



# Briefing

## ALERT LEVEL BOUNDARY OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

To Hon Minister Hipkins, Minister for the COVID-19 Response

Date	18/08/2021	Priority	High
Deadline	19/08/2021	Briefing Number	DPMC-2021/22-195

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update regarding possible regional boundary options ahead of a review of the current Alert Level 4 arrangements on 20 August 2021.

 Graham Maclean Head of System Readiness and Planning, COVID-19 Group	Hon Minister Hipkins Minister of the COVID-19 Response
18/08/2021	...../...../.....

Contact for telephone discussion if required:

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Graham Maclean	Head of System Readiness and Planning, COVID-19 Group	s9(2)(a)	✓
Sija-Robertson-Stone	Manager, Insights and Reporting Team, COVID-19 Group		

Minister's office comments:

- Noted
- Seen
- Approved
- Needs change
- Withdrawn
- Not seen by Minister
- Overtaken by events
- Referred to

Proactively Released

# ALERT LEVEL BOUNDARY OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

## Purpose

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2. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update regarding possible regional boundary options ahead of a review of the current Alert Level 4 arrangements on 20 August 2021.

## Background

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3. The principles for setting Alert Level boundaries have been agreed by Cabinet. These are:
  - a) boundaries are appropriate and proportionate to support a public health response to COVID-19 that prevents and limits the spread of COVID-19 (primary consideration);
  - b) boundaries minimise the need for people to travel between areas at different Alert Levels to go to work, a place of learning, or to receive medical treatment;
  - c) boundaries are practical and safe to enforce;
  - d) boundaries minimise economic disruption to business and supply chains – e.g. ensuring businesses can continue to operate if safe to do
  - e) boundaries minimise equity impacts – e.g. access to life critical services such as food.
4. Any potential boundary must be informed by a public health risk assessment and advice. The Ministry of Health will provide this assessment on Thursday 19 August.
5. For Cabinet consideration on 20 August 2021, five options are currently being formulated. The options are provided in the table included as attachment A, along with some policy and operational considerations for each.
6. When these boundaries have been formulated, the following information has been taken into account:
  - a) Commuter flows based on 2018 Census data
  - b) Health risk
  - c) Access to Alert Level 4 services
  - d) Adjustments to enable legal definition.
7. Considerations for the five boundary options currently being formulated include:
  - a) The characteristics of the Delta variant require a cautious approach in regards to population movement
  - b) Enforcement considerations, for example:



- i) To simplify enforcement, boundaries will ideally be contiguous
  - ii) The resources required for effective enforcement should be considered (noting that augmenting NZ Police with other agencies at scale is not supportable without compromise of other commitments). New Zealand Police have advised boundary options B, C, D and E would take frontline Police resources away from community policing
  - iii) If boundaries are too long they become difficult to enforce and would require a choice of community policing versus checkpoints
- c) System capacity, for example:
- i) The system may not be able to support the complexity of more than two Alert Levels, in regards to public communication, enforcement and exemptions. MBIE have indicated there would be issues with the travel exemptions process if multiple alert levels were to be managed at once.

## Next Steps

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- 8. Following feedback from Ministers and further public health advice on 19 August 2021, further options and advice will be provided to Cabinet for the meeting on 20 August 2021 regarding any potential regional boundary.

## Consultation

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- 9. Key agencies have been consulted for their views on the policy and operational considerations required to implement the boundaries. This includes Waka Kotahi, NEMA, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Primary Industries, and New Zealand Police. Not all agencies have been able to respond in the timeframes, however more thorough advice will be provided to the office on Thursday 19 August, as part of the review of the Alert Level arrangements.
- 10. Wider consultation outside Government has not occurred at this point.



<b>Attachments:</b>	
<b>Attachment A:</b>	Alert Level Boundary Issues for Operationalisation and Policy Considerations




## ATTACHMENT A

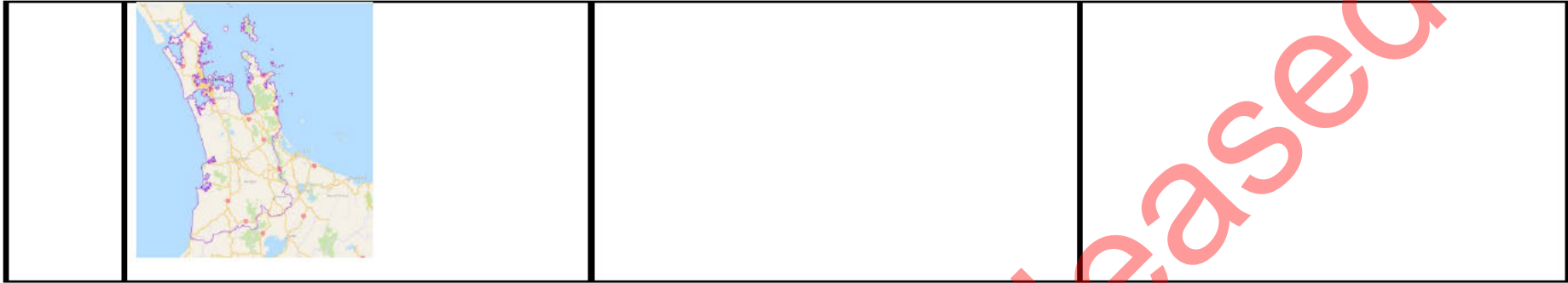
### Alert Level Boundary Issues for Operationalisation and Policy Considerations

Option	Description	Issues for Operationalisation (eg practicable, reasonable, timeframes)	Policy Considerations (eg, access, impacts, feasibility)
A	NORTH ISLAND / SOUTH ISLAND	<p>The largest and easiest geographical area to manage.</p> <p>Would contain a significant proportion of the population and require relatively few checkpoints to enforce.</p>	<p>Depending on the public health advice and the emergence and location of other cases, there may be an issue of proportionality.</p> <p>Given what is known about the transmissibility of the Delta variant and the experience of the New South Wales response where their efforts to keep the containment area small were not successful, a broader boundary may be proportional.</p>
B	AUCKLAND + WAIKATO	<p>19 checkpoints in total: 13 State Highway checkpoints; and 6 local road checkpoints</p> <p>Of these, 5 would be Northern checkpoints.</p> <p>The Southern boundary would require 11 State Highway Checkpoints and 3 local road checkpoints.</p> <p>Significant resource would be required.</p> <p>Traffic volumes would be low so freight lanes may not be needed.</p>	<p>We would be isolating communities from Taupo (medical and supplies) such Waiouru, Ohakune they would have to go south or to Taihape.</p>

		Three to four contractors involved on the Southern Boundary.	
C	<p><b>AUCKLAND</b> + <b>COROMANDEL PENINSULA</b></p> 	<p>Requires 15 checkpoints in total: 5 State Highway checkpoints; 10 local road checkpoints</p> <p>Traffic Management Deployment would be OK – three different contractors involved.</p> <p>Freight lanes possible on SH1 etc</p>	Traffic flows in Coromandel during the infectious period suggest that this area may not sufficiently contain the virus.



