

## **Staff Summary of Hearings Panel's Decision on Sleepyhead Proposal**

24 May 2021

Ambury Properties Ltd, on behalf of the Sleepyhead group of companies, lodged a submission on the Proposed Waikato District Plan seeking to rezone 178ha of rural land at Ohinewai to establish a mixed use industrial, commercial and residential development (“the proposal”). The site is located on the eastern side of the Waikato Expressway, bounded by Lumsden and Tahuna Roads. The site is adjacent to the North Island main trunk rail line.

The objective of the proposal was to enable the Sleepyhead group of companies to relocate their manufacturing facilities from Auckland to Ohinewai in order to consolidate their operations and to provide up to 1,100 houses for its workers and others to live at Ohinewai. The proposal has the potential to provide over 2,600 jobs to the Waikato region, to provide affordable housing to the local workforce, and to contribute an estimated \$200 million per annum into the local economy. The rezoning could enable 2,500-3,000 people to live and work at Ohinewai.

Waikato District Council staff have prepared this short summary to aid in the understanding of the proposal, the district plan process and the decision on the proposal.

The Waikato District Council appointed independent commissioners to hear submissions on the Proposed Waikato District Plan. A Hearing Panel comprised of Dr Phil Mitchell, Paul Cooney, Dynes Fulton and Weo Maag heard the evidence from Ambury Properties Ltd and the further submitters in late 2020. After careful consideration of the proposal, the independent Hearings Panel made a decision on 24 May 2021 to accept the zoning request. The Hearings Panel was satisfied that the proposal will bring significant economic, social and employment benefits to an area where there is limited job opportunities, affordable housing choices and community investment.

The rezoning proposal was opposed by some submitters on the basis that the Ohinewai locality had not been identified for urban development in the relevant statutory planning documents and that the development would result in a lack of integration with other identified urban growth areas and existing infrastructure services. Some submitters expressed concern that the proposal would create a car-centric community dependent on the use of the Waikato Expressway for short trips to access services in nearby Huntly or other townships.

After considering the evidence from Ambury Properties Ltd and all related further submitters (both supporting and opposing), the Hearings Panel was satisfied that the proposal meets the statutory requirements set out in the Resource Management Act 1991. The Hearings Panel concluded that the rezoning will enable the people and community of the North Waikato district to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being, while ensuring that any potential adverse effects can be managed by the comprehensive provisions included in the

district plan. The Hearings Panel was confident the development can establish and operate while managing the effects of the development both within and outside the new zone.

At the hearing, in September 2020, the Hearings Panel heard from a number of submitters seeking rezoning in and around Ohinewai. The decision issued by the panel only addresses the submission from Ambury Property Ltd [Submitter 764] and its related further submissions. Decisions on the other submissions seeking rezoning at Ohinewai will be addressed in the Hearing Panel's substantive decision on the proposed plan.

