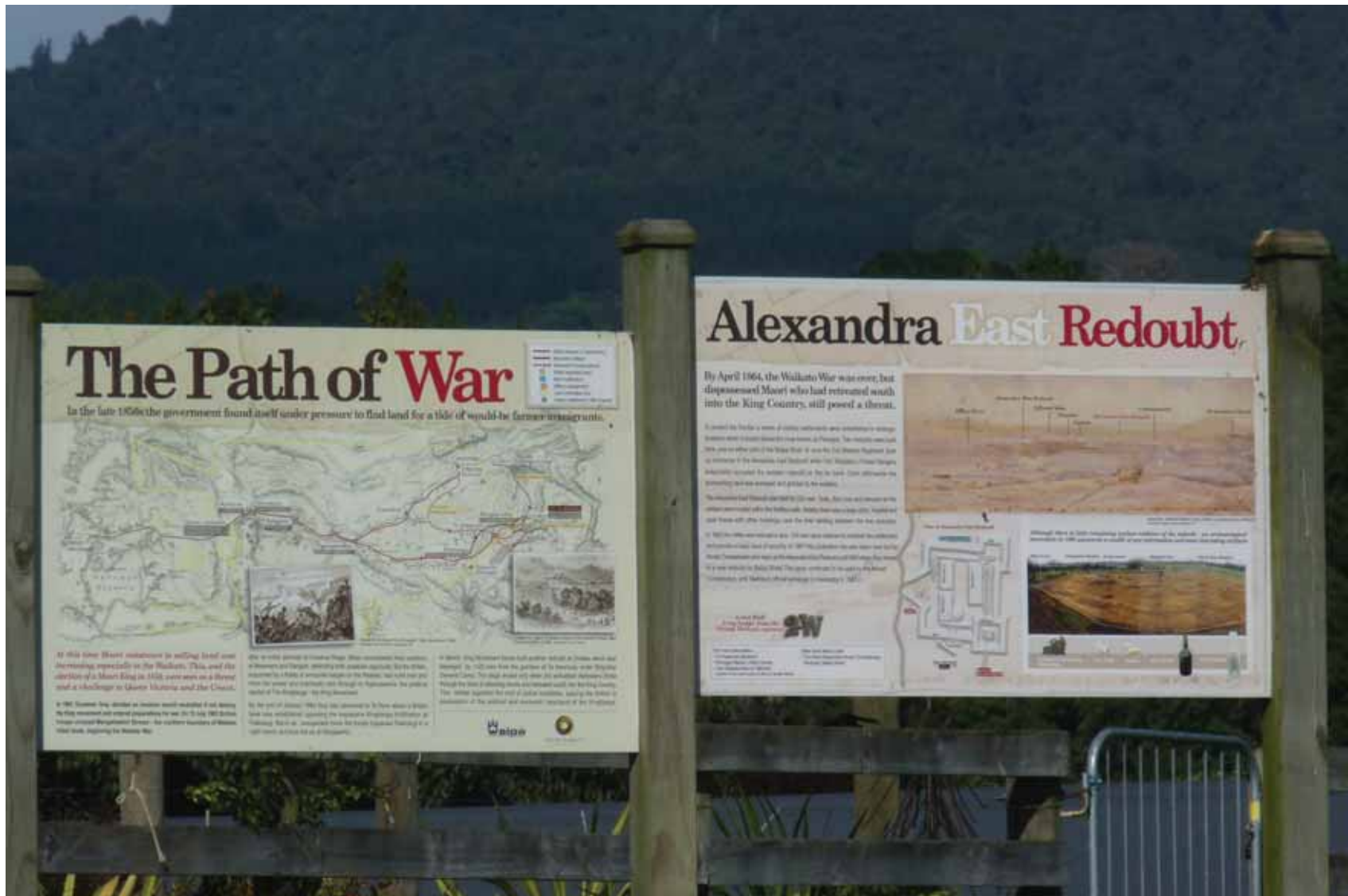
## Pirongia views and vistas

- The town of Pirongia is set in a very scenic, well defined location. Its western edge is defined by the Waipa River and the Pirongia Mountain beyond it. Its southern edge is also defined by the Waipa River and a small stream. Low hills define its northern boundary. Only its eastern edge is not contained by water, but here there is a long open public reserve and low hills that clearly set out the town's limits in that direction.
- The mountain dominates views to the west, rising impressively out of the gently undulating landscape. Framed views are achieved with street tree planting.
- Street views through the centre of the town are flat and open, with the wide highway, small scale buildings and generous street setbacks contributing to a sense of spaciousness.



