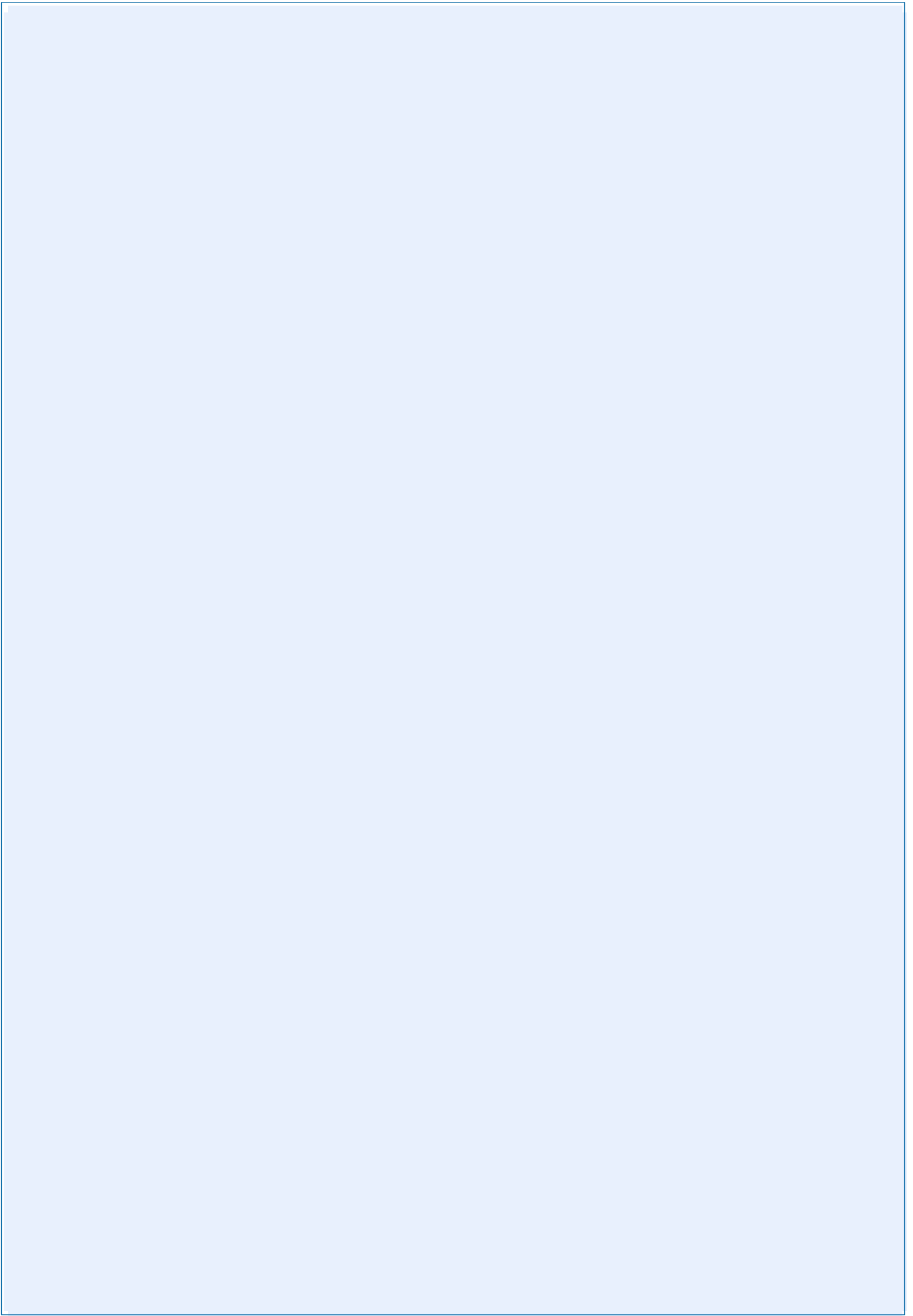


Surf breaks provisions in the Auckland Unitary Plan

Matthew McNeil

December 2012





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Matthew McNeil

Coastal Specialist, Environmental Strategy and Policy Department, Auckland Council

December 2012

Report prepared for Auckland Council.

This report has been peer reviewed internally.
<p>Approved for Auckland Council publication by:</p> <p>Name: Kath Coombes</p> <p>Position: Principal Specialist Coastal</p>
<p>Name: Phill Reid</p> <p>Position: Unitary Plan Integration Manager</p>
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Front cover photograph of Pakiri surf break taken by Matthew McNeil.

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Summary

The purpose of this report is to support the development of Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) provisions relating to surf breaks. The AUP will be a combined plan under the Resource Management Act and will include a regional policy statement, regional plan, regional coastal plan and district plan for the Auckland Region.

Previous Auckland planning documents have not included surf break-specific provisions. The need to reconsider this approach reflects the importance of surf breaks to Auckland, and increased recognition that activities can adversely affect surf breaks. The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) includes a policy on surf breaks of national significance, and acknowledges that surf breaks can be an important element of natural character. Auckland Council is considering how similar provisions should be applied through the AUP for the surf breaks that are significant for Auckland.

This report sets out the background to why the AUP should include provisions specific to surf breaks, and outlines the process undertaken to spatially identify 'significant surf breaks' and their values. The process included an assessment by internal council staff and a survey of surfers. From the survey results it is possible to identify the different values that users associate with each break. For example, while isolated breaks have a lower value in terms of usage and sometimes popularity, they often rate higher in terms of wilderness values and consistency of surfable conditions. The more accessible 'urban' surf breaks are highly popular, even though they are inconsistently surfable and have low wave quality. The surf breaks with the highest overall popularity were the more accessible and consistent breaks, which also have high landscape values, such as the west coast beaches, and Te Arai and Pakiri on the north east coast.

This report presents draft provisions for inclusion in the draft AUP. These include several policies relating to surf breaks, a definition of 'surf break', a schedule of significant surf breaks and their values, and maps of those surf breaks.

Table of Contents

Summary	5
1 Introduction	7
2 Background	7
2.1 Components of a surf break	7
2.2 Threats to surf breaks	8
2.3 Surf breaks under the Resource Management Act	9
2.4 Surf breaks under the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement	12
2.5 Surf breaks under the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act	14
2.6 Auckland Regional Council surf break assessment	15
2.7 The Auckland Plan	16
3 Surf breaks in the Unitary Plan	16
3.1 Proposed policies	17
3.2 Identification of significant surf breaks	21
3.2.1 Surf break criteria (internal council assessment)	21
3.2.2 Auckland Council 'surf breaks user survey'	24
3.2.3 Values of each surf break	36
3.3 Mapping of surf breaks	39
4 Conclusion	40
References	41
Appendices	42
Appendix A – Survey questions	43
Appendix B – Proposed surf breaks schedule	47
Appendix C – Surf break maps	51

1 Introduction

The incorporation of surfing and surf break management into coastal planning is relatively new, but gaining further attention as the social, economic and environmental benefits of surf breaks are realised. Auckland is home to a large number of surf breaks. These are an important resource for the region, being highly utilised recreational assets that contribute to tourism, economic development and amenity values.

Consideration of whether to include provisions around surf breaks in the Unitary Plan reflects direction from the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS), consideration of how surf breaks relate to the purpose and principles of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 (HGMPA), and consideration of relevant literature and alternative options.

This report sets out the background to why the Auckland Unitary Plan should include provisions specific to surf breaks, and outlines the process undertaken to spatially identify 'significant surf breaks' and their values.

2 Background

2.1 Components of a surf break

Surf breaks are the result of the combination of bathymetry, water levels, exposure to swell, and wind conditions which create waves which 'peel' at a suitable angle or speed and breaking intensity for surfers to ride.

There are four main geomorphic types of surf break:

1. beach break
2. headland or point break
3. river or estuary mouth bar
4. reef or ledge break

There are no clear boundaries between the different types and sometimes breaks fall under more than one category.

The NZCPS defines a surf break as:

"A natural feature that is comprised of swell, currents, water levels, seabed morphology, and wind. The hydrodynamic character of the ocean (swell, currents and water levels) combines with seabed morphology and winds to give rise to a 'surfable wave'. A surf break includes the 'swell corridor' through which the swell travels, and the morphology of the seabed of that wave corridor, through to the point where

waves created by the swell dissipate and become non-surfable. 'Swell corridor' means the region offshore of a surf break where ocean swell travels and transforms to a 'surfable wave'. 'Surfable wave' means a wave that can be caught and ridden by a surfer. Surfable waves have a wave breaking point that peels along the unbroken wave crest so that the surfer is propelled laterally along the wave crest".

It is considered that a definition of a surf break should be included in the Unitary Plan, and that it be consistent with the NZCPS definition.

2.2 Threats to surf breaks

Surf breaks as natural features are the result of a combination of factors, and therefore vulnerable to changes in natural processes. As population and coastal development has increased, there have been increased pressures on the coastal environment, and interaction with, or modification of natural processes which create surf breaks.

Coastal development has resulted in new structures extending into the coastal marine area (CMA), and a requirement for protection of land based infrastructure from coastal processes. Interaction with and modification of coastal processes by structures can affect wave quality at surf breaks. This may be through 'dampening' or blocking swell, interrupting or modifying sediment transport, altering bathymetry, or wave reflection or refraction. Such structures can include seawalls or shoreline armouring, groynes, breakwaters, jetties, marinas, or offshore structures within swell corridors such as marine farms. While there are examples of where engineering works have had a positive effect on wave quality, more often the effects on surf breaks are negative.

Wave quality at surf breaks is directly dependent upon seabed bathymetry. Direct alteration of bathymetry within or close to surf breaks can affect wave quality. This can include dredging to create or maintain navigation channels, sea bed mining or extraction, or deposition of dredge spoil or other material. These activities may remove sediment directly from within a surf break, or remove sediment which would otherwise be supplied to a surf break. Disposal of dredge spoil in close proximity to a surf break can create 'wave focusing' effects.

Surf breaks can also be adversely affected by activities on the adjacent land, such as developments adversely affecting access to a break or affecting the amenity values of a break, or erosion of sediment resulting in poor water quality. Landward development typically results in increased discharge of contaminants to coastal waters which affects amenity values at surf breaks.

The majority of Auckland surf breaks are in relatively rural locations. However, as coastal growth pressures increase, the potential for threats to Auckland surf breaks will also increase. Consideration and assessment of such threats is required as such development in or adjacent to the coastal environment occurs.

Public concern over threats to surf breaks, and support for inclusion of policy supporting protection of surf breaks in statutory documents, has increased in recent years in New Zealand.

Surf Break Protection Society

The Surfbreak Protection Society (SPS) was formed in 2006 with the aim of supporting local campaigns around protection of New Zealand surf breaks. The Society estimated there to be in excess of 100,000 surfers in Auckland in 2011. It is expected that the number of people participating in surfing will grow as the regional population grows, as will the demand for and value attributed to surf breaks in the Auckland region.

The SPS has submitted on resource consents, Regional Coastal Plans, Regional Policy Statements, and the Auckland Plan in relation to potential effects on, and identification and preservation of surf breaks. Examples include:

Resource consent applications:

- Submitting against the application to dredge and dispose of material within the Whangamata Estuary (in Coromandel) in order to maintain the access channel to the marina associated with the Whangamata Marina. Concerned at potential changes to the ebb tide delta feature which forms the surf break 'Whangamata Bar', at estuary mouth;
- Submitting against the application to increase volumes of dredge spoil disposal off the surf break known as 'Aramoana Spit' in Otago, due to potential effects on wave quality.

Statutory documents:

- Submitting on the Taranaki and Gisborne Regional Coastal Plans, and the Waikato, Gisborne, and Canterbury Regional Policy Statements, identifying the need to provide policy around surf break protection.

Significant numbers of submissions were also received from individuals on these consent applications or plan notifications around surf break protection.

2.3 Surf breaks under the Resource Management Act

The maintenance and protection of surf breaks is relevant to several aspects of the RMA, particularly the purpose and principles of the Act (sections 5, 6, 7), the

purpose of regional policy statements (section 59) and the purpose of regional plans (section 63).

Section 5 Purpose

- (1) *The purpose of this Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.*
- (2) *In this Act, sustainable management means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while:*
 - (a) *sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and*
 - (b) *safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and*
 - (c) *avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.*

Surf breaks are a “natural and physical resource” to be sustainably managed under the Act. Surf breaks contribute to the “social, economic and cultural wellbeing” of people and communities by providing for the recreation activities of surfers, but also have wider benefits in terms of the economic activity of the local area and creation of a distinctive ‘sense of place’ and identity for communities close to surf breaks. International research demonstrates that surfing breaks can have significant social and economic values (Lazarow *et al.* 2007; Nelsen *et al.* 2007). There are several places in Auckland, such as Piha, Muriwai and Great Barrier Island, where surfing is an important element of the character and culture of the local area. Surfing is an activity which draws people to live in the local area and attracts tourists and visitors. In total, the variety and scale of surf breaks around the Auckland region contribute to the character and attractiveness of the region. The coast and beaches are consistently given as a key reason why people choose to live in Auckland (ARC 2004, 2008, and as evident in submissions to the draft Auckland Plan 2011). It is not known how much this attractiveness relates to opportunities for surfing, but it is clear that the accessibility of the coast and the range of different coastal related activities possible contribute to the wellbeing of Aucklanders.

Globally the numbers of people involved in surfing has increased significantly over recent decades and is expected to continue to increase. At the same time, pressures for development along the coast are growing (Scarfe *et al.* 2009). Ensuring appropriate management of any potential conflict between such uses of limited coastal space is part of the council’s meeting the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations and of avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

Section 6 Matters of national importance

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall recognise and provide for the following matters of national importance:

- (a) *the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*
- (b) *the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development: ...*
- (d) *the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers.*

The matters of national importance in section 6 (a), (b) and (d) are relevant to the consideration of surf breaks, as they are natural features and their use depends on public access to the coastal marine area. Surf breaks are an element of natural character in that they rely on the natural formation of swell corridors and seabed morphology to create a surfable wave.

The nature of the surfing experience is also affected by the character of the surrounding area. In some places, the lack of built elements adds a remote, wilderness value to the surfing experience. At breaks in more developed areas, the natural elements of cliffs and vegetation along the coast can contribute to the surfing experience. In some places, surf breaks also form part of an outstanding natural feature or part of a high natural character area or outstanding natural landscape.

Public access to a surf break is fundamental to its use. Access can be enhanced by walkways and car parks, or can be diminished through activities such as subdivision which can block informal accessways.

Section 7 Other matters

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall have particular regard to — ...

- (c) *the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values: ...*
- (f) *maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment: ...*
- (g) *any finite characteristics of natural and physical resources:*

Surf breaks provide significant amenity values. They contribute to recreation, and also to the pleasantness of a site, for people surfing and for others who watch the surfers from the land. The maintenance of the quality of the environment is important for retaining the value of the surfing experience. Surf breaks are a finite

characteristic of the environment as they only occur at specific sites and can be difficult to replicate if the natural processes creating the break are disrupted.

Section 59 Purpose of regional policy statements

The purpose of a regional policy statement is to achieve the purpose of the Act by providing an overview of the resource management issues of the region and policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region.

Many of the resource management issues facing Auckland relate to population growth and the pressures it places on natural and physical resources. The regional policy statement policies and methods to address these issues should include consideration of how to protect the values of surf breaks as a resource that is important to Auckland. Integrated management is needed as many different activities, in the CMA and on land, can affect the physical processes and features that contribute to a surf break or the amenity values of a surf break.

Section 63 Purpose of regional plans

- (1) *The purpose of the preparation, implementation, and administration of regional plans is to assist a regional council to carry out any of its functions in order to achieve the purpose of this Act.*
- (2) *Without limiting subsection (1), the purpose of the preparation, implementation, and administration of regional coastal plans is to assist a regional council, in conjunction with the Minister of Conservation, to achieve the purpose of this Act in relation to the coastal marine area of that region.*

The functions of a regional council include: the establishment, implementation, and review of objectives, policies, and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region; and in respect of the coastal marine area, the control of natural and physical resources and the control of various activities in the coastal marine area (section 30). The development of the regional plan and regional coastal plan components of the Unitary Plan should include consideration of the most effective means to achieve the purpose of the Act in terms of managing the effects of activities on surf breaks.

2.4 Surf breaks under the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 includes several policies that are relevant to surf breaks, as follows:

Policy 6 Activities in the coastal environment

- (2) *Additionally, in relation to the coastal marine area: ...*
 - (b) *recognise the need to maintain and enhance the public open space and recreation qualities and values of the coastal marine area;*

Policy 6(2)(b) recognises the need to maintain and enhance the public open space and recreational qualities and values of the coastal marine area. Surf breaks provide high recreational qualities.

Policy 13 Preservation of natural character

- (1) *To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development: ...*
- (2) *Recognise that natural character is not the same as natural features and landscapes or amenity values and may include matters such as: ...*
 - (c) *natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, freshwater springs and surf breaks; ...*

Surf breaks are explicitly recognised as an example of a natural landform that can contribute to natural character. Such landforms must be considered when a council is assessing the natural character of the coastal environment and identifying areas of high and outstanding natural character.

Policy 15 Natural features and natural landscapes

To protect the natural features and natural landscapes (including seascapes) of the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development: ...

Including by:

- (c) *identifying and assessing the natural features and natural landscapes of the coastal environment of the region...*

In the NZCPS glossary, a surf break is defined as a natural feature. Therefore, policy 15 in regards to natural features and natural landscapes applies. A surf break could be part of an 'outstanding natural feature' under policy 15(a) where adverse effects should be avoided, or an 'other natural feature' under policy 15(b) where significant adverse effects should be avoided, and other effects avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Policy 16 Surf breaks of national significance

Protect the surf breaks of national significance for surfing listed in Schedule 1, by:

- (a) *ensuring that activities in the coastal environment do not adversely affect the surf breaks; and*
- (b) *avoiding adverse effects of other activities on access to, and use and enjoyment of the surf breaks.*

The surf breaks listed in Schedule 1 include breaks in Northland, Waikato, Taranaki, Gisborne, Canterbury and Otago regions. There are no Auckland breaks listed but policy 16 provides a valuable indication of matters to address for protecting surf breaks that are significant for Auckland.

2.5 Surf breaks under the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act

Sections 9(5) and 10(1) of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 require that a regional policy statement, regional plan and district plan must not conflict with sections 7 and 8 of the HGMPA, and that sections 7 and 8 must be treated as a New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement under the RMA. Plans must give effect to a New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

Parts of sections 7 and 8 that are relative to surf breaks are:

Section 7 Recognition of national significance of Hauraki Gulf

- (1) *The interrelationship between the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments and the ability of that interrelationship to sustain the life-supporting capacity of the environment of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands are matters of national significance.*
- (2) *The life-supporting capacity of the environment of the Gulf and its islands includes the capacity—*
 - (a) *to provide for—*
 - (ii) *the social, economic, recreational, and cultural well-being of people and communities:*
 - (b) *to use the resources of the Gulf by the people and communities of the Gulf and New Zealand for economic activities and recreation:*
 - (c) *to maintain the soil, air, water, and ecosystems of the Gulf.*

Section 8 Management of Hauraki Gulf

To recognise the national significance of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments, the objectives of the management of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments are—

- (a) *the protection and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the life-supporting capacity of the environment of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments:*
- (b) *the protection and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the natural, historic, and physical resources of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments: ...*
- (d) *the protection of the cultural and historic associations of people and communities in and around the Hauraki Gulf with its natural, historic, and physical resources:*
- (e) *the maintenance and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the contribution of the natural, historic, and physical resources of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments to the social and economic well-being of the people and communities of the Hauraki Gulf and New Zealand:*
- (f) *the maintenance and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the natural, historic, and physical resources of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and*

catchments, which contribute to the recreation and enjoyment of the Hauraki Gulf for the people and communities of the Hauraki Gulf and New Zealand.

Surf breaks fall within the ambit of HGMPA section 7(2) as they can make an important contribution to the social, economic, recreational, and cultural well-being of people and communities. They are used for recreation which supports economic activities in the surrounding area.

Several aspects of section 8 are also relevant. Surf breaks are a natural and physical resource of several parts of the Gulf (section 8(b)). In many surfing areas, people and communities have cultural and historical relationships with the surf break (8(d)). Surf breaks are a resource which contributes to social and economic wellbeing (8(e)) and to recreation and enjoyment of the Gulf (8(f)).

Giving effect to sections 7 and 8 requires that the values of surf breaks be protected or maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced.

2.6 Auckland Regional Council surf break assessment

The previous Auckland Regional Council (ARC) looked at the inclusion of surf break provisions in the Auckland Regional Policy Statement (ARPS) as part of the 2009/10 ARPS review and preparation of a draft ARPS.

The ARC Regional Strategy and Policy Committee resolved that council officers develop policies to be contained in the coastal environment chapter of the draft ARPS in regards to surf breaks. This was to take direction from points raised in the ARC submission to the draft NZCPS 2008 around surf breaks.

The ARC supported the recognition of the importance of surf breaks in its submission to the draft NZCPS 2008. However the ARC submission noted concern at including a list of only national significant sites, and seeking that sites in Auckland be included to recognise their significance due to high levels of use. The submission noted that locally significant breaks could be identified in regional policy statements and regional coastal plans, with supporting policies and rules.

The ARC draft NZCPS 2008 submission recognised that nationally and internationally surf breaks are continuing to be modified and destroyed, prompting numerous grass-roots campaigns. ARC considered it appropriate to provide strategic direction on the issue in the new RPS.

The draft ARPS 2010 included the following policy specific to surf breaks:

“Protecting surf breaks

Maintain and enhance the natural character, landscape, recreational, amenity, and economic values of regionally significant surf breaks by having particular regard to any existing and potential effects of activities on land or in the coastal marine area on access to, and use and enjoyment of surf breaks. This includes effects on water

quality, and on any coastal processes, currents, water levels, seabed morphology and swell corridors that contribute to surf breaks.”

Forty Auckland surf breaks were identified in the draft ARPS. The methodology used in identifying those breaks is set out in a background report (Coombes and Scarfe, 2010). In that report, each surf break is ranked against a range of criteria, for possible inclusion as regionally significant surf breaks.

2.7 The Auckland Plan

The Auckland Council was formed through the amalgamation of Auckland local authorities in November 2010. The council released an Auckland Plan discussion document in March 2011 and the draft Auckland Plan in September 2011, for public submission.

Under the category of coastal management, the number one issue raised in public submissions was the protection and enhancement of recreational and amenity values. A significant number of these submissions identified the importance of Auckland surf breaks and/or surfing.

The Auckland Plan 2012 includes a map that identifies “Significant Recreational and Public Open Space Areas”. This includes the activity of surfing on the west coast, north east coast, and Great Barrier Island beaches. The Auckland Plan also states that the Auckland coastlines provide an ideal environment for a wide range of water sports, including surfing.

3 Surf breaks in the Unitary Plan

Maintenance of the recreational amenity values of the coastal environment is a significant issue for Auckland, with high levels of use of the coast, and a high importance placed on the coast by the community. Surf breaks are an important element of Auckland’s coastal environment and warrant specific consideration in the resource management of the region.

Surf breaks are a relevant matter for inclusion in the Unitary Plan at a regional policy statement level and regional plan level. As discussed in section 2.2 of this report, activities in the CMA, such as dredging or structure installation, can affect the processes which result in surfable waves forming. Land-based sources of contamination (sediment, nutrients, pathogens) can affect the use and enjoyment of a surf break. Activities on land, such as development and vegetation clearance, can also impact upon the surfing experience and access to surfing locations. Therefore, maintenance of surf breaks is dependent on the integrated management of activities both in the CMA and on the adjacent land.

Surf breaks are a result of natural features and processes, and therefore should be considered in the development of AUP provisions relating to outstanding natural features and effects on other natural features.

In developing provisions around surf breaks in the AUP, consideration is required of all activity types to be included in the AUP which have the potential to affect surf breaks. This includes:

- extraction (seabed mining)
- dredging
- disposal and deposition (dredge spoil or other material, beach replenishment)
- structures (e.g. seawalls, breakwaters, marinas)
- discharge of contaminants (to land, streams, or directly into the coastal marine area, and
- reclamation.

The requirement to consider potential effects on surf breaks should be included under policies specific to these activity types.

