

BEFORE THE WAIPĀ DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of Proposed Plan Change 20 – Airport Northern
Precinct Extension to the Operative Waipā
District Plan

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF SAMUEL JAMES COLES

(URBAN DESIGN)

28 FEBRUARY 2023

Counsel acting:
JR Welsh
ChanceryGreen
223 Ponsonby Road
Ponsonby, Auckland 1011



INTRODUCTION

Qualifications and Experience

1. My name is Samuel James Coles.
2. I am the Technical Lead of the urban design team at Harrison Grierson. I hold a Bachelor of Planning and a Master of Urban Design, both from the University of Auckland.
3. Most of my 16-year urban design career has been focussed on the preparation of structure plans, master plans and detailed concept designs for large-scale developments. Some of my most relevant project examples are:
 - (a) Waterloo Business Park in Christchurch;
 - (b) Izone Southern Business Hub in Rolleston;
 - (c) Hautapu Industrial Estate;
 - (d) Te Rapa North business and industrial development;
 - (e) Air Park and The Landing industrial developments at Auckland Airport;
 - (f) Christchurch International Airport Business Park and commercial expansion;
 - (g) Kapiti Coast Airport industrial development;
 - (h) Ardmore Airport business and residential development;
 - (i) Whenuapai Village and local centre expansion.
4. I am familiar with the application site and the surrounding locality. I have read the relevant parts of: the application; submissions; further submissions and the Section 42A Report.
5. In my evidence I will refer to the Northern Precinct Urban Design Assessment Report, prepared in April 2022 and the Northern Precinct – Titanium Park Master Plan document (2019). These were prepared by my colleagues at Harrison Grierson and I was one of the reviewers.

Involvement in Proposed Plan Change 20

6. I have been engaged by Titanium Park Limited (“TPL”) and Rukuhia Properties Limited (“RPL”) to prepare evidence for Proposed Plan Change 20 (“PC20”). While I was not the author of the Urban Design assessment that supported the PC20 application, I reviewed and supported Harrison Grierson’s urban design team’s process and outcomes.
7. I have most recently visited the Site and the locality on 24 February 2023.

Code of Conduct

8. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note (2023) and I agree to comply with it. In that regard, I confirm that this evidence is written within my expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

9. In my evidence, I:
 - (a) provide an executive summary of my key conclusions;
 - (b) summarise the relevant aspects of PC20 with respect to urban design;
 - (c) set out an assessment of PC20 with respect to anticipated urban design effects; and
 - (d) address relevant submissions and comment on the section 42A Officer’s Report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

10. The PC20 site’s regional and local context has been thoroughly documented within strategic plans and technical reports. The landholdings were identified as suitable for a large-scale industrial development. An expansion of the existing structure plan area fits within the expected Future Growth Area.¹ At a total of 131.6 hectares,

¹ Contained within Appendix S1 – Future Growth Cells within the Waipā District Plan, Hamilton Airport Strategic Node.

the proposal would be similar in scale to other well-regarded business park developments.

11. The proposed Structure Plan is based upon the outcome of a detailed master planning process, facilitated by urban designers at Harrison Grierson. A two-year master planning process, assessed the site's context and integrated the technical inputs of stormwater, transport, civil engineering, cultural, planning and landscape architecture and other specialists. These inputs were amalgamated into a series of diagrams and key design moves, culminating in an Illustrative Master Plan. Overall, this process represents a suitable level of design consideration and was further informed by wider stakeholder engagement and consultation.
12. The proposed Structure Plan is based on and is consistent with the urban design principles and development layout shown in the Illustrative Master Plan and, therefore, in my view reflects good urban design. These principles are:
 - (a) Primary transport connections and alignments follow a clear hierarchy, supported with a cycling network and a future public transport route.
 - (b) Commercial amenities, open spaces and retail opportunities to support industrial activity are incorporated and located in convenient places within the development.
 - (c) A gridded block layout provides efficient and sequenced development that enables a range of lot sizes and activities.
 - (d) Character-defining elements such as the Airport runway, views to maunga and a hill feature are retained as key features within the layout.
 - (e) The amenity values within the development are supported by design guidelines which address aesthetic and functional elements of built form, public space and landscape at a detailed level.
13. The principles above are all achievable within what PC20 proposes and I expect they will be further refined through detailed design and the subsequent consenting phases.
14. Most large-scale business parks that I have been involved with have adopted an urban design process of a similar nature. Most also follow a similar approach to structure planning, in that the planning provisions respond to critical elements and

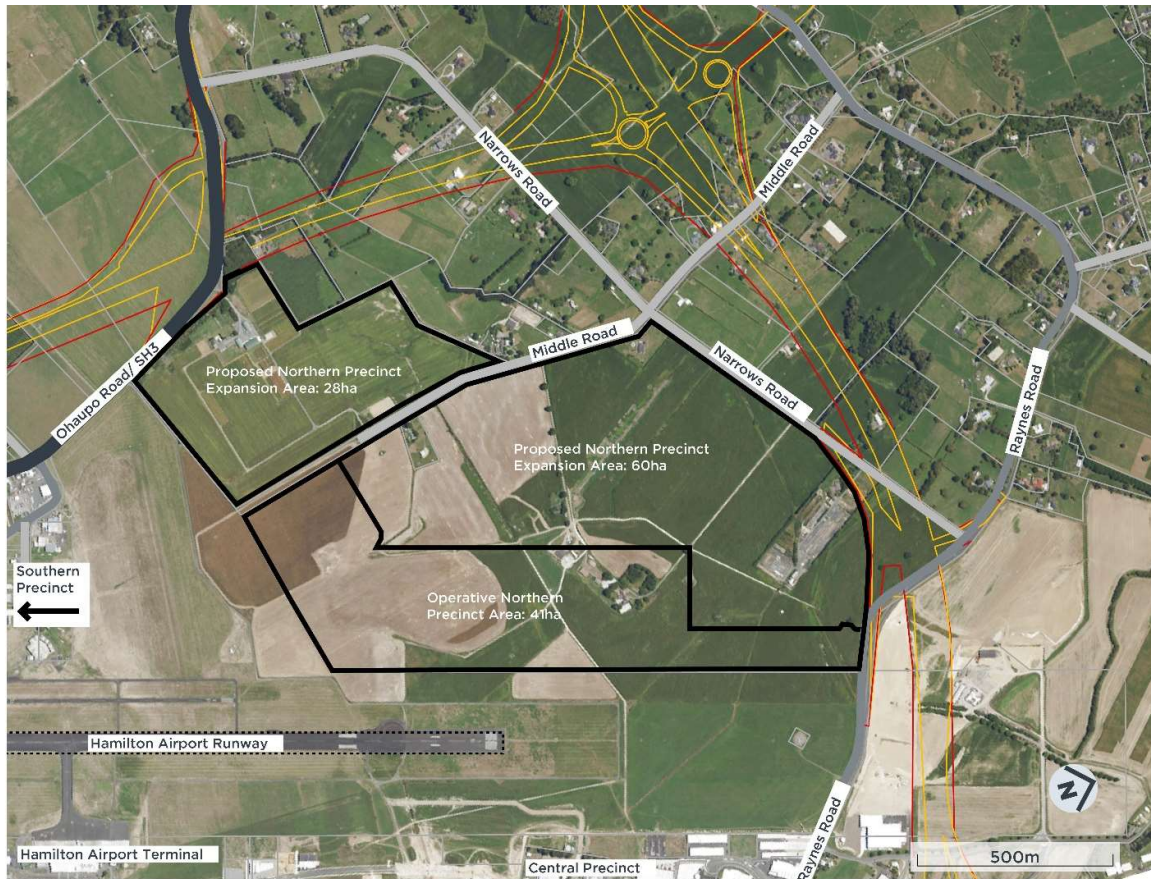
outcomes while the master plan and design guidelines are used to inform the detail along with subsequent consenting processes.