# Pirongia history and heritage

- In 1770, Captain James Cook was the first European to record Pirongia.
- Pirongia was originally named Alexandra after the wife of King Edward VII.
- Some of the village's businesses and organisations such as the Alexandra Hotel and the Alexandra Racing Club echo the town's original name.
- In 1864 the town was set up as a British army military base and two or three redoubts were built in the town.
- There are several historic buildings and features scattered around the community; and combined with its older trees and modest sized houses, these give the town a sense of unpretentious maturity.
- Alexandra Racing Club, established in 1866 is reputed to be the second oldest racing club in New Zealand.
- The area was the centre of conflict during the Waikato Wars. The presence of redoubts are a reminder of this.
- Matakītiki Pa is an ancient Pa site. It was a site of early occupation and a significant battle between Tainui and Ngāpuhi in 1822.



- The places numbered below are identified in Appendix 10 of the Waipa District Plan as 'Buildings, Civic Structures and Items of Cultural Value'. These buildings are shown in the image on the following page.

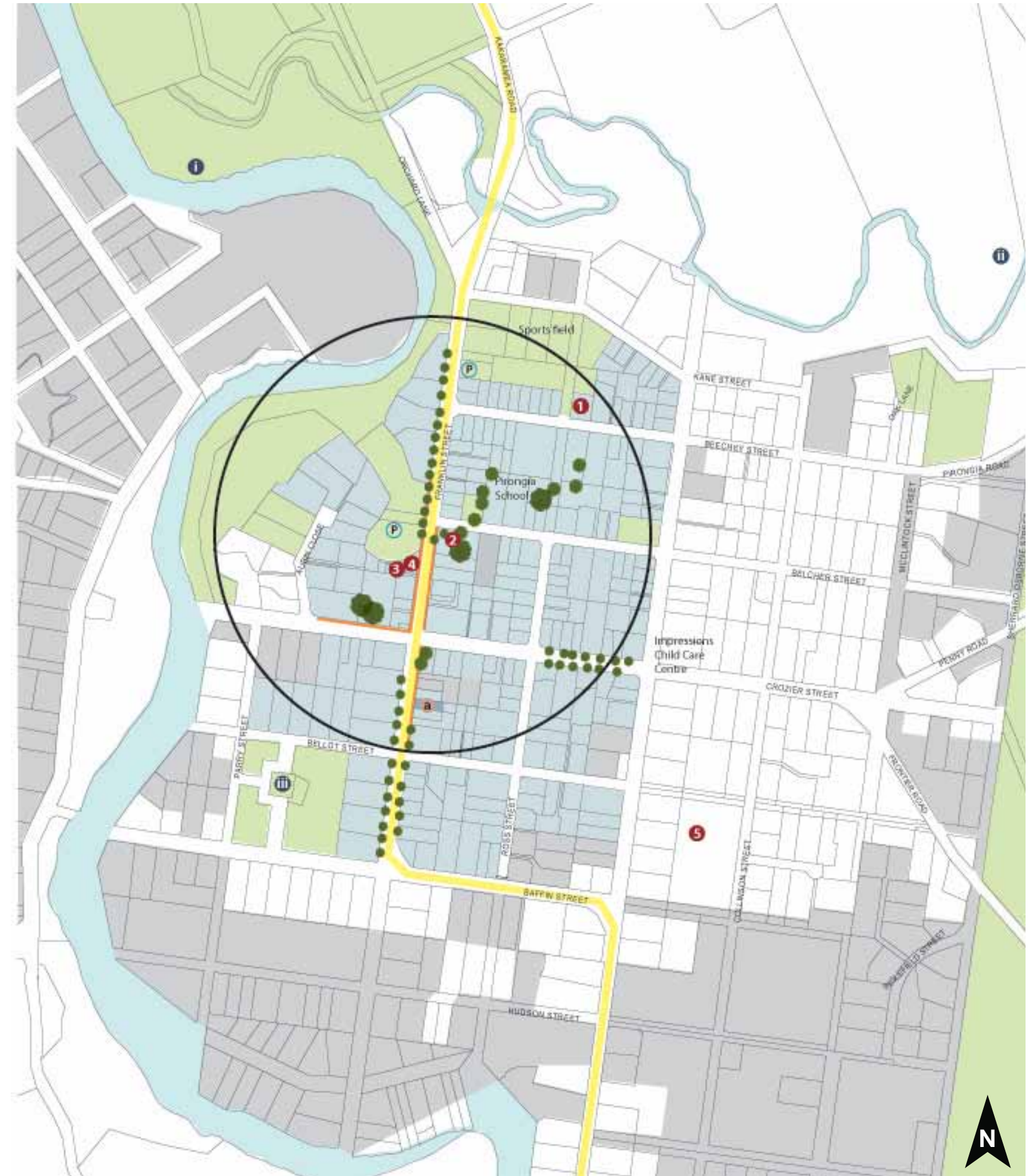
## PIRONGIA HISTORIC BUILDINGS / MONUMENTS, ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND CHARACTER BUILDINGS