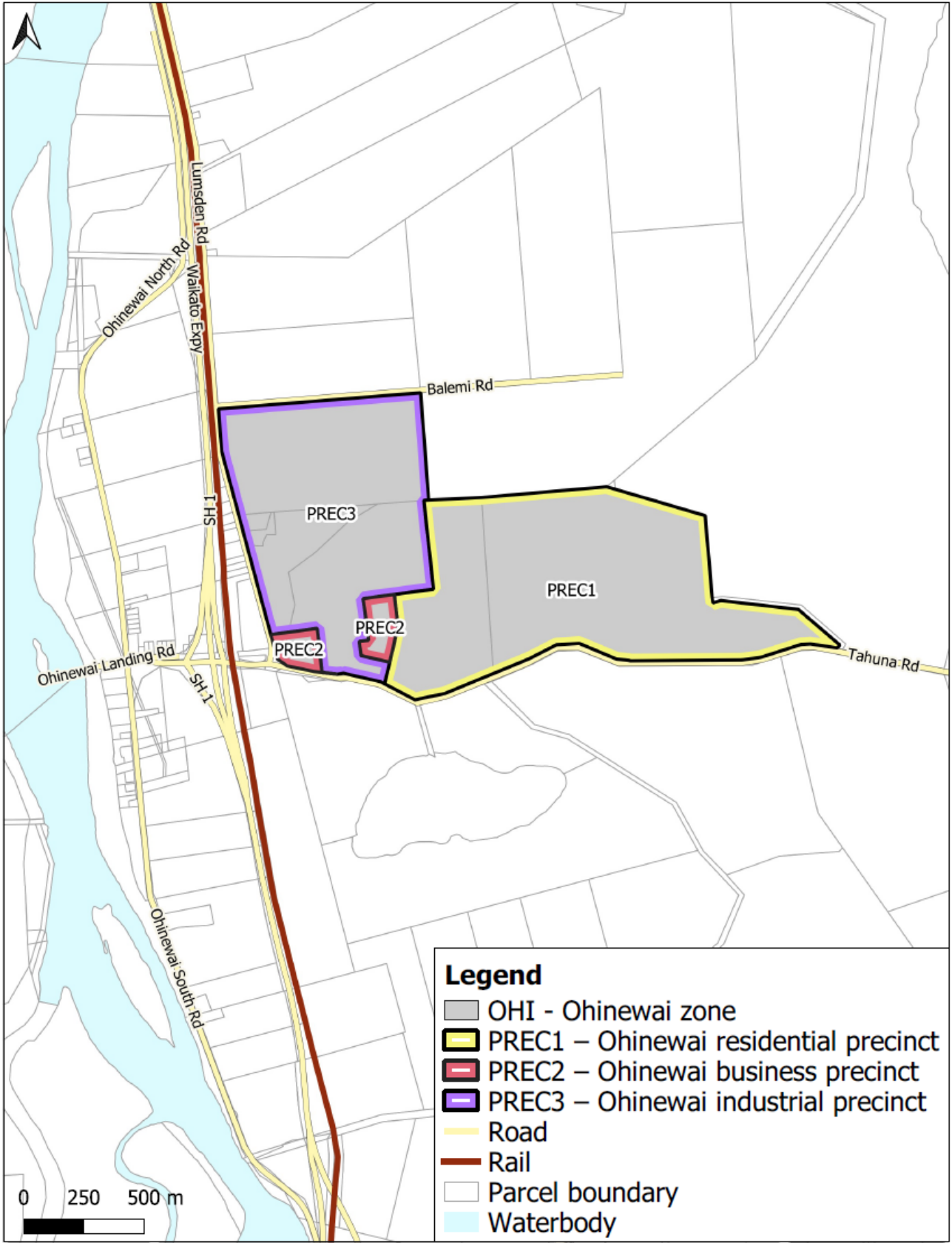
As the Hearings Panel has accepted the request to rezone Ambury Property Ltd's site, a new Ohinewai Zone will apply to the site, with industrial, business and residential precincts.

The provisions will not be operative until any appeals to be lodged against the decision have been resolved. If the zoning decision is confirmed after any appeals are resolved, Ambury Properties Ltd will still have to apply for a number of land use and subdivision consents to undertake the planned development.

In parallel to this district plan process, Ambury Properties Ltd have started earthworks on the site which was approved through separate resource consents. Alongside this, an application to build a large foam factory and rail siding are to be considered under the Government's Covid-19 fast-tracking consenting law.

Two diagrams are attached to this summary. The first is the decision's planning map. The second is the Structure Plan diagram which the decision has embedded into the planning provisions, and the rules require development to be in general accordance with it. The numbering on the Structure Plan diagram relates to infrastructure design and sequencing.

