

**BEFORE THE HEARING COMMISSIONERS
IN TIMARU DISTRICT**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 (“**the Act**”)

AND

IN THE MATTER of the Proposed Timaru District Plan Hearing
G Growth

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE BY LYNETTE PEARL WHARFE
FOR D & S PAYNE (SUBMITTER 160 AND FURTHER SUBMITTER 160)
30 JUNE 2025**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This statement of evidence addresses submissions and further submissions made by D and S Payne on provisions relating to Growth, in particular Future Development Area – FDA11.
- 1.2 A submitter package was provided in response to the preliminary s42A Report.
- 1.3 The s42A Report has assessed the submitter package and is recommending that the PTDP be amended:
 - (a) The FDA notation for FDA11 be removed and deleted from SCHED- 15
 - (b) The FDA11 area be rezoned from General Rural Zone (GRUZ) to Rural Lifestyle Zone (RLZ)
 - (c) A Specific Control area overlay of 2ha be inserted for the area
 - (d) The versatile soils overlay be deleted for the FDA11 area.
- 1.4 The basis for these recommendations is set out in 10.11.30 of the s42A Report:
 - (a) Gives effect to the NPS-HPL
 - (b) Gives effects to the NPS-UD
 - (c) Gives effect to the CRPS
 - (d) Is consistent with RLZ-O2 character of the rural lifestyle zone
 - (e) Infrastructure, apart for wastewater, is in place, with wastewater subject to a regional council consent.
 - (f) Tension with SD-O1(2) would still exist even if retained as FDA11.
- 1.5 I support the recommendations to amend the PTDP to remove FDA11 and rezone it as Rural Lifestyle Zone and also the removal of the versatile soils overlay from the FDA11 area.
- 1.6 This evidence responds to matters raised in the S42A Report in respect to:
 - (a) Cultural and heritage
 - (b) Water supply

- (c) Wastewater
 - (d) Stormwater
 - (e) Transport
- 1.7 The s42A Report recommendation to impose a Specific Control Area (SCA) of 2ha on the FDA11 area is predicated on the basis that the proposed plan in SUB-S1 (4) had a 2ha lot size unless there is a sewer connection to each residential lot.
- 1.8 The matter of the 2ha lot size was traversed at the subdivision hearing.
- 1.9 My evidence found that the requirement was not supported by the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS), the Timaru Growth Management Strategy (GMS) or the s32 Report for Subdivision.
- 1.10 My evidence to the Rural Zones Hearing B considered the conflicting requirements for wastewater management in the PTDP and sought that the district plan follow the direction in the Canterbury Land and Water Plan that allows for onsite wastewater management subject to resource consent.
- 1.11 While matters have been addressed in respective hearings the various provision need to be considered in an integrated manner.
- 1.12 Decisions that are made on the previous chapters will influence the extent to which the recommendation to adopt a SCA of 2ha for the FDA11 area is accepted.
- 1.13 I support an alternative lot size of 1.5 ha for the FDA11 area where the access is not onto Main North Rd/ SH79:
- (a) It would provide a more efficient and effective use of the land resource
 - (b) It is consistent with the current environment of the FDA11 area and RLZ objectives and policies
 - (c) Gives effect to the CRPS, particularly Policy 5.3.1
 - (d) It is supported in the landscape assessment
 - (e) It would not create transport effects greater than localised
 - (f) Would be subject to obtaining resource consent for wastewater and stormwater discharges from ECAN, including assessment of Ngai Tahu values
 - (g) Water is available through the Te Moana water scheme

(h) Provides for rural lifestyle capacity in the Geraldine area

- 1.14 In my opinion this would result in a more efficient and effective use of land, be consistent with the existing environment and achieve the policies and objectives of the PTDP and give effect to the purpose of the RMA.

2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 2.1 My name is Lynette Pearl Wharfe. I am a planning consultant with The AgriBusiness Group. I have a BA in Social Sciences and post graduate papers in Environmental Studies, including Environmental Law, Resource Economics and Resource Management.
- 2.2 I am an accredited commissioner under the Making Good Decisions programme with Ministry for the Environment.
- 2.3 I have been a consultant with The AgriBusiness Group since 2002. The Agribusiness Group was established in 2001 to help build business capability in the primary sector.
- 2.4 I have spent over 20 years as a consultant, primarily to the agricultural industry and rural sector, specialising in resource management, environmental issues, and environmental education and facilitation, including 20 years of providing advice to Horticulture New Zealand ("**HortNZ**") and its precursor organisations, NZ Vegetable and Potato Growers Federation, NZ Fruitgrowers Federation.
- 2.5 As part of providing advice to HortNZ for submissions and plans across the country I have been involved in development of Regional Policy Statements, Regional Plans and District Plans, including omnibus plans such as the Auckland Unitary Plan and the Marlborough RM Plan and district plans in Dunedin, Christchurch City, Selwyn, Waikato, Whakatane, Opotiki and Hastings so am familiar with the range of matters to be addressed in the Proposed Timaru District Plan ("**PTDP**").
- 2.6 I have read the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses, and I agree to comply with it. I confirm that the issues addressed in this brief of evidence are within my area of expertise, except where I state I am relying on what I have been told by another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

3. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 3.1 This evidence provides a planning assessment of those provisions on which David & Susanne Payne submitted and further submitted which are addressed in Hearing G - Growth
- 3.2 In undertaking this assessment, I have considered:
 - (a) The Section 42A Hearings Report for Hearing G Future Development Areas

- (b) The s32 Reports for PTDP and supporting documents
- (c) Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2013
- (d) Regional Land and Water Plan for Canterbury
- (e) National Planning Standards
- (f) Timaru District Growth Management Strategy 2045 and supporting documents¹

4. MY UNDERSTANDING OF D & S PAYNE'S SUBMISSIONS

- 4.1 David and Susanne Payne made submissions and further submissions on the growth provisions in the PTDP because they consider that identification of FDA11 is an inappropriate use of land and that the area is already fragmented through previous subdivision so is already functioning as a rural lifestyle area.
- 4.2 They seek that the FDA11 notation be removed and that the land be rezoned Rural Lifestyle.
- 4.3 The FDA11 area is a 56ha block between Templer St, Bennett St and Main North Rd, just north of the Geraldine township, currently in 38 lots ranging from 0.89ha to 8.79ha with an average lot size of 1.47ha.² Of the 38 lots only 7 are larger than 2ha. The other 31 lots average just over 7000 sq/m, all of which are on all on onsite waste water management systems (OSWM).
- 4.4 The Paynes provided information to the s42A Report writer in response to the request for information regarding FDA11, including as assessment under the NPSHPL.
- 4.5 The Payne's are particularly concerned as their orchard, and livelihood, has become increasingly surrounded by lifestyle/residential dwellings as a result of Timaru District Council approving subdivisions in the area under the Operative District Plan 'Enablement Approach'. This has led to considerable reverse sensitivity effects that have now may the orchard inoperable.
- 4.6 They consider that the proposed zoning of GRUZ and FDA11 10+ is inappropriate for an area that is so compromised by reverse sensitivity.

¹ Timaru Urban Growth Strategy: Hearing Panel Decisions Report 10 April 2018

Timaru District 2045 Draft Growth Management Strategy Consultation Summary and Officer Recommendations November 2017

² Note the s42A Report 10.11.8 states an average site size of circa 1.6ha, Refer to Appendix 2 of Submitter package which sets out lot sizes.

- 4.7 They are therefore seeking changes to the zoning so that the land can be used for a more appropriate use though extending rural lifestyle across the block, enabling consolidation and providing living opportunities that support Geraldine's ongoing economic growth, and recognise its proximity and existing linkages to the township and a logical, cohesive extension.
- 4.8 The Paynes have presented evidence in previous hearings for Strategic Direction, subdivision and Rural Zones which are relevant to consideration of the Growth issues.
- 4.9 This evidence addresses the specific submissions and further submissions on the subdivision provisions.

5. TIMARU DISTRICT PLAN - DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The PTDP has undergone a lengthy development process including consultation on discussion documents in 2016 and a Draft District Plan in 2020.
- 5.2 The inclusion of specific Rural Lifestyle Zone (RLZ) was identified as a key variation from the Operative District Plan, as opposed to dispersed development throughout the rural area of the district.
- 5.3 The provisions for RLZ have therefore been developed through the plan process and constitute a new set of provisions in the PTDP.
- 5.4 The draft District Plan identified part of the FDA11 area as Rural Lifestyle and submissions on the draft plan sought that the whole area be Rural Lifestyle.
- 5.5 However, when the proposed plan was notified in September 2022, the whole area was zoned GRUZ with a RLZ Future Development Area (FDA) 10 years plus.
- 5.6 There was no consultation with affected landowners in that time.
- 5.7 It appears that the change was as a result of the PLANZ review of residential capacity³ and the bias against provision of rural residential living.
- 5.8 No consideration appears to have been given to the reality on the ground of the nature of land use and the inappropriateness of a GRUZ zoning in an area that the 2017 Ryder report for the GMS⁴

³ Planz Consultants Timaru District Council Growth Management Strategy Review – Residential April 2022

⁴ Ryder Consulting Timaru Growth Strategy 2017 Growth Assumptions.

identified as having considerable rural residential development or the potential for reverse sensitivity impacts.

- 5.9 This situation has led to the submissions that seek that the FDA11 area be deleted and rezoned Rural Lifestyle in the PTDP.

6. S42A REPORT RESPONSE

- 6.1 The s42A Report has considered the submissions and information provided and is recommending (10.11) that:

- (a) The FDA notation for FDA11 be removed and deleted from SCHED- 15
- (b) The FDA11 area be rezoned from GRUZ to Rural Lifestyle
- (c) A Specific Control area overlay of 2ha be inserted for the area
- (d) The versatile soils overlay be deleted for the FDA11 area.

- 6.2 The basis for these recommendations is set out in 10.11.30 of the s42A Report:

- (a) Gives effect to the NPS-HPL
- (b) Gives effects to the NPS-UD
- (c) Gives effect to the CRPS
- (d) Is consistent with RLZ-O2 character of the rural lifestyle zone
- (e) Infrastructure, apart for wastewater, is in place, with wastewater subject to a regional council consent.
- (f) Tension with SD-O1(2) would still exist even if retained as FDA11.

- 6.3 Overall the recommendation is the that the amendment is more efficient and effective approach to achieve and implement the provisions of the PTDP.

7. RESPONSE TO S42A REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 I support the s42A Report recommendations in part.

- 7.2 In particular, I support the recommendation to delete FDA11 from SCHED-15 and rezone the land Rural Lifestyle Zone.

- 7.3 The s42A Report (7.2.5) identifies that the strategic intent of the FDA's is to identify and safeguard areas on the urban fringe for future urbanisation and limited rural residential (lifestyle) development to promote a co-ordinated pattern of development.
- 7.4 I concur with that intent, but note that FDA11, an areas of 56.134ha, is already largely fragmented with 38 existing titles ranging in size from 0.0870ha to 8.7940ha with an average lot size of 1.47ha and only seven lots over 2ha and the other 31 lots average just over 7000 sq/m (0.7 ha).
- 7.5 I consider that the opportunity for co-ordinated development has long past and any requirement for cohesive design would provide benefits to only a limited number of landowners in the block, with existing titles being unlikely to participate as the benefits would be negligible.
- 7.6 Therefore in my opinion FDA11 is not an appropriate area for the type of development envisioned in the FDA objectives and policies and it is more appropriate to be rezoned Rural Lifestyle Zone and enable subdivision as provided for in the PTDP.
- 7.7 However, I do not support the inclusion of a Specific Control Area limiting subdivision to 2ha or more for the FDA11 land.
- 7.8 In my EIC for Hearing E – Subdivision I raised issues with SUB-S1.4 – minimum lot size in the RLZ if a lot is not connected to reticulated sewage.
- 7.9 My evidence canvassed the range of background documents to ascertain the rationale for the 2ha size and found that it was not supported by the CRPS, Timaru Growth Management Strategy or the s32 Report for subdivision.
- 7.10 In evidence from s42A report writer for Subdivision, Mr Boye's concluded that this was not an OSWM issue, but a matter of Growth Management Strategy.
- 7.11 Therefore SUB-S1.4 is subject to submissions and decisions by the Hearing Panel.
- 7.12 However, the s42A Report writer for Hearing G has taken the 2ha minimum lot size and applied it to areas being considered for rezoning, in particular as a basis for rezoning FDA11 as RLZ.
- 7.13 There does not appear to have been consideration of the rationale for the 2ha in the s42A Report for the Growth hearing.
- 7.14 Below I will consider if a 2ha SCA is the most appropriate method to achieve the objectives and policies in the Plan.

8. MATTERS OF AGREEMENT

- 8.1 The s42A Report (10.11.15) lists a number of matters that are agreed as a result of the submitter package:
- (a) Notified zoning
 - (b) Landscape and natural character
 - (c) Biodiversity
 - (d) Hazards
- 8.2 I concur with the s42A Report writer that these matters are largely addressed and align with the outcomes sought in RLZ-O2 as notified.
- 8.3 However I note that the s42A Report writer for the Rural Zones hearing has recommended a change to RLZ-O2 which would add an additional clause regarding connecting to sewer and water infrastructure.
- 8.4 In my evidence for Hearing B I opposed the addition and set out reasons why the addition is not appropriate.
- 8.5 While this matter is subject to decisions by the Panel I do not consider that it would alter the assessment that the existing land use and subdivision pattern of the area is aligned with the outcomes sought in RLZ-O2.
- 8.6 In respect to the landscape assessment by Ms Pfluger on submission 160, I concur with her assessment that there is no landscape basis as to why such an outcome (degree of openness) could not be delivered under an immediate rezoning.
- 8.7 Ms Pfluger does consider that a minimum lot size of 5000m² could compromise the amenity of the outer lots but that:
- ‘it would be acceptable from a landscape effects perspective to develop the internal lots to similarly size rural lifestyle allotments (around 1.5 – 2ha) which would be consistent with the existing landscape character and development.*
- 8.8 The opportunities to enhance biodiversity through additional protection of margins of Raukapuka Stream are also recognised as a positive benefit from rezoning the area to RLZ and providing subdivision opportunities.
- 8.9 I concur with her assessment.

- 8.10 In respect to the Flood Assessment Area Overlay I agree with Mr Bonis that this matter can be addressed through NH-S1 and the recommended changes to SUB-R5 Subdivision and Natural Hazards.
- 8.11 Photos supplied as part of the submitter package demonstrate that even in severe flood events the Paynes' property has not been inundated, which could inform consideration of this matter as part of a resource consent process.