- 1** St Joseph's Catholic Church (1912)
- 2** House (Rosel)
- 3** Pirongia Playcentre (1872 - 1873)
- 4** Public Library (1888)
- 5** House (Auburn)
- i** Fortified Pa (Matakītiki)
- ii** Terraces
- iii** Alexandra Redoubt
- a** Memorial Hall

# Pirongia buidings and streetscape character

- Pirongia is not intensively developed and is rural in character. Most of its development is in residential housing set on lots predominantly larger than 2000m<sup>2</sup>. The surrounding rural landscape is visible from most locations within it.
- The town's streets are laid out in a "grid" pattern which makes its layout easily understood by visitors. Like other Waipa communities, the blocks in the grid are unusually large.
- There is only one building higher than one storey - the Memorial Hall at the front - although older buildings (churches and some houses) have higher ceilings and / or roof pitches that give some variety to the building scale.
- Local parks are well maintained and offer a range of facilities and amenities, from local sports fields, greens and gardens to informal reserves and walkways.
- The Waipa River borders the community on two sides and passes not far from the town's commercial "centre". The river provides a strong feature for the community.
- Pirongia appears to be both a retirement community and a community designed to take advantage of the recreational opportunities that surround it.
- There is a scattering of new commercial development along SH 39 which largely caters for the increasing traffic using this route as a north south bypass route around Hamilton.

KEY	
	Open Space
	Education Facilities
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	Public Services
	Retirement Facilities
	Industrial
	Retail / Town Centre
	Other
	Vacant
	Parking
	One-Storey
	Two-Storey
	State Highway
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	Formal Pedestrian Crossing
	Informal Crossing / Desire Line
	Through Site Link
	Awnings
	Railway Line
	Historic Buildings / Elements
	Archaeological sites
	Character Buildings / Elements
	Vista
	400m radius indicative 5 minute walk



# Pirongia issues and opportunities

Issues and opportunities were identified following the site visit in January 2009 and are outlined below. These along with the vision workshops have informed the development of the Town Concept Plans and the issues and opportunities identified are illustrated on the following page.