15. I assess the PC20 proposal as a logical and overall positive urban design response to the site's context. The Northern Precinct can be developed to achieve a well-functioning urban environment through providing regionally significant business opportunities while incorporating good amenity and character within the site through the design adopted, landscaping provisions and bat habitat areas.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Site Description

16. The site comprises approximately 130ha of mostly flat land immediately west of Hamilton Airport, and near the Waikato River. It is bounded by Raynes Road and Narrows Road to the north, Middle Road, Ohaupo Road and several rural allotments to the north and west
17. The site comprises the amalgamated land holdings of TPL and RPL.
18. The site contains the balance of land (both live zoned and rural zoned land) yet to be developed as part of the proposed Titanium Park Business Park and is known as the '*Northern Precinct*'. Approximately 41ha of the site is Airport Business Zoned land and approximately 89ha is Rural Zone under the Waipā District Plan (the 'WDP').



KEY





	Proposed PC20 Extent (Total 131.6haha)		State Highway 3
	NZTA Southern Links Designation		Collector Road
	Proposed Southern Links Rooding		Local Road
			Hamilton Airport Runway Edge

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

19. I have set out part of the regulatory framework for the Northern Precinct in my description of the site above. It is further expanded on within the Urban Design Assessment that supported the PC20 request.
20. The following sections provide a summary of the key policy documents that are relevant to urban design and which have shaped my urban design assessment.

The National Policy Statement: Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD)

21. The NPS-UD directs local authorities to plan for urban development capacity. Urban design-specific aspects of the NPS-UD in the context of an expanded industrial zone are centred around the development of sufficient capacity (supporting growth) and achieving well-functioning urban environments. The relevant policies are:
22. Objective 1: New Zealand has well-functioning urban environments that enable all people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future.
23. Objective 4: New Zealand's urban environments, including their amenity values, develop and change over time in response to the diverse and changing needs of people, communities, and future generations.
24. A "well-functioning urban environment" is a broad concept but I take it to mean, in this context, that a development considers and respects its surrounding environment as well as the future community who uses the development.
25. A significant business park creates employment and economic opportunities for the wider community. The large scale and prominence of the Northern Precinct and expanded airport industrial area would be a significant factor that informs the design of, and supports the development of, future projects in the wider area.
26. With respect to the future environment, including the occupants and users of the future business park and airport area, a well-functioning urban environment is primarily achieved through a sound design fundamentals and good provision of amenity. These opportunities are addressed through a master planning and structure planning process.

The Hamilton – Waikato Metropolitan Spatial Plan (MSP).

27. The MSP focuses on strategic urban growth and ensuring development is centred around a multi-modal rapid and frequent transport network enabling economic and quality urban development. This network is planned to connect Hamilton Airport with other locations through strategic arterial routes.
28. Hamilton Airport has also been identified along with a number of other areas as a 'strategic industrial area', where the plan envisions a majority of industrial growth to occur in these areas.

