

In the matter of: Proposed Auckland Unitary
Plan

To: The Auckland Unitary Plan
Independent Hearings Panel

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

Submitters: Nola Delamore 5399,
Aberdeen Adventures 6602

TOPIC 016 RUB NORTH

Statement of Evidence by Dr Mark Bellingham, November 2015

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Robert Mark Bellingham. I am a Senior Planner and Senior Ecologist with Terra Nova Planning Ltd.
2. I hold a PhD in Planning from Auckland University and I am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute. I have been a practicing planning and ecological consultant for over 25 years. I have also lectured in Environmental Planning at Auckland and Massey Universities. I have served on the Ministerial Advisory Committees for the Review of Protected Area Legislation (1989-90) Oceans Policy (2002-4), and as an Auckland Regional Councilor.
3. I have read and agree to comply with the Environment Court's Expert Witness Code of Conduct (Consolidated Practice Note 2006). This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on some other evidence. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

Summary Statement

4. The areas proposed by the Submitters for inclusion in the Rural Urban Boundary (RUB) at 22 Duke Street and 30 Cambridge Street, Riverhead is modest but provides further urban capacity within easy walking distance of central Riverhead. This strongly reinforces the compact urban form and local heritage values, in an area with no public transport.
5. The areas proposed have relatively limited development constraints that can be addressed at the

structure planning stage.

6. The proposed extensions of the RUB would provide 23 additional sites for urban development on both 22 Duke St and 30 Cambridge Rd.
7. The site specific engineering and geotechnical assessments by Riley Consultants Ltd (Appendices A & B) consider that there are low geotechnical constraints, infrastructure provision is feasible in the short-term and in the longer term, and flood risk issues can be mitigated through the structure planning process.
8. The submitters have provided a draft scheme plan to assist the Panel to visualize how this area can be urbanized (in the plans to Appendices A & B).
9. I am unable to comment on whether these areas are not necessary to meet growth demand to 2040, as the Panel appears to be the only body with sufficient overview to assess growth predictions, regional capacity and the veracity and suitability of specific locations to accommodate future urban growth for the Unitary Plan.

Riverhead North-east RUB Extension

The change enables the efficient provision of development capacity and land supply for residential, commercial and industrial growth.

10. The proposed extension of RUB areas at Riverhead is an important and valid area in regard to this Guidance matter. This would be in addition to the PAUP Western Riverhead FUZ area that provides for 675-900 sites and this would add only 21 more sites.
11. This could modest increase could be serviced within Watercare's capacity for Riverhead or be serviced on-site if additional capacity is not immediately available.
12. Earthworks across the area would be required, but these would not be dissimilar to that required across the other Riverhead FUZ areas. Riley's have advised that sediment and erosion controls following Council's TP90 guidelines would ensure any adverse effects were minor.
13. A Network Discharge consent and Catchment Management Plan would be initiated during structure planning for the Riverhead FUZ, and Riley's consider the requirements for this proposed RUB extension would be similar to that for the PAUP Riverhead FUZ area (Riley's p.7, 3.3.7).
14. If the land is included in the RUB, Watercare Services will make provision for Wastewater and water supply.
15. It is of course important to acknowledge that not all the land within the RUB / FUZ will be used for dwellings, with such extensive areas typically including neighbourhood centres, schools, technical institutes, and universities, recreational facilities, open space, parks and sports fields. There will

potentially be commercial and even industrial activities within such areas, particularly in terms of where they provide local services.

16. The specific use of this land on the northern periphery of the RUB would be decided during structure planning although I consider it would likely be suitable for low or medium density residential.

The change promotes the achievement of a quality compact urban form.

17. The proposed additional areas enhance opportunities to achieve a quality compact urban form. The proposed RUB boundary sits where the land contour, land character and existing road layout provides a reasonably sensible northern RUB boundary in Riverhead.
18. The additional proposed land within the RUB is all within 10 minutes-walk of the central commercial area of the town, whereas the FUZ to the south of Riverhead is 25-30 minutes-walk away. The consolidation of residential areas around the Riverhead commercial centre is an essential part of achieving a compact form for this rural town, where there is no public transport.
19. This is a very modest addition to the FUZ, but essentially completes the available urbanisation around the central commercial area of Riverhead (as proposed by Mr Hookway and Dr Fairgray).
20. The proposed RUB/FUZ extension proposed here supports the community preference and urban design principles outlined in Mr Hookway's evidence for Council ¹ (PLANNING – WEST AUCKLAND FRINGE, p. 34, para. 6.3).
21. In my experience, I find Riverhead is a community that values the ease at which locals can safely walk and cycle around the town, providing a safe environment for all sectors of the population.

Where moving the RUB results in rezoning, the provision of infrastructure is feasible.

22. Future Urban development for Riverhead is proposed for the first half of Decade Two (2022-26)² in association with Kumeu-Huapai. By that time I understand that the roading infrastructure issues are likely to have been resolved.
23. The Draft Unitary Plan, the PAUP and Mr Hookway's evidence have all considered the Riverhead FUZ to be feasible in terms of infrastructure delivery and that this would be specifically addressed during structure planning for the area.
24. This extension to the RUB/FUZ would likely to be limited to 21 sites, plus the 4-5 sites on 30

¹ D Hookway EIC (PLANNING – WEST AUCKLAND FRINGE)

² Auckland Development Committee, Thursday, 12 November 2015: Item 12, Adoption of the Future Urban Land Supply Strategy

Cambridge Road, that Mr Hookway recommends to be added to the FUZ (para. 6.9). This is a very modest addition to the FUZ and is unlikely to put any strain on the public provision wastewater, water supply, roading and stormwater mitigation.

