

Before the Selwyn District Council

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*under:* the Resource Management Act 1991

*in the matter of:* Proposed Private Plan Change 69 to the Operative  
District Plan: Lincoln South

*and:* **Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited**  
*Applicant*

Summary of Evidence of Nicole Lauenstein (urban design)

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Dated: 23 November 2021

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## **SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF NICOLE LAUENSTEIN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1 My name is Nicole Lauenstein and I hold the qualifications and experience as set out in my brief of evidence.
- 2 I have reviewed the urban design related matters relevant to PC69 and provided evidence in support of the plan change application. I have peer reviewed the application and considered **Mr. Nicholson's** urban design assessment and statement of evidence (appended to S42 report) and I have subsequently contributed to several improvements to the ODP and its narrative.
- 3 In his evidence, Mr Nicholson mentions several areas where he can be supportive of the internal layout of the ODP but has concerns regarding insufficient external connectivity to the township and accessibility to the main community services it provides. In preparation for this hearing we have met and agreed on improvements to the internal layout of the ODP. However, differences of opinion with regard to connectivity and accessibility remain.
- 4 Other remaining non-ODP related points of disagreement are:
  - 4.1 the most appropriate planning mechanism to locate future growth in Lincoln, big picture strategic planning exercise or plan change; and
  - 4.2 the effects on visual amenity for existing and future residents along the southern boundary of Verdeco and Te Whariki development.
- 5 Mr. Compton Moen and I have discussed the above matters on several occasions and are in agreement, however as he was unable to attend our informal meeting due to prior commitments, the visual amenity was not discussed in detail.

### **URBAN GROWTH AND FORM**

- 6 Lincoln is one of only two key regional centres in the Selwyn District. Growth is to be expected and directed towards such urban centres, which can clearly be deducted from the objectives and policies of the RPS and the NPS UD. In principle, Lincoln has opportunities for urban growth in all directions, but there are limitations and existing constraints to be considered when directing this growth, such as:
  - 6.1 Landcare Research areas to the north-west;
  - 6.2 Lincoln University to the west of the town; and
  - 6.3 Growing distance to the town centre of urban development going north and east

- 7 With regard to consolidated urban form, PC 69 is a logical sequence of urban development for Lincoln and fits within the overall direction of growth given by the Lincoln Structure Plan.
- 8 The timing of PC 69 is appropriate within the context of the urban growth rate, which has accelerated post-earthquakes and superseded the planned growth and sequencing as anticipated by the Structure Plan.

### **APPROPRIATE LOCATION WITHIN THE LINCOLN CONTEXT**

- 9 The site is only 1.4 - 1.7km from the town centre and library allowing easy access to key services, 1.2 - 1.7km from Lincoln University and Landcare Research, again key places of education and work, and is 2.2 - 2.7 km from the local high school and community centre. Within the context of a township the size of Lincoln, these are fairly short distances and when provided with the right environment can be travelled in active transport modes.
- 10 Other possible growth areas to the east, north-east, and south-east are at similar distances to the towncentre. While they are closer to the high school but further from key work places, all have to negotiate the limited crossing points over the Liffey stream.
- 11 The north-west area is close to all amenities but has to deal with a severance created by the Landcare Research land holdings. To the west, growth areas would also be a similar distance from the town centre, but have to negotiate linkages through the existing University campus.
- 12 PC 69 also offers the benefit of size and scale, avoiding bit by bit piecemeal development, as it covers a large area of approximately 190ha. It provides the opportunity to create certainty around location and availability of additional commercial nodes, an integrated pedestrian and cycle network within a high amenity green network, and importantly, it provides certainty around the status and protection of the local water springs by integrating them purposefully and carefully into this wider green network.

### **WELL-FUNCTIONING URBAN ENVIRONMENTS**

- 13 PC 69 supports well-functioning urban environments as per the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPSUD).

