

**BEFORE THE HOROWHENUA DISTRICT COUNCIL  
INDEPENDENT HEARING PANEL**

**IN THE MATTER OF**           the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**           the hearing on the Horowhenua Proposed District  
Plan Change 4 – Tara-Ika Growth Area

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GAVIN CRAIG LISTER ON BEHALF OF WAKA  
KOTAHI NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY**

**Integrated Design**

Dated: 2 November 2021

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## INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Gavin Craig Lister. I am a landscape architect and urban designer. I am a founder of Isthmus Group, a practice that specialises in landscape architecture, architecture, and urban design.
2. I have been engaged by Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (**Waka Kotahi**) to provide expert technical support on the integration of infrastructure and urban / landscape design in relation to the Horowhenua Proposed District Plan Change 4 – Tara-Ika Growth Area (**PC4**).

### Qualifications and experience

3. I have the following qualifications and experience relevant to this evidence:
  - (a) Master of Urban Design (University of Sydney, 2007).
  - (b) Post-graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture (Lincoln College, 1988).
  - (c) Bachelor of Arts (University of Auckland, 1985).
  - (d) Fellow and registered member of Tuia Pito Ora – New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA).
4. I have 33 years' experience providing design input to, and assessing the effects of, different project types throughout New Zealand. Relevant experience to this hearing includes:
  - (a) Master planning and evidence in support of plan changes for mixed density urban developments, including:
    - (i) Hobsonville Point in Auckland;
    - (ii) 'The Mission' in Napier; and
    - (iii) 'Clayden Road' (North Warkworth) PC40, in Auckland.
  - (b) Acting as an advisor to Councils for urban development, including the Board of Inquiry into the Ruakura Plan Change, subsequent Ruakura Variation to Proposed Hamilton District Plan, and the Iona Plan Change to the Hastings District Plan.
  - (c) Acting as an Independent Commissioner for Plan Changes for land rezoning for urban development, including the former Tamaki Campus of Auckland University, PC5 Whenuapai (still in progress), PC12 Hobsonville, and PC13 Cromwell, Central Otago.

- (d) Membership of Auckland Council's Panel of Independent Commissioners (2014-present), the Auckland Council Urban Design Panel (2007-2017), and Eke Panuku's Technical Advisory Group (2018-present).
- (e) Familiarity with assessment and resource management matters as they relate to landscape, visual, and urban design matters. I wrote the landscape and urban design assessment guidelines for Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (**Waka Kotahi**) and co-authored '*Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*', for Tuia Pito Ora / NZILA, 2021.
- (f) Assessment and design for infrastructure projects, including the Auckland East-West Link urban highway, the Basin Bridge project, Transmission Gully highway, and the Urban and Landscape Design Framework (ULDF) for Ara Tūhono (the Pūhoi to Warkworth highway) and Albany Highway.

#### **Code of conduct**

- 5. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. This evidence has been prepared in compliance with that Code, as if it were evidence being given in Environment Court proceedings. In particular, unless I state otherwise, this evidence is within my area of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

#### **Scope and summary of evidence**

- 6. My evidence considers the anticipated development of Tara-Ika and the provisions of PC4 from an urban design, landscape, and amenity perspective. In doing so I focus on how the proposed Ōtaki to North of Levin Project (**Ō2NL**) has been or could be integrated into the planned overall development of Tara-Ika.
- 7. My evidence is that it is good practice to integrate urban development and infrastructure, and that such integration should be reflected in the PC4 provisions with respect to Tara-Ika and Ō2NL. Objectives and policies relating to such integration should specifically address Ō2NL, and the provisions that apply to 'Arapaepae Rd Special Effects Overlay' should in general terms also apply to the interface between Tara-Ika and Ō2NL. Such

provisions would promote efficient development and good quality design. I make suggestions in my evidence to that end.