D	<p><b>AUCKLAND</b></p> <p>+</p> <p><b>WAIKATO</b></p> <p>+</p> <p><b>BAY OF PLENTY</b></p> <p>(with small adjustments)</p> 	<p>15 checkpoints in total - 11 State Highway checkpoints, 4 local road checkpoints</p> <p>9 new State Highway and 1 new local road checkpoints</p> <p>5 Contractors involved – traffic management resourcing should be OK</p> <p>2-3 policing districts involved – although they work together.</p> <p>Least impact on primary industries. Greater impact on forestry which is not an AL4 business.</p>	<p>Te Urewera Iwi will have a high level of interest at this runs right through their land.</p> <p>Community separation is okay but Waiouru and Ohakune would have to go south for their supplies</p>
E	<p><b>AUCKLAND</b></p> <p>+</p> <p><b>CUTTING ACROSS WAIKATO</b></p> <p>(with adjustments to allow Tauranga area to connect with the lower North Island)</p>	<p>This boundary has not yet been consulted, having only recently been generated. It includes the same Northern boundary, requiring 5 checkpoints. The number of checkpoints on the Southern boundary is has not yet been determined.</p>	<p>This boundary would allow movement to continue between Tauranga and the lower North Island.</p>



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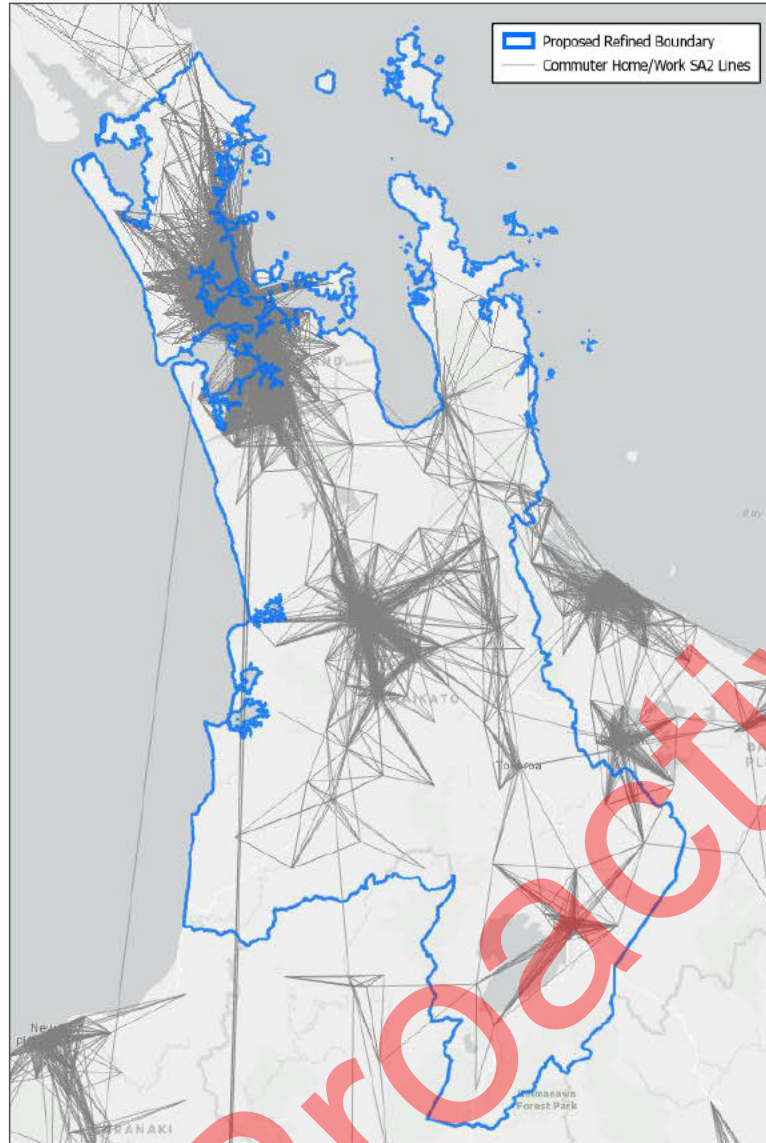


Objective of Alert Level boundaries: minimise the risk of transmission while causing the least social and economic disruption

