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To: Selwyn District Council
From: Hugh Nicholson, Urban Designer
Date: 30 November 2022
Re: DPR-0436 Dunsandel Rezoning Request for Proposed Selwyn District Plan
Urban Design and Landscape Review

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Submission 0436 to the Proposed Selwyn District Plan (PSDP) seeks to rezone 20.65 ha of land along Tramway Road zoned for rural uses (GRUZ) to large lot residential zone (LLRZ) in accordance with a proposed Outline Development Plan (ODP).
- 1.2 I have been asked by the Selwyn District Council to carry out a peer review of the expert evidence relevant to urban design or landscape matters. As part of the peer review, I have assessed the appropriateness of the proposed rezoning against the relevant strategic directions in overarching documents. I have identified any information gaps in the relevant expert evidence, and where appropriate recommended changes to proposed ODPs in order to better achieve the desired strategic directions.
- 1.3 My assessment does not consider the urban form implications for Greater Christchurch.

2.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- 2.1 In my peer review I have drawn strategic directions on good urban form from three sources, the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (**NPSUD**), the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (**CRPS**) and the proposed Selwyn District Plan (**proposed SDP**), all of which provide overarching guidance.

- 2.2 The **NPSUD** seeks to provide “*well-functioning urban environments*”¹ that enable more people to live near a centre or employment opportunities, and which are well serviced by public transport².
- 2.3 In particular the **NPSUD** promotes urban environments that provide good accessibility between housing, jobs, community services, and natural and open spaces, support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and are resilient to the likely effects of climate change³.
- 2.4 The **CRPS** seeks to manage the urban form and settlement pattern of the wider Canterbury region through concentrating or attaching urban growth to existing settlements, and promoting a coordinated pattern of development⁴.
- 2.5 The objectives of the **CRPS** also encourage high quality urban design that maintains and enhances amenity values⁵, and suggests territorial authorities give effect to the *NZ Urban Design Protocol 2005*. The Protocol refer to the need for well-integrated places that have high-quality connections including walking, cycling and public transport, and that are environmentally sustainable⁶
- 2.6 The **CRPS** also seeks developments that promote a diversity of residential, employment and recreational choices, and maintain or enhance amenity values, character and the quality of the environment.⁷
- 2.7 The strategic directions of the **proposed SDP** seek that “*Urban growth is located only in or around existing townships and in a compact and sustainable form that aligns with its anticipated role*”⁸.
- 2.8 The urban growth policies in the **proposed SDP** seek to establish high-quality urban environments by “*maintaining the amenity values and character anticipated within each township*” and “*preserving the rural outlook... through appropriate landscape mitigation... or development controls at the interface*” with rural environments⁹.
- 2.9 The urban growth policies in the **proposed SDP** also direct that the zoning of land demonstrates how it will integrate with existing urban environments including “*prioritising accessibility and connectivity between the land and*

¹ National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, Objective 1, p.10

² Ibid, Objective 3, p.10

³ Ibid, Policy 1, p.10-11

⁴ Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2013, Policy 5.3.1, Regional Growth (Wider Region), (1).

⁵ Ibid, Policy 5.3.1, Regional Growth (Wider Region), (5)

⁶ Ibid, Policy 5.3.1 Territorial Authorities: Methods (3)

⁷ Ibid, Policy 5.3.3 Management of Development (Wider Region) (1 & 2)

⁸ SD-UFD-01 Compact and Sustainable Township Network

⁹ UG-P10 Urban Form

adjoining neighbourhoods, commercial centres, ...reserves, and community facilities, including education... and health services”, and “requiring safe, attractive and convenient transport infrastructure that promotes walking, cycling, and access to public transport and public transport facilities to encourage energy efficiency and improve peoples' health and wellbeing”¹⁰.