9. OUTSTANDING MATTERS

- 9.1 The s42A Report identifies a number of matters where further information or comment is sought from the submitter:
- (a) Cultural and heritage
 - (b) Water supply
 - (c) Stormwater
 - (d) Wastewater
 - (e) Transport

Cultural and heritage

- 9.2 The assessment by Ms Hall for Manawhenua (Pg 11-12) identifies that the property at 20 Bennett Rd Geraldine has the Raukapuka Stream running through it and states that the stream and the Waihi River are culturally significant.
- 9.3 However Raukapuka Stream is not identified as a SASM, while Waihi River is. While Raukapuka Stream flows into Waihi River it is important that SASM only applies to the identified area.
- 9.4 The Paynes' have undertaken riparian planting along Raukapuka Stream where it passes through their property to protect the stream.
- 9.5 The assessment considers that the mauri of these waterways is culturally significant to Kati Huirapa and seeks that if the Hearing Panel are to approve the rezoning that the Council's reticulated infrastructure be extended to ensure that stormwater and wastewater do not degrade the Waihi River and Raukapuka Stream further.
- 9.6 I do not support the position of Ms Hall because the plan does not provide a policy framework that supports the extension of the reticulated infrastructure nor do Manawhenua have a submission on the Plan seeking the framework sought through comments on the rezoning submissions.

- 9.7 Mr Bonis (10.11.30 c) considers that there is a residual tension with the consenting requirements of Environment Canterbury and Manawhenua values and refers to Policy 5.3.2 and 5.3.5 of the CRPS.
- 9.8 The policies in the CRPS are implemented through the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan, in particular Rules 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9.
- 9.9 The effects of any wastewater discharge consents will require a restricted discretionary consent assessed by ECAN and the adverse effects on Ngai Tahu values is a matter of discretion that will need to be addressed as part of a consent application.
- 9.10 Therefore in my opinion the 'residual tension' can be appropriately managed through the resource consent process.
- 9.11 In the PTDP SUB-S2 Stormwater treatment, catchment and disposal and SUB-S4 Wastewater disposal need to be addressed in any subdivision application. The s42A Report recommendation to the Hearing Panel on these provisions at the subdivision hearing recommends that 'effects of the discharge on the values of Kati Huirapa' be added as a matter of discretion for assessing applications for subdivision.
- 9.12 I consider that the addition of these matters of discretion to the provisions in the PTDP will assist in addressing the concerns of Manawhenua in respect of Raukapuka Stream.

Water supply

- 9.13 The s42A Report (10.11.30c) requests that the submitter confirm or dispute the Te Moana – Geraldine Flat water scheme capacity at that density.
- 9.14 The Geraldine Downs, Geraldine Flat, and Te Moana Water Supply Scheme (commonly referred to as the 'Te Moana scheme') is a council-owned rural water supply scheme managed by the Timaru District Council (TDC). It services rural and peri-urban properties across the Geraldine area, including the fringes of the township. The scheme primarily provides domestic and stock water, allocated through a system of units, with each unit generally equating to 1,000 litres per day.
- 9.15 TDC documentation notes that half-unit allocations (500 litres/day) have more recently been made available to meet the needs of smaller domestic/residential users and to reduce allocation inefficiencies.
- 9.16 The scheme was originally developed to service rural lifestyle and agricultural properties across Geraldine Downs, Te Moana, and the

surrounding flats. It is distinct from the Geraldine township's reticulated urban water supply.

- 9.17 Due to infrastructure limitations, increasing residential demands on the scheme and resident frustrations with frequent boil water notices, it underwent a \$3.4 million upgrade (completed 2022) to address both capacity and water quality concerns.
- 9.18 This upgrade increased the network's capacity, with 560 additional units current available for purchase at \$9,200 per unit,⁵ and brought the scheme into compliance with the Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022.
- 9.19 While the report by Mr Kevin Kemp supporting Mr Bonis' s42A recommendations asserts that the scheme is 'not for residential use,' it is important to note that it currently supplies dwellings on small residential and lifestyle lots in the vicinity of the relevant area, including the small lots along Main North Road and Bennett Road, and recent intensive residential development on General Residential Zoned lots at the southern end of Templer Street (refer Figure 1 below). The water scheme also services a range of residential, rural lifestyle and rural property types across the Geraldine Downs and Geraldine Flat areas.
- 9.20 In correspondence from Mr Kemp (24 June 2025), he confirmed:

"From my knowledge, all water service within the area of your interest is supplied through the Te Moana – Geraldine Flat Water Supply Scheme."
- 9.21 As submitters, the Payne's currently hold 8 units on the Te Moana scheme—equivalent to 8,000 litres per day. This water is provided to the property and therefore demonstrates existing, deliverable capacity within the scheme's infrastructure.
- 9.22 From a planning and rezoning perspective, these water units represent a credible and infrastructure-supported supply. Subject to council processes, it is understood that these units can potentially be reallocated across titles in the event of subdivision, thereby supporting additional dwellings or lifestyle development within a Rural Lifestyle Zone framework of the Payne property, without requiring additional units to be allocated.
- 9.23 Attached are maps provided by Mr Kemp of TDC which show location of pipe work for Te Moana – Geraldine Flat sub-scheme. The Geraldine urban water supply serves the Residential 1 Zone land on the south side of Templer Street off Main North Road. The land bound by Main North Road, Templer Street, and Bennett Road is served by

⁵ Confirmed by Mr Kevin Kemp, Stormwater Team Leader at Timaru District Council (24 June 2025).

the Te Moana – Geraldine Flat sub-scheme. This sub-scheme is serviced by the Geraldine Urban Water Supply Reservoir.



Proposed Timaru District Plan - He Po. He Ao. Ka Awatea.

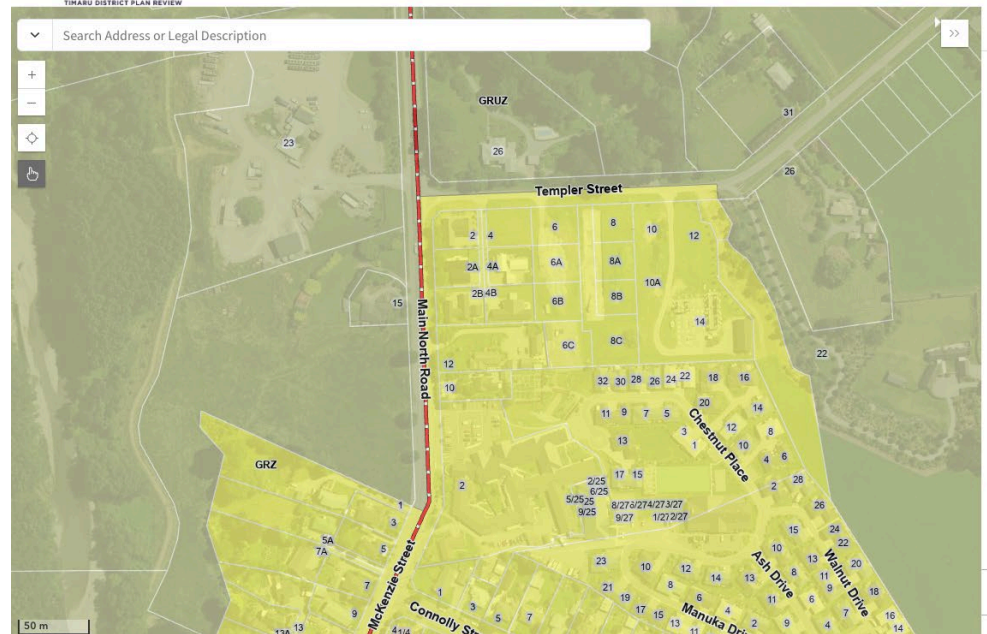


Figure 1: Zone Boundary between General Residential Zone and current General Rural Use Zone at Templer Street. The residential lots accessed off Templer Street are serviced by the Geraldine Downs, Geraldine Flat, Te Moana Water Supply Scheme, as is corroborated by Figure 5, provided by Mr Kevin Kemp at TDC (Source: TDC IsoPlan).

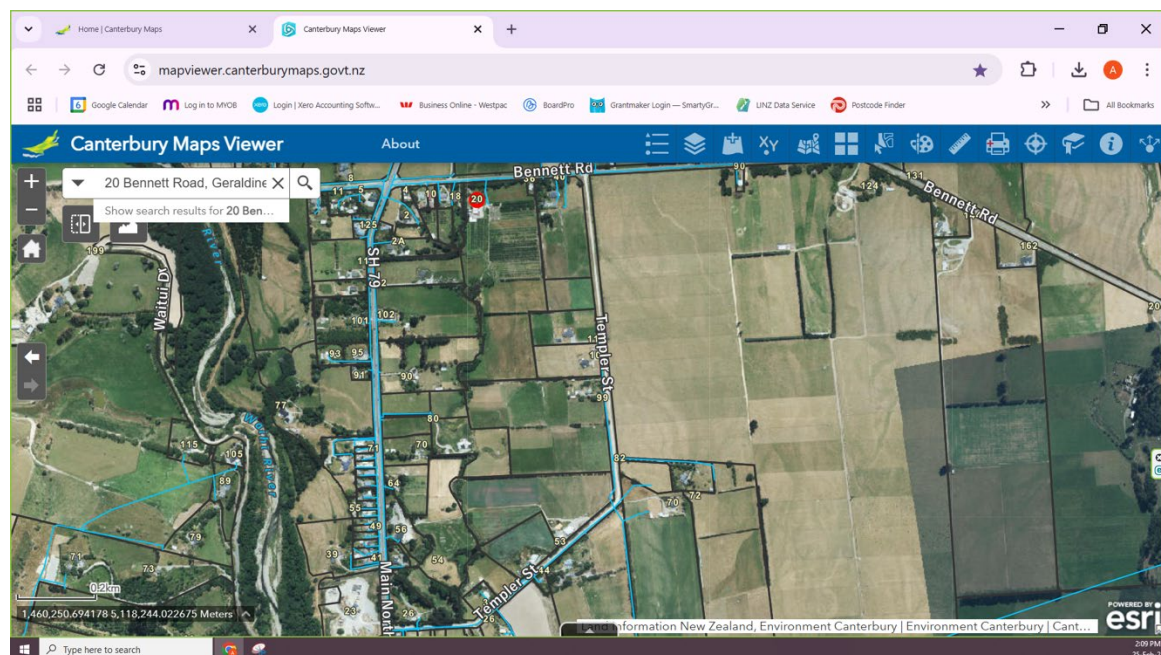


Figure 2: Existing water supply service area encompassing Main North Road, Bennett Road, and Templer Street (Source: Canterbury Maps).

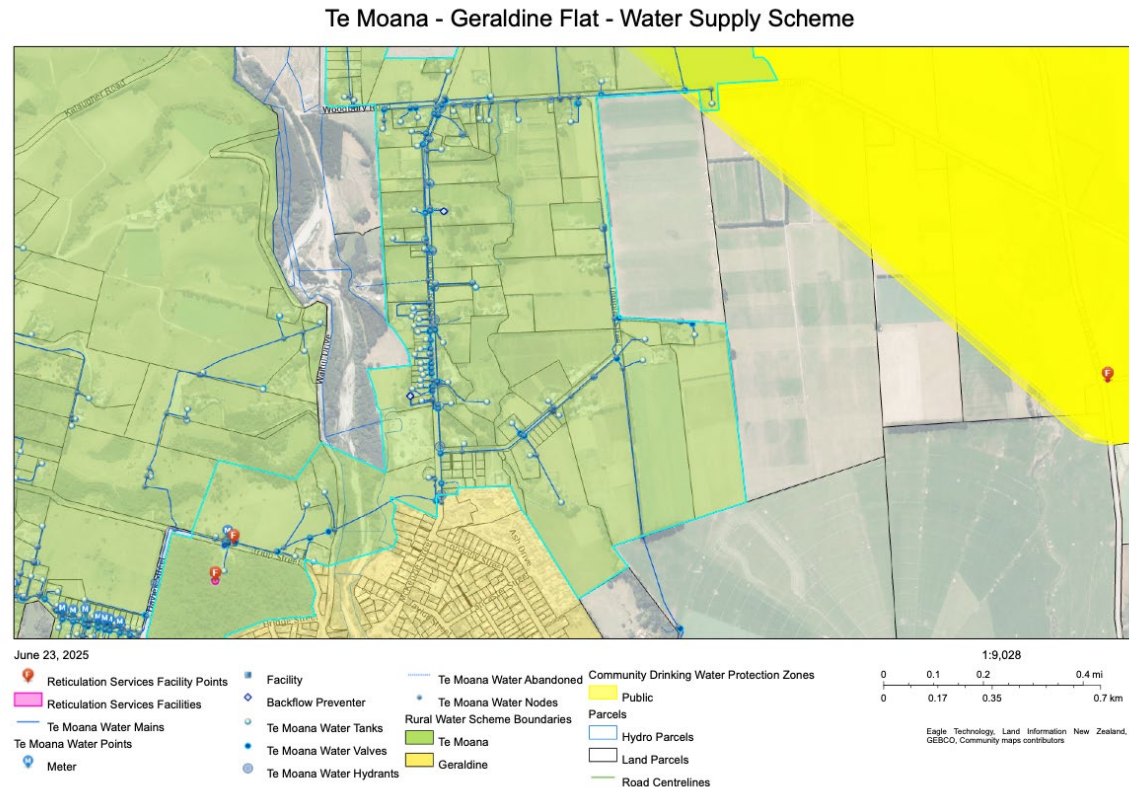


Figure 3: Te Moana Water Supply Scheme network and connections across Geraldine Downs and Geraldine Flat, showing coverage in the area north of Geraldine township (Map provided by Mr Kemp, Timaru District Council, 24 June 2025).

Stormwater

9.24 The assessment by the Infrastructure Team at TDC by Mr Kemp identifies that the FDA11 area is outside the Geraldine Stormwater Management Area.

9.25 Therefore, stormwater would need to be addressed through on-site management as provided for in SUB-S2 (4):

Where an allotment will not be connected to a reticulated stormwater network, all stormwater must be disposed within the net site area of the allotment.

9.26 Stormwater management also is managed through the Canterbury Land and Water Plan Rule 5.93A - 5.97. Rule 5.95 Discharge of stormwater other than into or from a reticulated stormwater system,

is permitted subject to conditions. If not met then Rule 5.97 would apply and a discretionary activity consent would be required at the time of subdivision.

- 9.27 Given the current fragmented nature of the FDA11 area an integrated system across the whole area is not appropriate as potential future development is proposed to be limited to a small number of the 38 existing titles.

