

To: Ministry for the Environment (MfE)

From: Katherine Hu – Barker & Associates Limited

Date: 8 December 2025

Re: Urban Design Memorandum – Greenhill Industrial Park Masterplan

1.0 Introduction

Greenhill Industrial Park Consortium proposes to lodge an application for a referral project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) to utilise the fast-track consenting process via an expert consenting panel. This application, known as the Greenhill Industrial Park Masterplan, relates to land located at 133, 135 and 257 Greenhill Road, and 112 and 112A, 154, 182 and 192 Puketaha Road, Puketaha (the 'Site').

To support the referral application, this memorandum provides a high-level assessment of the urban design aspects of the proposal, including:

- Summary of the proposal and the Site's key characteristics;
- Summary of the planning and urban design context and relevant statutory and policy considerations; and
- An outline of the masterplan's key urban design response, including preliminary matters for further assessment and mitigation.

This memorandum should be read in conjunction with **Appendix 1 – Urban Design Consultation Package**, prepared by Barker & Associates Limited and dated December 2025.

Should the project be successful in being referred to the FTAA process, a full Urban Design Assessment will be prepared and lodged as part of the substantive application.

2.0 Project Description and Summary

Greenhill Industrial Park Consortium has engaged Barker & Associates ('B&A') to provide planning and urban design services for the master planning, consenting and design of the Site. The Site is located in the Waikato District, immediately east of Hamilton City and directly adjacent to the Waikato Expressway / State Highway 1 (SH1). The Site is accessible from Puketaha Road to the north and Greenhill Road to the south, and benefits from immediate proximity to the Pardoia Boulevard / Greenhill Road diamond interchange, which provides direct northbound and southbound connections to SH1. To the east and north, the surrounding landscape maintains a productive rural character dominated by grazing, horticulture, and scattered rural-residential properties. Built form is generally sparse and low in scale, with shelter vegetation and intermittent farm dwellings and accessory structures along property boundaries.

The masterplan (refer **Appendix 1**) provides for approximately 161 industrial lots ranging from small sites of less than 2,500m² to larger lots exceeding 1ha. The lot pattern is intended to support a spectrum of industrial and logistics activities, while retaining flexibility for future amalgamation or subdivision in response to market demand.

To manage interfaces with surrounding rural lifestyle properties, landscape buffers (generally 10–15m wide) are provided between the industrial lots and the Site’s more sensitive edges. A total of 25 rural-residential lots, generally sized between 2,500–5,000m², are proposed adjacent to existing rural-residential lots along parts of the northern and southern boundaries. A Greenhill Expressway Service Area of approximately 4.96ha (including land partially zoned for Expressway Service Area under the operative District Plan) is located at the corner of SH1 and Taha Lane, providing facilities for freight operators and the travelling public.

A central corridor is formed by the realignment and naturalisation of an existing Waikato Regional Council drain through the Site. This corridor is supported by stormwater ponds and extensive riparian planting. The roading network includes a new north–south industrial collector road linking Puketaha Road and Greenhill Road, supported by local industrial streets and internal swales designed for heavy vehicle operation.

Built-form testing undertaken for the Consultation Package indicates the proposed block and lot dimensions can be realistically developed for typical industrial uses. To support high-quality outcomes, the Consultation Package recommends moderating site coverage where appropriate, providing functional yard depths and truck circulation, and incorporating on-lot landscaping (typically 10–20%) to improve amenity and landscape integration.

The overall development is intended to be delivered in stages, with sequencing aligned to bulk earthworks and the delivery of key infrastructure.

2.0 Masterplan



Figure 1 Overall High-level Masterplan

3.0 Site and Context Analysis Summary

B&A has undertaken a site and context analysis, which is included in **Appendix 1**.

From a planning and urban design perspective, the Site is currently zoned General Rural under the Waikato District Plan and sits at the interface between existing rural production and lifestyle activities, the strategic

transport corridor of SH1, and the planned future urban growth area identified as the Ruakura 2 (R2) growth cell on the western side of the Expressway. This location means the Site will play an important role in shaping how the rural–urban transition on the north-eastern edge of Hamilton is perceived and experienced over time.

