

Panel convener conference memorandum: Waikanae North Development

Fast-track project name	Waikanae North Development
Fast-track application number	FTAA-2603-1194
GW file number	FTA260420

To	The Fast-track Panel Convener
Date	21 May 2026

Introduction

1. This memorandum is filed on behalf of the Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) in response to the Panel Convener's direction in their Minute 2 dated 14 May 2026, in advance of the Panel Convener conference on the Waikanae North Development project (the Project).
2. For this project, Greater Wellington's role under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the FTAA) is to participate in the approvals process as a local authority and regional council consent authority. This includes participating in pre-lodgement consultation with the applicant, commenting on the application when invited to do so by the Expert Panel, providing information to the Expert Panel where requested, and commenting on draft approval conditions. If the approvals are granted, Greater Wellington must undertake compliance monitoring and enforcement on any regional resource consents as if those consents were granted under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), for the duration of those consents.

Limitations

3. Any comments provided in this memorandum are preliminary and only for the purposes of responding to the directions in the Panel Convener's minute. The comments provided in this memorandum do not constitute Greater Wellington's comments on the project under section 53 of the FTAA. Any comments provided by Greater Wellington on the application under section 53 of the FTAA may include, but are not limited to, the matters raised in this memorandum.

Pre-application consultation

4. The Applicant commenced pre-lodgement consultation with Greater Wellington in June 2025. Pre-lodgement consultation has included the following activities:

- a) A briefing on the project;
 - b) A site walkover and workshop with technical experts on 30 July 2025;
 - c) Provision of draft technical information, including:
 - i. Plans - Scheme, Earthworks, Stormwater, Wastewater, Water Supply.
 - ii. Ecological Effects Assessment
 - iii. Lizard Management Plan
 - iv. Native Freshwater Fauna Salvage and Relocation Plan
 - v. Infrastructure Report
 - vi. Geotechnical Assessment
 - vii. Hydrological Report
 - viii. Stormwater Management Plan
 - ix. Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
 - d) Greater Wellington provided feedback on the draft technical information on 08 August 2025 and subsequently on 05 February 2026.
 - e) Discussion of rules triggering resource consents on 25 March 2026.
5. The Applicant continues to consult with Greater Wellington on outstanding issues (which are discussed later in this memorandum).
6. It is our view that the approach taken by the Applicant and their advisors to pre-lodgement consultation has led to a narrowing of issues on certain technical matters. We consider this will result in a more efficient fast-track approvals process, with fewer issues needing to be resolved by the Expert Panel than may have otherwise been the case.

Matters to consider (Paragraph [6] (a)-(e) and Schedule 1 of Panel Convener Minute)

7. This section of the memorandum provides our feedback on the matters set out in Paragraph [6] (a)-(e) and Schedule 1 of the Panel Convener's minute.

Approvals

8. The application seeks the following resource consents under a regional rule in the Natural Resources Plan:
- (a) The discharge of stormwater from new subdivision and development.
 - (b) Earthworks and vegetation clearance.
 - (c) Activities in natural wetlands, including:
 - (i) Discharge of stormwater;

- (ii) Clearance of indigenous vegetation;
- (iii) Earthworks;
- (iv) Diversion of water into natural wetlands;
- (v) Reclamation of natural wetlands.
- (d) Activities in outstanding natural wetlands, including:
 - (i) Discharge of water;
 - (ii) Diversion of water;
 - (iii) Placement of new structures with an area greater than 10m² in area.
- (e) Reclamation of the bed of a river.
- (f) Placement of culverts in the bed of a river.
- (g) Diversion of water within or from rivers.
- (h) Dewatering.

9. The application seeks the following resource consents under the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-F):

- (a) Vegetation clearance and earthworks or land disturbance within, or within a 10m setback from, a natural inland wetland for the purpose of constructing a wetland utility structure.
- (b) Earthworks within a natural inland wetland that will result in the complete or partial drainage of all or part of the wetland (noting that this is a prohibited activity under regulation 53 of the NES-F).
- (c) Vegetation clearance within, or within a 10m setback from a natural inland wetland.
- (d) Earthworks within, or within a 10m setback from, a natural inland wetland.
- (e) The taking, use, damming or diversion of water within, or within a 100m setback from, a natural inland wetland.
- (f) Reclamation of the bed of the Ngarara Stream as a result of its proposed diversion.
- (g) Placement of culverts in the bed of a river.

Complexity

10. **Factual complexity.** Consideration of the application is likely to require analysis of technical, scientific, or highly specialised subject matter. To assist Greater Wellington to comment on the parts of the application that relate to its functions as a regional council, Greater Wellington has engaged external technical experts to provide comments in relation to the following subject matter areas:

- (a) Earthworks management/erosion, sediment and dust control;
- (b) Wetland ecology;
- (c) Stream ecology and freshwater fish;

- (d) Hydrology;
 - (e) Stormwater discharge quality and quantity;
11. **Evidentiary complexity.** The application contains a large volume of evidence, but this is not unusual for a project of this scale and range of effects.
12. **Legal complexity.** From Greater Wellington’s perspective, the regional resource consents sought by the applicant do not appear to involve novel or difficult legal issues that are out of the ordinary for an application for activities of this nature.

