

To Rotorua Lakes Council
Hearings Commissioners – Plan Change 2

From Rodney Albertyn, Senior Planner, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency

Date 22 September 2020

Subject Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency Position Statement – Plan Change 2, Rotorua

1.0 Introduction and High-Level Overview

- 1.1 This document sets out Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency’s position regarding Plan Change 2 (PC2), supplemented by independent traffic evidence prepared by Mr Duncan Tindall of GHD.
- 1.2 The Transport Agency is supportive of the proposed plan change in principle and considers the land in question to be strategically well-suited to future development. The Transport Agency supports aspirations to deliver additional development capacity in Rotorua as part of a well-planned growth strategy to support the district’s growing population.
- 1.3 The Transport Agency’s original submission sought additional information regarding a range of transport matters. The information sought has subsequently been provided by Mr Grant Smith of Stantec in his supplementary traffic report, dated August 2020. Additional clarity has also been provided by Mr Smith in a series of meetings and conversations.
- 1.4 There is a single transport-related matter that the Transport Agency considers has not been adequately addressed through the proposed plan change provisions. This matter being the efficiency and safety effects that future development within the Pukehangi Heights Development Area will have on the intersection of Malfroy Road and State Highway 5 (SH5). Given that all other matters raised by the Transport Agency are considered to have been adequately addressed, the focus of this statement is limited to this single outstanding matter.

2.0 Malfroy Road / State Highway 5 Intersection

- 2.1 Malfroy Road is one of several roads that will provide a direct connection between the Pukehangi Heights Development Area and SH5. The traffic modelling information provided to date indicates that the intersection of Malfroy Road and SH5 does not have sufficient capacity in its current form to safely and efficiently accommodate the additional traffic associated with future development in the plan change area and broader growth. The traffic modelling indicates that, due in part to the additional traffic facilitated by PC2, the intersection’s performance is likely to deteriorate from ‘Level of Service E’ or better to ‘Level of Service F’ on one or more legs before the structure plan area is fully developed.
- 2.2 According to industry best practice, Level of Service F is considered to be very poor and warranting mitigation. This Level of Service is not acceptable to the Transport Agency. In addition to efficiency concerns, safety effects arise as a result of reduced traffic light compliance due to driver frustration. These safety effects are of particular concern at this intersection due to its close proximity to Malfroy School and the significant number of students that utilise it as a crossing point at peak times.

- 2.3 The submitted traffic modelling includes intersection performance projections based on traffic data from both March 2020 and July 2020. When the July data is utilised to assess future intersection performance, Level of Service E or better is achieved at all legs of the intersection. However, it appears that lower traffic levels in July due to COVID-19 restrictions have influenced this result. Utilisation of the March data, prior to Covid-19 lock-down, results in Level of Service F on one or more legs of the intersection, depending on the residential yield assumed within the Pukehangi Heights Development Area.
- 2.4 It is encouraging that an upgrade to the intersection is included in the Rotorua Long Term Plan (LTP). However, there is still a degree of uncertainty with respect to whether the upgrade will be delivered, when this would occur, and the exact physical form that the upgrade would take.
- 2.5 The s42A Planning Report correctly notes that the 'infrastructure ready' requirement of the National Policy Statement for Urban Development 2020 is met with respect to this upgrade because it is provided for in the LTP. The Transport Agency acknowledges this. The fact the upgrade has not yet been delivered, funded or scheduled should not prevent the plan change from proceeding. However, inclusion in the LTP does not preclude the need for the plan change to include provisions that enable the actual and potential effects on the intersection to be adequately considered at the resource consent stage.
- 2.6 The section 42A report notes that future development within the plan change area as well as surrounding growth will result in only a 3% increase to traffic volumes at the intersection of Malfroy Road and SH5. It should also be noted that traffic levels at the western leg of Malfroy Road, being the leg that connects to the structure plan area, will increase by approximately 10%. Mr Smith notes this in his supplementary traffic report.

3.0 District Plan Provisions

- 3.1 PC2 provides for subdivision applications within the structure plan area to be considered as a restricted discretionary activity provided that various principles and performance criteria are met. The assessment criteria are very limited, and in most cases notification is precluded. In its current form, the council's processing planner would not be able to consider the safety and efficiency impacts of such subdivision on the intersection of Malfroy Road and SH5. This would be the case even if the additional traffic were to cause or exacerbate unacceptable safety and operational effects at this location, as the traffic modelling indicates will likely occur before the structure plan area is fully developed.
- 3.2 Given the likely effects of further development on the intersection of Malfroy Road and SH5, the Transport Agency considers that amendments to the plan change provisions are warranted. The changes sought by the Transport Agency are summarised below and detailed in Table 1.
- a. Additional assessment criteria that enable traffic safety and operational effects on SH5 to be assessed for restricted discretionary subdivision applications.
 - b. Additional performance criteria that require subdivision applications to be accompanied by a Traffic Impact Assessment once the number of residential lots within the Pukehangi Heights Development Area exceeds 500. This will ensure that the council's processing planner and delegated decision-maker have enough information about the performance of the intersection and the subdivision's effects on it to properly assess the proposal. It does not appear that the intersection's level of service will be degraded to an unacceptable level of service prior to the 500 lot threshold being reached. However, this figure is not based on detailed trip generation or distribution modelling.
 - c. Changes to the proposed non-notification clauses to enable Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency to be notified as an affected party once the number of residential lots within the Pukehangi Heights Development Area exceeds 500. Given the potential for adverse effects on the State Highway network, it is considered

appropriate for the Transport Agency to have input through the notification process if the statutory test is met.