	Issue	Opportunity (refer diagram)
Rural Landscape	Much of the land around the currently developed town of Pirongia, including a large area of land across the Waipa River has been surveyed for large lot rural residential housing. If all surveyed land is developed as zoned, the rural outlook from parts of Pirongia will be significantly impacted and some of the rural character of the town will be lost.	The vision statement for the Pirongia Community talks about preserving the rural character of the area. It may be appropriate to consider revising District Plan rules to better control rural residential subdivision around the Pirongia area. Alternatively or in addition, it might be beneficial to identify particular views both from the town and into the town that should be preserved over the long term.
Impact on State Highway 39 Traffic	The scattered unfocused commercial development on either side of State Highway 39 through Pirongia threatens the long term viability of the State Highway. The State Highway has already been relocated once to improve traffic flows through town, but the benefit gained by that change is now under threat by the new development.	It might be appropriate to consider controlling any further commercial development that takes direct access off the State Highway. This would not mean all new commercial development would be banned, but that new development would have to be accessed from existing side streets rather than directly from the State Highway. By limiting turning traffic to intersections, State Highway traffic would not be further impacted by further (inevitable) commercial growth, and those stopping and using the new commercial facilities would not be exposed to an ever growing traffic hazard.
Community Focus	The new “motor oriented” commercial development along the State Highway, through what might otherwise be the centre of town, does not serve the local community well, as it is neither compact nor accessible to local pedestrian use. It also straddles the State Highway, exposing people patronising businesses on both sides of the street to the unnecessary hazard of through traffic.	Identifying a clearly marked area for a “town centre” for Pirongia would be one way to ensure the commercial area of the town stays relatively compact. It would also allow the overall area to be designed in a way that would allow local pedestrian access without exposing residents to excessive traffic hazards. One side of the State Highway could be designed to handle “motor oriented commercial activities, and the other could be more focussed around a future cluster of shops (with off street parking) that both served passing motorists and local community
Grid Pattern	While the “grid” layout of streets can be helpful in orienting visitors, a grid system that has been randomly modified with street closures and cul de sacs can be very confusing. A number of changes have already been made to Pirongia’s existing grid system of streets. Any further changes to the town’s overall grid system should be carefully weighed against the long term confusion such changes will cause.	The “paper roads” of the community’s existing “grid” road system are a significant community asset that should perhaps be preserved. Some of these rights of way may need to be preserved only as public reserves over the long term, but others, perhaps most of them, may ultimately need to be formed into fully functioning streets as the town grows. For those wanting “curvilinear” streets, the existing very large blocks would allow further subdivision into this type of development.
Trees and Streetscape	While there is a very beautiful park along the State Highway near the new commercial development, there is little formal landscaping of the State Highway frontage through this area apart from some added kerbside parking.	The recent limited improvements along the State Highway are good short term measures, but it might be helpful to look at long term urban design for the centre of the town adjacent to the State Highway that provides for both increased commercial activity and increased State Highway use over the longer term. In addition, trees are an important contributor to the character of the town. They should be a major consideration in all future public improvements to the town.
River Connection	The Waipa River located on the Western edge of Pirongia is under utilized. The visual linkage and physical connections are weak.	Increasing the visual link and landscape treatment alongside the river particularly where the Waipa River is close to the State Highway 39. Identifying locations where access to the river can be increased for canoeists and boat users as well as extending the esplanade walkway through the town to connect to other informal walking and cycling trails would increase the significance of this recreational amenity.



# Pirongia issues and opportunities map

This diagram shows broad scale opportunities for Pirongia. This map was presented as part of the public consultation / visioning workshop, for review and discussion. The map has not been updated following the workshop as the identified function was to stimulate discussion and draw out any issues and opportunities identified by workshop participants.

## Gateway treatment

At the north, where avenue planting creates an attractive approach, more might be made of the key intersection before the 'core' block.

