

**BEFORE HEARING COMMISSIONERS
FOR SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

UNDER

the Resource Management
Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER

Private Plan Change Request
69 (PC69)

**SUMMARY OF HEARING REPORT OF MR HUGH ANTHONY NICHOLSON
ON BEHALF OF SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

URBAN DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE

24TH NOVEMBER 2021

1. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

- 1.1 My name is Hugh Anthony Nicholson. I have prepared a Hearing Report on Urban Design and Landscape for the Selwyn District Council with respect to Plan Change 69 to the Selwyn District Plan. My qualifications and experience are set out in that statement.
- 1.2 In my opinion if additional residential or business capacity is required in Lincoln a more strategic spatial planning process would allow the costs and benefits of alternative growth options to be assessed and discussed with the wider community. A 'first-come-first-served' approach through private plan changes does not allow for meaningful public consultation or for alternative options for growth to be assessed or compared in a comprehensive manner.
- 1.3 With reference to Figure 1 of Mr Compton-Moen's statement of evidence I note that there are alternative options for urban growth in Lincoln. In particular I consider that a strategic spatial planning process would allow further discussions with Lincoln University and Landcare Research regarding their future plans and the potential for finding alternative locations for some of their agricultural activities to the north of Gerald Street. This land would be valuable from an urban growth perspective.
- 1.4 There are also areas to the west and north of Barton Fields and the north of Flemington and Rosemeryn which are potentially suitable as urban growth areas. I have also attached a series of historical aerial photos of Lincoln showing its growth from a small settlement at the intersection of Gerald and Edwards Streets and Birches Road to the substantial growth to the east and south over the last decade.

2. CHANGES TO THE OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ODP)

- 2.1 In preparation for the hearing I have met with Ms Lauenstein and agreed on improvements to the internal layout of the ODP, however, differences of opinion remain with regard to the levels of external connectivity to the Lincoln township and accessibility to community services.

2.2 In particular I am supportive of

- (a) Two additional small commercial areas (three in total) that would provide for the day-to-day shopping needs of residents;
- (b) The establishment of a reduced speed limit and the provision of direct property access onto Springs Road to provide a safer and more urban street interface (with the support of Mr Collins providing transport advice for the Council);
- (c) The replacement of the flood prone area zoned Living Z with a wetland reserve that would enhance the ecological values and the mahinga kai values associated with Mangōnui;
- (d) The inclusion of a continuous east-west primary road to the west of Springs Road, and a third north-south primary road extending from Collins Road to the east of Springs Road.

3. ACCESSIBILITY AND WALKABILITY

3.1 *Accessibility* refers to the ability of residents and visitors to reach public services and facilities that require travel to where the services or facilities are located¹. The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and the planning provisions addressing accessibility place a high priority on walking, cycling and public transport². These include Policy 1 in the NPSUD which seeks good accessibility that supports a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and in Policy 4.2.10 of the SDP which seeks that new residential blocks should be convenient to public transport and community infrastructure particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

3.2 *Walkability* is a subset of accessibility and refers to the ability of residents or visitors to walk to their destinations including public services, facilities and public transport. In general walkability is a function of proximity or distance. I have used 400, 800 and 1,200 metre radii from relevant town centres to provide an indication of walkability. More sophisticated analyses measure actual distances along street or footpath networks however this is not

¹ S. Handy, Planning for accessibility, Theory and in Practice, Elsevier, Oxford (2005), pp. 131-147

² New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, Ministry for the Environment, 2005, p.21

possible for a plan change where the street networks are not defined until subdivision plans are lodged at a later stage.

- 3.3 In my opinion PC69 would have poor walkability to most existing public services and facilities in Lincoln. The provision of two additional commercial areas would provide walkable access to local shops for everyday use, however, most of the existing public facilities including libraries, the recreation centre, schools, supermarket and public transport would be more than 1.2 kilometres from the northern boundary of PC69 area plus the internal walking distance within the plan change area (see revised Figure 1).
- 3.4 The New Zealand Household Travel Survey (NZHTS) which surveys the distance that New Zealanders travel, including the length of the various travel legs that make up each journey, found that 12% of the total number of travel legs were pedestrian, and that the average walk leg was 1.0 kilometre³. I consider that the majority of people would be unlikely to walk from the PC69 area to access existing services in Lincoln regularly.
- 3.5 The public services and facilities would be relatively easily accessible by bicycle using the connections along the northern boundary, however, vehicle access would not be simple or direct and would be restricted to Springs Road or Moirs Lane.
- 3.6 I am supportive of the provision of cycling and walking connections but I note that the NZHTS found that only 1.3% of the total number of travel legs in the survey were cyclists⁴. Even if the provision of quality connections for cycling was highly successful and led to a tenfold increase of this number to 15%, the majority of people living in the PC69 area would still use private vehicles to access the Lincoln town centre. I note that due to the park-like character of the connections pedestrian and cycle trips are likely to drop off after dark due to perceptions of personal safety, and during wet weather.

