

# Proposed District Plan Variation 1

## Oral submission to hearing panel on Pukerua Bay Structure Plan from Pukerua Bay Residents Association

21 March 2023

*Provided to PCC and Panel in support of our oral submission.*

We would like to respond in opening to Simon Barber's suggestion that a path could be build on the paper road between the wetland and Grey Street. We think that would be too difficult because the slopes are too steep, and it could have a negative impact on the wetland and Waimapihi Stream.

We want to thank the PCC planners for the way they have engaged with us so far. The exercise we went through with a large community meeting to look at the structure plan generated a lot of feedback from people, much of what has been included in the final draft.

We like things like the protection of wetlands and the connections between new areas and existing public transport. There are some good things in this, and some of them were the result of what residents said they wanted to see.

Want to address two main issues:

- Climate change response principles in the district plan
- Kāinga Ora's proposal for a high density residential zone in Pukerua Bay.

First, some background about our organisation.

The Pukerua Bay Residents Association dates back to its formation in 1926, and its most recent incarnation and constitution dates from 2003. Under our constitution, one of our objects is to 'protect and promote the residential, social, recreational, educational and environmental amenities of the Pukerua Bay area for the benefit of both residents and visitors'.

One of the most important pieces of work we do is developing and maintaining our Village Plan. We were one of the first groups to develop one and last year completed our third plan. We strongly support the concept of village planning as a way for communities to identify their vision and shared values, and work towards enhancing them.

During the development of the village plan, we held workshops, and a focus group, and surveyed the community to get their views on a number of issues, including housing and development, and climate change.

The **themes on housing** from our consultation were:

- Residents identify the biggest issues as availability and affordability
- There is some support for infill housing and intensification
- There is strong opposition to urban sprawl or high-rise buildings

- They want good, eco-friendly design.

We aren't anti-development, but we don't want a continued dominance of the traditional three- or four-bedroom family home on a separate section. There needs to be more variety for people at different stages of life. And all development must be environmentally friendly.

## Climate change

There were a number of **themes on climate change**, and the most relevant to this discussion is:

- Ensure climate change is factored into all thinking and decision making.

Bearing in mind the shortcomings of consultation, we think we have a good sense of what is important to the people in Pukerua Bay, and it informs our view on developments.

When we made our original submission on the District Plan variation for the Northern Growth Development Area, including Pukerua Bay, we proposed that it include a specific section in the introductory principles to address climate change and community resilience.

We know climate change is one of the most significant issue facing the world now, and housing, transport and infrastructure are key elements in responding to it, and preparing for it getting worse.

PCC has a climate change strategy and our community has an active climate change group that is energising local action in Pukerua Bay.

*[Moirā Lawler to talk about local group's findings and what it tells us about planning for new housing.]*

The report provided to you by Rory Smeaton from PCC on the various submissions recommended that you reject our proposal to make climate change mitigation explicit in the district plan on the grounds that it was already sufficiently addressed in other parts of the Proposed District Plan. Mentions of climate change throughout the PDP seem to be in the context of hazards and infrastructure. Of course, climate change is mentioned in other documents, such as National and Regional Policy Statements and plans. The hope is that will influence decisions at the district plan and resource consent level.

Rory's focus also appears to be on infrastructure. While this is important, there are other factors that should be considered when planning for climate change. For instance:

- vegetation cover and green spaces providing shade, shelter and flood mitigation – it has amenity value, but also climate mitigation values that need to be considered;
- building materials and how they contribute to climate change through their manufacturing and use, and how they can affect urban environments by trapping heat or encouraging energy use for cooling or heating;
- how will waste be managed in these new communities and will that contribute to climate change?

Things like heat islands might not be a problem in Porirua now, but in 20 or 30 years time they probably will be.

As we learn more about technologies and design elements that mitigate the impact of climate change, authorities like councils will want to be able to require them to be incorporated into urban designs. If we focus only on pipes and drains and not building on the coast, for instance, we lose the opportunity to implement new approaches to a new problem.