25. Although on-site wastewater options are feasible within the land proposed Riley's have recommended a communal system as an option. With such a modest addition to the FUZ and likely to be at low density, until public wastewater reticulation appears to be feasible.
26. I note that Mr Hookway has only considered FUZ additions on the west of Riverhead as one consolidated area, without any analysis of the discrete areas proposed on the west and those on the north-west of Riverhead. I consider that the modest north-west RUB extension provides sound options for reinforcing the urban compact form of Riverhead without significantly affecting the feasibility of local infrastructure provision.

The RUB change avoids:

a. scheduled areas with significant environmental, heritage, Maori , natural character or landscape values;

27. There are no significant natural, cultural or historic heritage sites or significant landscapes within the proposed RUB extension. Although the Riverhead Forest precincts are adjacent to the site, there appears to be no lwi opposition to further RUB additions to the north of Riverhead.

28. Mr Bayliss (PLANNING – BACKGROUND TO THE NOTIFIED RUB, para. 5.1.3 & 5.1.6) identifies the exotic forests to the north of Riverhead as being a 'no-go' area for urban development, even though this area has no significant landscape areas identified in the PAUP or the ADP: Rodney Section. The proposed RUB extension does not affect the adjacent pine forests in the Riverhead Forest Precinct.

a. the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Protection Area;

29. Not applicable

c. mineral resources that are commercially viable;

30. There are no commercially viable mineral resources in the proposal area.

d. elite soils.

31. There are no elite soils in the proposal area. Some of the area has prime soils, but these are affected by water-logging and are generally not used for horticultural production, unlike the elevated prime land in the FUZ from the Delamore/George property in Cambridge Rd south to Lathrope Rd (90% of the Riverhead FUZ).

The change avoids, where possible:

a. areas prone to natural hazards, including coastal hazards;

32. This matter is addressed in Mr Beaumont's report³, and Mr Reed's report (Ch. 3.1).
33. The proposed RUB extension area is classified by Riley's as one broad zone having Low Geotechnical Constraints requiring minimal geotechnical input.
34. Riley's carried out a site specific assessment for 22 Duke St, and 30 Cambridge Rd for their report.
35. Mr Hiller's evidence⁴ has considered all of the RUB extension proposals around Riverhead as one, and I consider this rather generalised approach does not address the suitability of this proposal compared to less suitable areas in relation to geotechnical constraints. I consider that Riley's site specific approach for these properties provides a more appropriate level of information to inform the Panel.
36. Similarly in relation to flood hazards Riley's Engineering Assessment⁵ has addressed these issues on this site and proposed remedial action that could be considered during structure planning and/or consent processes.
37. In contrast, while Mr Hookway's EIC Attachment E addresses this matter and he concludes:
"While generally avoiding natural hazards there are some localised areas of flooding that will need to be resolved at structure plan or consenting level."
38. Consequently I disagree with Mr Hookway (para. 6.8 & Figure 12, p.32) where he states that 22 Duke St and 30 Cambridge Rd are located within the stream floodplain, while disregarding his own assessment table where he considers that these issues could be addressed during structure planning.
39. The draft scheme plan attached to Mr Reed's report shows a proposed layout that demonstrates that it is quite feasible to design localised flood mitigation engineering to mitigate the risk of flooding to the proposed RUB/FUZ extension. I consider that this would be part of the structure planning process that Mr Hookway has recommended in his evidence.
40. It appears to me that Mr Hookway agrees with Riley's site-specific assessment in relation to flood risk for 22 Duke St and 30 Cambridge Rd, although the general assessment in the body of the EIC, which is not supported by engineering assessments for this area, is that this may aggregate issues for a range of properties along the west and north of the Riverhead RUB. I would recommend that the Panel prefer the Riley's report for this area.

b. Conflicts between residents and infrastructure.

³ Geotechnical Constraints Assessment: 22 Duke St, Riverhead. Riley Consultants Ltd. Takapuna. Appendix A

⁴ Paragraph 9.33-36, Hillier EIC

⁵ Riley Consultants Ltd 2015 Engineering Assessment PAUP Submission 22 Duke St, Riverhead. Appendix B

41. This particular area of land does not raise any conflicts with infrastructure provision.

The RUB should aim to follow property boundaries.

42. I consider the RUB boundary proposed for the north-west of Riverhead is defensible as it follows a clearly discernable landscape feature (the hill country to the north of Riverhead) and the property boundaries closest to that feature. This is the “no-go” feature identified in Mr Bayliss’s evidence.

43. I consider this is more defensible than the PAUP RUB which follows a collection of property boundaries and HEV lines on flat terrain. The draft scheme plan in the Riley’s Engineering assessment shows how land under the HEV line can be accommodated within large lot urban zoning and local parks, while being within the RUB. This is not an uncommon situation within the Auckland MUL (and has recently been applied in subdivisions at Riverhead North).

A summary of the layers in the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (PAUP) that apply to the site.

44. The only PAUP overlays over this land are the Electricity Transmission Corridor and Ngati Whatua o Kaipara area of interest, and should the RUB be extended, the SMAF 1 would be applied.

The proposed change is supported by a pdf map marked up to show:

a. address(s);

b. the RUB line (current and the changes you seek);

c. any property boundaries;

that are the subject of your submission. If you have GIS software provide this map as both a pdf and shape file.

45. These are in the maps in Appendices A & B (Riley Consultants Ltd).

If the RUB change (and any related zone changes) relates to someone else's land, provide details of your consultation with the owner and their position on the proposed change.

46. No other landowners are affected by these submissions.