

PC42 submission hearing - 24 Aug 2023

Samuel Gray - 939 Tukairangi Rd, Acacia Bay, Taupō

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Sam Gray, I live at 939 Tukairangi Road on a 56 hectare lifestyle block, 10 minutes out of town. It has been zoned in the general rural environment under the draft district plan change. I propose for the reasons I will outline, that it be rezoned to be included in the rural lifestyle environment.

In my original submission, I outlined why my property fulfills the criteria for inclusion in the RLE. It is situated close to Taupō township in an area of existing smaller lifestyle lots, it is not accessed by a state highway and does not have any other constraints that would serve as barriers to its inclusion in the rural lifestyle environment. Despite being over 30 hectares in size, it is surrounded by smaller lifestyle blocks, which therefore warrants its inclusion in the RLE.

My initial submission June 22 was rejected for the following reasons: "site too large, also identified as high class soil".

I'd first like to address the 'site too large' rejection reason. As I have mentioned, my property is surrounded by smaller lifestyle lots. In fact, as you will see from the rural lifestyle zoning map, approximately 40% of my boundary is shared with properties in the newly formed RLE. This firstly indicates that my property is located in an area that has been identified as having a high demand for rural lifestyle living within the rural environment. It also means that if my property is zoned as GRE, then further development of lifestyle blocks in the surrounding RLE would invariably lead to reverse sensitivity effects on my property. These reverse sensitivity effects are to be avoided as per the draft plan change, and in my view are unavoidable unless my property is also part of the RLE.

I'd now like to comment on the second reason my submission was rejected, that being my property is "also identified as high class soil". This no doubt pertains to the NPS-HPL which came into force on the 17th of Oct 2022 and aims to protect soils identified as classes 1-3 from inappropriate development or subdivision. Clause 3.10 of the NPS-HPL does, however, allow territorial authorities to include properties that contain highly productive land in a rural lifestyle environment. This clause has obviously been applied to, by my count, 16 of my neighbours' properties on Tukairangi Rd. These properties contain the same land use capability class 3 soils that have been identified on my property, but they have been included in the rural lifestyle environment. Keep in mind the size of a land parcel whether it be 2 hectares or 200 hectares, has no bearing on it being subject to the requirements of the NPS-HPL, nor does its zoning. Any property that contains highly productive land, whether it be in the RLE or GRE, will need to have an HPL assessment performed by a suitably qualified and experienced person as part of any future proposed subdivision. The presence of highly productive land did not prevent the 16 properties I have mentioned from being included in the rural lifestyle environment, therefore it should not be used as a reason to exclude mine.

