



MT HOBSON GROUP

Town Planning & Resource Consent Solutions

9 August 2024

Whangarei District Council
Attention: Alister Hartstone and Katie Martin
Set Consulting Ltd

By email: alister@setconsulting.co.nz
Katie.Martin@wdc.govt.nz

RE: SL2300006 Vaco Investments (Waipu Project) Ltd

Further to Direction#5 of the Hearings Panel, please find attached a revised application by Vaco Investments (Waipu Project) Ltd in respect of the 47 Millbrook Road, Waipu site.

In making these changes, we have been mindful of the Council and communities emphasis placed on the importance of the Rural Production Zone, and its aim to protect, sustain and promote rural production activities and those that support rural communities, but also wish to realize the importance of the SH1 corridor in this context, particularly as an important piece of Northland infrastructure.

To that end, the applicant has sought to amend their proposal to solely provide a service centre for the travelling public, and a rural service centre for the wider rural community of Waipu and surrounding townships in line with the express purpose and objectives of the Rural Production Zone (RPROZ-O2). Our economic analysis has also highlighted that lack of available light industrial and commercial land for a rural service styled centre in this location, that will support rural communities in and around the Waipu area, and considers this site ideally located for such an entity.

We have also listened to many of the concerns raised by submitters and Council officers in regard to some of the commercial activities that were previously proposed. As such all references to retail activities and services more akin to an urban commercial hub (such as food retail stores, childcare centres, dance fitness studios) have been removed from the application, and the focus on rural supply and services, as well as bulk storage, warehousing and specialist vehicle and machinery sales and service activities has been made. These activities are more appropriately located in a site such as this, both being accessible and convenient to the rural communities that they support as well as being conveniently located to the main transport and freighting infrastructure of SH1.

The applicant is cognizant of the need to make upgrades to SH1, both in order to improve the current traffic management situation in and around the wider location, but also in order to realize this proposal. They have been actively engaging with NZTA as part of this process to refine the proposal in terms of traffic volumes, design of a roundabout and modeling data. In reaching this position, the applicant took the advice of NZTA to amend their initial proposal and provide a roundabout rather than a seagull arrangement to ensure safe access to the site. The applicant is committed to roundabout installation which will assist in the efficient and safer functioning of the roading network in this location.

We have included further specialist evidence on the financial viability of the 47 Millbrook Road site for rural production (highest and best use) and provided expert opinion regarding the ability of the proposal to meet the statutory exemption tests of the NPS-HPL. Whilst the need for a subdivision of



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the underlying land and subsequent lots still remains, and with it non-complying activity status, the type of activities proposed and the absence of residential development means that in our view the proposal is not contrary to the express purpose of the Whangarei District Plan's provisions, as it will not erode the viability of rural productivity by allowing urban and residential development that does not support rural production. On the flip side of this, the applicant has a number of signed leases confirming occupancies, significantly BP. The projected economic benefits discussed by Mr Thompson show a significant benefit to the Northland, and more specifically the Waipu economy as a result of the proposal.

We have also included further specialist landscape and visual assessment of Mr Knott, who has reviewed the commentary of Council's Landscape Architect Mr Kensington as part of the S42A report. To that end, the applicant has reduced the number of illuminated totem pole signage along the SH1 boundary, and would be happy to explore ways in which additional planting could be used to screen the development from view to address Mr Kensington's comments regarding the effects on rural character, bearing in mind both the likely changes to the context of this location with the proposed changes to SH1 and the change to rural supporting land uses, now proposed.

Accordingly, the key changes to the revised application and supporting documentation have been set out below.

(a) **Limitation of activities to those that support rural production activities and rural communities.**

Having considered the submissions received and the S42A report prepared by Council officers that applicant has reconsidered the mix of proposed activities provided on the site and seeks to limit these to only those commercial and industrial activities provided for in the Rural Production Zone (RPROZ) *"that have a direct connection with the rural resource and supports rural production activities and/or rural communities, including recreation and tourist based activities"* as per Policy 1 of RPROZ-P2.

All references to food retail and general commercial activity have been removed other than the 2xQSR and 2x Café or general food outlet proposed in Buildings 11, 12, 22 and 23 in Stage 1.

