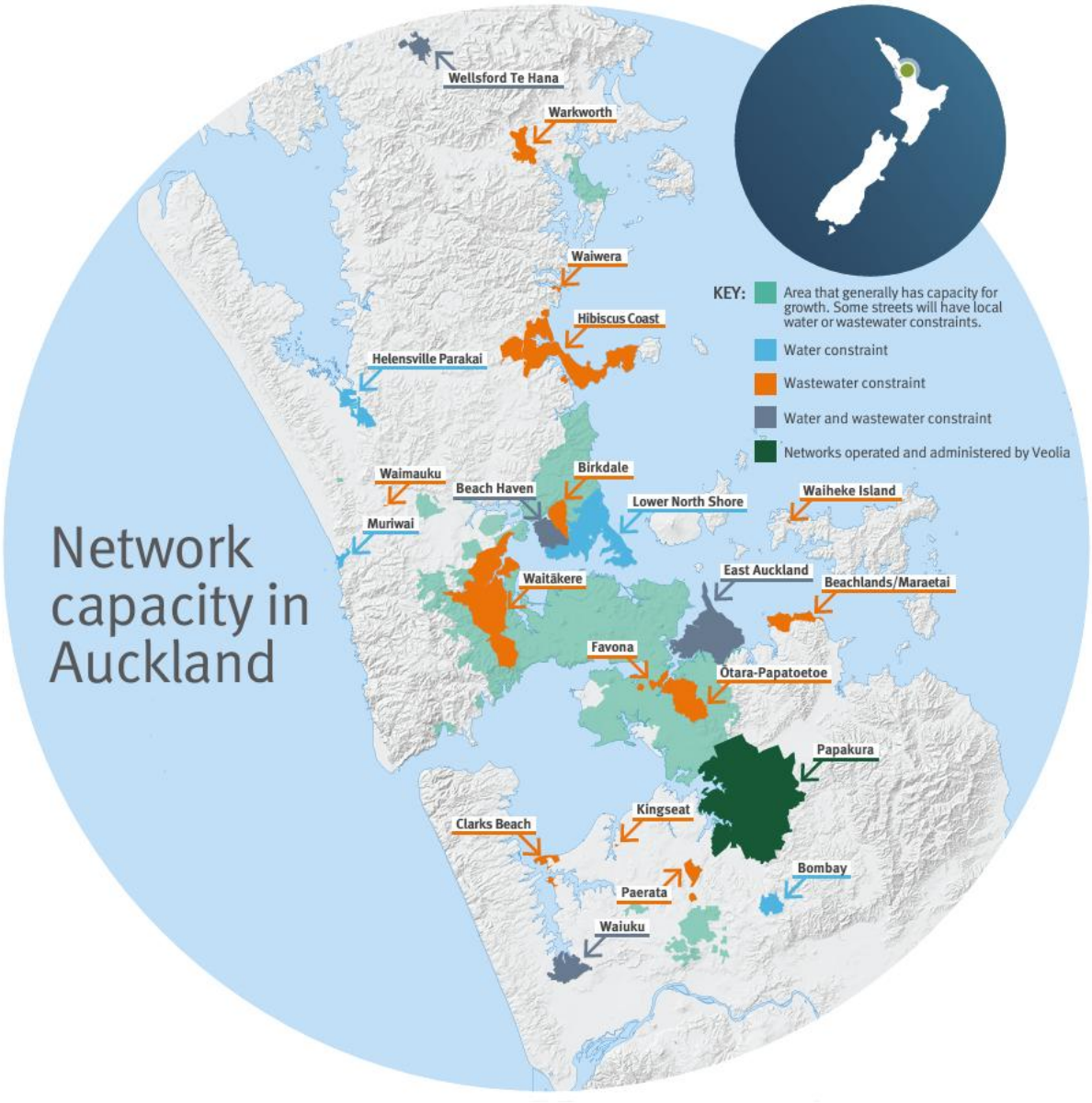
CoLab

Auckland's Infrastructure

Topic: Watercare's Infrastructure Capacity Constraints



1. Auckland's Water & Wastewater Infrastructure Overview

Watercare Services Limited, operating as a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO), maintains responsibility for providing water and wastewater services throughout the Auckland region (excluding Papakura). The organisation manages a comprehensive infrastructure network

encompassing treatment facilities, reservoirs, pumping stations, and network pipes.

Auckland's water and wastewater infrastructure faces considerable challenges due to unprecedented population growth.

Since 2010's regional integration of water services, Auckland's infrastructure network has faced increasing demands from both population growth and urban development. The implementation of the Auckland Unitary Plan in 2016 enabled further intensification throughout the region, contributing to the current infrastructure capacity challenges.