Additionally, surf breaks can be elements of, or contained within provisions and mapping relating to the following overlays:

- Outstanding Natural Character
- High Natural Character
- Outstanding Natural Features
- Amenity Landscapes
- Significant Ecological Areas

Therefore, policies specific to these overlays or values should include reference to surf breaks.

3.1 Proposed policies

It is proposed that a surf break-specific policy be included in the draft AUP RPS and that other draft policies for the regional plan level be modified so that they incorporate consideration of surf breaks. The proposed wording is as follows (additions shown with underlining):

Tier 1 (RPS): Surf breaks

Protecting surf breaks

Maintain and enhance the natural character, landscape, recreational, amenity, and economic values of surf breaks by having particular regard to any existing and potential effects of activities on land or in the coastal marine area on access to, and

use and enjoyment of surf breaks. This includes effects on water quality, and on any coastal processes, currents, water levels, seabed morphology and swell corridors that contribute to surf breaks.

Reference to 'regionally significant' surf breaks has been removed from the version in the ARC's draft ARPS in order for the policy to be applicable to all surf breaks in the region, not just those identified in the AUP.

Tier 1 (RPS): Natural character

Coastal Environment – Identification of significant areas:

Policy: Identify areas of Outstanding and High Natural Character by using the following assessment criteria, to enable the protection of their natural character values:

iv. water bodies, coastal processes.... and surf breaks;

Coastal Environment Overlay – Outstanding and High Natural Character:

Policy: Protect the physical and visual integrity and natural character of areas of outstanding and high natural character value by: ...

v. maintaining the integrity of landforms, geological features.... and surf breaks.

Tier 2 (regional coastal plan): Coastal use and development

Structures

Require structures be designed to avoid adverse impacts on regionally significant surf breaks.

Tier 2 (regional coastal plan): Activities

Sand extraction

- a. *By ensuring that proposals for mineral extraction activities from the coastal marine area demonstrate that the activity will not result in:*
- *significant adverse changes to bathymetry, foreshore contours, sediment particle size or physical coastal processes; and*
 - *significant adverse disturbance to surrounding sediments or significantly increase turbidity, and will avoid significant adverse effects on biota caused by the release of contaminants; and*
 - *the permanent loss of any habitat of a rare or endangered species; and*
 - *exacerbate coastal erosion either within the coastal marine area or on adjacent coastal land; and*
 - *significant damage to or destruction of marine flora and fauna, including benthic and pelagic species of fin fish and shellfish, and will enable re-colonisation by the benthic species present before extraction took place; and*

- *significant adverse effects on the recreational and amenity values of the area; and*
- *significant adverse effects on significant surf breaks; and*
- *significant adverse effect on Tangata Whenua values.*

Dredging

- By ensuring that dredging is avoided where it would result in an adverse effect on the values of any Coastal Protection Area 1, Tangata Whenua Management Area or area scheduled for preservation in Cultural Heritage Schedule 1.*
- By ensuring that:*
 - the redevelopment of existing navigation channels, wharves, piers and berths; and*
 - the development of new facilities;*

is designed and located so that the need for capital works and maintenance dredging is minimised as far as possible.

- By ensuring that proposals for dredging demonstrate:*
 - That there are no practicable alternative methods, locations or designs for the activity which would avoid or reduce the need for dredging.*
 - That any resulting turbidity is localised and limited in duration to ensure there are no long term adverse effects on the surrounding environment and associated biota.*
 - That the activity will not cause or exacerbate coastal erosion within the coastal marine area or on adjacent coastal land.*
 - That the activity will not result in any adverse effects on any significant surf break.*
 - That the activity will not result in the permanent loss of any habitat of a rare or endangered species.*

Marinas

The assessment of new marinas outside existing Marina Management Areas shall have particular regard to:

...

- Effects on regionally significant surf breaks.*

Tier 2 (regional plan): Public access and open space

Coastal public access

- Require subdivision, use, and development to be located and designed to maintain and enhance public access to, along and within the CMA.*

2. *Provide for public open space within and adjacent to the coastal marine area by:*
 - a. *recognising the importance of the coastal environment as an area of public space;*
 - b. *ensuring public open space is designed, managed and located to be compatible with the natural character, natural features and landscape, and amenity values of the coastal environment;*
 - c. *meeting the future needs of communities for public open space in the coastal environment;*
 - d. *maintaining and enhancing linkages between public open space areas in the coastal environment;*
 - e. *planning for the effects of coastal processes and climate change to ensure that future need for public open space is not compromised; and*
 - f. *acquiring esplanade reserves and strips in recognition of the contribution that they can have to meeting public open space needs; and*
 - g. *maintaining access to surf breaks.*
3. *Provide for opportunities to enhance or restore public walking access, including by:*
 - a. *ensuring access is practical, safe and free of charge;*
 - b. *identifying areas of, or having the potential for, high amenity or recreational value, including areas adjacent to surf breaks;*
 - c. *promoting walking access information through media such as website, brochures and signs;*
 - d. *providing for access to areas of particular, or potential, value for educational, scientific, cultural or historic reasons;*
 - e. *providing linkages between public open space areas;*
 - f. *identifying where physical access for people with disabilities is desirable;*
 - g. *avoiding restrictions on public access except where necessary as defined under Policy 4;*
 - h. *considering the likely effects of climate change and natural hazards on future public walking access requirements.*
4. *Provide for public access to, along and within the CMA except where restriction is necessary:*
 - a. *to protect threatened indigenous species or significant ecological areas; or*
 - b. *to protect identified sites, values, and activities of significance to Tangata Whenua; or*
 - c. *to protect historic heritage or natural heritage values; or*
 - d. *to protect public health or safety; or*

- e. to manage potential conflict between public uses of the CMA and its margins; or*
- f. for temporary activities or special events; or*
- g. to provide for defence purposes; or*
- h. to ensure a level of security consistent with the purpose of a resource consent; or*
- i. in other exceptional circumstances sufficient to justify the restriction notwithstanding the national importance of maintaining that access.*

3.2 Identification of significant surf breaks

A list of 35 Auckland 'significant' surf breaks was compiled from those listed in the Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide (2004), surfing websites, and local knowledge of council officers. Four of the breaks identified in the ARC 2009/10 RPS review were not included in the Unitary Plan list of significant surf breaks, as they rated lower than the other breaks in terms of overall values that could be attributed to them.

Other lesser known and less frequently surfed breaks also exist in the Auckland region, which are not included in the list of 35 to be identified in the AUP. If any surf break not identified in the AUP were to be threatened by any proposed activity or works, the generic policy around maintaining and enhancing the values of surf breaks would be applied.

3.2.1 Surf break criteria (internal council assessment)

A list of values was developed to assess each break, including both physical and social qualities, based on published information sources and council staff knowledge, and as detailed below. Identification of these values will assist in future consent processes considering how a proposed activity may impact on a particular surf break.

Physical and natural values:

1. Wave quality (height, length, peel angle, etc). When optimum conditions are present. This is independent of 'swell consistency'. In determining a wave quality rating, guidance was taken from the Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide (2004) "stoke rating", and internal council expert knowledge applied. The rating for each break is based upon when optimum conditions are present.
2. Frequency/consistency of surfable conditions. Sites which are able to be surfed frequently throughout the year are rated higher than those which only break occasionally.
3. Capacity. Spread out breaks which can accommodate more surfers rate higher than breaks which have a smaller 'surfable' area. Therefore the

longer beach breaks will rate higher in terms of capacity than defined reef breaks which have a small 'take off' area.

4. Suitability as a 'nursery' break. That is value of a break for learners or novices. Learners or novices represent a significant percentage of the surfing population. 'Nursery' breaks are an important resource to these surfers.
5. Naturalness. Indicates the level of naturalness retained (or lack of development), and value as a wilderness experience. Some breaks are valued for their sense of remoteness and natural surroundings, and this adds to the surfing experience.

A number of the surf breaks are located within or adjacent to the current draft 'outstanding/high natural character', 'outstanding natural landscapes', and 'outstanding natural features' overlays, as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of surf breaks and areas identified as outstanding/high natural character, outstanding natural landscape or outstanding natural features.

Name	Outstanding/ High Natural Character	Outstanding Natural Landscape	Outstanding Natural Features (i.e. the adjacent dune field or rocky intertidal foreshore area)
Te Arai Beach (including 'Black Swamp')	yes	yes	yes (dune field)
Pakiri Beach (North - 'Forestry')	yes	yes	yes (dune field)
Pakiri Beach (South)	yes	yes	yes (dune field)
Goat Island	yes	yes	yes (dune field)
Daniels Reef (Leigh)	no	no	yes (cliff/reef)
Boulders (Leigh)	yes	yes	yes (southern intertidal reef/island)
Omaha Beach and Bar	no	yes	yes (northern end of spit)
Tawharanui	yes	yes	yes (dunes)
Orewa Beach	no	no	no
Orewa Bar	no	no	no
Red Beach	no	no	no
Long Bay Reef	no	no	no
Milford Beach and Reef	no	no	no
ONeills Reef (Takapuna)	no	yes	yes (reef)
North Reef (Takapuna)	no	yes	yes (reef)
Takapuna Beach and South Reef	no	no	no
Orere Point	no	yes	no

Name	Outstanding/ High Natural Character	Outstanding Natural Landscape	Outstanding Natural Features (i.e. the adjacent dune field or rocky intertidal foreshore area)
Rimmers Road	yes	yes	yes (dune field)
Muriwai Beach (South)	no	yes	yes (dune field)
Maori Bay	no	no	yes (headlands/cliff/rock platforms)
Bethells Beach	yes	yes	yes (headlands/rock platforms)
ONeill Bay	yes	yes	yes (headlands/rock platforms/islands)
Anawhata	yes	yes	yes (headlands/dunes)
Whites Beach	yes	yes	yes (headlands/dunes)
Piha	no	yes	yes (southern foreshore/Lion Rock/rock platforms)
Karekare	yes	yes	yes (rocky headlands/cliffs/dunes)
Whatipu	yes	yes	yes (dune/foreshore area)
Kariotahi Beach	yes	yes	no
Whangapoua (Okiwi)	yes	yes	yes (estuary/sandspit)
Awana Bay	no	yes	no
Palmers Beach	yes	yes	no
Kaitoke Beach	yes	yes	no
Medlands Beach / Shark Alley	no	yes	no
Onetangi Beach	no	no	no
Palm Beach	no	no	no

6. Rarity. Relates to whether the break type is geomorphically rare for the region. Break types include: headland or point break, beach breaks, bar breaks, and reef breaks.

Social, economic, cultural values:

7. Level of use. Based on a general assessment of how many surfers typically surf each particular break when it is 'surfable', taking into account the 'capacity' of the break. That is, a break such as North Reef (Takapuna) which rates low in terms of capacity, is typically surfed to near or full capacity when it is surfable.
8. Amenity. Reflects ease of access, presence of ancillary services and facilities (e.g. car parks, toilets/changing sheds, surf clubs, nearby accommodation and shops). (Amenity values were taken out of the final ranking of values attributed to surf breaks, as amenity values do not contribute directly to the quality of a surf break.)

9. Local significance. Relates to whether the break is a key aspect of the local sense of place or community, or contributes significantly to the local economy.
10. Site recognition. Value as a national / internationally recognised site (competition site, attracts tourists, frequently cited in surfing guides). Sites with frequent competitions and mentions in guides rate higher than those that are only locally known.

Some of the above values can be directly compared to answers received to the 'Surf Breaks User Survey', as detailed below.

3.2.2 Auckland Council 'surf breaks user survey'

A 'surf breaks user survey' was undertaken to provide evidence for the weighting of values attributed to surf breaks as assessed by users of those breaks, and to gather information around which surf breaks are most popular and the reasons people surf the breaks they do.

The survey which was run online between 27 February 2012 and 18 March 2012, was forwarded to surfing contacts, distributed via social networking sites, and advertised on surf reporting and forecasting websites.

A total of 1,452 surveys were completed.

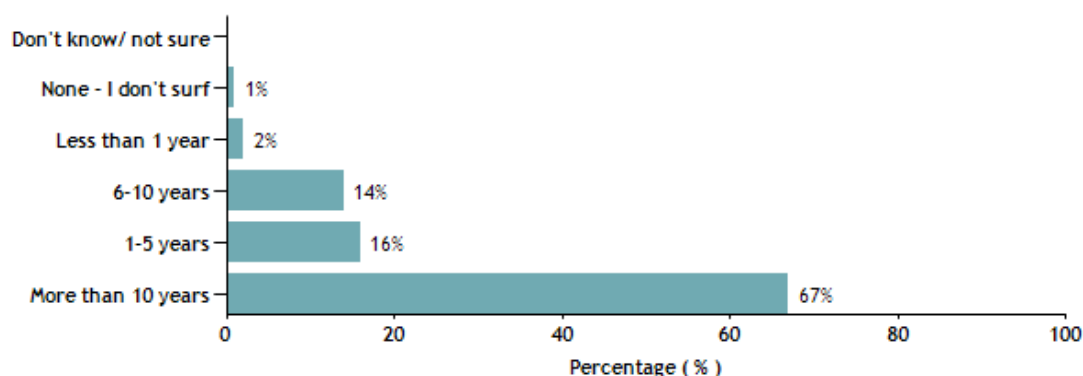
A copy of the survey is included as **Appendix A**.

The responses to each survey question are summarised in the following sections of this report.

Question 1A – Surfing experience

"How long have you been surfing for?"

Results:



With 81% of respondents having 6 or more years surfing experience, and 67% having more than 10 years experience, the majority of survey respondents could be considered well experienced surfers.

Question 1B – Surfer home locations

“What city/town and suburb do you live in?”

While the vast majority of survey respondents listed Auckland as home, others came from all regions of New Zealand, and from places as far away as Australia, South Africa, China and Sweden.

Question 2 – Surf break identification

Thirty nine surf breaks were listed in the survey. These are considered the most surfed and well known breaks in the region. In addition to the 35 ‘significant surf breaks’ identified by council staff, four additional breaks were listed. These were Hamilton’s Gap and Cochran’s Gap on the Awhitu Peninsula, Waiwera Reef, and Fishermans Reef. Survey results identified that these breaks were significantly less popular than the 35 ‘significant surf breaks’. It is considered that this supports the approach of limiting the surf breaks identified in the AUP to the listed 35.

All the breaks in the survey, other than Hamilton’s Gap, Cochran’s Gap, Palm Beach and Onetangi, are listed in the ‘Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide’.

From the list of 39 breaks, survey respondents were asked to select:

“The surf breaks you have surfed in the last 12 months (tick all that apply)”; and *“Up to 5 of your favourite surf breaks (select no more than 5)”*

Results:

Table 2: Surf break user survey – Surf breaks surfed in the last 12 months and favourite surf breaks.

	Surfed at in the last 12 months (please tick all that apply)		Favourite surf breaks (select no more than 5)	
	Count	%	Count	%
1 - Te Arai Beach (including Pacific Road access point 'Black Swamp')	969	67	675	47
2 - Pakiri Beach (north – ‘Forestry’)	923	64	627	44
3 – Pakiri Beach (south)	550	38	194	14
4 - Goat Island	238	17	82	6
5 - Leigh (Daniels Reef)	465	32	264	18
6 - Leigh (Boulders)	151	11	39	3
7 - Omaha (beach and bar)	666	46	174	12
8 - Tawharanui	798	56	391	27
9 - Waiwera Reef	35	2	2	0
10 - Orewa Beach	363	25	91	6
11 - Orewa Bar	231	16	88	6
12 - Red Beach	139	10	25	2
13 - Fishermans Reef (Whangaparoa)	25	2	7	0
14 - Long Bay Reef	97	7	49	3
15 - Milford Beach/Reef	188	13	45	3
16 - O’Neills Reef (Takapuna)	147	10	20	1
17 - Takapuna North Reef	187	13	53	4

18 - Takapuna Beach and South Reef	222	15	32	2
19 - Orere Point	69	5	32	2
20 - Rimmers Road (Muriwai Beach)	497	35	141	10
21 - Muriwai Beach	917	64	424	30
22 - Maori Bay	858	60	527	37
23 - Bethells Beach	517	36	188	13
24 - O'Neills Bay	488	34	210	15
25 - Anawhata	224	16	89	6
26 - Whites Beach	133	9	29	2
27 - Piha	1,000	70	736	51
28 - Karekare	577	40	334	23
29 - Whatipu	193	13	25	2
30 - Hamilton's Gap (Awhitu Peninsula)	39	3	17	1
31 - Cochran's Gap (Awhitu Peninsula)	18	1	11	1
32 - Karioitahi	108	8	30	2
33 - Whangapoua (Okiwi)	190	13	227	16
34 - Awana Bay (Great Barrier Island)	154	11	76	5
35 - Palmers Beach (Great Barrier Island)	66	5	16	1
36 - Kaitoke Beach (Great Barrier Island)	126	9	44	3
37 - Medlands Beach / Shark Alley (Great Barrier Island)	171	12	93	6
38 - Onetangi (Waiheke Island)	59	4	15	1
39 - Palm Beach (Waiheke Island)	43	3	11	1
40 - None of the above	18	1	11	1

The ten spots that came out on top in terms of '*surfing in the last 12 months*' were:

1. Piha
2. Te Arai Beach (includes Pacific Road access point 'Black Swamp')
3. Pakiri Beach (north – 'Forestry')
4. Muriwai Beach (south)
5. Maori Bay
6. Tawharanui
7. Omaha (beach and bar)
8. Karekare
9. Pakiri Beach (south)
10. Bethells Beach

The bottom three spots in terms of '*surfing in the last 12 months*' were:

37. Waiwera Reef
38. Fishermans Reef (Whangaparaoa)
39. Cochran's Gap (Awhitu Peninsula)

The ten spots that ranked highest in terms of '*chosen favourite breaks*' were:

1. Piha
2. Te Arai Beach (includes Pacific Road access point 'Black Swamp')
3. Pakiri Beach (north – 'Forestry')
4. Maori Bay
5. Muriwai Beach (south)
6. Tawharanui

7. Karekare
8. Leigh (Daniels Reef)
9. Whangapoua (Okiwi)
10. O'Neill Bay

The bottom three spots were:

37. Palm Beach (Waiheke Island)
38. Cochran's Gap (Awhitu Peninsula)
39. Fishermans Reef (Whangaparoa)

Comments

Breaks that came out on top are typically easily accessible spots that produce surfable and higher quality conditions on a relatively consistent frequency.

Whangapoua (Okiwi) on Great Barrier island is an isolated less-accessible break that rates highly in terms 'chosen favourite breaks'. However, this spot produces arguably the highest quality waves in the region, with a wave quality score of 9/10 in the 'Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide'.

What is also evident in the results is the popularity of some nursery, or learners type waves. Omaha, Tawharanui and Orewa Beach which are typically suitable for learners or novice surfers rated in the top 15 for both 'surfing in the last 12 months' and 'chosen favourite breaks' categories.

Breaks that ranked lowest were either remote isolated breaks, such as the Awhitu Peninsula breaks, or those with a low level of consistency in terms of surfable conditions.

Survey respondents answered the following seven questions specific to their chosen top five favourite breaks.

Question 3 – Favourite breaks ranking

"Please rank your favourite five breaks from 1st to 5th, where 1st is your favourite break".

This question allowed a further break down in terms of how often a break was chosen by respondents as one of their top five breaks.

For example, the following breaks came out as the most commonly chosen number one favourite break:

1. Piha
2. Te Arai Beach (includes Pacific Road access point 'Black Swamp')
3. Pakiri Beach (north – 'Forestry')
4. Maori Bay
5. Muriwai Beach (south)

Comments

These are the same breaks that came out in the top five for question two – ‘*chosen favourite breaks*’. These are spots that produce surfable and higher quality conditions on a relatively consistent frequency.

It is noted that while Te Arai and Pakiri beaches are relatively accessible, these breaks are a significant distance from any urban areas. It can be assumed that the majority of users of these breaks will drive for more than an hour to surf them.

Question 4 – Favourite breaks surfing frequency

“How often do you surf each break”.

It can be considered that surfing an individual break on an at least once a month basis is a ‘high frequency of usage’.

The following breaks came out highest in terms of survey respondents surfing them on an ‘at least once a month basis’:

1. Piha
2. Muriwai Beach (south)
3. Maori Bay
4. Bethells Beach
5. Karekare
5. Oneill Bay
6. Orewa Bar
7. Muriwai Beach (Rimmers Road)
8. Orewa Beach
9. Te Arai Beach (includes Pacific Road access point ‘Black Swamp’)
10. Pakiri Beach (north – ‘Forestry’)

Taking less often than monthly as a ‘low frequency of usage’, the following came out as the bottom three in terms of frequency of usage:

37. Medlands Beach/Shark Alley
38. Whangapoua Beach (Okiwi)
39. Orere Point

Comments

Eight of the top ten most frequently surfed breaks are sites that frequently have surfable conditions relative to other Auckland breaks.

The occurrence of Orewa Beach and Orewa Bar in the top ten emphasises the popularity of these nursery or learner waves. It can be assumed that the majority of times survey respondents are surfing Orewa on a ‘once a month or more frequency’, wave conditions will be small and of low energy.

While two of the least frequently surfed breaks provide relatively consistently surfable conditions, being located on Great Barrier Island they are isolated with small local communities. The third spot, Orere Point, is an inconsistent break, and also relatively isolated in location.

Question 5 – Surf break usage

“Typically, how many people do you see surfing the following surf breaks?”

Sixteen or more people typically observed surfing a particular break is taken as evidence that a break is relatively well surfed.

Using the sixteen or more observed surfers at a break rating, the following breaks were highest in terms of numbers of people observed surfing them:

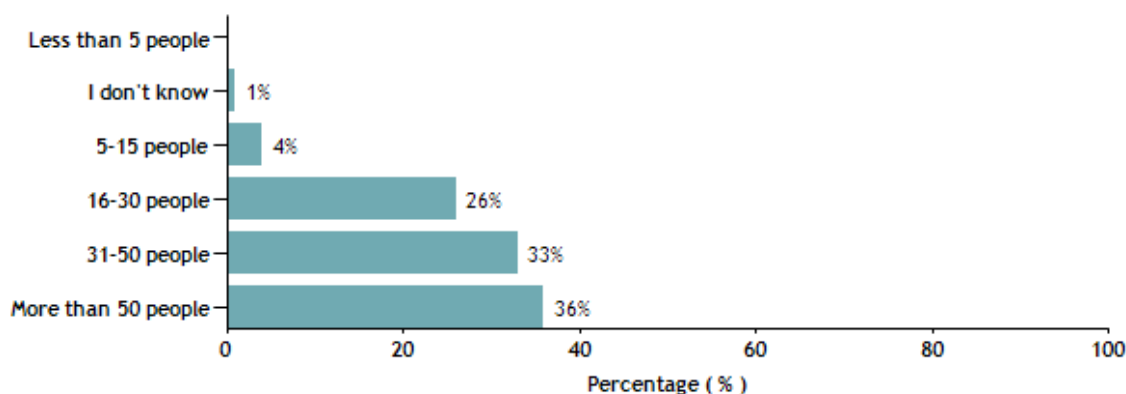
1. Piha
2. Muriwai Beach
3. Orewa Beach
4. Maori Bay
5. Takapuna (Beach and South Reef)
6. Te Arai Beach
7. Orewa Bar
8. Pakiri Beach (north – Forestry)
9. Milford Beach/Reef
10. Omaha Beach-Bar

The following breaks came out at zero in terms of respondents who typically observed more than 16 people surfing these breaks:

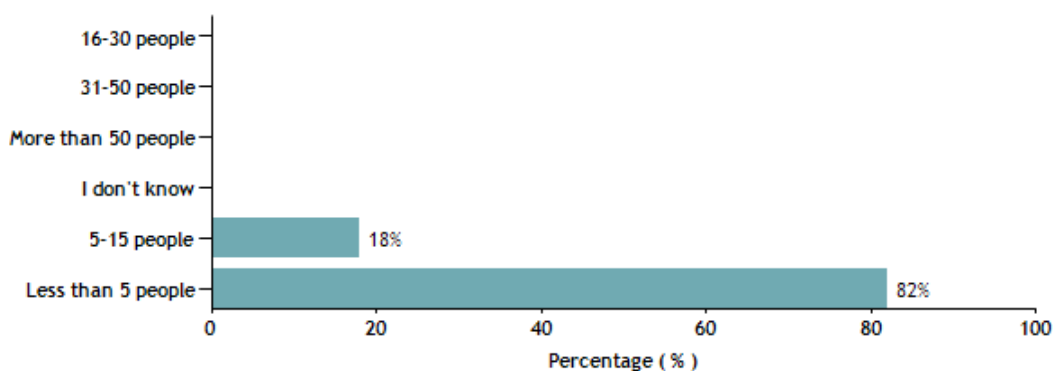
Waiwera Reef
Whites Beach
Cochrans Gap
Palmers Beach

Graphed examples of results:

Piha



Cochran's Gap (Awhitu Peninsula)



Comments

Piha came out strongly on top. This is to be expected as Piha is Auckland's iconic surfing beach, is relatively accessible from the city, and produces surfable waves on a high frequency basis (see Q.6 below). Muriwai and Maori Bay, which also rate highly, are also well known accessible breaks that produce surfable waves on a high frequency basis. These breaks also have a high surfing population amongst the local community.