Wastewater

- 9.28 Mr Bonis (10.11.16 b iii) considers that this matter remains in dispute.
- 9.29 It is acknowledged that the FDA11 area is not serviced by wastewater reticulation and that there are no plans to fund such development by Timaru District Council.
- 9.30 The submitter package identified that wastewater would be managed through onsite wastewater management and a resource consent from Environment Canterbury under Rule 5.8 of the Canterbury Land and Water Plan.
- 9.31 PTDP SUB-S4 (2) for Rural Zones provides :
- Where a connection to the Council's urban reticulated wastewater system is not available, the subdivision application must demonstrate that the discharge of wastewater to ground complies with the regional plan or has discharge consent.*
- 9.32 I am uncertain what is in dispute on this matter.
- 9.33 It is clear that any subdivision application will need to meet the requirements of ECAN in terms of onsite wastewater management and under SUB-S4 need to meet that requirement for subdivision consent to be granted.
- 9.34 It is not the purpose of a rezoning application to determine if a consent is likely to be granted as that involves a range of investigations and assessments to be made at the time of developing a consent application.
- 9.35 The Paynes' have consulted at a high level with engineers regarding wastewater management and potential consent pathways. Those discussions indicate that an OSWM (On-Site Wastewater Management) system can be designed to meet the criteria set by (ECAN) and the rules and standards within the CLWRP.
- 9.36 While they have explored options this remains at an high level and further information would be needed to progress to ECAN consent

applications which was considered to be premature given the current uncertainties around zoning status.

- 9.37 It is important to note the assessment of the Council engineers who consider that a cohesive landowner funded wastewater system would be challenging because of the extent of fragmented titles with such a scheme providing little benefit to the those already with established onsite systems and hence the benefit and cost would be limited to the small number of additional lots that may be created in the area.
- 9.38 This statement identifies that the history of subdivision in the area has effectively precluded the development of a landowner funded wastewater system in the area.
- 9.39 Therefore ensuring that there is a pathway for onsite wastewater management systems for any new lots in the future is the most appropriate and efficient method.

Transport

- 9.40 Mr Collins of Abley has provided a review of submissions in respect of transport considerations. (Appendix 8 to s42A Report)
- 9.41 Mr Collins has grouped submissions accordingly to the likely effects and has classified the submission of the Paynes' to rezone FDA11 as having 'localised effects' and likely to generate less than 10 veh/hr. (3.2).
- 9.42 He considers that the small scale and localised transport effects can likely be managed through the resource consent process if the rezoning were to occur.
- 9.43 I concur with the assessment.
- 9.44 The assessment is based on the assumption that there would be no potential new lots seeking access from Main North Rd /SH79. Such lots would require approval from NZTA and a wider range of effects would need to be considered.
- 9.45 The submitter's property has three access ways onto Bennett Road, which is stated in the submitter package provided.
- 9.46 However I note that the s42A Report writer suggests that Mr Collins identifies the absence of an integrated transport assessment which would be required to support immediate rezoning at a more intensive density. The exact reference is not stated.
- 9.47 Certainly Mr Collins appears to indicate that position in terms of moderated and large scale effects submissions, but not the localised effects.

10. EFFECTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEMAND

- 10.1 A key consideration in assessing potential growth areas is the impact and cost implications to TDC in the provision of infrastructure services.
- 10.2 In my opinion the costs to TDC by rezoning FDA11 to Rural Lifestyle are minimal:
- (a) Water reticulation is already provided for through the Te Moana water scheme, there is sufficient capacity to provide water and users pay for the scheme;
 - (b) Wastewater will be provided on-site through resource consents from ECAN, as provided for in SUB-S4 (2) 2), similar to the consents that already exist for the properties that form part of FDA11;
 - (c) Stormwater will be disposed of within the site area as provided for in SUB-S2 and assessed as part of the resource consent process;
 - (d) Transport effects are identified as localised and able to be managed through the resource consent process.
- 10.3 Given that the number of potential lots that may be developed as a result of the rezoning the effects are minimal and will not place a burden on the ratepayers of Timaru District.

11. STATUTORY CONTEXT

- 11.1 In assessing any proposal to rezone land consideration must be given to the relevant statutory context.
- 11.2 Mr Bonis has identified the following:
- (a) NPS-HPL (10.11.17)
 - (b) NPS-UD (10.11.23)
 - (c) Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS) (10.11.26)
 - (d) PTDP (10.11.27)
- 11.3 I consider that the following are also important:
- (a) Canterbury Regional Land and Water Plan
 - (b) Timaru District Growth Management Strategy 2045 (GMS)

NPS-HPL

- 11.4 Stuart Ford (The AgriBusiness Group) has prepared an assessment of the Paynes' property under the NPS-HPL that was included in the submitter package.
- 11.5 The assessment determines that it is appropriate to apply an exemption under c13.10 of the NPS-HPL to the property due to constraints on primary production and reverse sensitivity effects from the adjacent rural lifestyles properties.
- 11.6 Mr Bonis accepts that the assessment and exemption is appropriate and gives effect to the NPS-HPL. He also considers that the assessment be applied across the FDA11 area as the Paynes' property is the largest cohesive landholding in the block.
- 11.7 I agree that the NPS-HPL is appropriately applied in this context.

NPS-UD

- 11.8 There is debate as to the extent that the NPS-UD is applied to rural lifestyle zones as they do not form part of the urban environment to which the NPS-UD applies.
- 11.9 Various reports have considered the residential capacity for Geraldine and derived a range of figures.
- 11.10 Of particular note is the PLANZ report: Growth Management Strategy Review – Residential⁶ which included rural residential as part of urban capacity but discounted the contribution due to an opinion that they did not consider that rural residential development is considered to give effect to the NPS-UD as it would not result in a well-functioning urban environment ⁷
- 11.11 Property Economic Report Timaru District Residential Capacity Economic Assessment) (January 2022) indicated that 57 Rural lifestyle lots would be required per annum but the PLANZ report discounted this to 38 lots and then further reduced to 20 lots per annum.
- 11.12 This approach led to the rezoning of FDA11 as GRUZ and RLZ in 10 year plus.
- 11.13 The most recent Property Economic Report⁸ attached to the Preliminary s42A Report for Growth Table 13 has included rural lifestyle FDA's within the Dwelling Capacity requirements for high growth and identified that there is sufficient capacity in Geraldine to

⁶ Planz Consultants Timaru District Council Growth Management Strategy Review – Residential April 2022

⁷ Ibid pg 6

⁸ Property Economics Timaru District Residential Capacity Report (2024)

meet high growth demands. This is based on FDA11 having a potential capacity of 96 lots (Table 10), based on a lot size of 5000m².

- 11.14 Currently there are 38 lots in the FDA11 area and the recommended s42A Report change to Rural Lifestyle would provide for an additional 6 lots making the realisable capacity at 44 lots which is 52 lots less than the figures used by Property Economic to determine potential capacity.
- 11.15 Therefore in my assessment the projected capacity will not be realised through the recommendations in the s42A Report in respect to the number of lots to be realised through the rezoning of FDA11.
- 11.16 The recent report Housing Availability and Land Supply for Geraldine⁹ (attached to this evidence) indicates that the experience on the ground in Geraldine is that there is a lack of land supply for housing in the Geraldine area.
- 11.17 Therefore I consider that provision of more than 6 additional lots in the FDA11 area will assist to address the need and provide for the capacity anticipated in the Property Economics Report (2024).
- 11.18 I do not consider that provision of rural lifestyle lots will compromise the urban environment as they provide an alternative style of living that sales data over a number of years demonstrates a demand for such properties.

Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS)

- 11.19 The CRPS provides a directive framework to the district council in terms of providing for growth and development within the district plan.
- 11.20 CRPS Objective 5.2.1 seeks development that achieves consolidated, well designed and sustainable growth in and around existing urban areas.
- 11.21 CRPS Policy 5.3.1 seeks to ensure that limited rural residential development occurs in a form that concentrates or is attached to existing urban areas.
- 11.22 The CRPS Policy 5.3.5 requires that development can be efficiently and effectively served for the collection, treatment and disposal of sewage and stormwater in order to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on the environment and human health.
- 11.23 The policies are to be given effect in district plans.

⁹ The AgriBusiness Group and Net Zero Nexus Housing Availability and Land Supply: An evidence based assessment of Geraldine, South Canterbury May 2025

Canterbury Land and Water Plan

- 11.24 The Canterbury Regional Council has implemented CRPS Policy 5.3.5 through provisions in the Regional Land and Water Plan for on-site wastewater management, particularly Rule 5.8: Discharge of wastewater from a new, modified or upgraded on-site wastewater treatment system onto or into land in circumstances where a contaminant may enter water is a permitted activity providing conditions are met.
- 11.25 The conditions of Rule 5.8 include:
1. The discharge volume does not exceed 2m³ per day
 2. The discharge is onto or into a site that is equal or greater than 4 hectares in area
 3. The discharge is not located within an area where residential density exceeds 1.5 dwellings per hectare and the population is greater than 1000 persons.
- 11.26 If the permitted activity conditions cannot be met, including sites less than 4ha, then the activity is a restricted discretionary activity under Rule 5.9.
- 11.27 There is no requirement that a property needs to be connected to a reticulated sewer system.

Timaru District Growth Management Strategy 2045

- 11.28 The Timaru District Growth Management Strategy 2045 (GMS) sets out proposed areas where growth is anticipated to be provided over the next 20 years.
- 11.29 The GMS was notified for public consultation in 2016 and adopted by Council in 2018.
- 11.30 The GMS is a non-statutory document which is used to inform the district plan in identifying areas for growth to be provided for.
- 11.31 The GMS identified areas for rural residential, primarily adjacent to urban areas and bases assumptions of yield on a 0.5ha minimum site size or 1ha.¹⁰

¹⁰ Draft Growth Management Strategy: Consultation summary and Officer Recommendations. Pg 39
https://www.timaru.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/158784/Officers-Report-on-Submissions-to-the-Growth-Management-Strategy-10.11.17.pdf

- 11.32 The GMS was informed by studies that considered growth projections for the district and identified the need for rural residential locations.¹¹
- 11.33 As a precursor to the development of the GMS a report was prepared on Growth Assumptions¹² which looked at the rural residential zoning options, including for Geraldine.
- 11.34 The report analysed lots within a 2km radius of Geraldine (Pg 99) and identified that of 112 land parcels 43% were between 0.5ha to 2 ha, with 24 new titles created on the northern urban edge over the last 10 years, with further subdivision occurring due to the district plan 'entitlement approach with smaller rural residential lots being subdivided off large 10ha lots.¹³
- 11.35 The writers considered that the analysis identified that there is a relatively strong demand pattern and that there was potential for intensification in the area north of Geraldine and concluded that 90 additional rural residential lots will be required in Geraldine by 2045.
- 11.36 The Growth Management Strategy (2017) consequently proposed a number of areas for rural residential including the Main North Road East, Bennett Rd and Templer St areas.

PTDP

- 11.37 The PTDP has a number of provisions that are interrelated and address how growth will be managed.
- 11.38 Of particular relevance to this evidence is the approach to Rural Lifestyle Zone. Provisions include:
- (a) SD-O1 (2)
 - (b) RLZ-O1, RLZ-O2, RLZ-O5, RLZ-P1, RLZ-P3
 - (c) SUB- O3, SUB-P15, SUB S1 (4), SUB-S2, SUB- S4 (2), SUB-S3 (2).
- 11.39 Many of these provisions are subject to submission with evidence presented seeking changes to the provisions. The inter relationship of provisions across the PTDP need to ensure that there is an

¹¹ Timaru District Growth Strategy 2017 Growth Assumptions Report
https://www.timaru.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/114146/1057668-Notification-Draft-Growth-Management-Strategy-assumptions-report.pdf

¹² Ryder Consulting Timaru Growth Strategy 2017 Growth Assumptions.

¹³ This is some of the subdivision that has now led to the reverse sensitivity issues that have compromised the operation of Peelview Orchard.

integrated and consistent approach to how the Rural Lifestyle Zone is managed.

- 11.40 In particular I note that the Strategic Direction SD-O1 (2) is sought to be amended by submissions so references to that direction in the s42A Report needs to be cognisant of the submissions that seek that the direction is amended.
- 11.41 In assessing the s42A Report response to the submissions of the Paynes I have sought to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the various provisions in the PTDP.

12. IS A 2HA SCA APPROPRIATE?

- 12.1 The s42A Report is recommending that a 2ha Special Control Area be applied to the FDA11 area when it is rezoned Rural Lifestyle.
- 12.2 This recommendation is based on proposed SUB-S1 (4) where Rural lifestyle lots are 5000m² if there is a sewer connection, otherwise 2ha.
- 12.3 All the expert reports provided to the s42A Report writer for Growth are predicated on the recommendation of a SCA of 2ha for the FDA11 area.
- 12.4 The issue of a minimum lots size of 2ha for Rural lifestyle was traversed in my evidence for the subdivision hearing.
- 12.5 In summary I did not support the 2ha minimum lot size because:
 - (a) The Timaru Growth Management Strategy 2045 bases provision for rural residential sites on 0.5ha or 1ha. For instance: Table 19 sets out Geraldine Growth Locations and determines capacity for rural residential assuming a 0.5ha minimum site size.¹⁴
 - (b) The CRPS anticipates small rural residential lot sizes up to 2ha
 - (c) The GMS anticipated rural residential lots sizes from 5000m²
 - (d) The s32 Report for Subdivision did not provide evidence to support a 2ha lot size where there is no wastewater reticulation.
 - (e) A 2ha minimum lot size is not necessary to protect the character of the areas where rural lifestyle will occur as many areas proposed for rural lifestyle are adjacent to urban

¹⁴ Timaru District 2045 Growth Management Strategy Part F Pg 79

areas and development has already occurred with lots smaller than 2ha. The FDA11 area has an average lot size of 1.47ha.

- (f) This lot size forms a transition from the urban area to the rural area beyond the block and the surrounding roads constitute a defensible boundary for the zone changes and separation between residential use and primary production activities, mitigating future reverse sensitivity impacts on rural activities.
- (g) A 2ha minimum lot size is not necessary to protect the open rural character of a rural lifestyle area, especially where it has already been changed by prior development and provides a transition to the General Rural Zone.
- (h) I was unable to find support in TDC documents for a 2ha minimum lot size in proximity to urban areas.

12.6 Therefore in assessing the recommendation of the s42A Report for Growth I am concerned about the assumption that 2ha is an appropriate lot size for the Rural Lifestyle Zone, and in particular the FDA11 area.