Step 1

COMMUTER FLOWS

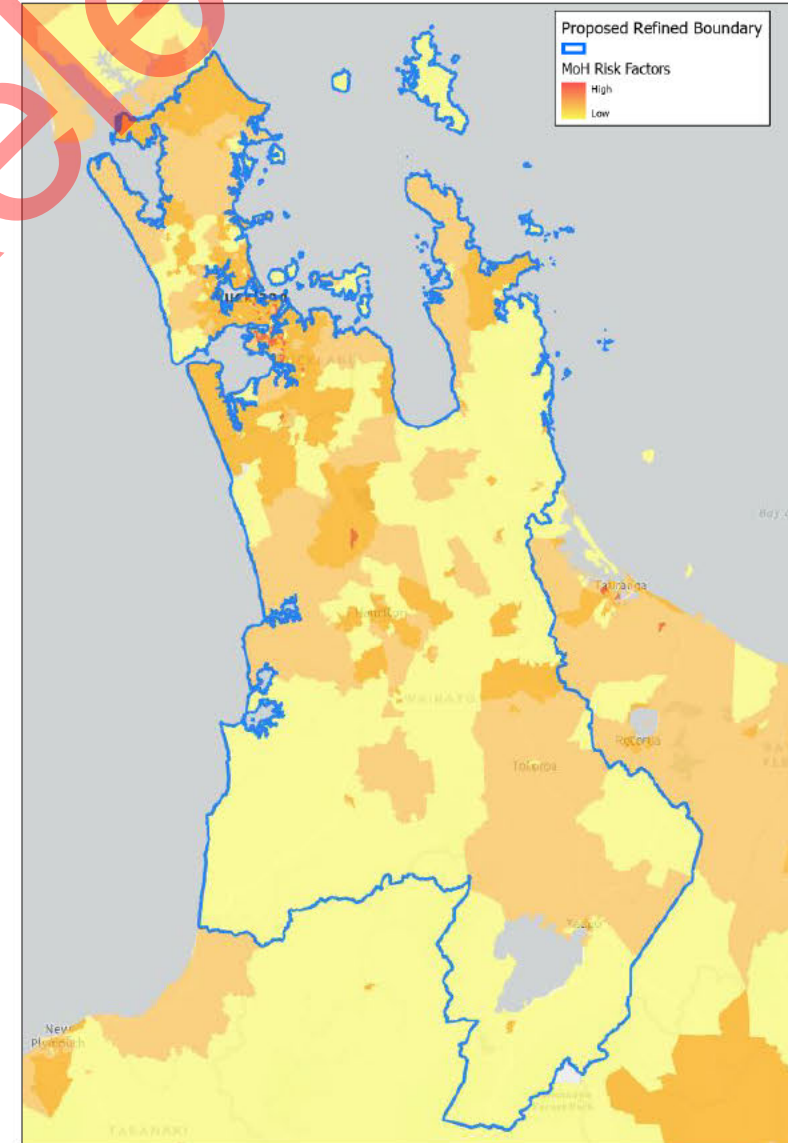
Commuter flows into and out of areas based on 2018 Census data are utilised.



Step 2

COVID RISK FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Health COVID Risk Framework is overlaid with the output from Step 1. This includes four risk categories i) presence of undetected cases, ii) potential for exposure, iii) potential for transmission, and iv) poor health outcome. The first risk category changes daily depending on community transmission, where the later three are more static. They include things like MIQ location risk, demographics, socioeconomics, and healthcare.



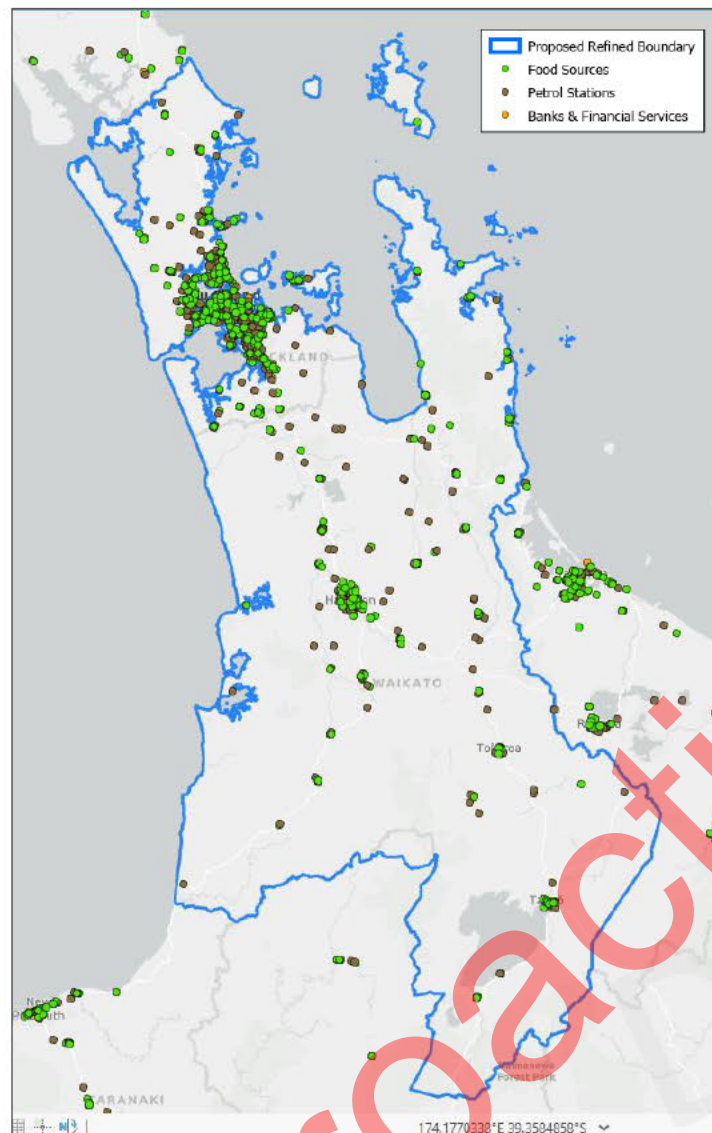


Objective of Alert Level boundaries: minimise the risk of transmission while causing the least social and economic disruption

### Step 3

#### ACCESS TO CRITICAL SERVICES

The next step addresses the boundary's impact on access to critical services, along with analysing economic and social impacts using data from MSD, NZDF, NZTA, MPI, Treasury and other agencies. This analysis will highlight any potential issues such as significant travel time changes to access critical services, as well as identifying isolated communities.



### Step 4

#### ADJUSTMENTS

The final step is to make final adjustments to align with administrative boundaries, rivers, roads and other features enabling the boundary to be legally defined. Additional small refinements are made to avoid isolating people and to minimise disruption through populous areas.



Recommendations are provided, but the Minister and Cabinet make the final decisions. While we can suggest pre-defined Alert Level boundary options there is boundary can be no guarantee these will be used. If required, further engagement with key stakeholders can occur and the refined as new data becomes available, such as information regarding community transmission and the risk of undetected cases.