Table 1: Amendments Sought by the Transport Agency

Section Reference	Recommended Provision(s)
<p>A5.2.3.4 (Performance Standards – Subdivision)</p> <p>Clause 11 (Development Traffic)</p>	<p>Insert additional performance standard as follows:</p> <p>a. <u><i>If subdivision consent has been approved for more than 500 residential lots within the Pukehanqi Heights Development Area, a Traffic Impact Assessment shall be provided. The Traffic Impact Assessment shall identify the safety and operational performance of the intersection of Malfroy Road and State Highway 5 and assess the subdivision’s effects on this intersection.</i></u></p>
<p>A5.2.4.4 (Performance Standards – Subdivision)</p> <p>Clause 7 (Development Traffic)</p>	<p>Insert additional performance standard as follows:</p> <p>a. <u><i>If subdivision consent has been approved for more than 500 residential lots within the Pukehanqi Heights Development Area, a Traffic Impact Assessment shall be provided. The Traffic Impact Assessment shall identify the safety and operational performance of the intersection of Malfroy Road and State Highway 5 and assess the subdivision’s effects on this intersection.</i></u></p>
<p>A5.2.5.4 (Performance Standards – Subdivision)</p>	<p>Insert additional performance standard as follows:</p> <p>2. <u><i>If subdivision consent has been approved for more than 500 residential lots within the Pukehanqi Heights Development Area, a Traffic Impact Assessment shall be provided. The Traffic Impact Assessment shall identify the safety and operational performance of the intersection of Malfroy Road and State Highway 5 and assess the subdivision’s effects on this intersection.</i></u></p>

<p>A5.2.6.5 (Subdivision within the Pukehangi Heights Development Area – Residential 1 Zone, Rural 2 Zone and Passive Open Space Overlay)</p>	<p>Amend assessment criteria as follows:</p> <p>A5.2.6.5 Subdivision within the Pukehangi Heights Development Area – Residential 1 Zone, Rural 2 Zone, <u>Rural 1 Zone</u> and Passive Open Space Overlay</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The extent to which the principles of the Pukehangi Heights Development Area Structure Plan will be achieved; 2. The extent to which the objectives and policies of the Pukehangi Heights Development Area and the underlying zone will be met; and 3. The appropriateness of ownership and management measures to ensure the required re-vegetation is maintained in perpetuity-; <u>and</u> 4. <u>Traffic safety and operational effects regarding State Highway 5.</u>
<p>A5.2.3.2 (Non-Notification)</p>	<p>Amend non-notification clause as follows:</p> <p>Any application for resource consent for the activities listed in Table A5.2.3.1 a 4 - 11 shall be considered without public or limited notification or the need to obtain the written approval from affected parties if the Land Use and/or Subdivision are consistent with the principles of the Pukehangi Development Area Structure Plan.</p> <p><u>Despite the above, if a Traffic Impact Assessment is required in accordance with A5.2.3.4(a), limited notification may be served to Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency.</u></p>
<p>A5.2.4.2 (Non-Notification)</p>	<p>Any application for resource consent for the activities listed in Table 5.2.4.1 a 5-7 shall be considered without public or limited notification or the need to obtain the written approval from affected parties if the Land Use and/or Subdivision are consistent with the principles of the Pukehangi Development Area Structure Plan.</p> <p><u>Despite the above, if a Traffic Impact Assessment is required in accordance with A5.2.4.4(a), limited notification may be served to Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency.</u></p>

A5.2.5.2 (Non-Notification)	<p>An application for resource consent for the activity listed as 3 Table A5.2.5.1 shall be considered without public or limited notification or the need to obtain the written approval from affected parties if the Land Use and/or Subdivision are consistent with the principles of the Pukehangi Development Area Structure Plan.</p> <p><u>Despite the above, if a Traffic Impact Assessment is required in accordance with A5.2.5.4.2, limited notification may be served to Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency.</u></p>
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4.4 Under a number of district plans nationally, development beyond certain thresholds incurs stricter activity status unless necessary road upgrades have been physically delivered. For example, Section A5.3 (Wharenui Road Area Development Plan) of the Rotorua District Plan specifies that non-complying activity status is incurred for development levels beyond specified limits, unless specific road upgrades are delivered. The Transport Agency would also support an alternative approach along these lines.

Dated at Tauranga 22 September 2020.



Rodney Albertyn

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Pursuant to a delegation from the Chief Executive of the NZ Transport Agency.

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Consents and Approvals

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Attachment 1: Malfroy Road

