

Submission: Curtis Street Rezoning (DPC77)

Submission from:

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I wish to state that I would not gain an advantage in trade competition from this submission.

I wish to speak in support of this submission.

Ecological Assessment

The Kaiwharawhara Stream passes under the proposed site for rezoning via a culvert. This water course has been the subject of much restoration input from the wider community yet still exhibits severe pollution at its culvert discharge point immediately north of Ian Galloway Park. Any development work, especially foundations, for commercial buildings on a rezoned site risks potential leakage into the culvert, thus increasing the level of pollution. All the work on creating an ecological corridor from Zealandia, through Wilton's Bush and the Kaiwharawhara Valley could thus be undermined by a further lowering of the stream's water quality.

Further restoration of the Kaiwharawhara Stream could be enhanced if the culvert is relined along its entire length to prevent seepage of contaminants. The rezoning proposal could well prevent such work from ever occurring.

The site proposed for rezoning is a former council works depot on the edge of a former Bradford rubbish tip. As such the ground involved can be expected to contain contamination for many years to come, if not indefinitely. Any disturbance through development is likely to result in exposure of the wider environment to these contaminants.

Economic Assessment

Existing businesses in Karori over the past three decades have shown a tendency to fail for a variety of reasons, including lack of patronage. A notable example was a long-established hardware store. A larger hardware business at nearby Crofton Downs also suffered

commercial failure and was subject to a staff buyout. There does not appear to be sufficient demand for increased retail/business operations in the general vicinity of the site proposed for rezoning.

It is widely known in the Wellington commercial community that it is extremely difficult to establish and maintain a retail business in Karori or the general vicinity. Residents of the suburb tend to shop elsewhere, apart from essentials such as food. This preference is unlikely to change with commercial development on a rezoned site.

Transport Assessment

None of the assessments of the impact of increased vehicular traffic resulting from the proposed rezoning and development supplied to this submitter to date give any indication of the accident record for the area. I would like to record that I have personally witnessed one accident involving a heavy vehicle using Whitehead Road, adjacent to the proposed rezoning site. An articulated truck which services both Karori supermarkets had been forced over the centreline because of its length, while negotiating a corner. A car travelling uphill in the opposite lane had become wedged under the truck, fortunately without injuring its driver. This is exactly the type of accident which could be expected to occur more frequently if the area is rezoned. At least three of the roads in the immediate vicinity of the rezoning site (Curtis Street, Whitehead Road and Creswick Terrace) are narrow, steep or have tight corners at certain junctures. These roads are simply unsuitable for heavy vehicles likely to service commercial premises on a rezoned site.

The northern end of Creswick Terrace which meets Curtis Street immediately adjacent to the site proposed for rezoning is extremely steep and narrow. Already it is used as a shortcut by Karori residents returning home during peak hours. As a resident of Creswick Terrace for 23 years I can personally testify over the problems caused by vehicles trying to negotiate this street, especially in those stretches where residents' cars are parked. Any promotions by commercial operators on a rezoned site are bound to attract increase patronage during peak business times like Saturday morning. With overflow parking extending to Creswick Terrace for these potential patrons, gridlock could easily occur, frustrating access for both residents and emergency vehicles. The area is already subject to increased traffic and parking at the weekends as a result of sporting activities at Ian Galloway Park.

The intersection of Chaytor and Curtis Streets is problematic at peak times, particularly for vehicles making a righthand turn from Chaytor into Curtis Street in the face of heavy traffic flows from Karori. The carriageway immediately after this turn is narrow and parked vehicles often restrict the road to one lane. Once again this situation means that increased traffic in the area could result in a gridlock situation and increased dangers for both drivers and pedestrians.

The following decision from council is sought:

1. To give effect to Council's existing plan for this valley for the site to be within Council controlled open space to enhance the ecological corridor as indicated in future initiatives of the Wellington outer green belt management plan May 2004; and that
2. The permissible development on the site be changed accordingly with lower thresholds for footprints for retail, commercial and all buildings along with signage, earthworks, noise and lighting.
3. That consideration be given to extending the Zealandia concept by council reacquiring, with philanthropic support, the land proposed for rezoning, in order to establish a sanctuary for Wellington reptiles (geckos and skinks). Council has recently expressed an interest in recording existing populations of these animals in its area to identify and arrest any decline in their numbers. Such a project would require minimum alteration to the existing site and could be achieved at a low cost to ratepayers. Parking and facilities for such a nationally significant visitor attraction could draw on existing Zealandia resources such as the shuttle bus service.

Signed

R.A. Bryant 11 March, 2013