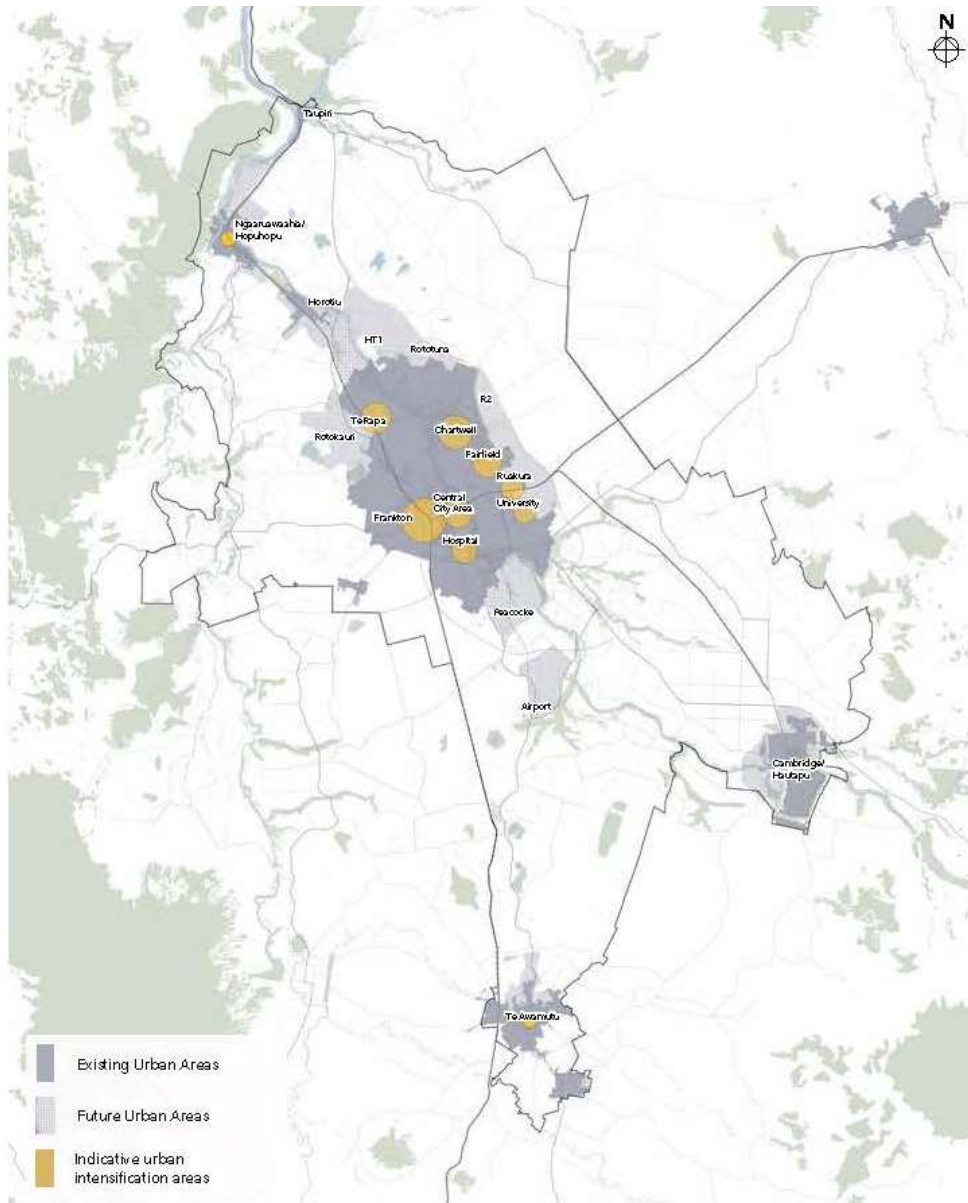


Figure 2 - MSP strategic growth map; Envisioned future employment priority areas

Updated Future Proof Strategy 2022

29. The Future Proof Strategy is a 30-year growth management and implementation strategy for the Waikato Region. It is relevant for PC20 because it identifies that the Airport Business zone (which includes currently part of the Northern Precinct) is a Strategic Industrial Node² and anticipates it to grow by a further 140ha through to 2050. It also identifies the key strategic transport network that surrounds the Northern Precinct and the Airport locality which is relevant to urban design matters.

² Updated Future Proof Strategy 2022, Map 9 and Table 2.

30. I have copied the relevant image from the strategy below and note that the strategy already provides a level of justification that it is appropriate for the Northern Precinct to grow (as sought by PC20). My assessment starts from this position, focusing on the appropriate way that the Northern Precinct should be expanded and developed based on best practice urban design principles.

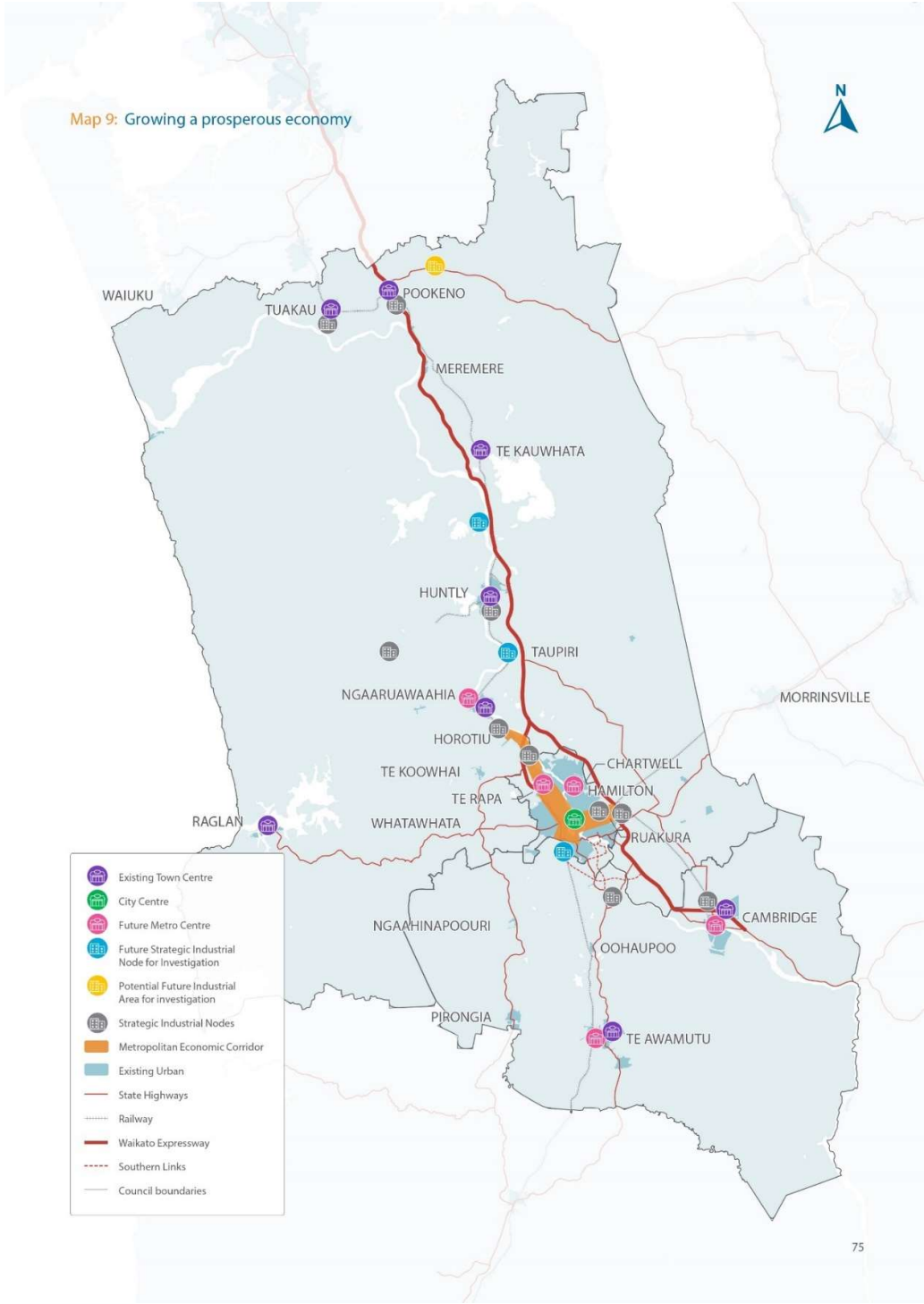


Figure 3 - MSP strategic growth map; Envisioned future employment priority areas

Table 2: Strategic Industrial Nodes			
Strategic Industrial Nodes	Industrial Land allocation and staging (ha)		Total allocation to 2050 (ha)
	2020-2030	2031-2050	
Pookeno	5 ^[10]	23 ^[11]	53
Tuakau	26 ^[12]	77 ^[13]	103
Huntly/ Rotowaro/ Ohinewai	77 ^[14]	-	77
Horotiu/Te Rapa North/Rotokauri	189 ^[15]	50 ^[16]	239
Ruakura/ Ruakura East	172 ^[17]	245	417
Hamilton Airport/ Southern Links	94 ^[18]	46 ^[19]	140
Hautapu	67	160	227
Totals	630	626	1,256

Figure 4 – MSP table listing industrial growth areas and their planned scale.