Other more urban breaks, e.g. Orewa, Takapuna and Milford, which produce infrequent lower quality waves, also rate highly in terms of numbers of surfers observed. This shows that these breaks are highly utilised when breaking due to their accessible urban location.

Question 6 – Frequency of surfable conditions

“How would you rate these surf breaks in terms of frequency of ‘surfable’ conditions?”

The breaks that came out on top in terms of users rating them as either ‘consistent/frequent’ or ‘almost always surfable’ were:

1. Piha
2. Maori Bay
3. Muriwai Beach (south)
4. Oneill Bay
5. Karekare
6. Bethells
7. Muriwai
8. Awana
9. Muriwai Beach (Rimmers Road)
10. Kariotahi

Comments

The breaks which rate highest in terms of frequency of surfable conditions are all exposed open coast high energy beach breaks.

Question 7 – Wave quality

“How would you rate these breaks in terms of overall wave quality when optimum conditions (shape, height, length etc) are present?”

The breaks that came out on top in terms of users rating them on wave quality as either ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ in terms of wave quality were:

1. Whangapoua (Okiwi)
2. Leigh (Daniels Reef)
3. Kaitoke
4. Piha
5. Awana Bay
6. Medlands Beach / Shark Alley
7. Maori Bay
8. Orere Point
9. Karekare
10. Pakiri (north – ‘Forestry’)

Comments

As the question was worded “when optimum conditions are present”, survey participants tended to score even the low quality breaks relatively highly. The ratings given by survey respondents are often significantly higher than the ‘stoke ratings’ for the same breaks in the Wave Track New Zealand Surfing Guide, and the internal expert assessment.

It is noted that the Auckland region lacks higher quality reef or bar breaks which can provide higher quality waves on a more frequent basis. Whangapoua (Okiwi), Daniels Reef, and Orere Point which rate highly are, however, examples of these.

Some of breaks that came out on top are sand bottom beach breaks which require a number of variables to come together to form high quality waves. Such optimum conditions may be relatively infrequent in occurrence.

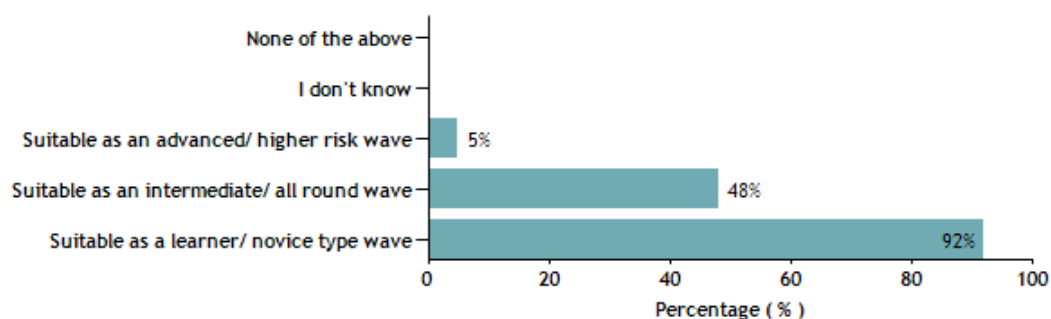
It may have been better to ask respondents to rate breaks wave quality on average rather than when optimum conditions are present.

Question 8 – expertise levels

“Please indicate which surf breaks are suitable for the following levels of expertise: Learner/novice; intermediate/all-round wave; advanced or higher risk.”

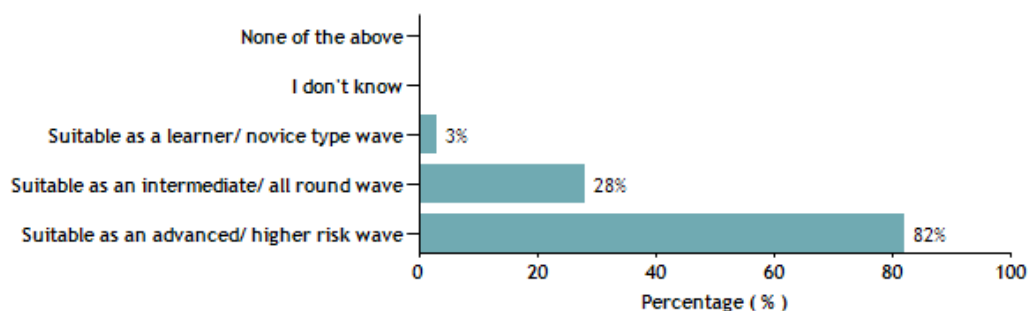
While surf breaks with higher quality or more advance waves have historically been given more recognition and higher value ratings, waves ‘suitable to learners or novices’ are highly utilised and popular for a significant percentage of the surfing population. For example, Orewa Beach which provides long, gentle breaking waves, and hence was identified as a learner/novice wave, also rated highly in terms of frequency people surf it, and numbers of other surfers observed surfing it. Other beaches which also provide waves suitable for learners or novices, such as Takapuna, Red Beach, and Omaha were also rated by survey participants for this reason.

Orewa Beach



West coast beach breaks which typically break with a lot of power and are high energy environments were recognised in the results as ‘advanced or higher risk waves’. However, the two spots that rated highest in the ‘advanced or higher risk wave’ category were the Leigh reef breaks known as Daniels Reef and Boulders.

Boulders (Leigh)

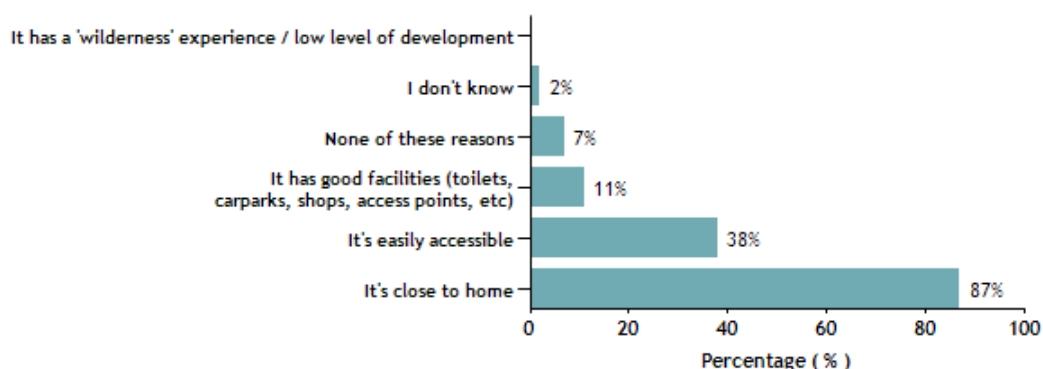


Question 9 – Key reasons for choosing a surf break

“Which of the following statements is a reason why you choose to go to each surf break: Close to home; easily accessible; has a ‘wilderness’ experience/low level of development; has good facilities (toilets, carparks, shops, access points, etc.)”

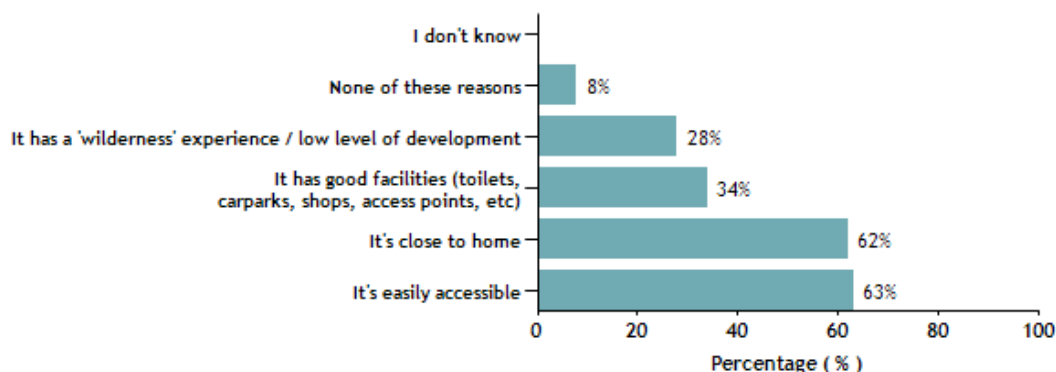
The most urbanised breaks of Orewa, Takapuna and Milford rated highest under the ‘close to home’ and ‘easily accessible’ categories.

Milford Reef/Beach



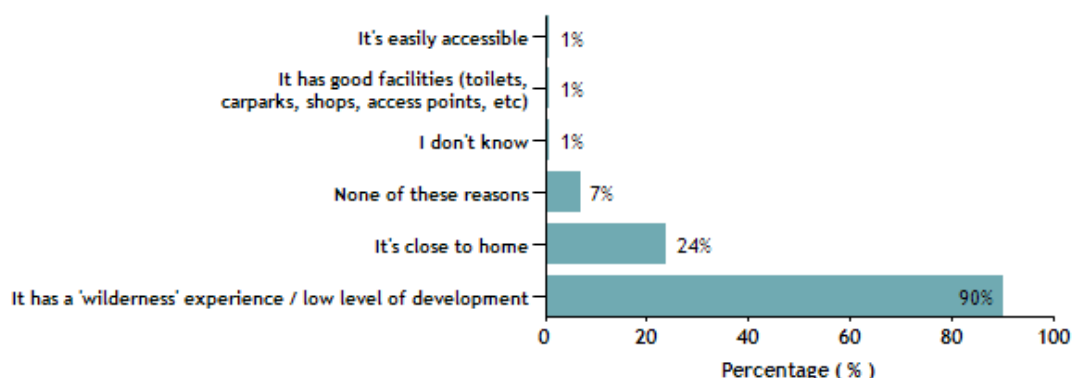
The breaks of Muriwai/Maori Bay, Bethells Beach and Piha where there is a strong local community also rated relatively high in terms of the ‘close to home’ and ‘easily accessible’ categories. These surf breaks can be considered part of these communities’ local identity.

Muriwai Beach



In terms of a 'wilderness experience/low level of development' the isolated breaks of Anawhata and Whites Beach, which are backed by dramatic cliffs and Waitakere Ranges forest, rated highest. These were followed by the Great Barrier Island breaks which are also isolated and typically backed by dramatic landscapes and lack of development. These sites also have high landscape ratings under the regional coastal plan.

Anawhata



The response in terms of 'has good facilities' was as expected in relation to the level of facilities present at each break. For example breaks such as Anawhata, Whatipu, Cochrans Gap, and Palmers Beach which in terms of facilities only have car parks received no or very few ratings in terms of 'has good facilities'. Breaks which rated highly in terms of has 'good facilities' include Orewa Beach, Muriwai Beach (South) and Piha. These breaks have extensive car parking, surf clubs, toilet and changing facilities, adjacent shops and extensive reserve space.

Question 10 – Other reasons for choosing a surf break

“For what other reason do you choose to go to your favourite surf breaks?”

In general respondents provided similar reasons to the question nine categories. Additional reasons people identified for going to favourite breaks included: wave quality, clean water, good beach to take family, lack of surfers, and to surf with friends.

“My in-laws live nearby so my wife can visit them while I’m surfing (so I can spend less time with them).”

Question 11 – Other comments

“Do you have any other comments you would like to make about Auckland’s surf breaks and/or the Council’s planning controls?”

Sixty six per cent (960 respondents) provided extra comments. These were categorised into the ten most popular topics, as follows:

1. Concern regarding further coastal development. (Came out overwhelmingly on top. A large number of respondents included specific comments around Te Arai.)
2. Appreciate existing facilities at surf breaks, or would like to see additional facilities.
3. Concerned about pollution or poor water quality.
4. Concerns in regards to potential effects on surf breaks of sand extraction or dredging operations.
5. Appreciate lack of development, or wilderness values at certain breaks.
6. Access to surf breaks (positive or negative, including roading, access tracks).
7. Support expressed for artificial reefs or structures for the purpose of enhancing wave quality.
8. Concern regarding potential for new coastal structures to adversely affect surf breaks.
9. Commented that surfing is continuing to grow, with more surfers.
10. Identified the economic values of surfbreaks/and or surfing.

Survey summary

From the survey results it is possible to identify the different values that users associate with each break. For example, while isolated breaks came out lower in terms of usage and sometimes popularity, they often rated higher in terms of wilderness values and consistency of surfable conditions. The popularity and high usage of ‘urban’ breaks, which are typically inconsistent and of low wave quality, was apparent. While the more accessible and consistent breaks, which also have high

landscape values, such as the west coast beaches, and Te Arai and Pakiri on the north east coast, came out on top in terms of overall popularity.

The survey provides evidence from the users of Auckland surf breaks that they are highly valued recreational resources. This provides an excellent evidence base and justification for including provisions around surf breaks in the AUP.

3.2.3 Values of each surf break

The table below identifies the rated values attributed to each of the 35 surf breaks, based on the internal council staff assessment and the results of the surf breaks user survey. The listed values are:

- **Wave quality** = using the Wavetrack NZ Surfing Guide "stoke rating", and internal expert knowledge.
- **Frequency** = occurrence of surfable conditions
- **Capacity** = breaks which accommodate more surfers rate higher
- **Suitability as a nursery break** (internal assessment) = value of break for learners or novices
- **Suitability as a nursery break** (survey) = question 8 - % who rated break suitable as a 'learner/ novice type wave'.
- **Naturalness** (internal assessment) = lack of development, remoteness, or wilderness experience.
- **Naturalness** (survey) = question 9 - % who rated break as 'wilderness experience/ low level of development' as reason to visit break.
- **Rarity** = rarity of (geomorphic) wave type for Auckland.
- **Level of use** (survey) = average of 'surfing in last 12 months' (q.2) and '% of respondents that surfed breaks frequently' (q.4) answers.
- **Local significance** = whether the break is part of the local sense of place or community, or contributes to the local economy.
- **Top 5 favourite break** (survey) = % that break was chosen as a top 5 break
- **Site recognition** = value as a nationally/internationally recognised site (competition site, in surfing guides)

Table 3 Surf break values from the internal council staff assessment and the survey data (Note: ¹ Internal assessment, ² From survey).

Surf Break	Wave Quality ¹	Frequency ¹	Capacity ¹	Suitability as a 'nursery' break ¹	Suitability as a 'nursery' break ²	Naturalness ¹	Naturalness ²	Rarity ¹	Level of use ²	Local significance ¹	Top 5 favourite break ²	Site recognition ¹	Average	Total
Te Arai Beach (including 'Blackswamp')	7	7	9	6	4.4	8	7.7	2	5.5	3	4.8	6	7.8	70.4
Pakiri Beach (North - 'Forestry')	7	7	9	6	4.4	8	8	2	5.3	3	4.4	6	7.8	70.1
Pakiri Beach (south)	7	7	10	6	3.9	8	7.4	2	3.7	3	1.4	5	7.2	64.4
Goat Island	7	4	3	1	0.7	8	5	4	1.4	3	0.6	3	4.5	40.7
Boulders (Leigh)	7	5	4	2	0.3	7	6.7	4	1	2	0.3	1	4.5	40.3
Daniels Reef (Leigh)	8	4	4	1	0.2	6	3.4	4	2.5	5	1.9	4	4.9	44
Omaha Beach-Bar	5	3	8	9	6.7	4	0.4	3	4.2	7	1.2	3	6.1	54.5
Tawharanui	6	5	7	7	6.5	9	7.2	2	3.9	2	2.8	3	6.8	61.4
Orewa Beach	2	2	8	10	9.2	2	0.1	2	3.4	5	0.6	2	5.1	46.3
Orewa Bar	4	2	4	8	6.6	2	0.2	6	3.5	5	1.2	2	4.9	44.5
Red Beach	1	2	6	10	8	2	0.4	2	2	4	0.2	2	4.4	39.6
Long Bay Reef	6	1	3	2	1.6	2	1.2	4	0.8	2	0.3	1	2.8	24.9
Milford Beach/Reef	5	1	3	4	3.8	1	0	4	1.3	2	0.3	1	2.9	26.4
O'Neills Reef (Takapuna)	5	1	2	2	1.5	1	0.5	4	2	2	0.1	1	2.5	22.1
Takapuna North Reef	5	1	2	2	2.6	1	0	4	1.3	4	0.4	3	2.9	26.3
Takapuna Beach and South Reef	3	1	6	9	8.1	1	0.3	2	2	2	0.2	1	4.0	35.6

Surf breaks provisions in the Auckland Unitary Plan

Orere Point	5	2	4	4	6.2	7	3.1	8	0.4	2	0.2	1	4.8	42.9
Rimmers Road (Muriwai)	7	8	10	2	0.9	8	6.9	2	4.2	3	1	3	6.2	56
Muriwai Beach (South)	7	8	10	3	2.7	7	2.8	2	6.6	8	3	6	7.3	66.1
Maori Bay	8	8	7	2	1	7	3.1	2	6.2	8	3.7	8	7.1	64
O'Neill Bay	7	8	7	4	1.3	9	6.8	2	4.4	6	1.5	5	6.9	62
Bethells Beach	7	8	8	2	1.2	8	6.5	2	4.8	7	1.3	5	6.8	60.8
Anawhata	7	8	7	2	0.9	10	9	2	2.1	1	0.6	2	5.7	51.6
Whites Beach	7	8	7	2	0.3	10	8.6	2	1.3	1	0.2	1	5.4	48.4
Piha	8	8	9	2	2.2	6	3	3	7	10	5.2	10	8.2	73.4
Karekare	7	8	8	2	1	8	7.2	2	4.8	7	2.4	5	6.9	62.4
Whatipu	6	3	7	3	2	9	7.6	2	1.5	1	0.2	2	4.9	44.3
Karioitahi	6	8	10	2	1.3	8	6.7	2	3.8	2	0.2	2	5.8	52
Whangapoua (Okiwi)	9	6	5	3	0.9	9	8.5	6	0.9	5	1.6	6	6.8	60.9
Awana	7	7	6	6	1.6	8	8	2	0.9	5	0.5	4	6.2	56
Palmers Beach	7	7	6	6	3.1	8	8.1	2	0.9	5	0.1	4	6.4	57.2
Kaitoke Beach	7	7	6	6	1.6	8	8.4	2	0.9	5	0.3	4	6.2	56.2
Medlands Beach / Shark Alley	8	7	7	6	2.9	8	7.1	2	1	5	0.7	4	6.5	58.7
Onetangi	4	2	6	9	6	4	0	2	2.2	3	0.1	1	4.4	39.3
Palm Beach	4	2	4	9	5.5	4	1.8	2	1	3	0.1	1	4.2	37.4

The above table enables the relative values of each break to be identified. Individual breaks will rate highly against some criteria, and low against other criteria. For example the west coast beaches rate highly in terms of wave quality, frequency and wilderness values, however, they rate low in terms of suitability as 'nursery' breaks. Orewa and Omaha rate highly in terms of suitability as a 'nursery break', and low in terms of wave quality, frequency and wilderness values.

A comparison of the internal wave quality rating and survey derived wave quality ratings was not included. This is due to ratings given by survey respondents were often significantly higher than the 'stoke ratings' for the same breaks in the Wave Track New Zealand Surfing Guide, and the internal expert assessment.

It is recommended that a summary of the values identified in the table above be included in the AUP as part of a schedule listing the significant surf breaks. Proposed wording for the schedule is attached as **Appendix B**¹.

3.3 Mapping of surf breaks

The extent of the surf break areas was mapped based on the spatial area within which the activity of surfing occurs at each break. This takes into account the maximum distance offshore and alongshore where surfable waves will break for each of the 35 identified sites. Maps of each surf break are attached as **Appendix C**.

The surf break sites range from relatively well defined reef breaks, such as Daniels Reef or North Reef Takapuna, to the most frequently surfed sections of long stretches of exposed breaches such Muriwai and Pakiri. For the Muriwai, Te Arai, Pakiri and Kariotahi breaks, mapped "significant surfbreak" areas where people typically surf are adjacent to the main beach access points. The length of the mapped area is the distance people typically walk along the beaches to surf – 1.5km or 15-20 minutes either way. There are significant lengths of these beaches which are still surfable, and accessible if people wish to walk further, arrive from sea, or drive along the beach if vehicle access points become available.

The NZCPS 2010 definition of a 'surf break' includes 'swell corridors'. That is the "the region offshore of a surf break where ocean swell travels and transforms to a 'surfable wave'. Low resolution swell corridors have been mapped but are not included as part of each surf break for the purposes of the AUP maps. The proposed AUP policies regarding surf breaks require consideration of the effects of activities and works that have the potential to impact upon swell corridors as well as on the area that is surfed. Further consideration will need to be given to how the swell corridor maps are made available.

¹ The schedule lists 33 surf breaks as there are combined entries for Orewa Beach and Bar, and for Palmers Beach / Kaitoke Beach at Great Barrier Island. These have separate entries in the table above of 35 surf breaks.

4 Conclusion

Recognition of surf breaks as valuable natural features in the Auckland Unitary Plan will facilitate their protection. This will mean greater weighting needs to be given to concerns over the potential effects on a surf break that may result from any proposal, and earlier consideration of such effects. The mapping and value identification provided in this report will be of use in considering how a proposal may affect a surf break.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Survey questions

SURF BREAKS SURVEY QUESTIONS

SURVEY INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Auckland Council's Surf Break Survey

This survey is trying to establish which are the most important surf breaks in the Auckland region so they can be protected from conflicting uses and developments, such as dredging, wharves or groynes. We would like you to help us identify surf breaks with high quality waves and/or high levels of use.

We have a list of 39 surf breaks for which we would like information. We would like you to pick up to 5 of your favourite breaks and answer a few questions about them.

The survey is also trying to establish what features/values at each break need to be protected by council planning controls. For example, if a break is valued because it is surrounded by bush, we may need controls on adjacent land development. If a break is valued because it has lots of adjacent car parking and shops, we may need to allow room for additional car parking but do not need to stop development on the surrounding land.

The survey should take about 5 minutes to complete and contains a mix of tick box and open ended questions.

STARTER QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been surfing for?

- ☐ less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ more than 10 years

1B. What city/town and suburb do you live in?

2A. From the below list of Auckland surf breaks could you please select:

- The surf breaks you have surfed in the last 12 months (tick all that apply)
- Up to 5 of your favourite surf breaks (select no more than 5)

Break	Surfed in last year	Favourite surf breaks
Te Arai Beach (including Pacific Road access point 'Black Swamp')		
Pakiri Beach (North – 'Forestry')		
Pakiri Beach (South)		
Goat Island		
Leigh (Daniels Reef)		
Leigh (Boulders)		
Omaha Beach-Bar		
Tawharanui		

Waiwera Reef		
Orewa Beach		
Orewa Bar		
Red Beach		
Fishermans Reef (Whangaparoa)		
Long Bay Reef		
Milford Beach/Reef		
Takapuna (O'Neills Reef)		
Takapuna (North Reef)		
Takapuna (Beach and South Reef)		
Orere Point		
(Muriwai Beach (Rimmers Road)		
Muriwai Beach (south)		
Maori Bay		
Bethells Beach		
O'Neills Bay		
Anawhata		
Whites Beach		
Piha		
Karekare		
Whatipu		
Hamilton's Gap (Awhitu Peninsula)		
Cochran's Gap (Awhitu Peninsula)		
Karioitahi		
Whangapoua Beach (Okiwi) (Great Barrier Island)		
Awana Bay (Great Barrier Island)		
Palmers Beach (Great Barrier Island)		
Kaitoke Beach (Great Barrier Island)		
Medlands Beach / Shark Alley (Great Barrier Island)		
Onetangi (Waiheke Island)		
Palm Beach (Waiheke Island)		
None of the above		

FAVOURITE BREAKS QUESTIONS

We will now ask you a series of questions about your favourite surf breaks in the Auckland Region.

