

Smales Farm Proposed Plan Change



Urban Design Assessment of Proposed Plan Change Provisions
Prepared for Smales Farm

21 March 2019



Boffa Miskell

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For A3 figures referenced in this document refer to the "Smales Farm Plan Change: Urban Design and Landscape Assessment Drawing Package" dated 21 March 2019. This drawing package contains 5 Sections and figures are numbered sequentially within each section (i.e. Part 1 - Figures 1-16; Part 2 – Figures 1-16; Part 3 - Figures 1-4, Part 4 – Figures 1-24; Part 5 – Figures 1-57).

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a comprehensive urban design assessment of the proposed plan change to the Smales 1 precinct of the Auckland Unitary Plan. The purpose of the plan change is to enable a greater density and diversity of development activity at Smales Farm including residential apartment living. This will allow the existing business park to transition to a vibrant mixed use development node that supports the existing investment made in mass rapid transit at the adjoining Northern Busway station. Such an outcome will help realise the new vision for the future of Smales Farm approved by the Smales Farm board in 2016, which seeks to become “*a vibrant people-focused place, to evolve beyond a single focus on being a great place to work to an all-encompassing mixed use community where people work, live and play*”.
- 1.2 Such a step change in the development of Smales Farm is consistent with the quality compact urban form approach to managing urban growth set out in the Regional Policy Statement. Smales Farm is part of the identified growth areas suitable for more intensive development under the Devonport-Takapuna local board area plan from 2014 and recently refreshed Auckland Plan 2050. In relation to the Auckland Plan Smales Farm is strategically located on the busway between the City Centre and Albany development node with strong links to the identified development areas of Takapuna and Northcote to the east and west. Smales Farm exhibits many of the characteristics the Auckland Plan sets out for identified development areas, including being well suited for significant development with access to employment and centres, being within walking distance of the strategic public transport network, having existing infrastructure capacity and market feasibility.
- 1.3 While a definite change in scale and intensity from the existing environment and current planned future form and character of the area, the Smales Farm site and context has many characteristics that from an urban design perspective make it highly suited to becoming a dense, vertically-oriented and mixed use development node within the immediate walking catchment of the busway station.
- 1.4 This urban design assessment has undertaken a detailed evaluation of the proposed plan change provisions and likely urban design and development outcomes that would result from them, as they ascertain to identified urban design issues and opportunities associated with a dense mixed use concentration of tall buildings. These matters canvas the range of urban design issues presented by the planned change in scale and activity mix sought by the plan change, that seeks to provide for tall buildings up to 75-100m height while ensuring a walkable urban environment of high design quality and amenity results both for people within the precinct and in relation to surrounding streets, neighbouring areas and wider urban context.
- 1.5 A summary of conclusions reached in relation to each of the key urban design matters assessed in this report are set out below. Overall, it is considered that the proposed plan change provisions are appropriate from an urban design perspective in enabling a dense, vibrant mixed use development node to emerge at Smales Farm in time while providing for a high degree of amenity and managing the potential for adverse effects both within the precinct and in relation to surrounding streets, public realm and neighbouring zones as well as the contribution future high rise development will make to the wider city skyline and built character.

Mix and Intensity of Uses

- 1.6 The site is well suited to rezoning that supports a greater intensity and mix of uses than that currently provided for under the Business Park Zone.
- 1.7 Key site and context attributes that support more intensive use including residential development include: the precincts' accessibility as a highly connected multi-modal transport node, its location along a mixed use corridor of Taharoto Road, the high degree of separation from surrounding smaller scale residential areas, the size of the site, its remaining development capacity and adaptability of existing site development, the existing retail, service businesses and amenities including landscape amenity that can cater to needs of future residents as well as workers and visitors to the site, and the high levels of visual amenity including the opportunity for expansive coastal and city views from taller multi-storey apartment buildings.
- 1.8 The proposed plan change provides for a genuine mix of activities with a good balance between commercial activity – capped at the existing GFA limit of 162,000m² – and residential activity. By continuing the proportionate allocation of floorspace for supporting retail and commercial services activities as new office and apartment buildings are developed, the plan change appropriately allows for the ongoing growth and diversification of these supporting activities that meet the growing needs of residents, workers and visitors to the precinct and play an important role in achieving the desired vitality and pedestrian-oriented development patterns at ground level.

Providing for Tall Buildings

- 1.9 Smales Farm is considered an ideal location to provide for tall buildings from an urban design perspective for the same site and contextual factors that mean it can readily support a greater intensity and mix of activities than currently provided for.
- 1.10 A height strategy has been adopted that appropriately concentrates the taller building heights of 75-100m in the central and western parts of the site beside the motorway corridor, and transitioning down in height to the established scale of approximately 27m around the site perimeter with Northcote, Taharoto and Shakespeare Roads where the precinct adjoins lower height mixed use and residential areas.
- 1.11 The range of building development standards and assessment criteria proposed suitably address matters of on-site and off-site amenity and potential for adverse environmental effects including visual amenity, dominance, privacy, wind, and shading effects.
- 1.12 Such an approach is consistent with that adopted by the Unitary Plan in other zones such as the Metropolitan Centre that enable and guide development of a comparable height and scale to that sought for the Smales Farm precinct.

Ensuring Built Form Quality

- 1.13 The plan change has recognised the need to ensure the design quality of buildings is maintained as the height and intensity of development at Smales Farm is increased. The proposed plan change maintains the approach taken by the Unitary Plan in comparable business and centre zones through identifying the design of all new buildings and external additions and alterations as restricted discretionary activities (other than small changes to existing buildings provided for as permitted activities).

- 1.14 The assessment criteria proposed provide an appropriately broad scope to consider a wide range of design quality issues for mixed use developments relating not just to building design, but the integration of each stage of development with the balance of the precinct in terms of provision of and integration with surrounding open spaces and considering matters of pedestrian access, safety and amenity.

Walkable Urban Form and Pedestrian Public Spaces

- 1.15 The future vision and planning for Smales Farm has recognised that improving the walkability and pedestrian-priority of the publicly accessible streets and spaces within the precinct is a critical foundation to achieving the desired development outcome of a vibrant mixed use and transit-oriented development node.
- 1.16 The proposed precinct provisions include the requirement for a new pedestrian plaza to be developed at the heart of the precinct as development occurs in future, as well as ongoing recognition and regard to key pedestrian linkages integrating the precinct with the established public street entrances on surrounding streets and the busway station. Specific assessment criteria have been developed to address matters of pedestrian access, safety and amenity in each stage of future development.
- 1.17 Collectively, these development standards and assessment criteria provide multiple opportunities to address issues of pedestrian access, safety and amenity and ensure each successive stage of future development at Smales Farm is working towards a highly walkable urban environment.

Providing for Residential Amenity

- 1.18 For future residents living within apartment buildings at Smales Farm, the development standards proposed, including the residential outlook control, maximum tower dimension and building separation standards, 20% minimum landscaped area requirement, specific assessment criteria relating to managing ground floor residential activity, and other criteria relating to landscaped open space, pedestrian access and amenity enable consideration of a wide range of matters relating to providing for and maintaining residential amenity within the precinct as each stage of development occurs.

Public Realm Interface with Surrounding Streets

- 1.19 The proposed plan change has recognised that the Smales Farm precinct is a prominently located standalone piece of land surrounding by public streets to the north, south and east and the major combined movement corridor of the Northern Busway and Northern Motorway to the west that is the central spine of the North Shore transport network.
- 1.20 The building height and massing analysis that has informed the proposed plan change has considered the relative sensitivity of these contexts and made a clear distinction between the height opportunity afforded by the broad state highway corridor and the desired outcome of more pedestrian-oriented, mixed use buildings of a human scale interfacing with surrounding streets on Taharoto, Northcote and Shakespeare Roads.
- 1.21 The plan change will enable medium rise buildings to define and activate the street edge on Shakespeare, Taharoto and Northcote Road in future, a beneficial outcome in urban design terms in this intensifying mixed use environment where the suburban

business park controls have previously resulted in a lack of integration and engagement between development within Smales Farm and surrounding streets.

- 1.22 The proximity and visibility of the taller building development to the busway and motorway corridor is considered a desirable scale and form of development for this context that will in time signal the precinct as a significant node of mixed use activity within the overall North Shore context.

Relationship to Neighbouring Zones

- 1.23 The combination of stepped heights transitioning down to neighbouring zones, building in relation to boundary standards that will continue to apply, development standards that manage building location, spacing and bulk, and assessment criteria relating to design and off-site effects, provide an appropriate planning framework that establishes an appropriate scale relationship to neighbouring zones and a restricted discretionary design regime that will require each stage of building development to address the potential for adverse effects on these neighbouring areas.

Legibility of Built form Node

- 1.24 A legible transit-oriented development node that is visible within the wider city as an identifiable cluster of tall buildings is considered a desired urban design outcome. Such an outcome at Smales Farm would serve to visually reinforce the importance that has been placed on this location as a highly accessible place offering a dense and diverse concentration of mixed use activity immediately adjoining the busway station. This will elevate its place in the future built character and identity of Auckland commensurate with its increased role as a destination for people from across the North Shore and wider city and future home to a significant dense new urban residential neighbourhood.
- 1.25 In enabling such an outcome, the proposed plan provisions include assessment criteria to help ensure this positive outcome is achieved over time through an attractive cluster of residential towers. These measures include promoting height variation amongst the tall buildings through the provision of limited floor space between 75-100m, progressively reducing the maximum building floorplate dimension with building height to require buildings to be slimmer and less bulky at upper levels, the residential outlook control, and assessment criteria that require consideration of the physical and visual impact of towers on the wider cityscape.
- 1.26 These measures will appropriately provide for the desired outcome of a legible and distinctive node of high rise buildings that will have a positive presence on the North Shore skyline as it develops over time.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This report provides an urban design assessment of the Smales Farm Proposed Plan Change (“plan change”) to the Auckland Unitary Plan Operative in Part (“AUP”). It should be read in conjunction with the standalone landscape and visual assessment, a companion report prepared by Boffa Miskell that assesses the appropriateness of the proposed plan change provisions in relation to the potential visual effects that may result from the scale and form of built development that could be developed as a result of the plan change including the potential for effects on the landscape values of the nearby Lake Pupuke Outstanding Natural Feature.
- 2.2 This urban design assessment sets out a detailed evaluation of the proposed plan change provisions as they pertain to identified urban design issues and opportunities – in particular relating to the desire to provide for a greater mix of uses and development intensity at Smales Farm including tall buildings up to 75-100m high, while ensuring a walkable urban form of high design quality that provides for appropriate levels of amenity both within the precinct and in relation to surrounding streets and neighbouring areas.
- 2.3 In recent years the Smales Farm board has undertaken a strategic review of the current development plan, including re-visiting the established development model, scale and form of development and mix of activities envisaged for the site. This has resulted in the creation of a new vision for the future of Smales Farm adopted by the board, together with a revised spatial masterplan developed by BVN Architects Australia that will guide the future transformation of the site from traditional office park to a more diverse urban community.
- 2.4 Boffa Miskell Limited was engaged by Smales Farm in late 2015 to advise on the potential urban design and landscape amenity issues and opportunities associated with the redefined future vision for the ongoing development of the property to enable a more vertical mixed use form of transit-oriented development.
- 2.5 This involvement has been extensive since this time, working closely with Smales Farm, BVN architects as lead masterplanners and the wider plan change team including planning consultant Vaughan Smith and Stantec TDG on transportation planning and engineering. Our involvement has included:
- international benchmarking of transit-oriented development opportunities and urban design and development outcomes against international best practice, particularly Australian cities and Vancouver, Canada with respect to vertical mixed use development and transit-oriented development principles;
 - a contextual urban design analysis of the site’s locational attributes that inform suitability for transit-oriented development;
 - testing of the concept masterplan prepared by BVN architects against an initial draft set of building envelope and other key development controls;
 - 3d modelling to test and analyse a range of potential building height, bulk and massing scenarios in terms of overall building envelopes on the Smales Farm site. These have been visualised contextually in relation to the existing environment and planned future built character in terms of development potential under the Auckland Unitary Plan;

- review and input into development of draft plan change provisions including precinct plans, objectives, policies, controls and assessment criteria;
 - engagement with North Shore Hospital with respect their future development plans and integration of these with the future vision for Smales Farm, particularly with respect to improving key pedestrian linkages between the Busway Station, Smales Farm and the Hospital across Taharoto Road.
- 2.6 This has involved regular meetings with the Smales Farm plan change team as well as with planning officers of the Auckland Council and Ms Rebecca Skidmore, urban design and landscape consultant to Council with respect the plan change request as the proposed development has taken shape during 2016 to 2018.
- 2.7 Boffa Miskell has a long association with the development of Smales Farm, having been involved in the development of the original masterplan and associated landscape design for the overall site, as well as in the design and consenting of the staged development of the site that has occurred to date since that time.

Scope and Purpose of this Report

- 2.8 The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive urban design assessment of the proposed plan change provisions. It should be read in conjunction with the urban design and landscape assessment drawing package that provides a comprehensive graphic summary of the context analysis, concept masterplan, proposed precinct plans, and 3d zoning views and visual simulations and associated visibility and viewpoint analysis.
- 2.9 Sections 3-9 of the report sets out the existing context and some of the bigger picture rationale and strategic context for change from an urban design perspective including details of the vision for the future of Smales Farm, the purpose of the proposed plan change in enabling the realisation of that vision, and the relevant statutory planning context. This part also takes account of the existing and future built context and character of Smales Farm and the strategic context and case for change from an urban design perspective.
- 2.10 Sections 10-13 provide the urban design assessment of the proposed plan change provisions. It first reviews international best practice principles for transit-oriented development and providing for tall buildings following an international benchmarking exercise and case study research. It then sets out a set of desired urban design outcomes developed by Boffa Miskell to inform development of the plan change and the assessment of the proposed provisions from an urban design, landscape and visual amenity perspective that follows. These desired urban design outcomes relate to key issues identified during the development of the plan change. These relate to managing potential effects of the future built form and activity mix on the amenity values for future residents, workers and visitors within the Smales Farm precinct, and in relation to the immediate urban context and character of the mixed use environs of the Taharoto Road corridor, as well as ensuring the plan change is providing for the desired urban form, activity mix and amenity values within the precinct.

Site Location and Extent of Plan Change Area

- 2.11 The plan change relates exclusively to the extent of Smales Farm landholdings that occupy an entire city block bounded by Northcote Road to the south, Taharoto Road to

the east, Shakespeare Road Extension to the north and the State Highway 1 transport corridor of the Northern Motorway and Northern Busway to the west. The Smales Farm Busway Station is sited to the northwest with a small section adjoining Smales Farm, with access off the cul de sac Shakespeare Road Extension that has formed a public road reserve formalising access to the busway station on land that was once owned by Smales Farm.

- 2.12 The extent of the Smales Farm precinct and existing site development and features is clearly depicted in Figure 2, Part 1 of the drawing package. The precinct has a site area of approximately 10.8 hectares and has street frontages of 300m to Northcote Road, 375m to Taharoto Road and 200m to Shakespeare Road extension.
- 2.13 Smales Farm sits within a broader swathe of commercial and community uses along the Taharoto and Shakespeare Road corridors around the western side of Lake Pupuke between the Anzac Street/Killarney corner and the North Shore Hospital. Taharoto Road is a key commercial corridor between the Takapuna Metropolitan Centre to the south of the lake and the Milford Town Centre in the north as well as the Forrest Hill and Wairau Valley areas to the north and northwest and Northcote and Birkenhead areas to the west and southwest accessed via Northcote Road that forms the southern boundary of Smales Farm. The immediate context includes the North Shore Hospital directly opposite Smales Farm across Taharoto Road, The Poynton Metlifecare retirement village, a number of schools including Northcote Intermediate School, and Westlake Girls High School, as well as the Smales Farm Bus Station on the Northern Busway and a range of other properties zoned Mixed Use and Mixed Housing Urban. These properties are currently occupied by a mix of residential and commercial activities but tending to transition towards commercial or mixed use development over time.

3.0 The Evolution of Smales Farm

- 3.1 The original vision and masterplan for the staged redevelopment of the Smales Farm property – conceived as the Smales Farm Technology Office Park – was created in the late 1990s. This vision was about becoming a premier location on Auckland's North Shore for corporate offices, with an aspiration to become '*New Zealand's best place to work and do business*'.
- 3.2 The masterplan that was developed at that time was based upon developing a spacious campus-style development of medium rise commercial office buildings set within an open spacious landscape setting; a development typology typical of the suburban business or office park model first developed for the likes of IBM in 1960's North America.
- 3.3 Key aspects of the original Smales Farm masterplan, characteristic of the model generally, included:
 - a campus style layout of a series of commercial office buildings, developed as standalone buildings with a high degree of physical separation from each other;
 - an expansive and visually open landscape setting, including buildings surrounded by extensive surface car parking as well as treed grassed areas and other landscaped

areas providing seating, strolling and “lunchtime amenity” for the office worker population;

- conceived with little need for interaction or exchange between occupants and users of the different buildings, contributing to the high degree of separation between buildings and sometimes leading to a lack of direct and convenient walking desire lines between buildings or other destinations from one quadrant to another, reflecting an understanding that all users will arrive at each individual building or precinct by car and with no need to walk to other parts of the site;
 - an absence of non-commercial activity, such as housing; and
 - a corresponding lack of activity and vibrancy at nights and weekends when the majority of businesses are closed and few people visit the site.
- 3.4 The development platforms were arranged in quadrants arranged around the axial structure of internal streets, The Avenue and The Boulevard, that provide for direct access through and around the site from each of the site’s three public street frontages. A large roundabout with water fountain feature marks the centre of the site where these three internal roads meet.
- 3.5 The masterplan has been steadily realised through staged development of the site, beginning with the distinctive curved form of the (now) Vodafone Building on the corner of Northcote and Taharoto Roads, first developed as the headquarters for Clear Communications. Due to its prominence and defining presence on this major intersection coming on and off the Northern Motorway at Northcote Road, the early development of this building quickly came to define Smales Farm as a major new location for commercial office activity on the North Shore with buildings of a scale and architectural quality and character markedly different from the scale and character of development in the surrounding area and a marked change from the site’s previously undeveloped farm-like state as a remnant of a once rural part of the North Shore.
- 3.6 Further stages of development have now established four additional major commercial office buildings; in order of development these are Air New Zealand building, Q4 building, Sovereign building and most recently, the B:HIVE building that opened for business in late 2017. These five buildings comprise approximately 58,000m² of commercial floor space (GFA).
- 3.7 The balance of future development areas identified by the original masterplan across the site are currently developed for use either as surface carparking or open and treed grassed areas, that provide on-site landscape amenity for workers and visitors to the Farm and provide flexible spaces for a range of events and activities that occur. Additionally, a stormwater management area incorporating detention ponds and associated wetland planting areas has been established along the western boundary with the Northern Busway and busway station. The original masterplan envisaged the staged redevelopment of these areas over time for additional commercial office buildings incorporating basement carparking, to be rolled out as development demand enabled.
- 3.8 Ultimately, the masterplan, envisaged up to 17 standalone commercial office buildings of 105,000m² in Gross Floor Area (GFA). Buildings would vary in footprint, form and scale but typically be 4-6 storeys in height. Each building would be located in a standalone manner with a considerable degree of separation from other buildings, thereby continuing to be set within an open spacious and treed landscape setting consistent with the desired campus style development pattern of office business parks.

