

Response ID ANON-URZ4-5FRG-9

Submitted to Fast-track approval applications
Submitted on 2024-05-02 19:12:04

Submitter details

Is this application for section 2a or 2b?

2B

1 Submitter name

Individual or organisation name:
Tainui Group Holdings Limited

2 Contact person

Contact person name:
Brian Croad

3 What is your job title

Job title:
Manager Regulatory Affairs

4 What is your contact email address?

Email:
s 9(2)(a)

5 What is your phone number?

Phone number:
s 9(2)(a)

6 What is your postal address?

Postal address:

PO Box 19295, 6 Bryce Street, Hamilton 3204

7 Is your address for service different from your postal address?

No

Organisation:

Contact person:

Phone number:

Email address:

Job title:

Please enter your service address:

Section 1: Project location

Site address or location

Add the address or describe the location:

The Ruakura Inland Port is located at 10 Aka Matua Lane, Ruakura, Kirikiriroa Hamilton (refer uploaded location plan). Stage 1 of the Inland port is currently operational from this location, occupying some 9ha, with the future expansion to Stage 4 ultimately having a 30ha footprint.

The subject site does not include any public conservation land.

File upload:

Ruakura Inland Port Location Plan.pdf was uploaded

Upload file here:

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Do you have a current copy of the relevant Record(s) of Title?

Yes

upload file:

Ruakura Inland Port Records of Title.pdf was uploaded

Who are the registered legal land owner(s)?

Please write your answer here:

- Ruakura Port Limited
- TGH Ruakura Industrial Development Limited
- Rusty Racing Limited

Detail the nature of the applicant's legal interest (if any) in the land on which the project will occur

Please write your answer here:

Ruakura Inland Port is a joint venture between Tainui Group Holdings and Port of Tauranga.

Tainui Group Holdings (TGH) is the wholly owned commercial entity of Waikato-Tainui with a responsibility to protect and grow the tribe's commercial assets to support the development and prosperity of its 88,000 tribal members. All profits generated by TGH fund education, health, elderly, cultural, housing and environmental programmes, and are reinvested into further growing the commercial assets.

TGH manages a diverse asset portfolio which spans commercial, retail, and residential property, hotels, farming, fishing and forestry, infrastructure, equities and direct investment. Ruakura Superhub is a signature project and an example of the intergenerational approach the company takes to investment. Ruakura Inland Port is part of and located within Ruakura Superhub.

Ruakura Port Limited has freehold interest in the property necessary to construct the Ruakura Inland Port out to its consented Stages 1-3 build out, comprising 16.6ha. Stages 1-3 are contained within Title ID 1166245, owned by Ruakura Port Limited.

Ruakura Port Limited also has the freehold and leasehold interest necessary to construct the Ruakura Inland Port out to the as yet unconsented Stage 4, with the exception of the 1.0708 ha title owned by Rusty Racing Limited (Title ID 148316).

The whole of the Inland Port (Stages 1-4) is zoned for Logistics (Inland Port) purposes in the Hamilton City District Plan, including the Rusty Racing Limited property. Stage 4 is estimated to be required to be operational in 2040 – 2042 to meet projected demand, allowing sufficient time for the acquisition of this property, to enable the expansion of the Inland Port to Stage 4.

To provide for the optimisation of the Inland Port, and specifically nighttime use, preliminary noise modelling undertaken on behalf of Tainui Group Holdings has shown the mitigation value of noise barriers comprising bunds and walls, north of the East Coast Main Trunk Rail Line (ECMT). The locations, also in the table of Relevant Records of Title above, are at 44 Percival Road and the 196ha block held on Record of Title 939233. Both properties are owned by TGH Ruakura Industrial Development Limited, presenting no impediment to implementing this mitigation.

Section 2: Project details

What is the project name?

Please write your answer here:

Ruakura Inland Port Optimisation

What is the project summary?

