

UNDER THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

IN THE MATTER OF an application for resource consent by **FONTERRA FARM SOURCE** to establish and operate a rural supply store and undertake a two Lot subdivision at 2475 South Road, Okato.

Council Ref. LUC18/47378 and SUB18/47165

**STATEMENT OF TRAFFIC ENGINEERING EVIDENCE OF IAN DONALD STEELE
ON BEHALF OF FONTERRA FARM SOURCE**

14 March 2019

INTRODUCTION

Qualifications and Experience

1. My name is Ian Donald Steele. I hold the qualifications of BE (Hons)(Civil)(2002) and Grad Cert (Infrastructure Asset Management)(2011); and I am a Professional Member of IPENZ (MIPENZ) and registered as a Chartered Professional Engineer (CPEng)(#255539).
2. Over my 17 year career, I have worked as a design engineer (Apex Consultants), mostly working on infrastructure design projects such as stormwater, road renewals, upgrades and road safety projects within Taranaki. I was the Road Network maintenance contract team leader for South Taranaki District (Apex Consultants), responsible for the design and maintenance supervision of the South Taranaki Road network including the role of Traffic Management Co-ordinator (TMC).
3. I have received Road Safety Auditor training, and my role prior to joining BTW Company was as Team Leader (Queensland / NT) - Infrastructure Management with ARRB Group, where I completed numerous project evaluations, road safety audits pavement assessments, road asset management plans and the like.
4. I have been employed by BTW Company since October 2011, currently as the director of Engineering. My role for BTW Company, New Plymouth includes design, supervision and reporting and investigation of various civil projects including many related to road, transport/traffic and site development engineering, specifically including stormwater management.
5. I confirm that I have read, and agree to comply with, the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2014). This evidence I am presenting is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. To the best of my knowledge I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

ROLE

6. Between August and September 2018, I was involved in various meetings with New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) representatives to consider a number of potential development sites in the Okato area, with regard to traffic implications for South Road (SH45). From these meetings, the current proposed site was viewed as being preferable from a safety and efficiency point of view.
7. In September 2018 a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) was completed to support the resource consent application for the Farm Source development to which I peer reviewed. The TIA made an assessment and included preliminary road upgrade plans for access into the site via a 90 m deceleration lane, and for seal widening on the South Road intersection.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

8. In my evidence I will comment on:
 - a) The proposal;
 - b) Assessment;
 - c) Submitters issues; and
 - d) Conclusion.

PROPOSAL

9. A description of the existing road network environment is well traversed within the TIA. To avoid repetition, this detail is not repeated within my evidence. Section 2 of the TIA provides the relevant information.
10. The proposal is well covered in the application lodged with New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) and also discussed in the Officer's report. My comments below relate specifically to matters around the proposed vehicle access points and traffic generation from the proposed activity.

ASSESSMENT

11. NZTA have provided their written approval to this resource consent application. NZTA's assessment encompassed the South Road and Kaihihi Road intersection.
12. A small area of additional seal widening has been proposed on the north eastern corner of the intersection which NZTA consider to be the only necessary upgrade works, in respect of the intersection. The purpose of this seal widening is to resolve historical edge break on this corner.
13. John Eagles, NPDC's Roothing Engineer has reviewed the application, and has confirmed in the S42a report that he has no concerns in terms of the safety or efficiency of the road network or any other roading matter.
14. With regard to posted speed limits and advisory signs, these are items for NZTA and NPDC to consider and are not typically matters that can be determined within a resource consent process.
15. The decision to lower a posted speed is often a contentious issue within urban fringe areas and is more likely to be required when the number of vehicle access points steadily increases along a section of road thereby creating a safety issue.
16. I understand that NPDC are currently completing a road safety review of Upper Kaihihi Road (outside of this resource consent process), which will inform any decision by NPDC around appropriate speed limits.
17. The traffic generated by this proposal is considered to be relatively low when considering the existing traffic on South Road and Kaihihi Roads.

18. When considering the use of the Okato Domain for recreational activities i.e. a Coastal Rugby game, traffic movements through this intersection and on Kaihihi Road would be significantly greater than any amount of traffic the Farm Source store is proposed to generate.
19. Heavy vehicles that will supply goods for the proposed rural supply store will typically be on a route from New Plymouth to Hawera, via South Road (State Highway 45). These vehicles will enter the site through the designated South Road site entrance and will circulate through the site, out onto Kaihihi Road and will continue to head south, on South Road. Therefore, the frequency and quantum of heavy vehicles that will need to make a right turn from Kaihihi Road onto South Road is low.
20. Kaihihi Road is used as part of an informal 'loop' of cyclists and pedestrians from Okato Township (accessed via the small pedestrian bridge which connects Old South Road and Kaihihi Road (Upper)). The frequency of cyclists and pedestrians is relatively low – estimated at 10 to 20 per day, spread throughout the day. From observation, the pedestrians and cyclists use the road pavement – there is low frequency of conflict with vehicles, largely due to the low volumes and speeds of traffic on Kaihihi Road.

SUBMISSIONS AGAINST THE APPLICATION

21. I have reviewed the two submissions that raise concerns for traffic safety. The main points raised in these submissions are summarised below:
22. Submission in opposition from James, Robert and June Dinnis:
 - a. Disagrees with the proposal because traffic generation exceeds permitted District Plan standard of 50 VEM's over 24 hours.
 - b. Believes adverse effects on the State Highway intersection will be generated.
 - c. Believes there will be reduced sight lines out of the subject property which creates safety concerns.
23. Submission in support from Stephen Looney:
 - a. Considers that the proposed rural supply store will attract many more customers than stated in the application.
 - b. Has observed vehicles and motorbikes heading northbound over the Stony River Bridge exceeding the 100 km/h posted speed limit, and that this speeding creates a dangerous environment at the Kaihihi Road intersection. Is concerned that neither NZTA or BTW Traffic Engineers have addressed this existing issue.

- c. Seeks that signage is displayed on the southern side of the Stony River bridge that alerts motorists to there being an intersection ahead, or that a dedicated right-hand turn bay should be established on South Road for vehicles turning into Kaihihi Road.
 - d. Considers that the posted speed for both South Road and Kaihihi Road should be reduced from 100km/h to 80km/h (or even 50km/h for Kaihihi Road).
 - e. Considers that the AEE statement that vehicles are likely to be travelling at speeds of no more than 50 km/h entering or exiting RD1, reflects a very limited sense of community responsibility towards accommodating local sentiment and concerns regarding the 100km/h posted speed limit and it being a multi-use road.
 - f. Does not consider the proposed road marking and seal widening to be sufficient to prevent accidents on the intersection.
 - g. Is considered that if this proposal is granted than further expansion may occur. Would like NPDC to enforce a condition that limits future expansion.
24. Having reviewed the submitters comments, I do not have any additional comments beyond my points provided earlier in my evidence.

CONCLUSION

25. On the basis of the relevant traffic related consent conditions as shown in the Officer's report, in my view the proposed development is considered to maintain the safety and efficiency of the South Road and Kaihihi Road traffic networks.



Ian Donald Steele
14 March 2019