These qualities were envisaged to be maintained even once full build-out was achieved as depicted in the illustrative birds eye view (Part 1, Figure 1).

- 3.9 The development model has always had a strong custodial aspect and long-term view given the decision by the Smales family to retain ownership of both the land and all buildings and oversee all associated property development and management functions. This is reflected in the consistently high quality of architectural and landscape design achieved in each stage of development and the ongoing upkeep of the property that has maintained its identity and image as a high quality business park in an attractive setting and highly accessible location – qualities that have served the development well as Auckland and the North Shore have continued to grow and diversify rapidly in the 20 or so years since its inception.
- 3.10 As of 2018 and the completion of the B: HIVE building, Smales Farm has completed approximately 55% of the total development envisaged by the first masterplan or 36% of the total theoretical 162,000 GFA cap on commercial floor space under the Smales Farm precinct planning provisions that had been incorporated within the former North Shore District Plan, and largely rolled over into the Auckland Unitary Plan.
- 3.11 In later years, approaching the tipping point of the half way mark in the development of the business park after some 20 years, Smales Farm has been conscious that a choice was approaching to either continue on with the staged development in accordance with the original masterplan or to take stock and consider a change in direction for the future development of the site in recognition of the changing conditions both in the commercial office sector and the wider urban growth and diversification of Auckland. The change in direction is consistent with trends internationally where office parks are becoming less popular and many are being converted to residential.

4.0 Vision for the Future of Smales Farm

- 4.1 In 2016 the Smales Farm board approved a new strategic guiding document and masterplan that established a new vision for the future of Smales Farm.
- 4.2 The vision is clear, to step away from the traditional office park model and transform into a more diverse urban community. The Smales Farm vision for the future is: *“a vibrant people-focused place - to evolve beyond a single focus on being a great place to work to an all-encompassing mixed use community where people work, live and play”*.
- 4.3 A number of guiding principles were developed by Smales Farm that help to underpin and articulate this new vision for the future. These principles were informed by global influencing trends that reflect a shift towards more vibrant people-focused urban places internationally and in the local Auckland context as witnessed by the success of emerging precincts such as Britomart, Wynyard Quarter and City Works Depot. The principles include:
 - **Diversity of Use** –the vibrancy that occurs when commercial, hospitality, retail and living converge and the new opportunities and synergies that come from allowing multiple audiences to use the site at different times of the day and week;

- **Walkability** –creating an environment where people come first, which means switching from a focus on driving and carparking to promoting walking as the most important transport mode, recognised as the key to success in all people-focused places and TOD developments internationally.
 - **Smart Transport** –recognising that Smales Farm has the location, scale and resources to trial and lead innovations in movement and travel that reduce auto-dependency and single occupancy car travel including integrating with and leveraging off the multi-modal transport access including the busway station and emergence of new cycleway infrastructure.
 - **Sustainability and Wellness** – valuing environmental sustainability and strengthening links between good design, sustainability and green spaces and practices to increase health, wellbeing and productivity for all users of Smales Farm and the wider community.
 - **Environment and Landscaping** – recognising that the design of outdoor landscape and public spaces has a major influence on the vibrancy of the site and ensuring spaces are designed with community activation, use, workability and liveability in mind.
 - **Hospitality** - developing new, vibrant and intimate, people-focused offerings that complement existing services, and diversify and extend the offering to workers, visitors and future residents through the day and into the night.
 - **Placemaking** – designing spaces and facilitating events and activities that enhance the feeling of vibrancy and grow community through greater interaction and exchange.
 - **Community** – actively grow and facilitate the community networks and identity of Smales Farm and strengthen the degree of shared exchange, experiences and sense of belonging, recognising that a place is more than just bricks and mortar.
 - **Flexibility** - ensuring Smales Farm is well placed to continually adapt to a fast-changing future including adaptability of buildings to changing needs and technologies.
 - **Partnership Approach** - the long-term custodianship approach that Smales Farm takes to intensively managing and servicing the buildings, spaces and activities on Smales Farm and the way this approach affords opportunities to do things differently to the success of the Precinct.
 - **Quality** - maintaining the high standard of quality in buildings, landscape spaces and management of activities and users within Smales Farm as the precinct diversifies and grows.
- 4.4 Central to this vision is to become a truly mixed use development – introducing residential development currently not envisaged or provided for – and intensifying the scale and form of development to create a more concentrated mix and diversity of activities that co-exist on the site. This will lead to greater vibrancy and pedestrian-oriented activity of benefit to a greater diversity of users – residents, visitors and the general public as well as office workers.

Concept Masterplan

- 4.5 The new vision for the future of Smales Farm was developed in tandem with a new concept masterplan prepared by BVN Architects in Sydney. BVN architects have an established connection to the development of Smales Farm, having co-designed the B:Hive building recently completed and earlier Sovereign Building, as well as

involvement in a number of innovative commercial workplace, residential and mixed use developments in Australia and internationally.

- 4.6 This concept masterplan, which was originally prepared for the strategic business planning purposes of Smales Farm Management, has as part of the development of this plan change request been tested and updated to inform and reflect the development of the proposed plan change provisions. In particular the concept masterplan has been used to test proposed development standards influencing building height and dimensions, setbacks and separation distance. A 3D modelling and GFA update of the concept masterplan built form has subsequently been undertaken to be consistent with the height, massing and built form of development under the proposed plan change provisions.
- 4.7 This updated model has been utilised as the basis for all the concept masterplan drawings, 3D modelling and visual simulations depicted in the urban design and landscape assessment drawing package. The 166,000m² commercial floor space of the concept masterplan is in the order of the 162,000m² maximum cap under both the existing Unitary Plan and carried over to the plan change. The approximate 140,000m² of residential floor space modelled is consistent with the 138,000m² figure used in the development staging and economic assessment that identifies this amount as providing a significant contribution to apartment dwelling supply on the North Shore over the long term. Given this amount of residential GFA provides for a long-term pipeline of residential supply over 30 years it is considered a reasonable basis for understanding the likely scale and form of development that might result from the plan change provisions over the medium to long term somewhat beyond the life of the current Unitary Plan.

5.0 Purpose of Proposed Plan Change

- 5.1 The purpose of the Proposed Plan Change (“PPC”) is to enable a greater density and diversity of development at Smales Farm in terms of the scale and form of built development and the mix of activities provided for. Planning provisions to provide for these outcomes are required to support the vision to transition Smales Farm from its current relatively low intensity and single use focus as a suburban business park to a vibrant, mixed use transit-oriented development.
- 5.2 In essence the Plan Change seeks to intensify the Precinct by introducing provision for residential activity within the Precinct and taller more vertical forms of development, while maintaining the quantum of commercial office space already provided for and continuing the provision for supporting appropriate retail and commercial services in proportion to the total quantum of development across the site.

6.0 Relevant Planning Context

- 6.1 The planning assessment prepared by Vaughan Smith Planning sets out a comprehensive account of the planning context for the plan change. This section sets out a summary of key provisions relating to urban design considerations relevant to this assessment.

Resource Management Act

- 6.2 Part 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991 ("RMA") sets out the purpose and principles of the Act. Section 5 states that the purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Key considerations under the Resource Management Act of direct relevance to this urban design, landscape and visual assessment relate to a number of section 6 and 7 matters under the Act.
- 6.3 Section 6 sets out the matters of importance that must be recognised and provided for in achieving the purpose of the RMA.
- 6.4 The protection of outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is identified as a matter of national importance in section 6(b). The precinct is in proximity to and forms part of the visual catchment and western built backdrop to Lake Pupuke that is an identified outstanding natural feature (ONF) in the Auckland Unitary Plan as an important volcanic feature.
- 6.5 Section 7 identifies a range of matters that shall be given particular regard to in achieving the purpose of the RMA. Of relevance to this proposal is section 7 (b) the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources, 7(c) the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values and 7 (f) maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.
- 6.6 In the context of the urban design matters considered by this assessment, potential effects on amenity values primarily relate the scale and form of development enabled by the plan change and how this may affect those qualities that contribute to people's use and enjoyment of the Smales Farm Precinct and adjoining areas. This includes consideration of the legibility and character of future built form and its relationship to adjacent development and public realm.
- 6.7 Potential effects relevant to this assessment primarily relate to the potential effects of building scale including building dominance, shading, privacy and overlooking. Visual amenity effects including changes in specific views, and to the built landscape character of the wider context more generally, are addressed by the landscape and visual assessment.
- 6.8 Additionally, there are other important amenity considerations in relation to public access and use of adjoining streets and public places and the publicly accessible streets and open spaces within the Precinct, particularly in terms of pedestrians accessing the area by foot. Consideration is also given to the potential amenity effects of providing for a greater diversity and density of activities within the Precinct.

Auckland Unitary Plan

Regional Policy Statement

- 6.9 The Regional Policy Statement contains a number of objectives and policies of relevance to urban design considerations in assessing the suitability of Smales Farm to provide for a greater scale and intensity of development and diversity of uses.
- 6.10 An overarching intention of the Regional Policy Statement is to provide for the anticipated growth and intensification of Auckland. Chapter B2 on Urban Growth and Form seeks to enable and provide for urban growth and form in an integrated and compact manner, while maintaining quality design, and providing for open space and social facilities.
- 6.11 In particular, a number of the urban growth and form objectives and policies in relation to achieving a quality compact urban form, quality built environment and providing for residential growth are of particular relevance to this urban design assessment. Key objectives and policies at B2.2 are referenced below:

B2.2 A Quality Compact Urban Form

Objective (1) A quality compact urban form that enables all of the following:

- (a) a higher-quality urban environment;*
- (b) greater productivity and economic growth;*
- (c) better use of existing infrastructure and efficient provision of new infrastructure;*
- (d) improved and more effective public transport;*
- (e) greater social and cultural vitality;*
- (f) better maintenance of rural character and rural productivity; and*
- (g) reduced adverse environmental effects.*

- 6.12 In particular the following policies that relate to quality compact urban form:

- (5) Enable higher residential intensification:*
 - (a) in and around centres;*
 - (b) along identified corridors; and*
 - (c) close to public transport, social facilities (including open space) and employment opportunities.*
- (6) Identify a hierarchy of centres that supports a quality compact urban form:*
 - (a) at a regional level through the city centre, metropolitan centres and town centres which function as commercial, cultural and social focal points for the region or sub-regions; and*
 - (b) at a local level through local and neighbourhood centres that provide for a range of activities to support and serve as focal points for their local communities.*

B2.3 A Quality Built Environment

Objective (1) A quality built environment where subdivision, use and development do all of the following:

- (a) respond to the intrinsic qualities and physical characteristics of the site and area, including its setting;*
- (b) reinforce the hierarchy of centres and corridors;*
- (c) contribute to a diverse mix of choice and opportunity for people and communities;*
- (d) maximise resource and infrastructure efficiency;*
- (e) are capable of adapting to changing needs; and*
- (f) respond and adapt to the effects of climate change.*

6.13 In particular Policy 3 under 2.3.2:

- (3) Enable a range of built forms to support choice and meet the needs of Auckland's diverse population.*

B2.4 Residential Growth

6.14 The following objectives under B2.4.1:

- (1) Residential intensification supports a quality compact urban form.*
- (2) Residential areas are attractive, healthy and safe with quality development that is in keeping with the planned built character of the area.*
- (3) Land within and adjacent to centres and corridors or in close proximity to public transport and social facilities (including open space) or employment opportunities is the primary focus for residential intensification.*
- (4) An increase in housing capacity and the range of housing choice which meets the varied needs and lifestyles of Auckland's diverse and growing population.*
- (5) Non-residential activities are provided in residential areas to support the needs of people and communities.*

6.15 Under this objective, policy 2.3.2 (2) that says:

- (2) Enable higher residential intensities in areas closest to centres, the public transport network, large social facilities, education facilities, tertiary education facilities, healthcare facilities and existing or proposed open space.*

Business Park Zone and Smales Farm Precinct Provisions

6.16 Key provisions of the Business Park Zone and Smales Farm Precinct (Smales 1 Precinct) that inform the current scale and form of development that can occur on Smales Farm, of direct relevance to this urban design and landscape assessment include:

- Enables commercial office development of up to 162,000m² GFA

- Provides for accessory activities (including retail, food and beverage, commercial services) up to a maximum of approximately 9800m², to be developed pro-rata with the build out of commercial office activities. Taking into account existing development within the precinct, additional accessory activities can be developed at a rate of 500m²/10,000m² of commercial GFA, so that these activities remain accessory to the commercial office activity in proportion to the overall quantum of commercial development so as to meet demand for food and beverage and convenience goods which meet the day to day needs of workers and visitors to the precinct;
 - A maximum height plane set at RL48.5m which is based upon 23.4m above the mean street level taken from a midpoint along the Taharoto Road frontage. A version of this height plane control has been in effect since the establishment of Smales Farm under the former North Shore District Plan. In effect, it enables building heights of approximately 25m across most of the site with the fall in the western part of the site adjoining the motorway corridor enabling 1-2 storeys of additional height at the western edge.
 - Height in relation to boundary controls (HIRB) in relation to adjoining residential zones, these HIRB controls include:
 - 3m + 45 degrees in relation to the Mixed Housing Urban (“MHU”) underlying residential zone of West Lake Girls High School (“WLGHS”) to the north of the site across Shakespeare Road, taken from the school / MHU boundary;
 - 3m + 45 degrees in relation to the MHU zoned properties to the south of the site across Northcote Road, taken from the MHU boundary on the south side of the road reserve.
 - 4.5m + 45 degrees in relation to the Open Space – Sport and Active Recreation Zone of AF Thomas Park to the west.
 - No such controls apply relative to the Mixed Use zoned properties to the east across Taharoto Road.
 - A 2m landscape buffer zone of 2m in depth must be provided along the street frontage between the street and carparking, loading or service areas which are visible from the street frontage.
 - Maximum impervious site area of 80%.
 - Minimum landscaped area of 20%.
 - Wind environment control for all buildings above 25m in height, consistent with all centre zones and other non-industrial business zones.
- 6.17 New buildings in the Business Park Zone are a restricted discretionary activity. Key matters for discretion relevant to this assessment include the following under H15.8.1(3) that apply to all new buildings and alterations and additions not otherwise provided for:
- (a) *the design and appearance of buildings in so far as it affects the existing and future amenity values of public streets and spaces used by significant numbers of people. This includes:*
 - (i) *the contribution that such buildings make to the attractiveness pleasantness and enclosure of the public space;*
 - (ii) *the maintenance or enhancement of amenity for pedestrians using the public space or street;*

- (iii) *the provision of convenient and direct access between the street and building for people of all ages and abilities;*
 - (iv) *measures adopted for limiting the adverse visual effects of any blank walls along the frontage of the public space; and*
 - (v) *the effectiveness of screening of car parking and service areas from the view of people using the public space.*
- (b) *the provision of floor to floor heights that will provide the flexibility of the space to be adaptable to a wide variety of use over time;*
 - (c) *the extent of glazing provided on walls fronting public streets and public spaces and the benefits it provides in terms of:*
 - (i) *the attractiveness and pleasantness of the public space and the amenity for people using or passing through that space;*
 - (ii) *the degree of visibility that it provides between the public space and the building interior; and*
 - (iii) *the opportunities for passive surveillance of the street from the ground floor of buildings.*
 - (d) *the provision of verandahs to provide weather protection in areas used, or likely to be used, by significant numbers of pedestrians;*
 - (e) *the application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles to the design and layout of buildings adjoining public spaces; and*
 - (f) *the effects of creation of new roads and/or service lanes on the matters listed above.*
- 6.18 All new buildings and alterations and additions to buildings not otherwise provided for require assessment against the policies that apply to all centre and other non-industrial business zones. Key policies relevant to this assessment include the following at H15.3:
- (3) *Require development to be of a quality and design that positively contributes to:*
 - (a) *planning and design outcomes identified in this Plan for the relevant zone;*
 - (b) *the visual quality and interest of streets and other public open spaces; and*
 - (c) *pedestrian amenity, movement, safety and convenience for people of all ages and abilities.*
 - (6) *Encourage buildings at the ground floor to be adaptable to a range of uses to allow activities to change over time.*

7.0 Existing Urban Context and Character

Immediate Site Context and Character

- 7.1 Smales Farm is a large 10.8 ha standalone site bound by public road corridors on all four sides – Taharoto Road to the east, Northcote Road to the south, Shakespeare Road extension to the north and the Northern Motorway/Busway corridor to the east (refer Figures 2-4 in Part 1 of the drawing package). The Smales Farm Busway Station, accessed from the end of Shakespeare Road extension and the bus station parcel of land has an adjoining property boundary with the north-western corner of the Smales Farm precinct. Aside from the bus station, all other neighbouring land uses are separated from the Precinct by public road reserve or designated transport corridor.
- 7.2 Taharoto Road is typical of a major arterial route, comprising a broad 30.0 metre wide road reserve with between 6 and 7 traffic lanes in the stretch between Smales Farm and the North Shore Hospital providing high vehicular throughput capacity as a key arterial connection between Milford and Takapuna and on and off the Northern Motorway at the Northcote Road interchange immediately to the south of Smales Farm.
- 7.3 While once a much quieter, largely residential street corridor, Taharoto Road has gradually evolved to become a more mixed use commercial corridor, with former residential dwellings being adapted to house a range of commercial business premises as well as new purpose built buildings for commercial office, healthcare and other service businesses uses making the most of the high profile and proximity to the North Shore Hospital and Smales Farm as a more concentrated node of larger scale commercial and institutional / healthcare activity partway around the western side of Lake Pupuke between Takapuna and Milford centres (Mixed Use Context, Part 1, Figure 12).
- 7.4 To the immediate east across Taharoto Road from Smales Farm lies the North Shore Hospital, which occupies a large site through to Lake Pupuke with a long frontage to and principal points of entry from Shakespeare Road, as well secondary access from Shea Terrace, a side street to Taharoto Road with left in / left out access between the signalised intersections at Northcote Road and The Boulevard entrance into Smales Farm. The hospital campus has developed in a somewhat haphazard way incrementally over time typical of such large and long-established facilities, and suffers somewhat from a lack of legibility in terms of the layout of buildings or key circulation routes through the site. Contextually, the complex of buildings is marked out by the height and bulk of the main hospital block that is approximately 60m in building height forming a large building block of around 10 storeys plus extensive rooftop plant above a three-four storey podium.
- 7.5 Adjoining the Hospital on the corner of Taharoto and Shakespeare Roads is The Poynton Metlifecare Retirement Village and Aged Care Facility. This has been developed in stages to form a perimeter block development of buildings 5 storeys in height strongly defining this corner of the broad expanse of intersection.
- 7.6 The main hospital block and the recently constructed standalone parking building near the Shea Terrace hospital entrance, are, together with The Poynton and the five main office building blocks constructed on Smales Farm, readily visible on the skyline seen from a number of locations across the wider area around Lake Pupuke. This helps to

mark out the area as a recognisable node of activity and development concentrated around the intersection of Shakespeare and Taharoto Roads.

