

Verbal Submission to Hearing 12 Country Living Zone

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Submission No 408.1

- The operative minimum lot size requirement of 5,000m² has existed for quite a while and needs to take account of change.
- Changing this to 4,000m² would enable the supply of sections in the Country Living Zone to transition to a slightly higher density housing.
- Reduces the likelihood of a pressure point.

This is a small INCREMENTAL change to start us on a CONTROLLED path to the future. Provides a signal, very consistent with a “*transition zone between the urban zones and the Rural Zone*”.

Topic 5: Subdivision [Source: Chibnall, S., s42a Report, Waikato District Council, 3 March 2020]

515 “The subdivision provisions for the Country Living Zone are the key mechanism for controlling the creation of new lots and the character of the zone. The intent and purpose of the Country Living Zone is somewhat of a transition zone between the urban zones and the Rural Zone. The minimum lot size of 5,000m² is intended to provide rural-residential living opportunities that are large enough to be self-serviced in terms of water supply, wastewater and stormwater.” **[Blue is my emphasis]**

Declaration of Interest

I am one of two Trustee owners of 49 Poplar Lane which is 9,033m² in area and could therefore possibly benefit from a reduction of the subdivisible land allotment size to 4,000m² (assuming many other requirements were met).

Presentation Objective

To convince the Commissioners to investigate further before a decision is taken to accept the Section 42a report recommendation to maintain 5,000m² as the minimum allotment size in the Country Living Zone (CLZ).

I submit that this very important issue has not had adequate investigation and as recommended, is in conflict with WDC's, the region's and New Zealand's policies to relieve the population pressures from growing urban centres and facilitate orderly planned development.

I also submit that by decreasing the allotment size to 4,000m² (ie by 20%) this represents highly appropriate strategy to balance the issues raised by WDC and all submitters on this point.

Hamilton City Council (HCC) “Objection”

“HCC opposes the relief sought to reduce lot sizes within the CLZ. Reducing the subdivision lot size will result in increased densities of subdivision near to Hamilton’s boundaries and is likely to result in impacts upon infrastructure within Hamilton, namely transport, 3 waters and social infrastructure. Such development could also detract from growth in towns and other identified locations for growth”

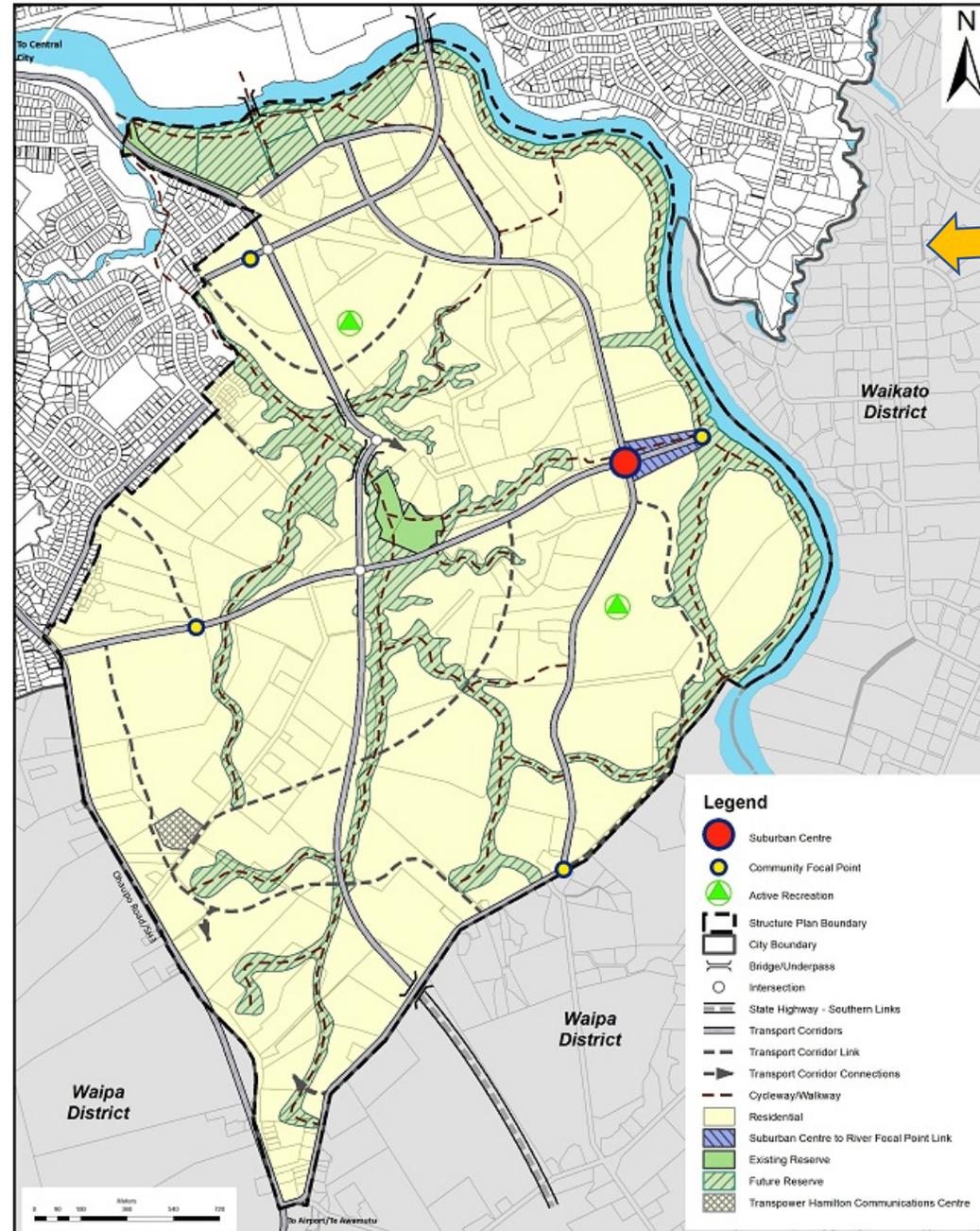
BUT:

1. This is a cut-and-paste response that does not acknowledge HCC’s desperate need to intensify its land use and transport in response to well publicised population growth. Two examples: Peacockes Development and both HCC’s and NZTA’s current and visible heavy investment in the transport network.
2. Reducing 5,000 to 4,000 m² will have no impact on ability to install septic tanks for wastewater, and very little impact on CLZ water supply as its mostly on trickle supply already (needing its own pumped water storage)
3. Stormwater is also very unlikely to be affected by 1,000 m² reduction in allotment size
4. Publicised policies and development by WDC and HCC have identified intensification beside and within the Tamahere CLZ (see diagram next page showing Tamahere Village, and Peacockes development). Tamahere has been identified as a growth area by WDC. So HCC objections based both on undesirable impacts on “social infrastructure” and detracting “from growth in towns and other identified locations for growth” are clearly incorrect.

“Peacocke is where the Council will be investing more than \$290m into as part of our 10-Year Plan, to create an area for homes for Hamiltonians over the next five, 10, 20 and even 30 years. Resource consents are the first major stage of the development process, particularly of this size.”

[HCC Website](#)

“Hamilton City Council has received subdivision and land use consents for 862 houses within 105ha between Peacockes Rd and the Waikato River in Peacocke, called Amberfield” [HCC Website](#)