Waipā District Plan

31. The site is identified under the WDP is being a ‘Possible Future Growth Area’ and “Future Extension Direction”. The Hamilton Airport Growth Map, which is contained in Appendix S1 of the WDP (refer Figure 5 below) and is shown in relation to the alignment of proposed Southern Links transport corridor. The WDP considers that this future extension would provide for future industrial land beyond 2035.

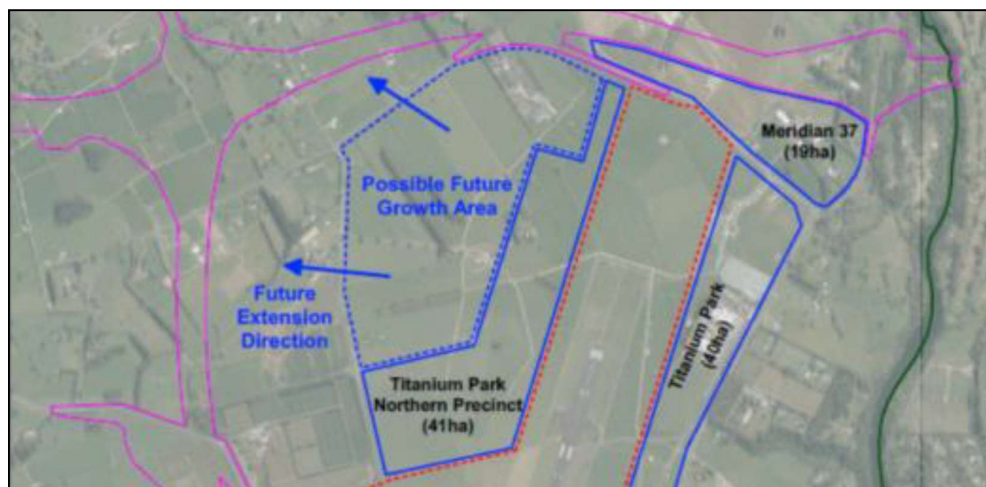


Figure 5: Future Growth Area (from Appendix 1 of the Waipā District Plan)

Site Context

32. Key elements of the site's context that informed the urban design response are described below and some are illustrated at Fig. 6 below. These have primarily been guided by the inputs of technical specialists and confirmed as part of the urban design process, especially within the Titanium Park Master plan report. They are:

- (a) A strategically well-connected location with a high public profile, being adjacent to Hamilton Airport.
- (b) Demand for that approximately 130ha development (in addition to existing airport business and apron activity) is feasible and sustainable.
- (c) A close proximity to existing employment, housing (including Peacocke) and infrastructure that will be enhanced in future.
- (d) Natural features of significance in the wider area include maunga such as Pirongia, Kakepuku, Maungatautari and Te Aroha.
- (e) Connectivity with existing and planned future roads, cycleways and walkways and a combination of potential temporary and permanent entry points to the site.
- (f) Topography including two hill features (one with mature vegetation) near the airport that could be utilised to add character and amenity to the development.
- (g) Ecological areas for bat habitat require protection and specific vegetation and interface treatments.
- (h) Several external boundary conditions; Hamilton Airport edge, frontages to future state highways, adjacent rural land and the existing business development.