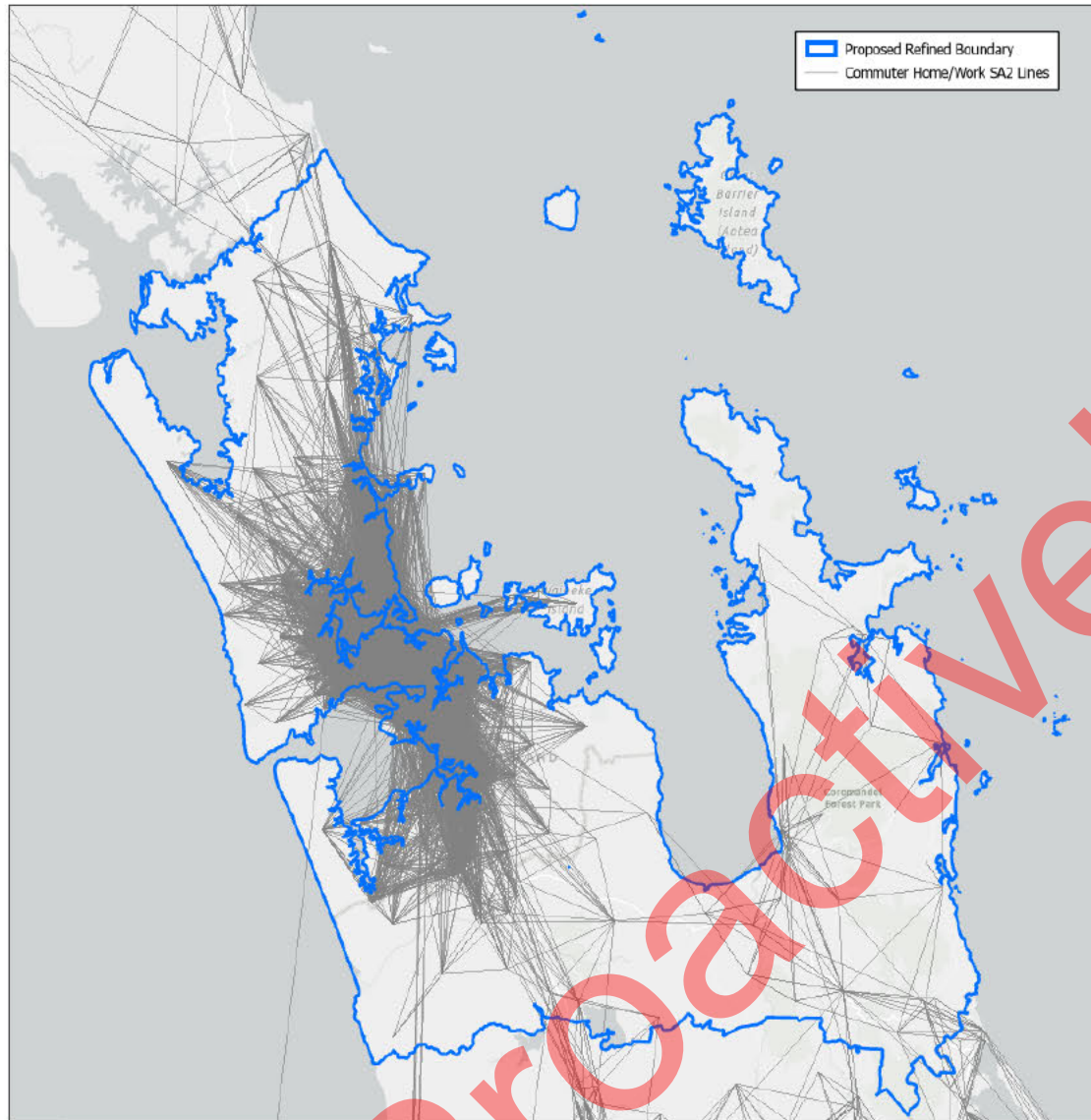


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