

Before the Hamilton City Council Hearings Panel

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (the **RMA**)

In the matter of a submission by the Waikato Regional Council (submitter reference 41) on Private Plan Change 2 -Te Awa Lakes

And

In the matter of Hamilton City District Plan Private Plan Change 2

**Statement of evidence of Andrew Stephen Wilson for the Waikato
Regional Council**

Dated 12 November 2019

Summary of evidence

- 1 The indicative roading structure associated with Plan Change 2 and resulting implications for public transport form the primary focus of my evidence.
- 2 In my opinion Plan Change 2 offers land-use activities and housing densities that warrant provision of quality public transport services.
- 3 However in my opinion the proposed roading pattern, roading design and lack of connectivity to adjacent sites precludes the effective provisioning of such services.
- 4 I recommend that amendments to the plan change provisions be made that would enable consideration of an alternative public transport option that aligns with an unformed paper road on the opposite side of the Waikato River to the plan change area.
- 5 Subject to these amendments being agreed, I consider that the plan change would offer a superior outcome from a public transport perspective compared to a scenario where the site is developed for industrial purposes.

Qualifications and Experience

- 6 My full name is Andrew Wilson. I am Manager of the Public Transport within the Finance Directorate at Waikato Regional Council (**WRC**). I am responsible for the planning and delivery of public transport services within the Waikato Region including within Hamilton City (**HCC**)
- 7 I have been employed by WRC since 2014. Prior to my current role I was employed as a Senior Investment Advisor (Transport) at the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) and prior to that I held RMA Planning positions at NZTA and HCC.

- 8 I hold a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Resource and Environmental Planning) obtained from The University of Waikato in 2008. I have 12 years' experience in land-use planning, transport investment (infrastructure and services) and public transport planning and service delivery.

Code of Conduct

- 9 While this is a Council hearing and acknowledging that I am an employee of WRC, I have read the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (2014) and I agree to comply with it (particularly Section 7). My qualifications as an expert are set out above. I confirm that the issues addressed in this brief of evidence are within my areas of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

Scope of Evidence

- 10 My evidence will address the following:
- a. Statutory Framework (Land Transport Management Act 2003);
 - b. Waikato Regional Policy Statement (**RPS**);
 - c. Hamilton City Operative District Plan;
 - d. Regional Land Transport Plan (**RLTP**);
 - e. Regional Public Transport Plan 2018-2028 (**RPTP**);
 - f. Linkages between statutory documents;
 - g. The Section 42A report;
 - h. Existing Bus Services;
 - i. Viability of Public Transport Within the Plan Change Area;
 - j. Suggested Amendments to Plan Change Provisions; and

k. Conclusion.

- 11 In forming my opinions, I have relied on the expert evidence of Ms Heppelthwaite and Mr Swears and legal submissions. Where relevant, I have made a reference to specific submissions where these identify matters that I consider require specific mention.
- 12 I participated in the joint witness caucusing on transport on 13th September and rely on the joint witness statement in my evidence where noted.

Matters Considered

- 13 I have specifically considered the following statutory matters and documents:
- a) Waikato Regional Policy Statement
 - b) Hamilton City Operative District Plan
 - c) Regional Land Transport Plan
 - d) Regional Public Transport Plan 2018-2028
 - e) Joint Witness Statement for Transport; and
 - f) Section 42A Hearings Report.

Statutory Framework

- 14 The Land Transport Management Act 2003 (**LTMA**) is the primary transport legislation that governs the planning and provision of public transport in New Zealand.
- 15 The LTMA requires all public transport services deemed integral to a network to be contracted with a Regional Council. The LTMA includes a statutory framework that seeks to grow public transport patronage with less reliance on public subsidy.

- 16 The LTMA also requires the Regional Council to prepare a Regional Land Transport Plan (**RLTP**) and Regional Public Transport Plan (**RPTP**).
- 17 Section 74(2) of the RMA requires territorial authorities to have regard to plans such as the RLTP and RPTP when preparing and changing district plans.
- 18 I have summarised relevant components of the RLTP and RPTP in so far as they relate to public transport and the proposed plan change in subsequent sections of this statement of evidence.