## River Connection

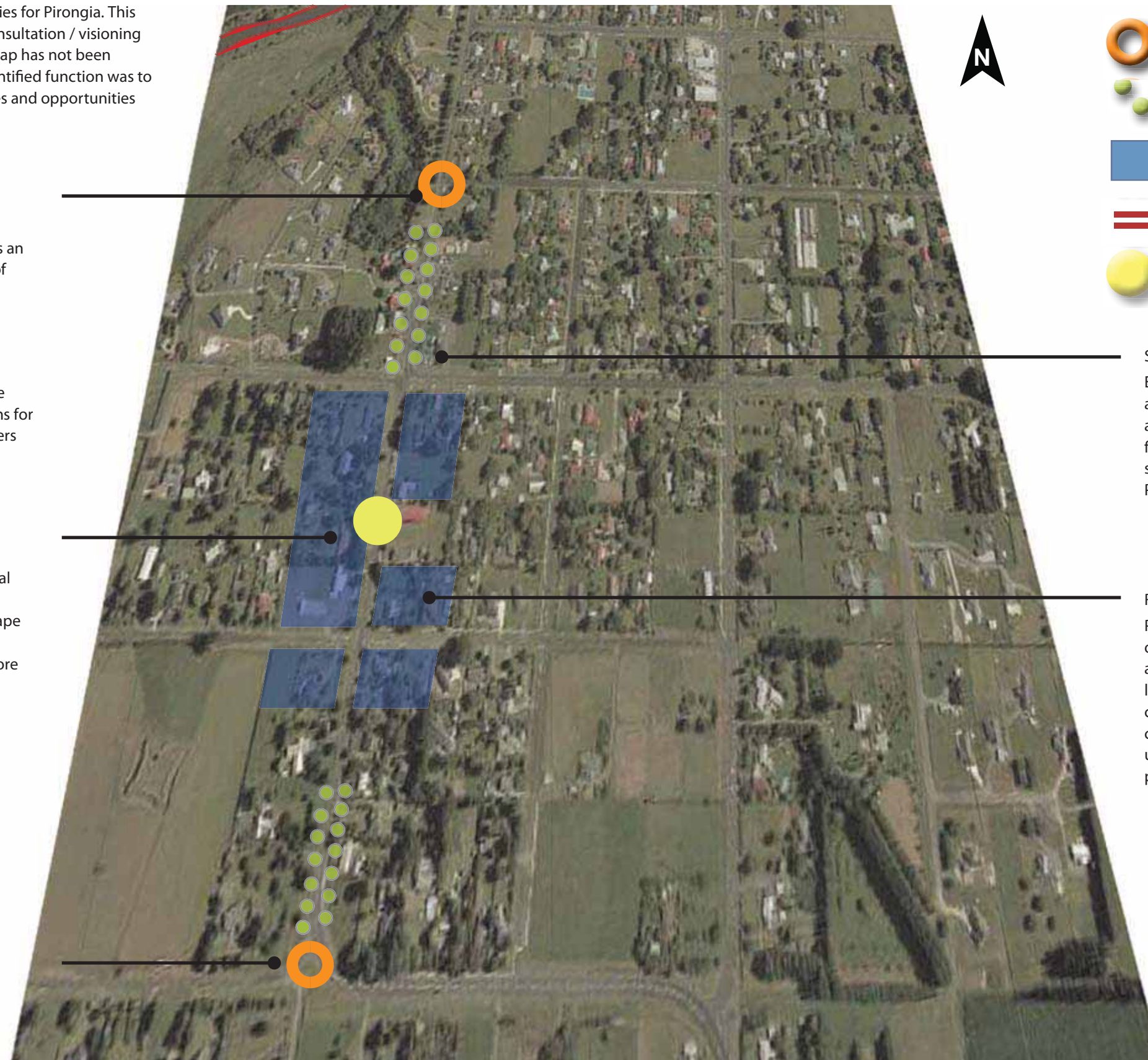
As the Waipa River turns towards the State Highway, there is an opportunity to increase the visibility of the river. Identifying locations for increased access by pedestrian and river users could increase use of this river amenity






## Community focus

The Memorial Hall already operates as a focal point for the community and surrounding areas during the Saturday market. Streetscape improvements as well as appropriate land uses in this central location could attract more people to stop and enjoy Pirongia.

## Gateway treatment

As the State Highway turns from the south onto the main road there is opportunity to strengthen the sense of arrival.