12.7 In my opinion the FDA11 area could support a lot size of 1.5ha where the lot does not access onto Main North Rd/ SH57:

- (a) Increased capacity would provide a more efficient and effective use of the land resource
- (b) It is consistent with the current environment of the FDA11 area and RLZ objectives and policies
- (c) Gives effect to the CRPS, particularly Policy 5.3.1
- (d) It is supported in the landscape assessment
- (e) It would not create transport effects greater than localised
- (f) Would be subject to obtaining resource consent for wastewater and stormwater discharges from ECAN, including assessment of Ngai Tahu values
- (g) Water is available through the Te Moana water scheme
- (h) Provides for rural lifestyle capacity in the Geraldine area

12.8 The current average lot size of 38 titles in the FDA11 area is 1.47ha, with only 7 lots over 2ha. The 31 lots less than 2ha have an average lot size of 0.7067ha.

- 12.9 To ensure consistency across the area any new subdivision should be able to reflect the current form of development.
- 12.10 An effective and efficient form of development should seek to achieve the best outcome for a given property such as working with natural landscape contours and property features and avoid perverse outcomes (e.g. boundaries in inappropriate places to fit within rigid minimum lot sizes.)
- 12.11 Such an approach would provide for consolidation and avoid wasteful use of an increasingly limited rural land resource and to provide for cohesive developments.
- 12.12 The landscape report for the s42A Report considers that the FDA11 area could have lots of 1.5- 2ha but not 5000m².
- 12.13 Given this advice I consider that a 1.5ha lot size could be used for the FDA11 area.
- 12.14 Such a lot size would provide for thirteen new lots within the area.
- 12.15 However being cognisant of the issues with access onto SH57 I consider that lots that have access onto Main North Rd should not be provided for.
- 12.16 Enabling 1.5ha excluding lots which would access onto Main North Rd would enable ten new lots, rather than six if the minimum lot size is 2ha.
- 12.17 Therefore, while not substantially greater number of lots it would provide greater yield out of the FDA11 area as anticipated in the 2024 Property Economics Report and would avoid perverse development outcomes and enable a more sustainable and efficient use of the land resource.
- 12.18 Attachment One to this evidence is a concept plan of what the impact of 1.4ha lots would be in the FDA11 area. This plan is based on following natural features and contours and demonstrates that a 1.4-1.5 lots size would provide for a more consistent approach across the area.
- 12.19 Such lot sizes would give effect to the CRPS in providing for limited rural residential development adjacent to and existing urban area.
- 12.20 The CRPS in the Principal reasons and explanation for Policy 5.3.1 states:

Rural residential development is typified by clusters of small allotments usually in the size range up to 2.0ha principally zoned for residential activity.

- 12.21 Therefore, the CRPS anticipates that rural residential sites will be smaller than a minimum of 2ha.
- 12.22 All such lots would be subject to resource consents for wastewater and stormwater from ECAN.
- 12.23 Any rural lifestyle lot that does not have a sewer connection will require resource consent from Environment Canterbury unless it is permitted by Rule 5.7 in the Canterbury Land and Water Plan (CLWP). Any site under 4ha will require a restricted discretionary consent under Rule 5.9 of the CLWP, with a list of matters to be met.
- 12.24 SUB-S4 in the PTDP sets out requirements for wastewater disposal. RLZ is included in section 2 under Rural Zones which requires connection to reticulated networks in specific situations. Where a connection to the Council's urban reticulated wastewater system is not available the subdivision application must demonstrate that the discharge of wastewater to ground either complies with the regional plan or has a discharge consent.
- 12.25 Therefore, consideration of the efficacy of the disposal system will be assessed at the point of consent. Size of the site is part of the assessment of such a proposal.
- 12.26 There are a range of factors which need to be taken into account when designing an onsite wastewater management system, including topography, soil type, soil holding capacity, nitrogen levels, proximity of waterbodies including groundwater and drinking water zones, proposed discharge rate for the proposed development, the proposed system to be installed and the ability of the system to meet the NZ Standard 1547:2012 On-site Domestic Wastewater Management. The system should be designed to be the best fit for the property (including size) given all these factors.
- 12.27 Such variables mean that the area requirements for a system will vary. Hence the lot sizes for a development will need to take such factors into account in the design of the development.
- 12.28 SUB-P15 Rural Lifestyle Zone requires connection to the reticulated wastewater networks where available, or if not available, provide a suitable site area for onsite disposal.
- 12.29 The policy does not stipulate that a minimum lot size be set – rather that there is a suitable site area for onsite disposal.
- 12.30 The purpose of the assessment under SUB-S4 is to determine that there is a suitable site area available on the proposed lot.
- 12.31 Stipulating a specific minimum lot size in SUB-S1.4 does not implement SUB-P15 for an applicant to demonstrate a suitable site

area for on-site disposal in an area less than the minimum, unless a non-complying consent is sought (SUB-R3).

- 12.32 In my opinion, it will be up to the subdivision developer to demonstrate that the proposed lots can be adequately serviced by OSWM system and obtain resource consent from Environment Canterbury.
- 12.33 Sec 7 b) of the RMA requires the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources.
- 12.34 In considering a rural lifestyle development the need to provide efficient and optimal use of land should be an important consideration to ensure efficiency in terms of infrastructure and transport, limiting the fragmentation of the rural land resource and reduction in productivity.
- 12.35 There needs to be flexibility to be able to design developments around the nature of the land, rather than meet an arbitrary minimum lot size of 2ha. For instance, a development designed around contours and optimum access may result in lots less than 2ha and so would require a non-complying consent, yet seeking efficiency in the development design.
- 12.36 In my opinion, it is preferable to focus on the most appropriate configuration for a development to ensure that the ensuing environment meets the objectives and policies of the plan.
- 12.37 Such an approach could be reflected in the plan by differentiating minimum lot size dependent on the proximity of the RLZ to an urban area.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 This evidence addresses submissions and further submission points relating to Growth provisions in the PTDP.
- 13.2 I support inclusion of a Special Control Area for the FDA11 area of 1.5 ha where the lots do not access Main North Rd/ SH79.
- 13.3 Such a provision would better provide for rural lifestyle development in the FDA11 area that gives effect to the RMA and the CRPS, is not inconsistent with the Regional Land and Water Plan and provides for an efficient use of the land resource and limits effects on primary production capacity.

Lynette Wharfe

30 June 2025



Attachment Two: Housing Availability and Land supply- An evidence based assessment of Geraldine, south Canterbury The AgriBusiness Group and Net Zero Nexus, May 2025

Housing Availability & Land Supply.

An Evidence Based Assessment of
Geraldine, South Canterbury.

Assessment Conducted for Geraldine.nz



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Table of Contents</i>	1
<i>Executive Summary</i>	3
<i>1.0 Introduction</i>	5
<i>2.0 Theoretical Framework</i>	6
2.1 Land Availability and Economic Growth	6
2.2 Economic Balance and the Need for Decentralised Growth	6
2.3 Housing Demand, Infrastructure and Migration Trends	7
2.4 Proactive Planning for Economic Resilience vs Reactive Cost-Cutting	8
2.5 Infrastructure, Incentives, and Land Use Policies.....	10
2.6 Leadership and Strategic District Development	11
2.7 Summary	11
<i>3.0 Methodology</i>	12
3.1 Community Survey	12
3.2 Community Statements	12
3.3 Document Analysis	12
<i>4.0 Research Findings</i>	14
4.1 Introduction	14
4.2 Survey Findings	14
4.3 Statements from the Geraldine Community	21
4.4 Review of Planning Documents Informing PTDP Growth Projections	22
Summary and Critical Observations.....	24
<i>5.0 Discussion</i>	25
5.1 Overview of Key Findings in Context	25
5.2 Geraldine's Constrained Growth and Economic Impacts	25
5.3 Centralisation of Development in Timaru: Strategic Bias or Oversight?	25
5.4 Latent Demand and Migration Trends Ignored?	27
5.5 Governance Structures and Local Disengagement	28
5.6 Misalignment Between Infrastructure and Planning	29
5.7 Strategic Leadership	30
5.8 Implications for Planning and Policy	30
Appendix A. Annotated Bibliography	32
Appendix B: Survey Questions	41
Appendix C: Summary of Survey Results	43
References	45

Authorship Details:

Co-authored by Dr. Benjamin A. Payne, Independent Researcher and Strategist at NetZeroNexus and Ms. Lynette P. Wharfe, Senior Planning Consultant for the Agribusiness Group.

Contact: info@netzeronexus.co.nz

Peer Review:

This report underwent independent peer review by two experts: a senior academic in Geography and Planning at the University of Otago, and a senior planning professional and lawyer based in Queenstown.

The review assessed the report's academic and industry rigour, theoretical and methodological integrity, the robustness and clarity of its analysis and findings, and the practical relevance of its conclusions and recommendations.

Given the contested nature of the Timaru District Plan Review and the sensitivity of the report's findings, both reviewers preferred to remain anonymous. Nonetheless, they expressed full support for the research analysis and findings, which they consider to be rigorous, data based and accurately reflect many of the key issues affecting New Zealand's current land planning system.

Published July 1, 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores the critical links between land availability, housing affordability, and economic development in Geraldine, New Zealand – providing a fresh, locally informed evidence base to shape the Timaru District Council (TDC) District Plan Review (hereafter Plan Review) and the Proposed Timaru District Plan (PTDP).

Commissioned by Geraldine.nz¹ and prepared by researchers with the Agribusiness Group and NetZeroNexus, this work responds to a growing sense within the community that district-level planning underestimates Geraldine's real demand for residential, rural lifestyle, and business-zoned land. This mismatch, locals argue, is fuelling housing shortages and affordability issues and holding back the town's economic and social potential.

Drawing on a mixed-methods approach – including an open-question community survey, analysis of formal submissions, and a critical review of planning documents supporting the Plan Review – the study uncovers a clear and consistent local message: constrained land availability is already eroding Geraldine's social and economic vitality, which will deepen if the TDC fails to recognise and respond to local demand.

A total of **148 respondents** participated in the Geraldine Housing and Land Availability Community Survey, with **88% identifying as current residents** and **35% as business owners or community group representatives**. The survey revealed strong community concern regarding land and housing availability, with **72%** of respondents (excluding 'unsure' responses) believing there is **insufficient residential land** in Geraldine, and **68.6%** reporting **inadequate rural lifestyle section availability**.

The economic impacts of constrained land supply were also evident: **nearly 60%** of relevant respondents stated that housing or land availability had **impacted their ability to operate or grow a business or community organisation**, with **over one in five (21.7%)** describing this impact as **significant**. Strikingly, **88% of all respondents** agreed that housing and land constraints are **undermining Geraldine's ability to attract and retain residents and workers**, with **54.8%** considering this impact as **significant**.

These figures highlight widespread and urgent concern that existing zoning and land availability settings are misaligned with current demand and growth dynamics—undermining housing access, business continuity, and Geraldine's broader social and economic resilience.

Key qualitative findings highlight:

¹ Geraldine.nz (formerly Go.Geraldine) is a community-led organisation that promotes the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of Geraldine and its surrounds, supporting local businesses, community initiatives and events to foster a vibrant and sustainable township.

- Housing shortages and affordability challenges are leading to the ‘flow through’ of potential residents to other districts, because families, potential business owners and workers cannot access housing.
- Land release scarcity (residential and business) is limiting local economic opportunities and making it harder for employers to attract and retain staff.
- A perceived policy and investment bias toward Timaru City, at the expense of smaller district towns including Geraldine.
- Uncaptured latent demand, particularly among return migrants, young families, and remote workers drawn to Geraldine’s high-amenity rural lifestyle.
- Infrastructure pinch points, notably wastewater capacity, stall development and inflate house prices.
- Governance gaps, including opaque, top-down planning and a lack of meaningful engagement with smaller district communities.

These patterns reflect broader national trends in which Tier 3 towns like Timaru are deprioritised in favour of larger urban centres, with flow-on effects for smaller district towns like Geraldine, despite the town’s potential to support resilient and diversified growth within the Timaru District. Economic theory and planning literature repeatedly stress the dangers of underestimating small-town housing demand and the need for spatially balanced development across regions and districts to reduce urban centralisation and promote equitable economic and population growth.

To unlock Geraldine’s potential, the report calls for:

- Strategic governance that recognises Geraldine’s role in the district’s current and future economic development.
- More accurate, informed land and housing demand assessments that acknowledge the critical role of land availability (residential and commercial) in supporting district and community economic and social development.
- Proactive ‘future-focused’ land release and aligned infrastructure investment that supports the aspirations of local communities.

Overall, the study offers a timely and empirically grounded contribution to the Plan Review process—one that seeks to rebalance the conversation and ensure that Geraldine’s current needs, as well as medium and longer-term opportunities, are not overlooked in shaping the district’s future.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Geraldine is at a crossroads. Long cherished for its scenic surroundings, community and high-amenity rural lifestyle, the town is increasingly facing constraints that threaten its vibrancy and economic potential. This report investigates how land availability and housing affordability are shaping Geraldine's development—and whether current district planning settings within the PTDP are fit for purpose.

Commissioned by Geraldine.nz and conducted by researchers from the Agribusiness Group and NetZeroNexus, the study aims to provide a robust, locally informed evidence base for the Plan Review and future land use planning for Geraldine.

It was sparked by a perceived disconnect: while planning assumptions suggest no or limited demand for new residential, rural lifestyle, or business land in Geraldine—based largely on low growth patterns in Timaru City and other parts of the district—local experience tells a different story. Residents, business owners, educators, and community service providers increasingly report housing shortages, land constraints, and missed opportunities for economic and employment growth – opportunities that could strengthen the wider Timaru District.²

In this context, the report sets out to bridge the gap between lived local realities and the formal planning process. It draws on a community survey, submissions analysis, and a critical review of relevant plans and consultancy advice provided to TDC since 2016.

The result is a grounded and timely contribution to the Plan Review—one that brings local insight to the fore and challenges assumptions that may be limiting Geraldine's future.

² At the time this research was conducted, the Timaru District was experiencing significant economic challenges. In October 2024, the Alliance Group confirmed the closure of its Smithfield meat processing plant in Timaru, resulting in the loss of approximately 600 jobs. The plant, which had been operational for 139 years, ceased operations by December 2024 due to centralisation and consolidation of processing infrastructure, declining livestock numbers and reduced demand for red meat, leading to surplus processing capacity (NZ Herald, 2024).

Additionally, in March 2025, the Timaru District Council announced a restructuring initiative, with the potential loss of 71 positions, further reflecting the broader economic downturn in the district (Black, 2025).

Furthermore, Dominion Brewery was reported to be assessing options for reducing its operating scale and number of employees, indicating ongoing economic pressures within the region (Comer, 2025).

