

25 November 2019

Peter Hill – Objection to the area described as Okara West proposed zoning change to Shopping Centre Zone.

Background

The area currently has a total 13 tenancies and 8 different owners.

The area at the rear is a Body Corporate and is comprised of 6 different tenancies and 5 owners. The overwhelming majority of the car parks in the Okara West area are parks of the Body Corporate and all of the car parks are on separate Unit Titles and owned by the various property owners.

These car parks are leased by their owners to their tenants. Currently there is a mixture of diverse ranges of tenancies such as the Army (including their armoury), Access (Office space), a builder, a car yard, a seed shop supplying farmers, a tyre shop and some retail the main one being Hunting & Fishing.

Parking

Currently parking is an issue Hunting & Fishing barely has enough parking.

Melville & Ellis (Retail) has no parking whatsoever and also no access to Okara Drive.

Go Cars – likewise has no parking or no access to Okara Drive.

The 4 other tenancies along Okara Drive also have very limited parking and poor access from Okara Drive and there is certainly not enough car parking to service “shopping centre zoning.” That leaves the remaining car parks which are owned by members of the Body Corporate and these are already under pressure from:

- People working at the Okara Shopping Centre or surrounding buildings parking there all day
- Tenants such as Melville & Ellis with no car parks parking there
- The Council has some car parks along the river but because there is no time restrictions on these they usually filled early in the day by staff working in the surrounding businesses such as the Okara Shopping Centre

Conclusion:

There is not sufficient car parks in the area to support Retail Zoning. A significant retail outlet would create chaos.

Pedestrian Access

There is none. There is not even walking access across the bridge linking Okara Drive and Reyburn Street. Pedestrians will have to cross Okara Drive at great risk to their personal safety because this is possibly the busiest intersection in Whangarei.

Public Facilities

There are none. I am not even aware of any of the current tenancies having a toilet their customers can use.

There are no food facilities. Anyone wanting food or drink will have to try and cross Okara Drive.

Roading

The roundabout linking Okara Drive must already be the busiest in Whangarei and likewise the entrance off Okara Drive to K Mart and Countdown is always congested.

It seems illogical to make another shopping centre just across the road from an already congested area.

Conclusion

The Council Planners have only had a superficial look at Okara West when deciding to change the zoning to Shopping Centre.

They have not thought through the impact of issues such as:

- Currently no pedestrian access
- Road congestion
- Multiple owners
- Multiple owners of the existing car parks
- No time limits on the existing Council parking
- Where is everyone going to park?
- No public facilities and toilets etc.