-  Proposed gateway
-  Landscape / streetscape opportunities
-  Potential for higher density residential
-  Existing barrier
-  Focal point of town

**Street trees**  
Extending street tree planting, including along side streets, would support the existing attractive main street character and help to frame interesting views along long straight streets to the surrounding areas and to Mount Pirongia to the west.

**Residential development**  
Pirongia's very low scale character and typically open streetscape with houses set well back, and views between them to surrounding rural land, means that future development must be carefully sited and designed. A more compact core with retail, commercial and community uses, as well some residential, should be prioritised over higher density elsewhere.

## Pirongia spatial vision (desired future character)

The visioning workshop for Pirongia was held on 29 April 2009. The agenda included a welcome and introduction by the Mayor, short presentations from Waipa District Council and the consultants, and two workshop sessions. The first session comprised group discussions of key issues affecting the participants, with a focus on likes, dislikes, needs and challenges. The second session was preceded by a Pirongia vision presentation (next column) and led to vision statements being developed by each work table for the town. The vision statements were prompted by the phrase "In 40 years' time, Pirongia will be / will have....."

The outcome of the workshop is summarised in Appendix A.

### Vision Statement

The submissions to the first round of public consultation by the Pirongia Residents and Ratepayers Association suggest that those residents of the village and the district who contributed envision a community:

- with a sense of identity which retains and continues to develop its rural village character and celebrates the natural beauty of its location;
- which acknowledges and celebrates the history of the area and its peoples - Maori and Tauiwij;
- which looks after its residents, by providing amenities and services which cater for all;
- which provides a range of facilities and opportunities for families and young people;
- which employs ecologically friendly, sustainable practices;
- which continues to develop in a planned way;
- which capitalises on economic opportunities consistent with the character and values of the community;
- and where residents share a strong sense of belonging, know each other and participate in local affairs



# Pirongia: Appendix A

## Outcomes from Pirongia – Town Plan Vision Workshop

Eight community visioning workshops were undertaken in the following towns / villages during the months of May and June with the following groups:

- Cambridge
- Te Awamutu / Kihikihi
- Ohaupo
- Pirongia
- Hui with iwi representatives
- Te Awamutu College
- Cambridge High School
- Kihikihi residents

The purpose of these workshops was to introduce the local communities to the Town Concept Plan phase of the Waipa 2050 Project.

The workshop agenda was as follows:

Overview of how the Town Concept Plans fit with the Growth Strategy, by WDC (Fiona Hill – Project Manager Waipa District Plan Review)

Presentation by Beca summarising analysis / issues / opportunities of the town / village (Lynne Hancock/Fiona Murray)

Presentation by Alan Hall on the vision work already done by the Pirongia Residents and Ratepayers Groups

### PART A – KEY ISSUES

Workshop participants were split into groups (each group at a separate table). They were asked to discuss what they see as the major issues affecting their area.

Workshop participants were asked to answer the following questions:

- What do you like most about your area?
- What do you like least?
- What do you think the town needs – and where?
- What are the barriers or challenges to achieving improvements?

A facilitator recorded the discussion and reported back at the end of the session.

## PART B – DESIRED FUTURE CHARACTER

### Workshop discussion

Alan Hall presented the vision statement that the Pirongia Residents and Ratepayers had developed and the process that had been used to develop the vision. The information presented is included below:

### VISION STATEMENT

The submissions to the community consultation suggest that those residents of the village and the District who contributed envision:

#### PIRONGIA

- A settlement with a sense of identity, which retains and continues to develop its rural character, and celebrates the natural beauty of its location;
- Use of ecologically friendly, sustainable practices;
- Residents with a strong sense of community, knowing one another, and participating in local affairs;
- Acknowledgement and celebration of the history of the area and its peoples – Maori and Tauitihi;
- A village that looks after its residents, by providing amenities and services which cater for all;
- Provides a range of facilities and opportunities for families and young people;
- Capitalises on economic opportunities consistent with the character and values of the community;
- Continues to develop in a planned way.

