

**Before the Hearings Panel
At Porirua City Council**

Under Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of the Proposed Porirua District Plan

Between **Various**

Submitters

And **Porirua City Council**

Respondent

**Response to questions on the NGDA
Rory Smeaton on behalf of Porirua City Council**

Date: 15 March 2022

INTRODUCTION:

1 My name is Rory Smeaton. I am a Senior Policy Planner at the Porirua City Council, a position I have held since April 2020. I am providing planning evidence on behalf of the Council in respect of submissions and further submissions made on the Proposed Porirua District Plan (PDP). A brief summary of my qualifications and experience is attached to each of the section 42A reports I have authored.

2 I authored the Section 32 and 42A reports for the DEV – NG – Northern Growth Development Area chapter, as well as the chapter itself.

3 At the hearing on 14 March 2023, the Panel requested a written reply to the following question:

Within the Northern Growth Development Area (NGDA) why does the Council propose to rezone RLZ – Rural Lifestyle Zone to the east of the FUZ – Future Urban Zone (as notified in the PDP) to MRZ – Medium Density Residential Zone?

4 Additionally, a question was also posed as to why the Council decided to progress a Development Area chapter and associated Structure Plan for the NGDA site through Variation 1 so soon after proposing the rezoning of that land to FUZ in the PDP? This question was posed as the NGDA is identified as a 'New Residential Area – Medium Term' in the Porirua Growth Strategy 2048.

5 I respond to each of these questions below

Why does the NGDA propose to zone land to the east of the FUZ?

6 During the hearing Commissioner Williams identified that part of the land proposed to be live zoned in the NGDA through Variation 1 fell outside of the area proposed to be zoned Future Urban Zone in the PDP.

7 The area of land referred to by the Commissioner is shown in Figure 18 of the section 32 evaluation report, which is reproduced in Figure 1 below.

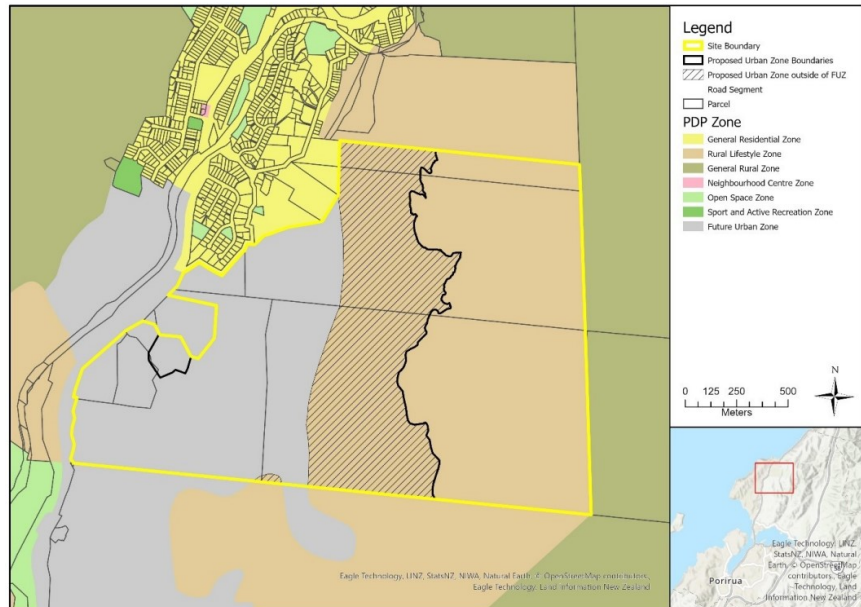


Figure 1: Area outside of FUZ proposed to be zoned MRZ

8 As I noted at the hearing, the inclusion of the land outside of the FUZ is assessed in section 5.2.5 of the section 32 evaluation report.¹ That section includes ‘Table 19: High-level Options Analysis’ (page 56) which assess different potential zoning options for the site. These options included:

- Option 1: Do nothing (status quo);
- Option 2: Rezone just the FUZ – Future Urban Zone within the site to urban zoning;

¹ Section 32 Evaluation Report: Part B – Northern Growth Development Area. Available from: https://storage.googleapis.com/pcc-wagtail-media/documents/FINAL_Section_32_Evaluation_Report_-_Variation_1_Part_B_-_Northern_Growth_Development_.pdf

- Option 3: Rezone the FUZ – Future Urban Zone and part of the RLZ – Rural Lifestyle Zone within the site to urban zoning; and
- Option 4: Rezone the Future Urban Zone and all of the RLZ – Rural Lifestyle Zone within the site to urban zoning.

9 Table 19 assessed the costs, benefits, efficiency and effectiveness of the options. Option 3 was selected as the most appropriate.