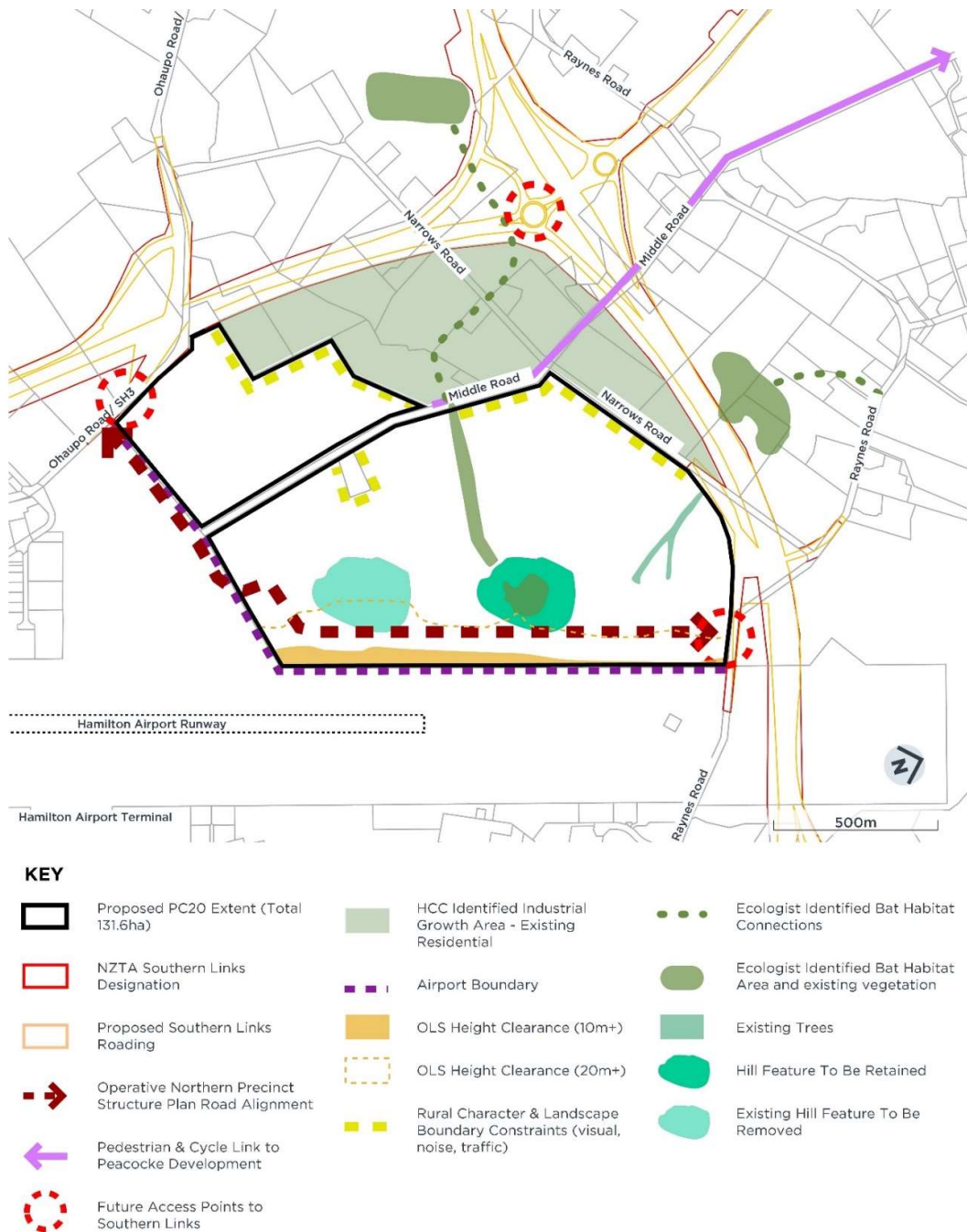


Figure 6 – Urban Design Existing Site Context Plan

Titanium Park Master Plan Package

33. Harrison Grierson’s urban design team prepared a technical package of design ideas and solutions between 2019 and 2023. The master plan package integrated the technical design work being undertaken by the wider consultant team, the client and other stakeholders.

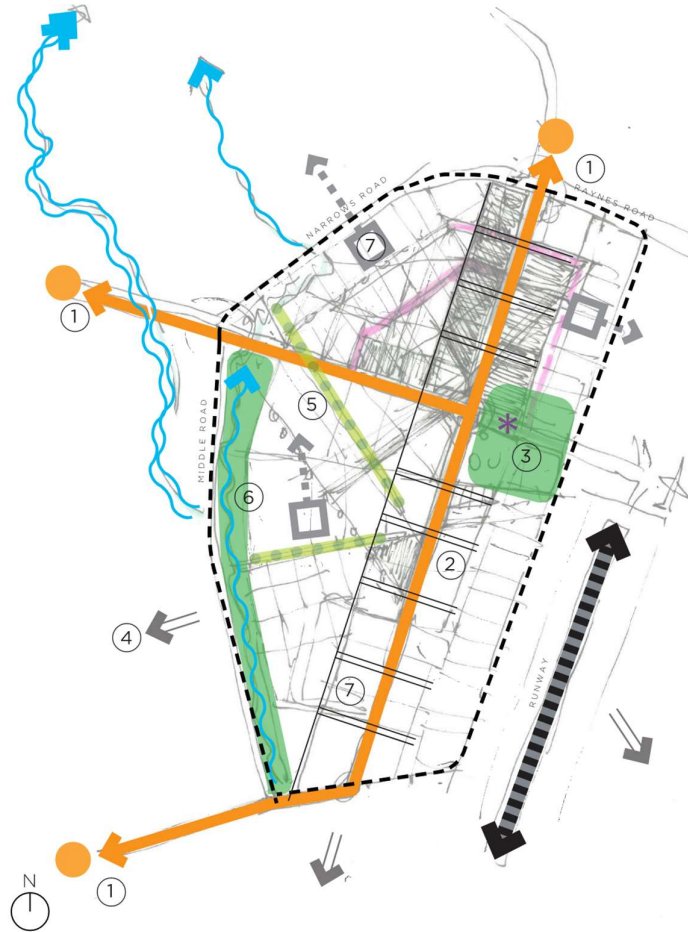


Figure 7 – Example conceptual graphic from Titanium Park master plan package – (Harrison Grierson, 2019)

34. The iterative masterplan design process involved a few key outputs that I will outline below. They culminated in a master plan which has been updated several times since 2019, including of the RPL site area and, most recently, in response to the bat habitat areas.
35. The urban design Key Moves Plan at Fig. 8 below provides an illustration of the essential urban design inputs for the Northern Precinct.