3A Please use the drop down boxes to rank your favourite 5 breaks from 1st to 5th, where 1st is your most favoured break.

Ranking	Break name
1	<i>Maori Bay</i>
2	<i>Te Arai</i>
3	<i>Daniels Reef</i>
4	<i>Bethells</i>
5	<i>Pakiri</i>

4. How often do you typically surf at each surf break?

(5 chosen breaks)	Less than twice a year	Two or three times a year	Every two or three months	Fortnightly to monthly	Weekly
<i>Maori Bay</i>					
<i>Te Arai</i>					
<i>Daniels Reef</i>					
<i>Bethells</i>					
<i>Pakiri</i>					

5. Typically, how many people do you see surfing the following surf breaks?

(5 chosen breaks)	Less than 5 people	5-15 people	16-30 people	31-50 people	More than 50 people
<i>Maori Bay</i>					
<i>Te Arai</i>					
<i>Daniels Reef</i>					
<i>Bethells</i>					
<i>Pakiri</i>					

6. How would you rate these surf breaks in terms of frequency of 'surfable' conditions?

(5 chosen breaks)	1 – rarely surfable	2 -infrequent	3 - average	4 – consistent/frequent	5 – Almost always 'surfable'
<i>Maori Bay</i>					
<i>Te Arai</i>					
<i>Daniels Reef</i>					
<i>Bethells</i>					
<i>Pakiri</i>					

7. How would you rate these breaks in terms of overall wave quality (shape, height, length etc) when optimum conditions are present?

(5 chosen breaks)	1 – Bad	2 - Low	3 - Average	4 – Good	5 – Excellent
Maori Bay					
Te Arai					
Daniels Reef					
Bethells					
Pakiri					

8. Please indicate which surf breaks are suitable for the following levels of expertise.

Can select more than one expertise level per break.

(5 chosen breaks)	Valuable as a learner / novice type wave	Valuable as an intermediate / all round wave	Valuable as an advanced or higher risk wave
Maori Bay			
Te Arai			
Daniels Reef			
Bethells			
Pakiri			

9. Which of the following statements is a reason why you choose to go to each surf break?

Can select more than one statement per break.

(10 chosen breaks)	Close to home	Easily accessible	Has a 'wilderness' experience / low level of development	Has good facilities (toilets, carparks, shops, access points, etc)
Maori Bay				
Te Arai				
Daniels Reef				
Bethells				
Pakiri				

10. For what other reason do you choose to go to your favourite surf breaks?

11. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about Auckland's surf breaks and/or the Councils planning controls?

THANK YOU PAGE

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers have been submitted.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact; Matthew McNeil on DDI: 4846205 email: matthew.mcneil@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Appendix B – Proposed surf breaks schedule

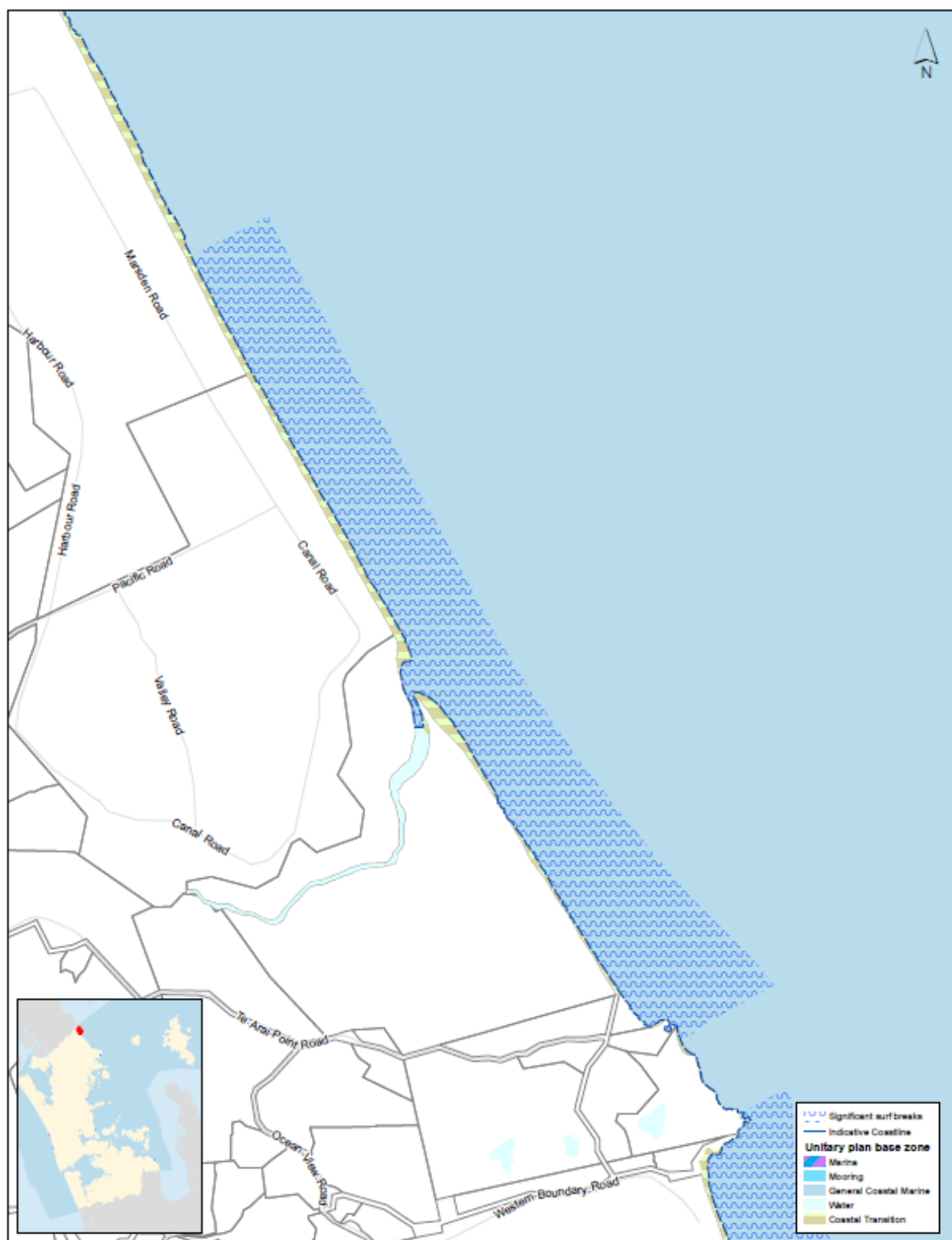
Coast/Island	Significant Surf Break Name	Break type	Seabed composition	Description
East Coast	1. Te Arai Beach (including Pacific Road access point 'Black Swamp')	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good wave quality suitable to all skill levels. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Good access.
East Coast	2. Pakiri Beach (North - 'Forestry')	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good wave quality suitable to all skill levels. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Good access.
East Coast	3. Pakiri Beach (South)	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good wave quality suitable to all skill levels. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Good access.
East Coast	4. Goat Island	Reef break	Rock/sand	Semi exposed reef break. Relatively inconsistent. Good to high wave quality suitable to experienced surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with little development. Good access.
East Coast	5. Daniels Reef (Leigh)	Reef break	Rock	Exposed reef break. Relatively consistent. High wave quality suitable to experienced surfers. Good access.
East Coast	6. Boulders (Leigh)	Reef breaks	Rock/sand	Exposed variable reef breaks. Frequently surfable. Good to high wave quality suitable to experienced surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with a lack of development. Difficult access.
East Coast	7. Omaha Beach and Bar	Beach break, bar break, groyne breaks	Sand	Semi exposed beach, bar and groyne breaks. Provides wave quality suitable to learners relatively consistently. Occasionally provides good wave quality suitable to competent surfers. High amenity values and good facilities. Good access.

Coast/Island	Significant Surf Break Name	Break type	Seabed composition	Description
East Coast	8. Tawharanui	Beach break	Sand/patches of rocky reef	Exposed beach break. Relatively consistent. Average to good wave quality suitable to all skill levels. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Good access.
East Coast	9. Orewa Beach and Bar	Beach break, bar break	Sand	Sheltered beach and bar breaks. Inconsistent. Wave quality highly suitable to and valued by learners and novices. High amenity values and good facilities. Good access.
East Coast	10. Red Beach	Beach break	Sand	Sheltered beach break. Inconsistent. Wave quality highly suitable to and valued by learners and novices. Good facilities and access.
East Coast	11. Long Bay Reef	Reef breaks	Rock	Sheltered reef break. Inconsistent but good wave quality suitable for competent surfers. Difficult access.
East Coast	12. Milford Beach and Reef	Reef and beach breaks	Rock and sand	Sheltered reef break. Inconsistent. Good wave quality suitable for novice to competent surfers. Highly valued and utilised urban surf break. Good access.
East Coast	13. ONeills Reef (Takapuna)	Reef/point break	Rock	Sheltered reef break. Inconsistent. Good wave quality suitable for novice to competent surfers. Highly valued and utilised urban surf break. Good access.
East Coast	14. North Reef (Takapuna)	Reef break	Volcanic reef	Sheltered reef break. Inconsistent. Good wave quality suitable for novice to competent surfers. Highly valued and utilised urban surf break. Good facilities and access.
East Coast	15. Takapuna Beach and South Reef	Beach and reef breaks	Sand and rock	Sheltered beach and reef breaks. Inconsistent, poor to average wave quality, however highly valued and utilised urban surf break. Suitable for learners to competent surfers. Good facilities and access.
East Coast	16. Orere Point	Point break	Boulders/cobbles	Sheltered point break. Inconsistent. Good wave quality suitable to novice to competent surfers. Good access.

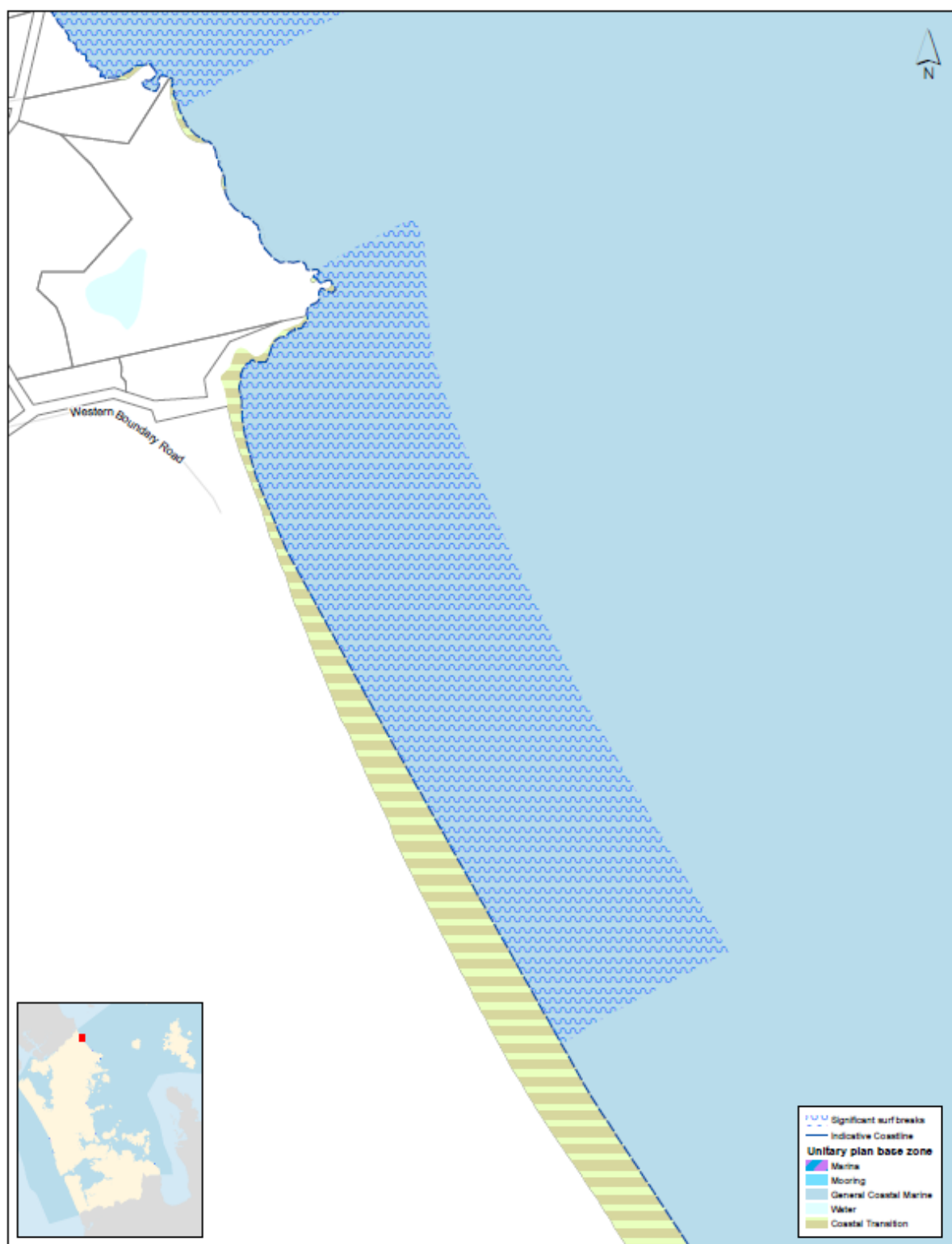
Coast/Island	Significant Surf Break Name	Break type	Seabed composition	Description
West Coast	17. Rimmers Road	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Adequate access.
West Coast	18. Muriwai Beach (South)	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable to competent to experienced surfers. High amenity value and good facilities. Good access.
West Coast	19. Maori Bay	Beach break, reef break	Sand, rock	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. Good facilities and access.
West Coast	20. Te Henga (Bethells Beach)	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Good facilities and access.
West Coast	21. O'Neill Bay	Beach break, rip reform break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Access requires 10-15 minute walk.
West Coast	22. Anawhata	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Adequate access.
West Coast	23. Whites Beach	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. 'Wilderness' experience with lack of development. Difficult access.
West Coast	24. Piha	Beach break, bar break	Sand	Exposed beach break and bar break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suited for competent to experienced surfers. High amenity values and good facilities. Good access.

Coast/Island	Significant Surf Break Name	Break type	Seabed composition	Description
West Coast	25. Karekare	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Good access.
West Coast	26. Whatipu	Inner harbour beach break	Sand	Sheltered inner harbour beach break. Infrequent. Average wave quality suitable to competent surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with lack of development. Adequate access.
West Coast	27. Kariotahi Beach	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. Good access.
Great Barrier Is	28. Whangapoua (Okiwi)	Bar break	Sand	Exposed bar break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. High wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with low level of development. Access across estuary mouth.
Great Barrier Is	29. Awana Bay	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach break that is frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable for competent to experienced surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with low level of development. Good access.
Great Barrier Is	30. Palmers Beach and Kaitoke Beach	Beach break	Sand	Exposed beach breaks that are frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high quality wave suitable to competent surfers. Offers a 'wilderness' experience with low level of development. Adequate access.
Great Barrier Is	31. Medlands Beach / Shark Alley	Beach break, reef break	Sand/rock	Exposed beach and reef breaks that are frequently suitable for wave riding. Good to high wave quality suitable to competent surfers. Good access.
Waiheke Is	32. Onetangi Beach	Beach break	Sand	Sheltered beach break. Low to average wave quality suitable for learners to competent surfers. Good access.
Waiheke Is	33. Palm Beach	Beach break	Sand	Sheltered beach break. Low to average wave quality suitable for learners to competent surfers. Good access.

Appendix C – Surf break maps



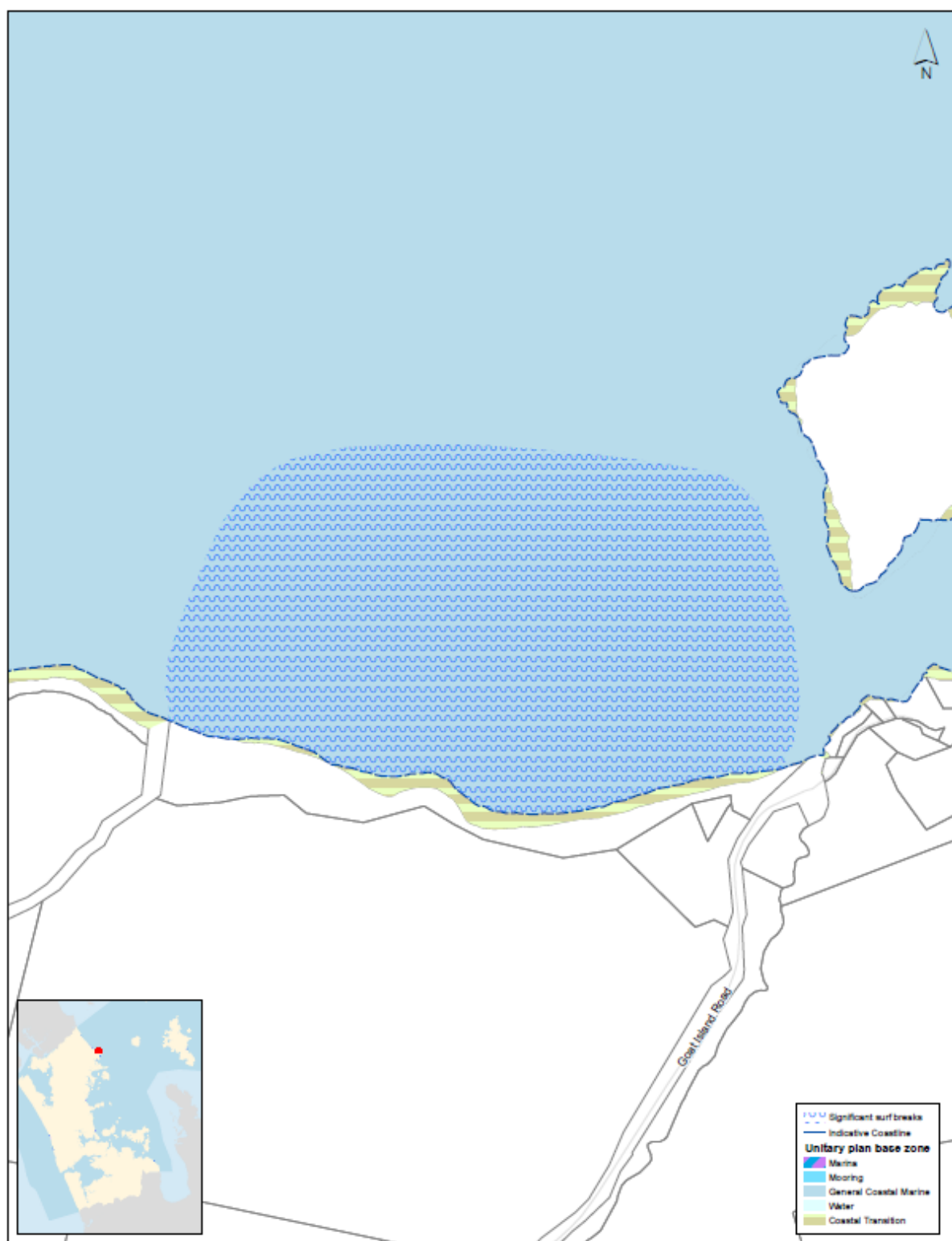
Significant surf breaks - Te Arai Beach (including Pacific Road access point 'Black Swamp')



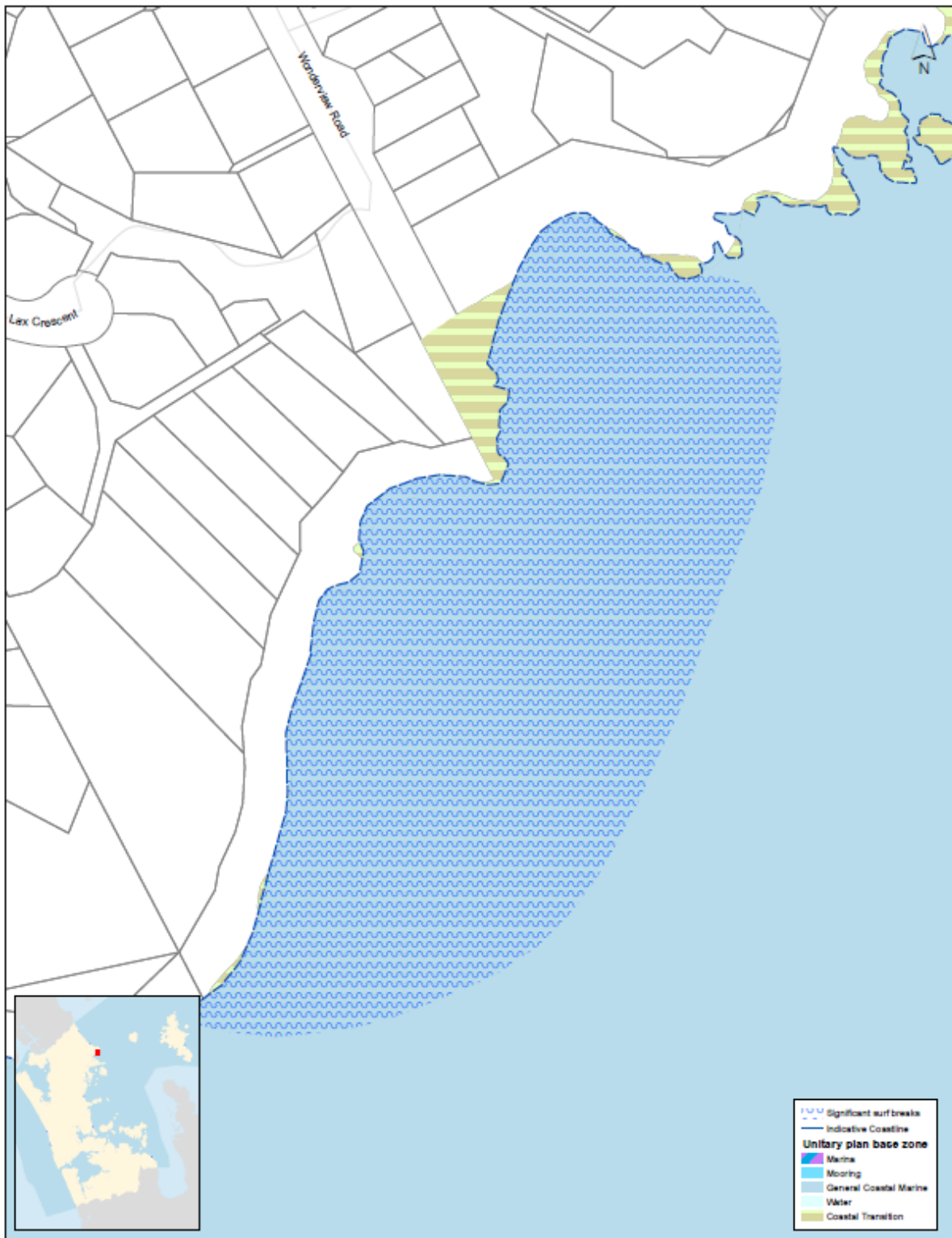
Significant surf breaks - Pakiri Beach (North - 'Forestry')