- 7.7 A mixed use environment predominates for a stretch further to the northwest along Shakespeare Road opposite the hospital and Carmel College before giving way to a more suburban residential pattern and scale of development to either side of this main corridor that connects the Smales Farm / Hospital node with the Milford Town Centre along the northern side of Lake Pupuke.
- 7.8 To the immediate north lies the campus of Westlake Girls' High School ("WLGHS or Westlake Girls'") across Shakespeare Road extension – a large single sex girls high school catering to over 2,000 students. Westlake Girls' has a large long site similar in orientation to Smales Farm although somewhat narrower being sandwiched between the Northern Motorway / Busway corridor and Wairau Road that continues on alignment as an extension of Taharoto before turning to pass under the motorway beside the Wairau Stream. The main buildings of the Girls' School campus – that includes a number of larger floorplate multi-storey buildings - are concentrated on the southern half of the site near Smales Farm and the Bus Station, with access off both Wairau and Shakespeare Roads. A new school hall building is in the planning stages, to occupy the key south-eastern corner of the school campus fronting Wairau and Shakespeare Roads, which is currently occupied by surface carparking and a large row of trees along the Wairau Road frontage that somewhat obscure the presence of the school from this key corner view beside Smales Farm.
- 7.9 Beyond Westlake Girls' to the north, the land starts to rise in elevation up Forrest Hill Road towards the sister school of Westlake Boys' High School and the undulating hill slopes of the Forrest Hill residential hill suburb. Aside from the Boys' High School, this is a largely residential area with properties along and in proximity to Forrest Hill Road zoned Mixed Housing Urban and the balance of the area Mixed Housing Suburban. Properties on the south-facing slopes afford views across the foreground of the Shakespeare and Taharoto Road areas including Smales Farm and the Hospital towards Lake Pupuke and Rangitoto Island as well as the high rises at Takapuna and more distant City Centre skyline to the south.
- 7.10 The Northern Busway officially opened in February 2008, providing a dedicated busway corridor alongside the motorway for express bus services running between the North Shore and the City Centre. The busway is served by a number of purpose-built bus stations providing interchange functions with local North Shore buses as well as bicycle storage, pick up and drop off facilities and in some cases, limited park and ride provision. As at the end of 2017 busway patronage was 5 million passengers / year, with Smales Farm station having patronage of 445,000 trips in the 2015-2016 year according to analysis on Greater Auckland, making it one of the top ten busiest rapid transit patronage stations (busway and rail stations combined).
- 7.11 The Smales Farm Bus Station (and Shakespeare Road extension) was formed as part of the Busway development on land purchased from Smales Farm for the purpose of establishing a station at this key destination serving not only the commercial office workers of the business park precinct but the North Shore Hospital and concentration of schools and other commercial and community uses concentrated in the area, as well as an interchange with local buses to and from Takapuna and Milford either side of Lake Pupuke.
- 7.12 The Smales Farm Bus Station is accessed from a roundabout at the end of the Shakespeare Road cul de sac and has a small offline 'pick and drop' carpark adjoining Smales Farm. A generously scaled footpath provides a direct pedestrian connection

across the forecourt into the busway station and platforms at this boundary interface between the carpark and Smales Farm.

- 7.13 The Northern Motorway, together with the Northern Busway alongside, form a very wide transport corridor separating Smales Farm from areas further west. The combined State Highway 1 motorway and busway corridor varies between approximately 80 and 160m in width beside Smales Farm along the stretch between the Northcote Road interchange and Wairau Road underpass. The Northcote Road interchange provides a full motorway interchange with the local road network, with on and off ramps providing for all movements between the motorway and Northcote Road to either side of the motorway, servicing Takapuna and Milford in the east and Hillcrest, Wairau Valley, and Northcote areas to the west.
- 7.14 The A F Thomas Park, an Auckland Council owned public reserve, borders the motorway corridor opposite Smales Farm and Westlake Girls'. The park is a designated reserve under the Reserves Act and zoned Open Space – Sport and Active Recreation and comprises the 18 hole Takapuna Golf Course accessed from Northcote Road as well as the North Shore Events Centre and associated conferencing and carparking facilities at the northern end.
- 7.15 Takapuna Normal Intermediate School is situated to the immediate south of Smales Farm across Northcote Road, with a mix of residential properties to either side of its Northcote Road entrance and a commercially developed property currently occupied by a psychology practice, on the corner site at the eastern end of the block. This corner site forms part of the Taharoto Road commercial corridor zoned Mixed Use under the Unitary Plan.
- 7.16 This corner of Northcote and Taharoto Roads is defined by the landmark curved corner building on Smales Farm that is now the New Zealand headquarters for Vodafone. This building, at six storeys in height, has an impressive presence at this major intersection that feels in scale with the surrounding street environment, in contrast to the smaller scale, suburban form and built character of development that still characterises much of the rest of the sites along these main roads in this vicinity.
- 7.17 Given the mixed use nature of the area, the high number of destinations and the accessibility afforded by the Northern Express bus services at the Busway Station and other frequent services along Taharoto and Shakespeare Roads via the Hospital, there are multiple destinations and desire lines for people walking and cycling through the area in and around Smales Farm (refer Strategic Transport Connections, Figure 8 in Part 1 of the drawing package).
- 7.18 In spite of this, existing provisions for walking and cycling on the streets surrounding the precinct and wider area are generally poor, with the area dominated by a network of wide, multi-lane and heavily trafficked major roads including Northcote Road, Taharoto Road, Shakespeare Road and Wairau Road. These arterial routes have not been designed with pedestrians or cyclists in mind, having been engineered to promote traffic flow and minimise traffic congestion for vehicular traffic travelling along these corridors between Takapuna, Milford and Wairau Valley as well as traffic coming on and off the motorway at the adjacent Northcote Road interchange or connecting through to Hillcrest and Northcote areas and other suburbs to the west of the motorway.
- 7.19 While footpaths are generally of adequate width and fair condition along these main streets, crossing opportunities are limited to a few large signalised intersections, many featuring wide and sweeping slip lanes providing vehicular traffic with the opportunity to turn left before the lights at speed and putting pedestrians crossing the road in the path of danger having to cross free flowing traffic manoeuvring the corner at speed. The

main vehicular entrances in and out of Smales Farm on Northcote and Taharoto Roads also feature wide sweeping slip lane and median splitter island arrangements at present that disrupt the continuity of the footpath for pedestrian through traffic along these routes. A signalised midblock crossing has been provided across Taharoto Road on the northern arm of the intersection with The Boulevard entrance to Smales Farm. This provides a safe way to cross this major road between Smales Farm and North Shore Hospital.

- 7.20 Provision of dedicated infrastructure for cycling is patchy with some discontinuous stretches of painted (non-separated) cycle lanes currently marked on Northcote and Taharoto Roads as well as the Northcote and Taharoto footpaths being designated shared paths providing for safer cycling for the many school children that choose to cycle in spite of the lack of on-street provision for cycling on these main roads. Some imminent improvements are planned to widen the shared path beside Smales Farm on Northcote Road. These improvements will link Smales Farm via Northcote Road into the growing network of planned cycleways through the Northcote Safer Routes and Seapath and Skypath providing linkages to areas to southwest of the motorway as well as around the coastal edge of Shoal Bay and across the Harbour Bridge.
- 7.21 Taharoto Road is served by a number of frequent and local bus routes between Milford and Takapuna via the Hospital, with some services interchanging with the Northern Express at the Busway Station (Part 1, Figure 6, Strategic Transport Context).
- 7.22 Smales Farm itself, while privately owned, has free and unencumbered public access and is at the heart of a number of key walking routes in the area between the bus station, and Smales Farm, the Hospital and Schools. The axial structure of the main streets through Smales Farm - The Avenue and The Boulevard – provide reasonably direct walking routes for people accessing Smales Farm from the surrounding street network either accessing the office buildings and range of existing shops, services and facilities on offer at Smales Farm, or shortcutting through to the Bus Station, Hospital or two schools to the north or south of the Farm. A continuous pathway has been constructed by Smales Farm along its western boundary providing formed access for pedestrians and cyclists between Northcote Road overbridge and the Bus Station and Westlake Girls' on Shakespeare Road.

8.0 Current Planned Future Form and Character of the Area

- 8.1 The Auckland Unitary Plan sets a clear directive that when assessing development proposals, the relevant contextual consideration is to give regard to the planned future form and character of the area, rather than the scale and form of development or existing built character that may exist today.
- 8.2 The immediate site context for Smales Farm, that can be characterised as a broad swathe of mixed use land around the western side of Lake Pupuke between Takapuna and Milford, is the subject of incremental redevelopment and change both at present and ongoing.

- 8.3 Significant future development potential is provided for under the Auckland Unitary Plan zoning as depicted in the series of existing Unitary Plan 3D zoning views for the City Engine GIS model included in Part 04 of the drawing package. Analysis of these views indicates that much of the area has opportunity to develop buildings of greater building height, bulk and intensity than that which currently characterises the area.

9.0 Strategic Context for Change

The Auckland Plan 2050

- 9.1 The Auckland Plan 2050 is the new long term spatial and strategic plan for Auckland and its communities, replacing the first Auckland Plan 2012 and adopted by Auckland Council in May 2018.
- 9.2 The plan sets the strategic direction for managing growth and change in Auckland over the next 30 years, and is focused on six outcomes: Belonging and Participation, Maori Identity and Wellbeing, Homes and Places, Transport and Access, Environment and Cultural Heritage, Opportunity and Prosperity.
- 9.3 The directions set under the Homes and Places and Transport and Access outcomes are of particular relevance to this Plan Change, Key directions to note in relation to Smales Farm and the urban design considerations of the proposed plan change are set out below.

Homes and Places Outcome

- *Direction 1: Develop a quality compact urban form to accommodate Auckland's growth*
- *Direction 2: Accelerate the construction of homes that meet Aucklanders' changing needs and preferences*
- *Direction 3: Shift to a housing system that enables secure and affordable homes for all*
- *Direction 4: Provides sufficient public places and spaces that are inclusive, accessible and contribute to urban living*

Transport and Access Outcome

- 9.4 The following directions and areas where efforts need to be focused particularly support the plan change to enable transit-oriented development at Smales Farm:
- *Direction 1: Create an integrated transport system connecting people, places, goods and services*
 - *Direction 2: Increase genuine travel choices for a healthy, vibrant and equitable Auckland*
 - *Focus Area 1: Make better use of existing transport networks, including a greater focus on influencing travel demand*

- *Focus Area 4: Make walking, cycling and public transport preferred choices for many more Aucklanders*
 - *Focus Area 5: Better integrate land use and transport decisions.*
- 9.5 Focus Area 5 is particularly relevant to this Plan Change. The Auckland Plan 2050 states that stronger integration between transport and land use decisions is required so that housing, business and employment growth occurs in areas with better travel options. The Plan recognises that encouraging housing and employment growth in these locations enables shorter commutes and reduces pressure on the transport system. This is the foundation of the proposed plan change for Smales Farm – recognising that its location next to the Smales Farm Busway Station means the precinct enjoys ready walk-up access to fast, frequent services to the City Centre and Albany metropolitan centres as well as frequent bus routes connecting it with Takapuna and other centres and suburbs across the North Shore. Additionally, the precinct is well placed to serve significant growth in active mode trips to the precinct and wider areas, being set to benefit from the growing network of cycleways in this part of the North Shore and being in close proximity to other major activity generators including the hospital, schools and Takapuna, Milford and Northcote centres.

Development Strategy - How Auckland will Grow and Change

- 9.6 The Development Strategy sets out how Auckland will grow and change over the next 30 years to become a place that Aucklanders love and are proud of, a place they want to stay in or return to, and a place that others want to visit, move to or invest in.
- 9.7 The Development Strategy is an update to the 2012 Auckland Plan, that set the direction for a quality compact approach to growth and informed the development and eventual adoption of the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) in 2017.
- 9.8 Over the next 30 years Auckland is expected to grow by another 740,000 people to reach a population of 2.4million, requiring possibly another 320,000 dwellings as well as 270,000 new jobs.
- 9.9 The opportunity to add up to 1,380 additional apartment homes at Smales Farm over this 30 year timeframe represents a not insignificant contribution to this regional growth challenge, at 0.43% of the 320,000 home total over the long term.
- 9.10 The development strategy is intended to provide a clear understanding of where and when investment in planning and infrastructure will be made to support this growth.
- 9.11 The Auckland Plan takes a multi-nodal model to intensifying growth within Auckland's urban footprint. The Plan anticipates that most future growth will focus in and around the major centres (the City Centre, Albany, Westgate and Manukau) as well as other identified development areas within the existing urban footprint.
- 9.12 As highlighted in the figure below, Smales Farm is strategically located in relation to the major centres, with direct connections to the northern busway and motorway interchange providing fast, efficient connections to the City Centre and Albany. The City Centre will continue to be the biggest and most important centre of employment for Auckland and Albany is set to become a more important node for the North Shore over the next 30 years, providing a larger and more diverse range of employment, housing, education, community and civic facilities. A node of transit-oriented development at Smales Farm will efficiently serve and connect with both the City Centre and Albany,

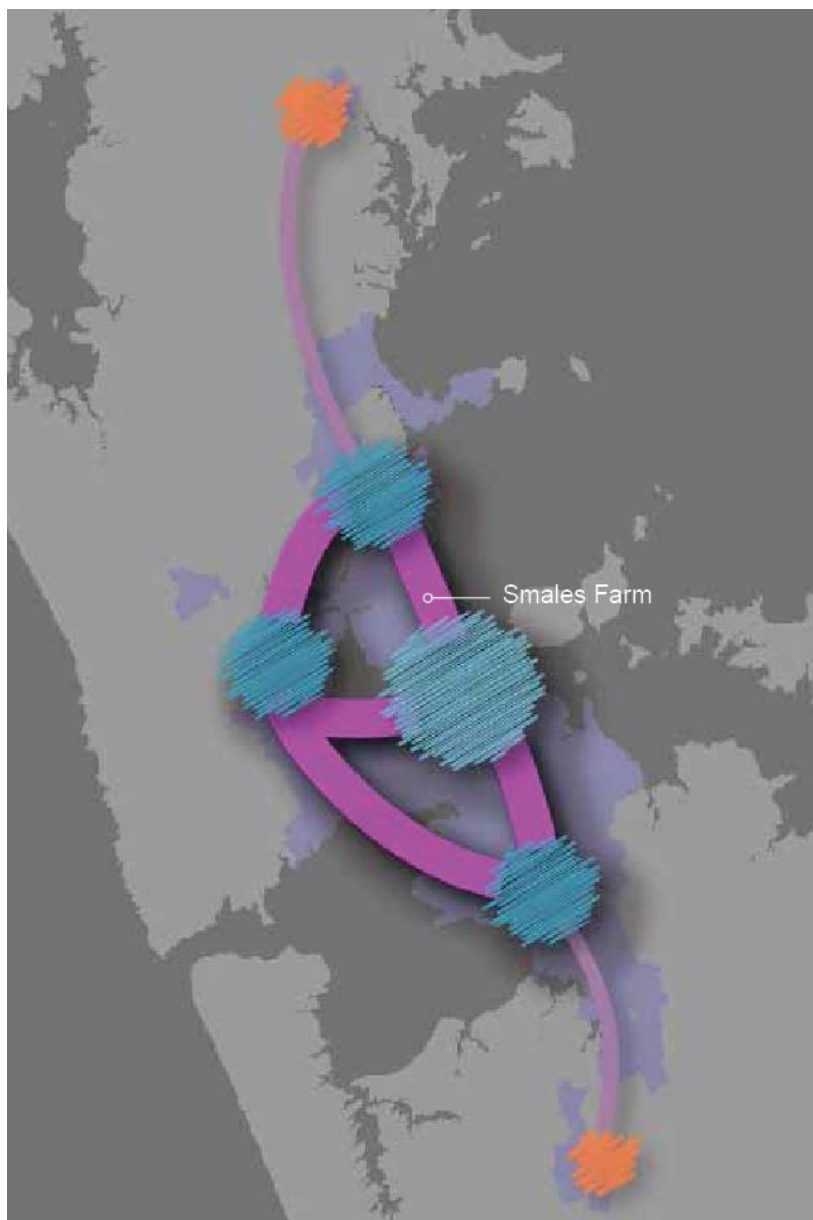


Figure 1: Auckland Plan 2050 (A Multi-Nodal City): Strategic location of Smales Farm as a transit-oriented development between the major nodes of the City Centre and Albany served directly by the Northern Busway and Motorway (Source: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/Pages/default.aspx>).