### Refining the vision statements

Taking the presentation of the vision statement as a starting point, individuals were asked to record their own 'wish list' for the future, focusing on the issue that's most important to them. This could take the form of "In 40 years' time [my town or area] will be / will have...."

The facilitator put all the vision statements on a large piece of paper.

### Workshop discussion

Groups were then asked to discuss how they see the issues they identified being addressed – how can we get from 'now' to the future that's described in the vision statement? What specific measures do they suggest?

[Report back](#)

[Conclusion and Thanks](#)

## Results from the Workshop

The outcomes from the visioning workshops, including the key issues (likes and dislikes), needs and challenges, and the desired future character, are outlined below.

### Attendees

The Pirongia Visioning Workshop was attended by 16 people. These people were split into four tables for the workshop discussion.

### Key Issues

All groups were asked to identify the key issues currently affecting their town. This was broken down into a list of both likes and dislikes. The information below gives a general outline of the key issues raised, before outlining the key likes and dislikes of their towns / areas as identified by participants.

All groups identified that the flow of traffic (both speed and noise) through the town is an issue. The lack of public transport in the area was identified and improving public transport was seen to be necessary. The provision of access (walkways and cycleways) to the river and mountain was an issue raised many times; the importance of Mt Pirongia (views / access to it) was emphasized by several attendees. Other issues included the need for more commercial space and a community centre in the village.

## Likes and Dislikes

### Land Uses

The large section sizes in Pirongia were liked, as well as the commercial area – said by two different groups to be ‘enough services but not too many’. Commercial development away from the centre of the village was disliked by one group. The public toilet facilities were also disliked.

### Buildings (built form)

The Memorial Hall was listed as a like by one group, but the colour of the hall listed as a dislike by another. Generally it seemed the built form of Pirongia is liked by the locals, especially the school (social focal point of the village). However, the sewer systems are disliked as is the frequency (or lack of) rubbish collections in the village. Recognition of historic buildings was also seen as an important step forward for the village.

### Natural Character

The mountain and the river were both identified by each table, emphasizing the importance of the surrounding natural character. The historical significance and heritage of the area was also identified as a positive.

### Trees and Landscaping

The amount of privet in the village was identified by one group as a dislike. The greenbelt including the river was identified by all tables as a very positive aspect of the village. Birds were also identified as a like by one table. More street planting was also desired.

### Traffic and Parking

Traffic was identified as the most disliked aspect of this village. Both the speed and noise of the traffic on SH 39 was criticised. Slowing down the traffic and providing off-street parking for trucks was seen as important for retaining the village character and safety. Attendees noted that there is a good amount of parking available though more wouldn't go amiss.

### Pedestrian safety and amenity

Good footpaths in the village were noted, as was the tidy main street and provision of doggy bins. These aspects were very positive; however the traffic speed through the village is seen to hinder the safe pedestrian access and amenity (due to noise and safety).

### Access to surrounds

Access was seen by most people as in need of improvement. The lack of public transport was identified by three groups as a dislike. The provision of walkways and cycleways (active links) was identified as highly desirable for the village.

### Village Character

One of the major likes was the character of the area – being described as a safe, quiet, family environment. The rural surrounds were identified as providing a country-living feel, while the shops provide a village atmosphere. What was described by one table as a ‘frontier feel’, brought about by the sense of history, is one of the most desirable characteristics of Pirongia.

### Other issues

The lack of facilities for youth was identified, and provision for this in the form of a community centre was discussed. A lack of Council funding was also noted as a dislike by one group.

## Needs and Challenges

Along with the likes and dislikes, participants were asked to identify what they thought their town / villages needs. They were also asked to identify the barriers or challenges to achieving these improvements.

A number of positive and interesting suggestions were made as part of this workshop. They cover landuses, access to open space, social and cultural activities and traffic / parking related requests. Co-ordination and communication with the Otorohanga District Council was seen to be an important step in developing a masterplan for this area because of the close connections between the Otorohanga District and Pirongia.