10 As discussed by Ms McRae at the hearing, an early analysis was undertaken from a landscape perspective to identify areas which were more capable of absorbing residential zoning. The ‘Landscape Statement’ prepared to support the Section 32 evaluation report sets out the ‘Environmental Framework’ for the site in Figure 3. This is reproduced in Figure 2 below:

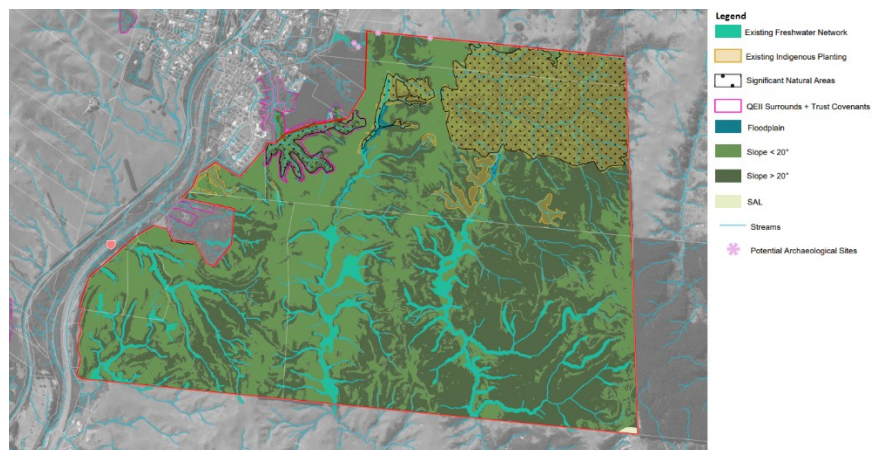


Figure 2: Environmental Framework (Adapted from Landscape Statement Figure 3)

11 As discussed at the hearing, the steeper slopes are located in the eastern part of the site. This is shown by the dark green areas in Figure 2 above, which identify slopes greater than 20 degrees. This area is therefore not considered to be appropriate to be zoned MRZ, and is considered to be more appropriate for a Rural Lifestyle Zone.

12 The suitability of the different areas of the site for residential or rural development is discussed in section 4.1.2 of the Landscape Statement, which states that:

The landscape analysis undertaken to inform the development of the Structure Plan also identified that an area of the site outside of the FUZ, was suitable to be rezoned residential from Rural Lifestyle Zone (RLZ) due to its location adjacent to the FUZ land and the presence of more open rolling landform in this area. The area to the east of this is characterised by narrow spurs and steep sided gullies and is therefore recommended to remain in the RLZ.

- 13 Also as discussed in the hearing, there are a range of other factors which were also taken into account, including the location of the gullies and the identification of the potential Freshwater Management Areas (FMAs) and the viability of development supported by an appropriate transport network.
- 14 I also noted at the hearing that the additional land assists to offset loss of potential residential capacity within the existing FUZ, including due to the location of SNAs which is discussed in detail in Table 19 in the section 32 evaluation report.
- 15 The extent of the FUZ – Future Urban Zone in the NGDA as included in the PDP is also discussed in section 5.1.4 of that report, which states that it generally followed the ‘Deferred Land (Rural)’ area in the Northern Growth Area Structure Plan 2014 with the eastern extent defined by the ‘Catchment Protection Overlay’. Commissioner Williams indicated that her concern related to the potential downstream environmental effects of the proposed zoning, through including land within the catchment on the eastern side of the ridge currently outside of the FUZ.
- 16 As shown in ‘Figure 9: Stormwater catchments’ in the section 32 report (reproduced in Figure 3 below), the eastern side of the NGDA is identified as being within the Kakaho Stream catchment. That catchment also extends into the FUZ area as zoned in the PDP 2020. The Pukerua Bay catchment is currently outside the existing FUZ, but a small area in the northern extent of the NGDA is proposed to be zoned MRZ by Variation 1.

