

**BEFORE INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS
AT WELLINGTON**

IN THE MATTER OF

the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

the hearing of submissions on the
Proposed Wellington City District Plan

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF JOE JEFFRIES ON BEHALF OF STRIDE
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT LIMITED (SUBMITTER 470) AND INVESTORE
PROPERTY LIMITED (SUBMITTER 405)**

PLANNING

Hearing 1 – Strategic Direction

21 February 2023

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Joe Jeffries. I am an Associate at Barker & Associates, an independent, specialist planning consultancy with offices throughout New Zealand, including Wellington where I am based. I have been in this position since July 2021.
- 1.2 I have a Master of Planning Practice (Hons) from the University of Auckland, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Otago. I am an Intermediate member of the New Zealand Planning Institute.
- 1.3 I have over ten years of experience in planning policy and have provided evidence as an expert planning witness on behalf of councils and central government throughout New Zealand. In my current position I have provided expert evidence on behalf of Kāinga Ora on the Proposed Selwyn District Plan on the natural hazards, commercial and mixed use, residential zones, and rezoning topics.
- 1.4 Prior to my current position I was employed as a Senior Policy Planner at Hutt City Council. I was Hutt City Council's lead planner on Plan Change 43 – a full review of the Residential Chapter of the District Plan. This included preparing the section s42a report, acting as the reporting planner through the hearings, and leading Environment Court mediation for Council.
- 1.5 I worked as a Policy Planner for Auckland Council between 2012 and 2017. In this position, I gave evidence as an expert witness on the Auckland Unitary Plan on the Precincts and Rural Urban Boundary topics.

2 CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 I have read and am familiar with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses, contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023, and agree to comply with it. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. Other than where I state that I am relying on the advice of another person, I confirm that the issues addressed in this statement of evidence are within my area of expertise. I have not

omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

3 SCOPE

3.1 This statement of evidence is presented on behalf of Stride Investment Management Limited (Stride) and Investore Property Limited (Investore). This evidence addresses Stride and Investore's submission points, on the plan wide matters and strategic direction topics within the Wellington City Proposed District Plan (PDP), as they relate to the recommendations of the Wellington City Council s42A report on those topics.

3.2 In preparing my evidence, I have reviewed:

- (a) The PDP.
- (b) The strategic objectives section 32 report.
- (c) The plan wide matters and strategic direction section 42A report.
- (d) The Statement of evidence of Mark Georgeson on Transport provided on behalf of Stride and Investore.

3.3 This statement of evidence addresses the following issues:

- (a) Classification of the Johnsonville Railway line as 'rapid transit' under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPSUD).
- (b) Recognising the regional significance of Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre.
- (c) The walkable catchment of the Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre.

4 CLASSIFICATION OF JOHNSONVILLE RAILWAY AS RAPID TRANSIT

4.1 The Stride and Investore submissions on the PDP opposed the exclusion of the Johnsonville rail line as rapid transit in the PDP for the purposes of implementing policy 3 of the NPS-UD and sought that all

stations on the Johnsonville rail line are included as rapid transit stops and that building heights of at least six storeys within a 10-minute walkable catchment of the stations are provided. The Stride submission stated:

Stride is opposed to the exclusion of the Johnsonville rail line as “rapid transit” for the purposes of implementing policy 3 of the NPS-UD. The NPS-UD defines “rapid transit service” as “any existing or planned frequent, quick, reliable and high-capacity public transport service that operates on a permanent route (road or rail) that is largely separated from other traffic”. The Johnsonville rail line meets this definition for many reasons, including as its peak frequency is 15 minutes and it is identified as planned rapid transit in the Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan 2021.

Accordingly, Stride seeks that all stations on the Johnsonville rail line are included as rapid transit stops and that building heights of at least six storeys within a 10-minute walkable catchment of the stations are provided.

Greater Wellington Regional Council have classified the Johnsonville rail line as rapid transit for the purposes of implementing policy 3 of the NPS-UD and has commented “when considering the Johnsonville Line as part of the region’s transport network, it is almost uniquely placed to play a future significant role. It is a sole use public transport corridor and one that is not being used to its full potential.” The Wellington Regional Growth Framework also identifies that the Johnsonville rail line is a rapid transit service. It is unclear why Wellington City Council have taken a different view.

