

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991
("RMA" or "the Act")

AND

IN THE MATTER Plan Change 92

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MATTHEW FORBES NORWELL
ON BEHALF OF FOODSTUFFS NORTH ISLAND LIMITED**

PLANNING

25 August 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

Background and experience

- 1.1 My name is Matthew Forbes Norwell and I am a resource management consultant and director of Barker & Associates Limited, an independent, specialist planning consultancy with twelve offices throughout New Zealand.
- 1.2 I hold the Degree of Bachelor of Planning from the University of Auckland and I am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute. I have 28 years' experience covering a wide range of land use planning matters on behalf of local authorities, government departments and private entities in New Zealand.
- 1.3 During that time, I have been involved with many aspects of resource management including preparation and lodgement of resource consent applications, submissions and presentation of evidence to local authorities in respect of proposed plans, plan changes, NoRs and presentation of evidence at the Environment Court. Similarly, I have also acted as reporting planner for Auckland Council on a range of complex resource consent applications.

Code of Conduct

- 1.4 I have read the Expert Witness Code of Conduct set out in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2023 and agree to comply with it. My qualifications as an expert are

set out above. Except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person, I confirm that this evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this evidence.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 1.5 Foodstuffs North Island Limited (FSNI) owns the site at 492 Omokoroa Road, Omokoroa (the site). Under the Operative District Plan, the site is zoned Future Urban. Under the proposed PC92, the site is intended to be rezoned "Industrial". The submission filed on behalf of FSNI supported the proposed rezoning.
- 2.1 This statement of evidence addresses matters raised by FSNI within their submission on PC92. In preparing this statement I have reviewed the Council's Section 42A Hearing Report.

3. OVERVIEW OF 492 OMOKOROA ROAD

- 3.1 The site at 492 Omokoroa Road is currently zoned Future Urban zone. Consistent with the Future Urban zoning, the current use includes rural residential and horticulture.
- 3.2 Directly across Omokoroa Road is an existing industrial zoned area. Under the Stage 3 Structure Plan produced by the Council infrastructure upgrades are proposed within the area to support future urbanisation. In particular, a new park n' ride facility is proposed adjacent to the site.



Figure 1: The site at 492 Omokoroa Road.

4. STATUTORY AND POLICY CONTEXT

The National Policy Statement – Urban Development

- 4.1 The National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 ('NPS-UD') came into force on 20 August 2020 and replaced the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity 2016. The NPS-UD has assessed all the local authorities within the country and classified them as either Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3, with Tier 1 referencing the largest local authorities in New Zealand (including Western Bay of Plenty). The NPS-UD provides direction to decision-makers under the RMA on planning for urban environments.

Well-Functioning Urban Environment

- 4.2 Under Policy 1 planning decisions must contribute to well-functioning urban environments. Policy 1 defines this as follows (emphasis added):

- a) *have or enable a variety of homes that:*
 - i. *meet the needs, in terms of type, price, and location, of different households; and*
 - ii. *enable Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms; and*
- b) *have or enable a variety of sites that are suitable for different business sectors in terms of location and site size; and*
- c) *have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport; and*
- d) *support, and limit as much as possible adverse impacts on, the competitive operation of land and development markets; and*
- e) *support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and*
- f) *are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.*

- 4.3 The components of a well-functioning urban environment that the proposed industrial zoning of the site will support include:

- Enabling an increase in land that is available for industrial business sectors;

- Promoting good accessibility between housing, jobs, community services and open spaces by enabling more people to work in accessible locations, which also supports a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through reduced car dependence;
- Supporting the competitive operation of land and development markets by providing a broadly enabling zone framework and providing flexibility for the market to take up those opportunities; and
- Being resilient through the likely current and future effects of climate change through flooding and promoting a compact and efficient urban form.

Development Capacity

- 4.4 Under Policy 2, Tier 1 authorities are required to provide at least sufficient development capacity to meet expected demand for housing and for business land over the short term, medium term, and long term. The Plan Change will enable the rezoning of future urban land to support increased capacity for industrial land use within Omokoroa. This will better enable the Council to meet Policy 2 given that the recently completed Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment (HBA, Market Economics, December 2022) demonstrates that greenfield land is required in Western Bay of Plenty to achieve sufficient industrial land capacity to cater for expected long-term future growth¹.

Planned Urban Built Form and Amenity Values

- 4.5 Objective 4 states that New Zealand's urban environments develop and change over time in response to diverse and changing needs of people, communities and future generations. Section 7(c) of the RMA requires particular regard to be had to the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values. Policy 6 of the NPS-UD now clarifies s7(c) of the RMA through focusing on the amenity values of the wider community and future generations and acknowledging that significant change within an area is not in itself an adverse effect.
- 4.6 The Plan Change will enable urban development of land currently used for rural activities and rural lifestyle. This will result in significant change over time in the character and may detract from the current amenity values currently enjoyed by some residents, related to the spacious and rural qualities of the site. The Plan Change will enable a different set of amenity values to be realised over time, when compared to those currently associated with rural environments. In particular, the amenity values offered with increased accessibility to employment opportunities. Policy 6 essentially recognises and gives weight to these changing amenity values.