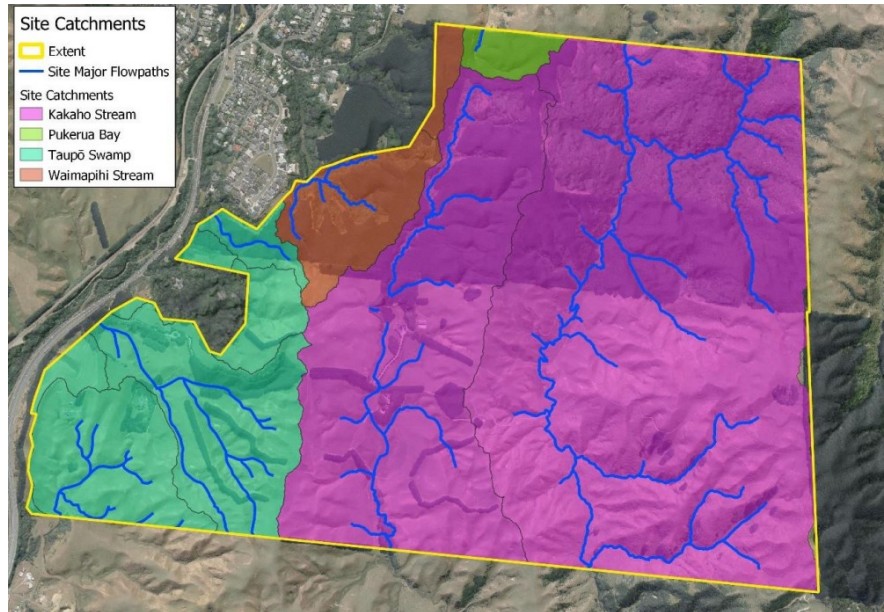


Figure 3: Site stormwater catchments

17 The Urban Engineers prepared the ‘Stormwater Management Site Assessment’ and associated ‘Draft Stormwater Management Plan’ for the site. The Site Assessment concluded that:

The proposed NGA Plan Variation and associated Structure Plan have been developed using Water Sensitive Design principles.

The development of the Site in the manner laid out in the NGA Plan Variation and associated Structure Plan, together with provisions of the PDP and NRP, is likely to;

- *achieve the stormwater management quality objectives laid out in this report, and*
- *achieve hydraulic neutrality, and maintain or improve existing downstream inundation levels.*

18 Mr David Wilson authored that report and will be available for questions from the Panel on 15 March 2023.

19 As such, in summary:

- The zoning of land that was not notified as FUZ in the PDP now proposed to be zoned MRZ was expressly considered in the technical assessments undertaken for the site, specifically the Landscape Assessment;

- The additional land is suitable for residential development from a topographical perspective, while the land further east is steeper and more suited to rural residential development;
- The section 32 evaluation report assessed the appropriateness of the additional land being included in the NGDA; and
- Technical assessments for the site indicate that the additional land can be developed for residential uses while also achieving relevant environmental requirements.

20 I also note that there are no submissions which specifically oppose the zoning of the land not notified as FUZ in the PDP to MRZ in the NGDA Structure Plan.

Why was the NGDA progressed in Variation 1?

21 I note that at the hearing I responded verbally that the Council recognised that there were motivated landowners seeking to rezone land within the Northern Growth Area, and that this was a factor in progressing the NGDA through Variation 1. In relation to this, I note that the section 32 evaluation report states in section 5.2 that:

The development of Proposal was initiated following notification of and receipt of submissions on the PDP. Submissions received on the PDP indicated that the landowners were seeking to rezone the area for urban development. The landowners of both the Muri Road Block and the Mount Welcome Block separately approached Council seeking that their land be rezoned for urban purposes. There was general acceptance by Council officers that the rezoning of the area for urban development would assist in achieving the strategic objectives of the PDP.

22 The section 32 evaluation report goes on to say that:

A primary consideration for inclusion of land within the Development Area was landowner aspirations to be included. Without landowner involvement, the structure planning and variation processes would be much more difficult and would potentially compromise the long-term vision for the area.

- 23 In relation to the Porirua Growth Strategy 2048, the strategy notes the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity (NPS-UDC²) identifies ‘medium term’ as being the 3 – 10 year timeframe. Page 24 identifies the indicative growth sequencing for the 30 years from 2018. This shows the Northern Growth Area as *‘It’s coming (not zoned, high level of certainty)’* from 2022 to 2042. The sequence also assumes the PDP being operative from 2022.
- 24 Additionally, I note that there may be significant lead-in time from the point that the land has an operative zoning to when development occurs, and the Infrastructure Report prepared to support the Section 32 evaluation report states that “[i]t is currently anticipated that development of the Site will occur in multiple stages over a period of 15 – 20 years”.
- 25 As such, I do not consider that there is any inconsistency with the proposed zoning of the site for urban purposes with the ‘medium term’ sequencing identified in the Porirua Growth Strategy 2048.
- 26 Further detail is provided on the reasons for the Council progressing the rezoning of the NGDA in section 5.2 of the section 32 evaluation report. Furthermore I note that the rezoning the NGDA assist the Council in giving effect to the NPS-UD 2020. As the Panel is aware the PDP did not fully give effect to the NPS-UD as it came into force on 20 August 2020 i.e. eight days before the PDP was notified.
- 27 The Council has given effect to the NPS-UD through Variation 1 (and PC19). This has included the rezoning of the NGDA which contributed to the Council meeting a number of objectives and policies of the NPS-UD including objectives 1, 2, 6 and policies 1, 2, 6 and 10(c), as assessed in

² The Porirua Growth Strategy 2048 pre-dates the NPS-UD.

Appendix C of the Section 32 Evaluation Report: Part B – Northern Growth Area.