- 2.10 The residential objectives in the **proposed SDP** direct that a “*range of housing typologies and densities are provided*”¹¹ and that “*increased densities occur in close proximity*” to activity centres, public transport and open spaces¹². They also require that “*residents have access to a range of community, recreation, education, health, and corrections activities and facilities that support... the residential amenity*”¹³.
- 2.11 The **Ellesmere Area Plan 2031** (adopted in 2016) expected limited growth in Dunsandel and considered that there was sufficient land in the Dunsandel Living A and B deferred zones to accommodate this growth and that is was likely to be more cost effective and efficient than alternative ‘greenfield’ locations¹⁴.
- 2.12 Drawing on the strategic directions outlined above I have reviewed the urban form proposed in DPR-0436 in terms of:
- a. the extent to which it creates a consolidated and contiguous urban form, and the spatial distribution of densities;
 - b. the level of connectivity with the existing urban environment;
 - c. the accessibility to a range of services using a range of travel modes including walking, cycling and public transport;
 - d. The residential amenity values and character, and the treatment of the urban / rural interface.

3.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1 The site is piece of rural land sandwiched between Tramway Road and State Highway 1 with two existing dwellings and associated buildings. It is bounded by SH1 and the Main South Railway line to the north with an associated noise control overlay, land with a business zoning (GIS) to the north-east, rural land to

¹⁰ UG-P12 Urban Form

¹¹ RESZ-03 Residential Objectives

¹² RESZ-04 Residential Objectives

¹³ RESZ-07 Residential Objectives

¹⁴ Ellesmere Area Plan 2031, Selwyn District Council, page 46

the west, and large lot residential land to the south-east on the opposite side of Tramway Road.