- 9.13 Smales Farm is also part of an identified development area that extends around the western and southern sides of Lake Pupuke joining the precinct and North Shore Hospital with Takapuna metropolitan centre. To the southwest, Northcote Central, closely connected to Smales Farm via Northcote Road that crosses the motorway at the southern edge of Smales Farm, is also an identified development area, experiencing major intensification and regeneration led by HLC and Panuku. These qualities make intensifying development at Smales Farm, including residential, aligned with the development strategy set by the Auckland Plan.

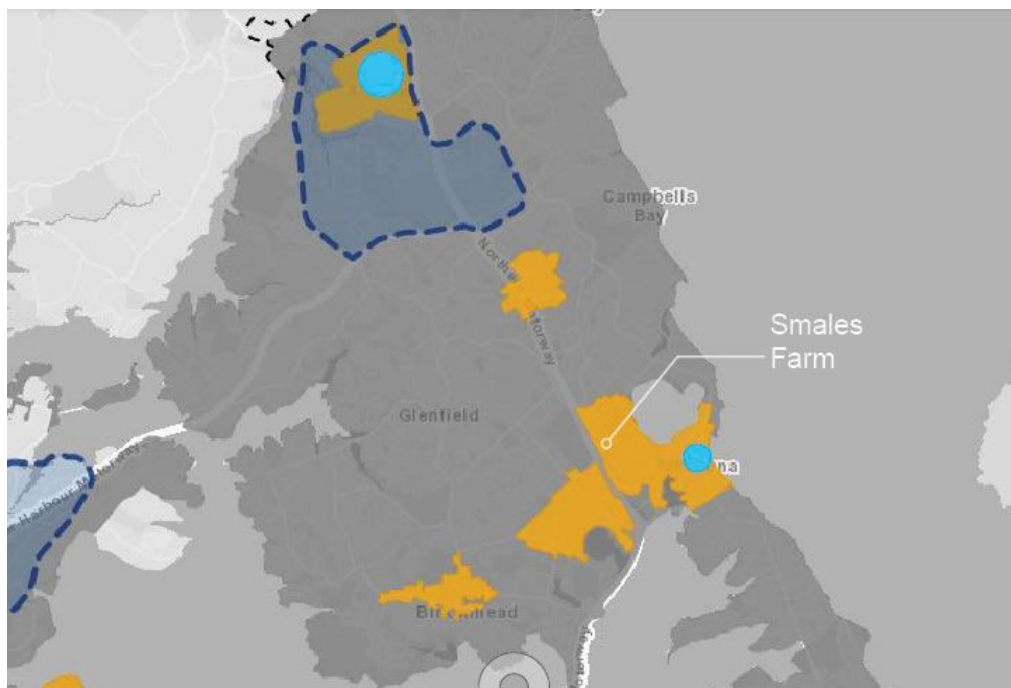


Figure 2: Auckland Plan 2050: Smales Farm forms part of an identified development area that forms a broad swathe of redevelopment and change around the southern and western sides of Lake Pupuke between Takapuna metropolitan centre and Smales Farm and North Shore Hospital (Source: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/Pages/default.aspx>).

- 9.14 The Auckland Plan recognises that development areas have a combination of the following characteristics that make them well-suited for significant development:
- substantial capacity provided in the Auckland Unitary Plan for housing and business development;
 - access to a large number of jobs within a reasonable commuting time;
 - access to centres and the strategic public transport network within easy walking distance;
 - major public landholdings with intended or potential redevelopment;
 - current or planned infrastructure capacity that is likely to enable significant additional growth – for example, the expansion of the strategic transport network that improves connectivity; and
 - market feasibility.
- 9.15 The proposal to transition Smales Farm to a transit-oriented development node along the Northern Busway reflects that the qualities of the site and its wider context rates highly against most of these characteristics.

Devonport-Takapuna Area Plan 2014

- 9.16 The Devonport-Takapuna Area Plan was prepared by the Local Board in 2014 and has the purpose of outlining how the Devonport Takapuna area is envisaged to change over the next 30 years, taking into account the vision for Auckland set out in the Auckland

Plan (and enabled by the Unitary Plan) and secondly in relation to the vision and priorities of the local board as set out in the local board plan.

- 9.17 The Plan sets out six 'key moves' that respond to the challenges and opportunities facing the area. The key moves will help transform Devonport-Takapuna, into an area where people will continue to want to live, work and play as well as attract visitors.
- 9.18 The first key move is 'Support the development of a greater Takapuna'. The 'greater Takapuna' area includes the established Takapuna metropolitan centre and the adjoining business and mixed-use areas to the west and north up to Smales Farm and North Shore Hospital (refer summary map included at Part 1, Figure 10 of drawing package). This is a regionally-significant employment and business area and will continue to grow, with more intensive business and residential development, along with further recreation, civic and cultural activities. The plan states that "*future high quality development across the area should connect well and complement the centre of Takapuna*". The Plan is clear in setting this key move that Greater Takapuna will continue to strengthen as the primary hub and development focus for the Devonport-Takapuna local board area.

Updated Government Policy Statement on Transport

- 9.19 The New Zealand Government has recently updated the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport ("GPS").
- 9.20 The purpose of the GPS is to help guide investment in transport by providing a longer term strategic view of how the transport network is prioritised and why. This includes an overall focus of improving our land transport network by prioritising safety, access, environment and value for money.
- 9.21 The strategic direction has a new focus that prioritises improving New Zealander's access to opportunities and markets. The increased focus on urban centres is to ensure that transport and land use planning reduces the need to travel by private motor vehicle by:
- transport and land use planning that improves access by reducing the need to travel long distances to access opportunities like employment, education and recreation; and
 - supporting a mode shift for trips in urban centres from single occupant private vehicles to more efficient, low cost modes like walking, cycling and public transport.
- 9.22 This strategic direction on access, and a key theme for the GPS of integrating land use and transport planning and delivery are of relevance to this Plan Change. Transport investment in these outcomes directly supports the land use change being sought for Smales Farm. Facilitating the greater intensity and diversity of land use development outcomes being sought for Smales Farm will concentrate growth in a highly accessible location that will provide people with greater transport choice and shorter commute times. This will help achieve the desired mode shift in urban transport away from auto-dependency. In this way the plan change is well aligned with the strategic direction for transport set by the GPS.
- 9.23 The update to the GPS signals a significant shift in direction in future investment in transport, with a greater emphasis on mass rapid transit and active modes (walking and cycling) and considerations of the impact of transport investment on public health and quality of place as well as road safety.

Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP)

- 9.24 ATAP is a joint transport investment programme developed by the New Zealand Government and Auckland Council and Auckland Transport, that sets out an aligned forward investment programme of funded transport priorities proposed to be delivered by central and local government transport authorities in Auckland over the next 10 years.
- 9.25 The most recent version of ATAP was released in April 2018, and contains a number of projects that inform the strategic context for change from the perspective of achieving greater integration of land use and intensification with planned investment in transport infrastructure. These planned transport investments also highlight the suitability and support the case for transitioning Smales Farm to a denser transit oriented development node with a greater mix of uses including residential.
- 9.26 Key aspects of ATAP of particular relevance to the Transit-Oriented Development outcomes being sought by the Plan Change include:
- Northern corridor improvements and busway extension to Albany improving access, travel times and reliability between Smales Farm and Albany;
 - Skypath and Seapath opening up new cycling and walking connections between Smales Farm and areas to the south including the City Centre and Auckland Isthmus across the harbour; and
 - Greater investment in enhanced walking, cycling, and bus priority programmes likely to strengthen the connected networks and mode choice for people coming and going between Smales Farm and other parts of the North Shore.
- 9.27 Additionally, as a future priority, ATAP provides for future planning for Harbour Crossing for rapid transit corridor, to eventually replace the Northern Busway with an additional spur providing direct dedicated connection between Takapuna Metropolitan Centre and the City Centre. ATAP signals that this will likely happen by the early 2030s. Projected future demand on this corridor is high and detailed investigation by Auckland Transport suggests upgrading the Northern Busway to a higher capacity mode (likely to be light rail) may be required by the mid-2030s, earlier than previously anticipated. This would require a new rapid transit crossing of the Waitemata Harbour on an alignment that connects with the City-Airport light rail corridor at Wynyard Quarter. Intensifying development at Smales Farm will increase demand and use of the Northern Busway with full build out of the planned masterplan set to take 30 years, meaning at full build out it would benefit from the greater capacity of a future rapid transit service.

10.0 Principles for Transit-Oriented Development

- 10.1 Transit-Oriented Development is a common form of development used internationally to integrate land use intensification with investment in high frequency, mass rapid transit corridors for public transport.
- 10.2 In Auckland, the principles and outcomes of Transit Oriented Development are less established and still in a nascent phase. Many of the attributes of successful TOD nodes are found in our established urban centres with access to high frequency high capacity public transport such as Newmarket. TOD principles have also informed the planned redevelopment and regeneration of some smaller suburban centres such as New Lynn on the Western Line.
- 10.3 These emerging transit-oriented outcomes notwithstanding, the principles of Transit Oriented Development, that require greater synergies between our transport and land use planning, have as yet, while commonly expressed in strategic planning documents such as the Auckland Plan, GPS and ATAP, not had a strong influence on the key tools of land use planning such as the Unitary Plan in terms of strategically zoning large landholdings and other areas within the walk up catchment of rapid transit stations.

The 6 'Ds' of Transit Oriented Development

- 10.4 Vancouver, Canada is a widely recognised global leader in the planning, design and development of Transit Oriented Developments at key station nodes in association with the development of Skytrain and Metro rail lines. A range of TOD nodes have been developed, and continue to be developed, across metropolitan Vancouver, delivered by both the public and private sector.
- 10.5 Translink, the British Columbia transit authority responsible for public transport in Vancouver, has prepared a set of design guidelines to inform their development, which identifies what they term the '6 Ds' of Transit-Oriented Communities and Development (Source: Translink website, available for download here - https://www.translink.ca/~media/documents/plans_and_projects/transit_oriented_communities/transit_oriented_communities_design_guidelines.ashx).
- 10.6 The 6 D's distil down some key success factors– some as pre-requisites to be suitable for consideration as a TOD development node, and others as desired urban design and development outcomes, that must be present to have a successful transit-oriented node that has high demand for transit services and supports well patronised, productive transit service. The 6 D's for Transit Oriented Development are:
 - 1. Destinations – land and location
 - 2. Distance – urban structure and street network
 - 3. Design – pedestrian friendly public realm
 - 4. Density – building form and massing
 - 5. Diversity – mix of uses and activity
 - 6. Demand Management – discourage unnecessary driving

Further paraphrased explanations of each of these 6 D factors from the Translink Guidelines are set out below:

1. **Destinations – Be On The Way (land and location)**
First get the location right – focus on high demand destinations located along frequent transit corridors and with land available for development. If a site is not on the way, it is not suitable for a TOD.
2. **Distance – Connect the Block (urban structure and street network)**
Create a supportive urban structure by introducing a fine-grained network of pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets. If block sizes are too big and streets are too discontinuous, distances will be too far to walk.
3. **Design – Make it Pedestrian Friendly**
Design a public realm that is pedestrian and bicycle-friendly. Bring buildings up to the footpath, animate them with active frontages, provide amenities and weather protection, and tuck carparking behind or underground.
4. **Density – Fill it In (building form and massing)**
Place the highest residential and employment density near to frequent transit stops, stations and exchanges and step these densities down to transition to surrounding neighbourhoods.
5. **Diversity – Mix it Up (mix of uses and activity)**
Ensure a good diversity of uses, especially those which animate the streetscape; provide a mix of housing types, tenures and price points; and a good jobs-housing balance so that people are never too far from work, shopping and other destinations.
6. **Demand Management – Discourage Unnecessary Driving (incentives and disincentives)**
Introduce demand management measures like parking pricing to discourage and dis-incentivise unnecessary trips by private vehicle.

This primer discusses how to implement the “Six D’s” – those key elements that are required to create more transit-oriented communities.

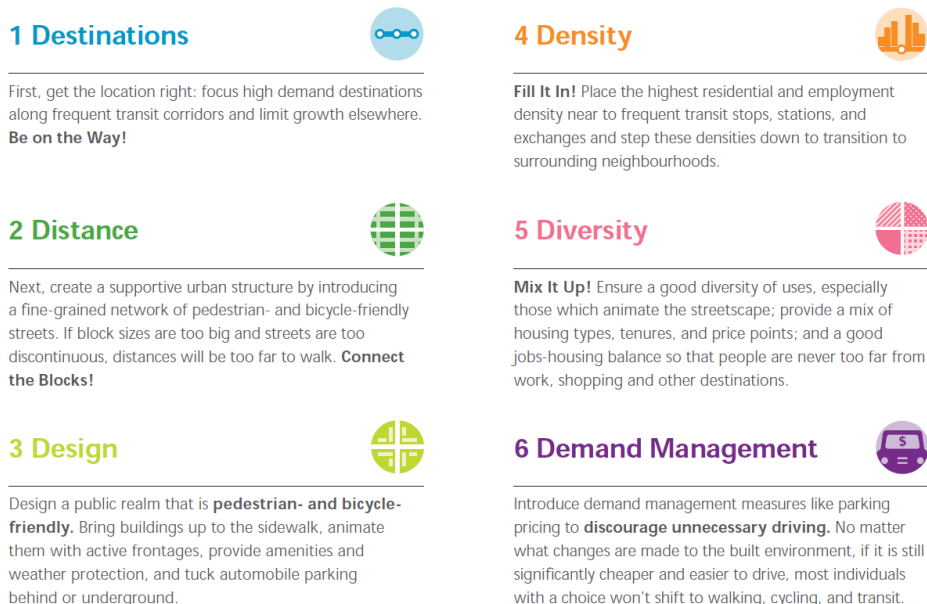


Figure 3: The 6 D's of Transit Oriented Development, from Translink British Columbia Design Guidelines for Transit Oriented Communities

- 10.7 In the most successful transit-oriented developments and communities all of the '6 D's' are implemented in concert. No one measure works in isolation, but rather they work synergistically to support the desired higher levels of walking, cycling, and transit ridership and reduced levels of driving.
- 10.8 Providing for more intensive forms of land use development at key station access nodes to quality mass rapid transit is the key principle of transit-oriented development. Creating a 'positive feedback loop' between better public transport and more multi-modal transport choice with denser and more diverse mixed use communities are the key to creating more liveable, resilient and sustainable cities.
- 10.9 The Smales Farm plan change has been developed with the 6 D's in mind. Fundamentally, the Smales Farm precinct exhibits the fundamental element of Destination – the Smales Farm land and location in immediate proximity to the high frequency, high volume, mass rapid transit corridor of the Northern Busway station and already being an important employment area in its own right. This is the key attribute that justifies the transformation of the area in to a dense development node of notably greater intensity of activity and scale of built form than the surrounding suburban areas away from the accessibility of the bus station.
- 10.10 The TOD principles around density distribution and transitioning from auto-dependent to pedestrian friendly public realm design are of direct relevance to the Smales Farm Plan Change and have informed the planning and concept masterplan work undertaken. These principles are clearly conveyed in the Vancouver 6 D's explanatory graphics included below (Source: https://www.translink.ca/~media/documents/plans_and_projects/transit_oriented_communities/transit_oriented_communities_primer.ashx).

4 Density Fill It In



Figure 8 – Auto-oriented density distribution (patchy development not focused around transit).

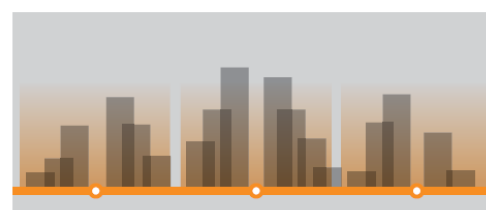


Figure 9 – Transit-oriented density distribution (highest at transit, stepping down to surrounding neighbourhood).

Figure 4: Distribution of density, from Translink: Transit Oriented Communities A Primer on Key Concepts. (Source: https://www.translink.ca/~media/documents/plans_and_projects/transit_oriented_communities/transit_oriented_communities_primer.ashx).

3 Design Make it Pedestrian-Friendly

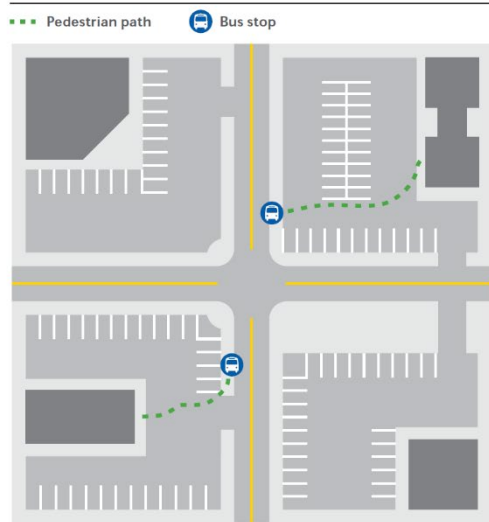


Figure 6 – Automobile-oriented urban design often sets buildings back from the street with parking in front.



Figure 7 – Pedestrian-oriented urban design features buildings with fine-grained active frontages built right to the street and with parking tucked behind or provided underground.

Figure 5: Pedestrian oriented urban design, from Translink: Transit Oriented Communities A Primer on Key Concepts (Source: https://www.translink.ca/~media/documents/plans_and_projects/transit_oriented_communities/transit_oriented_communities_primer.ashx).

11.0 Urban Design Considerations for Tall Buildings

- 11.1 Enabling tall buildings – up to 75-100m in height – is a key desired outcome of the proposed plan change to support transitioning Smales Farm to a denser more vertically-oriented built form node adjoining the busway station. Such an urban form typology is consistent with the Transit Oriented Development model prevalent internationally at key stations and interchanges along mass rapid transit lines such as the Northern Busway.
- 11.2 Providing for taller buildings within the precinct is a built form outcome that helps enable the bigger picture vision of transforming Smales Farm into a denser and more diverse place with a greater mix of activities including residential apartment living, while still providing space at ground level for people-focused public spaces and other activities such as the active uses of retail, hospitality and commercial services, all of which contribute to a walkable urban environment and high level of on-site amenity for the residents, workers and visitors to the precinct.