³ New Zealand Household Travel Survey, Ministry of Transport, 2015-2018, <https://www.transport.govt.nz/statistics-and-insights/household-travel/>

⁴ Ibid

4. CONNECTIVITY

- 4.1 *Connectivity* is a separate urban design issue and relates to creating streets that are joined together in city-wide networks and the consequent directness and multiplicity of routes through the networks. Connectivity supports improved choices allowing people to choose their preferred routes of travel, supports increased resilience by providing alternative routes for emergency access and evacuation, and creates safer places⁵. Research indicates that lack of connection of new neighbourhoods with surrounding areas is linked to vehicle dependence, social isolation and consequent public health risks⁶. Policy 6.3.2 of the CRPS and Objective B3.4.5 of the SDP seek high levels of connectivity both within developments and with adjoining areas.
- 4.2 For clarity I note that good accessibility does not necessarily correspond with good connectivity. In theory all public services and facilities could be provided internally within the plan change area, or they could be provided along a single or small number of roads rather than through a connected network with multiple routes supporting alternative travel modes.
- 4.3 There are a variety of technical measurements for connectivity using matrices and algorithms, however, these are not intuitive and I have used a simple comparison between two relatively natural boundaries within Lincoln. I have compared the number and spacing of connections along the northern boundary of PC69 where it meets Lincoln with the number and spacing of connections across the Liffey Stream which bisects the existing Lincoln township in a north-south direction. The stormwater and waste water facilities together with associated reserve areas along the northern boundary of PC69 create a comparable situation.

⁵ *People Places Spaces: A design guide for urban New Zealand*, Ministry for the Environment, 2002, p.32

⁶ *The Value of Urban Design: The economic, environmental and social benefits of urban design*, Ministry for the Environment, 2005, p.31

- 4.4 Along the Liffey Stream over a distance of approximately two kilometres there are three primary road crossings (North Belt, Gerald Street and Southfield Drive), five pedestrian bridges and continuous pedestrian walkway along the stream. There are a number of local roads and walkways that also connect to the stream corridor. This equates to connections spaced at approximately 250 metre intervals and provides a good level of connectivity across the stream (see revised Figure 2).
- 4.5 In comparison along the northern boundary of PC69 there is one primary road connection (Springs Road), one future local road connection (Verdeco Park), and four pedestrian cycle connections. If spaced equally along a 3.5 kilometre boundary this equates to connections at 585 metre intervals.
- 4.6 In my opinion the proposed street network in the ODP for the PC69 area would have poor connectivity with the existing Lincoln street network. I consider that an acceptable level of connectivity for PC69 would provide nine connections at approximately 400 metre intervals including four 'primary' street connections.

5. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The proposed plan change would result in a change from open rural land to a residential subdivision and in my opinion would have a *moderate-high* impact on the landscape character reflecting the change from an open rural landscape with long views and a small number of built elements which is valued by neighbouring residents, to a suburban landscape with shorter views, enclosed spaces and a greater number of built elements.
- 5.2 In particular I consider that the visual impact from viewpoints 3 and 4 on Collins Road, from properties on Springs Roads adjacent to the plan change area, and from properties along the southern boundary of the Te Whāriki and the Verdeco Park subdivisions would be *moderate-high*. I note that Mr Compton-Moen considers that the visual impact of the plan change from these viewpoints would be minor.

- 5.3 People's sense of belonging or emotional attachment to a place is generally understood to be based on their shared experiences of a specific territory over time⁷. Changes of the scale proposed in PC69 are not necessarily 'bad' but they are likely to threaten the perception that local people have of their town, both in the disruption of existing urban patterns and in the introduction of new elements including buildings, spaces and social networks.