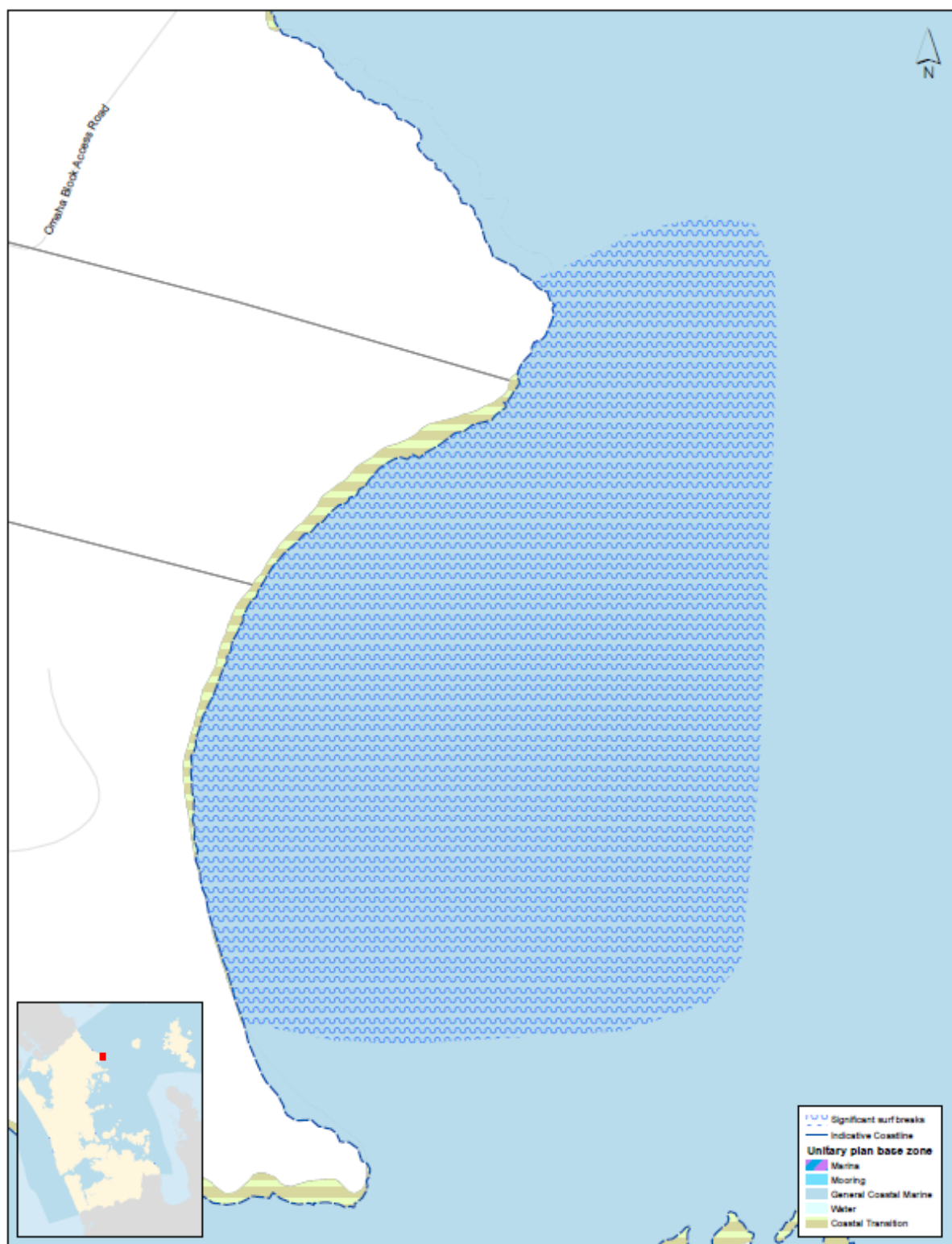
Significant surf breaks - Pakiri Beach (South)



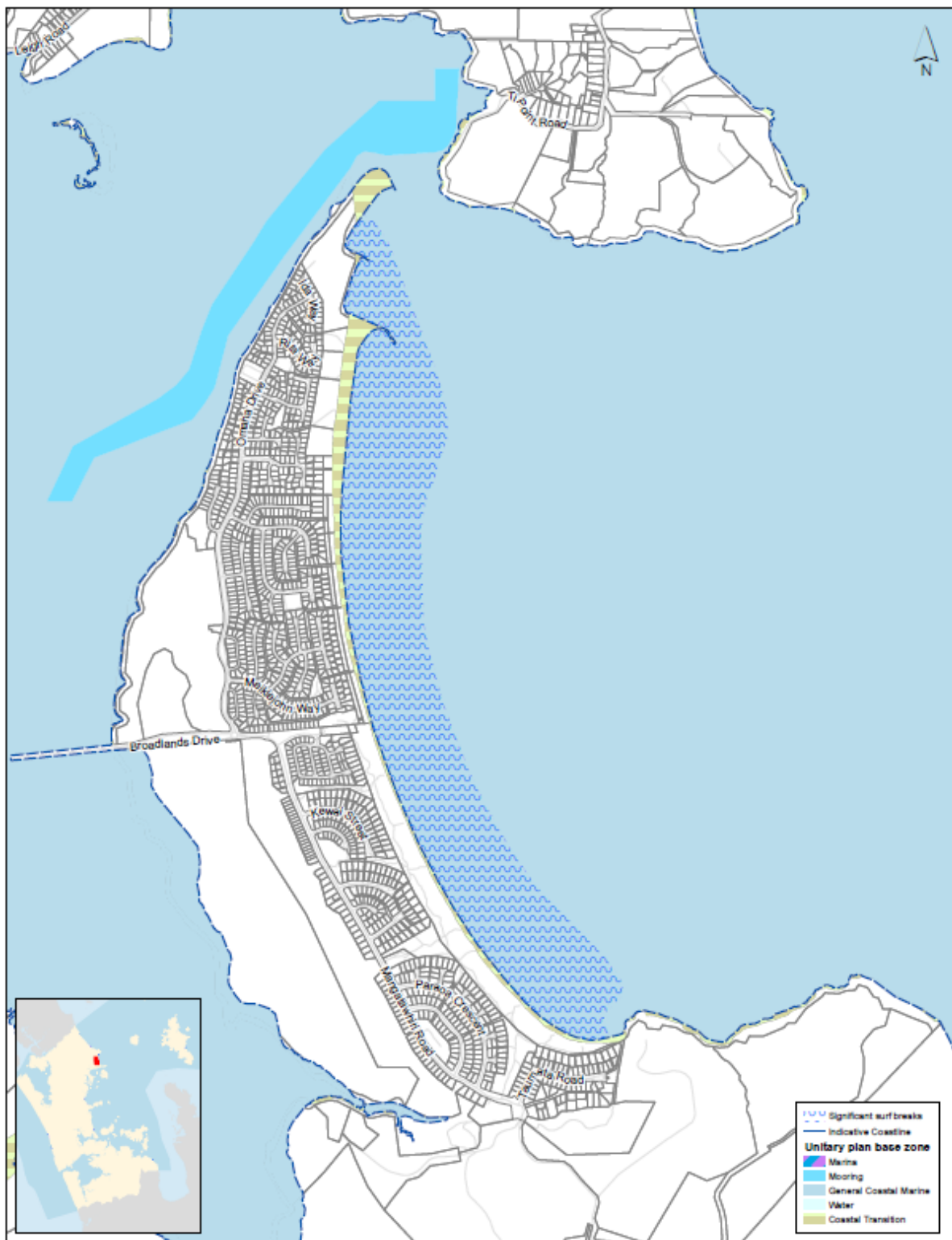
Significant surf breaks - Goat Island



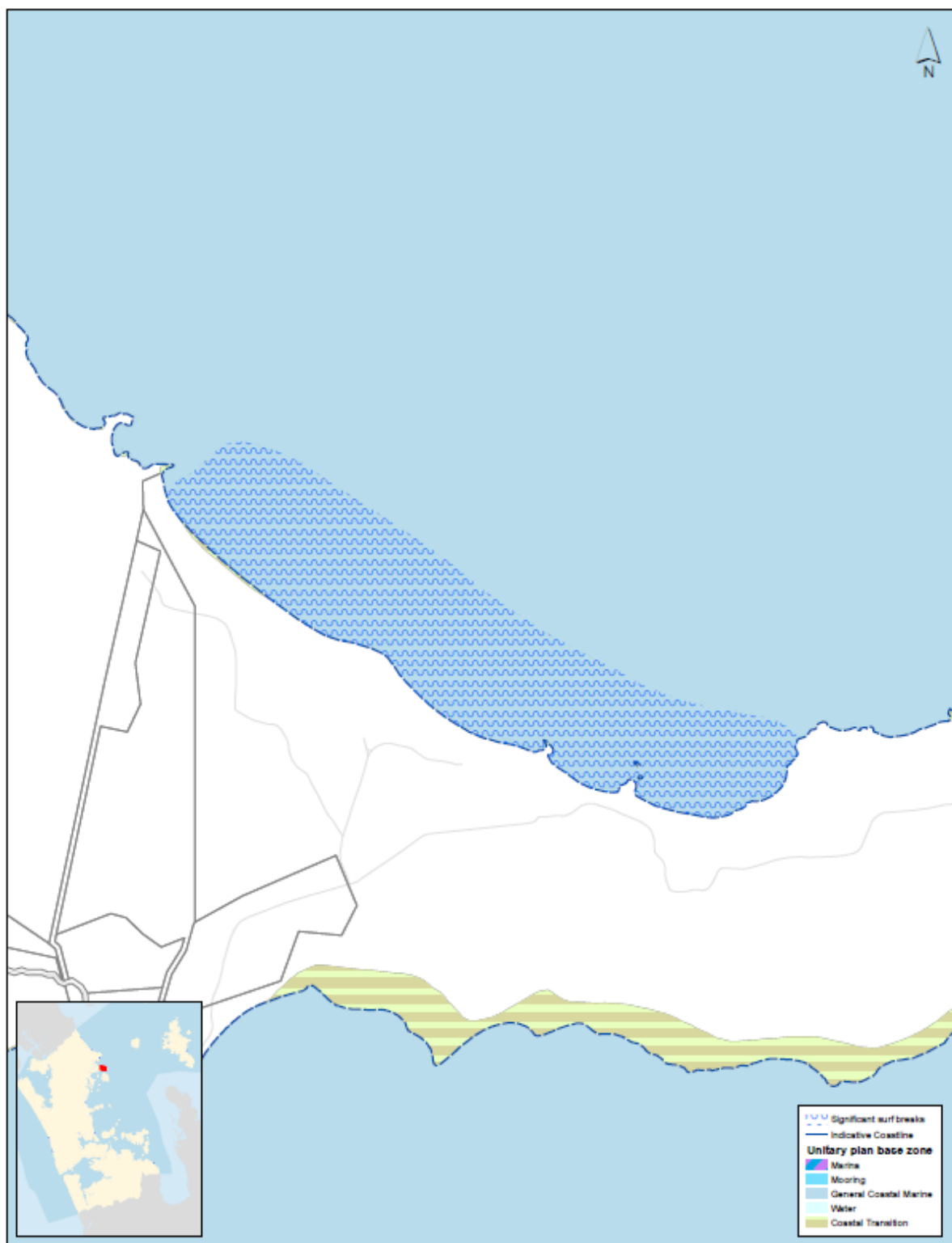
Significant surf breaks - Daniels Reef (Leigh)



Significant surf breaks - Boulders (Leigh)



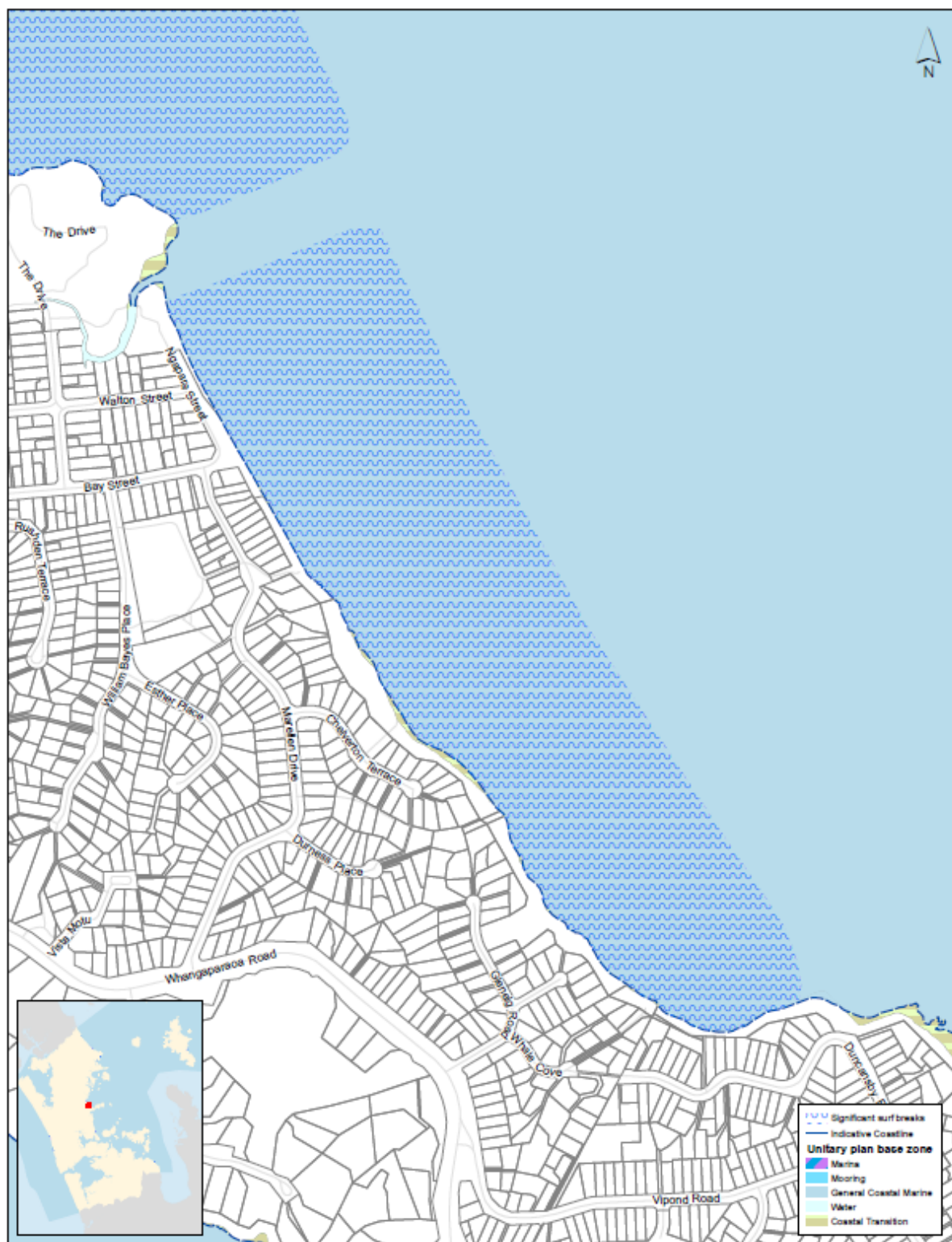
Significant surf breaks - Omaha Beach and Bar



Significant surf breaks - Tawharanui



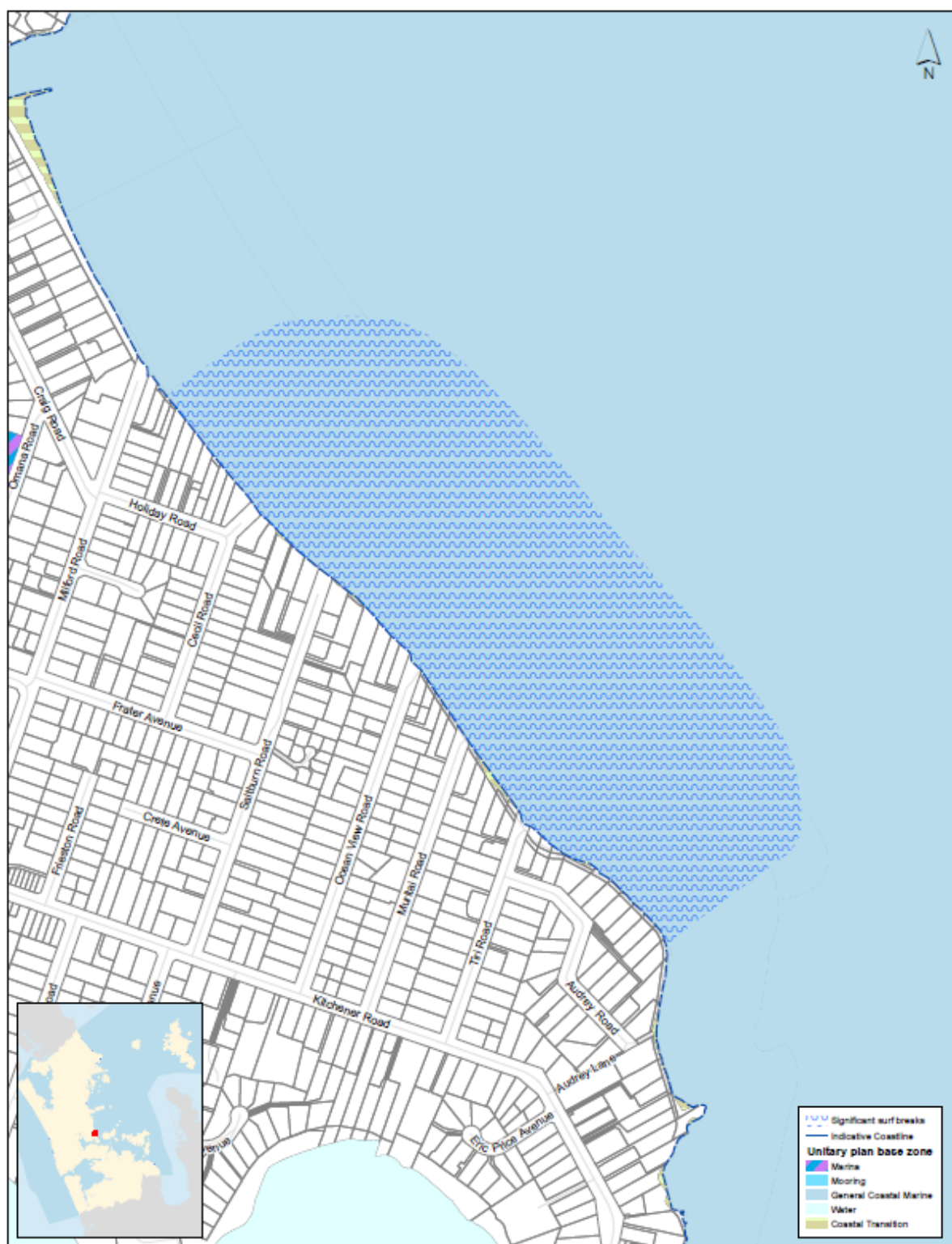
Significant surf breaks - Orewa Beach and Bar