*Policy 1: Planning decisions contribute to well-functioning urban environments, which are urban environments that, as a minimum:*

*a) have or enable a variety of homes that:*

*(i) meet the needs, in terms of type, price, and location, of different households; and*

*(ii) enable Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms; and*

- b) *have or enable a variety of sites that are suitable for different business sectors in terms of location and site size; and*
- c) *have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport; and*
- d) *support, and limit as much as possible adverse impacts on, the competitive operation of land and development markets; and*
- e) *support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and*
- f) *are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.*

- 14 I have underlined the particular passage regarding accessibility as this is a key point of disagreement.

### **ACCESSIBILITY, CONNECTIVITY AND WALKABILITY**

- 15 Accessibility translates to community services and educational, commercial, communal, and recreational facilities being accessible within the PC area and within the town centre and wider township. The NPS UD does not state that this accessibility is to be achieved via car. To the contrary, it specifically highlights the importance of accessibility by active transport modes such as walking and cycling.
- 16 Connectivity is the physical connection between daily frequented destinations within the PC site and to the outside. Again, this connectivity is to be provided for all modes of transport. It is however often mistaken as vehicular or road connectivity.
- 17 Walkability and 'cyclability' is often reduced to mere distance travelled, but this does not take into account the real complexity of what makes a route walkable or rideable. There are several other important factors that need to be equally considered, such as destination, reason for travel, pathway standards, the ability to share the path or use as a group, intermittent destinations, accommodation of various travel speeds, resting areas, cost savings, ability to securely store bikes at destination, age, fitness levels, intersections to negotiate, and knowing the neighbourhood. The most influential factors however are safety, in particular at night and when in conflict with cars, amenity of the environment travelled through, time and distance travelled or directness of the route, convenience or inconvenience, weather, and terrain. It is worth noting that, apart from the final two factors, all others can be addressed through good design.
- 18 Almost all residential environments in New Zealand are designed for one mode of transport above all others, the private vehicle. Road layouts are designed first and foremost to provide efficient travel for cars at a reasonable pace of 30 - 50 km per hour. Intersection spacing is set at convenient distances for cars and vehicular distribution in general, and crossing points are located where

this is convenient and least impeding for flows of traffic. The actual physical layout of roads puts cars at the centre and pushes pedestrians and cyclists to the outer margins. As a result, the public environment within the streets is car-dominant and often perceived as 'unfriendly' or even unsafe for other road users.

- 19 PC 69 takes a different approach by prioritizing cycling and pedestrian active movement over passive car movement. It places active transport (cycling, walking, and similar, including wheelchairs and other aided active transport such as e-bikes / e-scooters) via the most direct route within a very high amenity green and blue network. This provides safety, convenience, well-formed and well-lit pathways. It allows for all these active transport modes to share pathways and coexist within this priority network.
- 20 The PC 69 Site lends itself to such an approach due to the nature of the location requiring an extensive green and blue network for water conveyance and protection. This is ideal for the integration of pedestrian and cycle ways separated from road carriageways. A northern green corridor along the boundary to Te Whariki, 'collects' all pedestrians and cyclists using the various north-south routes within the Site, enables an east-west distribution and allows access to the existing transport network connecting directly to the town centre and through to the high school.
- 21 The most direct connections follow Vernon Drive, Kaitorete Drive, and West Belt. Further east, Alandale Lane and Ryelands Drive, and the Liffey stream corridor lead to the eastern edge of the town centre and further on to Lincoln High School.
- 22 There are further high amenity pedestrian / cycle connections through the open spaces in Te Whariki and local shortcuts through the residential neighbourhood streets. All these connections are suitable for walking and cycling (walking 12min/km & cycling 4min/km).
- 23 I consider the "inconvenience" to car travel by having to use an indirect route via Springs Road to the town centre as beneficial. It elevates walking and cycling above the car by giving them priority routes and should encourage active modes of transport over others.
- 24 To further support the new community, the PC area also provides local commercial centres of an appropriate scale. These are located within max. 500m radius from any dwelling in PC69, considered an easy walking distance, and can accommodate a future primary school, early learning centres, and other important community facilities if required.
- 25 With regards to external links, it does not create future impediments to connectivity and urban growth if this was to occur, by providing good linkages for future growth to the south and east.

