

Hutt City Council District Plan Review: Hearing Stream #5 - Natural Hazards

Wednesday, 19 August, 12.15pm at the Hutt City Council Chambers

HEARING STATEMENT

To: Hutt City Council District Plan Independent Hearing Panel comprising David McMahon, (Chair), Liz Burge, Jason Jones and Matt Muspratt.

Regarding: Opposition to Natural Hazard Flood Overlay (High Flood Risk Designation)

Property Address: 4 Kaitawa Road, York Bay, Lower Hutt 5013

Submitter: Susan Ewart, Submitter #423

Also representing: Fiona Christeller, Submitter #375 in relation to 18 Taungata Road, York Bay

Kia Ora. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding the proposed District Plan flood overlay for our property at 4 Kaitawa Road, York Bay. It was disappointing to have my submission on this issue rejected without explanation and it is important to have this proposed designation removed.

Three levels of risk of flooding are shown in the map overlay for our property – low, medium and high. None of them are possible. The overlay map implies that a stream goes through the property – it does not. Our boundary is to the west of and above the gully containing the stream, with a section of road reserve between the formed road edge and our boundary.

The flood overlay assessment appears to ignore the actual topography, failing to take into account the site's vertical contours. The model seems to treat the stream and our house as if they sit on a uniform, flat plane, which is completely wrong.

The Kaitawa Stream is in a deep gully – somewhere between three and four metres below the road level and our drive entranceway. A culvert takes the stream under the drive. Our house is approximately another nine metres above the road level, making it a total of 12 metres above the stream. The house is built on a small platform some 48 metres above sea level with banks falling away vertically on three sides so natural gravity drains any water downhill rather than pooling around the house.

It is simply not possible for this property to be at any risk of flooding, let alone a high risk.

Our family has dwelt on this property for about 77 years. Even in the heaviest rainfall, the stream might swell half a metre or so in depth at most (it is normally ankle deep). If the culvert was blocked and the stream did somehow rise four metres to the road

level, which would be extraordinary, it would then naturally flow downhill to the sea. It could not continue to rise up to the property level as it would no longer be contained within two banks forcing it upwards.

As the property is 48 metres above sea level, this means the entire world's oceans would have to rise by about 50 metres to flood our property – given that the harbour and oceans are all linked. Such a scenario is patently ridiculous, and not one contemplated in even the most dire predictions of climate change and sea level rise, yet this is what applying the flood overlay to our property suggests.

As such a designation has serious implications for insurance cover, the value of our property and future building compliance, it is very important that the proposed District Plan be amended to reflect the reality of the site, and that the natural hazard risk flood overlay be removed from 4 Kaitawa Road, York Bay. The hazard overlay boundary should be restricted solely to the true, physical, low-lying bed of the stream gully where any potential flow is safely contained by the natural topography.

My neighbour Fiona Christeller who can't be here today asked me to speak on her behalf. Her property is downhill from ours but faces the same issue. The stream passes through a nearby culvert and then continues flowing through a similarly deep gully to the sea. Like me, she says that, even if the stream overflowed due to that culvert being blocked, the water would run downhill to the harbour with at least a 15-metre drop, so there is no likelihood of that water backing up on the nearby properties.

She likewise seeks relief by having the proposed overlay hazard removed from her property at 18 Taungata Road.

I understand that there is the possibility of a site visit. I think that would be very beneficial in terms of appreciating that there is a clear evidential basis for removing this designation from both properties.

Thank you.