## **Ō2NL DEVELOPMENT AND ROUTE SELECTION**

8. I have been involved with Ō2NL since 2011. During this time, I provided input to the route selection process and urban / landscape design matters. I participated in meetings with Council, mana whenua, and the community, and provided input to multi criteria analysis (**MCA**) processes. In summary, the route selection firstly identified a broad eastern corridor in preference to western or central corridors. The eastern corridor included passing to the east of Levin. Alternative routes within the eastern corridor were then compared at finer scales.
9. As part of the MCA processes, in May 2017 I prepared a memo comparing routes N4 (effectively the current proposed Ō2NL route) and N5 (which swung in an arc roughly 1km to the east of Levin) in terms of both the 'Greenbelt Residential Deferred' zoning and Structure Plan 13 in effect at the time, and investigations that Horowhenua District Council were undertaking into potential urban development in the area east of Levin.
10. In March 2018 I prepared a report<sup>1</sup> comparing four route options (N4, N5, N8, and N9)<sup>2</sup> in terms of the District Plan provisions (Greenbelt Residential Deferred' zoning / Structure Plan 13) and the draft 'Horowhenua Growth Strategy 2040' that had been released for consultation the previous month (February 2018).<sup>3</sup> That strategy envisaged urbanisation of part of the area east of Levin. A concept plan had also been developed referred to as 'Gladstone Green' which illustrated how development might occur.
11. My report favoured N9 with respect to the urbanisation signalled in the draft Growth Strategy because that route most closely coincided with the perimeter of the identified potential urban development area. Option N4 (the current Ō2NL route) was considered less favourable because it would sever the potential urban area from Levin and cause amenity effects for housing on both sides of the highway. Option N4 did, however, fit the district plan provisions in place at the time because it would provide a boundary between the urban area and the planned semi-rural large lot residential character. It was also adjacent to the transport corridor depicted on Structure Plan 13.

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<sup>1</sup> Implications of Route Options on Eastern Growth Area Levin, 1 March 2018, Gavin Lister, Isthmus.

<sup>2</sup> Routes N4 and N5 are described above. N9 followed a straight alignment parallel with the edge of Levin and roughly 1km to the east (adjacent to a transmission line). N8 swung in an arc roughly 2km east of Levin adjacent to the hills.

<sup>3</sup> Horowhenua District Council, 'Horowhenua Growth Strategy 2040 Draft for Consultation', February 2018.

## TARA-IKA STRUCTURE PLAN

12. In July 2021 I reconsidered<sup>4</sup> three of the route options (N4, N5, and N9)<sup>5</sup> in light of proposed Plan Change 4 and the Tara-Ika Structure Plan, which presents a different situation from that considered earlier.
13. The proposed Tara-Ika Structure Plan (which is based on a master plan prepared by McIndoe Urban and Local) covers a larger area than indicated in the earlier draft Growth Strategy and Gladstone Green concept. It includes higher density development and is more integrated around a local centre. Route N4 (i.e. Ō2NL) crosses near the edge of this precinct, thereby reducing potential effects on its planned neighbourhood centre and internal connectivity. Whereas the N9 option was near the edge of the urban area depicted earlier, it would pass through the middle of Tara-Ika.<sup>6</sup> The report therefore concluded that, if the proposed PC4 had been in place at the time, option N4 would have been the preferred option. This is hardly surprising given that the proposed Tara-Ika Structure Plan (and PC4) was designed in the knowledge of the Ō2NL corridor. In effect, the larger and more integrated urban area represented by Tara-Ika is a viable response because of the N4 alignment.
14. I consider the Tara-Ika Structure Plan (and the master plan on which it is based) is good urban design. Specifically, it has an appropriate neighbourhood centre, a well-connected internal street network (including active mode paths), and sensible connections between Tara-Ika and Levin given the constraints of the existing SH57 and the planned Ō2NL. It provides for a mix of residential typologies including higher density development around the centre. It has an open space network that is connected and accessible to the community. The grid-like form is consistent with Levin's character (its sense of place) and with the flat natural setting backdropped by hills.
15. While Ō2NL will unavoidably create severance between Tara-Ika and Levin, as does the existing SH57, the proposed structure plan addresses that by configuring the street network to the two existing arterial roads of Queen Street East and Tararua Road, and a central spine road on the Liverpool Street alignment. The structure plan also indicates two additional 'strategic

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<sup>4</sup> Proposed Plan Change 4 (Taraika Growth Area), Landscape + Visual + Urban Design, 14 July 2021, Gavin Lister, Isthmus.

