

6. AWATEA VARIATION - PROGRESS REPORT

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The purpose of this report is to advise the Council on progress with a variation to rezone the Awatea block, in accordance with a resolution of the Committee on 6 October 2003.

DISCUSSION

The City Plan Team Leader (David Mountfort), prepared a comprehensive report to the Committee on 6 October 2003 outlining the level of progress which had been made to the nine matters, which require resolution before a recommendation to rezoning of the Awatea block can be made. This report will only discuss those matters of the nine (Appendix 1, attached), which have been progressed since 6 October 2003, or the situation surrounding their possible resolution has changed.

Matter:

- (a) The relocation of the Carrs Road Raceway (a noisy activity) on a basis satisfactory to the Club, the Council and local residents.

In September 2001, the Council deferred further consideration of the relocation of the Raceway, until such time as a meeting between the Committee and Riccarton/Wigram Community Board had been held to consider issues relating to the Awatea Variation. As noted in an earlier report, this has created a rather circular situation as the relocation was supposed to be arranged first.

Recent concept plans for Awatea propose that the majority of the area would be zoned Business 4 or a variant of that, which would be less sensitive to noise from the Raceway. While this appears to be a satisfactory zoning solution to the Raceway's continued location within the Awatea block, Council staff are still concerned that this would not be the best outcome and that the relocation of the Kart Club should still be pursued. The reasoning being, that noise generated from the raceway is still likely to be an issue for the residents of Westlake. Furthermore, if the area was urbanised further, even for business purposes, it is possible that the pressure to limit the use of the raceway and reduce noise levels, will increase.

A better environmental outcome would be the establishment of residential housing adjacent to Westlake and business activity concentrated towards the SPCA and Meadow Mushrooms end of the block.

A further matter to consider is whether the establishment of business or industrial activities around the raceway will find support from Environment Canterbury (ECan). As the earlier report discussed ECan is in the final stages of preparing its Natural Resources Regional Plan (NRRP) which will deal with the issue of groundwater quality. Draft objectives and policies of the NRRP seek to avoid the establishment of land use activities that pose a significant risk to groundwater quality, over the unconfined aquifer. ECan may not support industrial zoning of the Awatea block.

ECan staff have agreed to meet to discuss the issue of groundwater quality and the rezoning of the Awatea block. In particular, discussion will include the possibility of allowing some business development within the block but restricting the storage and use of hazardous substances to levels more consistent with rural and living zone standards, and/or limiting the types of activities to dry industrial. If ECan are unwilling to accept some form of business zoning, the option to rezone the larger part of the block for residential purposes may need to be pursued (ie requiring the relocation of the Kart Club).

For these reasons, Council staff are soon to meet with the Kart Club to discuss their future and whether their relocation would best serve their, the local community and the Council's long term plans. Council staff are also investigating the feasibility of relocating the Kart Club to four alternative sites. It is hoped to progress this matter over the next two months and will report back to this should significant progress be made.

- (b) The potential impact of Wigram Airfield operations on part of the zone.

The noise contours for the Wigram Airbase have been remodelled. Staff are currently at the stage of reviewing the amended contours, determining what changes can be made in terms of the City Plan provisions and within the scope of Ngai Tahu's reference. In effect the noise contours have been significantly reduced (the 50dBA and 55dBA contours no longer extend into the Awatea block).

Should a settlement agreement be reached between the Council and the referrer, a report to the City Plan References Subcommittee must be prepared by mid February 2004. Should agreement not be able to be reached, the Council will be required to prepare evidence to defend the existing contours (or a revised version) by the 30 April 2004.

- (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.

As part of the South-West Christchurch Area Plan (SWAP), a surface water management scheme is being developed. This scheme will ensure development (existing and future) located within the Halswell and Heathcote catchments, effectively and efficiently controls stormwater runoff and where possible, enhances the natural environment.

The greater part of the Awatea block is located within the Halswell catchment. The Awatea block is only a small part of this catchment and as such, its development for urban purposes may be considered to have a minor effect on the functioning of the catchment. However, careful consideration must be given to the cumulative effect of developing this area in conjunction with what other development and uses are occurring in the catchment (eg the change from pasture land to horticultural uses).

While a floodplain management strategy has been prepared for the Heathcote catchment (by the City Council in association with ECan), a management strategy has not been prepared for the Halswell catchment. ECan has no immediate plans to develop a strategy for the Halswell catchment and consequently, the City Council must carry out such work necessary to provide a solution to controlling the effects of further development within the catchment (ie Awatea).

The Awatea Residents Association has proposed a concept for stormwater management that is based on the total storm detention approach. While this may be an acceptable method of dealing with stormwater, it requires large spaces to be retained for stormwater purposes. Thus it may not provide stormwater retention basins in the most appropriate locations or be the most efficient and sustainable option.