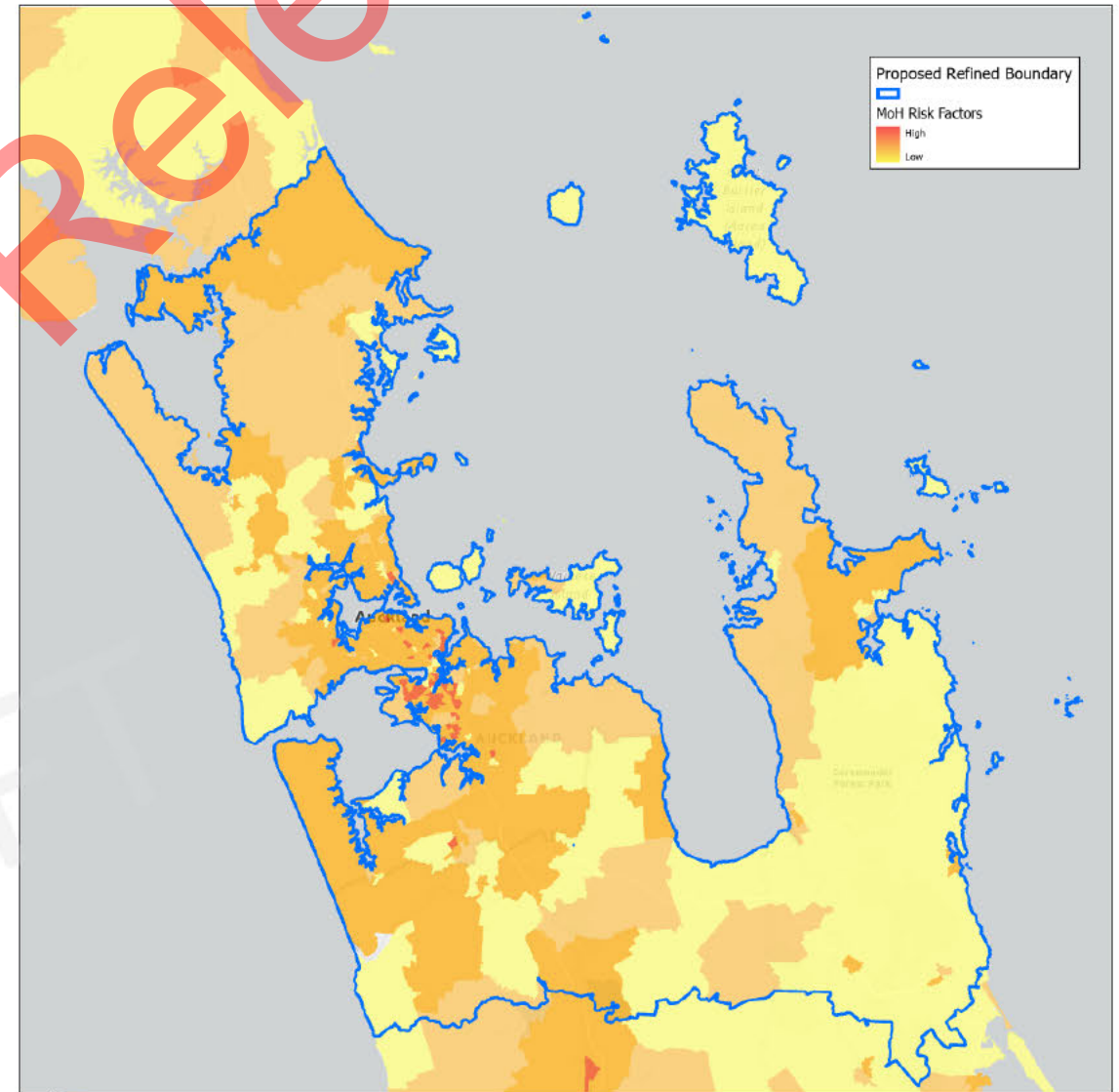
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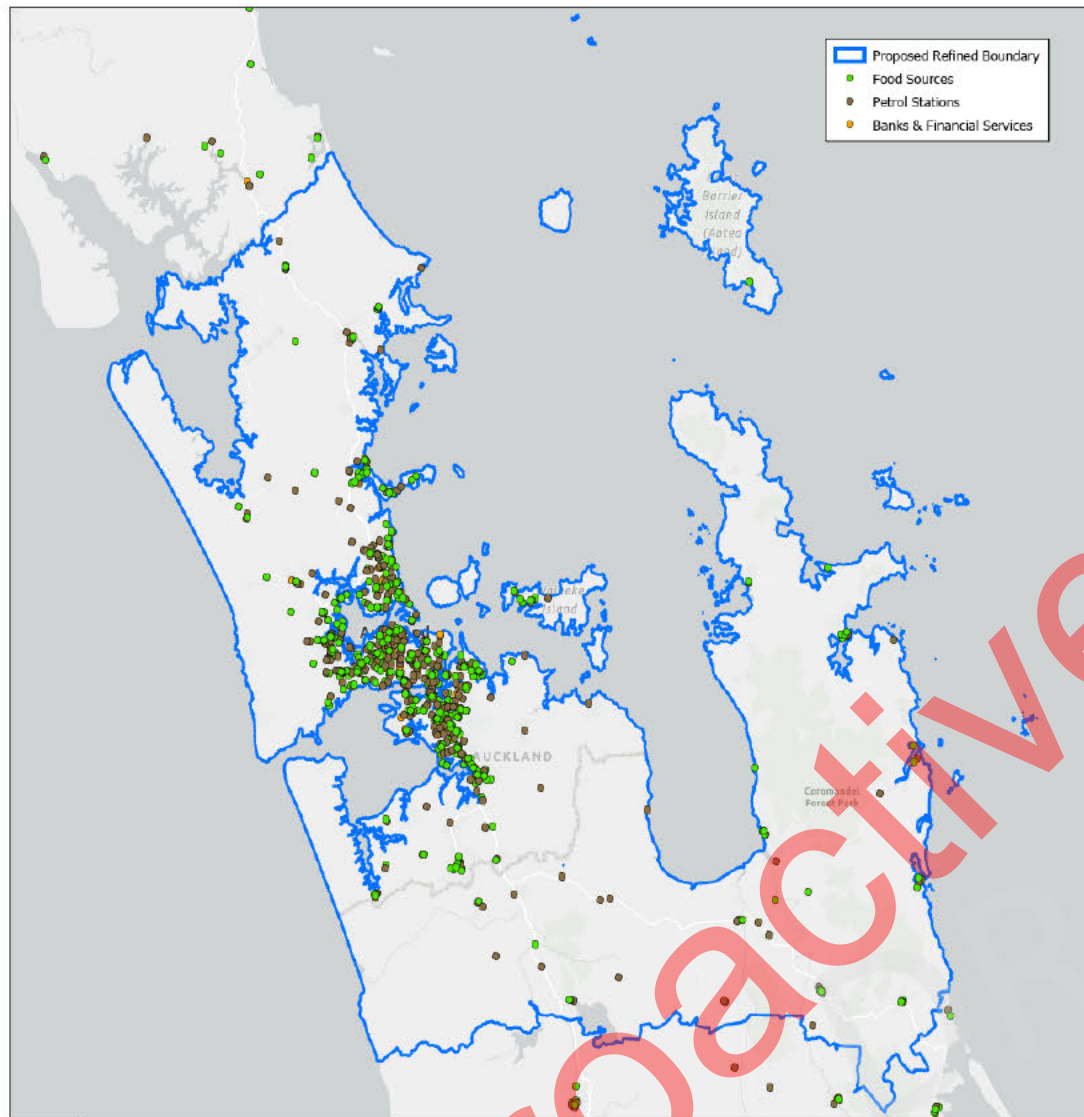