The subsequent eight-year period has witnessed substantial intensification within established suburbs, placing additional strain on existing infrastructure. Consequently, numerous areas within Auckland now experience significant capacity constraints, potentially impacting future development opportunities pending infrastructure upgrades.

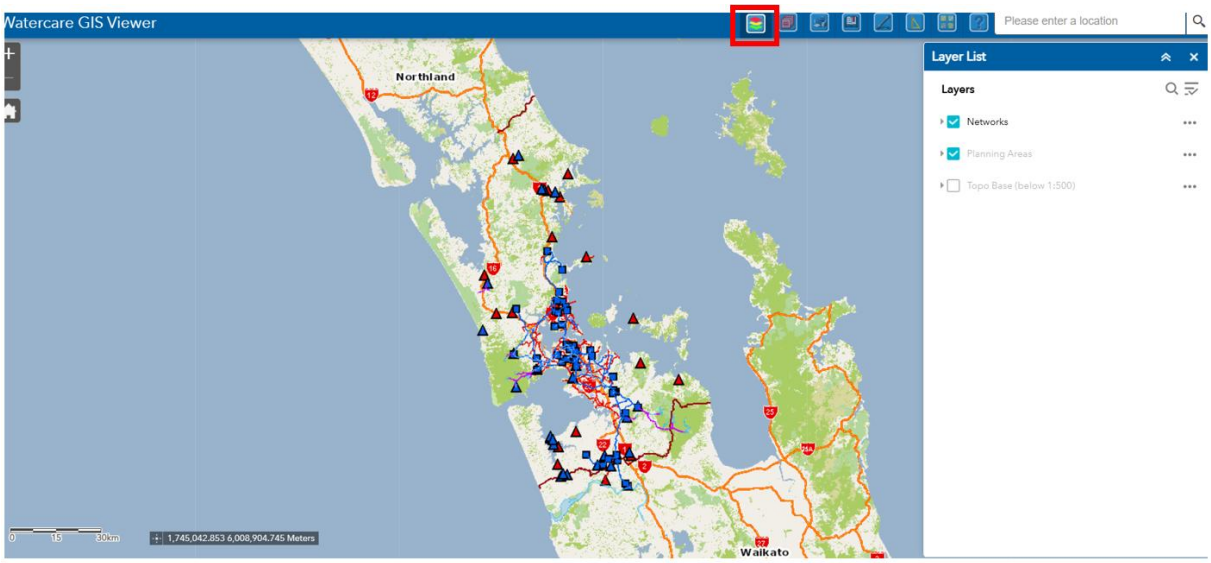
2. How to find out if you are Affected

To facilitate development planning, Watercare has implemented a comprehensive mapping system delineating areas with sufficient network capacity for new residential development, as well as areas experiencing infrastructure constraints. The affected urban areas include (but are not limited to):

- Otara/Papatoetoe
- Favona
- Beachlands/Maraetai
- East Auckland
- Parts of Waitakere
- Beach Haven/Birkdale
- Lower North Shore
- Hibiscus Coast
- Warkworth

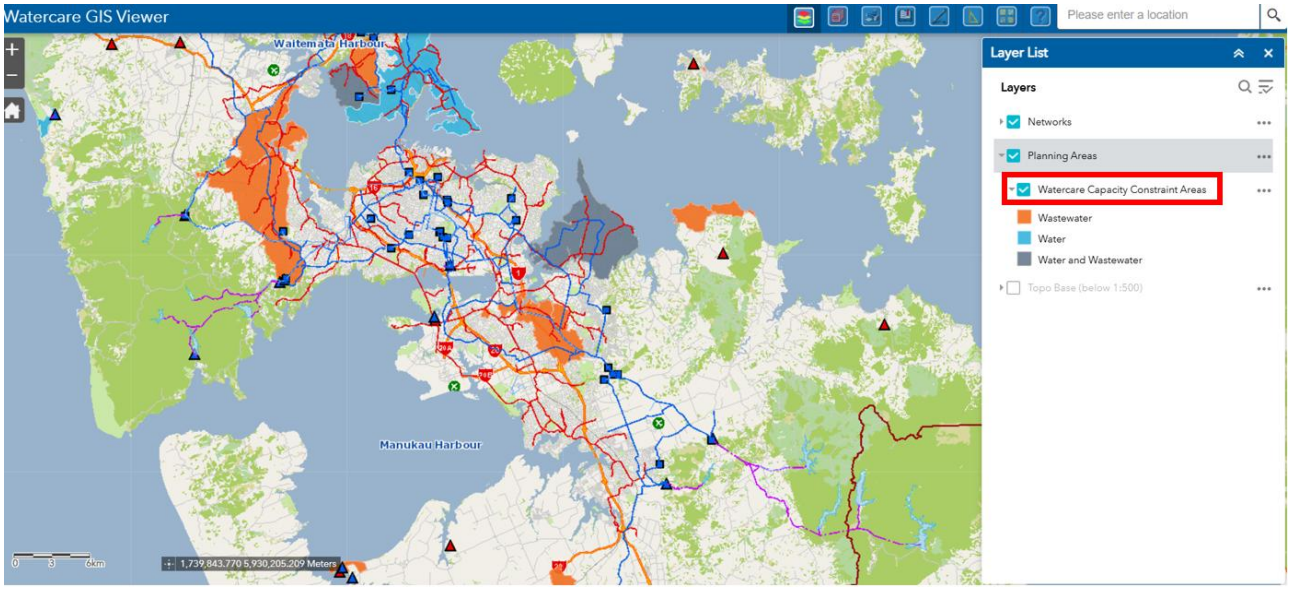
While the primary map provides a macro-level analysis of network capacity, Watercare has enhanced its Geographic Information System (GIS) platform to enable a site-specific infrastructure assessment. Watercare's GIS can be accessed here.