- 11.3 In the right place, tall buildings can make positive contributions to the life and identity of the city. In providing for tall buildings at Smales Farm, the proposed plan change seeks to enable a concentration of vertical buildings in the form of a cluster of towers of variable height, form and architectural character. Viewed from outside the precinct such a built form outcome will help identify the precinct from the surrounding streets and afar as a legible development node at the busway station and making a positive presence on the wider skyline. Within the precinct, flexibility is sought to enable the optimal location and siting of tall building footprints and form on a staged basis relative to existing development and public realm on the precinct, taking into account a range of factors including solar access, shading, views and outlook and wind, as well as the urban design considerations of achieving a pleasing composition of building forms sympathetic to the established built scale and character on the site.
- 11.4 While tall buildings can have a number of positive effects on the immediate precinct and surrounds and wider urban context, they raise the potential for a range of adverse effects on the environment due to their scale and prominence within the urban fabric. Potential adverse off-site effects of tall buildings at Smales Farm include microclimate effects such as adverse shading and wind, and visual amenity effects such as building dominance, privacy / overlooking, and view blockage, and the broader contextual impacts of detracting from the built and landscape character of the broader city where poor quality or unsympathetic design outcomes has resulted.
- 11.5 The design of tall buildings can also present urban design issues that need to be managed to ensure an appropriate level of on-site amenity is maintained within the precinct, recognising that the plan change is providing for significant change in planned future built character from the existing business park environment to transition to a denser, vertical mixed use node over time. A key component of such a built form is a concentration of tall buildings that results in a set of expectations and requirements to support amenity.
- 11.6 When planning for tall buildings, it is important that provisions are put in place that provide for a high degree of discretion over design matters and include specific development standards and controls that seek to manage the potential for adverse effects that arise from tall building development.
- 11.7 The Auckland Design Manual does not provide specific design guidance with respect to tall buildings. A useful and well-recognised document internationally is the CABE publication '*Guidance on Tall Buildings July 2007*' publication from the former United Kingdom Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment ("CABE") (Source: https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/guidance-on-tall-buildings_0.pdf). The CABE document sets out guidance to local planning authorities with respect to providing planning provisions that enable tall buildings in appropriate areas, as well as a comprehensive set of design criteria for evaluating tall building proposals. Much of this guidance is relevant and transferable to the Auckland context. Of particular relevance to this Smales Farm plan change, criteria include:
- **Relationship to context** including natural topography, scale, height, urban grain, streetscape and built form, open spaces, rivers and waterways, important views, and effect on the skyline. Tall buildings should have a positive relationship with relevant topographical features and other tall buildings; the virtue of clusters when perceived from all directions should be considered in this light.
 - **Effect on the historic context**, including the need to ensure that the proposal will preserve and/or enhance historic buildings, sites, landscapes and skylines.

- **Relationship to transport infrastructure** – capacity of public transport, the quality of links between transport and the site. Transport is important in relation to tall buildings because of the intensity of use, as well as density, that they represent.
 - **Architectural quality of the building** including its scale, form, massing, proportion and silhouette, cladding materials, and relationship to other structures.
 - **Contribution to public space and facilities**, both internal and external, that the development will make in the area, including the provision of a mix of uses, especially on the ground floor of towers, and the inclusion of these areas as part of the public realm. The development should interact with and contribute positively to its surroundings at street level; it should contribute to safety, diversity, vitality, social engagement and sense of place.
 - **Effect on the local environment**, including microclimate, overshadowing, night-time appearance, vehicle movements and the environment and amenity of those in the vicinity of the building.
 - **Contribution made to the permeability of a site** and the wider area; opportunities to offer improved accessibility, and, where appropriate, the opening up, or effective closure, of views to improve the legibility of the city and the wider townscape.
 - **Provision of a well-designed environment**, both internal and external, that contributes to the quality of life of those who use the buildings, including function, fitness for purpose and amenity.
- 11.8 These criteria are referenced in assessing the provisions for tall buildings in the assessment section later in this report.

12.0 Desired Urban Design Outcomes

- 12.1 In essence the Smales Farm Plan Change seeks to provide for a greater scale, intensity and diversity of activity, including residential development, as part of a more vibrant, mixed use transit-oriented development node located within the immediate walk up catchment of the Northern Busway station. Such an outcome is presented by the rare opportunity of a large site in single ownership in proximity to a Northern Busway mass rapid transit station and with significant development opportunity remaining.
- 12.2 The plan change seeks to provide for this overall shape, form and mix of development through providing for residential activity, and in doing so, to enable taller buildings up to 75-100m in height, so as to provide the additional developable area required while not taking away from the development opportunity for commercial office activity and to support a more active, vibrant public realm at street level.
- 12.3 Planning and designing such dense, mixed use urban areas is a complex exercise requiring a balanced consideration of multiple interrelated factors that are closely intertwined given the concentration of both built form and people into small areas of space across short distances.
- 12.4 Building on the vision for the future of Smales Farm, and an understanding of urban design best practice in terms of the planning and design of both transit-oriented

development nodes and mixed-use development, a number of urban design outcomes have been identified as matters that the plan change should be seeking to enable and/or manage in providing for development of greater scale and diversity at Smales Farm.

- 12.5 Key urban design issues in seeking to create a vertical, mixed use node of transit oriented development at Smales Farm have been identified as falling under the following broad themes that encompass both issues and opportunities to be considered in developing the plan change:
- Mix of Uses and Development Intensity
 - Tall Buildings
 - Quality Built Form
 - Walkability and Public Spaces
 - Residential Amenity within the Precinct
 - Public Realm Interface with surrounding streets
 - Relationship to neighbouring zones
 - Multi-Modal Movement Integration and Transport Choice
 - Legibility of Built Form Node
- 12.6 For the purposes of assessing the proposed plan change in urban design terms, desired urban design outcomes have been developed for each of the above broad themes that encompass both issues and opportunities to be considered in formulating a set of precinct planning provisions that will enable a vertical, mixed use node of development at Smales Farm while identifying and managing urban design issues to be managed through the resource consent process as each stage of development is proposed. These desired urban design outcomes provide the assessment framework to consider the appropriateness of the proposed plan change provisions from an urban design perspective, as set out in the following section.

A Greater Mix of Uses and Development Intensity

- *Providing for a mix of activities including residential, retail and service businesses, food and beverage as well as commercial office activity.*
- *Provide for vertical residential apartment living as part of a dense mixed use environment.*

Providing for Tall Buildings

- *Providing for taller buildings up to 75-100m in height that enable vertical built form and concentrated mix of uses to create the desired qualities of a more dense, diverse and walkable node of transit oriented development.*
- *Provide for multiple tall towers that will create a cluster of building height acting as an identifiable node of development viewed from outside the precinct.*
- *Provide for variation in the height, form and architectural expression and character of tall buildings to create a visually distinctive and identifiable node of vertical development*

over time that contributes a positive presence on the skyline and identity within the broader urban fabric and character of the wider city landscape.

- *Manage the location and distribution of tall building footprints, bulk and massing to create a quality environment for people within the precinct and surrounding streets and adjoining zones.*
- *Manage the potential environmental effects of tall buildings including building dominance, visual effects, privacy, and microclimate including shading and wind.*

Quality Built Form

- *Ensuring design quality and high levels of urban amenity for all buildings and stages of development within the precinct irrespective of building height, and including the integration of access arrangements and publicly accessible internal streets and spaces within the Precinct*

Walkability and Pedestrian Public Spaces

- *Create a highly walkable and pedestrian-oriented scale and form of development as the foundation of a transit oriented development node*
- *Maintain and strengthen a connected and legible network of key pedestrian routes through the precinct that are safe and enjoyable to use linking each of the main entrances with the surrounding street network with the central heart of the precinct and providing in time a new more direct route on the key desireline between the bus station, centre of the precinct, Taharoto Road entrance and North Shore Hospital precinct beyond*
- *Ensure these key walking routes are direct, safe, and enjoyable to use with a high level of pedestrian amenity afforded by streetscape and public space design and the quality of adjoining building edges and interface with adjoining development areas*
- *Provide for a primary pedestrian plaza public space at the heart of the precinct*
- *Recognise the need to manage internal vehicular access, circulation and carparking and required service areas to prioritise pedestrians along the key walking routes and high level of pedestrian amenity desired across the precinct*

Providing for Residential Amenity

- *Providing for appropriate levels of residential amenity for apartment buildings within the precinct including daylight, sunlight, outlook and privacy*
- *Recognise the role of the public realm within the precinct in providing access, use and enjoyment to open space amenity for future apartment residents living within the precinct*
- *Provide a more people-focused public realm of smaller scale public spaces fit to support the denser, more intensive and diverse use and range of activities and demands on public space expected of a dense mixed use development node, including a variety of spaces fit for purpose in meeting user demand from a greater intensity and diversity of use, that are multi-functional and flexible to support a wide range of everyday activities and events*

- *Managing interface / potential effects between activities*

Managing the Public Realm Interface with surrounding streets and movement corridors

- *Establish appropriate scale interface with adjoining public streets through transitioning down in scale from tall building in the central and western parts of the precinct to a more medium rise built form fronting Taharoto, Shakespeare and Northcote Roads that provides a more comfortable scale relationship with surrounding streets and adjoining zones*
- *Provide for a greater height and scale of development at the western boundary interface in recognition of the lack of sensitivity of surrounding uses to tall buildings; while*
- *Recognise the visibility and prominence of the western edge of the precinct to the busway / motorway corridor of SH1 that is the major movement corridor for the North Shore*

Managing the Relationship to Neighbouring Zones

- *Establish appropriate scale interface with adjoining residential zones to the immediate north and south of the precinct*
- *Establish an appropriate scale relationship and desirable built form definition to the Taharoto Road mixed use corridor and healthcare and retirement living areas to the east*
- *Manage the potential for adverse environmental effects in relation to adjoining zones including building dominance, visual effects, privacy, and microclimate including shading and wind.*

An Urban Form that provides Multi Modal Movement Integration and Transport Choice

- *An urban form that prioritises walking and ease of access to mass rapid transit as the primary forms of transport to and within the precinct as required for a successful transit-oriented development node.*

An urban form that integrates closely with the movement networks within the surrounding streets and open spaces for walking and cycling and local North Shore buses to realise the benefits of greater transport choice, shorter commute times and reduced auto-dependency for local trips.

A Legible and Distinctive Built Form Node

- *Create a new identifiable and distinctive vertical built form profile and character that is recognisable as a legible node of transit oriented development in the wider urban fabric*
- *Ensure the future skyline profile of the vertical built form node has a positive presence when seen on the skyline in terms of its contribution to the urban built landscape character of the immediate surrounds and wider city*
- *Manage the potential for adverse visual effects on specific views and viewing audiences and the general built character of wider city*

13.0 Urban Design Assessment of Plan Change Provisions

Mix of Uses and Development Intensity

- 13.1 The proposed plan change provides for a genuine mixed use development node consistent with the vision for Smales Farm and the masterplan underpinning it prepared by BVN architects.
- 13.2 The masterplan anticipates up to 300,000m² of development for a mix of commercial office and residential uses, with both 'primary uses' supported by a range of retail and food and beverage uses. The split between the primary commercial office and residential uses is roughly 50/50, with the retail activity including food and beverage, hospitality and service business uses being treated as secondary, supporting activities, provided for in proportion to the overall quantum of commercial and residential activity, on a staged pro rata basis as the precinct continues to develop and redevelop over time. This provides for a 30 year development horizon and pipeline of supply to be developed incrementally over the short, medium and long term as outlined in the economic assessment.
- 13.3 In summary, the quantum of development anticipated by the masterplan, as summarised in the economic assessment prepared by Insight Economics, includes:
- 162,000m² commercial office including 16,500m² of retail;
 - 138,000m² residential;
 - This equates to a total of 300,000m² total GFA at full build out (30 years); and
 - Currently approximately 58,000m² of commercial office space including ancillary retail has been across 5 buildings accounting for the B:HIVE building nearing completion in mid-2018.
- 13.4 The proposed retention of the existing cap on commercial development at 162,000 will encourage uptake of the additional development opportunity provided for residential development, helping to achieve a more balanced mix of uses over time. Importantly, the supporting retail and services will also be enabled to grow in proportion to the rate of development of both primary uses. These mixed use outcomes are consistent with international best practice for TOD developments that in order to optimise their potential for walkable, vibrant communities seek to achieve a true mix of uses and compact forms of development that support a highly walkable public realm between buildings and the transit station.

Providing for Residential Development

- 13.5 The proposed plan change does not place a GFA cap on residential development but seeks to introduce residential activity by providing for a vertical mixed use development typology that establishes new building heights and associated provisions that enable the development of a cluster of tall apartment towers on the site. While not restricted by the plan change provisions, the approximate 138,000-140,000m² of residential GFA anticipated by the development planning for is considered a realistic quantum of

residential development that might be anticipated to occur under these enabling provisions, providing for a pipeline of new apartment dwellings in this growth area of the North Shore over the short, medium and long term; ultimately up to 1,380-1,400 new dwellings at full build out over 30 years (as outlined in the economics assessment).

13.6 The following factors contribute to Smales Farm being highly suitable site for residential development and intensification:

- Accessibility as a highly connected multi-modal transport node;
- Located within an existing mixed-use corridor along Taharoto Road that is a main route between Takapuna and Milford centres;
- High degree of separation from surrounding smaller scale suburban residential areas, being surrounded by public road corridors on all four sides and with neighbouring properties mostly comprising a number of other large, mixed use campus style destinations and activities including the North Shore Hospital, The Poynton retirement village, Westlake Girls High School, and Takapuna Intermediate School;
- Flexibility to adapt existing masterplan and remaining under-developed land on the property such as the extensive areas of surface carparking to provide for more vertical mixed use forms of development and a more walkable urban form of built edges and public realm;
- Space and flexibility to develop a layout and orientation of residential building development that provides for quality built form and on-site residential amenity considering factors such as solar orientation, privacy and outlook, views, building separation distance, shading, and wind;
- A range of existing retail and services that offer convenience and amenity for residents, including cafes and food and beverage outlets, a medical practice, dentists, gym, childcare centre;
- High quality existing on-site landscape and public space amenity including open grassed areas, outdoor seating areas, formed recreational paths along the western perimeter of the site; and
- Opportunity for attractive sea and city views from upper levels of buildings including out to the coast and Rangitoto Island to the east and distant Waitemata Harbour and City Centre skyline to the south.

13.7 Residential activity brings a number of benefits to the depth and diversity of activities on offer at Smales Farm. It is a complementary activity to the established commercial office offering at Smales Farm. It provides a night time resident population to support retail, hospitality and food and beverage extending the range and viable operating hours for these supporting uses, which adds to the vibrancy of the precinct at nights and weekends. Providing for residential within the precinct provides housing choice in a way that offers people a 'zero commute' who may choose to live and work on site, a short walk to destinations such as the North Shore Hospital, the nearby schools and other businesses within the mixed use areas within easy walking distance along Taharoto and Shakespeare Roads, as well as transport choice in terms of short, frequent public transport on the Northern Busway into the City Centre and Newmarket to the South and Albany to the north, as well as to Takapuna Metropolitan Centre via frequent bus connections or a short bike ride.

Retail and Other Supporting Uses

- 13.8 Retail and commercial services, including food and beverage / hospitality, small supermarkets and other food and lifestyle retail goods and service offerings are an important part of the activity mix to support a dense mixed use development node as envisaged for the future of Smales Farm. Similarly, other supporting uses such as recreational facilities such as gyms (one of which is already established on the site) and healthcare facilities (such as the urgent care clinic and dental practice already established on site) provide recreational, health and wellbeing services that can cater to both future residents as well as workers within the Precinct. These retail and service activities are an important if smaller part of the mix of uses, playing an essential part in the success of mixed use developments by contributing to the vibrancy and life of the precinct, particularly the publicly accessible streets and spaces where these activities promote multiple reasons to walk within the precinct from places of employment or residence and also contributing to the convenience and amenity for residents and workers.
- 13.9 The proposed plan change provisions carry over the existing pro rata provisions for retail and commercial services activity, enabling GFA for these activities as a proportion of each commercial office or residential apartment building. While ultimately providing for up to 16,5000m² of retail and commercial services at full build out over 30 years, this has the effect of providing for incremental, staged growth in the size of the retail offering on the site, to grow in proportion to the overall intensification of the precinct for office and residential uses.
- 13.10 Linking the provision of these ancillary uses to the staged development of the precinct is an appropriate way to provide for the desirable growth in the quantum and depth and diversity of retail offering as Smales Farm intensifies, ensuring sufficient space is provided for these activities to contribute to the vibrancy and on-site amenities required to support a dense mixed use development node while also ensuring that these activities do not predominate or detract from the nearby town and metropolitan centres of Milford and Takapuna.

Conclusion with Respect to Mix and Intensity of Uses

- 13.11 The site is well suited to rezoning to support a greater mix of uses and intensity of development than that currently provided for under the Business Park Zone. Key site attributes that lend themselves to a more intensive mix of uses including residential development include:
- Accessibility as a highly connected multi-modal transport node;
 - Flexibility of existing site layout and development to adapt from established suburban business park typology to a new scale and form of vertical mixed use development;
 - High degree of separation from surrounding smaller scale suburban residential areas;
 - Located along an existing mixed use corridor between Takapuna and Milford Centres;
 - A range of existing retail, hospitality and service businesses that offer a range of goods and services and lifestyle amenities suitable to cater to the needs of future residents as well as the existing workers and visitors to Smales Farm;
 - A high quality of existing landscape amenity on site; and

- Opportunity to gain expansive panoramic coastal and city views from taller multi-storey buildings providing highly desirable residential amenity for high rise apartment development typologies.
- 13.12 The proposed plan change seeks to provide for a more vertical mixed use form of development that provides the opportunity to achieve a genuine mix of activities through enabling residential development.
- 13.13 The proposed plan change provides for a genuine mix of activities. The plan change maintains the existing cap on the quantum of commercial office development (162,000m²) while significantly increasing the building height opportunity to encourage more vertical forms of development, in particular apartment living. By not allowing further commercial office development than already provided for under the Business Park Zone, the plan change readily incentivises the uptake of the significant development opportunity that remains for vertical residential apartment development, helping to ensure a balance between commercial and residential uses while also introducing a significant new supply of more compact living options providing housing choice into a highly accessible and desirable part of the North Shore.
- 13.14 By continuing the approach of proportionate allocation of floorspace for supporting retail and commercial services activity to the uptake of allowable commercial office space, but also extending this to apply to a proportion of residential building GFA as apartment buildings are developed, the plan change appropriately allows for the ongoing growth and diversification of these supporting services and amenities on an incremental staged basis. This is appropriate, ensuring they can grow as the precinct as a whole grows in its density and diversity of offering.
- 13.15 This results in an approach that provides an appropriately balanced mix of uses with the cap on commercial office encouraging residential development in the significant development potential that would remain within the revised building heights up to 75-100m in height and associated building controls.