Please write your answer here:

The project seeks to allow for 24-hour activity at the Inland Port. Night time operation necessary to optimise current and future stages is very limited by existing noise conditions, and it is proposed to replace these with new noise conditions based on NZS 6809:1999, with appropriate mitigation measures. This constitutes one of three highly related projects for Ruakura which have been submitted for inclusion in the Fast Track Approvals Bill.

What are the project details?

Please write your answer here:

Background

The Ruakura Superhub is being developed to create New Zealand's largest integrated commercial hub. Central to the development is the 30ha Ruakura Inland Port, operated in a joint venture between Tainui Group Holdings and Port of Tauranga. Adjacent to this will be a 263ha industrial and logistics park with a mix of uses to help businesses thrive.

The Ruakura Superhub is at the nexus of the golden triangle of Tauranga, Auckland and Hamilton, and is adjacent to the East Coast Main Trunk rail line and the Waikato Expressway. Its location provides efficient and strong connectivity to both the Port of Tauranga and Ports of Auckland and creates an integrated, cost-effective supply chain solution for both importers and exporters. Ruakura Inland Port is managed by Port of Tauranga through its subsidiary Quality Marshalling.

The Ruakura Inland Port Optimisation project seeks to allow for 24-hour activity at the Inland Port. The current night time noise limits set by the Board of Inquiry in 2014 were set based on modelled predictions and assumed operations at that time, without the benefit of a port in place and failed to properly account for the realities and constraints of a modern port operation.

The Inland Port has a critical need to operate 24/7 to be viable and deliver the freight task along with transport and climate change benefit outcomes. The full benefits of the Inland Port to the regional and national economy, and to Waikato-Tainui, are predicated on the Inland Port reaching its potential container throughput capacity (working with Kiwirail) and to be able to be expanded through future stages to meet demand.

Applying the expertise of Port of Tauranga and Quality Marshalling, the current night time noise controls will impose significant constraints on the Port's operations, and specifically the unloading and loading of containers from trains at the night time slots available on the Kiwirail network. This in turn significantly constrains the container throughput of the Inland Port and operational viability and leaves it out of step with other nodes in the freight network.

The Proposal

The project seeks to allow for 24-hour activity at the Inland Port. Night time operation necessary to optimise current and future stages is very limited by existing noise conditions, and it is proposed to replace these with new noise conditions based on NZS 6809:1999, with appropriate mitigation measures.

TGH has commissioned expert advice on appropriate alternative noise controls to properly allow night-time operations, based on best practice and New Zealand Standards for controlling similar 24/7 operations, such as seaports. This advice when complete will include new methods of mitigating effects on residents including new noise bunds and walls, to provide for an appropriate level of night-time amenity.

The new noise standard is being worked on and the effects of this on residents being modelled. This new noise standard draws on best practice for ports from the NZS 6809:1999 Acoustics – Port Noise Management and Land Use Planning, which is a nationally applicable standard. This standard is designed to manage 24/7 port operations, and where there is proximity to sensitive land uses, strike a balance between the operation of the port and the people that live around. While specifically designed for seaports, the NZS 6809:1999 can be drawn on to also be applicable to the Ruakura Inland Port. The standard applies a 55 Ldn dB(A) (day-night) noise level, where below this, the impact on residential activities at night is considered appropriate.

A new noise bund and wall along the full western side of Percival Road will be constructed to help mitigate the effects of future stages of the Inland Port.

TGH are also investigating the effectiveness of additional acoustic barriers on land it owns at 44 Percival Road to further mitigate noise effects from future stages of the Inland Port.

The Planning Process

The Ruakura Inland Port Optimisation project can be achieved ideally by way of a Plan Change to the Hamilton City District Plan, or through a s127 RMA consent to change existing resource consent conditions. The Plan Change option is optimal because it allows the consented stages 1-3 and the future unconsented stage 4 to be subject to the same new noise rules in the District Plan – therefore importantly providing for future development certainty.