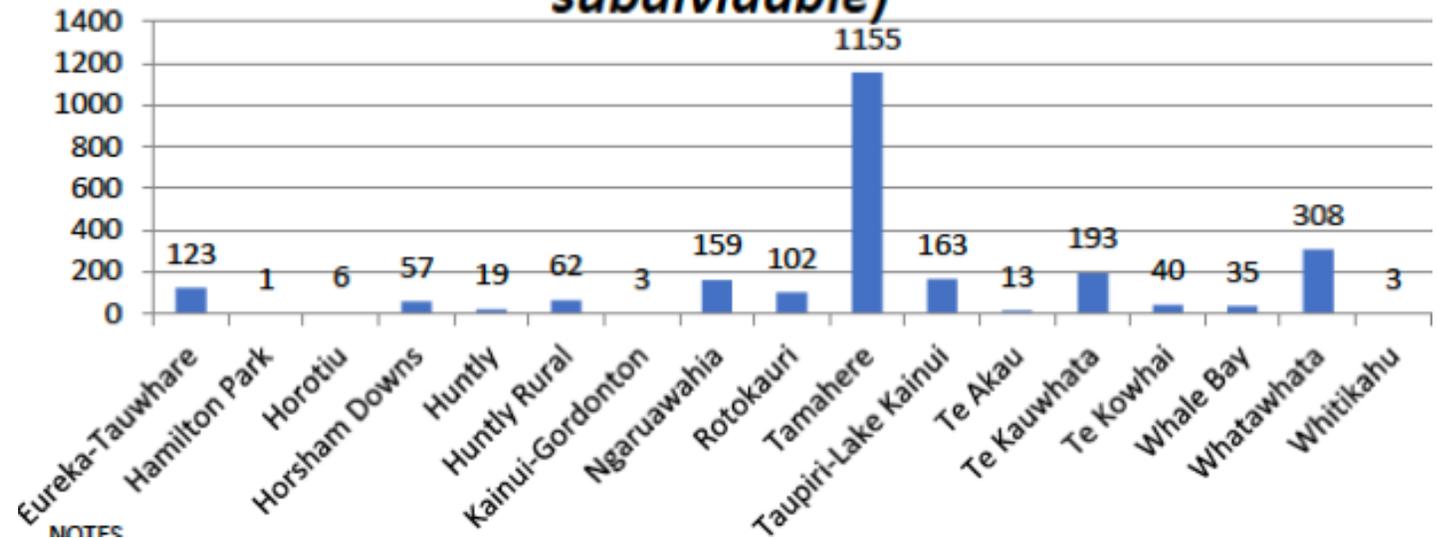
WDC Tamahere CLZ Country Living Zone

Tamahere Village about here

WDC reasons for discounting Tamahere

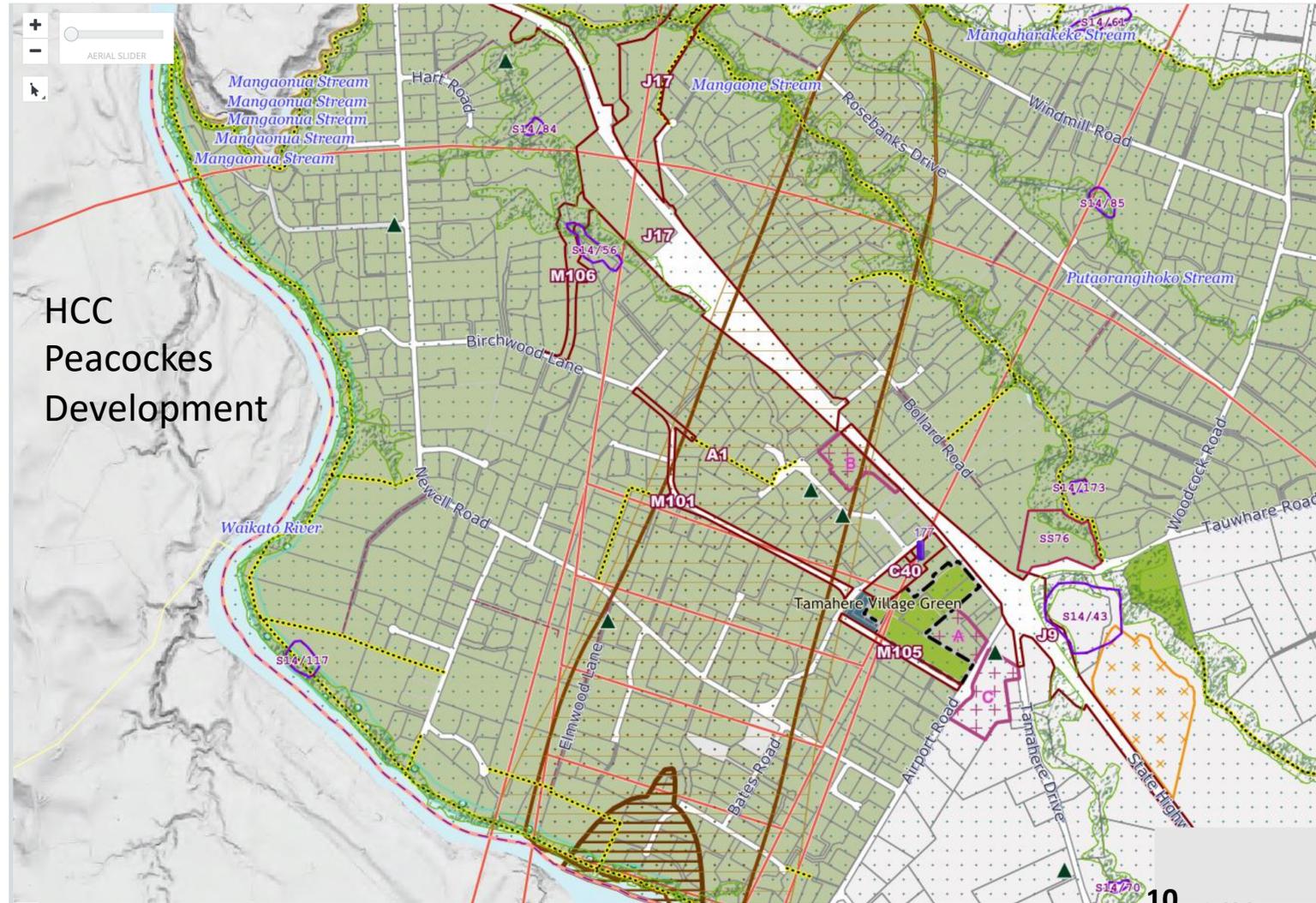
“Figure 18 below [alongside] illustrates the distribution of existing titles across the Waikato district in the Country Living Zone. The total number of existing titles is 2442, which includes a total of 1155 in Tamahere alone [47%]. (Note I have split the calculations for Tamahere separately due to the larger average lot size within the Airport Subdivision Control Boundary.) [But there appear to be only about 130 lots in that controlled area! See next slide] If the titles for Tamahere are excluded, there is a total of 1287 titles across the rest of the district.”