Providing for Tall Buildings

- 13.16 Of the 8 selected CUBE criteria for considering planning for tall buildings identified in section 11, the first three of these factors – relationship to context (including heritage context) and relationship to transport infrastructure – are important factors in determining whether an area is appropriate for tall buildings, a fundamental consideration in considering the merits of the proposed plan change with respect Smales Farm.
- 13.17 The five other relevant CUBE criteria – architectural quality, contribution to public space and facilities, effects on the local environment, contribution to site permeability and ensuring a well-designed environment - address issues that have been identified and addressed through the development of proposed development standards and assessment criteria for tall buildings and the revised planning approach to Smales Farm generally.

Site Suitability and Relationship to Context

- 13.18 Extensive modelling and visualisation has been undertaken to analyse and assess the contextual fit between the prospective built form that can be anticipated under the proposed precinct provisions as set out in the Parts 2, 4 and 5 of the urban design and landscape assessment drawing package. This has included 3D modelling of the built

form envelope proposed under the plan change as well as comparisons with the existing environment and current planned future built form for Smales Farm and the surrounding urban context centred around Lake Pupuke between Takapuna and Milford. These larger scale 3D zoning views aid an understanding of how greater building height on Smales Farm would sit in a broad sense into the wider distribution of zoning and the scale and pattern of built form that can be expected to evolve over time as incremental uptake occurs of the development opportunities enabled by the Unitary Plan.

- 13.19 In this wider context, enabling taller buildings of up to 75-100m in height will differentiate Smales Farm as a distinct and identifiable vertical node of built form amongst the broader swathe of medium-rise mixed use and special purpose zoning within which the precinct is located. The aerial oblique views from a range of perspectives demonstrate how this will support Smales Farm, in combination with the North Shore Hospital, appearing as a clearly identifiable node of development and concentration of activity to the west of Lake Pupuke.
- 13.20 The proposed vertical development node appears both distinct from and complementary to the established centres of the large and long established metropolitan centre of Takapuna (with stepped building heights back from the coast of between 12.5 and 36.5m as well as a core area of unlimited height (subject to FAR and building in relation to boundary controls) to the southeast, as well as to the smaller, lower rise and more local catchment focused Milford town centre to the northeast (where building heights of 18m and 32.5m apply). Tall buildings at Smales Farm will also read in association with those existing and enabled at the nearby North Shore Hospital precinct to the east across Taharoto Road that includes an area with heights up to 75m in height comparable to that being sought at Smales Farm. The height and scale relationship between a future cluster of tall buildings at Smales Farm and these nearby centres and precincts can be seen the range of 3D City Engine modelled views (see in particular Figures 11, 15, 19 in Part 4 of the drawing package) as well as a number of the visual simulations in Part 5 including Figures 32 and 36.
- 13.21 Viewed from a distance, a concentration of towers of up to 75-100m in height, as depicted in the visualisations based on the concept masterplan, will achieve the desired outcome of marking Smales Farm out as an identifiable node of transit-oriented development with a concentration of tall buildings on that part of Smales Farm close to the busway/motorway corridor and in direct proximity to the busway station. The provision for limited building footprints to go above the general 75m maximum height up to 100m (which would reasonably enable 3 tower buildings with a cumulative floorplate footprint of 3000m² and maximum tower dimension of 35m above 75m in height) provides for desirable height variation amongst the tall buildings providing for visual interest amongst the future cluster of towers.
- 13.22 Closer in aerial oblique views and street level views have also been prepared utilising the concept masterplan model to aid an understanding of prospective built form scale and massing that can be anticipated under the proposed precinct provisions.
- 13.23 This built form contextual analysis demonstrates that there is no inherent sensitivity to enabling tall buildings at Smales Farm. Fundamentally the site is well suited to supporting tall buildings due to some key site and context attributes – these include the large 10.8hectare site area, its location bounded by public road reserves on all four sides, and being located within an area of existing mixed uses already providing for multi-storey buildings of a variety of building heights between 16m for Mixed Use Zone and 75 metres in the case of the North Shore Hospital precinct. The height and massing of this current zoning pattern, as well as the change to this context with the proposed

plan change, can be seen in the range of 3d modelled City Engine views included within the drawing package. The wide separation distance of these road corridors from neighbouring street blocks and the established mixed use development and zoning along and around Taharoto Road help to ensure Smales Farm is generally well separated from lesser intensity residential zones seeking to maintain a consistent smaller scale of built form of a suburban residential character of 2-3 storeys.

- 13.24 The existing Smales Farm business park provisions already provide for buildings of up to 25m in height (RL48.5m) across the site. When buildings of this scale were first constructed at Smales Farm, starting with the landmark curved crescent of the now-named Vodafone Building on the corner of Northcote and Taharoto Roads, they represented a marked and noticeable change in scale from the typically 1-2 storey scale of the suburban surrounds.



Figure 6: The scale of buildings along Taharoto Road has been gradually evolving over time from suburban residential to a more urban street corridor defined by medium rise buildings up to six storeys in height (Source: Google Street view).

- 13.25 Over time incremental development of Smales Farm and the wider area has gradually evolved the scale and character of built form in the area that marks it out as a part of Auckland gradually transitioning to a more urban scale, mixed use street corridor. Most recently, the six storey B:HIVE building which in combination with the Vodafone Building is starting to create a consistent cohesive row of six storey high buildings lining Taharoto Road between the Northcote Road corner and The Boulevard midblock entrance into Smales Farm. Further north, this evolving street enclosure from multi-storey buildings is reinforced by the three storey Q4 building and the five storey height of the perimeter block The Poynton retirement village complex on the opposite corner of Taharoto and Shakespeare Roads, as well as the main building of Westlake Girls' High School built hard to the street on Wairau Road. WGHS is currently planning a new assembly hall and convention centre on the corner of Shakespeare and Taharoto which will further add to this scale of large floor plate, medium rise buildings along the corridor.
- 13.26 The North Shore Hospital to the east of Smales Farm already includes existing buildings of noticeably greater height and scale than the surrounding environment and also has significant further development opportunity under the Unitary Plan to develop with

building heights up to 75m in height (refer 3d Context views in particular Figure 15 in Part 4 for the extent of taller building height at the hospital in relation to the proposed Smales Farm height zones and more distant Takapuna metropolitan centre zoning).

- 13.27 This evolving urbanising scale of built form along Taharoto Road has been recognised through the rezoning under the Unitary Plan that has provided for significant up-zoning of areas around Smales Farm including a predomination of mixed use along Taharoto Road near the site, allowing building heights of around 4-5 storeys or up to 16m (+2m roof allowance).
- 13.28 Modelling of the current Smales Farm built form and planning envelopes in the context of the Unitary Plan zoning for neighbouring areas demonstrates that there is a comfortable scale relationship between the existing Smales Farm building height of around 25m and the 16m (+ 2m) of the mixed use zone.
- 13.29 In providing for tall buildings at Smales Farm, the proposed plan change has sought to retain this established scale of buildings around the street-facing perimeter of the precinct as an appropriate transition down in height to the adjoining zones and precincts in the immediate area. This is reflected in the proposed maximum height of 27m (RL50.4) to apply to a 50m deep street frontage height zone wrapping around Taharoto Road between the existing Smales Farm accessways on Northcote Road and Shakespeare Road extension. The 50m depth of this height area roughly corresponds to the depth of existing and proposed buildings aligned lengthways to the street such as Vodafone, and proposed masterplan buildings B14 and B15. Beyond this, within Height Area 2 as depicted on the proposed precinct plan, a new higher maximum building height zone is proposed enabling taller buildings up to 75m (RL98.4) with provision for limited building footprints to go taller up to 100m (RL123.4).
- 13.30 This building height strategy retains a lower building height zone of 27m around much of the public street perimeter of Smales Farm around Northcote, Taharoto Roads and Shakespeare Road extension while enabling tall buildings back from this street edge within the centre of the site and to the west where the precinct adjoins the Northern Busway / Northern Motorway corridor. This western interface lacks an established built form scale or character given the presence of the wide State Highway corridor and that the land to the west of here is the open space of the Fred Thomas Park golf course. This vast open space separation to the west marks out the central and western parts of the site as being most suitable for tall buildings.

Development Standards and Assessment Criteria relating to Tall Buildings

- 13.31 In providing for tall buildings at Smales Farm the proposed plan change has sought to adopt an approach consistent with that in other zones that already provide for buildings of comparable height and scale, in particular the Metropolitan Centre zone as applied at Takapuna, Albany and elsewhere. As with the Metropolitan Centre, the proposed plan change takes the approach of managing the effects of tall buildings through a combination of a restricted discretionary assessment regime with specific design criteria applicable to all new buildings as well as requiring key development standards to manage the environmental effects of tall buildings including building in relation to boundary controls, building bulk and setbacks at upper levels, building separation distance, and outlook depth for residential amenity.
- 13.32 Key development standards in the proposed plan change that address urban design, landscape and visual matters in relation to tall buildings include:
- A maximum plan dimension of 55m for that part of a building between 32.5m and 75m;

- An additional, lesser maximum plan dimension of 35m, to apply to that part of a building above 75m, setting an expectation that very tall buildings over 75m further reduce their footprint and bulk at upper levels;
 - A minimum tower separation distance requirement of 20m for that part of buildings above 32.5m, to apply to commercial and all non-residential buildings so as not to rely on residential outlook control as the sole requirement of building separation distance for tall buildings; and
 - Outlook space requirement of 20m secured for all residential buildings above 27m in height, to maximise light and outlook around buildings.
- 13.33 In addition to the above, all new buildings or external alterations and additions (irrespective of height) are a Restricted Discretionary Activity with specific matters and assessment criteria relating to design identified. 1538.8.2 (5) includes a specific matter (f) on effects of tall buildings to be considered by Council for all new buildings, and additions and alterations not otherwise provided for. This is in addition to the other four matters that apply to all buildings but provide opportunity to assess the particular impacts of tall building proposals, in relation to consistency with Precinct Plan 2, building design generally, landscaped open space and pedestrian amenity, safety and access – all relevant matters to consideration of the potential effects of a tall building proposal.
- 13.34 These criteria, along with the criteria of the underlying Business Park Zone, provide Council with the opportunity to require appropriately comprehensive urban design studies and visual assessment. Assessment studies will ensure changes to built character and effects on specific views and viewing audiences including privacy / overlooking are considered, as well as effects from wind, shading as part of assessing the environmental effects of a resource consent application for a new tall building. Accurate and realistic representations of the architectural appearance of the building, including visual simulations will be important to assist with assessing the impact of the tall building on near, middle and distance views, including on the immediate context of public realm and adjoining development around the base of the building. Such studies are considered necessary and appropriate to fully understand and assess the potential effects of tall buildings on their immediate surrounds and wider urban and landscape contexts.
- 13.35 Assessment criteria for tall buildings (all buildings above 27m or RL50.4M), are set out at 1538.8.2 (5)(f) and include the extent to which:
- The building maintains the visual amenity of the overall development on the site as viewed from residential zones and public places outside the Smales 1 precinct;
 - The building makes a positive contribution to the collective skyline of the Smales 1 precinct;
 - The building responds and relates appropriately to the scale and form of neighbouring buildings within the Smales 1 precinct; and
 - Adverse off-site effects of tall buildings, in particular wind, shadowing, dominance and privacy effects, are avoided or mitigated.
- 13.36 As additional assessment criteria specific to the assessment of tall buildings, these criteria provide an assessment framework appropriate to managing both on-site and off-site effects of tall buildings at Smales Farm.

- 13.37 These assessment criteria provide the opportunity for each successive tall building proposal to be assessed in the context of the existing environment including any other tall buildings already constructed or consented. The potential impacts of a specific tall building proposal can be modelled and assessed to consider the effect on context including on internal amenity within the Smales 1 precinct and off-site effects on the immediate surrounding area and wider city skyline. This includes the ability to consider the cumulative effect in association with other tall buildings already constructed and consented within the Smales precinct.
- 13.38 As with all buildings, tall buildings will also be subject to the building design assessment criteria at 1538.8.2 (5) (b) which requires consideration of the extent to which:
- Building design is of high quality;
 - Features such as façade modulation and articulation, and the use of materials and finishes, are used to manage visual amenity effects of building bulk and scale, and to create visual interest; and
 - The roof profile is part of the overall building form and rooftop plant and equipment is integrated into the building design.
- 13.39 This latter criterion relating to design of rooftops is particularly important for tall buildings, given that the skyline profile of rooftops and upper levels at heights up to 75-100m in height will be highly visible within the surrounding urban context and make a major contribution to the overall built character of the wider North Shore environs viewed contextually. Such provisions have long existed in Auckland’s City Centre where they have contributed to a diverse and distinctive collection of high rise buildings that have avoided the potential monotony or lack of distinctive character of flat top roof profiles. The Sentinel Building in Takapuna is a further local example of the contribution a distinctive roof profile makes to the wider built form and urban landscape character of the city. Such positive outcomes are sought through the inclusion of the assessment criteria under (f) that encourage building makes a positive contribution to the collective skyline of the Smales 1 precinct.



Figure 7: Assessment criteria that required consideration of rooftop profiles have helped shape a distinctive skyline profile in Auckland's City Centre over many years as seen in this render of Commercial Bay currently under construction (Source: Warren and Mahoney).

- 13.40 Wind assessment requirement for all buildings over 25m that will continue to apply as a requirement of the underlying Business Park Zone. This is the same requirement used to manage potential wind effects of buildings in zones that enable tall buildings such as the Metropolitan and City Centre zones. In relation to the planned pedestrian plaza to be built at the centre of the precinct, an additional requirement is that this space be appropriately sheltered from the prevailing southwesterly wind.
- 13.41 Additionally, 1538.8.1 (2) sets out matters of discretion for proposed buildings that exceed the height limits of the Smales 1 Precinct, including:
- a) The effects of the infringement on the amenity of neighbouring sites.
 - b) The location of the site in relation to its suitability for high buildings.
 - c) The contextual relationship of the building with adjacent buildings and the wider landscape.
- 13.42 Assessment criteria for height infringements are set out at 1538.8.2 (2) and include:
- a) The extent to which the amenity of neighbouring sites is adversely affected.
 - b) The extent to which the Smales 1 Precinct can accommodate higher buildings without generating significant adverse effects on the wider environment.
 - c) The extent to which the height of a new building is appropriate in the context of the height of buildings on adjacent land and within the wider landscape.

Conclusion with Respect to Provisions for Tall Buildings

- 13.43 Smales Farm is considered to be an ideal location to provide for tall buildings as part of planning provisions to enable a denser and more diverse concentration of activity adjacent to the Smales Farm bus station. Site suitability for tall buildings is supported by multiple factors including:
- the accessibility to mass rapid transit being located immediately adjoining the Smales Farm busway station;
 - the large 10.8 hectare size of the site in single ownership;
 - the high degree of separation from smaller scale suburban residential zones due to the wide road reserves that surround the precinct and the broader swathe of mixed use and special purpose (healthcare and education) uses that surround much of Smales Farm;
 - the suitability of the existing infrastructure and amenities on the site to support more intensive development, including the presence of an established and growing social infrastructure of retail, hospitality and service businesses and high quality landscape areas and pedestrian-focused public spaces; and
 - the flexibility of the existing business park masterplan and extent of build out (extensive areas of surface carparking remain) to adapt to accommodate a more dense, fined-grained and compact built form needed to create a highly walkable public realm needed to successfully integrate tall buildings with the busway station and wider urban context.
- 13.44 The proposed plan change has considered an optimal built form profile for the precinct in terms of building height and scale that retains the established scale of development along Taharoto Road with a 27metre height applying for a 50 metre deep street frontage zone that also wraps around Shakespeare and Northcote Road frontages. Beyond this, taller development up to 75-100m is enabled subject to a range of development standards and assessment criteria.
- 13.45 This height strategy concentrates the tall building opportunity within the central and western parts of the Smales Farm precinct adjoining the broad busway / motorway corridor and golf course beyond, transitioning down to areas of established built scale across Northcote, Taharoto and Shakespeare Roads.
- 13.46 Collectively, the tall building development standards and assessment criteria proposed are considered to appropriately provide for tall buildings with a restricted discretionary approach to help ensure design quality and flexibility while manage potential effects of tall buildings. Such an approach is consistent with the approach taken elsewhere in the Unitary Plan in the Metropolitan Centre and City Centre Zones that provide for buildings of comparable height, scale and form.
- 13.47 While the plan change is seeking to advance a new form of integrated land use and transport development for Auckland through providing for tall buildings at Smales Farm, planning for tall buildings itself is not new. Tall buildings have been a defining feature of Auckland’s city centre for many decades and are increasingly appearing in other centres such as Takapuna where a number of towers of more than 20 storeys are clustered.
- 13.48 Other zones in the Unitary Plan, most comparably the Metropolitan Centre zone, provide for buildings of a comparable height, scale and form to that being sought for the Smales Farm precinct. The proposed plan change has sought to borrow from the approach taken in the Metropolitan Centre zone in terms of development standards and

assessment criteria for tall buildings to ensure design quality and manage potential adverse effects.

- 13.49 There are many site and context factors that support Smales Farm having a high suitability to support tall buildings whilst avoiding or managing the potential for adverse effects. The approach taken in the proposed plan change that includes a set of development standards and assessment criteria takes a similar approach to managing tall buildings as the Metropolitan Centre that already provides for buildings of a comparable scale and form of development. Given the contextual suitability and discretionary planning regime with a focus on design quality and managing effects of buildings on internal and off-site amenity, overall it is considered that the development of the plan change has given due consideration to managing the range of urban design issues presented by tall buildings within the precinct and on the wider urban environment.

