

BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER OF: Proposed Plan Change 13

SUBMITTER: TA Projects Limited

SUBMITTER NO: 30, Further Submitter 2

EVIDENCE: Primary

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF
CRAIG MCGREGOR SHEARER ON BEHALF OF TA PROJECTS LIMITED**

10 JUNE 2021

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

1. My name is Craig McGregor Shearer. I am the director of Shearer Consulting Limited, an environmental and planning consultancy based in the Auckland region. I hold the qualification of Master of Arts in Geography (1978) from the University of Canterbury. I have been a consultant for sixteen years working for a variety of private and public sector clients on a range of projects, including preparing resource consent applications and providing evidence for council and Environment Court hearings. Until recently I have sat as an independent hearings commissioner with chairing endorsement, and regularly sat on hearing panels for councils across New Zealand.
2. I have read and agree to comply with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Consolidated Practice Note. The evidence is within my scope of expertise. I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from my expressed opinions.
3. I appear on behalf of TA Projects Limited. TA Projects provided submissions (30 and further submissions 2) on Proposed Plan Change 13 ("**PPC13**").
4. I have read the Section 42A report of Hayley Thomas for the Council.

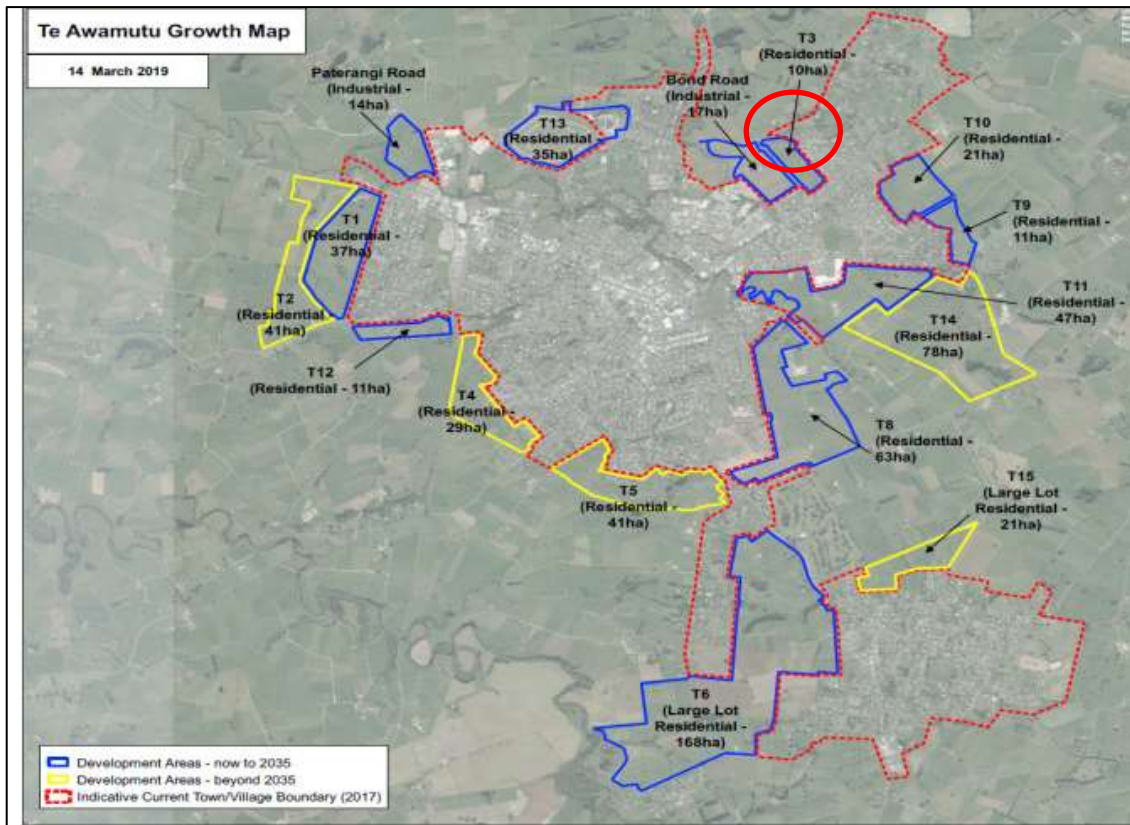
SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

5. The submission of TA Projects relates to change of the zoning of land it owns at 836 Bond Road – the T3 Growth Cell in Te Awamutu – from Deferred Residential to Residential.