3.2 There are no pedestrian or cycle facilities along this section of Tramway Road.

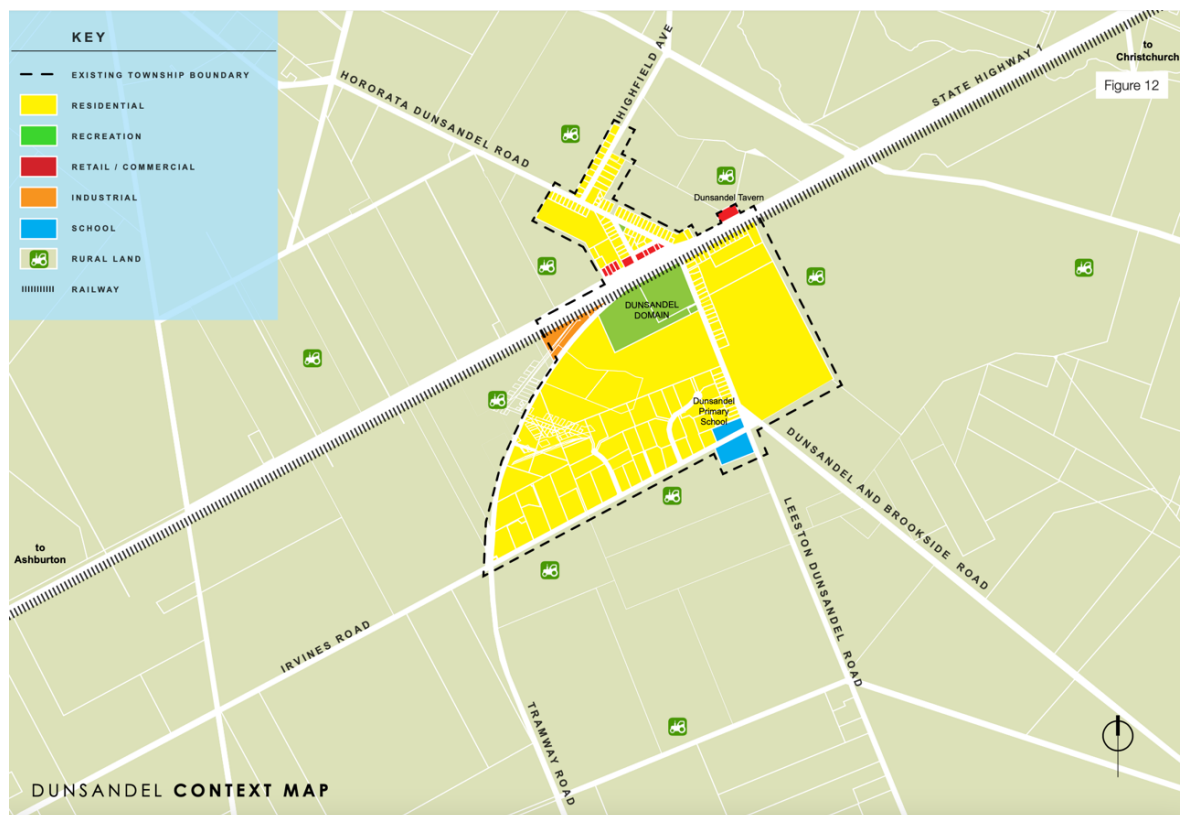


Figure 1: Dunsandel Context Map from *Ellesmere Plan 2031*

4.0 COMPACT URBAN FORM

- 4.1 Dunsandel is centred on a spine of residential development along the Leeston Dunsandel and Hororata Dunsandel Roads bisected by SH1. The Dunsandel School is located at the southern end of the strip, and the Dunsandel Domain and Community Centre are on the southern side, and a retail and commercial strip are on the northern side, of SH1. The site is approximately one kilometre from this spine.
- 4.2 While the site is bordered by an area of LLRZ across Tramway Road to the south-east there are no direct connections into this area. There is a triangular shaped piece of land zoned GIZ with a transport business immediately to the north-east, and a large piece of rural land between the site and Synlait Park that was previously zoned Living A Deferred.
- 4.3 In my opinion the proposed rezoning of this site would not contribute to a consolidated or compact urban form for Dunsandel. There are three areas of

undeveloped rural land identified in the *Ellesmere Plan 2031* which are closer to the township which would contribute to a consolidated and compact urban form if they were developed. I consider that these alternative blocks of land present better options for accommodating residential growth in Dunsandel.

- 4.4 In forming this opinion I note that the proposed rezoning would extend the boundary of Dunsandel approximately one kilometre westward while not being contiguous with the primary residential or commercial areas.