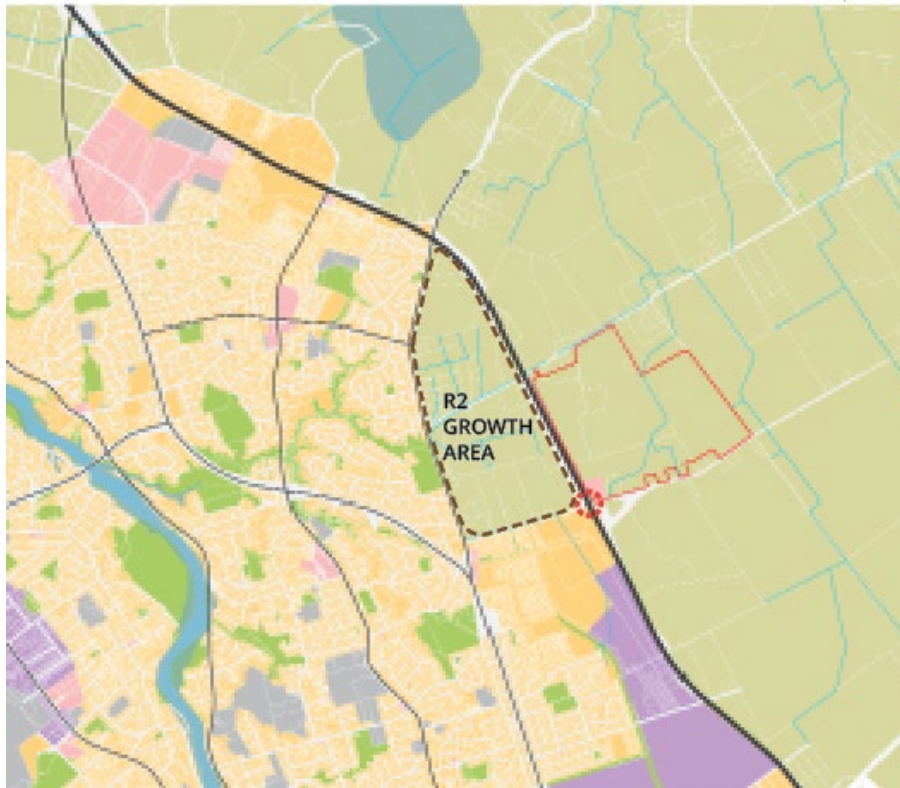


Figure 2 Planning Context and Local Site Context

Physically, the Site is irregular in shape and generally gently undulating, with some localised steeper slopes that inform road alignments and earthworks strategies. Existing land uses are dominated by pastoral grazing and rural-residential lifestyle properties. Vegetation is primarily shelterbelts, amenity planting and mature exotic trees associated with existing dwellings and property boundaries, and there is limited indigenous vegetation.

Hydrologically, watercourses on site are highly modified. A main Waikato Regional Council drain traverses the Site, with a series of smaller modified channels and potential degraded inland wetlands subject to further investigation. This drainage network underpins the proposed blue–green corridor and provides a key opportunity for stormwater management, ecological enhancement and improved landscape amenity. Approximately 6 ha within and adjacent to the corridor has been identified as having potential to support wetland offsetting, riparian restoration and stormwater treatment, subject to detailed design and approvals.