## **CHARACTER AND IDENTITY OF LINCOLN TOWNSHIP**

- 26 The underlying design intent for the ODP takes its cues from the neighbouring Te Whariki development and from the Liffey stream, the core Lincoln identity, by managing and 'protecting' its waterways with generous green spaces and high amenity landscaped environments with public access. The green and blue network will extend the local character and identity of Lincoln into the site and in particular provides protection for the cluster of natural springs, making them accessible for the public to enjoy.
- 27 The proposed PC 69 integrates the old homestead and associated landscaped areas around the larger springs, with the aim to preserve part of the local history.
- 28 Instead of proliferating the 4ha rural lifestyle block, it adds to a more consolidated and compact local community, proposing a similar residential character to that which is already existing. Keeping growth in as-close-as possible proximity to the town centre will support the sense of community.
- 29 Lincoln character and identity are strongly associated with land, education, research, rural activities, natural landscape features, and the ability to experience these. Organising the residential layout around a blue and green network informed by the underlying natural patterns of the site, will ensure the development will provide a sense of place and can be experienced as responsive to the landscape and natural characteristics of the site. Integrating pedestrian and cycling into the landscape margins of the waterways is in-keeping with the character of Lincoln and will allow public access to these areas.

## **THE MOST APPROPRIATE MECHANISM: PLAN CHANGE OR ANOTHER STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING EXERCISE OR STRUCTURE PLAN**

- 30 Structure Plans are a valuable tool to inform the strategic direction and spatial structure of an urban environment. Initiated by Councils, they also identify a vision and build upon a common identity. As such, the Lincoln Structure Plan has assisted in shaping the current township but not in a similar way as the Rolleston Structure Plan has transformed Rolleston.
- 31 Structure Plans are most effective when real change is required, when the current urban form of a town is not working, and strategic changes are needed to resolve or improve this. Rolleston is a good example of, where the Structure Plan has created a new vision and direction with large green spaces, a new high school, and key community facilities, completely changing the spatial structure of the town.
- 32 This is not the case in Lincoln. The Lincoln Structure Plan never really provided a major change in direction as this was not needed. The underlying spatial structure of Lincoln has always been dominated by natural features, the radial roading approaches, and the clear hierarchy and importance of the main road and town centre. Lincoln already has a high school, and clearly defined

destinations such as Lincoln University, town centre, Landcare Research, historic areas / buildings, and most importantly, the Liffey stream green corridor providing a strong spatial layout. The structure plan basically recognised this and identified areas of growth in all directions unless there were specific constraints (Uni / Landcare research)

- 33 Within this context, a plan change such as PC 69 is a logical extension of the Structure Plan and a natural growth progression for the township following the existing underlying spatial layout. The only discrepancy is the extent of growth anticipated by the original structure plan.
- 34 Plan changes, by nature, are part of the urban planning environment with opportunities for dialogue and public input. They are a good tool to inform and test urban development as they provide certainty around land availability and the willingness to develop. They often provide more accurate and detailed information regarding connectivity, density, and character than structural 'big picture' planning.
- 35 Structure Plans are rarely treated as 'live documents', and not updated regularly to respond to changing circumstances. As a result, the inherent detailed information within Structure Plans is often out of date.

### **TIMING**

- 36 Under the current circumstances with the need for housing, and the time it takes to undertake larger strategic exercises such as a Structure Plan, a plan change is an appropriate way to ascertain if the land south of Lincoln is suitable for development. From an Urban design perspective, it provides all the information needed to a detailed level, facilitating well informed decisions and providing the benefit of a faster process.

### **CONCLUSION**

- 37 I am happy to answer any questions concerning my evidence or the proposed conditions.

Dated: 23 November 2021




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Nicole Lauenstein