We note Wellington City Council was advised by its own planning staff to include the line as rapid transit.

- 4.2 In the s42A report the reporting officer supports the classification of the Johnsonville Line fits as a rapid transit service for the purposes of implementing the NPSUD, contrary to the position of the notified PDP:

In my assessment, the Johnsonville Line fits within the NPS-UD's definition of a rapid transit service. This means the plan should enable at least six storey building heights within walkable catchments of its rail stations. This is consistent with rapid transit interpretations from the other Wellington Region councils, national guidance and the Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan. Enabling six stories in these areas would also meet, or not be inconsistent with, the NPS-UD objectives.

- 4.3 I agree with the submissions on Stride and Investore with regard to the classification of the Johnsonville rail line as a rapid transit service, and consequential upzoning of the areas within a walkable catchment of the stations on the Johnsonville rail line.

- 4.4 I also agree with and support the recommendations of the s42a report that the Johnsonville line meets the NSPUD definition of a rapid transit service and that the plan should therefore enable building heights of at least six storeys within walking catchments of its rail stations.

- 4.5 In my view the s42a report provides a comprehensive analysis of this issue, and in general I agree with the reasoning provided. In particular I agree with the reporting officer that:

- (a) The Johnsonville line fits within the NPSUD's definition of "rapid transit service". In my view, the Johnsonville line meets each of the key descriptors contained in the NPSUD definition of "rapid transit service". These are frequent, quick, reliable, high capacity, public transport, permanent route largely separated from other traffic. As set out in the evidence of Mark Georgeson the Johnsonville Line provides a dedicated rail corridor, has a 15 minute frequency, and has a capacity of over 1000 people per day. I consider that the word "quick" within the NPSUD definition needs to be interpreted in terms of total travel times rather than just moving speed. All stations on the Johnsonville line (excluding

Johnsonville which is to be upzoned as a Metropolitan Centre) provide a peak journey time to Wellington central of 21 minutes or less. This is a shorter journey time to Wellington central than a significant number of stations that have been classified as rapid transit for the purposes of implementing the NPSUD including all stations on the Hutt Valley Line north of Epuni, and all stations on the Kapiti Line north of Porirua.

- (b) The classification of the line as rapid transit and enabling six storeys within walkable catchments of its rail stations is consistent with the objectives of the NPSUD.
- (c) The Johnsonville line is classified as rapid transit by Greater Wellington Regional Council, the Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan 2021, and Wellington Regional Growth Framework 2021. This demonstrates that there is support for classifying the Johnsonville Line rapid transit from the Regional Council and regional planning documents from both a land use planning and infrastructure perspective. Classifying the line as rapid transit through the district plan will achieve consistency with these regional planning documents.
- (d) The classification is consistent with the approach taken by other councils in the Wellington region.

4.6 I also support the reporting officer's recommendations to introduce definitions to the PDP of "rapid transit" and "rapid transit stops" that explicitly include the Johnsonville rail line and stations. These recommended definitions provide additional clarity and remove any ambiguity around this issue.

4.7 It is notable that both the planning advice provided to the elected Council prior to notification of the PDP in June 2022, and the recommendations of the s42a report, support the inclusion of the Johnsonville line as rapid transit for the purposes of implementing Policy 3 of the NPSUD and enabling six storeys within walkable catchments of its rail stations. The decision to exclude the line as rapid transit in the notified version of the PDP for the purposes of implementing the

upzoning requirements of the NPSUD has no planning support and in my view does not give effect to the requirements of the NPSUD.

5 RECOGNISING THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF JOHNSONVILLE METROPOLITAN CENTRE

6 The Stride and Investore submissions support the strategic objectives of the proposed plan generally and in particular support:

- (a) the recognition of the regional significance of Metropolitan Centres such as Johnsonville under CEKP-O2 as major live-work hubs;
- (b) the 'compact urban form' provided under UFD-O1; and
- (c) the recognition of the need to provide sufficient development capacity for housing and business land under UFD-O4 and UFD-O5.