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding the dynamics of land availability and its impact on economic development requires more than just data—it demands a clear theoretical lens. This framework sets the scene by unpacking key concepts that shape how land use decisions influence community well-being, district resilience, and the pace and pattern of growth. These ideas not only guide the interpretation of the research findings but also ground the report's recommendations in established planning and economic development theory.

An annotated bibliography of the core resources informing this framework and subsequent analysis is included in Appendix A.

2.1 Land Availability and Economic Growth

Land availability is a fundamental factor in economic growth, influencing housing supply, business expansion, and long-term regional and district prosperity. Research on land use in New Zealand has identified that restrictive policies can contribute to constrained housing supply, affordability challenges, and missed economic opportunities (NZIER, 2015; Shahzad et al., 2021). The New Zealand Productivity Commission (2015) has emphasised that the extent to which land is made available directly affects the ability of communities to grow and adapt to changing economic conditions.

Housing availability is also a key determinant of labour market mobility. When housing supply does not keep pace with demand, it limits the ability of businesses to attract workers, reducing economic dynamism and community resilience (NZIER, 2023a, 2023b). Ensuring sufficient land is available for residential and business development is, therefore, a critical consideration for land and economic development planning at regional and district levels.

2.2 Economic Balance and the Need for Decentralised Growth

Balanced economic development requires strategic planning that considers the roles of both urban centres and smaller towns within regional and district contexts (Hudson, 2022; NZIER, 2023a, 2023b; Savage & Willis, 2020). Economic development literature has long emphasised the need for balanced growth across a district rather than concentrating investment in a single urban centre, as this often results in uneven economic outcomes and severely limits the potential of surrounding areas and towns, where they become service towns rather than self-sustaining economic hubs in their own right (Friedmann, 1986; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018).

In New Zealand, land use policies have historically favoured growth concentration in urban centres (Huang, 2024; McKay & Petersen, 2015; NZIER, 2023a, 2023b). For example, the Government's current approach prioritises long-term zoning and proposed GST exemptions for infrastructure investment in Tier 1 and 2 local government areas, while overlooking Tier 3 areas such as Timaru. A similar pattern is evident within districts, where investment in Timaru may come at the expense of surrounding communities like Geraldine. In small towns such as Geraldine, limited land availability for residential and commercial

development can rapidly stifle economic opportunities, deter new residents, and undermine short, medium and long-term growth potential. In turn, this leads to stagnation with a reduction in the town's economic and employment base, diminishing its overall contribution to the district and undermining social and economic opportunities, vibrancy and demographic balance.

2.3 Housing Demand, Infrastructure and Migration Trends

Assessing housing demand requires consideration of both visible market activity and latent demand—that is, would-be residents who are not actively seeking housing because of limited or unsuitable supply (Nunns et al., 2021a, 2021b). As the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2024) notes, restrictive land-use settings can suppress this latent demand by reducing viable housing options. This creates a misleading feedback loop in which low supply or market inactivity is mistaken for a lack of demand. In fact the unmet need remains significant but unexpressed in market data. The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) (2022) joint update on the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD), along with the supporting *Urban Development Dashboard*,³ highlights how conservative zoning, land use, and consenting restrictions can suppress housing activity and mask true demand—particularly in Tier 1 and 2 areas.⁴

Housing preferences are evolving, influenced by factors such as remote work, lifestyle choices, and demographic shifts (NZIER, 2023a, 2023b). Notably, regional New Zealand is increasingly skewing towards an ageing population, as younger generations migrate to

³ Available online via the MfE or HUD sites, councils are required to use this dashboard to monitor key indicators of housing demand, supply, prices, and land-use efficiency under the NPS-UD.

⁴ The joint MfE and HUD update (2022) explains that councils are required to “plan for growth both ‘up’ and ‘out’” and to maintain an evidence base on “demand, supply and prices for housing and land” under the NPS-UD 2020. While formal monitoring reports are produced annually by Tier 1 and Tier 2 councils. The current government is actively reviewing how land-use restrictions and incentives are influencing both realised and latent housing demand. Council-level implementation reports (e.g., New Plymouth, Marlborough, Nelson-Tasman) that draw on the MfE/HUD Urban Development Dashboard further demonstrate how planning constraints were suppressing development activity—leading to constrained supply being misinterpreted as weak demand.

urban centres where employment opportunities are more accessible—often despite a stated preference for rural and semi-rural living opportunities (Alam & Nel, 2022; Brabyn & Jackson, 2019; Corlett, 2024; Duff, 2025; Nunns et al., 2021).⁵ A district’s ability to accommodate these preferences and harness innovation for economic growth depends on the availability of land and planning policies that support diverse housing and commercial development (e.g., shared office spaces for tech start-ups and digital nomads) (Hudson & Clapham, 2022; NZ Productivity Commission, 2019; NZIER, 2023b; Savage & Willis, 2020). NZIER (2023a) argues that local governments and planning frameworks that are proactive and adaptable to these emerging preferences and employment patterns will achieve stronger economic and social development outcomes than those constrained by archaic, insular, and inflexible planning orthodoxies.

2.4 Proactive Planning for Economic Resilience vs Reactive Cost-Cutting

Research on municipal governance suggests that long-term strategic planning is a key driver of economic resilience, particularly in regions undergoing structural economic change (Donovan, 2025; Maltman, 2023; OECD, 2020). A proactive approach to land-use planning can help regions adapt to shifts in employment patterns, infrastructure needs, and demographic trends.

Conversely, a reactive approach—such as reducing services or delaying land release and infrastructure provision in response to short-term economic pressures such as declining GDP or rate-payer base, as currently evident in the proposed restructure of TDC (Black, 2025)—functions as a short-term mechanism that likely limits a district’s capacity for future growth (Hudson & Clapham, 2022; NZIER, 2023a). An alternative approach is to proactively incentivise innovation and investment in promoting new and diversified economic opportunities. In addition, domestic and international best practice highlights that local councils and regional authorities should play a critical role in shaping economic opportunities through aspirational planning and decisions that align land availability with future development needs (Nunns et al., 2021b; OECD, 2020; Shahzad et al., 2021).

⁵ These resources represent a growing body of New Zealand literature that outlines the demographic challenges facing regional areas, particularly the trend toward an ageing population (Greenaway-McGrevy & Phillips, 2020). They underscore the importance of policy responses that not only support older residents but also help attract and retain younger people to sustain and revitalise rural communities. A key enabler of this is the timely release of land and provision of appropriate housing options to support inward migration and innovation. Notably, two significant agri-tech start-ups—[Halter](#) (AI stock tracking technology, headquartered in the Waikato) and [Landify](#) (a platform matching equity finance with aspiring young farmers)—have connections to South Canterbury but are no longer based in the Timaru District. While a range of factors likely contributed to this shift, the availability of suitable office space may have played a role—an area where proactive support and future focused local government initiatives and incentives could make a meaningful difference to emerging businesses like Halter and Landify and also boost the district’s declining GDP.

2.5 Governance Constraints, Housing Access and Affordability

Recent analyses (NZ Infrastructure Commission, 2022; NZIER, 2023a, 2023b; Storper, 2013) highlight systemic barriers to housing affordability in New Zealand rooted in local governance structures. A recurring critique is that local government settings are often short-sighted, self-interested, or constrained by political and economic incentives that diminish the bigger picture necessity of home availability and accessibility.

A key issue is that many decision-makers in local government—whether elected officials or senior bureaucrats—are often also of a generation fortuitous to be homeowners in the areas they represent. Given New Zealand’s prolonged housing price inflation since the early 1990s, these individuals have often personally benefited from rising property values. Whether intentional or not, this creates an inherent ‘homeowner bias’ toward policies that maintain or increase property values, often at the expense of affordability and accessibility for new entrants, leading to growing, intergenerational homeownership and capital disparities (Fischel, 2001; Donovan, 2025; Maltman, 2023; Murphy, 2014; Statistics NZ, 2020).

One primary mechanism through which this occurs is the restriction of land supply for new housing. By limiting zoning changes, imposing restrictive consenting processes, and framing constrained supply as a response to ‘lack of demand’, local governments contribute to a ratcheting effect on housing prices (Greeaway-McGrevy & Phillips, 2020). This reflects broader patterns of neoliberal governance, where policies often prioritise asset inflation over equitable housing access (Donovan, 2025; Maltman, 2023; McLeay, 2022).

Expert consultants, despite operating within what is represented as an ostensibly open and democratic planning process, frequently reinforce existing power structures and benefit from this status quo (Allmendinger, 2009; Flyvberg, 1998; Rydin, 2007; Sager, 2009; Stigler, 1971). Many planning and economic consultancy firms build their business expertise within existing regulatory frameworks, creating a vested interest in maintaining the complexity and exclusivity of planning processes (Allmendinger, 2009). This results in ‘expert capture,’ where professional influence reinforces the economic and political interests of local authorities and existing property owners, rather than serving the broader public good (Allmendinger, 2009; Sager, 2009).

Although local governments speak rhetoric of engagement with communities—particularly during plan reviews—residents increasingly feel disengaged from council processes and doubt their ability to influence outcomes (Frethy, 2024; MBIE, 2017; Reid & Schulze, 2019; Wheen & Geddis, 2024). As a result, development decisions are often dominated by large-scale developers with the financial resources to navigate the system (Wheen & Geddis, 2024). This dynamic, fuels the binary perception of ‘greedy developers’ versus the ‘collective good’ of council planning processes and planners just ‘doing the job’, which is often not the full picture in terms of transparency and democratic accountabilities.

Consequently, land and resource management in New Zealand has become highly litigious and resource-intensive, reinforcing a false dichotomy: councils are seen as protecting resources, land and the environment, while developers are cast as inherently exploitative

and profit driven (Environmental Defence Society, 2025). Many councils across New Zealand are also land developers,⁶ and in reality, a balanced approach is essential. Ensuring adequate land availability for housing and business is fundamental to the economic and social stability of communities (McLeay, 2022; Murphy, 2014).

Addressing these governance constraints requires fundamental changes in housing policy. Greater transparency, stronger accountability mechanisms, and policies that actively counteract entrenched biases in land supply and development are critical. Without these shifts, housing availability and affordability challenges will persist, exacerbating socio-economic divides and limiting opportunities for equitable growth, economic and social opportunities across diverse district communities.

2.5 Infrastructure, Incentives, and Land Use Policies

Infrastructure investment and land-use planning are closely linked, yet they are often treated as separate policy and implementation areas within district councils and at the interface between regional and district planning instruments (NZ Infrastructure Commission, 2022). A lack of alignment between infrastructure planning and land release creates bottlenecks

⁶ Timaru District Council has not traditionally acted as a land developer in the proactive, strategic way seen in larger centres like Auckland or Christchurch. However, there are some notable exceptions and historical activities worth mentioning:

1. Washdyke Industrial Expansion

- TDC purchased land in the Washdyke area over the years to enable industrial expansion. Rather than acting as a commercial developer, the council's role has focused on land banking and zoning changes to support business and employment growth. The Washdyke area continues to be a key industrial zone, but the council has largely left infrastructure provision and subdivision to the private sector.

2. Land Disposal vs. Retention

- In recent years, TDC has been more focused on disposing of surplus land than on development. For example, land sales in central Timaru (e.g., for Showgrounds Development) show a preference for offloading land assets rather than holding and developing land for commercial, community or housing outcomes, for example, by establishing a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) for development. This reflects a more passive, market-reliant approach, rather than strategic use of land for housing affordability or innovation.

3. Housing and Growth Strategy

- TDC has adopted growth strategies (e.g. through the 2021 Spatial Plan and through District Plan reviews), but implementation has been slow and at times contradictory. The council has not directly entered the development space to catalyse outcomes—despite holding some land assets with potential.

that slow down development and reduce the responsiveness of housing supply to market needs (*ibid.*). The situation reflects a ‘chicken and egg’ dynamic, where limited land release is often attributed to servicing constraints, yet these constraints can stem from unambitious or reactive planning approaches that do not anticipate or enable future growth (Hodgson, 2019; Hudson & Clapham, 2022). The issue is further compounded when responsibility is deferred to short-term budget limitations, leading to perverse outcomes that undermine long-term community and economic development.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2024) has also highlighted the role of incentives in shaping council decision-making. Councils that do not directly benefit from population growth through increased revenue streams may have fewer motivations to release land for development. Policy mechanisms that align incentives with growth objectives can be an important factor in ensuring sustainable district development.

2.6 Leadership and Strategic District Development

Effective district planning requires leadership that recognises the interconnected roles of housing, infrastructure, business and employment in shaping short, medium and long-term economic outcomes and community uplift. The NZIER (2023a) report underscores the importance of grounding planning decisions in robust, forward-looking assessments of housing demand and economic development potential—drawing on tools such as horizon scanning of future economic opportunities, scenario modelling, trend analysis, and local contextual insight—rather than being constrained by existing administrative rules, legacy planning patterns, or parochial interests. The authors note that often growth assessments are delivered by external consultants with no or limited understanding of local communities operating within narrow briefs shaped by council parochialism and rely on aggregated, assumption-based growth models that overlook latent demand, emerging opportunities, and disregard lived local knowledge and experience.

Local government leadership in this context involves considering the broader and aspirational strategic direction of a district and its communities, ensuring that planning decisions support sustainable growth, economic diversification, and community well-being across all district localities. Aligning land-use policies with district economic objectives can help create a more adaptive and resilient development framework.

2.7 Summary

These thematic areas of international and New Zealand focused literature provide a foundation for analysing Geraldine’s housing and land availability within the research findings. The discussion section will apply these theories and concepts to examine how they relate to the current district planning and development landscape within the Timaru District.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methodologies approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative strategies to assess the effects of land and housing availability on Geraldine's social and economic vitality. Community-level data was collected through a structured survey designed to capture residents' lived experiences, perceptions of housing accessibility, and aspirations for the town's future. This was complemented by critical document analysis to interrogate the assumptions and framings underpinning local planning decisions within the ongoing District Plan Review. The research design was shaped by a dual objective: to centre community voice while challenging dominant narratives that shape policy and development outcomes within the Plan Review process.

3.1 Community Survey

An open-response community survey (refer to Appendix B) was developed on Google Forms and distributed on behalf of Geraldine.nz between 04 April and 04 June 2025. The survey sought to gather empirical data on lived experiences and realities of housing and land availability in Geraldine, impacts on local livelihoods, and anticipated future needs. The survey targeted a wide demographic cross-section, including residents, business owners, workers, educators, and community leaders. Questions were structured to collect both quantitative data (e.g., availability of housing, recent experiences in seeking housing or land, intentions to move or expand) and qualitative feedback (e.g., perceptions of growth, community well-being, and aspirations for Geraldine's future).