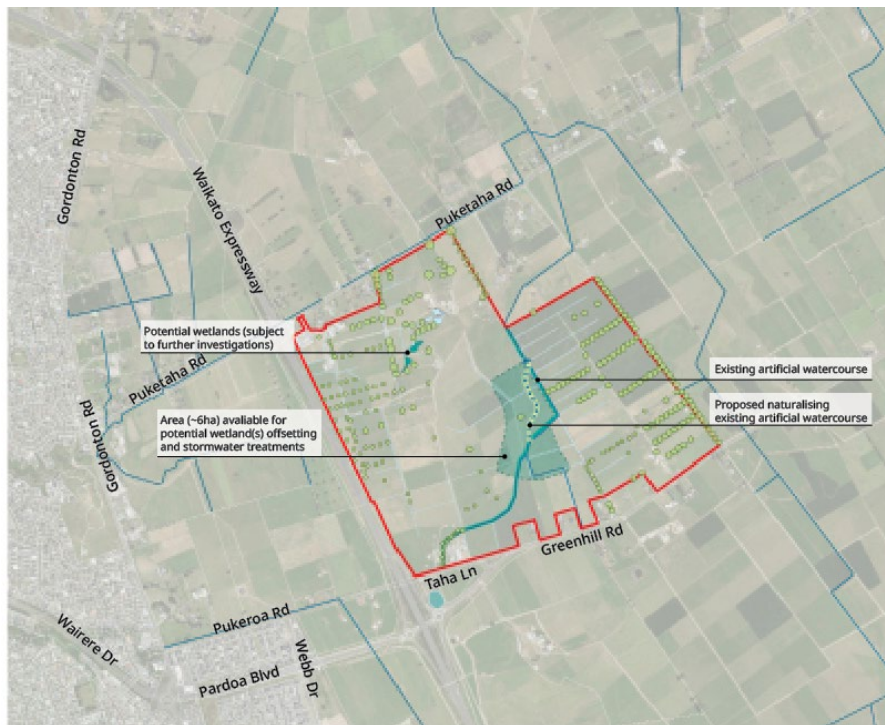


Figure 3 Preliminary Ecological Findings (pg 7 of Consultation Pack)

In terms of transport and accessibility, the Site's direct connection to SH1 via the existing interchange provides regional connectivity and supports the Site's role within a freight and logistics corridor. At the same time, adjacency to existing rural-residential properties and the Expressway Noise Control Overlay requires careful consideration of access design, traffic distribution, noise and visual effects, and the treatment of public frontages.

The Site also contains existing infrastructure elements, including overhead power lines and a radio mast, which may influence built-form envelopes and development layout in specific locations. Several existing dwellings along Puketaha Road and Greenhill Road are proposed to be retained, requiring compatible access and interface treatments.

4.0 Statutory Policy Documents

National direction provides strategic guidance relevant to urban development, infrastructure and the provision of business land. The following matters are particularly relevant to the Greenhill Industrial Park Masterplan.

4.1 National Policy Statement on Urban Development

The National Policy Statement Urban Development (**NPSUD**) identifies the Waikato District as a Tier 1 territorial authority. This requires Council to take a strategic approach and determine future needs for the short, medium and long terms to meet the expected demand for housing and provide the development capacity to meet expected demand for business land.

This high-level Masterplan is generally consistent and in alignment with the NPSUD in the following ways:

- The Site is a large landholding in a strategically connected location, where a holistic master planning approach has been applied to enable fit-for-purpose industrial development capacity adjacent to SH1.

- The proposal supports economic wellbeing by enabling a substantial supply of business land, including approximately 161 industrial lots and an expressway service area.
- The masterplan illustrates the opportunities for accessibility and connections with the existing urban fabric and roading network.
- The provision of infrastructure in terms of the development capacity that will be enabled has been considered. It is intended that infrastructure will be delivered through a staged approach and could be funded privately but also alongside and in conjunction with the territorial authority.

4.2 2024 Future Proof Strategy

The Future Proof Strategy is the 30-year growth management and implementation plan for the Hamilton, Waipā, Waikato and Matamata-Piako sub-regions. It seeks to manage growth in a staged and coordinated way and identifies transformational moves including iwi aspirations, a strong and productive economic corridor, and water-wise and water-sensitive communities.

The Site is adjacent to the R2 growth cell for planned urban expansion. Enabling the masterplan will reinforce the north–south economic corridor between Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga via an industrial park directly connected to SH1. In combination with the future R2 development, the proposal can contribute to employment opportunities in proximity to existing and planned residential areas, while incorporating blue–green infrastructure to improve stormwater outcomes and ecological resilience.

4.3 Waikato District Plan and Hamilton City District Plan

The site is currently zoned General Rural under the Waikato District Plan, indicating its current primary use for rural activities and highlighting the need for rezoning or special planning processes to facilitate urban development. The adjacent areas along the Hamilton City boundary are zoned as General Residential and Industrial Zone, which indicates potential for cohesive urban integration subject to planning changes. The identified R2 growth cell is planned for a mixed urban neighbourhood development, providing approximate 1,350 dwellings, 56ha industrial land, 2ha neighbourhood centre and approximate 29ha of future residential and industrial uses.

