

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF Private Plan Change 95 Pencarrow Estate
Pongakawa to the Western Bay of Plenty
District Plan

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF RICHARD COLES (PLANNING)
ON BEHALF OF KEVIN AND ANDREA MARSH**

Introduction

1. My name is Richard Newton Coles. I confirm my qualifications and experience as set out in my statement of evidence dated 24 October 2024.
2. I also confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses, as contained in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2023. I confirm that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying upon the specified evidence of another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.
3. My reply evidence addresses statements made in the evidence of Lucy Holden (Planning - BOPRC) and Mike Maassen.
4. BOPRC Planner Lucy Holden considers that the settlement at Awara Road is not an urban area and that the Plan Change is not consistent with the NPS-UD, RPS or the SmartGrowth Strategy. Ms Holden makes reference particularly to NPS-UD Policy 1, which identifies criterion that contribute to well-functioning

urban environments which includes access to multi modal transport options and creating walkable neighbourhoods (See also RPS Policy 7A).

5. My view is that the existing settlement of Pongakawa includes approximately 10 hectares of residential zoned land and has 75 existing houses reticulated with a municipal water supply is an urban area. It has residential zoning and has been developed to a reasonable density and is clearly not suitable for rural use or a rural productive use.
6. I have already outlined in my evidence why I believe that Pongakawa settlement is predominantly urban in character and that PC95 will increase the housing supply in the eastern corridor at a density that provides efficient urban development and through its inclusive design will help create a walkable neighbourhood contributing to a well-functioning urban environment.
7. My view is PC95 is consistent with Policy 1 of the NPS-UD for the following reasons.
8. PC95 has included two housing density areas to provide for a range of housing typologies and therefore provides the opportunity to meet various housing price points.¹
9. Cultural traditions - Ngati Whakehemo and Ngati Piako have expressed the importance of water quality and the Puanene Stream and the stream buffer and reserve overlay in the PC95 structure plan, will help improve the health of the stream and provide the public and Iwi access to the stream. The Applicant has agreed to a wider 8m buffer area as recommended by BOPRC and the Structure Plan have been updated.²

¹ NPS-UD Policy 1(a).

² NPS-UD Policy (1)(a)(ii).

10. Good accessibility - Pongakawa is located within the eastern corridor growth area and has excellent access to employment areas³ including the RBP, Affco, Post Harvest operations, and kiwifruit orchards and benefits from easy access to the TEL and the interchange to the RBP. Active transport opportunities are being progressively developed by Council in the eastern area of the district and are planned to be developed as per Council's Reserve Management Plan and Cycling and Walkway Strategy connecting communities of Pukehina, Pongakawa, Paengaroa, Rangiuru and Te Puke.

11. Ms Holden, states that the public transport viability threshold in Policy 4.3 RPTP⁴ relates to an urban land area of 10 ha with a density yield of 15 dwellings per hectare⁵, or 150 dwellings. PC95 will enable approximately 130 additional dwellings plus commercial activities, when combined with the existing residential area of Pongakawa (approx. 75 dwellings) will exceed the minimum 150 dwelling threshold. The net density of the proposed PC95 residential area is approximately 15.35 dwellings per hectare. The viability for public transport will improve with dwelling numbers beyond the 150-threshold having easy accessibility to a planned bus stop. The combined PC95 residential development area (130 dwellings) plus the existing Pongakawa dwellings within and adjacent to the Residential area (approximately 75) would provide a likely yield of over 205 dwellings. I therefore disagree with Ms Holden's assessment that the PC95 is inconsistent with Policy 1.

12. The development is not of a scale that would detract from the competitive operation of land development markets⁶, but rather would add to it, by creating more housing choice in an area where there is clear demand and significant shortage of housing as confirmed by economist Kevin Counsell and evident in the HBA 2022.

³ NPS-UD Policy 1(c).

⁴ Policy 4.3 - BOP Regional Public Transport Plan 2022.

⁵ Lucy Holden's evidence at paragraph 13.

⁶ NPS-UD Policy 1(d).

13. Pongakawa is located within close proximity to the Rangiuru Business Park, AFFCO meat works and Te Puke, accessed via State Highway 2, the Tauranga Eastern Link and/or the Te Puke Highway which provides good accessibility via road. Council has identified active walking and cycling routes walking and cycling strategy and while these connections aren't all established they are planned, are developing over time and are likely to be established within a 10 years.