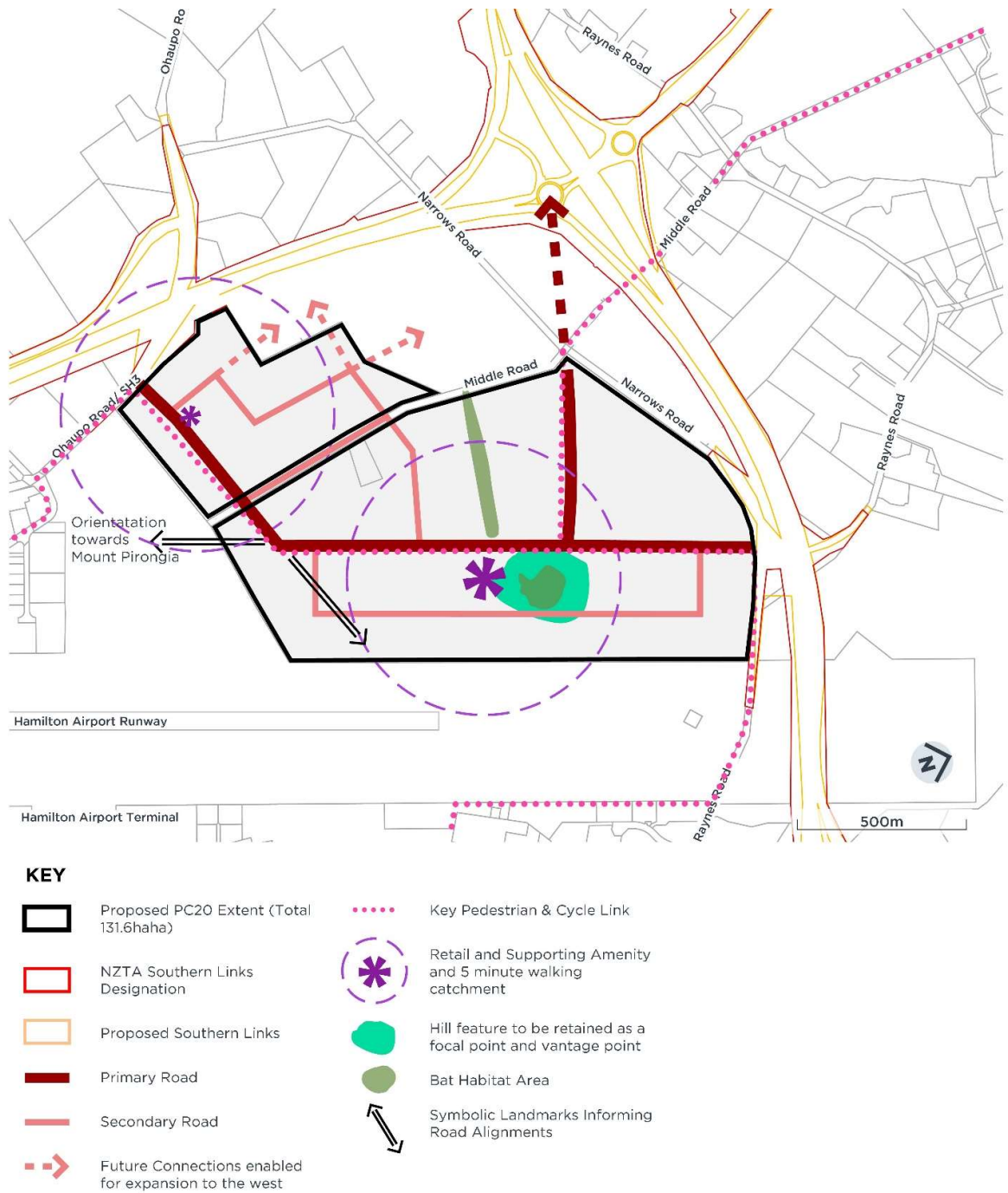


Figure 8 - Urban Design Key Moves Plan

36. The key urban design responses to the project brief and site context (“Key moves”) are:
- (a) The Airport Industrial Zone can be supplemented with an Amenity Hub overlay to enable a concentration of retail and supporting amenities for the business park.

- (b) A gridded street and block layout provides flexible and optimal lot sizes to supply industrial land parcels in response to operational (market) demand.
- (c) A simple transport hierarchy proposes a primary “spine road” and alternative “secondary” routes through the development, plus other minor roads at a tertiary level (to be determined later through context-specific design). Amenity within streets is achievable through landscaping and street layout. The transport network considers and provides for cars, freight vehicles, buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

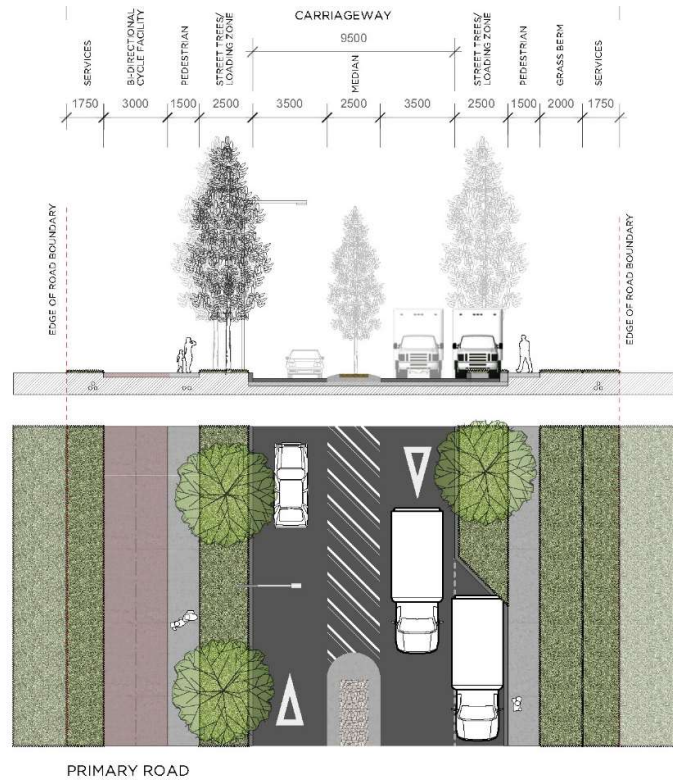


Figure 9 - Primary Road example cross section and layout including quality urban design through pedestrian and cycle amenities and landscaping features

- (d) Ecological areas for long-tailed bats are incorporated into the layout and provided with an appropriate design response; a darkened and vegetated area or corridor of land. Future industrial activity is required to respond to this area with a low-lighting and building setbacks, in accordance with specialist Ecological advice.
- (e) One hill feature is retained as a focal point and a vantage point. The culmination of ecology, outlook, open space and amenities in this location provides a character-defining aspect to the development.

- (f) Grid-based road alignments respect symbolic landmarks in the wider context including Mt. Pirongia and are aligned to the airport runways.
- (g) Rural interfaces are addressed through setbacks and development restrictions. The Structure Plan and master plan can respond to this through providing deeper blocks and internalising development along those edges.
- (h) The layout of the development provides for logical future expansion options into the adjacent business or industrial areas (both existing and planned).

Illustrative Master Plan

- 37. The Illustrative Master Plan shown at Fig. 10 below was developed over time through an iterative design process, most recently updated to incorporate a bat habitat area.
- 38. The Plan is intended to provide a holistic picture of the development in a hypothetical future state. It is one interpretation of how the site may be developed through further design, subdivision and development.
- 39. While it contains hypothetical details, the central benefit of the illustrative masterplan is to test and communicate a range of design outcomes, including PC20 provisions. This information then feeds into the simplified Structure Plan format. Overall, the masterplan demonstrates how the Structure Plan can align with the site's development possibilities.



Figure 10. Northern Precinct Illustrative Master plan – showing hypothetical development of the Northern Precinct

Design Guidelines

40. The other Precincts within the Airport Business Zone all use design guidelines and Messrs Morgan and Richards have confirmed the intention to revise these for the Northern Precinct. Design Guidelines supported with a design review process will address the finer grained urban design solutions and controls that are not part of PC20. I acknowledge these sit outside of the RMA and District Plan but, as accepted industry approach, their aim is to establish good amenity values in relation to specific development proposals.
41. Guidelines cover topics such as building aesthetics, landscaping, signage, vehicle access and parking. These aspects have been considered and tested within the Northern Precinct - Titanium Park Master plan package.

42. Informed by the principles and intentions of the Master Plan, the developer will utilise guidelines to assist in determining the appropriate location and design features for individual activities as they seek to establish on the site.

OVERVIEW OF PC20 STRUCTURE PLAN

43. The Airport Business Zone Structure Plan incorporates the elements that have been informed by urban design (as well as others). These include the hierarchy of roads, the Hub location, and the general layout of the urban blocks. These elements are consistent with the masterplan design objectives and key moves.

44. The proposed Structure Plan (Fig. 11) is compared below highlighting the amendments to the operative version (Fig. 12).

