

Introduction

We support the rezoning of 74 Weston Road, Waiareka Junction, from General Rural Zone to General Residential Zone and request that the Waitaki District Council amend the Proposed District Plan accordingly.

The site is strategically located adjacent to existing residential development and forms a logical extension of Oamaru's urban growth area. The proposed rezoning will facilitate a well-planned residential expansion that responds to current and future housing demand while making efficient use of existing infrastructure and services.

Suitability of the Land for Residential Development

The subject land is well positioned to accommodate residential growth due to its proximity to existing urban development, transport connections, schools, community facilities, and employment opportunities.

The site is contiguous with existing residential areas and represents an orderly expansion of the urban environment rather than isolated or fragmented development. Rezoning the land would create a logical urban boundary and avoid inefficient patterns of rural residential subdivision.

Highly Productive Land Considerations

The land does not meet the intent of land that should be protected as Highly Productive Land under the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land.

Factors supporting this position include:

- The property is located on the edge of the existing urban area and is influenced by surrounding residential development.
- The site's future role is more appropriately aligned with urban growth rather than long-term commercial food production.
- Rezoning would result in a relatively small loss of productive land compared with the significant public benefit of providing additional residential land supply.
- Urban expansion in this location is logical and efficient and avoids pressure for less suitable development elsewhere.

The site's proximity to existing residential areas means it has characteristics more closely associated with urban transition land than with large-scale productive rural land.

National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 (NPS-HPL)

Assessment of LUC 2 Land Under Clause 3.6

Parts of 74 Weston Road are identified as Land Use Capability Class 2 (LUC 2) land. While LUC 2 land is recognised as highly productive land under the NPS-HPL, the circumstances of this site support an exception to the general policy of avoiding urban rezoning. The NPS-HPL allows urban rezoning where specific tests are met and where the benefits of rezoning outweigh the long-term costs associated with the loss of highly productive land.

1. Relationship to Existing Urban Development

The subject site is located immediately adjacent to the existing urban extent of Oamaru and is surrounded by established residential development, transportation infrastructure, and urban services. The land forms a logical extension of the existing residential environment and does not represent isolated urban expansion into a wider productive rural landscape.

The site's location means that residential development can occur in a consolidated manner consistent with efficient urban growth principles, rather than creating fragmented settlement patterns.

2. Availability of Alternative Land

There are limited opportunities for residential expansion in the immediate locality that would provide the same access to existing infrastructure, services, employment, schools, and community facilities.

While alternative land may exist elsewhere within the district, alternative locations would not necessarily serve the same housing market or provide the same connectivity and infrastructure efficiencies as land adjoining the current urban boundary. The NPS-HPL requires consideration of whether reasonably practicable and feasible alternatives exist within the same locality and market. [\[bing.com\]](https://www.bing.com)

The subject site is therefore considered to represent one of the most logical and efficient locations for future residential growth in the Waiareka Junction/Oamaru fringe area.

3. Productive Capacity of the Land

Although identified as LUC 2, the productive value of the site must be considered in the context of its existing characteristics and urban interface.

Relevant considerations include:

- The property is located on the edge of an expanding urban environment.
- Residential development already occurs immediately adjacent to the site.

- The land is not part of a large, contiguous area of intensive primary production.
- Urban encroachment has reduced the long-term viability of productive rural activities through increasing reverse sensitivity effects.
- The property's strategic location for urban growth reduces its practical value for long-term primary production compared with larger rural landholdings elsewhere.

4. Environmental, Social, Cultural and Economic Benefits

The proposed rezoning would generate significant benefits including:

Housing Supply

- Increased residential land capacity for Oamaru.
- Greater housing choice for future residents.
- Support for population growth and housing affordability.

Efficient Infrastructure Use

- Ability to connect to existing water, wastewater, stormwater, roading and emergency service networks.
- Reduced infrastructure costs compared with more remote greenfield development.

Social Benefits

- Provision of residential land close to schools, employment opportunities and community services.
- Creation of a connected and sustainable neighbourhood.

Economic Benefits

- Construction investment and employment opportunities.
- Increased rates base and economic activity for the district.
- More efficient land use adjacent to existing urban development.

5. Overall Assessment

While portions of the site contain LUC 2 land, the property occupies a unique position on the urban edge of Oamaru and represents a logical and efficient area for future residential expansion.

The environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits arising from rezoning are considered to outweigh the long-term costs associated with the loss of productive land, particularly given:

- the site's close relationship with existing urban development;
- the efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- the need to provide additional residential land supply; and
- the reduced practical role of the site for long-term productive rural use.

Accordingly, the rezoning of 74 Weston Road from General Rural Zone to General Residential Zone is considered consistent with the intent of Clause 3.6 of the NPS-HPL and should be approved.

