

## Notes for Submission to Hearing Panel on SNA proposal - 13 September 2024

1. My name is Thomas Brent Layton. With my partner, Jo Schofield, I own 287 South Karori Road. We bought the property in 2022. It is our place of residence.
2. The proposed district plan for Wellington City contains SNA designation over a large part of this property. The purple area in the map I submitted in support of my appearance today indicates the extent and locations of the designations.
3. In my submission on the proposed district plan I requested the council discontinue with the process of designating areas as SNA and instead open negotiations with the landowners what it believes are significant natural areas with a view to reaching an agreement to protect those areas. Officials recommended this submission be rejected but the spreadsheet does not give reasons.
4. I think the approach I proposed would be preferable on at least two counts.
5. My first point is, as the GHD economic analysis concludes, “the costs of the proposal accrue to the relatively small proportion of affected parties ... that would be affected by SNA’s being established, while the benefits would be borne broadly across the City’s residents.”
6. The data included in GHD’s economic analysis identifies there are 40 private parcelled natural open spaces and 169 private rural properties that will be subject to SNA designation. GHD estimate the costs to the owners of these 209 properties has a present value of \$19.2m or, on average, \$91,866 per property.
7. GHD’s estimate of the present value of the benefit to Wellington City citizens’ is between \$16.0m and \$40.0m. Since the costs to Wellington property owners is estimated to be \$19.2m, the proposal may make the citizens of Wellington as a whole slightly worse off or marginally better off.
8. Of course, most of the benefits will be spread over a very long time but the loss of value to landowners will occur immediately. To turn the present value benefits into “annual” benefits I think a conservative approach is to assume they will only last 20 years and are spread evenly over the 20 years. On that assumption, the annual benefit to each of Wellington’s approximate 220,000 residents of SNA designations being applied to the 209 properties is between \$3.63 and \$9.09 per year.



9. What Wellington's proposed district plan will do in relation to SNA's on rural and private natural open space is impose on implementation an average cost of nearly \$92,000 on the owners of 209 properties in order to provide each resident with a benefit of between \$3.63 and \$9.09 per year. i.e. with between two thirds and 2 cups of coffee per year.
10. The area of 287 South Karori Road proposed to be subject to SNA designation is roughly 5 times the average 7.3 hectare SNA area of the 209 properties according to data in the GHD report. Assuming the costs are prorata by area, for the sake of illustration, this puts the cost propopsed on my partner and I at \$459,000.
11. I don't see how any administrative decision maker could consider such large imposts on a few for a very small annual benefit for other residents is reasonable.
12. Administrative decision makers that fail to be reasonable are liable to be found in error if there is a legal challenge. When the costs are concentrated and significant, as the current proposal ensures, the risks of legal challenge and future disputes are material.
13. My second point is that failure to negotiate around each parcel of land individually will result in areas being included in SNA's, and subject to all the restrictions that involves, that have very limited ecological merit and generate little benefit from the additional protection.
14. The photographs I took last week and submitted for this hearing demonstrate this in relation to 287 South Karori Road. The dots and arrows on the maps indicate where I was standing when I took the photo with the corresponding letter label and the direction in which I pointed the camera. I have been able to accurately do this because the council's map is overlaid on a satellite image. The tracks, fence lines, buildings, etc. and how they relate to where I was standing are easy to determing.
15. What the photographs show is that the proposed SNA at 287 contains quite a lot of land that is not a significant natural area by any stretch of the imagination.
16. For example, there are a few young mahoe in Photo A but the vast bulk of the vegetation is blackberry brambles, Darwin's barberry, gorse and the top of a large macrocarpa tree.
17. The process used to identify SNA's has been flawed. In 2016 Wildlands, a environmental consultancy, conducted for Wellington City Council what it called an audit of the areas in Wellington with potentially significant natural areas. Although it entitled and described its report as an audit, it was not an audit in the normal sense of that word; it did not thoroughly scrutinise the veracity of information. It was principally a desktop collation of existing environmental reports on indigenous vegetation and endangered fauna in Wellington.



18. It appears that from this report some checking of the areas the status of which was indicated by Wildlands may be uncertain was done, and then maps of proposed SNA areas drawn up.
19. Only if someone objected to the designation has a site visit made. A lot of property owners and members of the public don't take much notice of what the council is up to and find out about the significance of changes in designation only when they try to do something that is now precluded.
20. The council should deal with each area it believes should be designated an SNA on an individual basis by negotiating with the owners. Failure to do so will mean that the community, which includes landowners, is likely to be made worse off by the process because the SNA designation is applied inappropriately in a material number of cases.
21. The flawed process has created a very real risk that proceeding will result in a net detriment to the community as a whole and not a benefit.