Regional Policy Statement

- 19 The Waikato Regional Policy Statement (RPS) defines ways in which integrated management of the Region's natural and physical resources will be achieved.
- 20 District plans in the Waikato Region must give effect to the RPS.
- 21 The Operative RPS includes provisions relevant to Private Plan Change 2 and public transport. In particular:
- a) Policy 6.3 seeks to ensure co-ordination between land use and infrastructure planning and (among other things) requires district plans to include provisions that ensure roading patterns and design support the use of public transport (2016 RPS 6.3.1 a)).
 - b) Policy 6.15 establishes density targets to ensure that urban development becomes more compact overtime. This is to (among other things) improve the viability of public transport, walking and cycling for the purposes of reducing;
 - i energy demand
 - ii the need for future transport infrastructure development
 - iii transport impacts on air quality,
 - iv carbon emissions.

- 22 The RPS recognises the importance of urban density along with roading patterns and design in relation to enabling effective public transport.
- 23 The indicative roading structure associated Plan Change 2 and resulting implications for public transport forms the primary focus of my evidence.

Hamilton City Operative District Plan

- 24 The Hamilton City Operative District Plan (District Plan) seeks to transition to an increasingly 'compact city' where (among other things) there is an increase in the cost-effectiveness of infrastructure including roads and passenger transport (Objective 2.2.1 and related explanation).
- 25 Cost effective provision of public transport for the Plan Change area is a material issue that I have outlined in paragraphs 54 to 58 of this statement of evidence.

Regional Land Transport Plan

- 26 The RLTP is promulgated under the LTMA and identifies regional priorities for land transport along with suite of objectives, policies and implementation measures to address stated priorities and direct investment in the transport system. The RLTP also serves as a gateway to accessing national funding assistance for transport activities.
- 27 Stated priorities relevant to public transport and the proposed plan change include:
- a) Grow public transport and active mode share in urban centres and new growth areas.
 - b) Collaboratively plan and provide transport infrastructure and service improvements to encourage modal shift to public transport and active transport modes.

- c) Develop customised approaches and coordinated funding and transport service models to enhance access and mobility for our communities.

28 Relevant policies include:

- a) P15 Provide an effective, efficient and affordable public transport system in urban centres and emerging growth areas.
- b) P21 Encourage the use of travel modes other than single occupancy vehicles and private vehicle use in Hamilton and surrounding towns.
- c) P22 Promote travel demand management initiatives that support travel behaviour change, modal shift and compact urban form. Provide safe, connected, coherent and accessible walking and cycling networks and facilities supported by activities aimed at reducing barriers to participation in active transport modes.

29 It is my view that the proposal (as it currently stands) will not assist in delivering the RLTP's outcomes due to the inability to service the plan change area cost efficiently and effectively with public transport.

Regional Public Transport Plan

30 The RPTP 2018-2028 is statutory document that sets out the priorities for public transport with the Waikato over the next 10 years.

31 The current RPTP 2018-2028 was adopted by Waikato Regional Council in 2018 following public consultation.

32 The RPTP includes seven key objectives along with a policy framework for each objective. The objectives are:

- a) **Objective 1:** Deliver a layered network of public transport services that meets a diverse range of travel needs.
- b) **Objective 2:** Transition to a mass transit oriented network over time.

- c) **Objective 3:** Provide the infrastructure necessary for an accessible, effective and efficient public transport network.
- d) **Objective 4:** Provide high-quality and intuitive public information.
- e) **Objective 5:** Provide a fares and ticketing system that is easy to use and affordable for passengers.
- f) **Objective 6:** Provide public transport services that are affordable for passengers and funders.
- g) **Objective 7:** Develop and maintain partnerships that obtain best value for money in the delivery of transport solutions.

33 For the reasons outlined in paragraphs 57 and 58 of this statement of evidence I consider that the plan change as currently proposed aligns poorly with Objective 1 (delivering a layered network of services), Objective 3 (enabling an effective and efficient public transport network) and Objective 6 (delivering services that are affordable for passengers and funders).

34 With the exception of the Objective 2, I consider that the remaining objectives are less relevant to the plan change proposal.

35 I wish to draw attention to Objective 2 which confirms WRC's intent to transition to a mass transit-oriented network over time.

36 The RPTP recognises that as Hamilton's population grows its car orientated transport system will become increasingly congested and less economic. Continually adding capacity to roads to accommodate more cars is neither practical nor affordable in the long term.

