

Report on the potential for intensive land use on 278 Clevedon Kawakawa Road as part of a Proposed Private Plan Change Request.

October 2019

1 Background

The AgriBusiness Group has been requested to provide a report evaluating the potential for intensive land use on elite and prime soils on the property at 278 Clevedon-Kawakawa Road that is to be the subject of a private plan change request which will be seeking to rezone this area of land from Rural – Rural Coastal Zone to Rural – Countryside Living Zone and extending the Clevedon Sub Precinct C over this land.

The statutory approval process that is being adopted for this project involves a private plan change request to rezone the land and a subsequent resource consent application for the subdivision of 278 Clevedon-Kawakawa Road to create 11 countryside living lots, a balance farm lot and a balance lot to be amalgamated with 272 Clevedon-Kawakawa Road. The resource consent application is being prepared on the basis that the plan change request will be approved prior to this application being considered. The resource consent application is therefore being made on the basis that the land at 272 and 278 Clevedon Kawakawa Road will be zoned Rural Countryside Living and the Clevedon Sub Precinct C will apply to this land.

This statutory approval approach is being taken as the proposed plan change will only enable limited countryside living development opportunities on the properties given the extent of the flooding constraints that apply to this land and the nature of the clustered countryside living subdivision and development that is provided for by the Rural – Countryside Living Zone and Clevedon Sub Precinct C provisions under the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP). The proposal for which resource consent is being sought therefore defines the maximum extent of subdivision and development that will be enabled by the proposed plan change on the properties.

My assessment is therefore based on the subsequent subdivision and development of the land that will be enabled through the approval of the plan change request, which is the proposal as detailed in the resource consent application. It is my understanding that this is the maximum possible development potential of the land that would reasonably be expected to occur as a result of the approval of the plan change request.

As part of my consideration I have been provided with:

- Soils and Land Use Capability Map for the property with accompanying report prepared by Dr D Hicks.
- A map of the Catchment Hydrology.
- Coastal Inundation Mapping from Auckland Council GeoMaps.
- A map containing an aerial view.
- Draft Scheme Plan of Subdivision
- Draft Landscape Planting Plans.

I visited the property and was taken around it by one of the owners.

The owners intention is to subdivide a relatively small proportion of the available land which constitutes an area of land at the south of the property which is on a rise which is approximately four meters above the rest of the land which is all of an even low lying contour.

The proposed subdivision plan shows eleven rural residential lots collectively containing some 5.46 hectares, a twelfth 2.22 hectare lot containing the shared access road to be held in common, a thirteenth 1.13 hectare lot to be amalgamated with the property at 272 Clevedon-Kawakawa Road and a 43.19 hectare balance farm lot.

2 Land Use Capability.

2.1 Existing Land Use

The land in question is currently run as a pastoral grazing operation predominantly grazing young dairy stock before their second winter with some beef finishing as well. The current land use is predominantly driven by the fact that the vast majority of the property is very low lying and it is subject to flooding and has a high water table across its soil types throughout the year so it is relatively wet in nature and so it isn't able to carry larger animals because of the risk of pugging and destruction of the pasture species.

This land use is the same as the land use on land which is close to the block in question and which is of a similar contour, apart from an area which is occasionally cropped for maize on a slightly elevated floodplain berm.

2.2 Soil Type and Classification under the Auckland Unitary Plan.

The major factor in protecting the elite and prime soils in the AUPOiP is to ensure that retaining land with high productive potential for primary production provides flexibility to improve economic performance, sustainably manage land resources and enable communities to pursue sustainable lifestyles. Analysis of the report prepared by Dr D Hicks on the soil classification is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Soil type and land use classification of the block of land.

Classification AUP	Area (Ha)	Percentage of Total
Elite Soil	0	0
Prime Soil	6.03	11.6
Other Soils (i)	35.1	67.5
Other Soils (ii)	10.9	20.9

As reported by Dr Hicks only 6.0 ha of the property, or 11.6 %, meets the AUPOIP's definition of prime soils. The Countryside Living subdivision and development that would be enabled by the proposed plan change would use approximately 4.65 Ha of this area of prime soils.

Other soils (i) which constitute 67.5% of the property are excluded from AUPOIP's definition because they have either a slope angle which is difficult to cultivate or imperfect drainage which restricts cultivation windows or protracted waterlogging which reduces crop growth.

Other soils (ii) which constitute 20.9% of the property are excluded from AUPOIP's definition because they have either impeded soil drainage or standing water in surface depressions or are in floodways with bottoms which are too flood-prone and banks which are too steep to cultivate.

Regardless of the amount used in this proposed subdivision, the combined factors of the fact that the areas of prime soil are not contiguous and the fact that these non-contiguous small areas are interspersed with land at a high degree of risk mean that the land in question does not offer the characteristics which would classify it as offering high productive potential.

It is my opinion that in general the commercial vegetable production sector regard blocks of land below 50 ha as unsuitable to be able to operate them efficiently. This opinion incorporates the factors such as the scale of vehicles that are used, the size of the property that it is necessary to include a complete rotation of a range of crops which is required to allow for the necessary time between crops to allow for pest and disease minimization and the allowance for travel times between the various blocks operated by the large scale efficient commercial vegetable production operation.

These soils are also isolated to the south-western and south-eastern corners of the property at 278 Clevedon-Kawakawa Road.

2.3 Potential Land Uses

Because of the low lying nature of the property and the high degree of risk of both flooding from rainfall and the risk of coastal inundation I do not believe that this block of land has a high number of potential land uses. I believe that pastoral grazing of relatively light animals, because of the high risk of pugging of the pastures, the making of supplements to be sold off the property (as hay or silage) and the growing of maize on the few elevated paddocks would be the only potentially viable land uses.

However I would put in as a rider that because of the high degree of risk from flooding none of these options would be without a high degree of risk therefore I would not consider them to be high returning land uses.

The potential viable land uses are severely limited by the low lying nature of the property. I have used the term "viable" in the context that this term conforms to the definition of viable in the Cambridge dictionary, which is "able to work as intended or able to succeed". It encompasses all of the factors of practical / commercial / financial / economic and political viability.

3 Summary

I have visited and inspected the land in question and have been provided with sufficient background information.

The total amount of soil available on the property in question which is classified as prime is too small to justify the establishment of a modern horticultural operation. The location of the soils classified as prime on the property are also isolated to the south-western and south-eastern corners of the property and as such could not be amalgamated with any adjacent properties to

form a viable block of elite or prime soils that would be of sufficient scale to carry out horticultural operations on.

There is a very limited range of alternative viable land uses which all encompass a high degree of risk from flooding therefore I would not consider them to be high returning land uses.

Because of the relatively small area of prime soils that would be taken up by the Countryside Living subdivision and development that would be enabled by the proposed rezoning I believe that it would be appropriate to approve the plan change request from a land use capability perspective.

Allowing this proposed rezoning would not compromise the protection of elite soils for the purpose of food supply as required by the AUPOIP as there are no elite soils located on the property. The proposed rezoning would not compromise the capability of the prime soils located on the property for vegetable production as there are only small isolated areas of such soils found on the property which are not sufficient in size to be viable for a food growing operation. The limited value of this land for intensive rural production also means that the proposed rezoning would not compromise the direction to recognize the productive potential of land that does not contain elite or prime soils. On the grounds that there are only small isolated areas of prime soils located on the land, it is not a practicable proposition to avoid an alternative viable use of this land for countryside living purposes, given the other factors that make it more appropriate for this land use.