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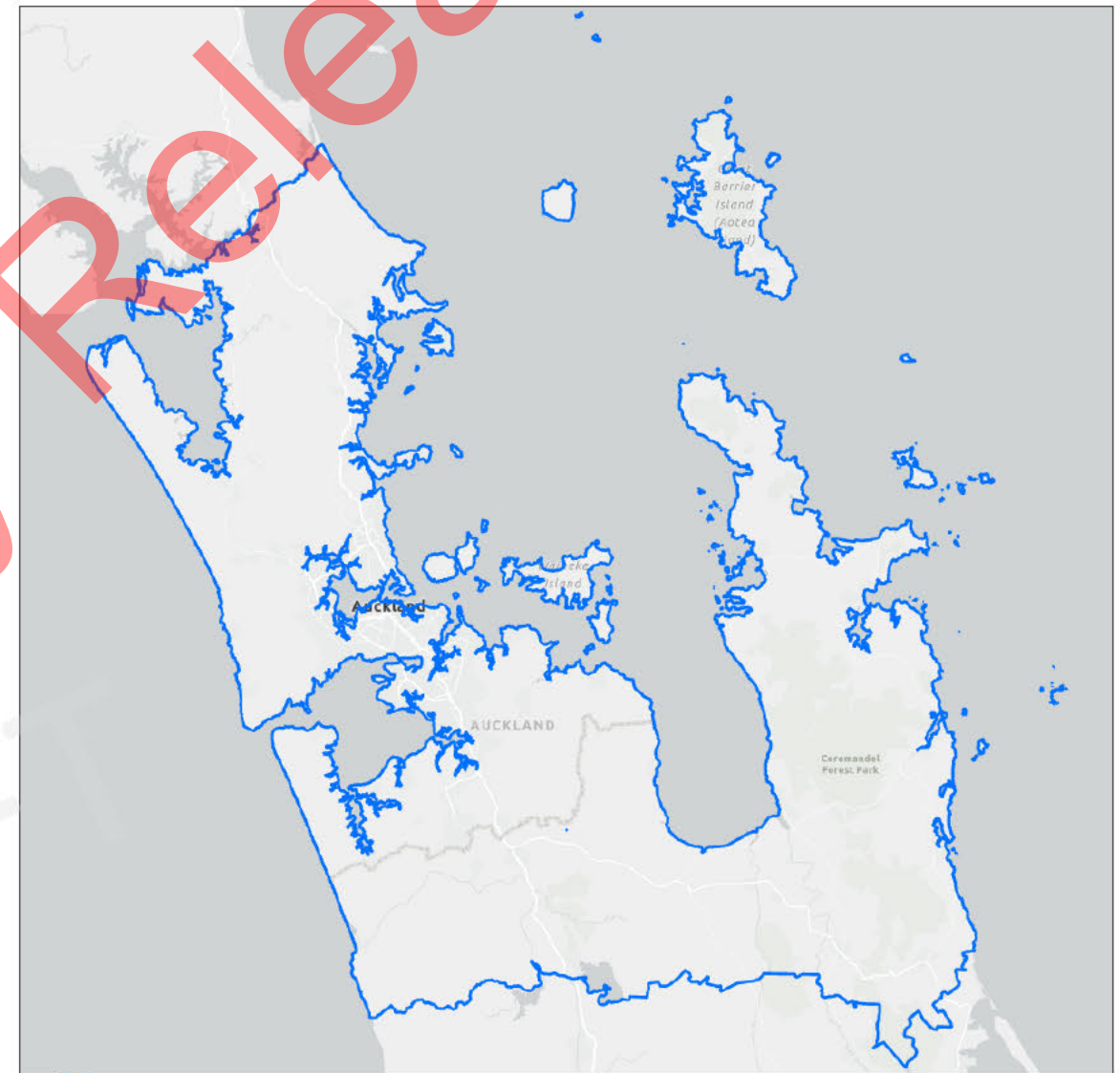
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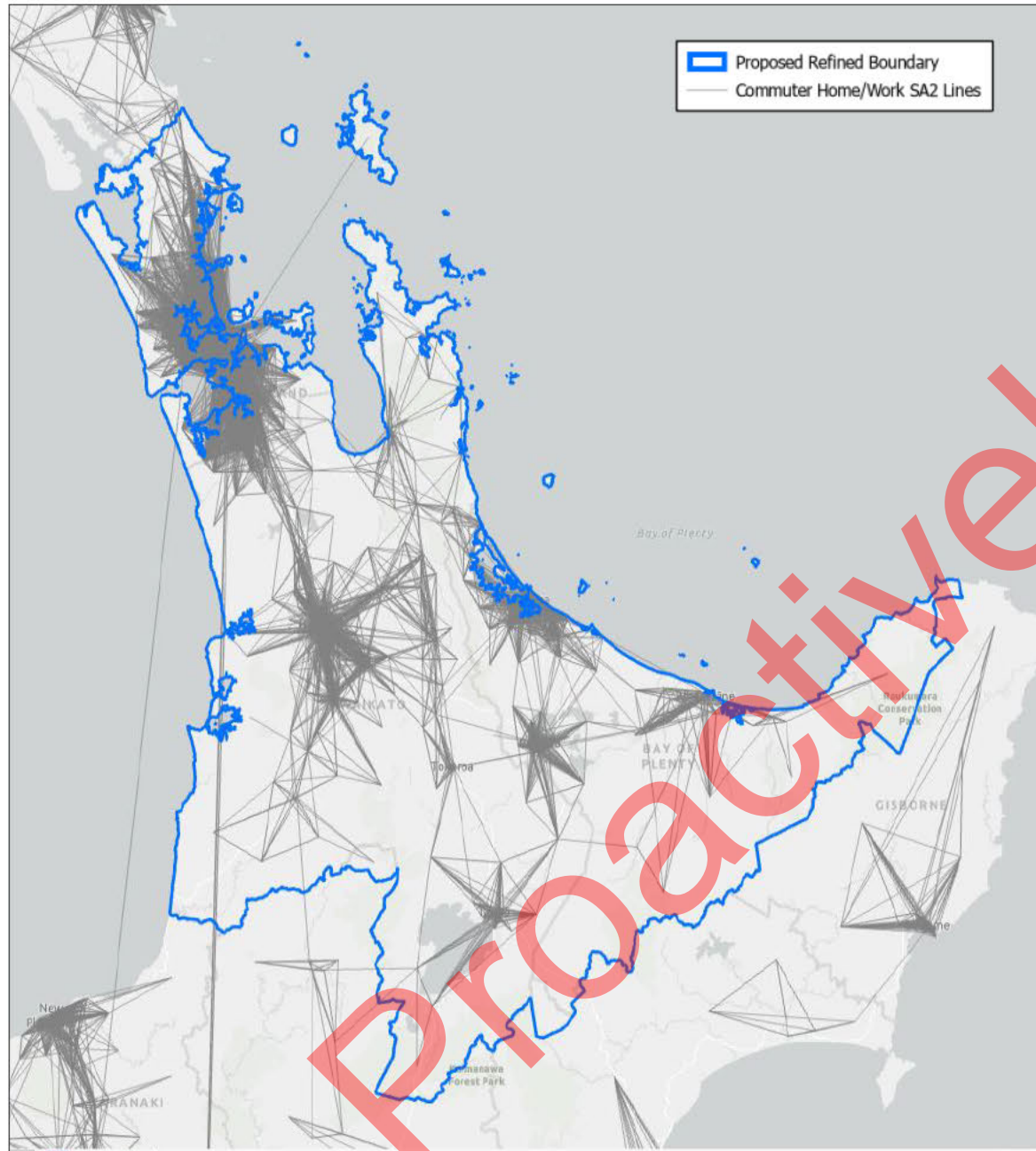