In the alternative, a s127 change to existing consent conditions could be sought to the existing resource consent for the inland port, which was obtained for stages 1-3 in 2020 and is subject to restrictive night time noise limits. The s127 consent would apply to stages 1-3, providing for short-medium term optimisation, but not provide for long-term certainty for stage 4.

Describe the staging of the project, including the nature and timing of the staging

Please write your answer here:

The stages of the Ruakura Inland Port Project, with currently anticipated timing, is set out in the table below. The timing of the stages is based on demand and projected TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) container throughput and may be subject to change. The stages will occur as freight volumes grow.

Inland Port Stage 1 (cumulative land area 9ha) - projected annual TEU Capacity: 58,400/Projected date when Capacity is created - August 2023.

Inland Port Stage 2 (cumulative land area 13ha) - projected annual TEU Capacity: 216,810/Projected date when Capacity is created - mid 2028.

Inland Port Stage 3 (cumulative land area 17ha) - projected annual TEU Capacity: 283,292/Projected date when Capacity is created - mid 2032.

Inland Port Stage 4 (cumulative land area 30ha) - projected annual TEU Capacity: 528,572/Projected date when Capacity is created - 2040-2042.

What are the details of the regime under which approval is being sought?

Please write your answer here:

Resource Management Act 1991 – Plan Changes (if the Fast Track Bill is amended to include Plan Changes)

Resource Management Act 1991 – Resource Consents/s127 application

If you seeking approval under the Resource Management Act, who are the relevant local authorities?

Please write your answer here:

Hamilton City Council

What applications have you already made for approvals on the same or a similar project?

Please write your answer here:

Tainui Group Holdings Limited holds resource consents for the establishment and operation of the Inland Port Stages 1-3 (Hamilton City Council consent 010.2015.00008414.003, dated 4 November 2020 for the Inland Port establishment and operation and 010.2015.00008413.004, dated 4 November 2020 for the Land Development Plan A for the Inland Port).

No applications have been made to change the night time noise limits of the Inland Port as now proposed.

Is approval required for the project by someone other than the applicant?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The applicant, through its joint venture company Ruakura Port Limited, is able to undertake the project Stages 1-3, including the construction of associate noise mitigation barriers on land that it owns. In this respect, the applicant already holds resource consent to establish and operate the Inland Port Stages 1-3 and owns land on which that will be established.

For stage 4, one property (1.0708 ha title owned by Rusty Racing Limited (Title ID 148316)) is still required to be acquired to complete full build out, however that property is zoned for Logistics (Inland Port) purposes in the Hamilton City District Plan, meaning there is no planning impediment. As noted above, Stage 4 is estimated to be required to be operational in 2040 – 2042 to meet projected demand, allowing sufficient time for the acquisition of this property, to enable the expansion of the Inland Port to Stage 4.

If the approval(s) are granted, when do you anticipate construction activities will begin, and be completed?

Please write your answer here:

If all approvals are granted through the fast-track process, then the current Stage 1 phase of the inland port will be able to start operating to the new night time noise limits immediately after the establishment of any necessary mitigation measures (anticipated to be 12-18 months to complete and be certified as meeting requirements - maximum). Subsequent stages 2-4 will follow the anticipated timing set out above in the staging response.

Section 3: Consultation

Who are the persons affected by the project?

Please write your answer here:

The persons likely to be affected by the project are as follows:

- Waikato Tainui
- Ngāa Hapuu as represented on the Ruakura Tangata Whenua Working Group; namely: Ngāati Maahanga, Ngāati Hauaa, Ngāati Tamaiunapo, Ngāati Wairere, Ngāati Korokii Kahukura and Ngāati Tamainupo.
- Hamilton City Council
- Local residents, including as represented on the Inland Port Community Liaison Group
- Kiwi Rail
- Port of Tauranga

Detail all consultation undertaken with the persons referred to above. Include a statement explaining how engagement has informed the project.