Ensuring Built Form Quality

- 13.50 In addition to managing the location, design and potential effects of tall buildings, the proposed plan change seeks to ensure quality built form is achieved across the whole precinct irrespective of building height. This includes the built form, massing, design and appearance of individual buildings and how they relate to other buildings and the public realm external to the precinct and the publicly accessible streets and spaces within Smales Farm, as well as any external off-site effects in relation to neighbouring properties.
- 13.51 Buildings within the 27m (RL50.4) height zone 1 will have an external public realm interface with the street network surrounding Smales Farm and play an important role as the 'front face' of the precinct in terms of its relationship with the immediate mixed use neighbourhood along and around Taharoto, Northcote and Shakespeare Roads – major movement corridors that are used and experienced by tens of thousands of people every day.
- 13.52 This street frontage zone is the most established part of the Smales Farm precinct, with three completed office buildings – Vodafone, Q4 and now B:HIVE – lining Taharoto Road and representing roughly 50% of the Taharoto Road frontage between Northcote and Shakespeare Roads.
- 13.53 The plan change, consistent with the concept masterplan, seeks to maintain the scale and form of medium rise, six storey development to this street frontage as established by these completed buildings that can be expected to remain for the long term.
- 13.54 Development standards that apply across the precinct will have an influence on further development within the lower height zone, including the outlook space requirement for any future residential buildings that fall within or interface with this area.
- 13.55 The treed landscape yard setback, that has been a distinctive element of the original Smales Farm masterplan and requirement of the business park provisions under the former North Shore District Plan, was not continued forward into the Unitary Plan and would not be consistent with the desired change to transition to a more urban built form with building edges more strongly defining streets and squares and providing activity to the street.
- 13.56 Under the proposed plan change, it can be expected that future buildings within this street frontage zone, in particular the future masterplan B14 and B15 sites in the northeastern corner of Taharoto and Shakespeare Roads, will build closer to the street

edge than earlier buildings such as Vodafone, and provide active ground floor uses that bring activity and vitality to the street corner. Such an outcome would be beneficial to the experience of walking along Taharoto Road and would help with a more outward integration of Smales Farm with the wider mixed use neighbourhood within which it sits.

- 13.57 All buildings at Smales Farm, including external additions and alterations, will be restricted discretionary activities subject to specific assessment criteria. All buildings will be subject to the building design assessment criteria at 1538.8.2 (5) that seek to ensure a quality built form will result including architectural quality / building design and appearance including the provision and integration of landscaped open spaces. This provision also requires applications to be assessed for consistency with the Precinct Plan 2 in terms of supporting the key pedestrian linkages between the street entrances and centre of the precinct, and provision for a future pedestrian plaza in this central location.
- 13.58 Additionally, all buildings will be subject to assessment criteria that apply under the Business Park provisions that relate back to the policies that apply to other business and centre zones. In particular, the policies at H15.8.1(3) reinforce the need for all new and altered buildings to achieve high quality integrated design outcomes in relation to internal and off-site amenity considerations.

Conclusion with Respect to Achieving Quality Built Form

- 13.59 The plan change seeks to maintain a medium rise six storey scale of buildings around the Taharoto Road street frontage generally consistent with the established scale of existing commercial office buildings and the existing height controls in place under the Smales Farm precinct of the Business Park Zone.
- 13.60 All new buildings (and alterations/additions) within this zone, and all buildings lower than 27m within the Height Area 2 anticipated to provide taller buildings back from the public street environment, will be restricted discretionary activities subject to development standards and assessment criteria that are focused on achieving quality built form that relates well to existing development within the precinct and the external interface with adjoining streets and wider neighbourhood.
- 13.61 These provisions are considered to provide an appropriate restricted discretionary assessment regime to manage design quality consistent with the approach taken across comparable business and centre zones within the Unitary Plan, providing the right balance of both flexibility of design response and discretion by Council with respect to building massing, architectural appearance, landscape integration and pedestrian amenity interface.

Walkable Urban Form and Pedestrian Public Spaces

- 13.62 As highlighted in the '6 D's' of Transit Oriented Development from the Vancouver transit authority design guidelines, achieving the qualities of a highly walkable urban form is key to the success of transit-oriented development. This has been recognised by Smales Farm in preparing their new vision for the future of the precinct, with walkability and creating an environment where people come first identified as a key guiding principle to realising the long term vision of becoming a vibrant mixed use community. It is recognised that for some parts of Smales Farm this will mean future stages of development will need to reduce the extent of the site characterised by vehicle-dominated carparking areas and vehicular access arrangements that sometimes

prioritise vehicular movement and space allocation over the needs of people walking to and through the Precinct. Such improved outcomes for walking will be able to be addressed incrementally over time with each future stage of development as supported by the proposed provisions.

- 13.63 In preparing the plan change consideration has been given to how some certainty of outcomes with respect to achieving walkable urban form, including pedestrian-focused public spaces, can best be provided for at Smales Farm. In doing so it has been recognised that there is a need to ensure flexibility for future masterplanning of staged development in what is a large under-developed site in single ownership. These qualities make Smales Farm quite different to the normal fine grain pattern of public streets and blocks that characterises other dense mixed use areas such as Takapuna or the City Centre that are more constraining for masterplanned development and provide more certainty of outcome in relation to controls and criteria that relate to the amenity of surrounding public streets and spaces.
- 13.64 Smales Farm Precinct Plan 2 identifies key pedestrian linkages from each of the three established street entrances into the heart of the precinct. The intention of identifying these connections – which already exist in the form of the axial The Avenue and The Boulevard internal road layout – is to ensure that they are retained as key walking routes through the site and integrating with the external public realm, in any future changes to the internal layout of circulation and development blocks. This is reinforced through the assessment criteria relating to pedestrian amenity, that requires consideration of the extent to which each stage of development achieves legible pedestrian routes within and through the site linking each of the main entrances from the surrounding street network to the future pedestrian plaza to be developed as a new central heart to the precinct.
- 13.65 Both the precinct plan and the criteria make reference to an identified new more direct route from the bus station through the centre of the precinct to the Taharoto Road entrance. This route will pick up on a missing desire line between the bus station and the centre of the Smales Farm precinct, and beyond to the Hospital precinct across Taharoto Road. It is anticipated that such a route could become the main pedestrian connection between the hospital and the bus station in the future.
- 13.66 The precinct plan also identifies the requirement for a pedestrian plaza to be constructed at the centre of the precinct. The pedestrian plaza is provided for through a dedicated development standard at 1538.6.9 that requires a pedestrian plaza to be built no later than the completion of 125,000m² GFA of development in the Smales 1 precinct. The standard requires the following minimum requirements for the design of the pedestrian plaza:
- Have a minimum area of 400m²;
 - Receive adequate levels of direct sunlight during the middle of the day throughout the year;
 - Be appropriately sheltered from the south-westerly wind;
 - Be designed for personal safety; and
 - Incorporate hard and soft landscaping.
- 13.67 Supporting these requirements to maintain and provide for these key pedestrian linkages and pedestrian plaza, all stages of development requiring resource consent will be subject to the building design assessment criteria at 1538.8.2 (5) (e) that seek to ensure each stage of development will result in a highly walkable urban form with high

levels of pedestrian amenity, safety and access. In particular, the criteria at (e) require development to consider the extent to which:

- Legible pedestrian routes are provided within and through the site linking each of the main entrances from the surrounding street network and the bus station to the location of the future pedestrian plaza;
- The design of a building contributes to pedestrian vitality and interest where it fronts an area of significant pedestrian activity;
- Building entrances are easily identifiable and accessible, and provide pedestrian shelter;
- Separate pedestrian entrances are provided for residential activity;
- The design of development contributes to personal safety; and
- Parking, loading and service areas are located and screened (as necessary) to maintain pedestrian amenity.

13.68 Consideration of the ways in which car parking affects pedestrian amenity are specifically addressed by the last criterion cross-referenced above. This issue is also addressed directly in the provisions of the underlying Business Park zone that will continue to apply. In particular Standard H15.6.4(2) of the Business Park zone requires a landscape buffer of 2m in depth along the street frontage between the street and any car parking, loading or service areas visible from the street frontage. Additionally, within the Business Park zone this issue is addressed through the matters of discretion and associated assessment criteria, for example H15.8.1 (c) and (3) (a)(v).

13.69 Consideration has been given to the possibility of residential uses at ground floor. Unlike Centre zones, where the Unitary Plan discourages residential units at ground floor, it is considered that opportunity exists for appropriately designed ground floor residential within some parts of the Smales Farm precinct, particularly away from the key pedestrian routes. While there is no restriction proposed on ground floor residential, it is recognised that this needs careful design to ensure high quality pedestrian amenity from publicly accessible walking routes and open spaces within the precinct, as well as managing the privacy and residential amenity of residents.

13.70 This is recognised and addressed through the inclusion of assessment criteria at 1538.8.2 (5 (c) that states that:

Where ground floor residential activity adjoins a publicly accessible area of public access, the extent to which the design of the public/private interface:

- Addresses the privacy of occupiers of dwellings;
- Provides appropriate levels of passive surveillance of the adjoining area of public access; and
- Maintains the visual and pedestrian amenity of the adjoining area of public access.

13.71 Such a provision helps to manage the public / private interface where ground floor residential adjoins areas of public access within the precinct to manage privacy while affording desirable levels of passive surveillance of, and visual interaction and interest to, the adjoining public areas. In doing so this helps ensure the base of residential buildings helps promote a safe and engaging, walkable urban form irrespective of whether active ground floor uses are provided.

Conclusion with Respect to Walkability and Quality Public Spaces

- 13.72 Collectively, these development standards and assessment criteria provide multiple opportunities to address issues of pedestrian safety and amenity and ensure each successive stage of development at Smales Farm is working towards a highly walkable urban environment and publicly accessible streets and spaces within the Precinct.
- 13.73 Importantly, the precinct plan and assessment criteria on pedestrian amenity, safety and access recognise the on-going need to preserve and enhance key walking routes through the precinct connecting the three established public street entrances with the centre of the precinct, as well as providing for a new direct walking route between the bus station and the central heart. Additionally, the development standard for a pedestrian plaza establishes some minimum requirements for the desired future public space at the heart of the precinct, including a requirement for its staged delivery before or at the trigger of 125,000m² GFA of commercial floor space.
- 13.74 These proposed precinct provisions are consistent with the existing policy directive within the Unitary Plan for the Business Park Zone, that includes policy 18 h) that states that any plan change to a business park zone must maximise the number and quality of connections through the site where these provide logical links to the local street network, with a priority on pedestrian and cycle routes and avoiding fenced and gated environments.

Providing for Residential Amenity

- 13.75 Providing for residential development and activity at Smales Farm is a key objective of the plan change. Smales Farm has many existing site and contextual attributes that make it highly suited for residential development. The precinct also provides an existing high level of on-site amenity – particularly in terms of landscape and open spaces but also the provision of a growing range of retail and commercial services that create the foundations of a social infrastructure at the same time as providing for the needs of the workers and visitors who currently use the precinct.
- 13.76 It is recognised that the nature of some of the landscape provision on-site may change over time as the precinct transitions into a more densely developed transit-oriented development node. Inevitably, the current landscaped areas of the site, which includes large areas of open grass and specimen trees (and large expanses of open areas dedicated to surface carparking and vehicular circulation such as the roundabout at the centre of the site) will reduce to accommodate greater development and intensity of use on the site.
- 13.77 In a dense mixed-use development node, the public realm of the precinct must provide for a more urban set of characteristics of public space amenity including a greater intensity and diversity of use and spatially, a more closely connected network of fine grain, more human scaled streets, pedestrian pathways and public places that are more closely defined and supported by the adjoining building edges. Achieving this form of public space and pedestrian amenity at Smales Farm means more pedestrian-priority streets and public spaces within the precinct such as shared spaces and laneways and pedestrianised small squares, plazas and pocket parks; spaces that are largely hard surfaced to support more intensive use by people for a wide variety of activities. This will require the redesign of existing internal streets and circulation spaces over time, and in some areas of the precinct will result in some reduction in green space.

- 13.78 While achieving such a compact and dense form of development, supporting taller buildings above the human scale of the street, is a key desired outcome for Smales Farm, it is not intended that this be uniformly applied across the entire site in such a way that there is no room for areas of green space. One of the benefits of providing for a more vertical form of development, is that it can simultaneously add greater density of activity while reducing the horizontal footprint of development, which helps to continue to provide space for landscaped open spaces at ground level. As depicted in the concept masterplan, the quantum and scale of development provided for continues to allow landscape areas with more open and expansive spatial qualities, offering contrasting experiences to those within the core of the precinct including a sense of relief and solitude, as well as informal active and passive recreation activity such as the ability to kick a ball, stroll, meander, jog or run around spaces more peripheral to the precinct.
- 13.79 The large 10.8 hectare size of the precinct allows for such a juxtaposition and integration of a dense built form of a vertical mixed use development node with areas of open space. The plan change does not anticipate moving to a near 100% building coverage model found in traditionally dense older urban parts of the city such as Takapuna or the City Centre, but maintains a 20% minimum landscaped area requirement for the Smales Farm precinct as a whole. This development standard already applies under the existing business park zone provisions.
- 13.80 In terms of residential amenity for future residents living within the precinct, under the plan change, future stages of development will result in a taller and more closely spaced pattern of buildings than the widely spaced low to medium rise pattern of existing commercial office buildings. This has implications for expectations of residential amenity and how an appropriate living environment is established and maintained for future apartment residents within buildings. Outside buildings it also places a more intensive and diverse set of demands on the public realm of the landscaped open spaces within the precinct. In providing for residential activity within the Precinct therefore it is important to consider this in the context of this future planned environment which has a different built form and public realm character, development intensity and activity mix that is planned and provided for.
- 13.81 The nature of on-site amenity required to support residential living within a dense mixed use development node as envisaged for the future of Smales Farm is quite different to that of the lower density, low rise suburban scale and setting of a suburban business park. It is not however, a consideration unique to Smales Farm. Rather, it is akin to that already provided for in other parts of the city zoned for both greater scale of building height, density and a mix of uses, such as the Metropolitan Centre zone.
- 13.82 As is the case in planning for residential amenity in dense urban centres, the scale and distribution of built form must be managed to ensure that daylight and sunlight is gained to residential buildings and to key public places at street level that will provide an extension of the living areas to compact apartment living. The layout and design of each stage of building development must seek to manage privacy, outlook and microclimate for residential buildings within the precinct and create the desired highly walkable public realm at ground level.
- 13.83 The need to provide for such residential amenity, including landscaped open space amenity, as part of the ongoing intensive development of Smales Farm into a vibrant, mixed use transit-oriented development is recognised in the proposed policies under 1538.3 that include:

- (1A) *Enable the development of intensive residential activities at the Smales 1 Precinct and require it to be designed to provide privacy and outlook; and have access to daylight and sunlight.*
- (1B) *Require landscaped open space and pedestrian connections to be provided or maintained with each stage of development to ensure an appropriate level of amenity for residents, worker and visitors to the Smales 1 precinct.*

Development Standards and Assessment Criteria relating to Residential Amenity

13.84 The following provisions of the plan change help to provide for an appropriate level of residential amenity and open space amenity as Smales Farm introduces residential activity and transitions to a denser, more compact, walkable and intensively used mixed use precinct over time:

- Applying development standards on minimum dwelling size and associated balconies and outdoor terraces;
- Applying the development standard on residential outlook control used in other locations of comparable development intensity and scale such as the Metropolitan Centre Zone, to provide for an appropriate level of outlook and daylight for future residents of apartment buildings;
- Applying development standards such as the maximum tower dimension that manage building bulk and size at upper levels for tall buildings, helping to provide more light to the lower levels of buildings and public spaces and landscape areas at ground and podium level;
- Maintaining the 20% minimum landscaped area requirement for the Smales Farm precinct as a whole, from the current business park zone provisions that sets a baseline expectation in terms of the area of the site to remain as landscaped open space as the precinct intensifies and develops over time;
- Provision for the central pedestrian plaza, to be established by the time of approximately 30% buildout (125,000m² GFA) – which will offer useable amenity to residents as well as workers and visitors to the precinct. This publicly accessible space is required to be a comfortable space with a minimum area of 400m², located at the heart of the precinct and designed in an integrated way with surrounding buildings to provide a comfortable microclimate including shelter from the prevailing wind, and to receive adequate levels of direct sunlight during the middle of the day throughout the year; and
- Managing ground floor residential activity as addressed through the assessment criteria at 1538.8.2 (5 (c) that requires consideration of the privacy of occupiers of dwellings where ground floor residential units adjoin publicly access areas of the Precinct.

13.85 Additionally, assessment criteria proposed for the Smales precinct include a number of criteria that require consideration of matters relating to on-site amenity for future residents and all users of the Precinct, including:

- Requirements for providing and maintaining the key pedestrian linkages through the precinct as identified on Precinct Plan 2;
- Consideration of landscape open space provision with each stage of development, under 1538.8.2 (5) (d) that consider the extent to which:
 - o *Landscape open space is provided or maintained with each stage of development*

- *The design of hard and soft landscaping integrates with and appropriately enhances the design and configuration of buildings and the amenity of public places within the site for the various users of the Smales 1 Precinct.*
- Considerations of pedestrian amenity, safety and access recognising that walkability is a key attribute of on-site amenity for anyone living within the Smales Farm precinct, and including the extent to which separate pedestrian entrances are provided for residential activity providing a sense of address for residents and visitors;
- For tall buildings, the extent to which the building responds and relates appropriately to the scale and form of neighbouring buildings within the Smales 1 precinct, helping to manage potential effects on residential amenity internal to the precinct with subsequent stages of development once the first residential building is established.

Conclusion with Respect to Residential Amenity

- 13.86 Smales Farm has many site and locational attributes that are ideal to support high quality, high density residential development in future.
- 13.87 The desired built form and activity mix for the future of Smales Farm as a vibrant mixed use transit-oriented development node will alter the way in which open space amenity is provided for within the precinct and the way in which common, publicly accessible areas are laid out to cater to the demands of more users and greater range of activities.
- 13.88 The maintenance of the 20% minimum landscaped area requirement, requirement for a central pedestrian plaza, and assessment criteria relating to landscaped open space provision and pedestrian amenity help to ensure considerations of how landscape design and open space / public space provision as they contribute to residential amenity can be fully considered and addressed with each stage of development.
- 13.89 For future residents living within apartment buildings at Smales Farm, the development standards proposed provide for an appropriate level of residential amenity comparable to that provided for in other dense, mixed use environments such as the Metropolitan Centre zone.
- 13.90 The restricted discretionary nature of all building development enables consideration of a range of issues relating to residential amenity by Council in considering approval of each stage of new development, with assessment criteria that enable consideration of a wide range of matters relating to providing and maintaining residential amenity as each stage of development occurs.