37 Transitioning to a mass transit-oriented system over time aims to:

- a) deliver fast and reliable public transport travel times;
 - b) reduce reliance on private motor vehicles;
 - c) provide capacity for population growth and urban; development;
- and

d) help deliver on the urban form and environment and outcomes sought via the RPS and Operative District Plan.

38 The RPTP includes a high-level future network diagram for Hamilton (RPTP 2018-2028 Figure 2, pg.13) that signals a longer-term aspiration for a public transport hub and mass transit corridors converging within the vicinity of the Plan Change 2 structure plan area.

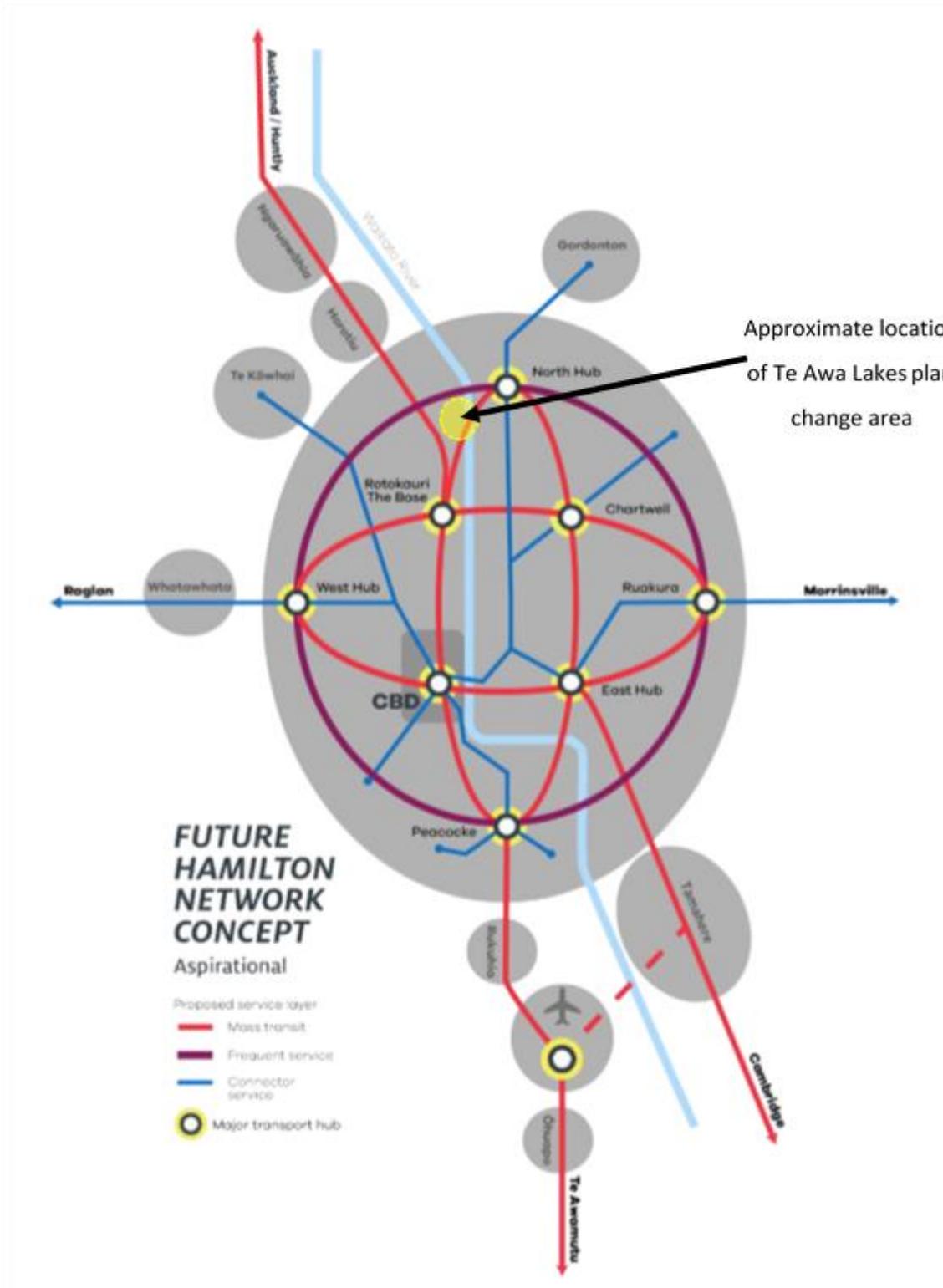
39 An excerpt from the conceptual future network diagram is included below (Figure 1 - Future Hamilton Network Concept). It should be noted the purpose of the diagram is to signal structure at a city wide scale and not specifics relevant to particular locations or corridors.