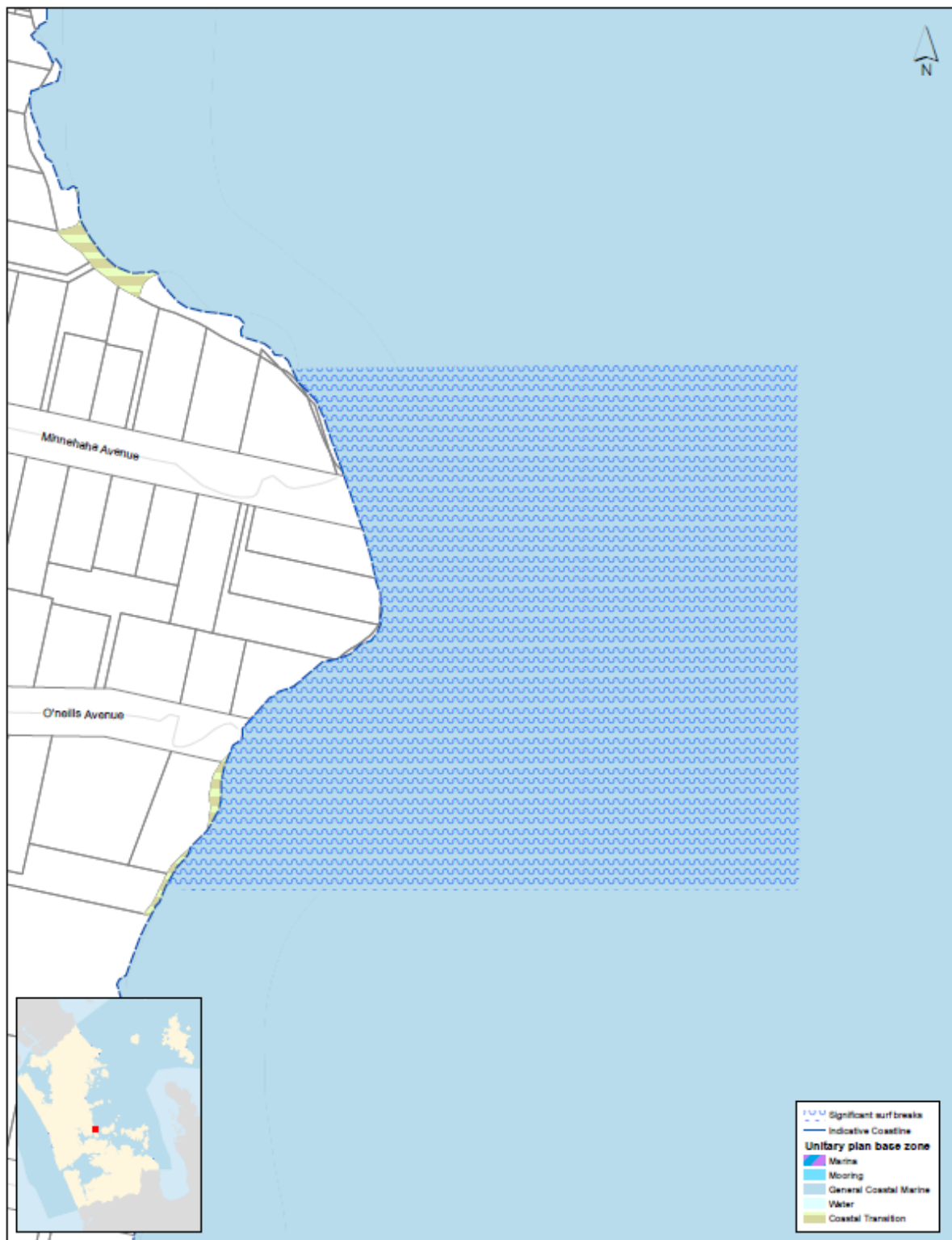
Significant surf breaks - Red Beach



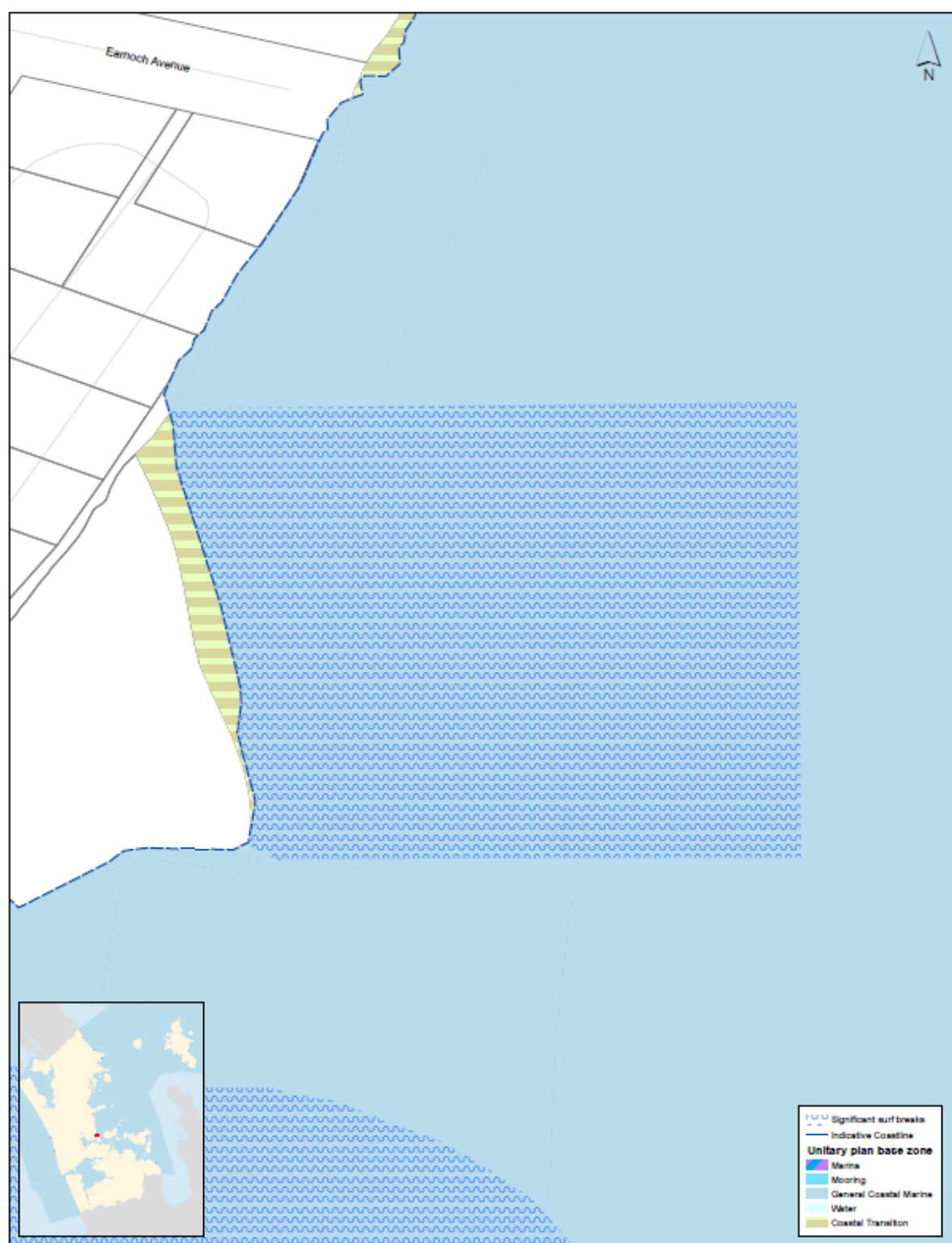
Significant surf breaks - Long Bay Reef



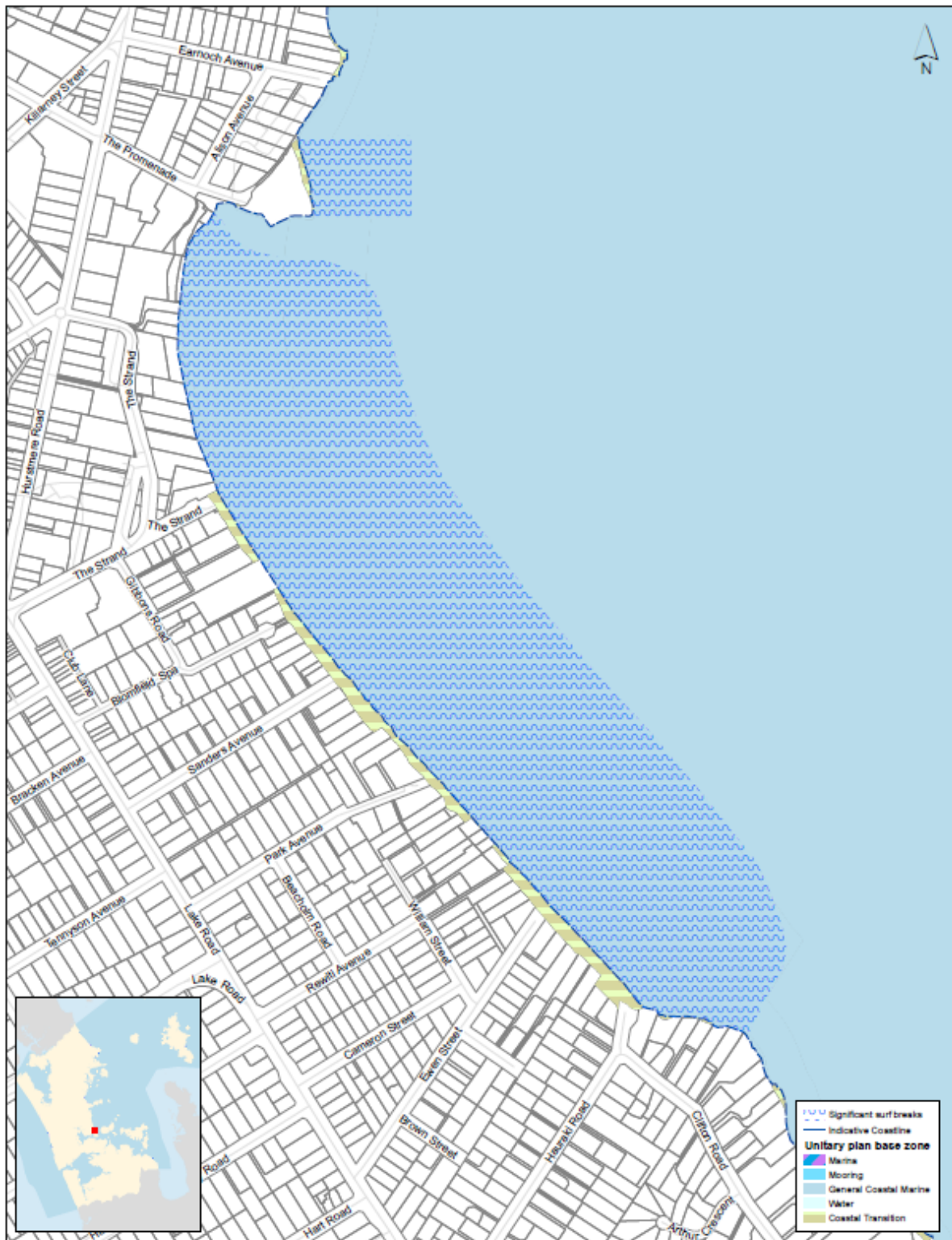
Significant surf breaks - Milford Beach and Reef



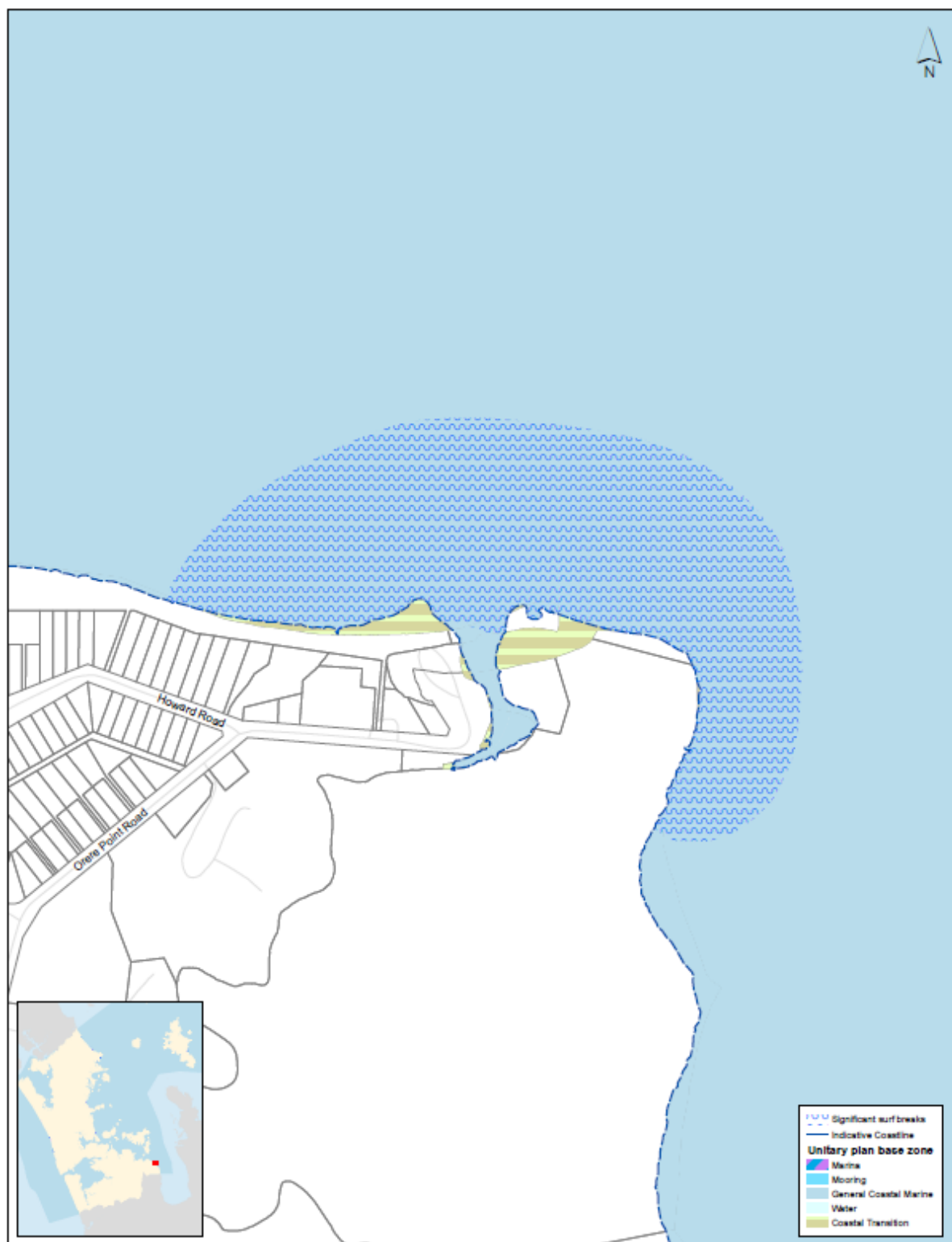
Significant surf breaks - ONEills Reef (Takapuna)



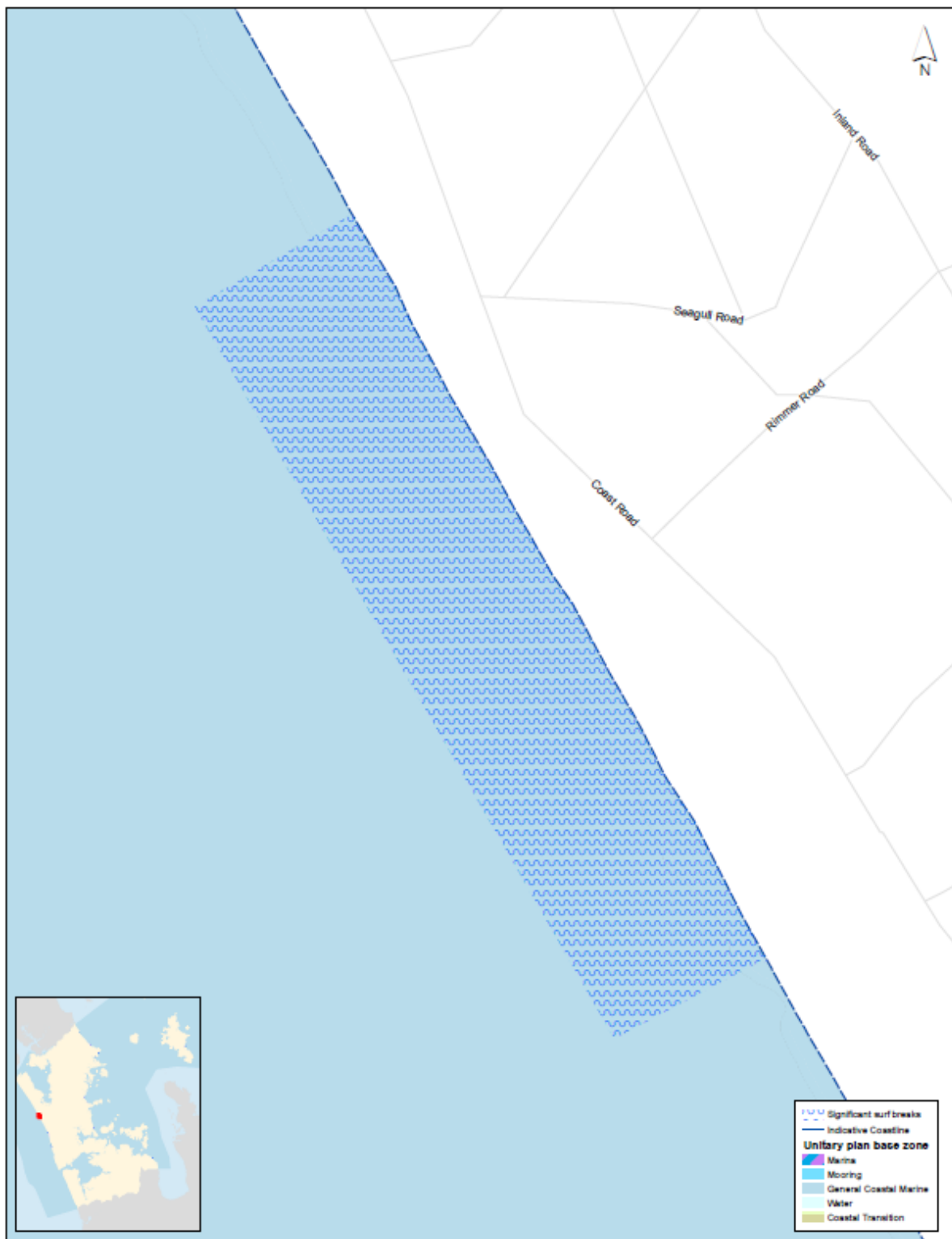
Significant surf breaks - North Reef (Takapuna)



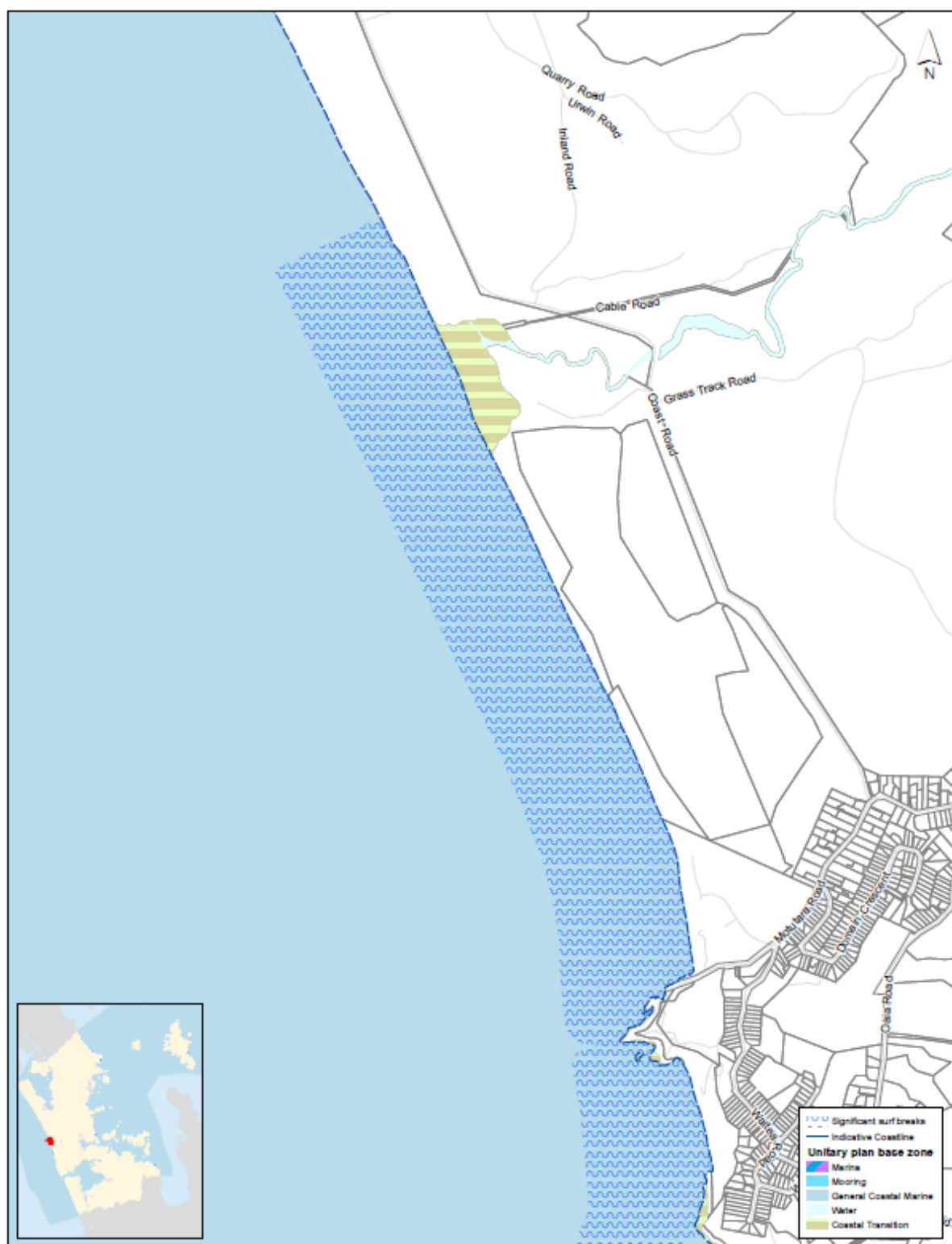
Significant surf breaks - Takapuna Beach and South Reef



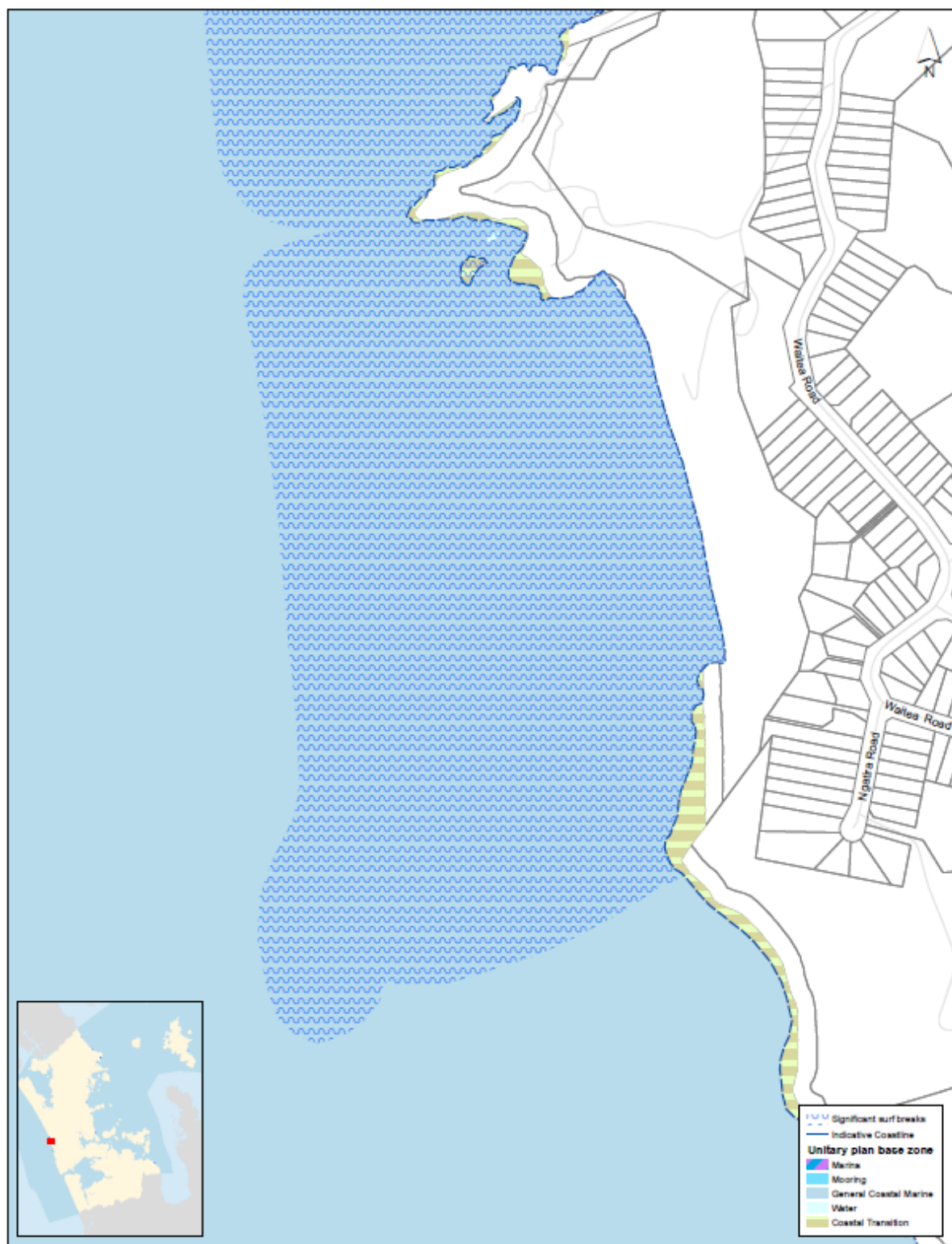
Significant surf breaks - Orere Point



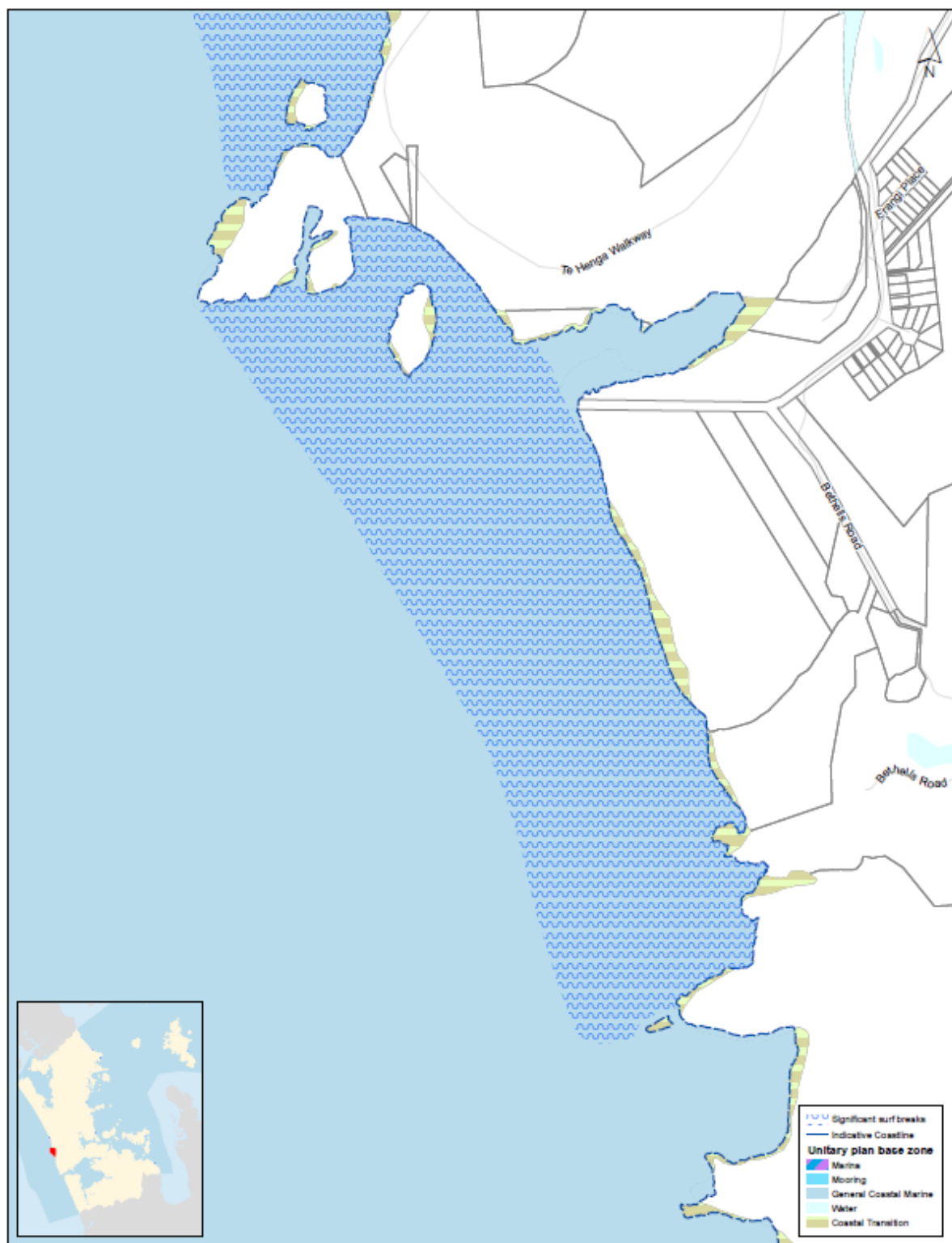
Significant surf breaks - Rimmers Road



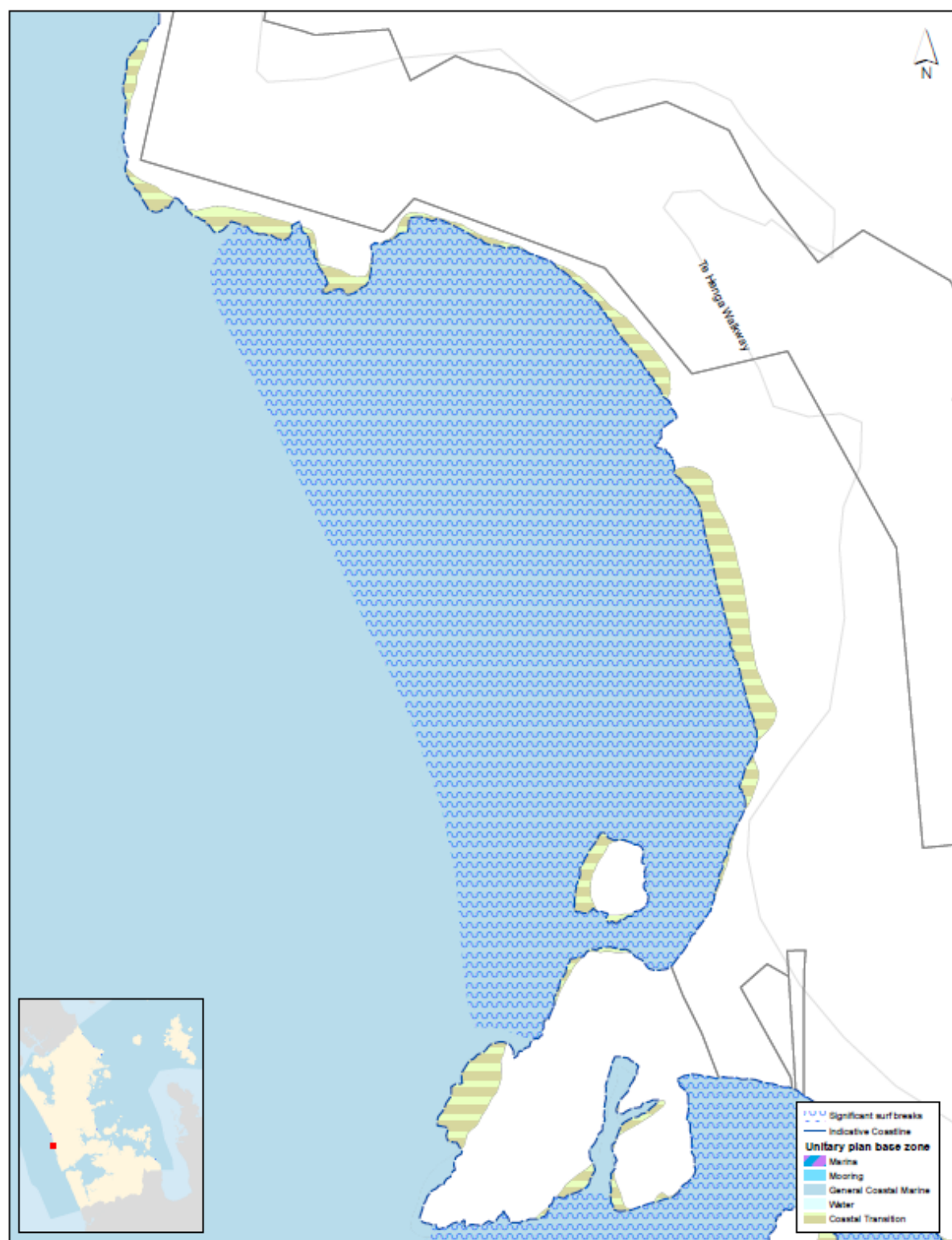
Significant surf breaks - Muriwai Beach (South)