Hugh Anthony Nicholson

24th November 2021




⁷ Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, *Public Places, Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*, 2006, Architectural Press, p.97

Figure 1: PC69 Walkable Catchments

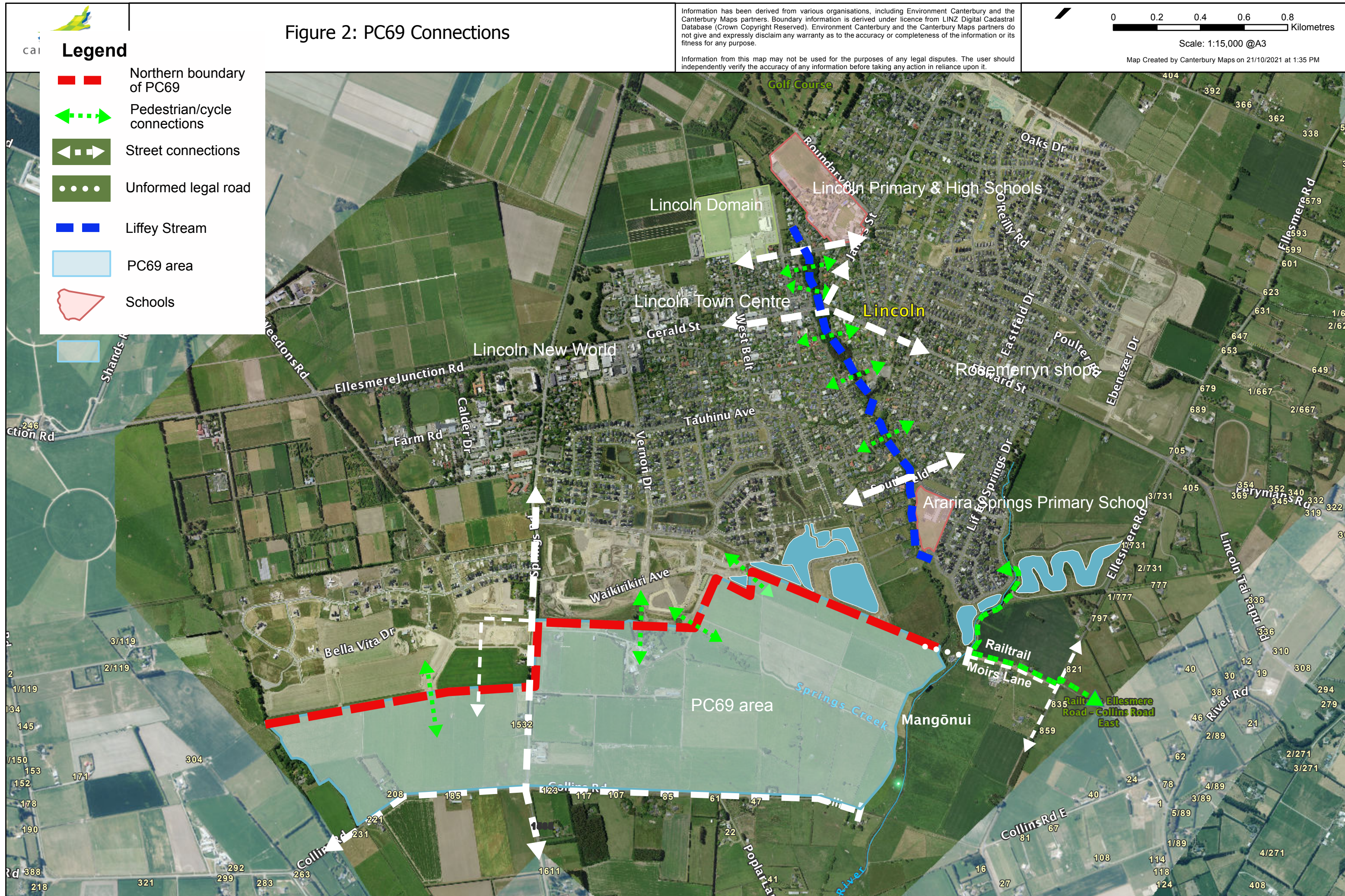
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Legend

-  Existing centres - 400 metre radius walkable catchments
-  Proposed centres - 400 metre radius walkable catchments
-  PC69 Plan Change Area



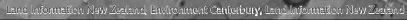




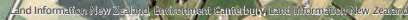
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