The survey was distributed via multiple local channels to maximise reach and participation. These included digital platforms (social media pages, community mailing lists), local print media (the Geraldine News and Four Peaks Gazette) and community noticeboards. This inclusive approach was intended to ensure accessibility for a wider cross section of digitally connected and offline community members.

3.2 Community Statements

To deepen the qualitative dimension of the research, the survey was supplemented by detailed statements provided by local businesses, school principals (both past and present), and other community leaders. These firsthand accounts were solicited to illuminate specific impacts on key institutions and to provide grounded insights into how housing and land constraints are manifesting in daily operations, recruitment, and retention, and the sustainability of local businesses and essential services.

3.3 Document Analysis

A detailed review of relevant growth and demand reports produced as part of the Plan Review (2016-2024) was undertaken. These documents were critically analysed to identify key assumptions, projections, and methodologies informing district-level planning decisions. Particular attention was paid to how these reports addressed—or failed to

address—the unique context of Geraldine in relation to housing demand, land capacity, infrastructure servicing, and population trends.

By triangulating findings from the community survey, qualitative testimonies, and documentary analysis, this study offers a robust, local-knowledge informed and evidence-based evaluation of Geraldine’s land availability and development context. The methodological approach was designed to ensure that community voices are centred in the discussion of district growth strategies and that the specific challenges faced by smaller towns like Geraldine are not obscured in district-wide planning processes.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the key findings of the research, drawing on multiple sources to assess land availability and housing demand in Geraldine. It begins with an analysis of survey data collected from local residents, business owners, and community stakeholders, offering insight into lived experiences and perceptions of housing and land availability pressures. This is followed by a summary of formal support statements submitted as additional information for the Section 42A report for Hearing G – Growth, as part of the PTDP process. These statements, submitted in support of Submitter 160 (D & S Payne), emphasise specific community concerns and aspirations related to housing and land availability. Finally, a review of key planning documents and consultant reports underpinning growth projections within the Plan Review provides critical context to evaluate the assumptions guiding current land supply and zoning decisions for Geraldine. Together, these components offer a comprehensive picture of the town’s current and future land availability constraints.

4.2 Survey Findings

The Geraldine Housing and Land Availability Community Survey received 148 responses from a wide cross-section of the Geraldine community. Of these, 88% were current residents, while 35% identified as business owners or representatives of community organisations. A small proportion (3.1%) were hopeful residents seeking to move to Geraldine, and 2.6% worked in the town but lived elsewhere. Business respondents represented diverse sectors, with the largest group in agriculture and rural services (19.6%), followed by retail, building and construction, tourism, hospitality, and consultancy (Appendix C, Figures 1–3).

Housing and Land Availability in Geraldine

The survey revealed a consistent concern about housing and land availability in Geraldine (Appendix C, Figure 4). Both quantitative and qualitative responses reflected widespread frustration, concern, and personal hardship in relation to housing availability, affordability, and suitability.

Housing and land availability, rental shortages and affordability pressures emerged as dominant themes. Many described rentals as ‘very limited,’ ‘hard to come by,’ or ‘virtually impossible’ to secure, with several noting that the shortage has driven workers to reject local job offers. One respondent summed up the frustration:

There is a serious shortage of rentals and affordable housing in Geraldine. While a few homes are on the market, they often don’t meet the needs of families, first-home buyers, or retirees and are wildly unaffordable for the cold, damp and terrible quality house you get. (Respondent 60)

Affordability challenges were echoed across the responses, with participants noting a mismatch between available stock and local needs. As one real estate sector respondent put it:

...we're fielding regular inquiries about newer builds, spare land to build on, and small lifestyle lots but are often unable to provide suitable options.(Respondent 103)

Additional respondent feedback reinforced these issues:

We've been looking for a rental for months, but there's just nothing coming up—everything goes so fast or the landlord knows someone who knows someone and you don't get a look in. (Respondent 12)

I've lived here 25 years and never seen it this bad. It's a real worry for my son trying to get into his first home. He has kids and an engineering business, but it's impossible to find a home. (Respondent 87)

We want to build but can't find a section that's not pokey and tied up in silly rules, is in the retirement village or some tiny infill shitbox section at the South End of town where its damp and cold all winter and under the flood banks. (Respondent 16)

Figure 1 shows that among those who expressed clear opinions (unsure responses removed), **72% believed there is insufficient residential land** in Geraldine. Figure 3 illustrates similar perceptions for rural lifestyle development, with **68.6% expressing concern** about inadequate supply. Respondents consistently called for more flexible zoning to accommodate families, retirees, and those seeking small lifestyle blocks—not just high-end 'Downs type' properties, retirement village units or infill sections. Responses indicate community support for expanding residential development and providing more flexible and diverse land and housing options to reflect current and latent local demand, lifestyle preferences, and the appeal of semi-rural community living in Geraldine.

Figure 1. Summary of responses to Survey Question 2a on residential land availability.

2a. Is there sufficient land available for residential development in Geraldine?

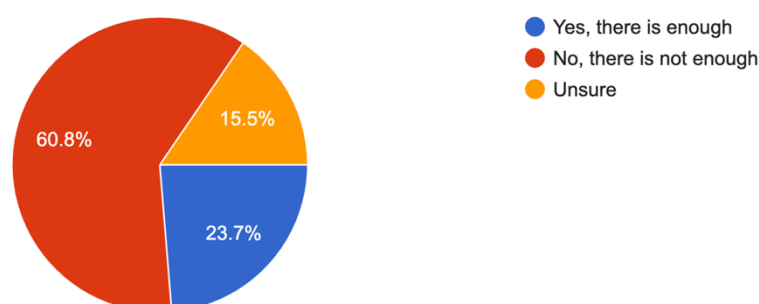
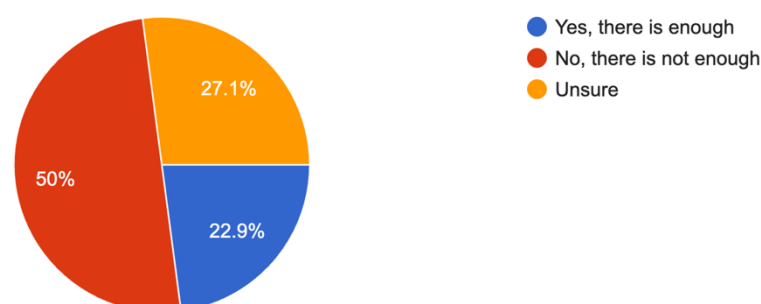


Figure 2. Summary of responses to Survey Question 2b on rural lifestyle land availability.

2b. Is there sufficient land available for rural lifestyle development in Geraldine?

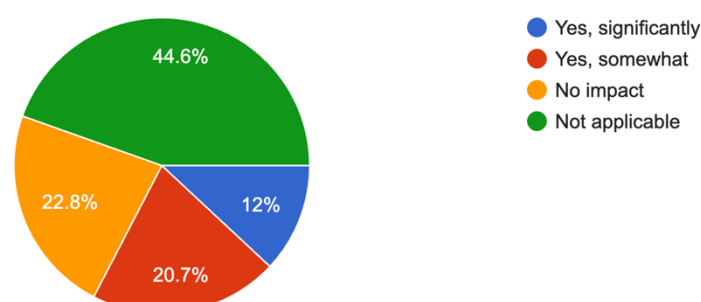


Impact on Business, Workforce, and Community Life

The survey made clear that land and housing constraints are not just personal frustrations; they are impeding local economic and social opportunities. Figure 3 shows that among relevant respondents (not applicable responses removed), **nearly 60% reported land or housing availability had hindered their ability to operate or grow a business or community organisation**, with **21.7% describing the impact as significant**.

Figure 3. Summary of responses to Survey Question 3 on housing and land availability impacts.

3. Has housing or land availability impacted your ability to run or grow a business or community organisation in Geraldine?



Respondents described a range of key issues that current housing and land availability presents, outlined as follows:

- **Barriers to staff recruitment and retention:** Many respondents highlighted the challenge of securing accommodation for staff—especially rentals—as a direct barrier to business stability and growth. This was mentioned by business owners, farmers, vets, sole traders, and tradespeople:

Numerous permanent vets and also locums have turned down job offers. (Respondent 18).

Can be extremely difficult to find nearby accommodation for staff, we've had to accommodate new staff in the camping ground for month due to no rentals. (Respondent 3)

We have missed out on staff because of the inability to find something suitable. (Respondent 29)

We've had two applicants back out after they couldn't find a place to live. It's gutting to get to the point of making an offer and they have to decline based on something so reasonable but out of our control [and] not related to the job. (Respondent 62)

My partner's boss offered someone a job and they had to turn it down cause they couldn't find a rental—even though they wanted to move here. (Respondent 141)

- **Restricted business expansion:** Some businesses reported being unable to grow operations, expand offerings, or settle permanently in Geraldine due to the housing situation:

I'm currently here for family reasons as my parents age. If I had a more secure home and office situation I would permanently domicile my consulting business here and look to expand capacity and employ locals. (Respondent 36)

Lynn River has just spent heaps redeveloping, and so are Barker's at the moment ..., housing must limit their ability to find staff. (Respondent 11)

We could easily double our work stream and team, but people can't find places to live, so we're stuck with the status quo. (Respondent 56)

We moved from Christchurch and I want to stay and build my business [business strategy advisory sector] here and provide my kids a rural upbringing like I had. I can't grow it if staff can't move to town. ... My wife commutes but we're not moving to Timaru or Ashburton because we like Geraldine. (Respondent 23)

- **Missed economic and community opportunities:** There's frustration that housing issues are preventing population and workforce growth, which affects the town's ability to evolve and thrive:

I'm really worried for the future of Geraldine. I'm getting on in years and the situation has got increasingly worse in the 35 years I've been here. TDC never supports Geraldine's growth as an appealing town. With no housing, new families won't move into the school zone, as a retiree I believe the retiree focus is self-limiting. Where do carers and nurses live? (Respondent 45)

Geraldine's CBD cannot grow ... its stagnant, in part because the population is kept too old and small, but also there's no retail land or buildings available if someone wanted to start a business. No one's encouraged to invest in Geraldine ..., we are all just meant

to drive to the big box crap in Timaru, go out for dinner in Timaru, do everything in Timaru. (Respondent 19)

... encouraging new people into Geraldine should be seen as a win-win for the district as they're not flowing through to Fairlie, Tekapo or other towns [beyond the district]. New people bring new opportunities, population brings prosperity and different perspectives, ... they bring skills, would open new businesses and in my experience newcomers to town really want to be part of the community and contribute. (Respondent 76)

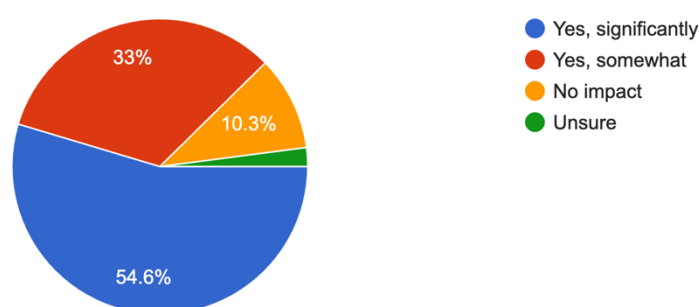
My daughter and her partner wanted to come home from London and raise their kids in Geraldine, but there's no space for them, so they now live in Wanaka and don't especially like how busy it is. It is active and outdoorsy and people are ambitious there which suits them. They both work remotely in tech and law and earn very good money, so it's a shame we couldn't get them back to Geraldine. I suspect there's a lot of younger Geraldine expats in similar situations, who feel forced to move back to cities to give themselves and their kids opportunities (Respondent 121).

It's not just about houses—it's about growing the town in a smart way so it doesn't die or come to be all old people. That's where its heading but the council doesn't seem interested anything except preventing growth. (Respondent 3)

A striking **88% of respondents** (Figure 4) agreed that housing and land availability impacts Geraldine's ability to attract and retain residents and workers, with **over half (54.8%) describing the impact as significant.**

Figure 4. Summary of responses to Survey Question 4 on Geraldine's ability to attract and retain new residents and workers

4. Do you think housing and land availability affects Geraldine's ability to attract and retain new residents and workers?



Governance and Planning Frustrations

The perceived 'Timaru alone' mentality was a recurring theme. Many respondents voiced frustration with the TDC and economic development agencies like Venture Timaru, feeling Geraldine's needs are consistently sidelined:

TDC are extremely Timaru-centric... Geraldine, Temuka and Pleasant Point are always fed scraps. (Respondent 9)

Other District towns like Geraldine all contribute to rating base and 'sing for their supper' in terms of making the Timaru District a more appealing place to live. The TDC have been actively encouraging proudly Geraldine businesses like Lynn River and Barkers to redevelop in Washdyke where they are providing 'industrial zoned' land, rather than encouraging businesses to invest and expand in Geraldine and other smaller district towns. It's 'robbing Peter to pay Paul', and is a sad indictment on the economic development leadership of TDC and other organisations like Venture Timaru (which is 100% one eyed for Timaru). (Respondent 14)

It is frustrating that the growth data shows we are growing far more rapidly cause we are a nice place to live... yet we are locked in with the same short-sighted rules as Timaru. (Respondent 92)

Other community members shared similar sentiments:

Feels like we're in the too-hard basket for council. We don't get the support or planning attention we need. They don't want Geraldine to get ahead and look better than Timaru so they leave us to fend for ourselves. (Respondent 66)

Venture Timaru—never seen them here. Who are they venturing for? Not Geraldine anyway. (Respondent 13)

It's like Geraldine's success is seen as a threat instead of something to build on. TDC backwards thinking at its finest. (Respondent 106)

The tension between Geraldine's growth needs and district-level governance is also reflected in formal submissions on the PTDP, including Venture Timaru's, which is addressed as a case study in Section 5.

Summary of Sentiment

The survey revealed a consistent pattern of sentiment and views, as outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sentiment overview of survey responses (n = 148)

Sentiment Category	Approximate %	Description
🙄 Negative/Frustrated	~75%	Focused on housing, governance, TDC neglect, lack of land, and poor planning
😬 Mixed/Concerned	~15%	Worried about growth without infrastructure or sustainability
😊 Positive/Satisfied	~0%	No one expressed satisfaction with the current situation
🙋 Growth-critical	~10%	Critical of overdevelopment and greed; promoting sustainability or "sufficiency"

The majority of respondents see the lack of affordable housing and land supply as the most urgent barrier to Geraldine's economic growth and community well-being. Many also expressed frustration with planning frameworks they see as poorly aligned with Geraldine's character, high amenity and economic growth needs.