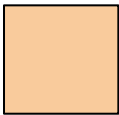
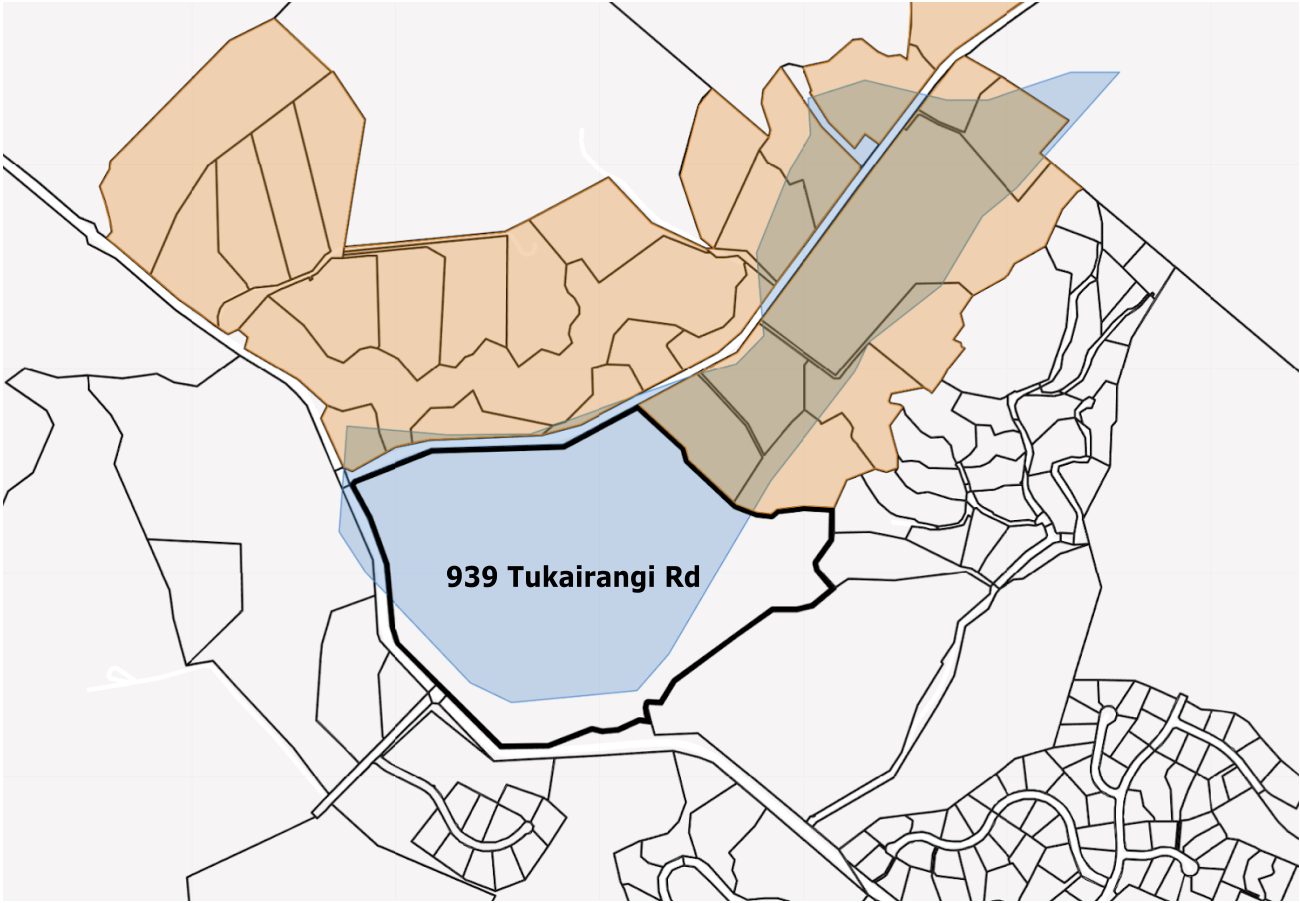
Finally, I would like to discuss the productive potential of my property. I understand the overall purpose of separating the GRE from the RLE is to preserve the productive potential of the land. However as I have outlined in my submission, and I'd now like to reiterate, 939 Tukairangi Rd is an uneconomic, unproductive block of land that is surrounded by lifestyle blocks. It has a very low nitrogen discharge allowance (NDA) and highly drought-prone, coarse pumice soils which only permit me to run a very low intensity stocking rate. My partner and I both have full time jobs outside of farming our block, because this property would in no way be able to support us financially. However, when discussing the productive potential of the property, we also need to ask the question of; "could this property be productive in the future?". I can tell you that the answer is "no".

The two ways this property could be productive in the future, would be a) intensification and b) expansion. Intensification would involve purchasing more nitrogen to raise my NDA, which would allow me to run more stock and begin cropping for intensive winter grazing. However, this would be completely unviable economically on a block of my size. Furthermore, any intensification of farming on my property would invariably lead to conflict with the surrounding rural lifestyle environment due to the associated odours, noise and spray drift. So that leaves expansion. Could I increase the area of my farm to a size that would begin to be an economically feasible unit? Well, the fact that I am surrounded by smaller lifestyle blocks means this is also not possible. All in all, there are considerable legal and physical limitations to the productive potential on 939 Tukairangi Rd. I'd like to be very clear here that the productive potential of my block, in an area surrounded by other smaller lifestyle blocks, is a completely different proposition to a 56 hectare property that is surrounded by farms, in the Upper Waikato. This property would have the potential to be farmed productively in the long-term. Mine does not.

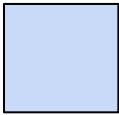
To conclude, I have discussed the reasons 939 Tukairangi Rd should be included in the RLE. It is 10 minutes from town in an area targeted for growth of rural lifestyle living. It is surrounded by smaller lifestyle blocks that have been included in the RLE. If my property were to be zoned in the GRE there will be unavoidable reverse sensitivity effects from this surrounding RLE. This places significant limitations to the productive potential of my block as it inhibits my ability to expand or intensify any farming activity above its current uneconomic, unproductive state. There is therefore no loss of productive potential by its inclusion in the rural lifestyle environment.

I'd now welcome any questions you may have.

Extent of the Land Use Capability class 3 land identified at 939 Tukairangi Road.



Properties zoned in RLE



Land Use Capability class 3 land