

BY MATTHEW PATERSON, PLANNER, AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL

COASTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FROM A TLA PERSPECTIVE

EXPERIENCE OF AUCKLAND CITY'S PLANNING STAFF IN DEVELOPING COASTAL STRATEGIES

In 1995 Auckland City Council embarked on developing coastal management strategies (CMS) for its Isthmus coastline. This was partly in recognition of the pressures being placed on coastal resources by an expanding population and public perception of coastal issues such as stormwater quality, public access, sea level rise and habitat loss. It was also seen as a mechanism to improve the coastal management coordination within the Council and cross-boundary integration with other coastal agencies eg. Regional Council, Department of Conservation, Iwi, etc. The intent was to provide a single reference document that drew together all of Council's current policies, strategies, plans and projects for a

particular section of the coastline. This in turn would provide a process for making and prioritising capital and operational decisions and would provide a clear direction for the future management of coastal resources.

Although the future direction for all land is provided through the District Plan, CMS are specific tools ensuring the future environmental, cultural and spiritual values of the coast are maintained while at the same time providing appropriate opportunities for public use and enjoyment of the coast area.

To date three CMS have been produced and another is currently being developed. One of the difficulties in developing CMS is determining the structure and scope of a CMS. The aim of this

paper is to impart some of the knowledge gained in the past five years of CMS development and in particular the issue of scope and structure. This may assist those local authorities embarking on, or reviewing, coastal strategy development.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF A COASTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

CMS are non-statutory documents and as such they have no legal force and should only address themselves to those areas and matters for which a TLA has jurisdictional responsibility ie. public coastal land. They should be complementary to, and consistent with, regional and district plans.

Ideally, there would probably be one CMS for the entire coastline within a TLA's jurisdiction. In practise, such a document would be large and difficult to use and in reality it is easier if the coast is divided into geographical sections with each section having a CMS.

The physical area parallel to the coast covered by a particular CMS will be determined by practical considerations, physical characteristics and by the existence of discrete communities of interest. The Regional Coastal Plan or a coastal landscape assessment should be helpful in defining the area to be contained in a particular CMS. Ideally, these defined areas will display a homogeneous and consistent landscape character, with the character being derived from a combination of land uses, vegetation cover, topography and the relationship with the sea and other bodies of water.

The landward extent of each CMS includes public land and waterways which are physically linked to the coast, have a direct visual connection with the coast, or are within catchments which feed this coast. Although a CMS has no authority to dictate the use of private coastal land, it is important that the role of private land is recognised when developing CMS as it is often this land which generates the issues relating to public land. Therefore the scope of CMS is:

- all public land in the coastal area. Mostly this will be parks and reserves classified under the



Reserves Act 1977, esplanade reserves, foreshore reserves, road reserves and crown land marginal strips. Some fee simple land held by the TLA for a particular purpose may also be included;

- all matters within these areas for which a local authority has legal responsibility. These responsibilities include land use planning, traffic and roading, parks and reserves management, and stormwater management.

WHAT SHOULD COASTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES SEEK TO ACHIEVE?

The development of CMS structure requires an understanding of their use and purpose. They are primarily tools for Council staff who are charged with management of, and setting work and budget priorities for the coastal area to achieve the best possible management of coastal lands by:

- providing a framework to achieve a comprehensive approach to the management of the coastal area;
- providing a clear direction for the future management of the physical and natural resources and cultural and historic values of the coastal area;
- ensuring the protection and enhancement of the existing values and quantities of the coastal area;
- ensuring that opportunities for public use and enjoyment of the coastal area are maintained and enhanced; and
- providing the local and wider community with certainty as to the direction in which the coastal area will be managed.

HOW SHOULD COASTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ACHIEVE THESE GOALS?

CMS will achieve the above goals by developing strategies, actions, and management policies which:

- ensure adequate opportunities are provided for the public to use and enjoy the coastal area;
- ensure development is compatible with, and does not compromise that values of the coastal environment which attract users;
- protect the coastal environment from uses and development which could harm its qualities and values;
- provide adequate means for the public to easily get to and around the coastal area;
- ensure acceptable coastal water quality is achieved and maintained;
- put in place adequate stormwater management measures to ensure stormwater does not compromise the natural character, amenity and use



- values of the area;
- ensure coastal vegetation is appropriately protected and managed; and
- ensure matters of particular importance to Maori are recognised and appropriately addressed.

WHAT STRUCTURE SHOULD A COASTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY TAKE?

A CMS should contain:

- detail on the existing characteristics, values, issues and opportunities of the area;
- specific management strategies and actions to achieve the purpose of the CMS, to realise opportunities and resolve issues; and
- priority bankings identifying the relative importance of implementing each action.

The difference between strategies and actions needs to be made clear to remove confusion between these aspects of the CMS. Strategies identify what the goal is, eg water quality at bathing beaches should at all times meet bathing beach water quality guide-lines; whereas actions identify how this goal will be achieved eg relocation of stormwater outlets away from bathing beaches.

The following outlines the current format Auckland City Council employs for CMS structure. Some of the issues that may be addressed under each coastal issue heading are also described however the coastal characteristics and uses present within the CMS area will usually determine these.

- use and enjoyment (open space planning, preserving open space amenity, authorised private use of public land, tourism, private/public land interface, management of the sea/land interface, and community involvement);
- development (coastal structures, subdivision, esplanade reserve take, coastal development, commercial development on public land, development amenity, and the design of public

- fixtures);
- protection of the coastal environment (coastal erosion, climate and sea level change, amenity value and landscape character, and heritage protection);
- getting to and getting around the area (public transport, private vehicle use and parking, traffic management, foot/cycle strategies, walkways and conflict);
- coastal water quality (quality necessary for recreational use, habitat health, receiving environment sensitivity, sewage entry, and monitoring);
- stormwater management (stormwater discharge, stormwater treatment, catchment management plans, stormwater reserves, and private watercourses);
- vegetation management (enhancing ecology, vegetation and riparian management, amenity planting, and weed and pest management); and
- matters particular to Iwi (water quality, erosion, stormwater management, natural biota enhancement, recognition and consultation in management).

CMS should also address the implementation of the actions included in them and the need for monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy. Relevant provisions of other documents such as district plans should not be repeated but their existence and relevance should be referred to.

REFERENCE

Auckland City Council, "Eastern Bays Coastal Management Strategy" (Environmental Planning Division, City Planning: March 1999)

Note: The majority of this paper is based on the experience of Auckland City's, City Planning staff in developing coastal strategies.

Further information on Auckland City's Coastal Strategies is available on line: www.akcity.govt.nz

