

5. AWATEA VARIATION

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee on progress and timing of the Awatea Variation (Variation No 49).

BACKGROUND

In issuing its decisions on submissions to the Proposed Plan the Council introduced the Special Purpose (Awatea) zone. The zone is bounded by Awatea, Wigram Halswell Junction and Wilmers Roads and is bisected by the southern arterial designation. The intention of the zone was to signal its general appropriateness for urban development and to outline a number of matters to be considered as part of a new land use pattern to be brought into effect by way of a variation to the Plan. The zoning was to be applied as an interim measure pending consultation and investigation towards a Variation, which would confirm the final zoning pattern, development plan and rules for this area. The zone statement states *that the Council is satisfied that the area should ultimately be urbanised*. The Plan states that the variation should be notified by the 1th October 2001. In the meantime the default zone was to remain Rural 2.

In addition to the above land Variation No 49 now also encompass an area of land bounded by Awatea Road, Wigram Road and the Heathcote River. This piece of land had not been subject to submissions and had remained as a Rural 2 zone surrounded by urban or potentially urban zoned land.

The land as a whole is fragmented into multiple ownership of mainly small rural holdings. The majority of the land is used for rurally oriented purposes, including animal training and grazing, crop and turf production, plant nursery, chicken farming and the Christchurch SPCA. There are some exception to this including industrial activities in McTeigues Road and Wilmers Road and Go Carting and Greyhound Racing on Carrs and McTeigues Road respectively. A large area through the centre of the zone has been subject in dumping and filling over the years.

ISSUES

The Plan identifies a number of matters to be assessed in determining the environmental outcomes for the zone. These were:

- (a) The relocation of the Carrs Road Speedway (a noisy activity) on a basis satisfactory to the Club, the Council and local residents.
- (b) The potential impact of Wigram Airfield operations on part of the zone.
- (c) Acceptable means of addressing the volume and quality of stormwater discharges likely upon development of the zone and effects on the Halswell and Heathcote River catchments.
- (d) Any impacts of likely land uses on unconfined aquifers.
- (e) The identification of important natural values associated with waterways and other water bodies, any sites of significance to Tangata Whenua and opportunities for green corridors and recreation within the zone.
- (f) Identification of an appropriate zoning pattern within the Special Purpose Zone, also recognising the needs of existing activities such as Meadow Mushrooms and the SPCA, and their protection from incompatible activities.
- (g) The establishment of appropriate roading patterns with particular regard to the Southern Arterial.
- (h) The identification and rehabilitation of any contaminated sites of former landfills.
- (i) The development of suitable rules or other methods to ensure that particular areas identified for living, business or recreational purposes achieve a high standard of amenity.

Over the past ten months studies and investigations have been progressing towards addressing the above matters and preparing the Variation. This work has been undertaken in conjunction with a Residents Steering Group set up as part of the consultation process. On going discussions have also been held with Transit NZ regarding the Southern Arterial designation.

The majority of the above matters have now been addressed. A draft zoning pattern has been developed, storm water discharge methods and mitigation measures have been addressed, land for open space identified, provision made for existing activities and the detailed plan provisions are currently being prepared. However, the resolution of matters (a) Carrs Road Speedway and (b) Wigram Airfield remain outstanding.

CARRS ROAD SPEEDWAY

A prerequisite of urbanising the Awatea block is the removal of the Carrs Road Speedway. While it has been established for a number of years, the speedway is a relatively noisy activity, which is now close to a number of residences. The Council has been investigating the removal of the speedway to another location beside Ruapuna, but to date these investigations have not reached a stage where there is a final commitment to the relocation.

It is considered inappropriate to zone land surrounding the speedway for residential purposes until there is a definite commitment to its removal. This unfortunately has a knock-on effect for development of much of the area as servicing of the new zone would take place from Wigram Road.

It is also of note that the special noise provisions in the City Plan for the speedway are subject to references to the Environment Court by local residents.

WIGRAM AIRFIELD

The City Plan contains noise contours and associated rules relating to aircraft utilising the former Wigram Airbase and the development of noise sensitive uses within those contours. The outer 50dba Ldn contour affects a significant proportion of the Awatea block. Policy 6.3.17 makes specific reference to discouraging residential development from being located within the 50dba Ldn contour. It would not therefore be appropriate for the Council to initiate a variation for the Awatea area allowing living zones while the contours remain in their current format. Again these provisions are subject to references to the Environment Court by local residents.

One possible solution could be to revise the contours to better reflect the current usage of the airfield. The original contours were based on upwards of 70,000 take offs and landings per annum, which reflected the possible future development of airfield operations and related activities. This is now very unlikely to occur and the land owner Ngai Tahu has signalled their intention to develop the airfield for residential purposes in the future. Current take-offs and landings are approximately 7,500-9000 per annum. Noise contour projections using these figures would have only a minor impact on the Awatea block in the area of Owaka Road. A variation (or possibly a consent order) could be prepared showing new contours based on these revised flight numbers.

TIMING OF THE VARIATION

Up until now progress on the variation has been working towards notification on 1 October this year as indicated in the zone statement. Because the above matters are yet to be resolved it has become clear that notification on that date is no longer achievable. Legal advice on the implications of the wording in the Plan and not meeting the 1 October date have been sought from John Hardie, Barrister (see attachment). In short, Mr Hardie has indicated that in his opinion the wording in the Plan does not impose a definitive time limit upon the Council to have the variation promulgated, although he has no doubt that there is a good faith obligation to move towards it.

Recommendation: That the Committee acknowledge that the 1 October date will not be met and that work continue on preparing the Awatea variation (Variation No 49) so that it may be ready for notification upon the matters relating to the Carrs Road Speedway and Wigram Airfield being satisfactorily resolved.

Chairman's

Recommendation:

1. That the information be received.
2. That the above recommendation be adopted.