Please write your answer here:

Details of consultation undertaken and how this has informed the project are included in the uploaded Application Attachment Report.

Upload file here:

Fast Track Bill Schedule Application_TGH_Inland Port_Report Attachment V3.pdf was uploaded

Describe any processes already undertaken under the Public Works Act 1981 in relation to the land or any part of the land on which the project will occur:

Please write your answer here:

No processes are required or have already been undertaken under the Public Works Act 1981 in relation to the land or any part of the land on which the project will occur.

Section 4: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

What treaty settlements apply to the geographical location of the project?

Please write your answer here:

The Ruakura Superhub, including the Inland Port, is part of a 605ha block of land returned to Waikato-Tainui as part of its 1995 Treaty of Waitangi settlement with The Crown for raupatu (wrongful land confiscation by The Crown).

Are there any Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 principles or provisions that are relevant to the project?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Are there any identified parcels of Māori land within the project area, marae, and identified wāhi tapu?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Is the project proposed on any land returned under a Treaty settlement or any identified Māori land described in the ineligibility criteria?

Yes

Has the applicant has secured the relevant landowners' consent?

Yes

Is the project proposed in any customary marine title area, protected customary rights area, or aquaculture settlement area declared under s 12 of the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 or identified within an individual iwi settlement?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Has there been an assessment of any effects of the activity on the exercise of a protected customary right?

No

If yes, please explain:

No protected customary rights have been identified at the subject location.

Upload your assessment if necessary:

No file uploaded

Section 5: Adverse effects

What are the anticipated and known adverse effects of the project on the environment?

Please describe:

Please refer to Section 2.0 of the uploaded Application Attachment Report which, in accordance with Section 14 (3) (e) of the Fast Track Approvals Bill, provides a description of the anticipated and known adverse effects of the project on the environment.

Upload file:

Fast Track Bill Schedule Application_TGH_Inland Port_Report Attachment V3.pdf was uploaded

Section 6: National policy statements and national environmental standards

What is the general assessment of the project in relation to any relevant national policy statement (including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement) and national environmental standard?

Please write your answer here:

Please refer to Section 3.0 of the uploaded Application Attachment Report which, in accordance with Section 14 (3) (f) of the Fast Track Approvals Bill, provides a general assessment of the project in relation to national policy statements and national environmental standards (as those terms are defined in the Resource Management Act 1991).

File upload:

Fast Track Bill Schedule Application_TGH_Inland Port_Report Attachment V3.pdf was uploaded

Section 7: Eligibility

Will access to the fast-track process enable the project to be processed in a more timely and cost-efficient way than under normal processes?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

A plan change process to change the nighttime noise rules at the Ruakura Inland Port could take between 9 to 12 months to obtain a decision from the Council. If that is appealed, another 12 to 18 months before an Environment Court decision. Once that is obtained then a new resource consent or s127 approval would have to be obtained to change the Operational Noise Management Plan in accordance with the new noise provisions, which would add a further estimated 4 months until approval. In total therefore, normal RMA process would take an estimated 2 to 3 years before the Inland Port could operate in accordance with the new nighttime noise limits. There is a reasonable prospect of appeal in this case, given the nature of the issue.

The fast-track approval process will considerably speed this timeline, and even more so were the plan change or s127 application be submitted simultaneously with changes to the Operational Noise Management Plan for consideration and approval.

Access to the fast-track process will enable three significant projects at Ruakura, being Ruakura Tuumata Residential and Commercial, Ruakura East WEX and Ruakura Inland Port Optimisation, to be considered in a coordinated and timely way. This is very beneficial given the scale of the projects and their interdependencies.

What is the impact referring this project will have on the efficient operation of the fast-track process?

Please write your answer here:

The full application package will include a complete set of draft District Plan provisions (if a plan change) and a draft set of consent conditions (if a resource consent application). These will be supported by specialist technical analysis, including from acoustic engineers. Acoustic engineering reporting and modelling will be fully independently peer reviewed before being submitted for consideration of the Fast Track Expert Panel, including a peer review report.