As part of the scheme for the SWAP, Council staff will determine the most efficient and sustainable options for stormwater management. For example, a preferred option may be not to retain stormwater within the block but channel it to another area, which may have more ecological benefits (ie channelling water to a currently dry area which once was a nesting area for birds). In this instance, smaller areas for stormwater retention will be required within the block, enabling a greater proportion of the block to be developed for other purposes. If the Awatea block is dealt with in isolation, opportunities may be lost to satisfy more than the one value of stormwater management. What the Association is proposing may be acceptable for the current landowners purposes, but not for the system as a whole.

The more pertinent questions are certainly, when will the whole catchment scheme be created and what work is needed to be carried out to create it. In terms of the Heathcote Catchment, greater detail is still required about the natural environment (ie land and hydrology), to be certain of the effect current and future development is having, and will have, on the existing system (ie floodplain areas and waterways). Less is known about the Halswell Catchment. Staff will improve their understanding of this catchment through the following:

- Contour mapping - existing contour maps are incomplete and in some areas are inaccurate. An aerial laser scan has been carried out and this information should soon be in a useable form. The contour information will indicate where the catchment (and sub catchment) boundaries are, the way the water will flow, and suitable areas for ponding, detention etc, and what work (eg land acquisition, earthworks, mitigation) will be required to adequately and efficiently control stormwater.

- Modelling - inlet hydrographs are needed to be developed to understand stormwater flows at certain locations within the duration of a storm. Once these have been developed the modelling programme will analyse the flows, calculating the total hydrograph at selected locations within the system. The model can then be used to trial options for stormwater management. However, to carry out this modelling, a significant amount of physical data is required. This includes the nature of groundwater and surface water resources, base flows and spring flows, absorption capacity and water quality management issues.

A number of groundwater investigations are currently being undertaken as part of the SWAP to provide this base data. Further studies and investigations are known to be required once this base information is obtained and analysed. The target date for developing the Southwest scheme is August 2004. The Awatea concept plan and the preferred option for stormwater management will then be known.

- (d) Any impacts of likely land uses on unconfined aquifers.

The NRRP is expected to be notified in March/April 2004. As already noted, Council staff in the next week(s) hope to progress this issue further with ECan and gain an understanding of how strongly they are likely to oppose business/industrial development in this area.

- (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.

An assessment of the significance of the Awatea land in terms of Maori and European heritage is being carried out as part of the cultural assessment for the South-West Area Plan (SWAP). Draft briefs to carry out these assessments have been prepared (in consultation with NZHPT and NZAA) and are currently being reviewed. It is hoped that consultants to undertake these assessments will be engaged in the next week(s) and the assessments completed by April 2004.

As part of the SWAP, consultation with the Tuahuriri runanga, Taumutu runanga and the Te Waihora Management Board, will begin in mid February 2004. It is intended that the proposal to rezone the Awatea block will be discussed as part of this consultation.

- (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.

It is difficult to confirm any zoning pattern until more is known about ECan's position on business zoning and the possibility of relocating the Carrs Road raceway.

- (g) The establishment of appropriate roading patterns with particular regard to the Southern Arterial.

Over the next months, work will be progressed on the Awatea concept plan in regard to roading linkages, and public transport. There is no progress yet on the possibility of constructing the Southern Arterial sooner than 2012, although recent funding announcements by the Government may assist. The Arterial is necessary to provide sufficient roading capacity before the Awatea development can proceed.

- (h) The identification and rehabilitation of any contaminated sites or former landfills.

Pattle Delamore and partners have been engaged to carry out an assessment of contaminated land within the Awatea block and its potential effect on urban development of this area. This assessment will be completed in late February 2004. The primary purpose of this assessment is to:

- Identify sites where potential contamination has or may have occurred.
- Identify the potential environmental, health and safety risks arising from contaminated land.

- To understand what the outcomes of the investigations mean in the context of urban development potential within the study areas.
- To develop, if considered necessary and appropriate, subdivision and development standards that identify the need for further investigation of potentially contaminated land prior to land development, and/or control the use and development of contaminated sites.

Essentially this assessment is a preliminary or desktop site study, from which the nature of contamination will be known and whether further investigation is required to better identify the extent and nature of contamination. If further more comprehensive studies are deemed necessary, the key issue will be who is to pay for these investigations (it is noted a detailed site investigation can cost between \$50,000 - \$100,000).

- (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.

Draft rules have been prepared and will be further progressed once other issues are resolved.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, over the next months it is hoped significant progress on the Awatea variation can be made. One of the key obstacles is to confirm what is the most suitable and acceptable land use option for this block. Until this is known (ie ECan's position and whether the raceway can be relocated), it is difficult to confirm the zoning pattern, a surface water management scheme, greenspace network, rules and mitigation measures.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Awatea Variation continue to be deferred pending the development of the south-west Christchurch Area Plan, the resolution of the nine assessment matters stated in the City Plan, and the public notification of the Environment Canterbury's Natural Resources Regional Plan (NRRP).
 2. That officers prepare a further report advising of progress to the Regulatory and Consents Committee in the month following the public notification of Environment Canterbury's National Resources Regional Plan.