### Needs

A long list of needs and wants were identified by the attendees of the workshop including:

- Active links / walkways to the river and Mt Pirongia
- Community centre / envirocentre
- Public transport
- Recognition of historic buildings
- Accommodation / Retreat
- Housing for the Elderly
- New playground
- Parking restrictions
- Street planting
- Better water supply
- More police (traffic police and night time policing)
- Medical service
- More tourism

### Challenges

The main challenges identified include: a lack of commercial land, funding, issues with the State Highway (busy traffic), land agreements, poor leadership, and a lack of reserves. Interestingly, a key challenge was keeping families in the District as many older families move away to be closer to secondary schools. Maintaining a village atmosphere was also seen to be a challenge.

## Desired Future Character

Participants were asked to draft up a vision statement for their town / village. The vision statement looks towards the future and provides a statement which represents how they want their town / village to look and feel in 40 years time. The following is a list of vision statements produced by individuals.

In 40 years time Pirongia will be / will have:

A vibrant rural village founded on principles of sustainability and planned development in character with the village atmosphere, history and natural features.

A green and open village beside a river and under a mountain with a larger population and some commercial development where people stop on Stae Highway 39 to enjoy the atmosphere and the opportunities and services for tourists.

A culture of care, a village atmosphere, amenities for all residents, and an environment that facilities that.

Pirongia will be a community village which prides itself on its beauty, history and consideration of all the people who live here. It will maintain an identity with the mountain and the environment addressing those needs. It will be a place where people aspire to live.

### How do we get there?

Participants were asked how they envisage we can move forward from today to the future, and what actions would need to be put in place.

The following actions were identified:

- Co-ordination and leadership
- An agreed strategic plan (coordinated with Otorohanga District Council)
- A Pirongia 'champion' to drive the vision and keep lines of communication open
- Limits placed on further subdivision of existing lots
- Building up community sense of belonging which will lead to greater participation
- Improving safety and public transport

# Pirongia Wananga

## Draft Outcomes from Wananga – Town Plan Vision Workshop

A wananga was held at the Raukawa Trust Board offices in Te Awamutu on 12 June with approximately 15 members of local iwi. The purpose of this was to gather input on likes and dislikes, needs and challenges and vision for the future of each town. This workshop was organised and run in a similar way to the Town Concept Plan Vision Workshops with an overview of how the Town Concept Plans fit with the Growth Strategy, by WDC (Fiona Hill – Project Manager Waipa District Plan Review) followed by a presentation by Beca summarising analysis / issues / opportunities of each of the towns / villages (Fiona Murray). The following is a summary of the outcome of the workshop.

### Likes and Dislikes

The Pirongia group liked the small and undeveloped nature of the village along with the rural character with Maunga backdrop. The country lifestyle was certainly seen to be very positive. Other likes included the wide streets, handy toilets, the relationship to Maunga, the natural environment including the river, scenic walks, and birds. The Waiata and history was also noted as a like however it was not perceived to be fully representative. The fact the Ratepayers Association has tangata whenua representation was also seen as a big positive.

As mentioned above the lack of heritage and tangata whenua recognition was noted leading to a lack of Maori feel in the town. The history is perceived to be too settler focused. Other dislikes include the lifestyle blocks and high land prices.

### Needs and Challenges

A shared leadership of governance arrangements is seen to be one of the main actions to make a positive difference in Pirongia. Also, the group felt that the creation and display of local Maori history and education on the history of tangata whenua will help to balance out the redoubt and colonial emphasis. One idea was to create a beautiful garden with some Maori designs pertaining to the tangata whenua. A better control of the town boundary and housing in the area was requested.

It was felt that a lack of imagination by Council would inhibit the above needs being met. A loss of courage and confidence may prevent some of these initiatives being considered. Similarly, the small Maori population may lead to a lack of input and recognition and the small population in general means a lack of funds for community projects.

### Vision for the the future

In 40 years time Pirongia will have small specialty shops, a sports / events centre, a gym, more petrol stations and more shops run by locals. There will be development of industry and employment creation, through tourism and the retention and promotion of markets. Pirongia will also be serviced with better wastewater and water and there will be more accommodation for people to stay in the area.



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