Tainui Group Holdings Limited has considerable experience in obtaining plan changes and consents for development at Ruakura, including through streamline planning processes, such as the 2014 Board of Inquiry.

Using this experience, complete and thorough applications will be able to be presented for consideration of the Expert Panel with a current and robust set of planning provisions/consent conditions, plus a thorough assessment of effects on the environment, based on the TGH and its consultant team's track records and considerable experience. This will allow a fast and efficient consideration of the application through the process by the Expert Panel, meaning it is not expected to unduly impact on the efficient operation of the process.

Has the project been identified as a priority project in a:

Local government plan or strategy

Please explain your answer here:

As documented below, development of the Ruakura Superhub – of which the Ruakura Inland Port is an integral part – has been identified as a priority project in a number of central and local government plans and strategies. The benefits of its development are also recognised in general terms in Tai Tumu Tai Pari Tai Ao, the Waikato-Tainui Environment Plan.

Future Proof Strategy 2022

The Future Proof Strategy and Implementation Plan is the collaboration between Hamilton City Council, Waikato Regional Council, Waipa District Council, Waikato District Council and Tangata Whenua for the development of a sub-regional growth strategy covering the areas of the three territorial authorities and the region covered by the Waikato Regional Council. Other key organisations involved in the strategy include the New Zealand Transport Agency and Matamata Piako District Council.

Ruakura is identified as a Strategic Industrial Node in the Future Proof Strategy 2022. There are five Strategic Industrial Nodes identified in the Region at Tuakau, Pokeno, Huntly/Rotowaro/Ohinewai, Horotiu/Te Rapa North/Rotokauri, and Ruakura/Ruakura East. In these areas greenfield industrial growth is expected to occur, and an overarching staging pattern which aligns expected demand and infrastructure servicing.

Hamilton-Auckland Corridor Plan & Implementation Programme 2020

The Hamilton to Auckland H2A Corridor Plan outlines the agreed spatial intent for the corridor and a work programme of six focus areas and 13 key initiatives. The purpose of the Plan is to develop an integrated spatial plan and establish an ongoing growth management partnership for the corridor.

Under Focus Area 5 “Hamilton-Waikato metropolitan area”, six priority development areas are identified. Of these, the “Metropolitan economic corridor: investigate alternative planning/financing and economic development frameworks to promote growth along the envisaged economic corridor from Ruakura through the Central City to Te Rapa and Horotiu”, is identified as a priority development area.

Freight and movement road network to provide access for the region’s economic activity hubs is identified as a key enabler.

Hamilton Waikato Metropolitan Spatial Plan 2020

The Hamilton Waikato Metropolitan Spatial Plan 2020 (MSP) is a vision and framework prepared by the Future Proof Partners for how Hamilton City and the neighbouring communities within Waipaa and Waikato districts will grow and develop over the next 100 plus years.

Priority Development Areas are identified and described as “distinct, targeted initiatives for the Future Proof partners to implement and give effect to the MSP”. The timing of implementation of Priority Development Areas is set out in the Urban Growth Programme as “Short Term” ie with a 3-5 year timeframe.

The MSP notes that in addition to identified new priority areas, there are already significant actions already underway in the MSP area, including the Crown co-investing with Waikato Tainui through the development of the Ruakura Inland Port.

Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and Future Proof Strategy Update)

The Ruakura Inland Port is shown as part of a Strategic Industrial Node at Ruakura, consistent with Future Proof 2022 on Map 43 of Change 1, within the Short-Medium Term development 2020-2030 timeframe.

Aotearoa New Zealand Freight and Supply Chain Strategy - Ministry of Transport Te Manatū Waka August 2023

Goal One of the Aotearoa New Zealand Freight and Supply Chain Strategy 2023 is to protect, decarbonise, and improve nationally significant freight routes and infrastructure.