The range of land use activities now provided for include:

Stage 1 Activities

- Petrol station and truck stop service centre (in Buildings 1-9)
- 2 x QSR (fast food outlet in Buildings 11 and 22)
- 2 x Café or general food outlet (Building 12 and 23)

Stage 2 Activities

- Rural services and supplies, warehousing, marine or vehicle sales and service (Buildings 13,14,16,18,19-20A, 21,24, 25, 28 and 30)
- Farming agricultural supplies (Building 25)
- Marine and vehicle sales and service (Building 30)

The term rural services and supplies has not been defined in the WDP (or RPROZ), however the applicant intends that this includes commercial activities that support businesses that have a functional need to service and supply rural businesses and households or location based recreation or tourist activity. The types of business that this would allow for include for



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example PGG Wrightson's, Farmlands, Hunting and Fishing, Burnsco and RD1. This definition does not include general retail stores such as The Warehouse, Kmart or supermarkets.

The term marine and vehicle sales and service include business that supply the rural industries and include rural machinery sales and servicing including implements, 4x4s, tractors as well as marine vehicles. This definition would not include a general car sales yard.

(b) Changes to the Architectural Plans

As a result of the proposed changes to the land use aspect of the application, the applicant has taken the opportunity to more clearly define the two stages of the development on the Architectural Plan set. The size and layout of buildings on the site largely stays the same, although free standing and illuminated Signs 2 and 3 have been removed from the proposal in response to comments by Council's Landscape Specialist and submitters. The revised Architectural Plans are attached as **Appendix 2** to the AEE.

(c) Resultant changes to Traffic Impact Assessment and Appendices

As a result in the limitation of land uses on the site, the traffic modelling (including trip generation) undertaken by TPC Ltd has also been updated to reflect the range of land uses proposed on the site. TPC's updated Traffic Impact Assessment and supporting Appendices have also been updated and are attached as revised **Appendix 6** to the AEE. TPC Ltd have also been involved in further engagement with NZTA to further address the areas of disagreement in regard to the traffic modelling and further define the details of the proposed roundabout. This information is also captured in the revised TPC report and attached appendices.

(d) Revised Economic Effects Assessment

As a result of the changes of land use on the site, the Economic Effects Assessment has also been updated to reflect the rural support commercial and light industrial activities proposed on the site. The updated Economic Effects Assessment is attached as **Appendix 10** to this AEE.

(e) Revised Landscape and Visual Assessment

Richard Knott has taken the opportunity to review and comment on the Visual and Landscape Assessment in light of the Council's Landscape Architects comments expressed in his memorandum and repeated within the S42A report, as well as the recent government announcement regarding the fast tracking of a four lane SH1. Mr Knotts revised Landscape and Visual Assessment is attached to this AEE as **Appendix 18**.

(f) Assessment of NPS-Highly Productive Land

The applicant has taken the opportunity to obtain further specialist advise in respect of the whether the proposed development meets the criteria of Policy 3.10 of the NPS-HPL for exemption. Stuart Ford of the AgriBusiness Group has prepared a report addressing this matter which is attached as **Appendix 20** to the AEE. Ian Hanmore has also revised his report in light of the further specialist opinion. His revised report is attached as **Appendix 14** to this AEE.

(g) Changes to the Scheme Plan

As a result of the changes proposed the Scheme Plans have been updated and attached as **Appendix 12** to the AEE.

(h) Draft consent conditions



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A suite of draft consent conditions for the land use and discharge activities have also been prepared and attached as Appendix 20 the AEE, as the detail provided assists in greater understanding how the activities and development will be managed on site both during construction and operation.

As a result the AEE for the application has also been revised to reflect the changes to the proposal, and is attached to this letter.

Yours faithfully

Keren McDonnell
Mt Hobson Group

Appendices:

Revised AEE_Waipu Gateway_47 Millbrook Road, Waipu_090824
Appendix 2: Revised Architectural Drawings (Date)
Appendix 6: Revised Traffic Impact Assessment and Appendices
Appendix 10: Revised Economic Assessment
Appendix 12: Revised Scheme Plans
Appendix 18: Revised Landscape and Visual Assessment
Appendix 20: Assessment of NPS-HPL Land Requirements
Appendix 21: Draft LUC and DIS consent conditions