REASONS FOR SUBMISSION

6. TA Projects Limited supports PPC13 and the recommendations in the reporting officer's S42A report to change the zoning of "Deferred Residential" zoned land, anticipated to be developed up to 2035, to "Residential".
7. TA Projects owns 6.5 hectares of land at 836 Bond Road Te Awamutu. (See Figure 1 below). Along with an adjacent 3.5 hectares it comprises an area known as "T3" in Appendix S1 of the Waipa District Plan and is currently zoned as "Deferred Residential". The T3 area covers 10 ha, but 3.5ha, under different ownership, has already been subdivided and fully developed into housing (the Beckett Drive area). My client's land is completely surrounded by land that is either residentially developed, or to the west and south, industry zoned or development.

Figure 1: TA Project's T3 land



8. Appendix S1 of the District Plan anticipates the T3 land will be developed between “now to 2035”. I note that the previous impediment to the land being developed in the past was availability of water (Council’s water supply), and access to the Council’s reticulated sewerage system. These road blocks have now been overcome.
9. TA Projects has fielded several approaches from parties interested in seeing the land developed into its future intended use. These approaches have come in the context of increasing population of Waipa District and in particular Te Awamutu, generating increasing demand for housing. I note the population of Te Awamutu is now estimated at 14,500 in 2021, up 2,300 from 12,198 in 2018 (Statistics NZ). At 2.6 persons per household this represents 884 more houses being needed over a three-year period. Such growth is extremely fast. Like much of New Zealand, with such demand for additional housing to be constructed, it is not surprising that median house prices in Te Awamutu have risen from \$395,000 in October 2016 to \$690,000 in April 2021 as recently reported by One Roof.
10. The process for changing the zoning has been stalled as the Council has identified legal issues with changing the zoning without going through a Plan Change process. It is a

very costly and time-consuming exercise for individual landowners having to go through a Private Plan Charge process to have land re-zoned for a purpose it has been set aside for, for some years. And part of this process required an unnecessary production of a structure plan. I therefore applaud Council's initiative to front foot the demand for housing land by putting forward this Proposed Plan Change.

11. I do not see the need to address the individual submission points made by myself on behalf of TA Projects as the submission points are generally in agreement with the reporting officer's S42A report and her recommendations. So, I support her recommendations.
12. I do however have some comments on the two further submissions lodged by TA Projects.

OTHER SUBMITTERS

13. TA Projects lodged further submissions against two submissions – one lodged by Fire and Emergency New Zealand (7/2), and the other by Hayden Woods (1/1).
14. Hayden Woods (1/1 and 1/5), in reference to Topic 9 – Uplifting of the Deferred Zone - objects to the “removal of the reference to uplifting Deferred Zones by Council resolution”. He believes this will remove regulatory control and oversight from the Council, “otherwise Council Staff will have control over Elected Council, removing any right for the people to object”. He also opposes the removal of the Deferred Zone from the pre-2035 Growth Cells.
15. With respect I cannot agree with this submission. There is already a high degree of elected councillor oversight of planning matters. Elected Councillors determine through the development of the district plan which areas are suitable for various zonings, the timing of development and so on. The ‘Deferred’ zoning resulted from a public process when Council developed and approved the District Plan in 2016. This current Plan Cchange process is another approved by Councillors. Further, if the Council approves PPC13 all subdivisions will require resource consents, generally as a restricted discretionary activity, which provides another layer of oversight for the Council. Council does not need any further regulatory control. In fact, I am impressed with the pragmatic approach Council has taken to ensuring it increases development opportunities within its district.
16. I therefore agree with the recommendation of the reporting officer that this submission be rejected and request the Panel reject it.

17. In respect of Fire and Emergency New Zealand's submission it appears the TA Projects submission has mis-read the relief sought. Although Fire and Emergency Fire and Emergency did submit they consider that removing the requirement for structure plans has the potential to result in poor urban outcomes, I note their decision requested does not seek the reinstatement of the structure plan process and acknowledges that the necessary detail relating to infrastructure provision will be adequately considered through a subdivision consent process. TA Projects agrees and supports that process for dealing with the provisions for infrastructure services.

RELIEF SOUGHT

18. Without going into each submission point, TA Projects supports the recommendations in the s42A report prepared by Ms Thomas and commends them to the Panel.



Craig Shearer

10 June 2021