40 WRC, HCC, and NZTA in partnership with key stakeholders are in the early stages of jointly developing a Mass Transit Plan for the city and surrounding metropolitan area that builds on the direction set in the RPTP and Access Hamilton Transport Strategy.

41 The Mass Transit Plan will identify specific mass transit corridors and how they can be developed overtime. The Mass Transit Plan is being progressed under Future Proof and forms part of a broader spatial planning initiative. Outputs from the Mass Transit Plan are intended to be incorporated into the RPTP and will be subject to public consultation.

42 In my opinion, given the direction set in the current RPTP and the location of the plan change area, the Mass Transit Plan development process will need to consider the Te Awa Lakes site and adjacent lands irrespective of whether Plan Change 2 is incorporated into the Hamilton City District Plan.

Figure 1 – Future Hamilton Network Concept



Linkages between the Regional Policy Statement, District Plan, RLTP and RPTP

- 43 In my opinion all relevant planning documents are unanimous in their intent to;
- a) promote a compact urban form;
 - b) transition away from a transport system dominated by low occupancy motor vehicles; and
 - c) enable cost efficient and effective public transport services.
- 44 More specifically, all of the statutory documents and plans outlined above set objectives and policies that go beyond merely accommodating public transport. The documents clearly seek to enable cost efficient and effective public transport services. In my opinion this is an important distinction relevant to consideration of the plan change proposal.
- 45 In my opinion, Plan Change 2 offers land use activities and housing densities that warrant provision of high-quality public transport services but the proposed roading pattern, roading design and lack of connectivity to adjacent sites precludes the effective provisioning of such services.

Mr Eccles' s42A Report

- 46 The Section 42A Report prepared by Mr Eccles¹ includes some consideration of public transport in the context of aligning with RPS criteria.
- 47 The 42A Report notes that public transport can be developed to the site and this represents a key area of consistency with the RPS.
- 48 I disagree with this assessment. In my opinion the RPS and other relevant statutory documents require deeper consideration of the

¹ Grant Eccles, Section 42A Report paragraphs 4.18 and 4.19.

extent to which public transport can be provided in a cost efficient and effective manner.

- 49 While I agree that public transport can be developed to the site, I do not consider (that as currently proposed) services can be provided in a cost efficient and effective manner beyond the initial stages of development.

Existing Public Transport Service

- 50 Bus Route 21: *The Northern Connector* currently operates within the vicinity of the plan change area.
- 51 The Stantec Integrated Transport Assessment Report² provides an accurate description of Route 21 and how it could be utilised in association with the plan change area.
- 52 It should be noted that the primary purpose of Route 21 is to connect north Waikato towns with Hamilton. WRC will continue to optimise the service for that purpose and as such Route 21 should not necessarily be relied upon to enable public transport connectivity with the plan change area in the medium to longer term.
- 53 In my opinion it is reasonable to assume Route 21 will provide some basic service levels during the early stages of development should the plan change proposal proceed.

Viability of Public Transport within the Plan Change Area

- 54 With respect to public transport, WRC's original submission opposed Plan Change 2 on the basis that that site is unable to be served efficiently and effectively.
- 55 A defining feature of the structure plan area is that it only has one vehicular access point to the broader transportation network via the intersection of Hutchinson Road and Te Rapa Road.

² Te Awa Lakes Integrated Transport Assessment Update Report - 21 August 2019 (paragraphs 3.20 to 3.30).

56 Figure 2 below is an extract from page 18 of Mr Apeldoorn's Evidence³. The diagram illustrates (yellow dashes) how the plan change provisions could enable a public transport route within the site.