While this memorandum does not assess every relevant objective and policy, a summary of key urban design District Plan matters (both Waikato District Plan and Hamilton City District Plan) for consideration is outlined below:

- Achieving a practical, functional and safe roading environment specifically suited to industrial activities, including heavy vehicle movement and servicing.
- Managing sensitive interfaces through setbacks, landscaping and lot typologies, particularly where industrial activities abut rural-residential properties and key public frontages.
- Promoting efficient use of land while recognising that design quality and coherent structure become increasingly important as the scale of development increases.
- Ensuring that infrastructure is in place, or can be provided, to support new development and to manage environmental effects, including stormwater and noise.

5.0 Urban Design Response

The Greenhill Industrial Park Masterplan has been informed by high-level technical inputs from a range of specialists and has been designed to provide a functional and coherent industrial environment while managing key interfaces and environmental constraints. Key urban design aspects are summarised below.

5.1 Movement and Connectivity

The proposed masterplan establishes a clear and legible roading hierarchy designed for industrial activity. The network is structured around a new north–south collector road (approximately 30m wide) linking Puketaha Road and Greenhill Road, supported by local industrial streets (approximately 21m wide) and cul-de-sacs where necessary.

From an urban design perspective, the network supports:

- Legibility and efficient freight movement through a clear collector/local hierarchy for freight, staff and visitors. Intersections, turning heads, road widths and the geometry of blocks are designed to allow for efficient freight movements;
- Multiple route choices and a resilient layout where practicable, helping disperse traffic and support staging; and
- Opportunities for integrated stormwater swales and street planting to improve amenity and reduce the visual dominance of hardstand.

5.2 Industrial built form, scale and interface

The masterplan provides a range of industrial lot sizes to accommodate varied industrial and logistics activities, while retaining flexibility for future amalgamation or subdivision. Built-form testing indicates typical industrial development can be accommodated through appropriate site coverage, yard depths and servicing arrangements.

Given the Site’s rural context and high visibility from SH1 and local roads, design quality will be important to avoid an ad hoc pattern of large buildings, yards and signage. The masterplan’s structure, together with proposed landscape buffers, provides a framework to achieve:

- A coherent and ordered industrial precinct with clear public frontages and site access;
- Sensitive transitions to rural-residential edges through setbacks, buffer planting and lower-intensity lot typologies; and
- An improved ‘gateway’ character along key corridors, particularly where the development addresses SH1 and the interchange.

5.3 Expressway Service Area and gateway frontage

The expressway service area at the SH1 / Taha Lane corner leverages the Site’s immediate access to the national freight corridor and provides for a concentrated node of services for freight operators and travellers.

Along the SH1 edge, larger lots and more intensive activities are generally oriented toward the Expressway where reverse-sensitivity risks are lowest. A continuous landscape buffer (typically 10–15 m wide) is proposed to assist with visual integration, reduce the apparent scale of buildings and yards, and present a landscaped frontage to the Expressway.

5.4 Open space provision, response to natural features and infrastructure

The central watercourse corridor and associated stormwater ponds are key elements of the masterplan. Realignment and naturalising the existing modified drain, widening it where feasible, and integrating generous riparian planting will transform the corridor from an engineered drainage asset into a higher-amenity blue–green spine.

From an urban design perspective, these elements can provide:

- Stormwater management and treatment integrated with landscape character and ecological enhancement;
- A recognisable identity and internal structure for the industrial park, with the collective open space can also provide informal walking routes, places to sit outside, and visual relief from built form and hardstand, supporting a more pleasant working environment and experience for staff; and
- A framework for wetland offsetting, riparian restoration and improved biodiversity, subject to further investigation and detailed design.

5.5 Staging and implementation

Given its scale, the masterplan will be delivered over multiple stages. From an urban design perspective, early delivery of the collector road spine and key sections of the blue–green corridor will help ensure initial stages read as part of a coherent planned environment rather than isolated development pockets.

The block and lot structure has been arranged to support different staging scenarios in response to market demand, while maintaining overall framework integrity through consistent access, interface treatments and infrastructure sequencing.