# Wellington City 2024 District Plan: Appeals Version

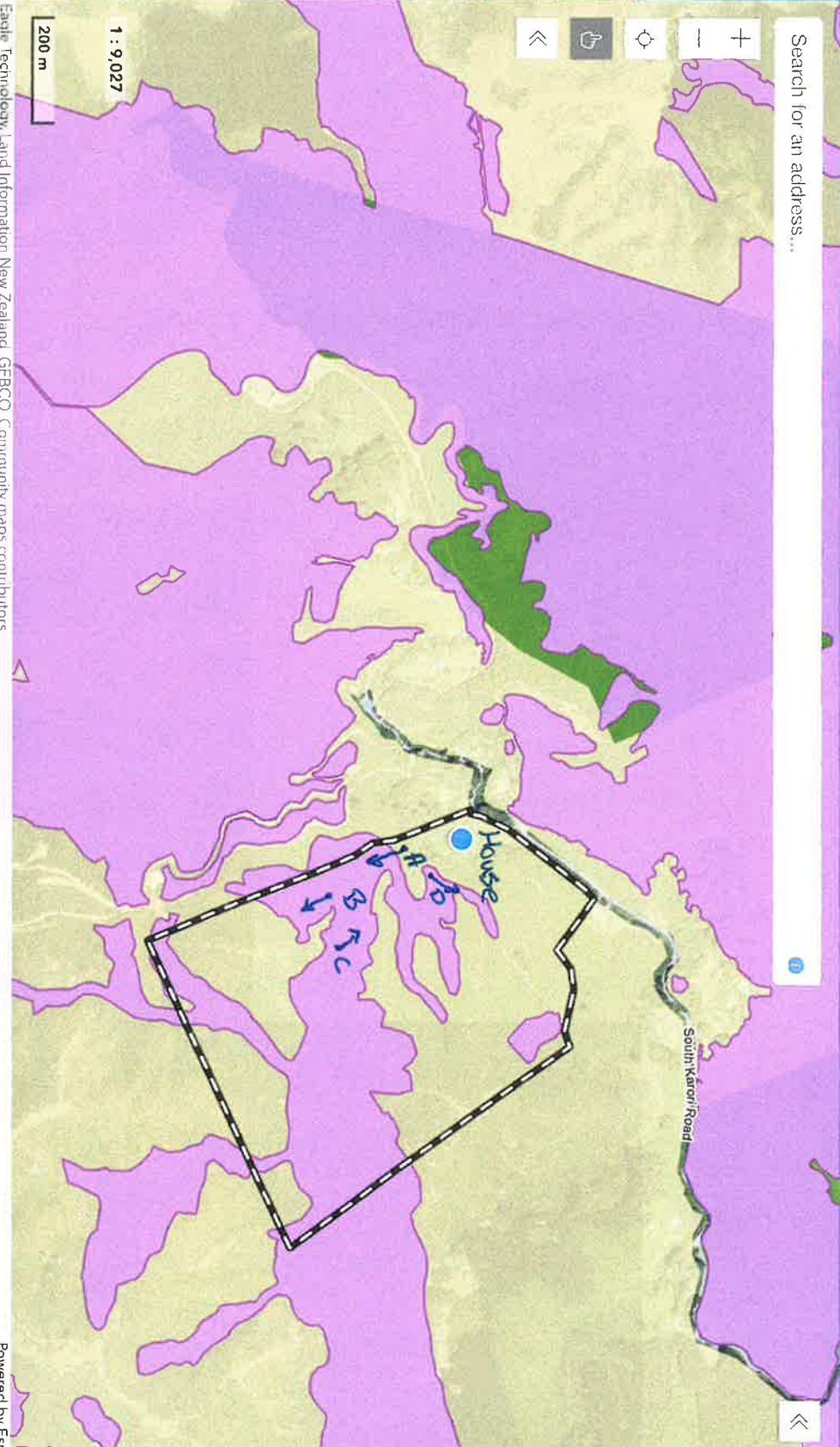
Absolutely Positively  
Wellington City Council  
Me Heke Ki Poneke

287 South Karori Road, Karori

Multiple properties at this address  
[View Details](#)



- Property Specific 2024 District Plan: Appeals Version Chapters
  - View Full 2024 District Plan: Appeals Version
  - View Property Report (PDF)
  - Zoom to selected property
  - Clear selected property
- Appeals: 29 Aug 2024  
Revision: 29 Aug 2024
- Change
- The following information applies to this property



Eagle Technology, Land Information New Zealand, GEBCO, Community maps contributors

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Proposed SVA 287 South Karoo Rd

A



B





Proposed SWA 267 South Karori Rd

C



D