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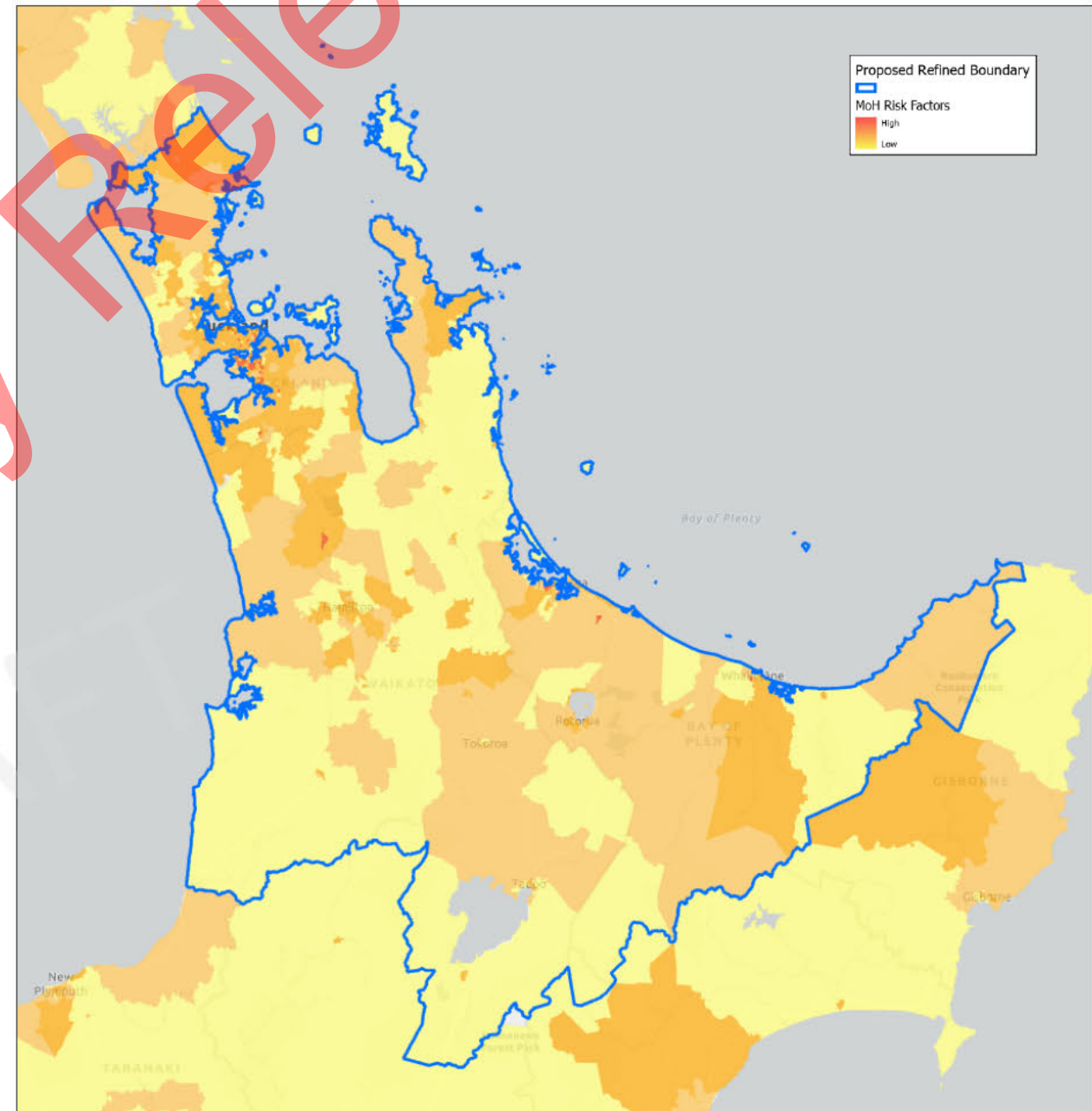
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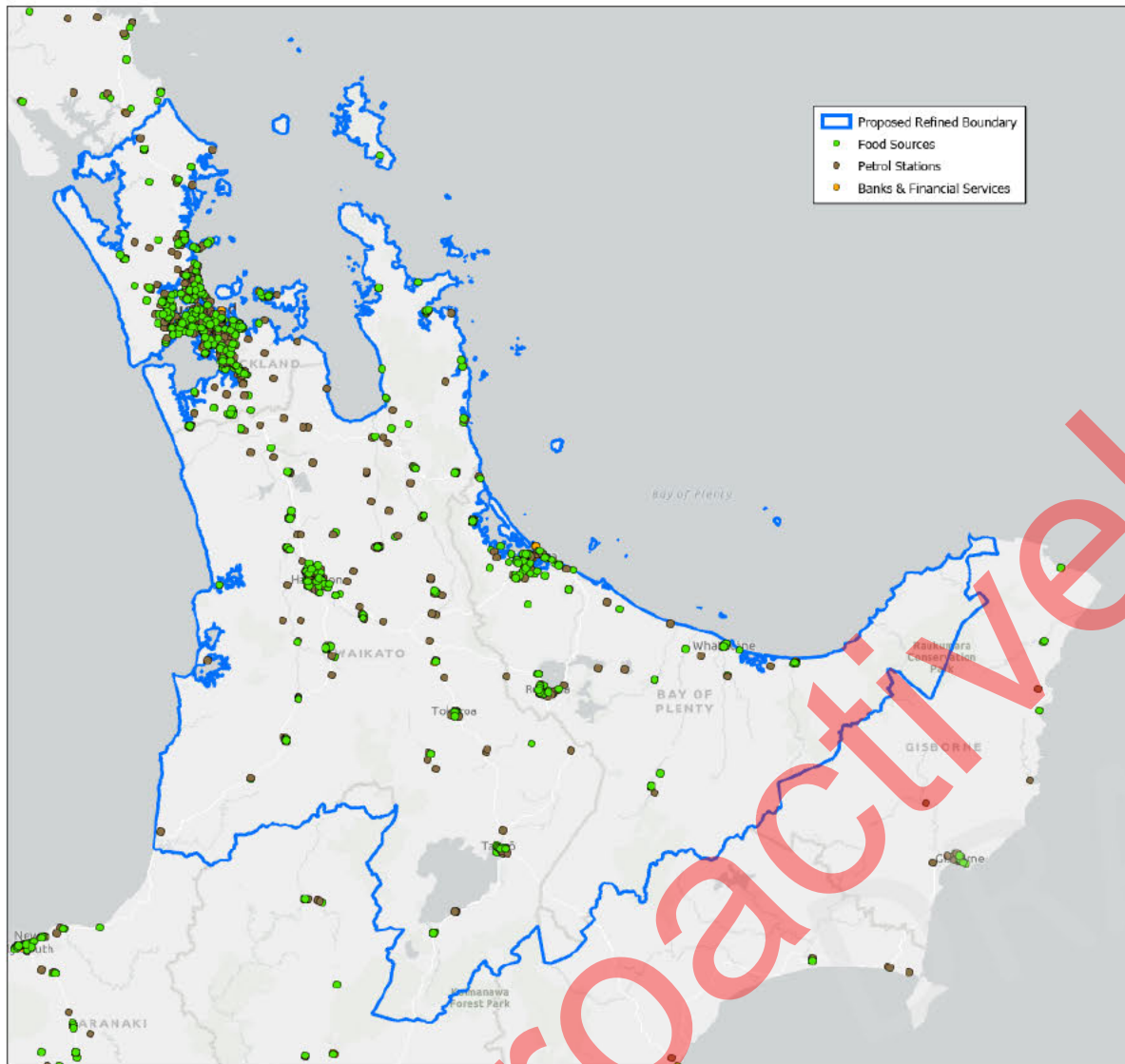