Goal Four is that Government policy enables the sector to accelerate emissions reduction and build long-term resilience.

The Strategy does not identify any particular priority development projects, however includes the Ruakura Superhub as a case study, as follows:

“The Ruakura Superhub is a large logistics zone that is being developed by Tainui Group Holdings (Waikato-Tainui) to meet an expected 60% increase in freight volumes in the area by 2042.

Ruakura Superhub will become the largest logistics and industrial hub in New Zealand and, when complete, will span over 500 hectares of land and will include an 84-hectare logistics zone. Included in the Superhub is an inland port which provides connectivity for high-capacity rail and road links between the major trade nodes of the New Zealand ‘Golden Triangle’ (Hamilton, Auckland, Tauranga) as well as southwards to the lower North Island. The inland port is a joint venture between Tainui Group Holdings and Port of Tauranga, who together will operate and expand the inland port as freight volumes grow.

Ruakura Superhub seeks to improve the freight system by transitioning the movement of freight away from the predominance of round-trip, road-based journeys towards more rail-based, one-way movements. With its large scale and links with the Waikato expressway, the Ruakura Superhub is expected to make it easier, cheaper and more sustainable to move goods to and from sea ports and throughout the upper North island.

Tainui Group Holdings has designed a range of environmental measures to support cleaner waterways, increase native habitats, and reduce the carbon emissions of the project. The inland port is expected to remove the need for 65,000 long-haul truck journeys each year, reducing carbon emissions by 600 tonnes per year. Tainui Group Holdings is also keeping track of the economic and social impacts of the development on Māori and Pasifika peoples and businesses.

This Superhub will provide increased resilience against supply chain disruptions, decreased cost of transport, increased volumes transported, all while decarbonising the national freight system – to the benefit to tenants, users and our environment alike.

The government has invested ^{s 9(2)(b)(i)} into enabling public infrastructure for this strategic logistics development and see it as a project of national significance. The Ruakura Superhub is an example of how the Crown and iwi can work together to improve the freight and supply chain system”.

Hamilton City District Plan

The Hamilton City District Plan recognises the key strategic importance of the development at Ruakura and the Inland Port. It notes that Ruakura is strategically located and is of an appropriate scale to satisfy growing national demand for enhanced freight-handling infrastructure. It is ideally placed to process containers originating at the Ports of Tauranga and Auckland, and as such has the ability to realise significant agglomeration benefits. It is therefore the preferred location in Hamilton City to establish an inland port (Ruakura Logistics Zone, Section 10.1a Purpose).

The Ruakura Logistics Zone provides land for the establishment of the Inland Port (Sub Area A of the Logistics Zone) and an adjoining logistics area (Sub Area B of the Logistics Zone).

The District Plan also notes that agglomeration benefits arise from the fact that production costs fall as related businesses cluster together, share infrastructure, provide economies of scale and reduce the cost of handling and moving freight between Auckland, Bay of Plenty and Waikato regions. A key component to realising these agglomeration benefits will be the development and release of industrial land and the Inland Port in a staged and

coordinated manner. With a direct connection to the Waikato Expressway, environmental benefits, such as reducing New Zealand's carbon emissions and a reduction in congestion, can also be realised (Ruakura Logistics Zone, Section 10.1c Purpose).

Finally, the District Plan records that the Inland Port will be developed adjacent to the existing rail infrastructure (East Coast Main Trunk railway) and the Waikato Expressway. The location of both road and rail infrastructure allows the proposed port to be intermodal, so freight can be transferred between rail and road transport (Ruakura Logistics Zone, Section 10.1d Purpose).

An objective of the Ruakura Logistics Zone is to "Optimise the long-term positive, environmental, economic and social benefits of the Ruakura Logistics Zone" (Objective 10.2.2).

The overall Vision for the Ruakura Structure Plan Area is to "Maximise the use of existing infrastructure investment, including the railway network, and align land use patterns with the area's planned infrastructure investment to achieve integrated transport and land use development; with an emphasis on logistics and freight" (Section 3.7 Ruakura Structure Plan).

