27.7.2026

To: The Fast-track Approvals Decision-makers / Expert Panel

Subject: Ngāti Reko response to the Stillhaven Residential Masterplan, Te Kowhai

Tēnā koutou

Ngāti Reko provides this response in relation to the proposed Stillhaven Residential Masterplan, located on the edge of Te Kowhai village within the Waikato District. We understand the proposal relates to an approximately 86 hectare site with frontage to Horotiu Road and Te Kowhai Road, adjoining an established rural village setting and close to Te Kowhai School, Te Kowhai Community Hall, Four Square, local parks and recreation areas.

Ngāti Reko acknowledges the need for well-planned housing, infrastructure and community development across the Waikato. However, any development of this scale must proceed in a way that recognises mana whenua, protects cultural values, provides for Te Ture Whai Mana, Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, and avoids or mitigates adverse effects on whenua, wai, wāhi tapu, mahinga kai, biodiversity, stormwater systems, traffic safety and the wellbeing of the existing Te Kowhai community.

Fast-track Approvals Act considerations

The Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 provides an alternative approvals pathway for projects that may deliver significant regional or national benefits. We understand that the process requires applicants to notify and consult relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities before lodging applications, and that decision-makers must consider Treaty settlement and recognised customary rights obligations.

Ngāti Reko expects that the Stillhaven proposal to advance through any fast-track process with meaningful engagement with Ngāti Reko, including sufficient time and resourcing for Ngāti Reko to review the proposal, identify cultural effects, and provide informed recommendations.

Ngāti Reko is a hapū of Waikato-Tainui. Waikeri Marae, located approximately two kilometres from the proposed development, is a recognised marae of Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Inc. The marae is part of the Waikato-Tainui tribal structure established through the Waikato Raupatu Claims Settlement Act 1995 and is recognised within the Waikato River settlement arrangements established in 2010.

Key matters for Ngāti Reko

1. Ngāti Reko must be recognised as a party with interests in the whenua, waterways, cultural landscapes and future wellbeing of Te Kowhai and the surrounding area.
2. A Cultural Impact Assessment should be commissioned with Ngāti Reko involvement within the substantive application prior to it being lodged or determined.
3. Protection of wāhi tapu and archaeology: The applicant must undertake appropriate cultural and archaeological due diligence, including accidental discovery protocols developed with Ngāti Reko.
4. The proposal must demonstrate how stormwater, wastewater and water supply will be managed without degrading local waterways, wetlands, groundwater, mahinga kai or receiving environments.

5. The cumulative impacts associated with residential development must be assessed and managed to ensure they do not impede on Ngāti Reko kaitiakitanga, rangatiratanga, mana, tikanga, or adversely affect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and Waipā River systems, as obligated under Te Ture Whai Mana o Waikato.
6. The proposal must assess effects on Horotiu Road, Te Kowhai Road, school access, pedestrian safety, cycling links and the existing village character.
7. The masterplan should include meaningful restoration planting, blue-green corridors, public open space and opportunities for native biodiversity enhancement.
8. Any claimed regional benefit should be supported by clear commitments to housing choice, infrastructure delivery, community facilities and positive outcomes for existing and future residents, with housing affordability is a key driver.
9. Engagement should lead to a formal Memorandum of Understanding or partnership agreement between the applicant and Ngāti Reko, setting out agreed principles, roles, resourcing, decision-making pathways, cultural monitoring, implementation responsibilities and ongoing relationship arrangements for the life of the project.

Requested actions

Ngāti Reko requests that the applicant and decision-makers:

1. Confirm whether the Stillhaven Residential Masterplan is intended to be advanced under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 and, if so, provide Ngāti Reko with all relevant application material at the earliest opportunity.
2. Provide resourcing for Ngāti Reko to review technical material and prepare cultural advice, including any Cultural Impact Assessment or Cultural Values Assessment.
3. Include Ngāti Reko in the development of consent conditions, management plans, accidental discovery protocols, stormwater design, ecological restoration plans and naming / cultural interpretation opportunities.
4. Ensure that any decision on the proposal expressly records how Ngāti Reko's views have been considered and how cultural effects will be avoided, remedied, mitigated or otherwise addressed.
5. Work with Ngāti Reko to develop and execute a Memorandum of Understanding or partnership agreement that records engagement commitments, cultural advice processes, resourcing arrangements, monitoring roles, implementation actions and dispute-resolution pathways before any substantive approvals are granted or works commence.

Position Statement

At this stage, Ngāti Reko does not provide unconditional support for the Stillhaven Residential Masterplan. Ngāti Reko reserves its position until meaningful engagement has occurred through the Substantive process, to ensure cultural effects have been properly assessed, clear commitments have been made to protect cultural, environmental and community values, and an appropriate Memorandum of Understanding or partnership agreement has been progressed with Ngāti Reko.

Ngāti Reko remains available to engage constructively and in good faith. We ask that all future correspondence and meeting invitations be directed to the appropriate Ngāti Reko representatives.

Nāku noa, nā



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Kaitiaki Ngāti Reko
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