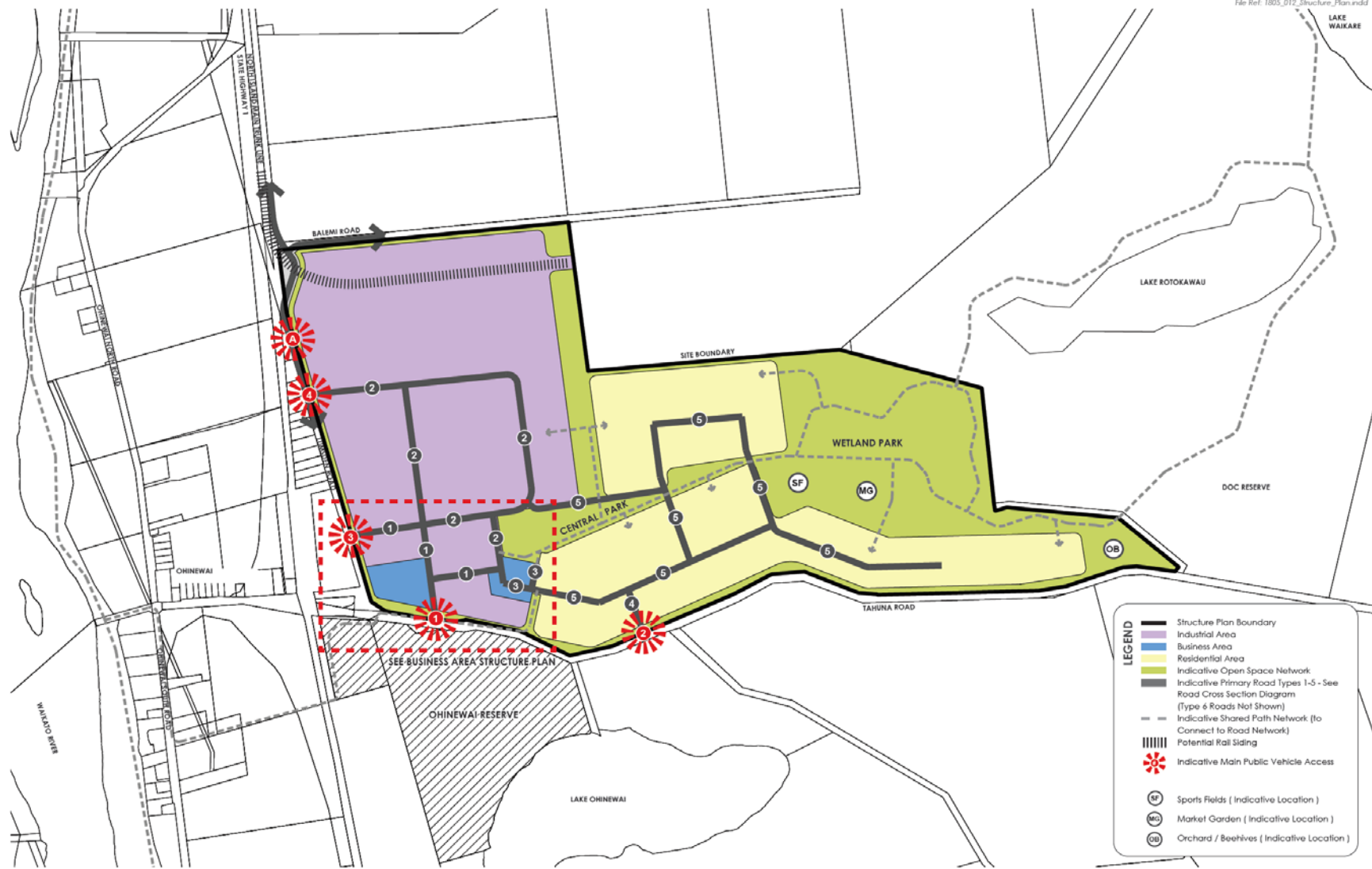
For more information on the Hearing Panel's decision and the approved planning provisions, refer to Council's website.



**Proposed District Plan  
Ohinewai Zone Decision map**

Created By: BI/GIS department  
 Created For: PDP Hearing Panel  
 Date Created: 19-May-2021  
 Projection: NZTM GD2000  
 Ref: ME25670

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Structure plan for the site