Tai Tumu Tai Pari Tai Ao, the Waikato-Tainui Environment Plan

Tai Tumu Tai Pari Tai Ao, the Waikato-Tainui Environment Plan 2013 is the Waikato-Tainui environmental planning document. The Plan identifies the importance and significance of enabling development of Maaori owned and settlement redress land. It notes that the commercial benefit of any Waikato-Tainui development remains within the rohe and for the benefit of Waikato-Tainui tribal members and the wider community. The link between the economic and commercial success of Waikato-Tainui and their cultural and social success cannot be overstated. Waikato-Tainui have land development proposals that are indicative of the contribution and inherent interest that Waikato-Tainui has in sustainable and enhancing development within its rohe.

This statement is applicable to the Ruakura Inland Port because it is commercial redress land, and the commercial benefit of its development will remain within the rohe and for the benefit of Waikato-Tainui tribal members and the wider community.

Will the project deliver regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

National significant infrastructure

Please explain your answer here:

Yes. The Ruakura Inland Port and the wider Ruakura Superhub is nationally and regionally significant infrastructure. Ruakura Superhub will become the largest logistics and industrial hub in New Zealand.

Ruakura Superhub will improve the national freight system by transitioning the movement of freight away from the predominance of round-trip, road-based journeys towards more rail-based, one-way movements. With its large scale and links with the Waikato expressway, the Ruakura Superhub is expected to make it easier, cheaper and more sustainable to move goods to and from seaports and throughout the upper North island.

The national and regional significance of the Ruakura Superhub has been recognised already, including in 2013, when the plan change to establish it was determined to be a Matter of National Significance by the Minister for the Environment and referred to a Board of Inquiry. Included in the reasons for deciding that the matter was of national significance under s149J of the RMA 1991, the Minister stated:

"....the proposed inland port and logistics hub at Ruakura is uniquely located to provide strategic links to the upper North Island and nationally and internationally important infrastructure assets including:

- the proposed Waikato Expressway (Road of National Significance);
- East Coast Main Trunk railway line connecting the Waikato and Bay of Plenty region; and
- two of New Zealand's largest international ports, Ports of Auckland and Tauranga....

the proposed inland port and logistics hub, if enabled, has the potential to contribute to increased freight and transport efficiency in the upper North Island, and contribute to future reductions in the growth of road congestion, traffic incidents, road wear and tear and carbon emissions, including within the Auckland region

.....".

Will the project:

Please explain your answer here:

Will the project deliver significant economic benefits?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Yes. Ruakura is located at the heart of the Golden Triangle along key transport routes connecting Auckland, Tauranga, and the rest of the North Island. The Golden Triangle accounts for a significant portion of New Zealand's economic activity, which is expected to continue to grow due to sustained strong population growth.

Development of the intermodal hub will attract jobs and investment to the Waikato region that might otherwise locate elsewhere. Due to the close proximity to key transport routes to New Zealand's two largest ports (POAL and POT), Ruakura will become a key hub for logistics and import and export businesses servicing the North Island. This grouping of similar businesses would create additional economic benefits through agglomeration effects,

which will in turn attract further business to the area.

Economic and infrastructure consultants Castalia previously estimated that the economic growth enabled by the Ruakura Inland Port would be equivalent to be about s 9(2)(b)(ii). These estimates remain valid in real terms (Source: Castalia: "Assessment of Regional and National Economic Significance of the Ruakura Intermodal Hub", April 2024).

In addition to lower costs and improved competitiveness, the development of Ruakura as a commercial and industrial hub will provide increased employment opportunities for workers throughout the Golden Triangle. Even though, the Ruakura development, through the attraction of businesses to the Waikato region will initially mean increased employment in Hamilton and Waikato, the efficient use of rail and transport infrastructure to create an interconnected Golden Triangle will increase business activity and employment throughout the Golden Triangle.