Once you have accepted the standard terms and conditions, open up the 'layers list' which is located within the top navigation bar.



Once open, navigate to the 'planning areas' section within the layers menu and ensure that the 'Watercare capacity constraint areas' is selected. The system will display colour-coded overlays indicating:

- Areas affected by wastewater infrastructure constraints.
- Areas with water supply limitations.
- Areas experiencing both water and wastewater capacity restrictions.

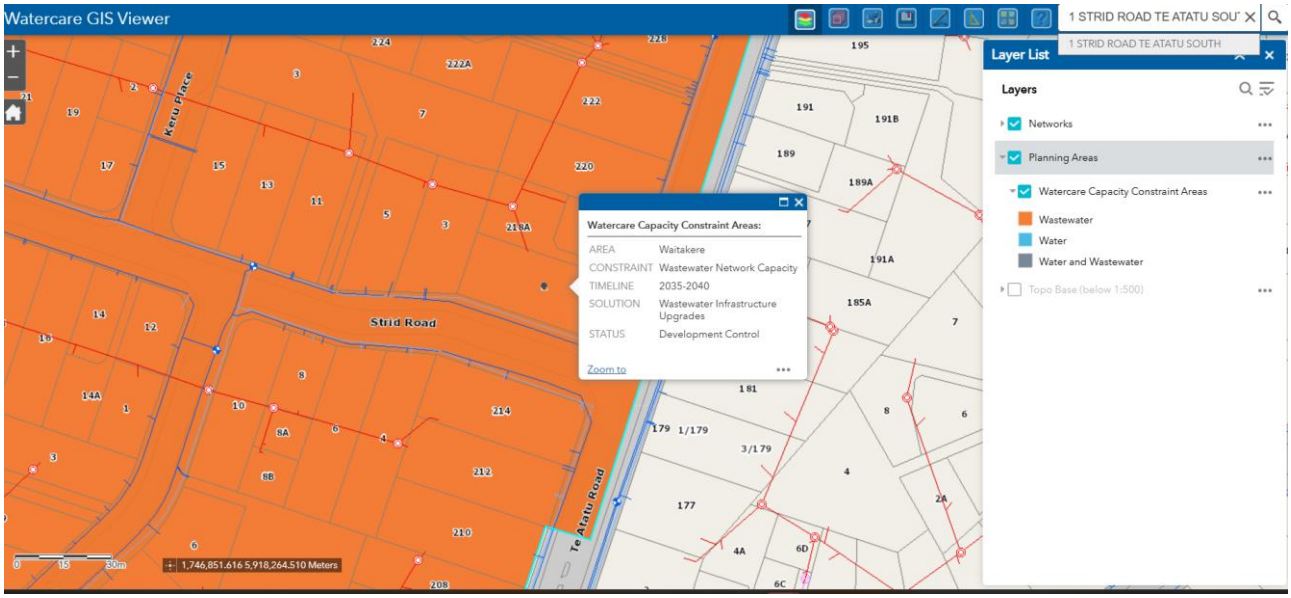


For optimal results, we recommend conducting a property-specific analysis rather than relying solely on the regional overview. To perform a specific site assessment:

1. Locate the search functionality in the upper right corner of the mapping software.
2. Input the specific property address to generate a site-specific analysis.
3. Review the property's infrastructure capacity status.

Example Assessment:
Property: 1 Strid Road, Te Atatu South
Current Status: Subject to Wastewater Network Capacity constraints (indicated by orange shading)

This granular approach provides stakeholders with infrastructure capacity information relevant to their specific location, enabling more informed decision-making regarding development potential and infrastructure requirements.