<sup>5</sup> N8, the most eastern option, was eliminated earlier. It was not favoured from a landscape perspective because of its effects on the Gladstone and Denton Road areas.

<sup>6</sup> N5 would similarly have passed through the middle of Tara-Ika through the neighbourhood centre. It would have been considered a fatal flaw.

cycleways' over Ō2NL: The northern of these aligns with Meadowvale Drive and provides access to Waiopahu College, and the southern aligns with the southern side of Levin's residential areas and would provide an alternative to negotiating the highway interchange on Tararua Road.

16. A MCA process is currently in process to examine options for connections between Levin and Tara-Ika. Representatives of Horowhenua District Council have participated in this process.
17. In summary, the route planning for Ō2NL and plans for the future urban development east of Levin have been carried out cognisant of each other over several years. The Tara-Ika master plan is designed in response to Ō2NL, and the Ō2NL design has been (and continues to be) tailored in response to proposed urban development. I consider this represents good practice and an integrated approach.

#### **PLAN CHANGE 4 PROVISIONS**

18. However, I consider that integration is not fully reflected in the proposed Plan Change 4 objectives and policies, and in the rules relating to the interface between Ō2NL and urban development.

#### **Objectives and policies**

19. The 'Issues Discussion' does acknowledge the severance risk created by the preferred Ō2NL alignment and the existing SH57. It says that the Tara-Ika master plan responds to such risks to achieve "*a **connected and integrated future-proof development that represents good urban design and provides a high level of residential amenity.***" It says, "*it is important that subdivision, development, and land use activities **are coordinated** to occur in locations and at densities that enable sustainable and efficient use of land and delivery of infrastructure and contribute to a high amenity environment.*" (**emphasis added**).
20. However, despite identifying the importance of such coordination and integration, Ō2NL is mentioned only one other time in PC4 (to help explain why a commercial centre is important within Tara-Ika). The Plan Change introduction does not mention Ō2NL despite the corridor being a significant element of the Tara-Ika master plan and the Wellington Northern Corridor (of which Ō2NL is part) being a factor supporting the growth on which Tara-Ika is based.

21. Objective 6A.2 does refer to coordination of infrastructure and urban development in general terms. It states that “**Efficient delivery of infrastructure within Taraika will enable development while protecting environmental values and achieving a high level of residential amenity.**” Policy 6A2.2 is to “**Require subdivision and development to be managed, designed and staged to align with the coordinated provision and upgrading of the infrastructure network (including roading network), public open space, streetscape and local service facilities within the Taraika, as illustrated on Structure Plan 013**” (emphasis added).
22. In summary, the integration and coordination, and the resultant good urban design and amenity outcomes, identified in the issues, objectives and policies would be more clearly promoted by directly framing objectives and policies with reference to the planned Ō2NL project. This would represent efficient integration of development between Ō2NL and Tara-Ika. It would also be consistent with Objective 6(a) of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPSUD) that local authority decisions on urban development that affect urban environments are integrated with infrastructure planning and funding decisions.

#### **Rules: Arapaepae Road Special Treatment Overlay**

23. Structure Plan 013 identifies an ‘Arapaepae Rd Special Effects Overlay’<sup>7</sup> which covers the area between the existing SH57 and the Ō2NL corridor indicated on the Structure Plan. Within the overlay, development is a restricted discretionary activity (Rule 15A.3.2(a)). The **matters of discretion** comprise:
- (i) reverse sensitivity effects including noise, vibration, visual, and traffic;
  - (ii) compatibility with surrounding and anticipated land uses; and
  - (iii) safe and efficient access.

The **conditions** require buildings to be constructed to maintain specified “indoor noise levels<sup>8</sup> from Arapaepae Road / State Highway 57”, including the provision of ventilation / cooling if achieving such noise levels rely on windows being closed, and the provision of an acoustics report with building consent applications (Rule 15.8.1.1). These measures are a sensible and

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<sup>7</sup> Note that Rules 15A.8.3.2 and 15A.8.1.1 refer to the “Arapaepae Road Special **Treatment** Overlay” while the Structure Plan refers to the “Arapaepae Rd Special **Effects** Overlay”.