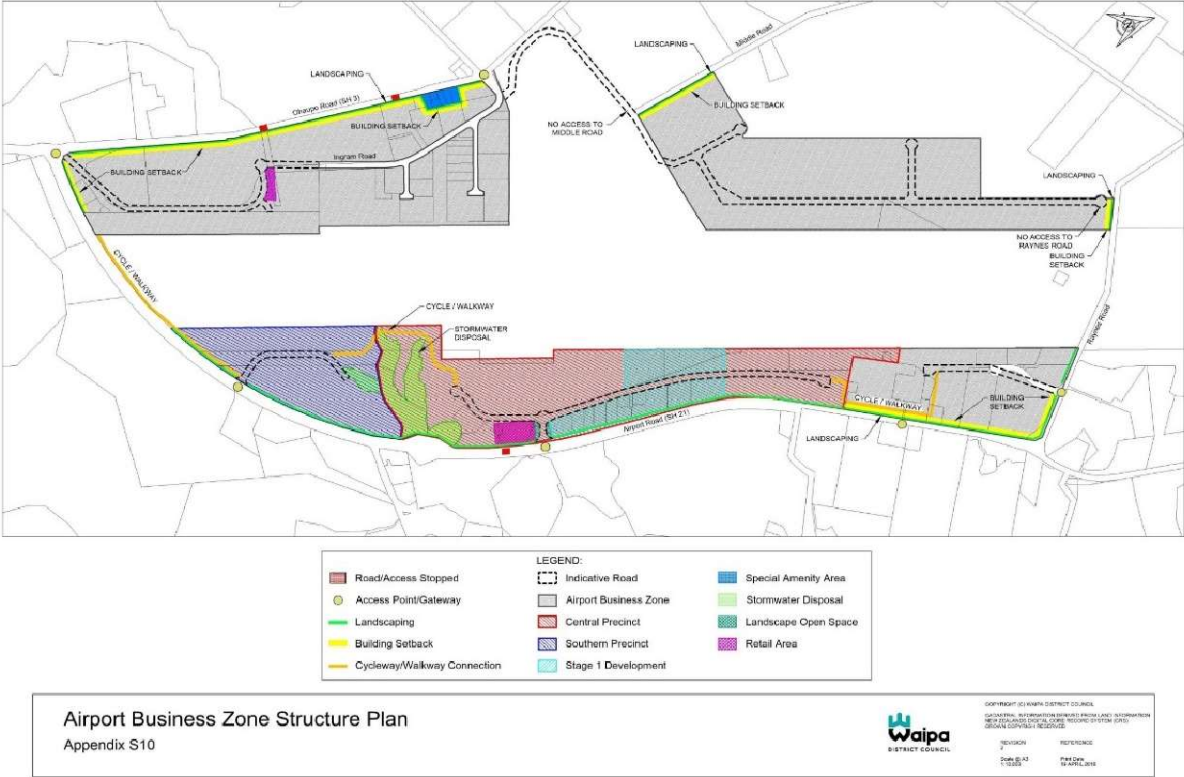


Figure 11 - Operative Structure Plan

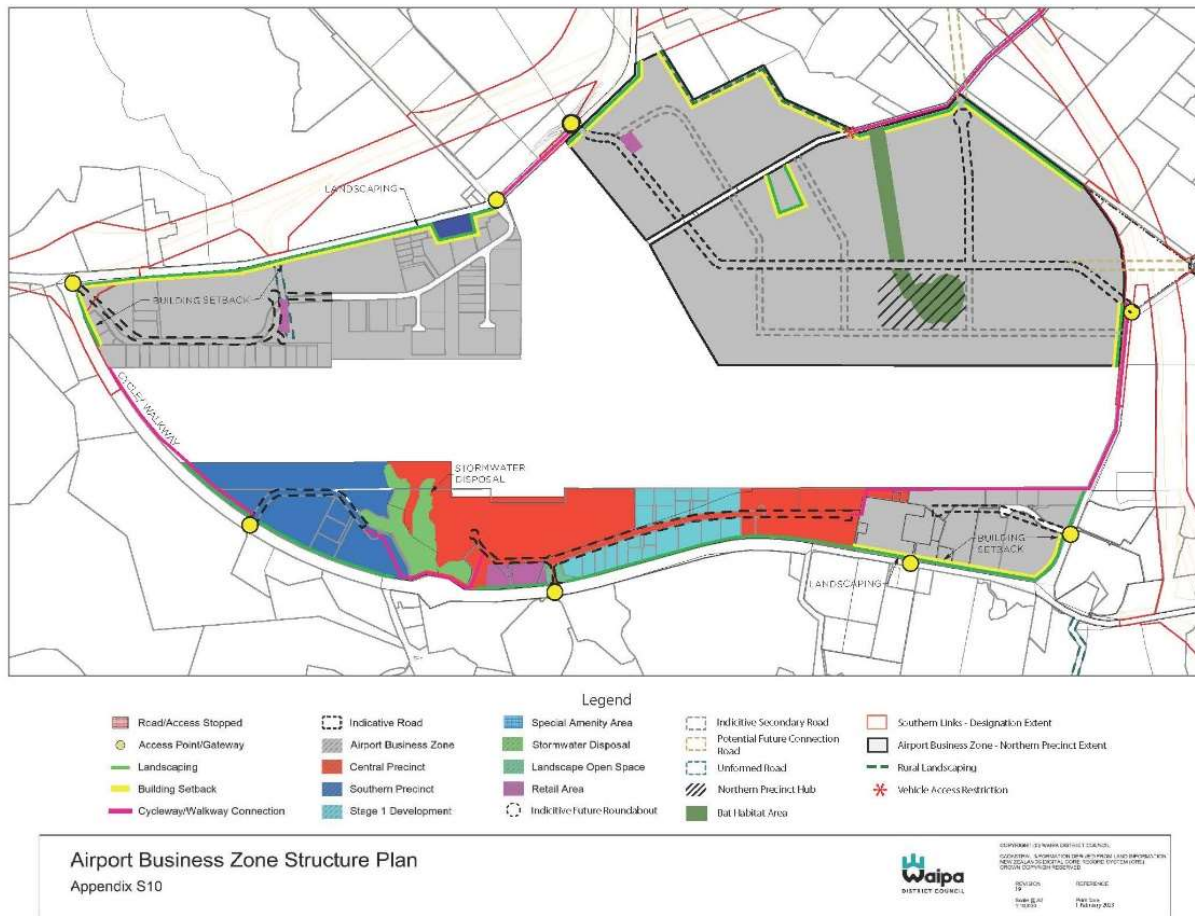


Figure 12 – Proposed Structure Plan

45. A detailed review and assessment of the comparison between the Proposed and Operative Structure Plans was provided in the Urban Design Assessment Report by Harrison Grierson (at Section 5.2 - Urban Design Principles & Structure Plan Comparison).
46. I agree with this assessment and note that changes between the operative and proposed Structure Plans include:
 - (a) The land area of Airport Business Zone is increased from approximately 40 ha to 130ha; this is expected to support demand for additional business and industry activity and a significant worker population. In my experience this increase in scale will support the development of a better *business park*.
 - (b) Future roads are now proposed in two categories; Primary and Secondary. This will provide a more refined and legible movement hierarchy. New cross sections for each category enable better access to cycling and public

transport facilities as well as improved public amenity through landscaping. The primary road alignment is relocated to a more centralised position within the expanded development.