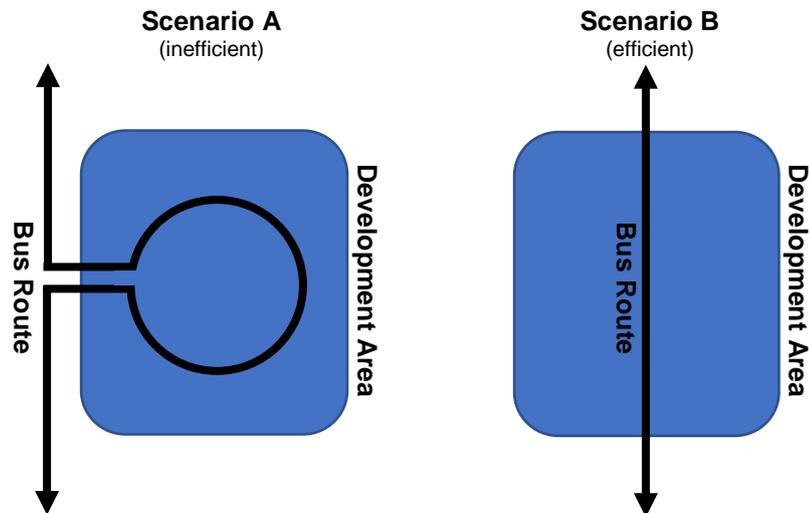
Figure 2 – Indicative Bus Service Route within the Plan Change Area.



57 The single vehicular access point to and from the site means any public transport service must double back on itself in order to service the development area. This is significantly less efficient compared to a scenario where public transport is able to traverse through the site. Figure 3 below illustrates the two scenarios.

³ EIC Mark Apeldoorn, 9 October 2019.