In this instance, the map confirms that the site is subject to a specific site constraint (wastewater), the expected timeframe for a solution (in this case; 2035-2040), as well as the solution type (wastewater infrastructure upgrades).

3. How Watercare Plans to Address these Constraints

Watercare's infrastructure capacity maps clearly identify areas within Auckland that require either new infrastructure development or significant upgrades to existing systems to accommodate future growth. In an effort to enhance transparency for Auckland's development community, Watercare has published these maps alongside a capacity table. This table provides detailed information for each constrained area, including:

1. Specific infrastructure constraints.
2. The nature and scope of the limitations.
3. Projected timeline for implementing solutions.

The extended timeline for many projects, with completion dates ranging from 2025 to 2040, reflects the complexity and scale of some of the required infrastructure improvements. These timeframes indicate that the solutions often involve extensive network modifications or major treatment plant upgrades, rather than simple localised fixes.

Areas with limited capacity at present

Area	Constraint	Expected timeframe for solution
Beach Haven	Water and wastewater network capacity	2040-2045
Beachlands / Maraetai	Wastewater treatment plant capacity	2025-2030
Birkdale	Wastewater network capacity	2030-2035
Clarks Beach	Wastewater treatment plant capacity	2026
East Auckland	Water and wastewater network capacity	2035-2040
Favona	Wastewater network capacity	2025-2030
Helensville / Parakai	Water treatment plant capacity	2025-2030
Lower North Shore	Water network capacity	2040-2045
Ōtara-Papatoetoe	Wastewater network capacity	2035-2040
Paerata	Wastewater network capacity	2025-2030
Waitākere	Wastewater network capacity	2035-2040
Waiuku	Water and wastewater treatment plant capacity	2025-2030

Areas with no capacity at present*

Hibiscus Coast	Wastewater treatment plant capacity	2031
Kingseat	Wastewater treatment plant capacity	2030-2035
Waiwera	Wastewater treatment plant capacity and water network capacity	2025-2030
Warkworth	Wastewater treatment plant capacity and network capacity	2025-2030
Wellsford / Te Hana	Water and wastewater treatment plant capacity	2026-2028

** There is some capacity at present to accommodate developments with current consents on the Hibiscus Coast and in Warkworth and Wellsford / Te Hana. See our website for area-specific conditions.*

Areas with no capacity long term

Bombay	Water treatment plant capacity	n/a
Muriwai	Water treatment plant capacity	n/a
Waiheke Island	Wastewater treatment plant capacity	n/a
Waimauku	Wastewater treatment plant capacity	n/a

Key: Water constraint | Wastewater constraint | Water and wastewater constraint | November 2024

4. What does this mean for you?

Network constraints in water and wastewater systems **do not automatically preclude new connections**. Each development will undergo individual evaluation based on several key

factors:

- Geographic location;
- Projected service demand;
- Development scale; and
- Implementation timeline.

Within the designated constraint areas, some developments could proceed with appropriate capacity analysis and planning as these areas have **limited capacity** - not no capacity.

It is critical that a detailed site-specific assessment is undertaken that is supported by a quality engineering assessment, with this overseen by a qualified and skilled Planner to navigate through these constraints.

> **Kirsty Merriman**, an experienced local property investor and developer, shares her perspective on the current infrastructure landscape:
>
> *"The current circumstances facing developers and landowners raise important considerations, particularly regarding infrastructure planning and housing supply in Auckland's vital development zones. There are significant gaps in planning, funding allocation, and stakeholder communication that are impacting potential housing development.*
>
> *A collaborative approach is essential, with skilled teams led by qualified Planning and engineering professionals who can effectively address these challenges while maintaining productive engagement with Watercare. Given the present constraints, stakeholders must prioritise understanding their specific position within this regulatory and infrastructure framework."*
>
> **Developer Perspective**

Infrastructure capacity considerations may affect resource consent applications. However, there are specific planning pathways available, including:

- Permitted activity status for up to three dwellings in certain residential zones, including Residential: Mixed Housing Suburban and Urban zones;
- Potential for conditional consents that align development timing with infrastructure upgrades; and/or
- Specific provisions for subdivisions proceeding around existing development or approved land use consents, based on Auckland Council's own practice and guidance.

The above could provide alternative options if you want to develop prior to the required infrastructure upgrades.

5. Need Help?

If your development plans could potentially be affected by these constraint areas, our team can assist with consultation with Watercare in partnership with trusted Civil Engineers to ascertain if your project will be impacted.

This is a complex field to navigate, and early evaluation of infrastructure requirements is crucial for project viability and can result in significant cost savings.

Contact us today to see how we can help.

Contact Person: Mark Charlesworth
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Interested in learning more about resource management planning?

Contact us today at contact@colabplanning.co.nz.