¹ Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty Business Capacity Assessment ME 16 December 2022 pf vii - viii

Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions

4.7 Objective 8 supports a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and resilience to the current and future effects of climate change. The subject land forms an extension of Ōmokoroa urban area. The Plan Change area is currently zoned Future Urban and therefore has already been identified by Council as being appropriate for urbanisation through its Future Urban zoning. Therefore, in my view the proposed industrial zoning of the site will facilitate urban development that achieves Objective 8 of the NPS-UD through supporting a compact built form and promoting employment opportunities to support the surrounding residential land use within the future urban zone.

Ōmokoroa Structure Plan

4.8 In 2012 the Future Urban zone was applied to land surrounding Ōmokoroa to cater for future growth. Council has been progressing a Structure Plan for the future urban zone to provide a framework for urbanisation within that area. Plan Change 92 seeks to implement the proposed Structure Plan for Ōmokoroa.

4.9 The draft Structure Plan proposes an urban layout to accommodate land for housing, rural residential land, industrial land, land for schools, active reserve (sportsfields) and opportunity for walking and cycling connections through the gully network (within the area known as Stage 3 – between the railway line and the State Highway). The site is proposed to be subject to an industrial zoning under the Structure Plan refer Figure 2.

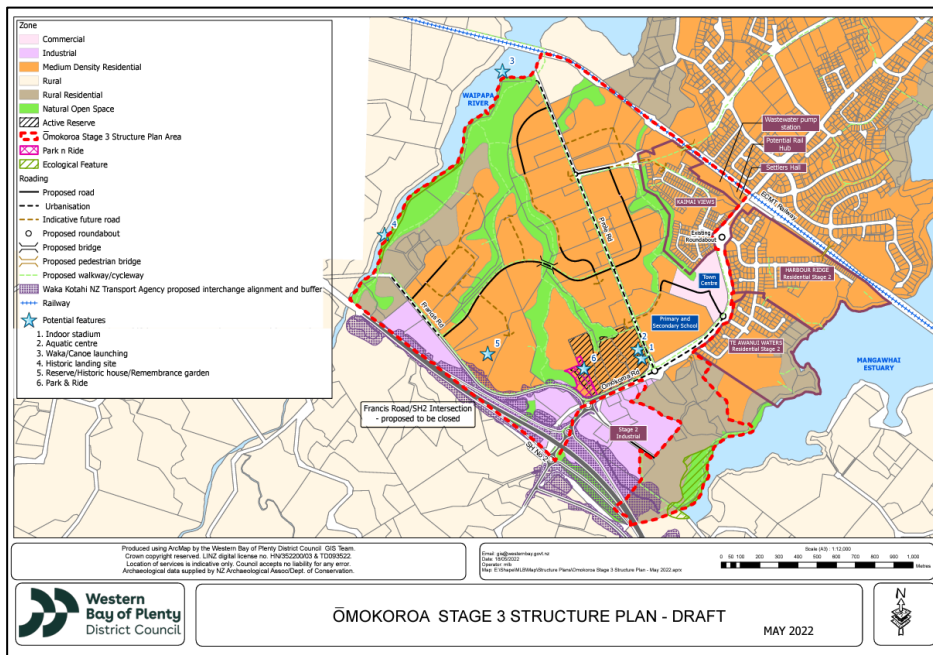


Figure 2: Ōmokoroa Structure Plan

5. ZONING OF 492 OMOKOROA ROAD

5.1 The reporting planner has recommended retaining the proposed industrial zone boundaries. Council's reporting officer states that to support a well-functioning urban environment there is a need to provide employment opportunities. Further the reporting officer also points out that at a subregional level, there is a shortfall of industrial land.

5.2 I support the recommendation of Council's reporting officer in respect of the proposed industrial zoning at 492 Omokoroa Road. Enabling industrial land use within this location is consistent with the Omokoroa Structure Plan. Furthermore, it gives effect to the NPSUD in that it will:

- Provide more opportunities for a range of business activities to establish within Omokoroa supporting increased accessibility to employment opportunities and a well-functioning urban environment;
- Support increased capacity for industrial land use within Omokoroa and competitive land markets;
- Support a compact built form through promoting employment opportunities accessible to the surrounding residential land use within the future urban zone.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 I consider that the proposed rezoning of 492 Omokoroa Road, Omokoroa from Future Urban to Industrial under PC92 will give effect to the sustainable management purpose of the RMA, the RPS and relevant national direction. In particular the zoning will ensure that there are employment opportunities to support urban growth contributing to a well-functioning urban environment.

Matthew Norwell

25 August 2023