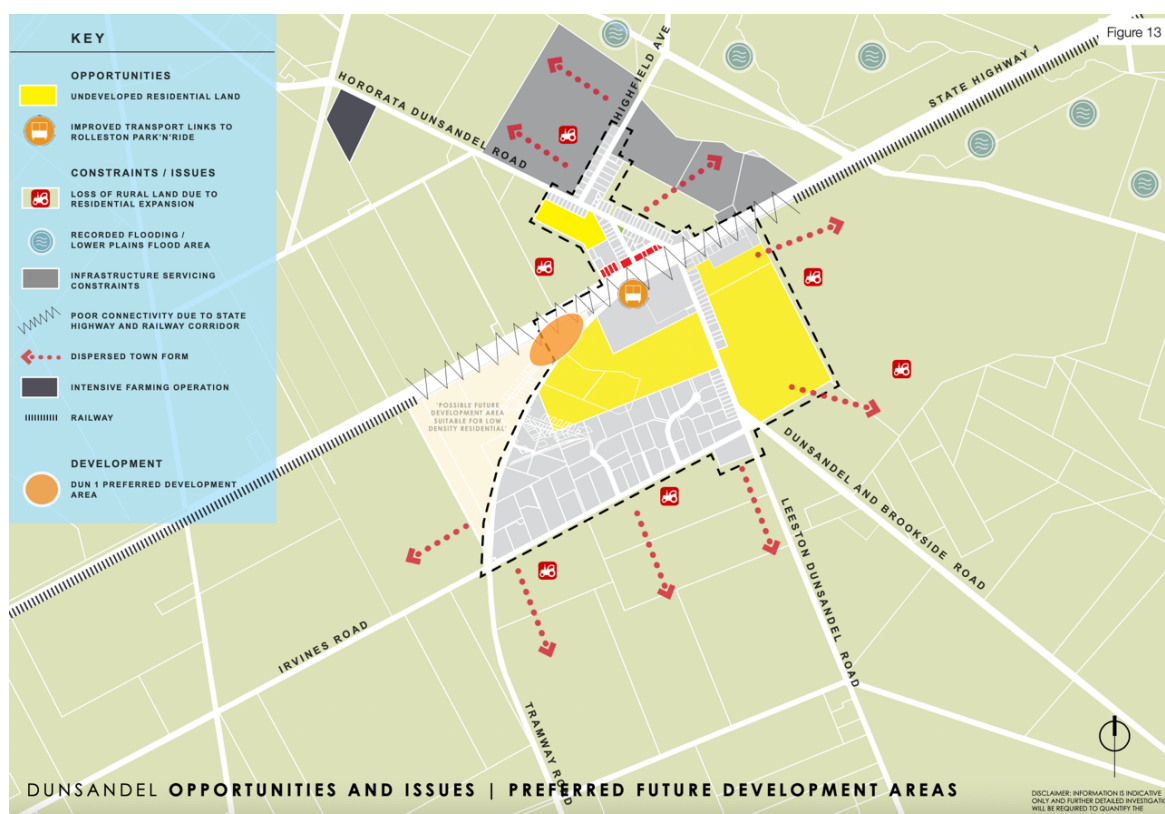


Figure 2: Preferred future development areas from *Ellesmere Plan 2031*

5.0 CONNECTIVITY

- 5.1 Connectivity refers to creating streets that are joined together in city-wide networks that provide more choices, and support increased resilience and safer places¹⁵. Well-connected street networks support walking and cycling.
- 5.2 With access to the north severed by SH1 and rural land to the west, the triangular site has only has connections to the Dunsandel township along Tramway Road on the south-eastern edge. There are no connections across Tramway Road into the existing LLRZ area. In my opinion this is a *low-moderate* level of connectivity.

¹⁵ *People Places Spaces: A design guide for urban New Zealand*, Ministry for the Environment, 2002, p.32

6.0 ACCESSIBILITY

- 6.1 Accessibility relates to providing access to public services and facilities particularly within easily walkable or cyclable distances¹⁶. The New Zealand Household Travel Survey (NZHTS) found that the average walking trip was 1.0km, and the average cycle trip distance was 4.0km¹⁷.
- 6.2 The majority of houses in the proposed site would be more than 1.0km from the shops and the school, and approximately 1.0km from the Dunsandel Domain and Community Centre. All of these facilities would be within a 4.0km average cycle distance.
- 6.3 There are no pedestrian or cycle facilities along Tramway Road. Dunsandel is not serviced by public transport and commuting for employment or groceries is likely to require car travel.
- 6.4 In my opinion the proposed site would have a *low-moderate* level of accessibility to public services and facilities as a result of location, a lack of walking and cycling facilities, and limited public transport options.

7.0 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AND CHARACTER

- 7.1 There are potential adverse effects from rural activities to the west, business activities to the north-east, and SH1 and the Main South Railway Line to the north. These can be managed with appropriate setbacks and buffer treatments but may reduce the level of residential amenity for future residents.

8.0 RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE ODP

- 8.1 If the Commissioners are of a mind to approve the rezoning request I recommend that the following changes are made to the ODP.
 - a. That the Tramway Road frontage is upgraded with a shared pedestrian cycle path;
 - b. That a rural interface treatment including open rural fencing and an appropriate setback with tree planting are specified in the ODP narrative;
 - c. That appropriate treatments for the northern and north-eastern boundaries are specified in the ODP narrative. For example: *For the full length of the SH1 boundary a 3m high acoustic bund and/or fence, and a 40 metre*

¹⁶ *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol*, Ministry for the Environment, 2005, p.21

¹⁷ New Zealand Household Travel Survey, Ministry of Transport, 2015-2018, <https://www.transport.govt.nz/statistics-and-insights/household-travel/>

building setback shall be provided. This acoustic treatment and setback shall be adapted along the north-eastern boundary to achieve equivalent acoustic protection from the adjacent business activities.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 In my opinion the proposed rezoning does not contribute to a compact or consolidated urban form for Dunsandel, and would have *low-moderate* levels of connectivity and accessibility

Hugh Nicholson

Urban Designer | Landscape Architect