We think the traditional hierarchy of influence by relying on other documents is too weak in this situation. We believe district plans — all of them and not just this one — should be explicit about the impact climate change is going to have on our communities and have a set of rules that do not allow us to create developments that have the problems we have built into existing suburbs, plus other problems we are yet to experience. We know what is going to happen and now is the time to prepare for it.

We need to build for the future, not the present. Maybe this isn't the conventional way of doing urban planning, but we are in unprecedented times in modern human history. This is an opportunity for cities like Porirua to grasp the nettle and be innovative in their thinking.

People will argue that it is too prescriptive or that we can't afford it, but we can't afford not to do this for future generations. It's too important to be left to chance.

Our request is that you incorporate into the introductory principles one that specifically addresses climate change and community resilience, and not just focusing on infrastructure.

You suggest you should consider incorporating something like this into the wider District Plan, as well.

Resource consents will be issued based on the wording in the district plan. The closer you can get the requirement for building climate change preparation into the rule-making, the stronger those rules will be and the better prepared new communities will be for dealing with or avoiding the impacts of climate change.

## **High density residential zone**

We want to strongly reiterate our opposition to the submission that much of Pukerua Bay be made into a high density residential zone. This view is strongly felt throughout the village.

Kāinga Ora seems to have taken a very cookie cutter approach to this. If it satisfies one criterion, that's good enough for them. In this case, there is a neighbourhood centre within the walkable catchment of a train station, so they've got their compass out and drawn an 800m radius circle on the map and declared that the area is suitable for a high-density residential zone. However, they've realised that the existing neighbourhood centre, which consists of a secondhand bookshop, a diary and a hairdressers, is too small, so have proposed that it is expanded.

Pukerua Bay is essentially a rural village several kilometres from many essential services. An expanded neighbourhood centre would only serve the day-to-day needs of the community. Even with the projected 30-year population growth, the community is unlikely to support more than a small neighbourhood centre, and people would still have to leave the village to do things like supermarket shopping, or going to the doctor or pharmacy.

The submission from Nicholas Rae in support of Kāinga Ora's proposal seems to take the approach that if they build enough high density dwellings, local businesses will appear to service the population. This is the sort of wishful thinking that can easily result in a large population that is not close to many services, and is inconvenienced by having to travel further to get to many of them.

The school does not have room for a lot of extra students, and if it built on the field, we would lose one of the recreational areas that would be necessary for a much larger population. There is more to a well functioning neighbourhood than a bigger block of shops.

Although Kāinga Ora has proposed this — presumably for their benefit — it would leave the option open to commercial developers, who would not necessarily have the same social imperatives Kāinga Ora has.

As I said earlier, we aren't anti-development, and these is support for medium density housing (although it's not universally welcomed). But Pukerua Bay is a bad place for a high density residential zone.

PCC agrees with us. It says in its Section 32 Evaluation Report and the Section 42A report that having a medium density residential zone across the whole of the township is the most appropriate way to support the objectives of the National Policy Statement-Urban Design.

Please reject Kāinga Ora's proposal to rezone any of Pukerua Bay as high density residential.

## **Waimapehi Stream rezoning**

The proposal to rezone the land in the Muri Block and Mount Welcome farm also includes a small area of non-contiguous land next to the intersection of Muri Road and Seavista Drive. It's part of the New Residential Zone in Variation 1.

It's a mystery to us why this piece of land is included in here. It is part of an area known as Bell's Block and is in a Significant Natural Area (SNA011). It is also the course of the Waimapehi Stream, and is an area that locals have cleared weeds and rubbish out of to protect the stream. Apparently, it also has a QEII Open Space Covenant on it. It also seems to include part of the train station car park.

The idea that it could be residential seems ridiculous. It's a big hole in the ground and a car park, and is unsuitable for building on.

Please removed this piece of land from the area that is being rezoned as residential in the DP variation.

*Presented by Moira Lawler (Secretary) and Iain MacLean (Deputy Chair)*