Principal environmental effects and principal issues

13. The matters that Greater Wellington may comment on under Section 53 of the FTAA include (but are not necessarily limited to):
- (a) In relation to Greater Wellington’s functions under the RMA:
 - (i) Effects of earthworks and the associated discharge of contaminants;
 - (ii) Effects on the extent and values of wetlands;
 - (iii) Effects on the extent and values of rivers (including stream ecology and freshwater fish);
 - (iv) Effects on catchment hydrology including effects on the conveyance of flood flows;
 - (v) Effects of the volume and quality of stormwater discharges on receiving water bodies;
 - (vi) Alignment of the project with national and regional planning documents, including the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM), Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region (RPS), and the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region (NRP).
 - (b) In relation to Greater Wellington’s functions under other legislation:
 - (i) Impacts of the project on the public transport network;
 - (ii) Alignment of the project with the Regional Land Transport Plan.
14. There are a range of matters that Greater Wellington has raised through pre-application consultation with the Applicant which are either not resolved in the application, or which

Greater Wellington may take a differing position on through its Section 53 comments on the application. These matters include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- (a) **Offsetting and compensation for loss of streams and natural inland wetlands –**
The offsetting and compensation for the loss of natural inland wetland and stream bed extent and values, and the alignment of the offsetting or compensation conditions with the principles for offsetting or compensation set out in the Natural Resources Plan. There is some uncertainty around the effectiveness of offsetting and restored wetlands and stream connectivity/hydrology. This is primarily driven by a lack of stream flow/level monitoring data and hydrological and hydrogeological models to assess the change in land use, topography and soil conditions (with over 475,000m³ of low permeability peat being replaced with compacted sand).
- (b) **Offsetting of wetland 3 –** While the current vegetation composition of Wetland 3 is similar to other grazed wetlands on the property, it is not the same type of wetland as wetlands proposed to be restored (e.g. it differs in terms of landscape position, hydrology and substrate). As such the proposed offsetting does not provide ‘like for like’ replacement for the proposed loss of this sand dune impounded wetland.
- (c) **Classification of waterways -** There is disagreement between Greater Wellington and the Applicant regarding the proposed reclamation of a large proportion the approximately 3 kilometres network of waterways linked to the Ngarara Stream. Greater Wellington considers that these waterways meet the definition of “river” under the RMA. However, the applicant has obtained legal and ecological advice on the classification question and considers these waterways do not meet the RMA definition of “river”. The Panel may need to determine whether these waterways are “rivers”, and if so, how the effects of the project on them are mitigated, offset, or compensated for.
- (d) **Stream Ecological Valuations (SEVs) -** The applicant has provided SEV calculations for the Ngarara Stream, as well as for two of the larger tributaries. However, SEV calculations have not been provided for the network of smaller waterways feeding into these larger channels (noted in (c) above). For the SEV calculations which have been provided there is contextual information missing such as sampling location, exact dates, and preceding weather conditions. Further, no macroinvertebrate sampling has been completed and therefore a full SEV data set is not available. Greater Wellington’s ecology expert has also identified other limitations to the SEV calculations that may need to be worked through by the Panel.
- (e) **Compensation for the reclamation and diversion of the Ngarara Stream -** The enhanced stream length to compensate for realignment for Ngarara Stream has not

been calculated to demonstrate it provides a suitable level of offset using Environmental Compensation Ratio methodology for SEV's.

- (f) **Hydrology** - The hydrology report attempts to assess changes in hydrology and hydrogeology resulting from the proposed activities using empirical calculations and interpretation of piezometer monitoring data. Developments of this size typically include a hydrogeological groundwater model or hydrological model to evaluate pre- and post-development groundwater conditions. In addition to this:
 - (i) No flow time-series / water-level analysis has been undertaken for the Ngarara Stream to assess hydraulic connectivity between the stream and adjacent wetlands and riparian margins across a typical year,
 - (ii) The assessment does not include site-specific testing of peat hydraulic conductivity (e.g. slug testing or pump tests) or the integration of this into a hydrogeological model.
- (g) **Long-term management of water levels in Te Harakeke Swamp** – There are unresolved issues about the potential adverse effects that the long-term management of water levels in Te Harakeke Swamp may have on the proposed development (akin to reverse sensitivity issues). This is a significant concern, as wetland management is likely to be technically complex and potentially costly and Greater Wellington considers that it should not be deferred until after consent is granted.
- (h) **Conditions** - The structure and content of regional resource consent conditions to appropriately manage the adverse effects of the proposal in relation to the matters set out in paragraphs 13.
- (i) **Transport** - Potential impacts of the proposal on existing public transport services and facilities, and alignment of the proposal with the Regional Land Transport Plan.

Panel membership

- 15. Due to the complexity of the project, the range of issues likely to be raised by Greater Wellington in its comments on the application, and the potential reliance on consent conditions to provide for appropriate management of the effects of the proposal on the environment, Greater Wellington considers it important that the Expert Panel includes a resource management practitioner that is experienced with making decisions on regional resource consents for large-scale urban development.

16. Greater Wellington also considers that it is important that the Panel has sufficient expertise (either on the Panel, or engaged by the Panel) to consider the ecological and hydrological effects of the proposal.

Procedural requirements

17. Greater Wellington is willing to engage directly with the Expert Panel as necessary to advance the progress of the application efficiently. This includes participating in briefings, meetings, conferencing or wānanga, expert conferencing, mediation, or hearings.

Drafting of proposed consent conditions

18. In respect to point [6](e) of Minute 2 Greater Wellington does not accept the Applicant's drafting of proposed regional resource consent conditions. Greater Wellington intends to comment on the proposed conditions as part of its Section 53 comments to the Expert Panel.

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