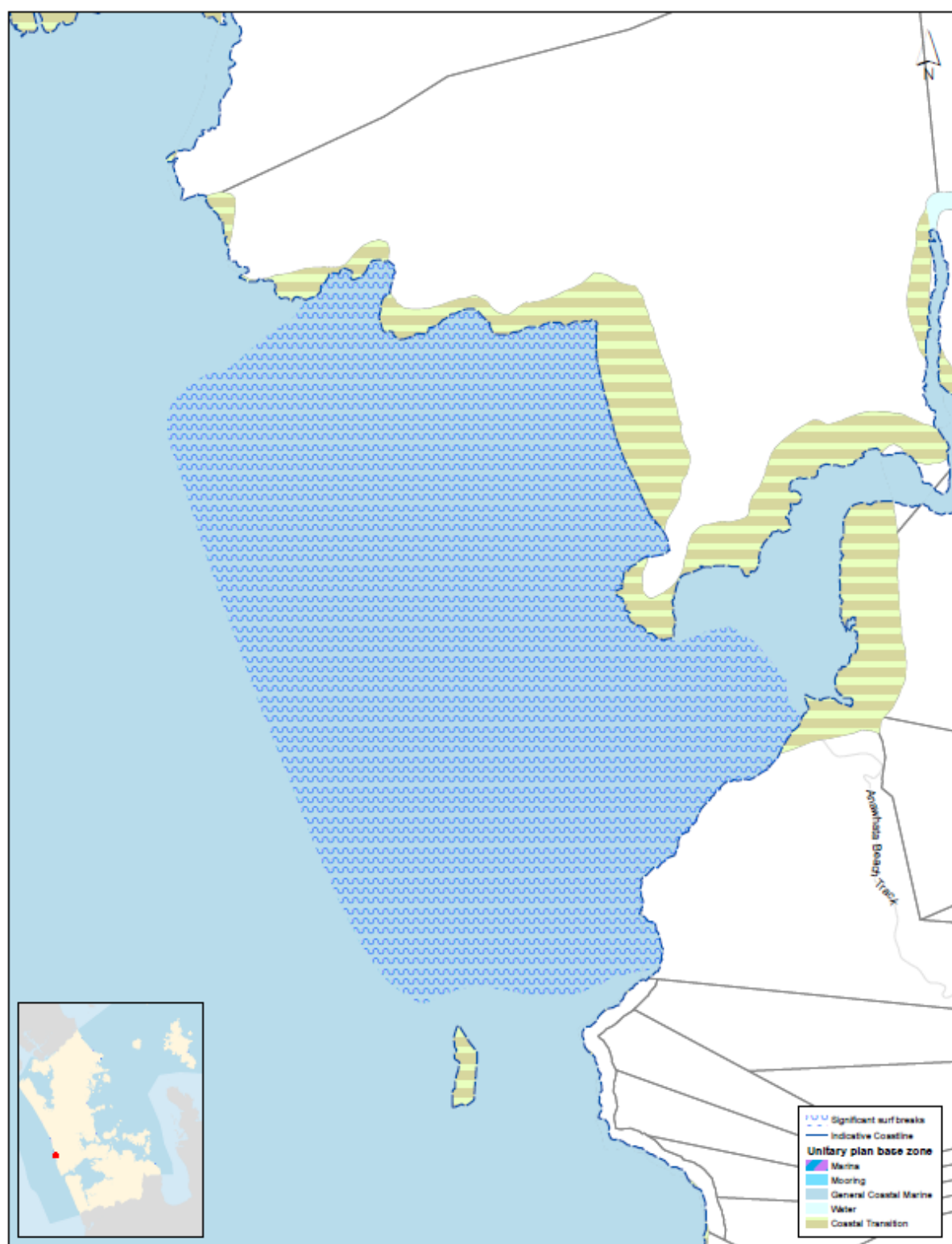
Significant surf breaks - Maori Bay



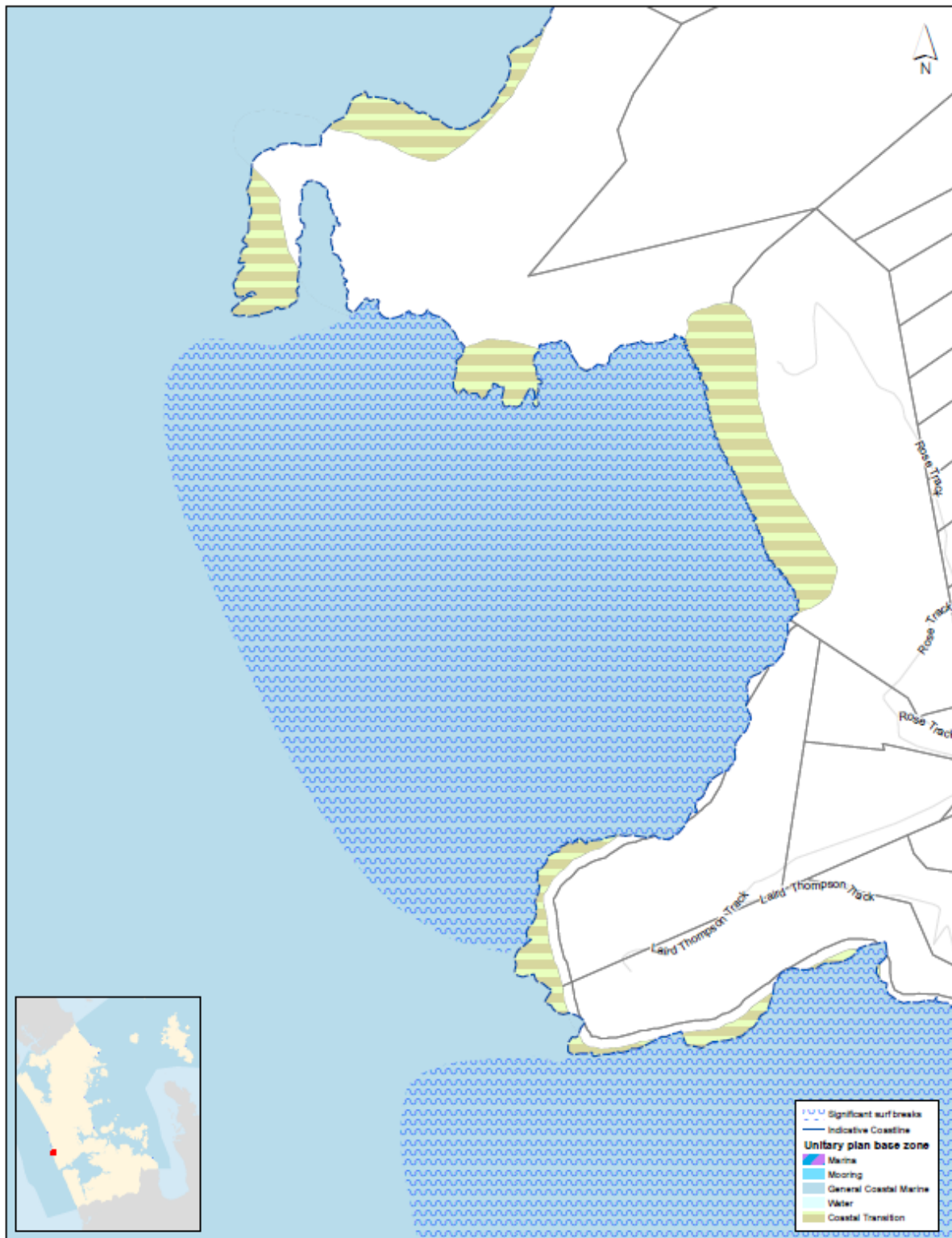
Significant surf breaks - Te Henga (Bethells Beach)



