

Porirua's Proposed District Plan 2020

Submission on Porirua's Proposed District Plan

To - Environment and City Planning Team

Date received 19/11/2020

Submission Reference Number #55

Wishes to be heard? Yes

Is willing to present a joint case? Yes

Could gain an advantage in trade competition in making this submission? No

Directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission? N/A

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Submission points

Point 55.1

Support / Support in part / Oppose

Support in part

Section: ECO - Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity

Sub-section: ECO - Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity

Provision

The SNAs that are covered by this chapter are contained in SCHED7 - Significant Natural Areas. Where the SNA is in an urban environment allotment as defined under s76(4C) of the RMA, further detail of the SNA is set out in SCHED8 - Urban Environment Allotments.

Submission

We believe that the retention of native bush is important and we bought this property in part because of the backdrop of native bush, and the habitat for native birds. We have been here for ten years and apart from trimming trees encroaching into our back yard area we have retained all the native trees on the property and also cleared out invasive bramble and gorse. We have also toyed with the idea of building a second house stepped into the hillside. We are in part approving of a less intrusive encroachment of SNA on our property but we believe the proposed extent of the SNA encroachment is heavy handed to say the least.

Heavy Handed Control:

The way this was presented to us through the mail, with immediate legal effect and in such a condescending tone, all this at a time on top of other significant events happening in New Zealand due to Covid-19, political unrest and national elections was quite frankly upsetting and difficult to allocate time to.

Light Planes:

Our house is tucked into a valley, we unfortunately lose sunlight for the whole of winter, if the tree height cannot be managed and trimmed regularly we lose significantly more. This we consider to be a health issue and will impact more on our heating costs and will also contribute to more mould and mildew growth.

Fire Risk:

We consider the proposed 3 metre distance from the house a possible fire risk, we have discussed this with the fire service who agree with our concerns, as you are aware there has been significant urban fire events internationally due to restrictions of clearing vegetation due to new green laws.

Cost of Trimming and Management of Growth:

Every couple of years we trim trees immediately surrounding our house and yard areas, this is necessary and cannot be delayed for too long as the usefulness of our yard areas including washing line will be degraded. It costs time, petrol and disposal but are easily manageable in our budget. With the proposed SNA rules we would have to pay for resource consent and if approved would have to hire an arborist to do the job at a considerable cost. Our thoughts now is that we wouldn't even consider it, and that would leave us in a situation of reduced usefulness and enjoyment of our property.

Equity:

The proposed SNA encroachment is in the vicinity of 90 percent of our land area which is probably one the largest encroachment in an urban area, we feel that we have been unfairly disadvantaged by this proposal, there are properties with plenty of land area with little or no SNA's designated.

The Porirua community have the benefit of the SNA in the area but we are the ones sacrificing our property rights.

Loss of resale value:

We also bought this property in part as a land bank. If we needed to sell there could be an increased interest in it as it is large enough to be subdivided. The proposed SNA would make this possibility too expensive and risky for a developer.

Relief sought

- We would like to see a more collaborative approach between the council and landowners with SNA designations as is in operation in the Hawkes Bay area.
- We would like a more equitable approach to the quantity of SNA designated to our property such as a maximum percentage of encroachment, where there is an SNA designation with strict rules with resource consent necessary clearly marked on a plan, and then an area marked as discretionary which is maintained by the landowner without the need for resource consent for trimming.
- We would like to see rates reduction on SNA proportion of the property.