Number of titles zoned Country Living, by town, as at ~August 2019 (which are subdividable)



WDC reasons for discounting Tamahere - 2

“Figure 18 below [alongside] illustrates the distribution of existing titles across the Waikato district in the Country Living Zone. The total number of existing titles is 2442, which includes a total of 1155 in Tamahere alone [47%]. (Note I have split the calculations for Tamahere separately due to the larger average lot size within the Airport Subdivision Control Boundary.) **[But there are only about 130 lots in that controlled area within purple boundary]** If the titles for Tamahere are excluded, there is a total of 1287 titles across the rest of the district.”



Tamahere Community Committee “Objection”

“No Reason Provided”

Or possibly:

With 47% of the subdivisible CLZ land, any decrease in allotment size would certainly increase land availability and depress either land prices or their rate of increase?

WDC Analysis (Chibnal, S.)

534 “... In order to retain the character and integrity of the Country Living Zone and prevent the zones from being a sliding scale with no discernible difference between them, I recommend that these submission points be rejected. I consider it important to retain the integrity and purpose of each zone, and one of the key mechanisms to achieve this is controlling the lot size (and in doing so, maintain the density and a more rural form of development) [my emphasis in blue]. ...”

WDC Analysis (Chibnal, S.)

- 535 “... (a) Subdivision, building and development within the Country Living Zone ensures that:
 - (i) The creation of undersized lots is avoided where character and amenity are compromised;
 - ...
 - (v) Character and amenity is not compromised. ”

Rebuttals - 1

1. “**Maintaining density**” is precisely what WDC should NOT be doing for CLZ. There is urban pressure on the abutting land to accommodate more people which has received much policy support and financial investment by HCC and WDC (as above, and NZ wide). **This is Policy conflict at a high level and CLZ is therefore not serving as a “transition” but instead as a “barrier” between Urban and Rural Zones.**
2. A modest Intensification of Country Living Zones will assist WDC to fulfill its other obligation to preserve areas of rich soils for agricultural/horticultural use in Rural Zones.
3. WDC’s section 42a report indicates no submissions provided evidence of the impact of reducing allotment size on the “character of country living”, but neither did WDC provide evidence for its recommended rejection other than the author’s “opinion”. There is no survey or other evidence of land use impact or character of country living provided. **Minimum allotment size is a strategic control mechanism and this important decision should be based on knowledge and verifiable data.**
4. WDC interest in preserving the “**character of country living**” ignores the fact that a large proportion of CLZ development is already in the character of large “urban lots” and the market shows that is what people want. A drive around Tamahere will confirm this. Very few have animals or horticulture on 5,000 m² and most are simply mowed. More evidence is required of what it is that needs to be preserved in the “**character of country living**”. **Subjective characterisations are not enough to determine such an important parameter.**

Rebuttals - 2

5. Any farmer will tell you that small paddocks are unsuitable for some animals (eg cows and horses) because they are herd animals that need company.
6. Its in WDC's financial interest to modestly intensify CLZ as these areas attract high net worth individuals who contribute strongly to the WDC's limited ratepayer base (~33,000 for a very large area) with much less infrastructure investment than urban areas. This is effectively an economic development opportunity going begging.
7. The s42a report suggests that "Based on the analysis above, it is my opinion that the minimum lot size of 5,000m² should be retained, to ensure that the potential lot yield does not result in title sizes similar to the proposed Village Zone."

BUT:

- The Village Zone is 3,000m² operant, \$2,500m² proposed, so they are substantially less than CLZ and the conditions attached to the Village Zone are long and appear very different to CLZ.
- The academic sounding "potential lot yield" number is likely to have far less strategic impact than: the abatement of population pressures; reducing pressures to subdivide rural land; and enhancement of economic development.

Conclusion

I believe there needs to be further investigation to clarify and compare the consequences of retaining the status quo 5,000m² allotment size against the other options of decreasing it, including to 4,000m², with greater emphasis on the same strategic drivers that have driven HCC and WDC to invest in other areas including Peacockes, Tamahere Village and the HCC and NZTA transport networks. Where “character and integrity of the Country Living Zone” is used to count against those strategic drivers, more quantifiable data and knowledge needs to be provided to ensure that it is more than opinion.

Godfrey Bridger, ME, MBA, 7 April 2019