While most respondents supported well-managed growth and proactive land release, a small minority voiced concerns about overdevelopment:

We don't want much growth – the size and services are perfect now. Keep the character and charm of this rural service community and town. (Respondent 11)

[This question proposes] an incorrect view of what we need... We don't need growth, growth, growth. We need an economy of sufficiency... Our planet is telling us this. Listen. Look. (Respondent 30)

Others highlighted parochial attitudes among some long-term residents as a barrier to growth and demographic diversity:

Old Geraldinians and their attitude of not wanting growth. Geraldine is changing for the better with the influx of residents. There's more Māori, South African, Asian, Indian and South American people living here now and owning businesses. It's always been a nice place to live but it's becoming less pale and stale than it was and especially compared to other rural towns across NZ. This is great and to keep growing this diversity, there must be adequate land available to meet needs and allow housing. (Respondent 109)

Additional responses noted the generational divide in perspectives:

Some of the old guard is stuck in the past. Older residents / retirees are well and truly spoken for. They might have a pile of money and do some volunteer work here and there, but they're not investing in businesses, contributing to school rolls and sports

clubs, becoming volunteer firefighters or ambo workers. ... my kids (19 and 22) want to stay living and working here and need something different—something affordable and modern. There's nothing. (Respondent 76)

We love Geraldine, but we're getting priced out. If you want to keep young families here, you've got to plan for them, but Timaru District Council has decided that Geraldine should be pale and stale, regardless of what we [the community] want. (Respondent 102)

Overall, the responses reflect a diversity of views, which is expected in a small town like Geraldine and underscores the value of using an open-ended survey to capture diverse perspectives, lived experiences and knowledge across the wider community.

4.3 Statements from the Geraldine Community

As part of the additional evidence submitted for Hearing G – Growth (Submitter 160 D & S Payne), [statements](#) from Geraldine businesses, education leaders, and residents reinforce the critical housing shortfall and the underestimation of future demand in the PTDP. These local voices reiterate and deepen insights into land availability issues that are undermining economic resilience, social cohesion, and workforce stability in Geraldine as a high-amenity rural town, distinct from Timaru,

Key themes across the statements include:

- **Recruitment and retention challenges:** Major local employers (Barkers' Fruit Processors, Aorangi Vets, Lynn River) and schools cite current housing shortages as the primary barrier to attracting and retaining skilled workers, from veterinarians and machine operators to teachers. Geraldine's strong appeal is being undercut by accommodation scarcity, which is deterring relocations and threatening business growth and essential services, like veterinary services in a rural community.
- **Community impacts:** School leaders report that housing pressures are weakening staff integration, retention, and student outcomes.
 - *Geraldine Primary School* faces major recruitment hurdles as candidates withdraw over housing concerns; commuting staff experience additional stress, and school roll numbers are declining as families move away due to housing unavailability.
 - *Geraldine High School / Community of Learning* highlights ongoing difficulties attracting specialist teachers and leadership roles, with strong candidates declining offers due to lack of ability to secure suitable housing.
 - *Early childhood providers* are struggling to recruit and retain staff, with families leaving town, affecting enrolments.

- **Disconnect between planning and lived reality:** Contributors challenge the council’s growth projections and call for more diverse, affordable housing—including small lifestyle and family sections—close to town.
 - *Local builders* report declining residential inquiries and an uncertain project pipeline, not from lack of demand but from lack of available land. Labour shortages are also worsening as workers cannot secure housing.
- **Broad support for rezoning and more proactive land release:** Businesses across sectors stress the economic and social urgency of expanding residential, commercial, and industrial land to futureproof Geraldine as a vibrant, self-sustaining community.

The statements align closely with the community survey findings, offering further qualitative evidence of the systemic constraints Geraldine currently faces. They reflect a strong community mandate for a locally informed and more responsive approach to zoning and land supply. Critically, housing and land constraints are not a distant threat—they appear to already be limiting Geraldine’s ability to attract talent, support housing access for families, and sustain its economy, with businesses feeling unsupported by the council—holding back local growth and the district-wide contribution Geraldine offers.

4.4 Review of Planning Documents Informing PTDP Growth Projections

Over the past decade, multiple reports have been commissioned by TDC to inform growth projections for Geraldine and the wider Timaru District. These reports have reached varying conclusions, reflecting differences in underlying assumptions, data management, and planning methodologies.

The earliest of these were prepared to support the development of the Timaru District 2045 Growth Management Strategy (GMS).⁷ The GMS Growth Assumptions Report (2017)⁸ provided information regarding household growth and also considered rural residential development in the respective areas of the Timaru District. A subsequent Options Report⁹ identified the need for additional residential, rural residential, and industrial land in Geraldine, leading to the development of the GMS adopted by Council in April 2018. This

⁷ Timaru District 2045 Growth Management Strategy

<https://www.timaru.govt.nz/services/planning/district-plan/district-plan-review/growth-management-strategy>

⁸Timaru District Growth Management Strategy - Assumptions Report (2018)

https://www.timaru.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/114146/1057668-Notification-Draft-Growth-Management-Strategy-assumptions-report.pdf

⁹Timaru District Growth Management Strategy - Options Report (2017)

https://www.timaru.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/114147/1057595-Notification-Draft-Growth-Management-Strategy-options-report.pdf

strategy projected a population increase of 210 people—rising to 2,710 by 2048—requiring 140 additional dwellings, primarily through infill and uptake of vacant land. At the time, existing zoned capacity was estimated to support 84 dwellings, prompting the identification of additional residential land on Orari Station Road to provide medium- to long-term sufficiency.

For rural residential growth, the GMS proposed development to the north, east, and south of Geraldine, identifying approximately 45 hectares that could yield 76 rural residential dwellings by 2045 (assuming 5,000 m² lots), or an average of 2.5 dwellings per year. These assumptions informed the zoning reflected in the Draft District Plan.

In 2022, the GMS and associated zonings were reviewed by Planz Consultants, drawing on a revised growth assessment by Property Economics (2022).¹⁰ This latter report projected higher district-wide growth than originally forecast in the GMS. The Planz report adopted a “realisable capacity” lens to estimate housing supply, using it as a proxy for where demand should be directed—particularly within the existing urban boundary. It also recalibrated rural residential assumptions, reducing the projected lot yield, as such development was deemed inconsistent with the NPS-UD’s definition of a well-functioning urban environment. In the Geraldine area, average demand was estimated at 6 rural residential lots per year over 19 years, with some areas earmarked as Future Development Areas (FDAs). The analysis concluded that Geraldine had capacity for 107 additional dwellings, against an estimated demand for 180—equating to 9% of the district’s total residential growth. This formed the basis for proposed land zoning in the PTDP.

In 2024, Property Economics undertook a further assessment of commercially feasible residential capacity across the district.¹¹ This analysis focused on the timing and viability of development within FDA-zoned land under the PTDP. It concluded that approximately 4,000 new dwellings could be accommodated district-wide. In Geraldine, under a high growth scenario, demand was projected at 511 dwellings, with urban capacity of 593—suggesting sufficient supply without requiring FDA land. Including rural residential land and FDAs, capacity rose to 1,021 dwellings, creating a projected surplus of 510. Under a medium growth scenario, the surplus was estimated at 906 dwellings. Based on this analysis, the report concluded that no additional zoning capacity was needed beyond what

¹⁰ Property Economics (January 2022) Timaru District Residential Capacity Economic Assessment https://www.timaru.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/669874/Property-Economics-2022-Timaru-District-Residential-Capacity-Report.pdf

¹¹ Property Economics (October 2024) Timaru District Residential Capacity Economic Assessment https://www.timaru.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/945512/Attachment-A-Timaru-Residential-Capacity-Property-Economics.pdf

was proposed in the PTDP. These conclusions have since been used as the foundation for recommendations to the District Plan hearings on growth and rezoning.

Summary and Critical Observations

While the reports summarised above aim to inform Geraldine's growth and zoning decisions, they reveal a pattern of inconsistency and fragmentation across assessments. Growth and demand figures vary markedly depending on which assumptions, timeframes, and methodological approaches are used. This results in projections that are, at best, difficult to reconcile—and at worst, misleading. For example, over just a few years, projections for household demand in Geraldine have swung from modest infill assumptions to high-growth scenarios producing surplus capacity estimates, all without consistent validation against actual local conditions or community feedback.

A critical concern is the lack of independent peer review and internal consistency across these reports. Key modelling inputs—such as assumptions around demand, realisable capacity, and market feasibility—are often accepted without scrutiny, despite being based on narrow datasets or constrained by regulatory filters. Notably, the Property Economics assessments—which have been influential in shaping zoning recommendations—operate on relatively short planning horizons (typically 19 years) and offer little to no quantification of latent demand or suppressed housing need, particularly in a high-amenity rural town like Geraldine.

In short, the evidence currently used to guide the PTDP lacks a robust, integrated assessment of Geraldine's current and future housing and land availability pressures. It does not provide a reliable basis for immediate, let alone medium- to long-term zoning decisions. There is a clear need for more transparent, peer-reviewed, and locally grounded analysis that reconciles diverging growth scenarios and better captures real-world constraints on land and housing supply. Without this, planning decisions within the PTDP are likely to reinforce outdated assumptions and miss critical opportunities to support Geraldine's economic, social, and demographic resilience— and potentially further 'lock in' the broader pattern of economic stagnation across the Timaru District.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Overview of Key Findings in Context

The community survey and accompanying statements reveal a widespread and urgent perception that land availability constraints are severely undermining Geraldine’s economic and social potential—a situation poised to worsen if current growth assumptions embedded in the PTDP remain unchallenged. A clear majority of respondents reported significant difficulties in securing affordable housing or suitable land for business expansion. Qualitative responses underscore how these limitations are not abstract concerns but active barriers causing stalled economic growth, persistent labour shortages, preventing settlement of new residents, and the ongoing exodus of both people and businesses.

This lived reality stands in stark contrast to the TDC’s growth projections and land capacity assessments that underpin the PTDP. These official assumptions systematically underestimate both the existing and latent demand for residential and commercial land in Geraldine, risking entrenched planning failures that threaten the town’s long-term viability.

5.2 Geraldine’s Constrained Growth and Economic Impacts

The survey and statements reveal that housing shortages and a lack of zoned business land are creating tangible barriers to economic participation. Employers report difficulties attracting and retaining staff due to a lack of local accommodation options, while community institutions such as schools cite declining enrolments linked to housing unavailability for families.

These effects align with extensive theoretical and empirical literature, which demonstrates that constrained land supply—often misinterpreted by decision-makers as low demand—limits market responsiveness, hinders labour mobility, and undermines local economic dynamism (Glaeser, Gyourko & Saks, 2005; NZIER, 2015; Quigley & Raphael, 2005; Shahzad et al., 2021). Studies show that restrictive zoning and planning delays artificially restrict supply, exacerbate affordability challenges, and depress local growth opportunities (Fischel, 2001; Hudson, 2022; Maltman, 2023). TDC’s current planning approach—delaying land release until servicing thresholds are met, without clear, committed, and accountable long-term servicing investment plans—reflects a reactive mindset that is neither strategic nor aspirational for Geraldine’s ongoing prosperity. This lack of vision actively undermines the long-term resilience and future prospects of communities across the district, particularly those outside Timaru City, reinforcing patterns of economic and social stagnation rather than enabling dynamic, future-oriented growth (Auckland Council, 2018; Hodgson, 2019; Hudson & Clapham, 2022; Mills, 1992).

5.3 Centralisation of Development in Timaru: Strategic Bias or Oversight?

Community feedback overwhelmingly indicates that Geraldine is being deliberately marginalised to prioritise centralised development in Timaru. Prominent local businesses such as Barkers Fruit Processors and Lynn River report explicit pressure from council officials

to relocate or expand in Timaru, where industrial land is deliberately made more accessible. Survey data corroborates this pattern, revealing that TDC's planning actively funnels economic growth toward Timaru's urban fringe, effectively stifling Geraldine's potential. Extensive research confirms that restricting land availability in smaller towns undermines regional economic resilience and diversification (Coulson et al., 2020; He et al., 2022; McKay & Petersen, 2015).

This systemic neglect of Geraldine reflects a broader national trend of Tier 3 towns being sacrificed for urban centres, relegating Geraldine to a 'service town' role. Such policy choices critically weaken its economic base and erode the community's distinctive identity. This entrenched strategic bias is underscored in Case Study 1, which scrutinises Venture Timaru and its CEO's submission on the PTDP, highlighting institutional complicity in this unbalanced development approach.

Case Study 1: Aspirational Timaru, Overlooked District? Examining the Gap Between Rhetoric and Reality in Venture Timaru's Proposed District Plan Submission

The **'Timaru Alone' mentality** in TDC and Venture Timaru's approach was described in various survey responses. Venture Timaru, as a TDC-controlled but independent economic development agency, is intended to serve the entire Timaru District. However, its current approach appears heavily weighted toward Timaru City.

The **Chairman's Report** in Venture Timaru's Annual Report 2023-2024 is resolutely inclusive of the district as a whole and ambitious in its language. Chairman, Dr. Anthony Brien, highlights the urgency of district-wide economic and population growth, emphasising the need to diversify to address demographic change and build economic and community resilience. He explicitly states that "everyone in the district has a part to play" and that "we must positively and proactively progress."

Yet when it comes to the most consequential planning process in terms of defining future economic development outcomes—the PTDP—the organisation's submission does not appear to reflect this district-wide mandate. Supported by a Benje Patterson (2022) report **'Scenarios of an aspirational economic future for Timaru District'** the submission reads as though the district's economic development and prosperity begins and ends in Timaru.

The **submission on the PTDP** by CEO Nigel Davenport on behalf of the organisation, while acknowledging challenges linked to population decline in Timaru, is narrow in scope—focusing almost exclusively on the city. It makes no reference to the district as a whole, omits mention of other towns, and overlooks the economic principle that a strong district economy is built on the strength of all its communities.

This disconnect raises an important question: is the Annual Report's inclusive language being fully translated into the organisation's planning and advocacy efforts? To maintain its credibility as a district-wide economic leader, it will be important for Venture Timaru to ensure future submissions and strategies reflect the needs and opportunities of all communities across the district.

Venture Timaru and TDC's perceived prioritisation of 'Timaru alone' overlooks the economic role of smaller towns like Geraldine, which contribute significantly through both rates and local economic activity.

New Zealand and international research highlights that the failure to support regional housing growth can lead to economic stagnation, as populations either decline or shift toward urban centres offering greater opportunity (Alam & Nel, 2022; Brabyn & Jackson, 2019; Coulson et al., 2020; He et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2024; Donovan, 2025; Maltman, 2023; New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, 2022).