<sup>8</sup> For example, 40dB L<sub>Aeq(24h)</sub> for residential living and sleeping spaces (including visitor and retirement accommodation)

integrated approach with respect to SH57. The same general approach to Ō2NL would likewise be sensible and represent a coordinated and integrated approach. It would be consistent with Waka Kotahi's submission point 04/34.06 and the amendments recommended in Ms Ainsley McLeod's evidence.

24. To highlight the matter, it is likely that the section of SH57 would be revoked on completion of Ō2NL when the traffic carried by the existing highway is redirected to the new highway. In other words, the rules address the effects of traffic on an existing section of highway that is likely to be revoked, but not the planned redirection of that traffic to the Ō2NL highway corridor depicted on the Structure Plan. This not only misses the opportunity to coordinate urban development with Ō2NL, but also to configure urban design to a repurposed Arapaepae Road which I discuss further below at paragraph 26.
25. If the matters of discretion in Rule 15.8.1.1 (i.e. visual aspects of reverse sensitivity, compatibility with surrounding and anticipated land uses) were generally to be applied to Ō2NL, they would enable the configuration of the street network, lots, and buffer space adjacent to Ō2NL to be considered in a coordinated way. For example, one approach to such situations is to locate single-loaded streets adjacent to the designation so that dwellings have outdoor living spaces on the opposite side to the highway. The separation provided by such local streets increases the buffer from dwellings and provides the opportunity for street landscaping to soften the highway and any noise walls. Such an approach is, in fact, depicted on the non-statutory Tara-lka master plan.
26. As Mr Chiles explains in his evidence, such an approach can also lend itself to such typologies as terrace housing which helps reduce noise to the wider residential areas as well as containing visual effects. I note such higher density housing is contrary to an aspect of Waka Kotahi's submission point 04/34.02 which sought to restrict density within 100m of the corridor that Waka Kotahi has subsequently decided it no longer wishes to advance, and it would be consistent with Council's recommendation to increase the housing density in this area. It too, would help give effect to the NPSUD.
27. Provisions seeking coordination between urban development and Ō2NL would also enable the urban design to be tailored to the eventual designation boundaries. The Ō2NL corridor indicated on the Structure Plan is relatively wide and the designation boundaries may well be drawn in closer to the highway once the final design is settled. This would enable, for example, the

configuration depicted on the master plan to be refined at the interface with Ō2NL.

28. This may be especially relevant to the narrow area between Arapaepae Road and the Ō2NL corridor. It would represent integrated and efficient design to coordinate urban development of this area to the likely future status of SH57 as a local road, and to suit the final designation boundaries thereby maximising the depth of this sliver of land.

## **RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS**

29. I consider the recommended amendments to the provisions in Ms Ainsley McLeod's evidence address the matters discussed in my evidence:
- (a) The recommended amendments to Issue 6A.1 and Objective 6A.1 would recognise the importance of integrating urban development and infrastructure in a way that addresses connectivity, amenity, and efficiency.
  - (b) The recommended amendments to Policy 6A.1.7 would address effects of state highways on urban development, and vice versa.
  - (c) The recommended amendments to Policy 6A.2.2 would promote coordination and integration of urban development and infrastructure and would appropriately respond to the context presented by the existing SH57, its potential revocation, and the planned Ō2NL.
  - (d) The recommended amendments to the Structure Plan with respect of the 'Proposed State Highway Overlay' would enable the provisions listed above to address the interface of urban development and Ō2NL (in addition to the existing SH57), and especially the narrow area between the existing SH57 and Ō2NL.
  - (e) The recommended amendments to 15A Rules and matters of discretion (15A.8.2.1, 15A.8.2.2(a)(xix)) would be consistent with, and give effect to, the objectives and policies above. They would require that development within the 'State Highway Overlay' be considered with respect of compatibility with the state highway, potential amenity effects (noise and visual) for future residents of the highway, and potential adverse effects of development on the highway network.

**Gavin Lister**

**2 November 2021**