Figure 3 - Public Transport Servicing Scenarios

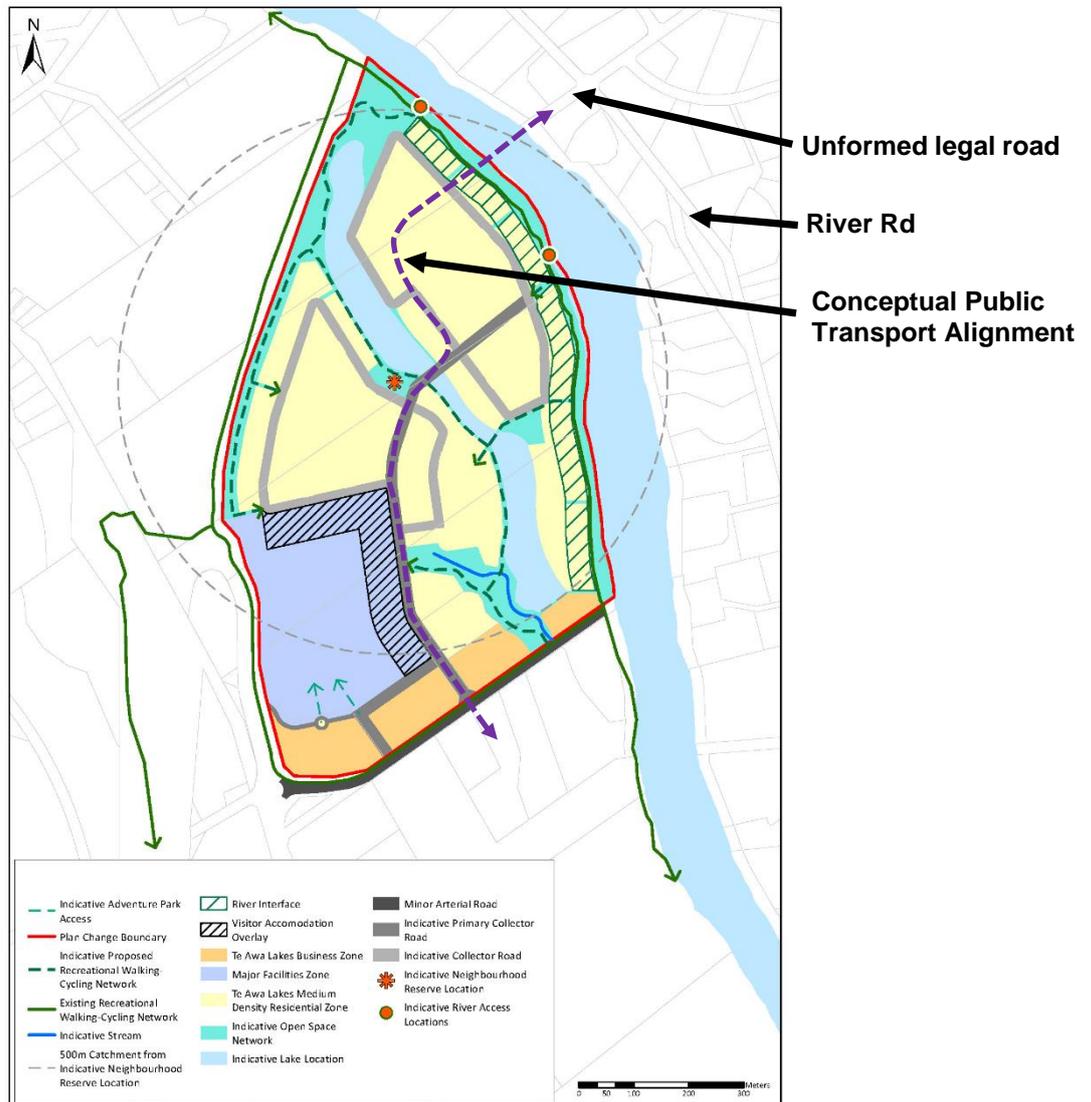


- 58 In my experience “Scenario A” above will almost always result in:
- a) Public transport being less attractive for users resulting in less utilisation;
 - b) Longer travel times;
 - c) Higher resource requirements (vehicles, drivers and fuel);
 - d) Higher public transport operating costs indefinitely;
 - e) Higher public subsidy requirements indefinitely due to:
 - i Higher operating costs; and
 - ii Less patronage and associated fare revenue, which offsets public subsidy requirements;
 - f) Opportunity cost – (public transport resources deployed are unable to be utilised elsewhere).
- 59 If public transport services were able to be efficiently provisioned through the structure plan area then in my opinion the plan change would offer a superior outcome from a public transport perspective compared to a scenario where the site is developed for industrial purposes.

- 60 Issue 6 of the Joint Statement of Transportation Witnesses⁴ records the intent of WRC and the Applicant to jointly explore alternative concepts that could enable, or at least not preclude, options for efficiently servicing the site in the longer term.
- 61 A potential alternative concept that in my opinion has merit in the longer term is to configure the development in such a way that it does not preclude a public transport route through the plan change area such that it aligns with an unformed legal road on the opposite side of the Waikato River as illustrated (dashed purple line) in Figure 4 below.
- 62 This would enable a public transport connection that closely aligns with the future network concept anchored in the RPTP (Figure 1 in this statement of evidence), which was subject to public consultation in 2018.
- 63 A public transport connection of the type proposed (Figure 4) would enable a high quality service to the site and could provide an opportunity for improved interim public services (eg. scheduled bus services and / or demand responsive transport) as means of building patronage ahead of the higher quality service being available.
- 64 Not precluding the connection would enable a wide range of public transport outcomes for the site including the potential to incorporate the plan change area into a future mass transit network. At the very least it would enable a longer term option for provisioning more efficient and effective public transport services within the plan change area and beyond.

⁴ 13 September 2019.

Figure 4 – Alternative Public Transport Concept



65 I consider that due consideration could be given, as the site progressively develops, to not precluding the potential for public transport route that travels through the site and aligns with the unformed paper road (River Road) on the opposite side of the Waikato River to the plan change area.

66 I suggest this could be achieved via wording changes within Chapter 3 (Section 3.8.5.3.3) of the structure plan provisions. The effect of change would be to enable consideration of not precluding the alternative route alignment in developing the relevant Land

Development Plan Consent applications and resource consent applications.

- 67 Ms Heppelthwaite has proposed a new provision (Rule 3.8.5.3.3A) which I consider achieves this.

Conclusions

- 68 I recommend that amendments to the plan change provisions be made that would enable consideration of an alternative public transport option that aligns with an unformed paper road on the opposite side of the Waikato River to the plan change area.
- 69 Subject to these amendments being agreed, I consider that the plan change would offer a superior outcome from a public transport perspective compared to a scenario where the site is developed for industrial purposes.

Andrew Stephen Wilson

12 November 2019