6.2 In the s42A report, the reporting officer has recommended that CEKP-O2 be retained as notified, consistent with the Stride and Investore submission points.

6.3 The reporting officer also supports the retention of UFD-O1 and UFD-O5 as notified, and recommends a minor change to UFD-O4 which is consistent with Stride and Investore's submissions.

6.4 Though the issue does not appear to be in contention, I support the Stride and Investore submission points in relation to the strategic objectives of the PDP. In particular I support the recognition of the regional significance of the Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre as a major live work hub under strategic objective CEKP-O2. This objective appropriately recognises Metropolitan Centres such as Johnsonville as second only to the City Centre in the centres hierarchy, and recognises these centres will provide a wide range of activities, and will enable intensification for housing and business needs.

6.5 In my view this strategic recognition of the Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre set out in CEKP-O2 is consistent with the scale, accessibility and range of services within the existing Johnsonville centre, and with Johnsonville's redevelopment potential as a major area of growth within

Wellington City and the wider Wellington region. This recognition of Johnsonville as a regionally significant centre is consistent with the creation of well-functioning urban environments in accordance with the NPSUD because it will enable a variety of homes, will enable capacity for business, and will provide good accessibility between housing, jobs, and community services.

7 SIZE OF WALKABLE CATCHMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY 3

7.1 The Stride and Investore submissions supported the extent of the notified zoning of High Density Residential zoning in the catchment of the Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre and sought for this to be retained. The Stride submission stated:

Stride supports the provision of a broad area of six storey High Density Residential zoning in the wider Johnsonville catchment. This gives effect to the NPS-UD and reflects the status of Johnsonville as a Metropolitan Centre.

7.2 In the s42A report, the reporting officer reiterates support for the proposed extent of High Density Residential Zoning in Johnsonville in the notified plan:

In my view, the plan's 10 minute walking catchment from the Johnsonville MCZ remains appropriate. It is consistent with MfE guidance on implementing walkable catchments in the NPS-UD.

7.3 I concur with the submissions of Stride and Investore, and the recommendations of the s42a report. I therefore support the extent of the notified zoning of High Density Residential in Johnsonville in the PDP.

7.4 Stride and Investore also lodged further submissions in support of the submission of Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities seeking that a 15 minute walkable catchment be recognised in relation to Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre.

7.5 In my view providing a High Density Residential zoning within [at least a ten] minute walkable catchment of the Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre

is consistent with the direction of NPSUD Policy 3(c)(iii), it is consistent with the MfE guidance on implementing walkable catchments in the NPSUD, and will help support the long term viability of providing a range of services and amenities within the Johnsonville Centre.

7.6 I also consider that identifying a 15 minute walkable catchment in relation to the Johnsonville centre would be appropriate given the regional significance of the Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre, the scale of the centre, the range of amenities and services available, and the general accessibility of Johnsonville within Wellington City. As stated in the evidence of Mark Georgeson, half of the people surveyed in Auckland walked further than 800 metres to a train station and the Ministry for the Environment guidance indicates that a 800m or ten minute catchment should be considered a minimum walkable catchment in urban areas.

7.7 Enabling a larger population to reside within walking distance of the Johnsonville centre, which supports a wide range of services and amenities, improves the self-sufficiency of this suburb and reduces the overall need for travel over the long term. This supports the creation of well-functioning urban environments consistent with the direction of the NPSUD and the strategic direction of the PDP.

8 Conclusion

8.1 I support classifying the Johnsonville rail line as rapid transit and enabling six storeys within walkable catchments of its rail stations; recognising the regional significance of the Johnsonville Centre in the strategic objectives; and applying a High Density Residential Zoning within a fifteen minute walkable catchment of the Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre. In my view this will give effect to the objectives and policies of the NPS-UD, will contribute to well-functioning urban environments, and is consistent with the purpose and principles of the Resource Management Act 1991.

Joe Jeffries

21 February 2023