Ruakura will help to alleviate the constraints faced by Auckland and Tauranga. The Golden Triangle is expected to continue to have strong population growth in future years, increasing economic activity. However, population growth also leads to economic constraints. Auckland and Tauranga currently face many constraints, including: high land prices, shortages of industrial zoned land, traffic congestion and infrastructure bottlenecks.

Ruakura is well positioned to alleviate some of these constraints and allow for increased activity in both the Waikato region and the wider Golden triangle. Hamilton City does not face the same land price and availability constraints as Auckland and Tauranga. Thus, continued development of a logistics hub, serviced by the Ruakura intermodal terminal, would likely be a lower cost option for logistics and import and export businesses to locate to, compared to locating in Auckland or Tauranga. The rail connection to both POAL and POT will provide businesses nearby to Ruakura to still have easy access to New Zealand's two largest ports (Source: Castalia 2024).

Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The Ruakura Inland Port provides access to markets for primary industries in the Waikato and beyond.

Will the project support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum?

No

Please explain your answer here:

Will the project support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Yes. Increased use of intermodal hubs means fewer trucks on the road but also more rail trips.

To account for this, the decrease in emissions from fewer road trips and an increase in emissions from more rail trips need to be factored in (Long-haul heavy trucks typically emit 105 grams of CO₂ per tonne-km, which is 3.75 times more than the 28 grams of CO₂ per tonne-km emitted by rail).

Castalia estimate that intermodal transport as a result of the Ruakura Inland Port could result in reductions of 918,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions from 2023 to 2053, given unconstrained capacity and demand in-line with its forecasts (Castalia 2024).

Will the project support adaptation, resilience, and recovery from natural hazards?

Not Answered

Please explain your answer here:

Will the project address significant environmental issues?

Not Answered

Please explain your answer here:

Is the project consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Yes. The project is entirely consistent with local and regional planning documents, including spatial strategies as set out above which identify Ruakura as a Strategic Industrial Node for the Waikato region and seek to enable its optimisation, including:

- Future Proof Strategy 2022;

- Hamilton-Auckland Corridor Plan & Implementation Programme 2020;
- Hamilton Waikato Metropolitan Spatial Plan 2020;
- Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and Future Proof Strategy Update); and
- The Hamilton City District Plan.

While the proposed new night time noise conditions do not align with the noise rules in the District Plan, they still accord with the policy intent of these provisions for the Inland Port. At Objective 10.2.2, these seek to “Optimise the long-term positive, environmental, economic and social benefits of the Ruakura Logistics Zone”, and at Objective 10.2.3, seek that “Adverse effects of logistics and freight- handling activities and infrastructure are avoided or mitigated”.

In this regard the proposed night time noise controls will optimise the long-term positive, environmental, economic and social benefits of the inland port as set out above in this application. They will do this in a manner that still mitigates adverse effects on nearby residents by adopting a recognised and appropriate New Zealand Noise Standard, and requiring other mitigations such as the installation of additional noise barriers and adherence to an updated Noise and Vibration Management Plan.

Anything else?

Please write your answer here:

Does the project includes an activity which would make it ineligible?

No

If yes, please explain:

Section 8: Climate change and natural hazards

Will the project be affected by climate change and natural hazards?

No

If yes, please explain:

Section 9: Track record

Please add a summary of all compliance and/or enforcement actions taken against the applicant by any entity with enforcement powers under the Acts referred to in the Bill, and the outcome of those actions.

Please write your answer here:

Tainui Group Holdings Limited has an enviable track record in developing land at Ruakura over the last 10 years, and has not had any instances of compliance and/or enforcement actions taken against it during this time.

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Declaration

Do you acknowledge your submission will be published on environment.govt.nz if required

Yes

By typing your name in the field below you are electronically signing this application form and certifying the information given in this application is true and correct.

Please write your name here:

Chris Joblin -CEO Tainui Group Holdings Limited

Important notes