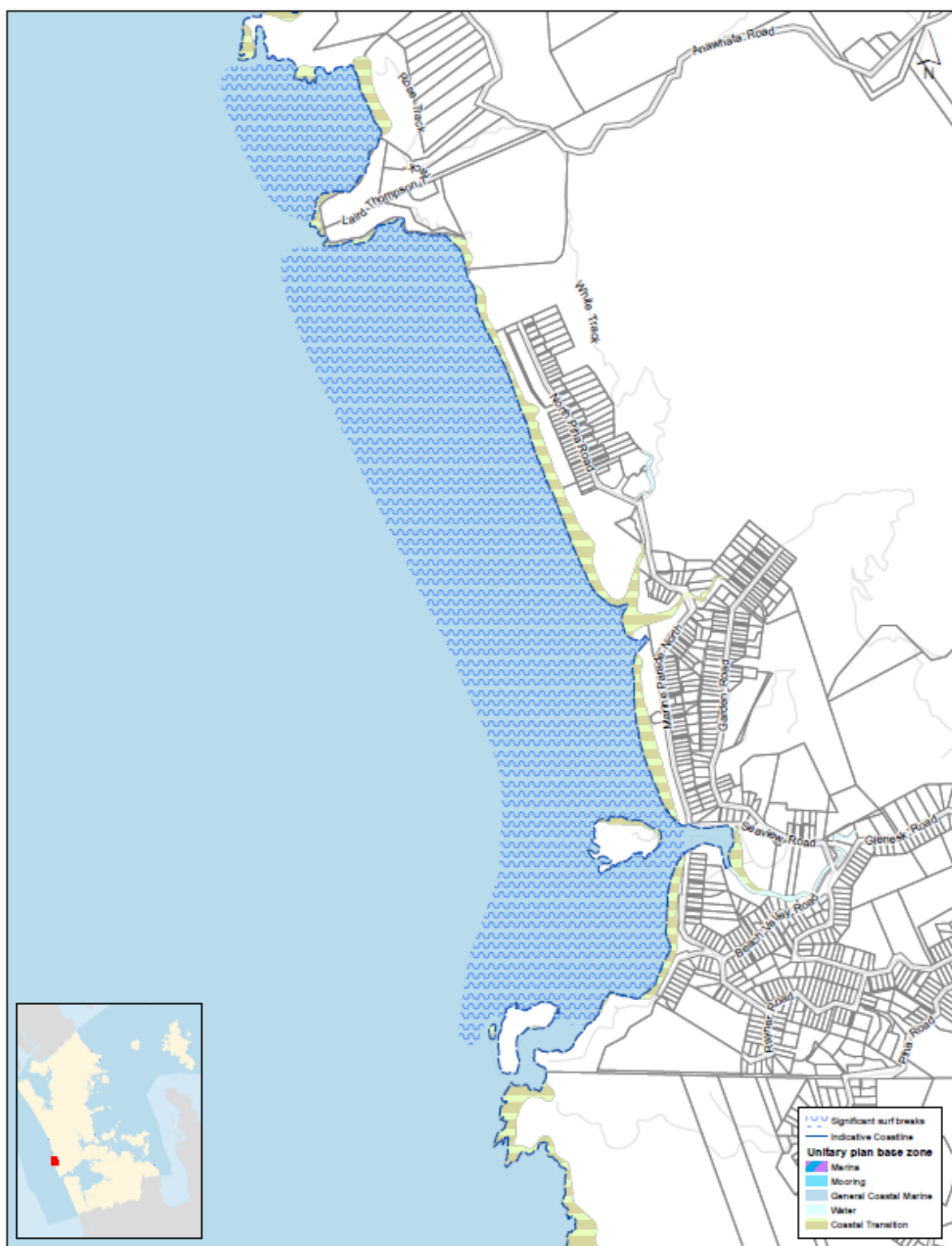
Significant surf breaks - O'Neill Bay



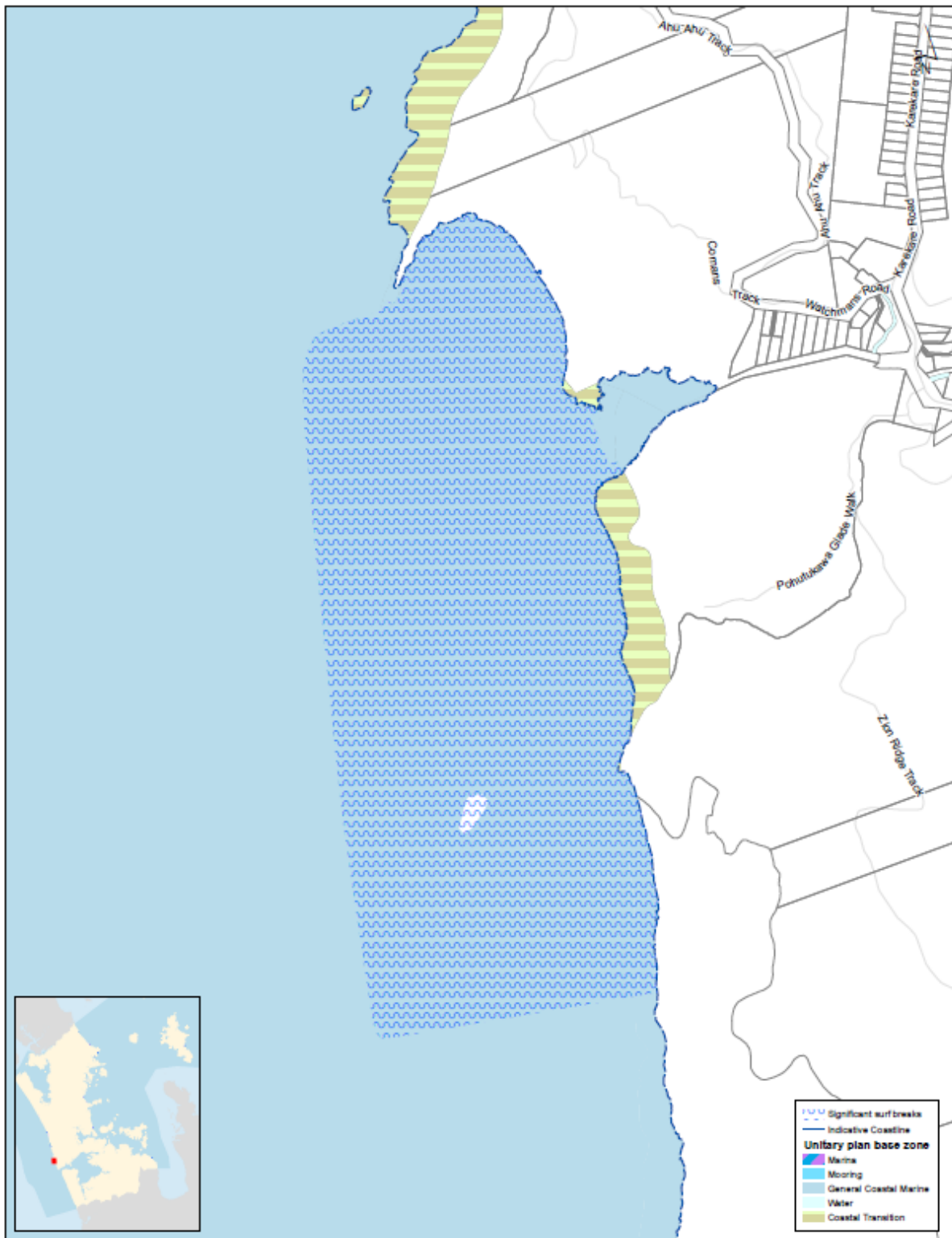
Significant surf breaks - Anawhata



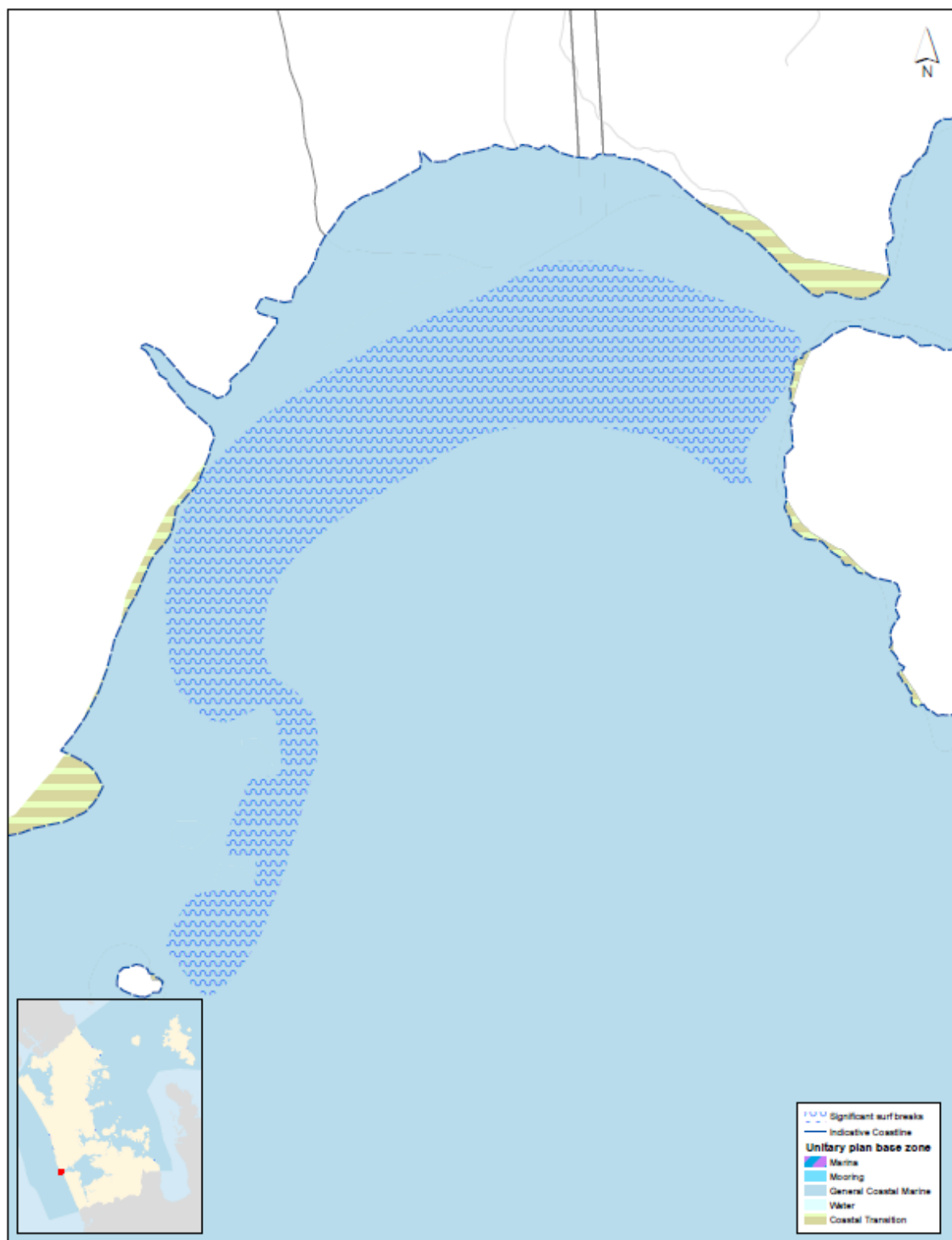
Significant surf breaks - Whites Beach



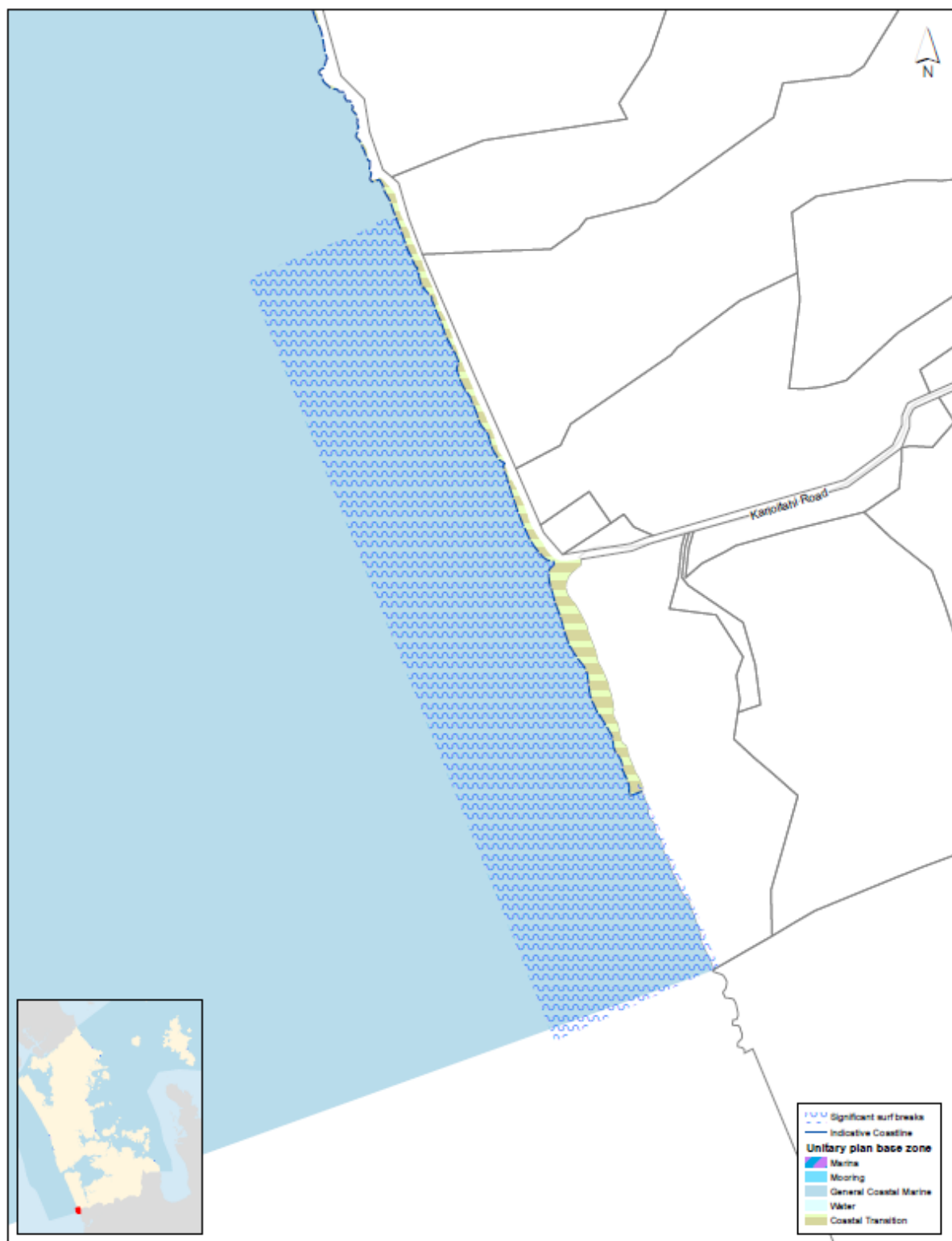
Significant surf breaks - Piha



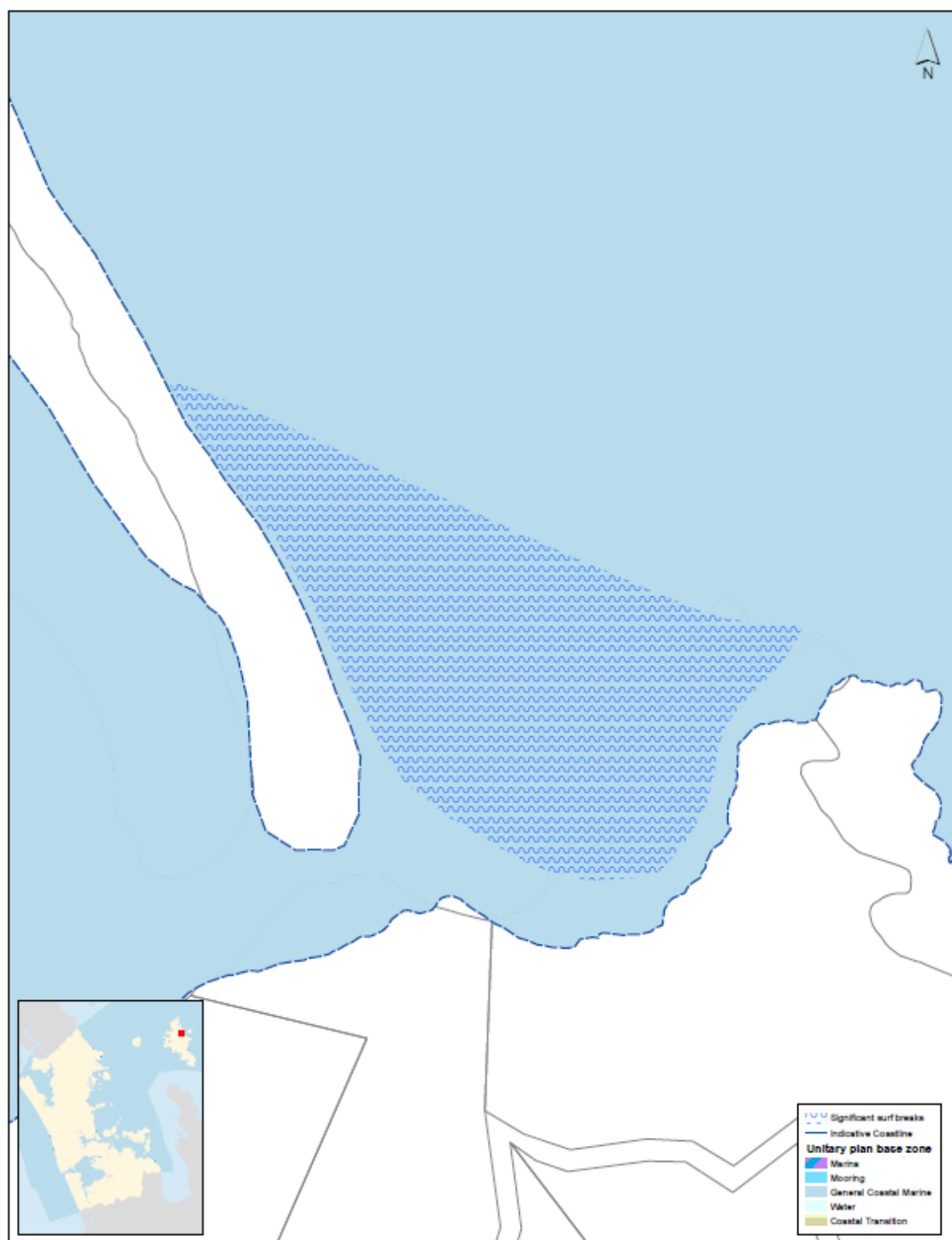
Significant surf breaks - Karekare

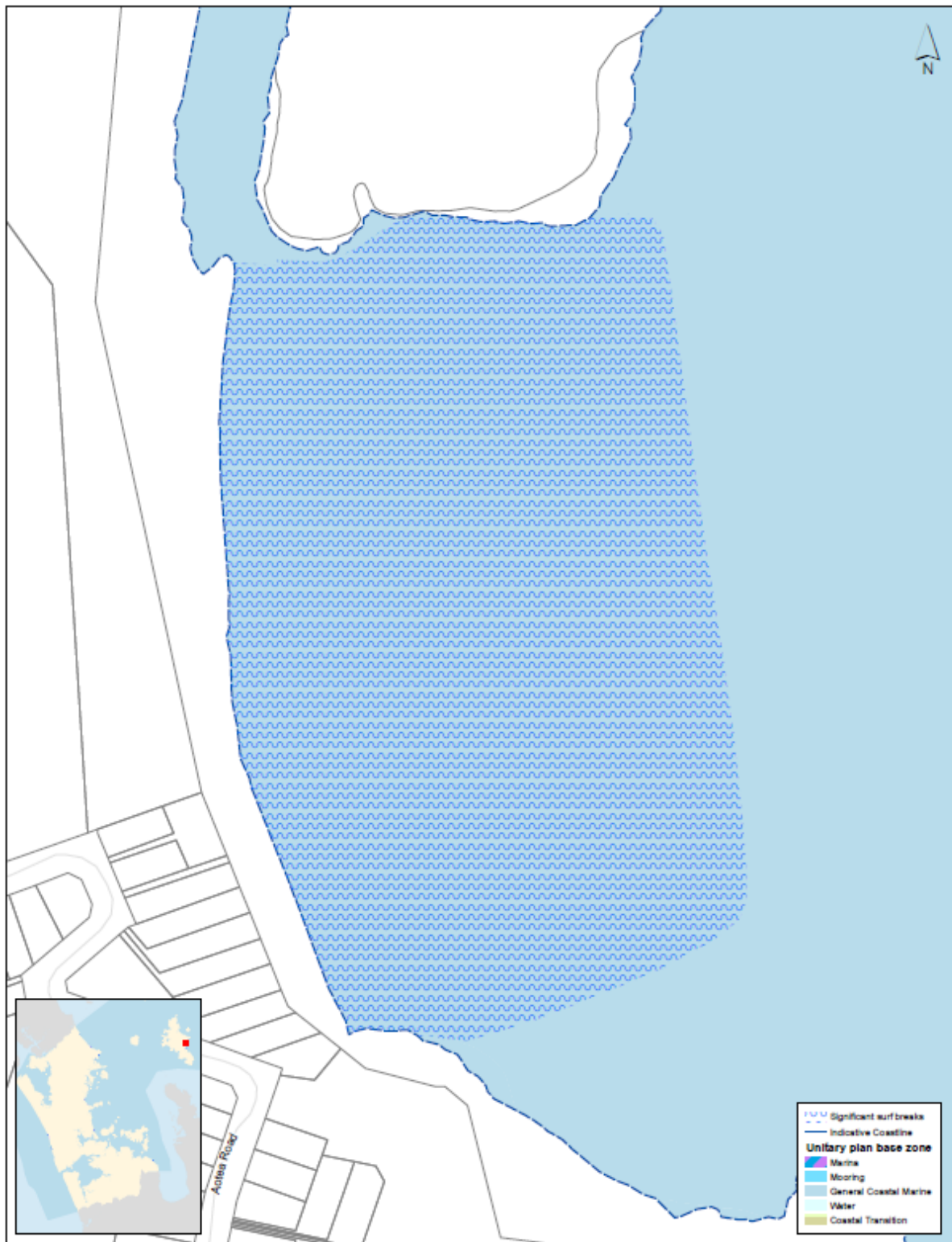


Significant surf breaks - Whatipu

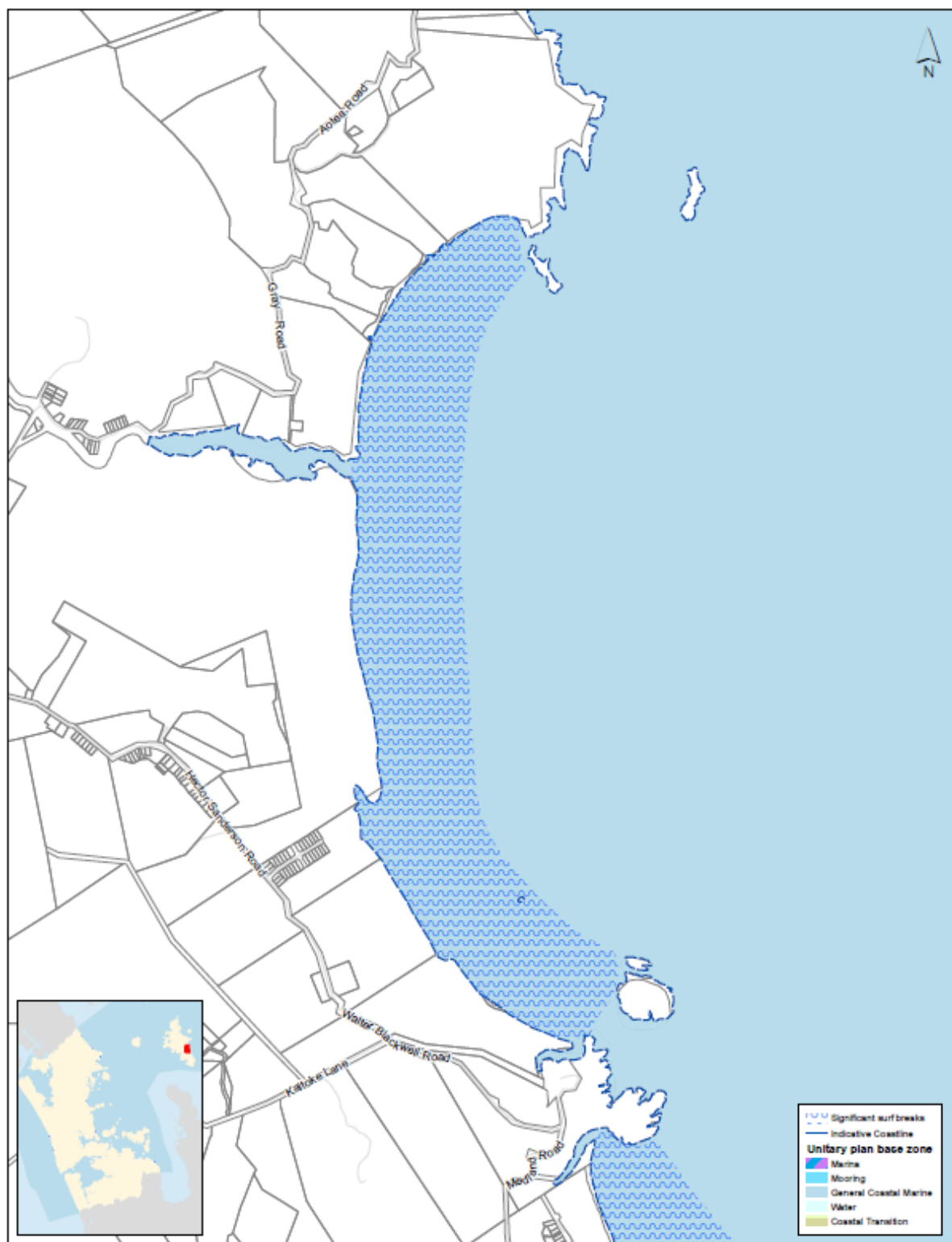


Significant surf breaks - Karioitahi Beach

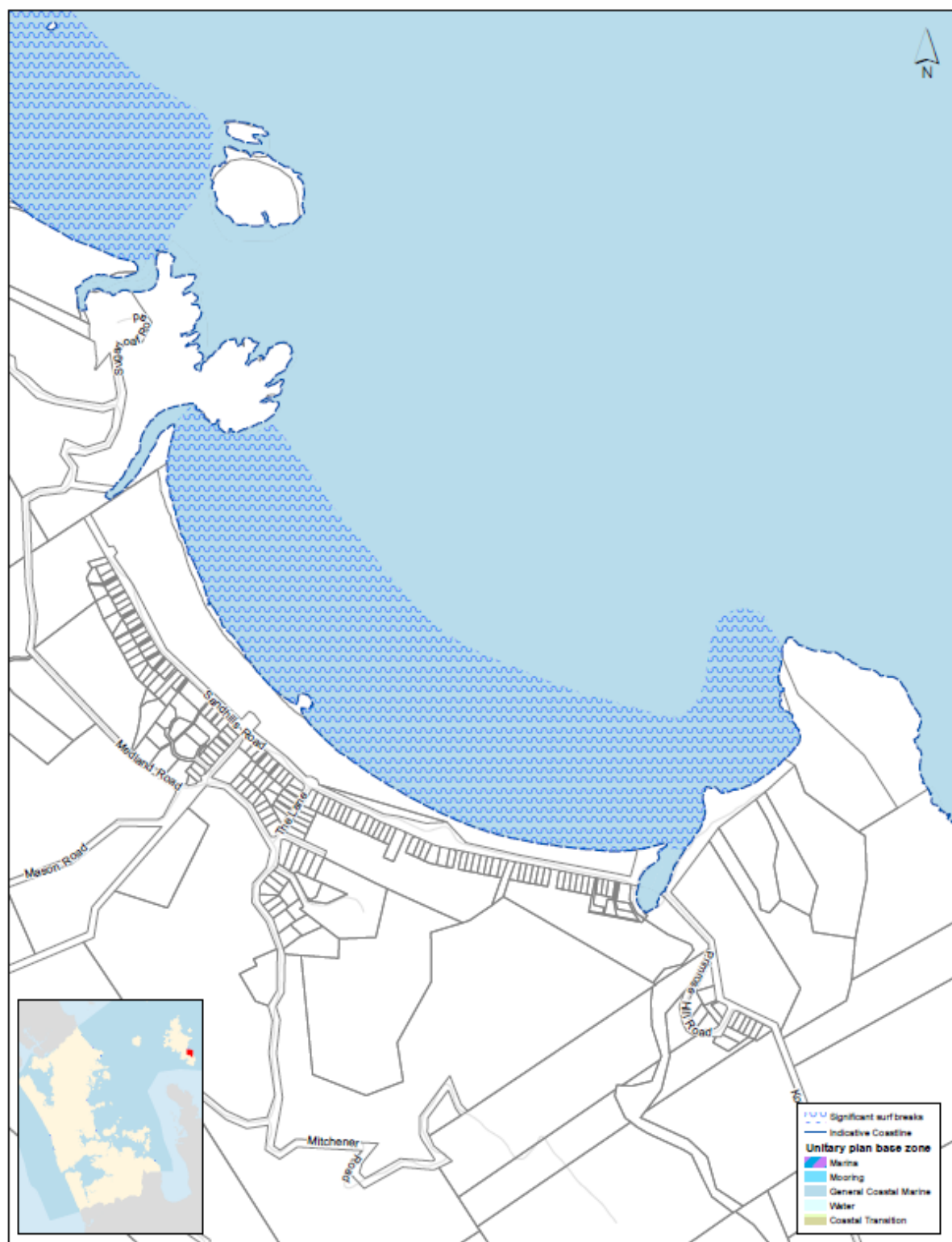




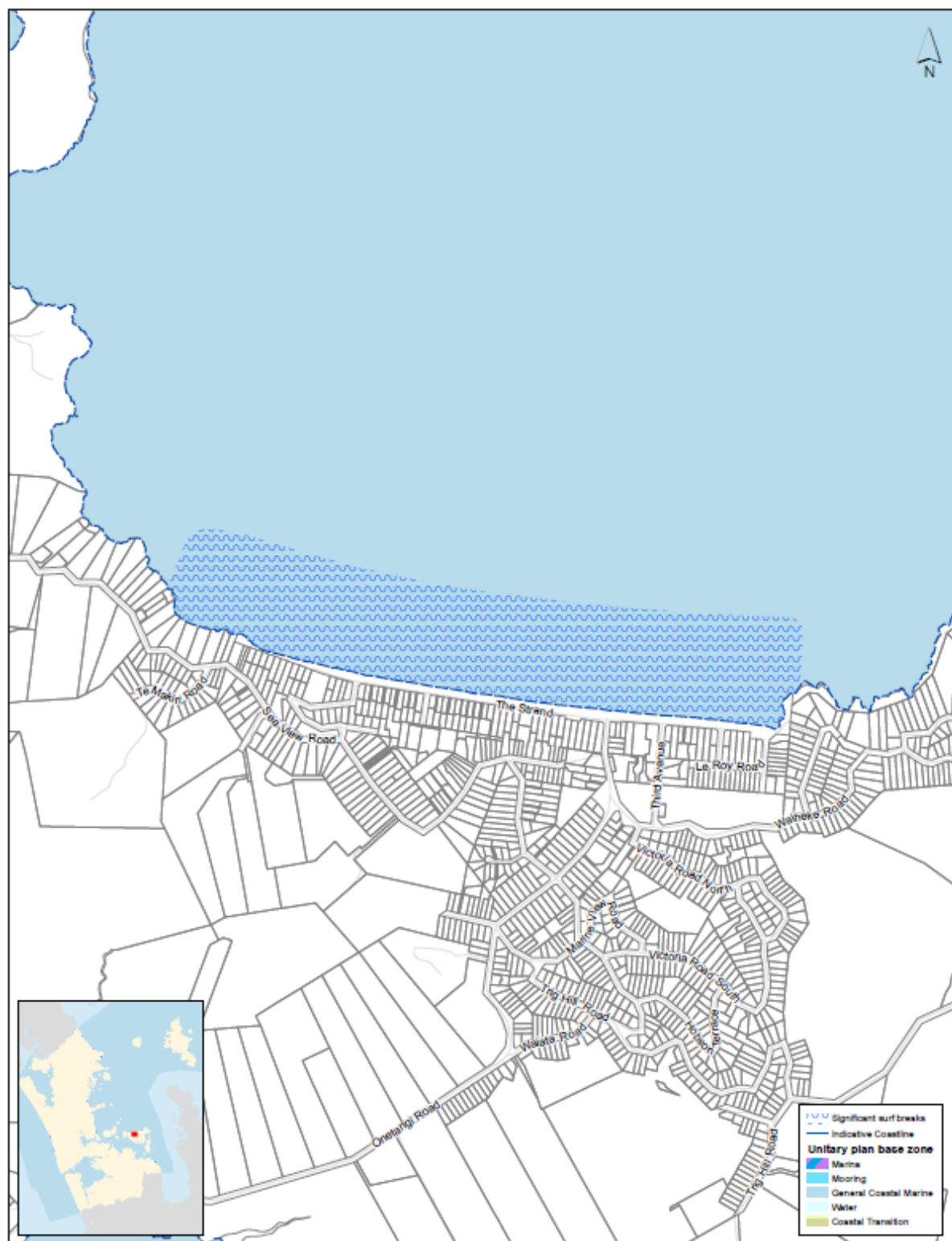
Significant surf breaks - Awana Bay



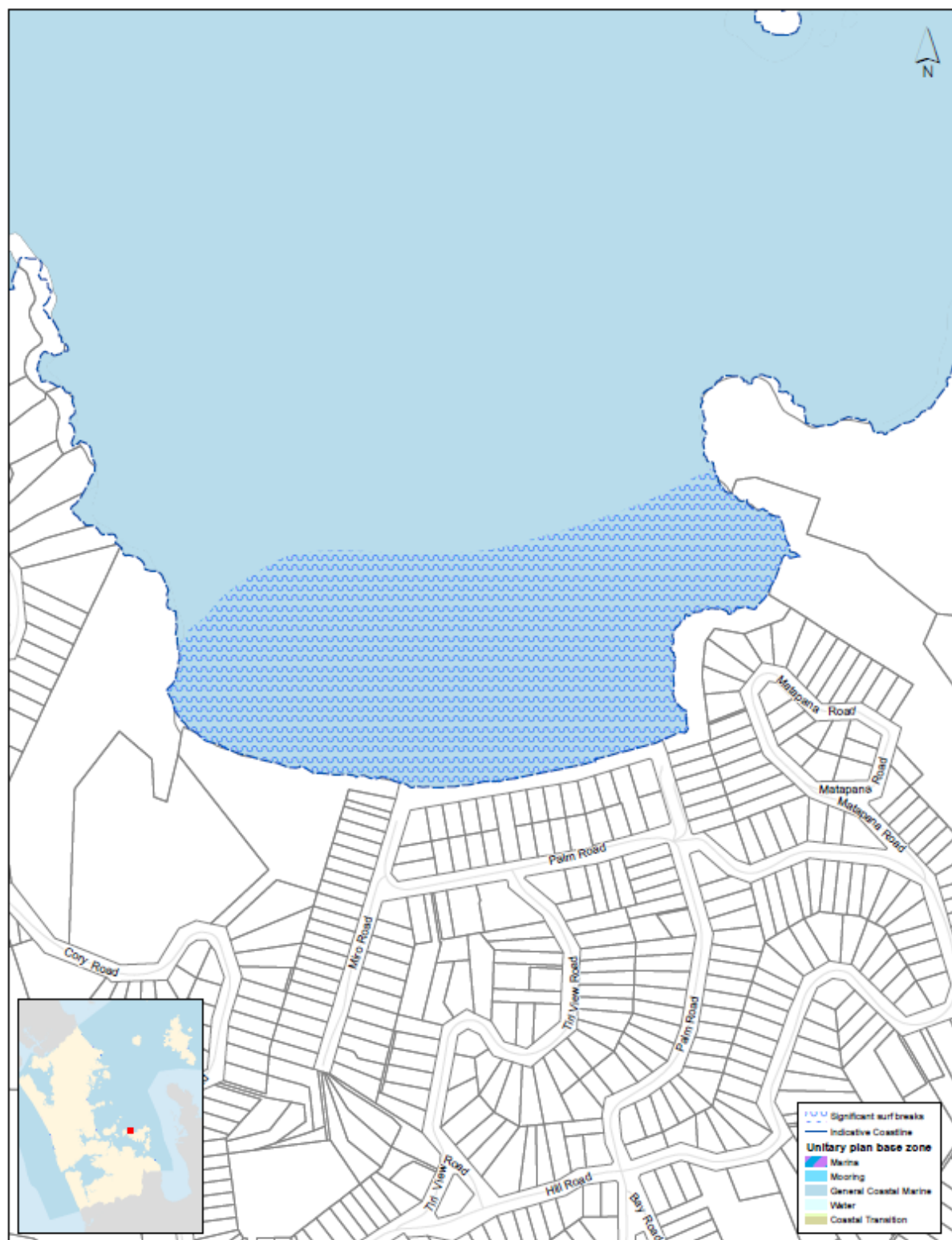
Significant surf breaks - Palmers Beach and Kaitoke



Significant surf breaks - Medlands Beach / Shark Alley



Significant surf breaks - Onetangi Beach



Significant surf breaks - Palm Beach