Public Realm Interface with Surrounding Streets

- 13.91 Consideration has been given to the desired future public realm interface with surrounding streets including the SH1 Northern Busway and Motorway corridor that forms the long western boundary to the precinct.
- 13.92 In general, it is considered desirable in future that as part of the transition from a suburban business park typology to the more urban transit-oriented development node, that future buildings at Smales Farm with an immediate public realm interface to surrounding streets of Northcote, Taharoto and Shakespeare Roads have a closer relationship to the public realm of the streets that surround the precinct.
- 13.93 Future buildings should contribute a strongly defined built edge to these streets and where possible, providing ground floor activity that enlivens the street and contributes to

pedestrian amenity and safety in terms of bringing life and activity to the street edge. Such outcomes are promoted through the zero setback requirement to all three road frontages, as well as the provision that enables floor space for retail activities as a proportion of a commercial or residential building.

- 13.94 The lower 27m building height maintained along the length of Taharoto Road frontage and wrapping around the key corner sites with Northcote and Shakespeare Road, will ensure a medium-rise, human scaled street wall of up to six storeys will continue to evolve along these street edges as future buildings fill in gaps and extend the scale of built form already established by the Vodafone and B: HIVE buildings. Taller buildings will be required to be set back from this lower height zone that represents the main public realm interface where the majority of pedestrian movement and activity can be expected to occur in terms of people moving along and across Taharoto Road between the busway station, Smales Farm, the hospital and other mixed use destinations along and nearby this busy street corridor. Development standard H15.6.4(2) of the Business Park Zone will continue to apply to all street frontages requiring any visible car parking, loading or service areas to be set back at least 2 m behind a landscape buffer zone helping to manage the visual and pedestrian amenity considerations of dealing with vehicular access and carparking in relation to the public streets that surround the Precinct.
- 13.95 Upper levels of street-facing buildings should be designed to provide positive passive surveillance and visual interaction with the street environment, particularly future residential buildings that through the provision of balconies and outdoor terraces will result in a much more interactive relationship with the street than that typical of the commercial office buildings that have been developed at Smales Farm to date.
- 13.96 These desired outcomes with respect to pedestrian amenity on surrounding streets are supported by the assessment criteria at 1538.8.2 (5)(e) that require consideration of the extent to which the design of a building contributes to pedestrian vitality and interest where it fronts an area of significant pedestrian activity.
- 13.97 The long, uninterrupted western boundary of the precinct to the Northern Busway and Motorway corridor is also a public realm interface, although with quite different qualities and sensitivities than the public streets that bound the balance of the Precinct.
- 13.98 This western precinct interface does not have the human-scaled sensitivity that comes with a pedestrian pavement street edge condition. Rather, it is a highly visible edge experienced by many people at speed as they move along this major movement corridor for the North Shore. Visual amenity is a key consideration to this edge, but there is little sensitivity to the scale of built form or activity interface between Smales Farm and this corridor.
- 13.99 Consequently, the plan change has considered this western part of the precinct suitable to support tall buildings with low sensitivity to the potential effects of building scale while a concentration of building height and density on this part of the Precinct will result in a desirable built form profile reinforcing the legibility and recognition of Smales Farm as a significant node of mixed use development at this key gateway point into Takapuna and Milford from the motorway and accessed directly from the high volume, fast and frequent Northern Busway mass rapid transit line. The development of a cluster of residential towers, supported by more medium rise mixed use buildings in this location, represents a highly desirable expression of a high density, high rise built form node signalling the presence of this transit-oriented development node from the major movement corridor for the whole of the North Shore.

13.100 While such a high rise built form outcome will result in beneficial outcomes for the precinct and wider North Shore context from an urban design perspective, the proposed plan change has recognised the need to manage the potential scale of buildings at this height to ensure the potential for adverse effects from building bulk are managed to an acceptable level. The development standards that apply provide assurance that a continuous high rise wall of building towers 75-100m in height will be avoided along this edge and, in combination with the assessment criteria that apply to all buildings and tall buildings in particular, provide an appropriate assessment framework to manage potential effects of building height and scale in relation to this highly visible and prominent interface with State Highway 1.

Conclusion with Respect to Public Realm Interface

- 13.101 The plan change has recognised that the Smales Farm precinct is defined by public streets and movement corridors – including the Northern Motorway and Northern Busway – on all four sides, giving it an extensive public realm interface and corresponding prominence within the wider area between Takapuna and Milford and as experienced from State Highway 1.
- 13.102 The building height and massing strategy adopted by the proposed plan change has considered the relative sensitivity of these contexts and makes a clear distinction between the desired outcome of more pedestrian oriented, mixed use buildings interfacing with surrounding streets on Taharoto, Northcote and Shakespeare Roads and the western interface with the busway/motorway, which can support buildings of greater height and scale without the need to step down in height as provided for around the other precinct boundaries where the public realm interface is defined by an immediate interface with the footpaths of public road reserves serving a busy mixed use neighbourhood.
- 13.103 The plan change appropriately manages the built form interface with the road reserve with surrounding streets, providing for buildings that will provide greater spatial definition and activation of surrounding streets than have historically been developed at Smales Farm under the suburban business park model that has influenced and controlled development outcomes to date.
- 13.104 Along the western boundary with SH1, the plan change enables significantly greater building height and scale than currently provided for, which will in time result in a significant new node of high rise, mixed use development appearing along this highly visible public interface with the busway and motorway corridor that is the major movement corridor for the North Shore. In urban design terms, this is considered a desirable scale and form of development, signalling that the precinct is a significant node of mixed use activity within the overall North Shore context and representing an appropriately optimised greater density and scale of built form at this interface that does not have the same contextual sensitivity as the street network surrounding the balance of the precinct.

Relationship to Neighbouring Zones

- 13.105 In enabling tall buildings within Smales Farm consideration has been given to maintaining an appropriately scaled interface with adjoining zones that surround the precinct. This includes a mix of school and residential properties zoned Mixed Housing Urban to the north and south of the precinct as well as the North Shore Hospital and mixed use zoned The Poynton retirement village to the east (refer the range of

contextual massing views and concept masterplan cross-sections - Figure 3 and 4, Part 2 - of the drawing package).

- 13.106 Building in relation to boundary controls are maintained to adjoining zones of Mixed Housing Urban across Northcote Road to the south, and to the Westlake Girls' High School to the north. This control also applies to the golf course land to the west across the motorway, although at such a distance that it makes little impact on the ability to locate buildings up to 100metres in height within the western part of the precinct.
- 13.107 The land use interface between Smales Farm and properties to the south across Northcote Road is quite distant with little relationship from one side of the street to the other, due to the predominant motorway interchange function of this short stretch of Northcote Road between Taharoto and the motorway creating major severance and separation between the existing business park and properties to the south. The Smales Farm frontage is split between the existing Vodafone Building to the east of The Avenue, with a large surface carpark to the west between the Northcote Road entrance and the Northern Busway.
- 13.108 The majority of the residential properties are concentrated at the eastern end where the immediate interface is with the existing Vodafone Building and the Smales Farm entrance, both of which can be expected to remain for the long term. The 27m street frontage height area covers the existing Vodafone corner site through to the The Avenue entrance. The 75m height area is set back 50m back from the street edge and any tall buildings to be developed in this part of the site will be subject to the 3m + 45 degree building in relation to boundary recession plan that applies from the southern side of Northcote Road and would have the effect of stepping in buildings 75m in height at least 51m back to achieve 75m in height or 68m to achieve 100m.
- 13.109 To the west of The Boulevard entrance and signalised intersection on Northcote Road, the balance of the properties to the south are occupied by the Northcote Intermediate School which has its main entrance on Northcote Road with buildings set well back behind an entrance carpark. School playing fields extend to the west as far as the motorway, with a slip lane access off Northcote Road providing access to the playing fields and several residential properties that remain backing onto the school grounds.
- 13.110 The slip lane, in combination with the road widening that has occurred to accommodate the motorway on and off ramps at the abutment to the motorway overbridge creates an extra wide buffer (between approximately 30–60m) between this southwestern corner of the Smales Farm precinct and the school grounds and handful of residential properties to the south.
- 13.111 Given this extra wide separation distance, the generally broad open space and treed character of much of the land opposite, it is considered that the building in relation to boundary control that applies is sufficient to manage building height at this interface. The plan change does not propose the continuation of the lower height 27m zone along this stretch of the Smales precinct. The building in relation to boundary control will require tall buildings to be set back from Northcote Road, with a building of 75m in height being set back 51m from the boundary and a 100m building being set back 68m. The maximum tower dimensions that apply, as well as the minimum building separation and outlook controls, limit the potential for a 'wall of tall buildings' along this 200m length of frontage of Northcote Road.
- 13.112 Such a built form interface, managed by these development standards, is considered an appropriate scale relationship for this section of Northcote Road and will enable a desirable presence of tall buildings defining the southwestern corner of Smales Farm marking the key gateway on and off the motorway at Northcote Road. Potential effects

that may arise from the design of a specific building proposal, including the potential for building dominance, privacy, visual amenity, shading, or wind effects, can be readily considered and addressed through the assessment criteria proposed with discretion remaining with Council.

- 13.113 Similarly, a building in relation to boundary control applies relative to the Girls' High School to the north across Shakespeare Road, as a key control that will require the set back of tall buildings back into the site to the south of the precinct boundary. Shakespeare Road between Taharoto Road and the Smales Farm entrance has a width of at least 24m. West of here, the road reserve widens to accommodate the access arrangements and small park and ride carpark of the busway station. This expanded vehicle circulation and carparking area results in a wider separation distance of at least 50m between the Smales Farm and the School at this western end near the busway station entrance.
- 13.114 The height planes for Smales Farm respond to these characteristics, with the 27m height zone wrapping around the corner from Taharoto Road for approximately the first third of the boundary. While the 75 m height area extends to the boundary either side of The Avenue access from Shakespeare Road, the building in relation to boundary control will limit buildings to approximately 31m at the street edge east of The Avenue and around 40m on the bus station side of the entrance where the separation distance from the school boundary is wider. Tall buildings seeking to reach heights of 75-100m will be required to be set well back from the street edge, between 66-90m south from the street.
- 13.115 As with the Northcote Road interface, this built form interface, subject to the development standards and restricted discretionary assessment criteria proposed, is considered an appropriately scaled built form interface in urban design terms between the Smales Farm precinct and the school to the north of the precinct, which transitions down in height from the tall buildings in the centre of the site down to between 27 and 40m at the boundary with Shakespeare Road.
- 13.116 The bus station site, which legally forms part of the Northern Busway land, has an adjoining dogleg-shaped boundary with Smales Farm in the far northwestern corner of the precinct. Given the transport status and function of this land parcel, the lack of sensitivity of this activity to building proximity and the desirability in transit-oriented development terms to maximise building density in proximity to transit access, the plan change provides for tall buildings with no set back in relation to the common boundary with the bus station. While not currently envisaged by the concept masterplan, which shows this area remaining as part an open landscaped zone along the western boundary, such a built form outcome as enabled by the plan change would be considered highly desirable from an urban design perspective.
- 13.117 No building in relation to boundary or yard setback control is currently provided for or required along Taharoto Road in relation to the mixed use and special purpose zoning of the North Shore Hospital and The Poynton sites to the east. At this eastern interface, the 27m height, relative to the typical 30m width of the road reserve, maintains the comfortable height to width ratio already established for Smales Farm that has a comfortable relative height and scale relative to the Hospital and mixed use zone sites and will at full build out on the Smales Farm precinct result in a strongly defined building edge of up to six storeys reinforcing the desired mixed use urban street corridor planned for Taharoto Road under the Unitary Plan.

Conclusion with Respect to Neighbouring Zones and Precincts

- 13.118 The proposed plan change has given consideration to maintaining an appropriate scale of built form at the street edge interface with neighbouring zones by managing a transition down in height from the provision for tall buildings within the central and western motorway boundary of the precinct where no such sensitivity exists.
- 13.119 This is achieved through the retention of a lower height 27m height area wrapping around Northcote and Shakespeare Roads, as well as relying on the building in relation to boundary controls that will require tall buildings of up to 75-100m in height to be set well back within the Precinct from the public street edges proximate to the neighbouring schools and residential properties to the north and south of the precinct.
- 13.120 A number of development standards will apply including maximum tower dimensions, building separation distance and residential outlook controls that will manage bulk and massing of future buildings. A range of assessment criteria will also require consideration of potential effects in relation to neighbouring residential zones (including the schools) and other neighbouring areas. In particular, assessment criteria 1538.8.2 (5)(f) requires all buildings above 27m (RL50.4) to maintain visual amenity and mitigate adverse off-site effects of tall buildings, including the potential for wind, shadowing, dominance and privacy effects.
- 13.121 This combination of the height zones, development standards and assessment criteria is considered to result in a planning framework from an urban design perspective that results in an appropriately scaled built form interface with neighbouring properties to the north, south and east of Smales Farm with a restricted discretionary design regime to require each stage of building development to manage and mitigate the potential for adverse effects in relation to these neighbouring areas, particularly residential zones.

Legibility of Built Form Node

- 13.122 A legible transit-oriented development node that is visible within the wider urban form of the city in the form of an identifiable cluster of tall buildings has been identified as a desired urban design outcome.
- 13.123 Such an outcome would serve to visually reinforce the importance that has been placed on this location as a highly accessible place offering a dense and diverse concentration of mixed use activity immediately adjoining the busway station which will increase its importance as a destination for people from across the North Shore and the wider city.
- 13.124 These positive effects on the wider urban form of the city from enabling a recognisable cluster of tall buildings at Smales Farm can be seen in a number of the visual simulations prepared from representative viewing locations on the North Shore and from across the harbour on the central city waterfront.
- 13.125 In particular, this can be seen in the range of middle distance views included in Part 5 of the drawing package from North Shore locations such as the Onewa Domain (VP14), Ocean View Road in Northcote (VP15), Glenfield Shopping Centre (VP16), Greville Reserve in Forrest Hill to the north (VP19), and from around Lake Pupuke such as Sylvan Park (VP21) where the new taller built form at Smales Farm will read strongly in association with the existing tall buildings at North Shore Hospital, reinforcing the identity and landmark qualities of the wider mixed use neighbourhood.
- 13.126 More distantly, from the city centre waterfront and the harbour as represented by the Wynyard Point Viewpoint 4 (Part 5 Figure 10-11) the prominence of the built form node

will be less given the much greater viewing distance, but will still be visible on the skyline and will read as a discrete node comparable in height and built character to that which already exists in Takapuna. In relation to Takapuna, from these city centre views the tall buildings at Smales Farm will read well separated and readily distinguishable from the tall buildings at Takapuna and this will reinforce the sense of both places as discrete concentrations of tall apartment towers offering more compact and diverse forms of urban residential living on this lower part of the North Shore.

- 13.127 Up close, approaching from the motorway and busway from the north Viewpoint 28 (Part 5 Figure 45) and south Viewpoint 29 (Part 5 Figure 46), or heading south on Forrest Hill Road past Westlake Boys' High School Viewpoint 20 (Part 5 Figures 33-34), the tall buildings will read in association with the lower buildings on the precinct to form a sizeable concentration of mixed use development with the greatest density and scale on the western part of the precinct overlooking the bus station and State Highway corridor. This will be highly visible to the many tens of thousands of people that pass through this transport corridor every day, making for a memorable moment moving along this corridor reinforcing the importance of Smales Farm as a significant node of development and by extension, its accessibility by the adjoining busway station.
- 13.128 Smales Farm will become, in time, as this new, taller skyline develops incrementally over the medium to long term, a new landmark node of tall buildings within the urban form that will be highly memorable moving along this corridor and serve to strengthen a clear built character and identity within the wider city.
- 13.129 It is important that the future skyline profile of the tall buildings and precinct as a whole has a positive presence visually in terms of a massed composition of building forms. This has been addressed by the inclusion of specific assessment criteria to consider the contribution all tall buildings make to the skyline and encouraging the use of rooftops and upper levels to create distinctive profiles that also reduce building bulk at upper levels. This is also supported by the reduced maximum tower dimension of 35m for that part of any building above 75m.

Conclusion with Respect to Legibility of Built Form Node

- 13.130 Tall buildings of up to 75-100m in height will be readily visible on the North Shore skyline from many locations within the surrounding city form from up close to very far viewing distances, as seen in the visual simulations of the concept masterplan from a wide range of representative viewing audiences.
- 13.131 The plan change provisions include a number of provisions that help to ensure an attractive cluster of residential towers is likely to develop over time, including restricting the number of towers that could build above 75m in height to achieve variation in height amongst tall buildings, progressively reducing the maximum building floorplate dimension with building height to require buildings to be slimmer and less bulky at upper levels, and the application of the residential outlook control which would require minimum separation distances of 20m for buildings above 27m. These controls, together with the assessment criteria relating to design of new buildings over 27m in height and consideration of their physical and visual impact on the wider cityscape, appropriately provide for the desired outcome of a legible and distinct built form node that will have a positive presence on the skyline of the city.

14.0 Conclusion

- 14.1 Overall, it is considered that the proposed plan change has appropriately enabled the desired development outcome – the ability to transition towards a denser, more diverse and vibrant transit-oriented development node over time – while providing development standards and assessment criteria that address key urban design matters.
- 14.2 This combination of development standards that manage building location, height, bulk and massing and outlook for residential units, while making design of all new buildings and external alterations and additions (not already provided for) matters for discretion, is consistent with that used to manage development of comparable scale and intensity in other zones such as the Metropolitan Centre and City Centre Zones. Such an approach will address key urban design issues relating to tall buildings and ensure appropriately high levels of residential and pedestrian amenity are maintained within such a dense, mixed use environment.
- 14.3 In terms of the relationship with surrounding streets, neighbouring properties and the wider urban context, the precinct height zones and building in relation to boundary controls will ensure buildings will transition down in height fronting Shakespeare, Northcote and Taharoto Roads reflecting the existing established scale of the approximate 27m building height currently provided for on Smales Farm that has a comfortable scale relationship with building height and scale on neighbouring zones under the Unitary Plan.
- 14.4 Assessment criteria will enable Council the ability to assess the design quality of buildings. This will help ensure the potential effects of building bulk and scale are given due consideration. Specific criteria have been developed to address matters of on-site residential and pedestrian amenity and off-site amenity. These criteria include consideration of the extent to which adverse off-site effects of tall buildings, in particular wind, shadowing, dominance and privacy effects are avoided or mitigated.