5.6 Relationship with Ruakura 2 (R2)

The Ruakura 2 (R2) fasttrack listed project seeks to subdivide and develop approximately 211ha of land between the existing Hamilton urban edge and the Waikato Expressway for a mix of residential housing (around 132ha / ~1,350 dwellings), approximately 35ha of industrial land, a neighbourhood retail centre and catchment-wide infrastructure including roads, three waters and amenity assets. Concept plans for R2 indicate that residential activity is generally proposed on the western and northern parts of the growth cell, with industrial activity concentrated on the eastern edge adjacent to the Expressway, supported by a spine road, stormwater / amenity assets and a small local centre. This would locate industrial land on the western side of SH1 opposite the proposed development on the Site on the eastern side, creating an employment-focused corridor along both sides of the Expressway.



Figure 4 R2 Concept Design and Greenhill Proposed Masterplan

From an urban design perspective, the proposed Greenhill Industrial Park masterplan provides several opportunities to support the planned Ruakura 2 (R2) development and help shape a coordinated growth outcome across both sides of the Waikato Expressway:

- With industrial land proposed on both sides of the Expressway, Greenhill can help establish a consistent and high-quality corridor character. The masterplan's emphasis on coordinated setbacks, frontage expectations, and substantial landscape buffers provides a strong basis to align with R2 and present a legible, well-landscaped gateway that reflects the strategic economic role of this part of Hamilton's growth area.
- The masterplan adopts a clear gradient of activity, placing more intensive industrial activities closer to the Expressway and using rural-residential lots and landscape buffers to manage transitions to more sensitive edges. This complements the R2 concept, where the Expressway-edge industrial strip is used to buffer higher-density residential neighbourhoods. Together, this approach can help minimise direct residential-industrial interfaces and support a more compatible long-term pattern of development, provided that detailed design continues to prioritise acoustic, lighting, and landscape outcomes.
- While SH1 is a barrier to direct east-west walking and cycling connectivity, the Greenhill masterplan's internal collector network and its strategic location adjacent to key intersections create opportunities to support efficient movement between R2's residential areas and employment opportunities within Greenhill. In particular, the connections via Gordonton Road, Puketaha Road, and Greenhill Road (including potential future public transport and active mode linkages) can help reinforce a well-functioning urban environment at a wider growth-cell scale.

As part of the substantive application, the following matters can be used to further strengthen integration with R2 and support coordinated outcomes across the wider growth cell:

- Establish a consistent approach to industrial block structure, street hierarchy and cross-sections, including tree planting, swales, and pedestrian facilities, so the corridor reads as a planned and coherent employment precinct.
- Formalise core development controls (e.g., frontage/yard requirements, site coverage ranges, minimum landscaping, building height limits, and service yard location expectations) to reinforce a high-quality Expressway edge and avoid ad hoc outcomes.
- Require key blue–green infrastructure (stormwater ponds and the modified watercourse) to be designed as integrated public realm and amenity assets, with safe batters/benches and shared path integration where appropriate.
- Apply performance expectations for noise, lighting, and building orientation at sensitive interfaces (including within the Expressway Noise Control Overlay), supported by setbacks and planting, to help protect amenity for existing rural dwellings and future R2 neighbourhoods.
- For larger lots and high-profile sites (including Expressway edge and open space frontages), require additional design expectations to secure strong built-form outcomes consistent with the strategic gateway role of the area.

6.0 Conclusion

Based on this high-level urban design review of the Consultation Pack, it is considered that the proposal:

- Delivers a coherent industrial street and block framework aligned with topography and drainage;
- Provides a range of industrial lot sizes with embedded flexibility for market demands;
- Establishes a connected blue–green spine and pond network that manages stormwater and provides the core identity of the development; and
- Incorporates clear landscape buffers and lot typologies to manage interfaces with the Expressway and adjoining rural / lifestyle areas.

Subject to further technical inputs and refinement of detailed design controls and landscape guidance, the proposal is considered capable of delivering a high-quality industrial development that consistent with contemporary New Zealand urban design practice and the FTAA purpose.

7.0 Qualifications and Experience

Katherine Hu (BPlan (hons); MUDes) is an Associate – Urban Designer at Barker & Associates. Katherine has had over ten years of professional experience as an urban planner and urban designer in both the public and private sectors in New Zealand. Katherine has experience working on urban design review, spatial and strategic planning, master planning, as well as non-statutory place-making projects. Her experience also includes plan changes, resource consenting and development of key design documentation and urban design guidelines.