14. Ms Holden states (Topic 2- Settlement Pattern - para 18) that she agrees with the reporting planner that housing supply isn't required to meet the housing capacity requirements for the Tauranga area. However, my view is we have a significant and growing shortfall and the speed of development in growth areas is not currently sufficient to keep pace with the projected housing supply. As an example, the Te Puke Growth Area between McLoughlin Drive and Whitehead Avenue was first mooted in the late 1990s with a notified Council Plan Change when I was working in the policy team at Council. This was made operative in the early 2000s. It has taken a lead time of 15 to 20 years for the first subdivisions to be developed, and houses built. The balance of this area is significant and remains largely in kiwifruit. While subdivision consents have been granted, the lead in time for these to be developed, serviced and titles issued is at least three years away and will need significant capital investment into wastewater and stormwater upgrades and for this infrastructure to be built and operational in advance of the lots being 224'd. The stormwater ponds which are necessary to manage stormwater effects on downstream properties have not yet been constructed. Given these development obstacles and likely delays, I consider there will be a significant lag to houses being constructed at Te Puke which will exacerbate the housing supply shortage. The seriousness and importance of the housing supply issue is evident in the SmartGrowth Strategy (P155) which states "...the subregion has a serious housing shortfall" and raises the need for potentially a Specified Development

Project and the need for a “...city/regional deal between the Crown and the three local authorities”.

15. Ms Holden references the Eastern Centre as providing sufficient supply, but in my experience, this will be at least 10 years in the planning and has similar constraints to expanding Te Puke over established kiwifruit orchards.
16. Ms Holden (Topic Highly Productive Land - Para 23) states that the use of the highly productive land for residential development for the PC95 area is inconsistent with the NPS-HPL and also references Objective 10 of the RPS (Para 23). Mr Murphy has addressed Clause 3.6(1) of the NPS in some detail, which provides the gateway criterion to consider urban development on highly productive land. My view is that this plan change is required to provide housing within the eastern corridor to provide additional housing capacity within the short to medium term; there are no practicable alternatives to sufficiently meet the demand within this timeframe; and there are positive social and community benefits that will result from PC 95.
17. At (Topic 5 Transportation 27-28) of Ms Holden’s evidence, she states that as PC95 will not meet Policy 4.3 of the RPTP and therefore doesn’t meet the requirements of Object 24, Policy UG 3A or Policy 13B of the RPS. As discussed above my view is quite the contrary, the development yield exceeds the development density required by Policy 4.3 of 15 lots per ha (net developable area). Pongakawa is now strategically located close to RBP and other employment opportunities as previously discussed. Council has planned walkways and cycleways some of which are established or consented or being planned. There is a clear vision to see the communities connected by active transport corridors.⁷ With these connections established linking Pongakawa to employment and commercial areas and establishing a village of over 205 dwellings (approximately 500 population), the PC95 area would be consistent with these transportation objectives and policies of the RPS.

⁷ WBOPDC Walking and Cycling Action Plan 2020-2021, District Eastern Connections (p36 -41).

18. Ms Holden at (Topic 7 Wastewater - Paras 31 to 34) states that she believes the financial costs of running a wastewater scheme will be inconsistent with RPS policy UG 10B. The development including the establishment of the wastewater treatment plant will be developer funded meaning the costs to design, consent, and establish the wastewater treatment plant will be paid by the developer. Future operational costs of the treatment plant will initially be paid for by the developer until the asset is vested in Council. Following this time the operational and maintenance costs will be rate funded, and we are informed by the waste treatment manufacturer that these are not significantly different to a conventional rates charge. I therefore disagree with Ms Holden's findings with respect to efficient use of Council finances and Policy UG 10.
19. I agree with Ms Holden's evidence (Topic 4 Natural Hazards) at paragraph 51, which states that the natural hazard matters have been resolved with respect to overland flow paths and she agrees there is a low-level flood risk sufficient to meet the requirements of RPS Policy NH4B.
20. Mr Maassen states that the PC will result in *ad hoc uncoordinated growth* (p3). My view is the plan change has been prepared with very clear parameters for access, servicing, housing choice, reserves, riparian planting and walkways helping establish planned village feel with a small commercial area for convenience of the Pongakawa community. The plan change considers and responds to all of the NPS-UD Policy 1 matters that are considered necessary to establish well-functioning urban environment.

Richard Coles

12 November 2024