Three Waters Infrastructure Assessment

Water Supply and Firefighting Capacity

The proposed rezoning to General Residential Zone would enable development to connect to the existing reticulated water supply network servicing the Oamaru urban area. The property is located immediately adjacent to established residential development and existing infrastructure corridors, making the extension of water services both practical and efficient.

Future subdivision and development would be designed in accordance with Waitaki District Council engineering standards and any requirements of Infrastructure and Asset Management staff. Water supply infrastructure can be extended from nearby reticulated services to provide a reliable potable water supply for residential development.

Firefighting water supply requirements can be addressed through detailed subdivision design and engineering assessment. This may include appropriate pipe sizing, hydrant spacing, network upgrades where required, and compliance with New Zealand Firefighting Water Supplies Code of Practice. Any necessary upgrades can be identified and implemented as part of the subdivision and development process.

As development would occur in a staged and managed manner, the proposal is not expected to result in more than minor adverse effects on the public water supply network.

Wastewater Infrastructure

The proximity of the site to the existing urban area means that connection to Council's reticulated wastewater network is achievable.

Connection to the municipal wastewater system would provide a significantly more sustainable outcome than continued reliance on individual onsite wastewater treatment systems. Urban wastewater infrastructure is specifically designed to service residential development and provides improved environmental outcomes through centralised collection and treatment.

Detailed design and hydraulic assessment can be undertaken at subdivision stage to confirm network capacity and any localised upgrades that may be required. Given the location of the site on the urban fringe and adjacent to existing residential development, wastewater servicing is considered feasible and can be achieved without resulting in more than minor adverse effects on public infrastructure or the wider environment.

Stormwater Infrastructure

Stormwater generated by future residential development can be effectively managed through contemporary stormwater design practices.

Subdivision development would include measures such as:

- Onsite stormwater attenuation and detention.
- Controlled discharge rates.
- Swales, rain gardens, and treatment devices where appropriate.
- Protection of downstream receiving environments.
- Mitigation of peak stormwater flows.

Detailed stormwater management plans can be prepared at subdivision stage to demonstrate that post-development runoff rates do not adversely affect neighbouring properties, downstream infrastructure, or watercourses.

The site's size provides sufficient opportunity to incorporate stormwater management solutions within the development area. As a result, any adverse environmental effects can be appropriately avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

Overall Three Waters Assessment

The site is located adjacent to existing urban infrastructure and is capable of being serviced by water supply, wastewater, and stormwater networks. Infrastructure extensions and any necessary upgrades can be delivered through the normal subdivision and development process.

Accordingly, residential development of the site can occur without creating more than minor adverse effects on public infrastructure networks or the wider environment.

Transport Effects Assessment

Existing Transport Context

The subject site fronts Weston Road and is located close to the existing urban boundary of Oamaru. The surrounding road network currently accommodates residential, rural residential, and rural traffic movements and provides direct access to the wider Oamaru transport network.

The site is well positioned relative to schools, employment areas, community facilities, and commercial services, reducing the need for long-distance travel and supporting efficient transport patterns.

Effects of Residential Development

Rezoning to General Residential Zone would result in an increase in vehicle movements compared with the current rural use of the site. However, these traffic effects are anticipated and typical of urban growth occurring on the edge of an existing residential area.

Residential development generally generates dispersed traffic movements throughout the day, reducing the likelihood of significant peak traffic effects on the surrounding road network.

The scale of likely development is not expected to generate traffic volumes that would adversely affect the safety or efficiency of the wider transport network.

Roading Network Capacity

Weston Road already functions as an important transport corridor serving surrounding residential and rural areas. The proposed residential development would create incremental traffic growth that is considered capable of being accommodated within the existing network, subject to detailed assessment during future subdivision design.

Should traffic assessments identify specific requirements, the following measures could be implemented:

- Road widening at development frontage.
- Intersection improvements.
- Turning bays.
- Pedestrian facilities.
- Street lighting.
- Safe access design.
- Footpath and active transport connections.

Any necessary upgrades can be required as conditions of future subdivision consent and funded as part of development.

Active Transport and Connectivity

The site's proximity to existing residential areas creates opportunities for walking and cycling connections to nearby services and facilities.

Future development can incorporate:

- Footpath connections.
- Shared pathways.
- Safe crossing points.
- Links to existing residential streets.

This would support transport choice, reduce vehicle dependency, and contribute to a well-connected residential environment.

Overall Transport Assessment

While residential development will increase traffic movements compared with the current rural zoning, these effects are expected to be minor and manageable.

The site's location adjoining the existing urban area enables efficient integration with the surrounding transport network. Any localised infrastructure improvements required can be identified through future traffic engineering assessments and implemented through subdivision design.

Accordingly, the anticipated transport effects do not present a barrier to rezoning the property from General Rural Zone to General Residential Zone.