- (c) Bat habitat areas have been identified within the Structure Plan and this allows for a specific landscape and built-form design response to be achieved (through consenting and management plans).
- (d) Building setbacks and landscaping buffers to rural interfaces are realigned and extended. This will help to mitigate the visual effects of industrial development on existing residents (until that land is rezoned to industry).
- (e) An Amenity Hub overlay has been added. This will provide for the needs of a large-scale business park including worker and visitor amenities. The inclusion of an Amenity Hub is also likely to enable a higher quality of industrial activity to establish at this location.

URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

- 47. I have undertaken a review of PC20 and the background documents that informed the Structure Plan. My summary of the key issues of relevant to urban design is as follows:
- 48. The design process, urban design strategy and the amount of detail covered throughout is sound and contributed positively to the proposal. This includes:
 - (a) Context assessment and mapping, supported by site visits;
 - (b) Integration with other technical disciplines and responding to site opportunities and constraints;
 - (c) Consultation and significant meetings with feedback incorporated (eg with Iwi, Council, NZTA);
 - (d) SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints) analysis (refer page 11-12 of the UD Assessment 2022);
 - (e) Iterative design and optioneering;
 - (f) Involvement of the client (as developer/advisor); and
 - (g) Consideration of detailed design and testing of potential outcomes as a means to formulate design principles.

49. Technical reports and urban design testing demonstrate that the site is appropriate for business and industrial development in the context of regional servicing and supply of industrial land.
50. I consider that the design outcomes reflected in the Structure Plan respond appropriately to the site's context, including natural and cultural elements.
51. I note that quality urban design characteristics are adopted such as centralised local amenities, a quality movement network, suitably sized blocks for subdivision and quality interface conditions to the external boundaries. These have been integrated within the future development.
52. I consider that the Structure Plan responds to and is consistent with relevant strategic plan and NPS UD outcomes (ie, positive scale for growth opportunities and future direction provided).
53. In my view PC20 enables a regionally significant business park with a unique identity and character provided by the proximity to the airport, the transport connectivity and the proposed layout of the development.
54. There is potential for sufficient on-site amenity to attract a high calibre of industrial activity (eg the Hub and good amenity within streets, cycle lanes, landscaping, etc). I support the inclusion of a variety of ancillary business, open space, retail, and commercial activities.
55. The development is well serviced now and in the future by key transport connections. Within the site, the transport network can be achieved in conjunction with appropriate flexibility in the layout of minor roads and subdivision parcels.
56. The Structure Plan incorporates appropriate development controls (setbacks and landscaping) at key external interfaces. These reduce external effects and will contribute to a quality amenity in the future.
57. Further detail provided through updated design guidelines will help to achieve finer-grained aspects of urban design and built form quality.
58. The proposed Airport Business Zone Structure Plan offers a good balance of certainty over the enabling elements with flexibility and scope to develop the principles of the master plan further, through detailed design and implementation.

59. Overall, I consider that the combined urban design outcomes of the proposal represent a positive response to the site and reflect good design practice.
60. I conclude that PC20 would enable and encourage development that is in accordance with National, Regional and Local plans and policies and fits the definition of quality urban design, as described in the Ministry for the Environment's Urban Design Protocol.

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS RAISED

61. Few submitters raised urban design concerns (as opposed to landscape and visual effects). Hamilton City Council lodged a submission seeking that:

"44. The Airport Northern Precinct extension should aim to attract a complementary range of high-value industrial activities such as logistics, specialised manufacturing, airside and related aeronautical activities to leverage off its locational advantages. To achieve this, it is critical that a strong rule framework is put in place to a) ensure a high-quality amenity industrial environment is created in line with the MSP and b) that non-industrial activities and industrial activities that do not align with providing first and foremost industrial land for industrial activities are discouraged from locating here. The objective for the zone seeks to combine business, industrial, retail and offices. In our view this needs to be refocused."

62. The expanded size of the development will be able to cater for a range of industrial activities including those listed above. In my experience, a high-quality amenity industrial environment is more likely to be created when there is a range of supporting commercial activities (food and beverage, convenience retail, service stations, banks, etc) and amenity space available.

63. The submission also noted that:

"45. We also believe there is a risk associated with the permissive nature of the proposed rule framework that it will lead to a sub-optimal mix of land use activities in a strategic location. Low value industrial activities have a risk over time of driving out or deterring higher value industrial activities to co-locate. We believe the rule framework needs to be significantly strengthened to reflect a new, refocused objective for the Plan Change area."

64. Business Parks of this scale typically achieve, over time, a co-location of compatible activities together within the wider development, guided by a site selection process and supported with design guidelines. This provides value through agglomeration benefits and can reduce the likelihood of complaints between operators regarding noise, vehicle movements, etc, so it is in the best interests of the developer to encourage this. I have noted my opinion previously that the design guidelines and review process, together with the amended Airport Business Zone provisions, will deliver a quality urban environment.

65. The submission also covered retail, which while specifically covered in the economic evidence of Mr Colegrave, has some overlap to urban design and specially ensuring a well functioning urban environment is achieved. The submission was that:

“46. While we are supportive of ancillary retail activity, we believe given the additional 5,000m² of non-terminal retail/commercial services proposed from 5,300m² to 10,300m² and the increased size of the Airport Business zone, that stronger thresholds are required to limit the extent of this relative to the size of the primary activity that could potentially occur across the wider zone.”

66. I support the idea of a compatible activities and options to workers within the Northern Precinct as it will contribute to a higher-amenity development and a more localised travel pattern with greater likelihood for active modes of travel.

RESPONSE TO THE SECTION 42A REPORT

67. I have read the Section 42A report but do not consider that there are any particular aspects that require a response from an urban design perspective.



Samuel Coles
Harrison Grierson

28 February 2023