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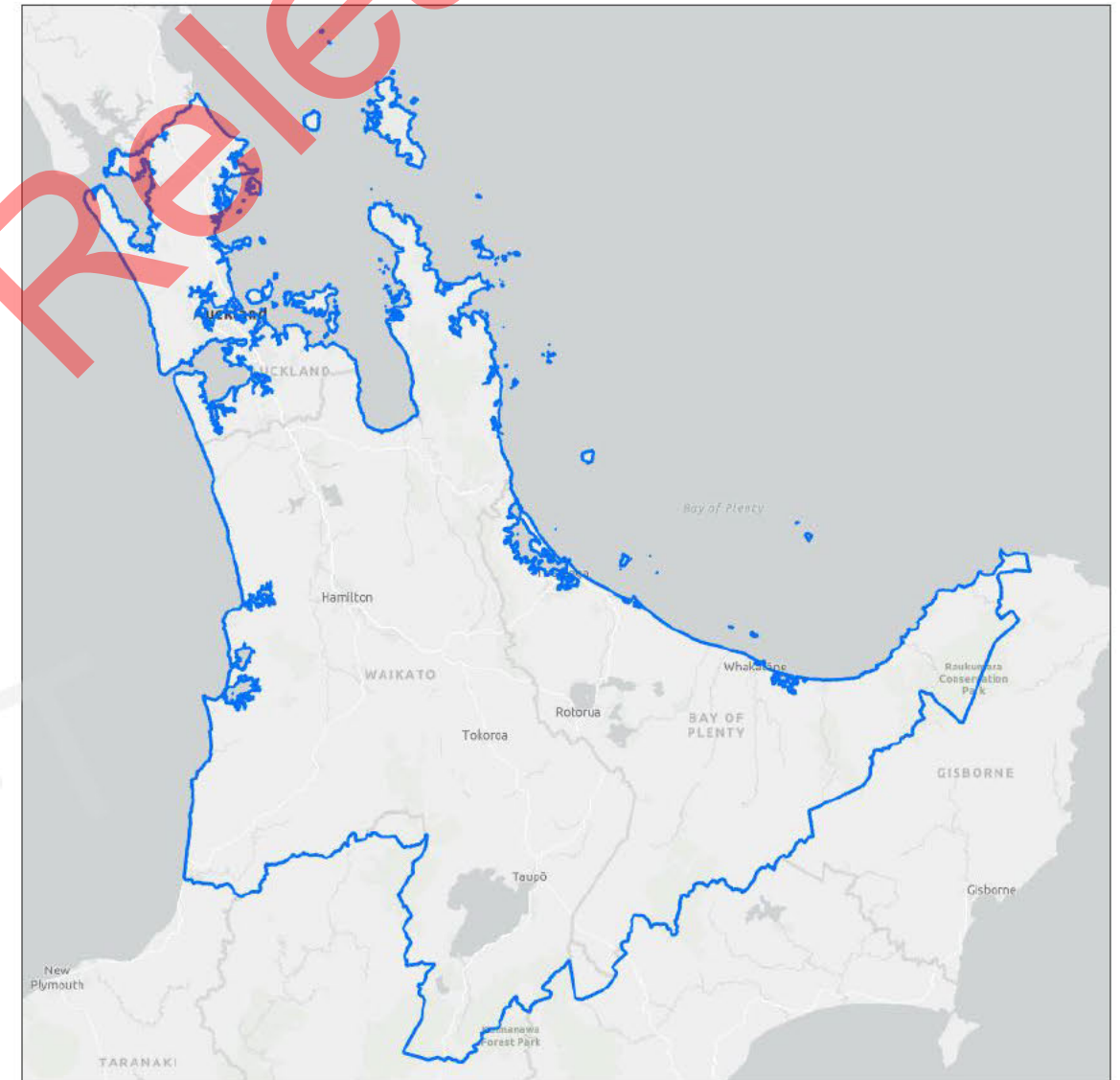
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