As outlined in the theoretical framework, economic development theories emphasise the importance of spatially balanced growth across a district, rather than concentrating investment in a single urban centre (Coulson et al., 2020; Friedmann, 1986; He et al., 2022; McKay & Petersen, 2015; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018). Within the Timaru District, towns like Geraldine play a critical role in contributing to the rates base and diversified district economy—yet current planning approaches appear to disproportionately favour Timaru.

A more balanced, aspirational and proactive strategy for economic growth linked with planning instruments would recognise the potential of smaller towns to attract new residents, businesses, and investment, thereby reducing economic vulnerability in the face of industry closures (e.g., the recent loss of 600 jobs in the freezing works) (Hudson & Clapham, 2022).

Geraldine, in particular, offers a different lifestyle and community proposition compared to Timaru, Pleasant Point, or Temuka. Encouraging new residents and business owners to settle here by providing access to housing and opportunities—rather than losing them in a 'flow through' dynamic to other districts—would ultimately strengthen the Timaru District as a whole.

5.4 Latent Demand and Migration Trends Ignored?

The survey responses and local testimonies point to strong latent demand for housing—especially among return migrants, young families, digital nomads/remote workers and lifestyle seekers—who are currently unable to secure property in Geraldine due to availability constraints. Several respondents described having to delay or abandon plans to settle in Geraldine, not for lack of interest, but due to lack of viable housing options.

This aligns with Nunns et al.'s (2021a, 2021b) argument that low market activity often indicates constrained land supply rather than weak demand. The complete absence of any recognition of latent demand in the growth assessments underpinning the PTDP reflects a serious flaw in the way growth projections have been formulated—an omission that fundamentally skews the planning response and risks locking in inadequate land supply and consequent economic underperformance for communities like Geraldine. As detailed in the analysis of documents underpinning the PTDP zoning recommendations (Section 4.4), the amount of land allocated for growth in Geraldine across the short, medium, and long term is minimal. Compounding this is a lack of transparency around infrastructure

investment planning—an issue further obscured by the weak and often ill-defined links between the PTDP and adjacent Long Term Plan processes. This fragmented approach undermines the potential for coordinated, future-focused growth in Geraldine.

Contrary to claims that there is ‘low or no demand’ for additional residential and rural residential land in Geraldine, such assertions are unsubstantiated and run counter to national evidence. Research consistently shows sustained and growing demand for residential and lifestyle housing in high amenity rural communities, particularly as remote work becomes more viable (Greenaway-McGrevy & Phillips, 2020; Nunns et al., 2021; HUD, 2024). The New Zealand Productivity Commission (2015) has made it clear that when councils underestimate demand and restrict land supply, they risk creating artificial housing shortages that push residents toward larger urban centres. Geraldine is at risk of exactly this outcome. Its ability to attract families, retirees, and professionals (and associated economic emerging business and employment opportunities) seeking a high-quality rural lifestyle is directly tied to the availability of suitable housing options. Constrained planning and a failure to act on clear, latent and emerging demand actively undermines that potential.

Urban economics literature is unequivocal: restrictive land supply fuels housing unaffordability, suppresses labour mobility, and prevents districts and towns from realising their full population and economic potential (Glaeser, 2011; NZ Productivity Commission, 2015; Quigley & Rosenthal, 2005; Saiz, 2010). The persistent narrative that there is ‘low or no demand’ for new residential land in Geraldine—relied upon throughout the Plan Review process—lacks empirical grounding and analytical robustness. It rests on questionable assumptions and inconsistent data within the Property Economics reports, which obscure localised signals of growth by aggregating demand across the wider district, where overall trends point toward stagnation or decline. This approach has overlooked distinct sub-district growth dynamics and associated housing pressures specific to Geraldine. A more detailed evaluation and critique of the report’s methodology and assumptions was provided in Section 4.4.

Crucially, the ‘low or no demand for land’ narrative ignores latent demand: people who would relocate to Geraldine if land and housing options were made available. This is not hypothetical—survey responses from hopeful residents make this point repeatedly and clearly. National studies confirm that demand for rural and lifestyle living remains strong, particularly in the context of increased remote work and changing migration patterns within New Zealand (Greenaway-McGrevy & Phillips, 2020; Nunns et al., 2021a, 2021b).

By failing to recognise and activate this demand, the current planning posture does not just overlook opportunity—it actively suppresses it. The result is missed economic and social potential, escalating affordability pressures, and the continued erosion of Geraldine’s long-term resilience as a viable and vibrant community.

5.5 Governance Structures and Local Disengagement

Numerous respondents voiced strong frustration with planning processes they perceive as opaque, unresponsive, and disproportionately influenced by centralised district-level priorities. These concerns reinforce critiques in the literature (see Section 2.5) highlighting

systemic biases in local governance and the tendency for planning consultants to entrench existing power dynamics rather than challenge them (Gallent et al., 2017; Legacy & Gethin, 2020; NZ Productivity Commission, 2015; Simpson Grierson, 2023; Wolch et al., 2014).

A recurring concern was the widespread perception that council officials and consultants are either out of touch with the lived realities of smaller communities or unwilling to deviate from outdated planning orthodoxy. Respondents cited past consultation rounds where local submissions were ignored, sidelined, or treated as ‘tick box’ procedural formalities—contributing to deepening community disillusionment and a growing sense that local voices are systematically disregarded in decision-making processes.

5.6 Misalignment Between Infrastructure and Planning

Findings indicate that TDC’s rationale for delaying zoning and land release in Geraldine is largely attributed to infrastructure constraints, particularly around wastewater capacity. However, many respondents viewed this as a council-imposed bottleneck: the failure to proactively invest in infrastructure effectively chokes supply, inflates land and housing prices, and stifles economic momentum. This disjointed approach—where infrastructure planning lags behind land-use needs—echoes national-level critiques of siloed and reactive policy-making (Hudson, 2022; Ministry for the Environment, 2023).

A common reductive argument used to justify inaction and constrained land release is that councils lack the tax / ratepayer base to fund the infrastructure required to support growth (NZ Infrastructure Commission, 2021; Productivity Commission, 2012). While this is a concern raised by TDC, it overlooks the fact that key infrastructure—such as wastewater systems—can be delivered on a cost-neutral basis through user-pays funding models. This has already been demonstrated in Geraldine, where the reticulation of wastewater services to the Geraldine Downs area was financed through targeted rates, with even non-connecting residents contributing to debt servicing via their rates. Importantly, councils in New Zealand also benefit from access to favourable lending terms through the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA), enabling long-term infrastructure investment to be spread across time and users. This precedent shows that, with the right financial and governance structures and aspirational leadership by planning decision makers, infrastructure need not be a barrier to enabling well-managed and forward-looking land supply to support economic growth.

The issue reflects a broader structural flaw in New Zealand’s housing system: councils lack meaningful incentives to enable growth (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2024). In the absence of mechanisms that reward proactive planning and development—particularly in smaller towns—local authorities default to restrictive land supply policies that entrench inequities (Nunns et al., 2021a, 2021b; NZ Infrastructure Commission, 2022; NZ Productivity Commission, 2015). Strategic leadership in district economic development requires more than simply reacting to growth in dominant centres. It demands recognising and enabling the distinct strengths of district communities (Brabyn & Jackson, 2019; Corlett, 2024). Geraldine’s potential as a thriving residential, tourism, and agricultural hub is being squandered by planning frameworks that lack aspiration for the community, overlook its value and systematically deprioritise its future.

5.7 Strategic Leadership

Geraldine's situation starkly underscores the critical need for local leadership that prioritises the distinct needs of smaller towns within district-wide planning frameworks. While Timaru currently dominates as the economic and administrative centre, a truly resilient district economy must recognise the strategic importance of its smaller towns, like Geraldine, as engines of population growth, innovation, and enhanced quality of life (NZIER, 2023a, 2023b; OECD, 2018).

The TDC's reactive restructuring—triggered by the freezing works closure and broader economic pressures—reveals a shortsighted and defensive posture (Hudson & Clapham, 2022). Instead of scrambling to manage consequences after the fact, the Council and supporting bodies such as Venture Timaru must adopt forward-thinking strategies that actively build community strength, attract new residents and businesses, and lay the groundwork for enduring economic resilience (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment [MBIE], 2023; Savage & Wills, 2020). The district cannot continue with a passive, flow-through mindset; it requires deliberate, targeted enablement—embracing inward migration, fostering entrepreneurship, and cultivating a vibrant, future-focused district economy (Local Government NZ, 2021).

These findings reinforce urgent calls for a fundamental planning paradigm shift—from reactionary, compliance-driven approaches to proactive, place-based development strategies (Section 2.6) (PCE, 2017). This transformation demands courageous political and bureaucratic leadership that genuinely values local insight and dares to challenge entrenched orthodoxies that lack aspiration for the district's communities (Hodgson, 2019; MBIE, 2023). Planning decisions must be based on rigorous evidence—incorporating meaningful community engagement and robust economic analysis—not on superficial, one-size-fits-all consultant reports like the Property Economics Report underpinning the PTDP Growth component, which conspicuously lacks connection with local realities (NZ Productivity Commission, 2019; Property Economics, 2024). With the current Plan Review shaping outcomes for at least the next ~15 years, a far more rigorous, aspirational, and nuanced examination is not just desirable—it is essential (Hawke's Bay Regional Council, 2020; Hudson & Clapham, 2022).

5.8 Implications for Planning and Policy

This research reveals that Geraldine's acute constraints on housing and business land availability are not inevitable outcomes of geography or market forces but are direct consequences of avoidable planning decisions. These findings expose the fundamental shortcomings of existing district growth models and demand a radical shift toward a more sophisticated, adaptive planning framework—one that meaningfully incorporates community input, rigorously anticipates demographic and economic changes, and actively drives equitable, balanced economic development across the Timaru District.

Geraldine is far from a peripheral issue; it stands as a stark indicator of the systemic challenges confronting small towns throughout New Zealand. Overcoming these

challenges requires urgent, decisive local political leadership coupled with comprehensive reform of planning culture and practice within TDC. Without this, the district risks perpetuating stagnation, eroding community resilience, and forfeiting opportunities for sustainable growth that benefits all residents—not just those in the urban core. The future of Geraldine, and similar communities, depends on transforming passive management into bold, proactive stewardship of economic development and community resilience across the district as a whole.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.

Strength is not that of a single warrior, but that of many.

Appendix A. Annotated Bibliography

Note: Full reference and access details are provided in the reference list at the end of this report.

Citation	Annotation
Alam, A., & Nel, E. (2022). Migration, emerging multiculturalism and planning in rural and small-town Aotearoa New Zealand. <i>Australian Planner</i> , 58(3-4), 132-142.	This research indicates that rural and small-town populations in New Zealand are ageing, with these areas witnessing a rising median age. This trend is attributed to younger individuals moving to urban centres for education and employment, leaving behind an older demographic and reduced economic and cultural diversity in regional New Zealand towns.
Allmendinger, P. (2009). <i>Planning Theory</i> . Palgrave Macmillan.	Allmendinger discusses how planning theory has evolved, noting that planning consultants often operate within frameworks that favour existing power dynamics and may resist changes that threaten their established roles and stability of consultancy business.
Auckland Council. (2018). <i>Development Strategy for Sustainable Growth</i> .	This strategy report outlines how coordinated land supply and infrastructure investment are critical for enabling sustainable urban growth. It highlights the risks of delayed land servicing and release, which can suppress economic development and exacerbate housing affordability issues, reflecting challenges faced in smaller towns like Geraldine
Benje Patterson Limited. (2022). <i>Scenarios of an Aspirational Economic Future for Timaru District</i> . Venture Timaru.	This report, commissioned by Venture Timaru, presents three economic growth scenarios for the Timaru District through to 2050: a 'status quo' scenario projecting GDP growth to \$4.2 billion, a 'more' scenario with moderate enhancements, and a 'better' scenario envisioning transformative growth reaching \$9.1 billion. Achieving the 'better' scenario necessitates significant investments in housing, education, and healthcare infrastructure, alongside attracting over 1,000 net migrants annually and enhancing industry productivity. The report underscores the importance of strategic planning and investment to realise Timaru's full economic potential.
Brabyn, L. & Jackson, N. O. (2019). A new look at population change and regional development in Aotearoa New Zealand. <i>New Zealand Geographer</i> , 75(3), 116-129.	<p>Studies have found that population age is a strong predictor of migration patterns in New Zealand. Younger people tend to move to cities for tertiary education and work opportunities, while older individuals often remain in rural areas leading to an demographic skew in regional New Zealand.</p> <p>Population change and balanced demography is illustrated as interlinked with regional investment, while regional investment—or lack thereof—impact migration patterns. Places growing in population, like the Southern Lakes, are attracting significant regional investment. Whereas places like South Canterbury with</p>

	stagnant and ageing population demographics fail to attract regional investment and are confronting stark economic decline unless proactive economic development leadership changes the trajectory.
Corlett, E. (2024). New Zealand's fertility rate hits record low as births fall. <i>The Guardian</i> , Monday 19 February, 2024.	New Zealand's fertility rate has reached a historic low, with a significant drop in the number of births. This decline contributes to the ageing population, particularly in rural regions where the outflow of younger residents is exacerbating demographic imbalances.
Coulson N.E, McCoy S.J. & McDonough I.K. (2020). Economic diversification and the resiliency hypothesis: Evidence from the impact of natural disasters on regional housing values. <i>Regional Science and Urban Economics</i> , 85, 1-17.	This study published in <i>Regional Science and Urban Economics</i> found that regions with more diversified economies experience less severe and shorter-lasting economic downturns following disasters. The research indicates that economic diversity dampens both the magnitude and duration of adverse effects on local real estate values, highlighting the role of diversification in enhancing regional economic resilience.
Duff, M. (2025). 'Hollowing out': New Zealand grapples with an uncertain future as record numbers leave. <i>The Guardian</i> , Fri 9 May 2025.	This article in the <i>Guardian</i> examines how the migration of younger populations to New Zealand's urban areas is leading to increasing concerns about a "hollowing out" of the workforce in rural towns. This demographic shift associated with centralisation around major urban centres results in school closures, reduced public services, shrinking local economies and reduced community vibrancy and resilience.
Environmental Defence Society (2025). What, How, Why. Exploring the fundamental questions for resource management law reform in Aotearoa New Zealand, Paper 2: The scope of the system.	The Environmental Defence Society discusses how the implementation of the Resource Management Act (RMA) has, in practice, allowed councils to prevent the rezoning of land due to infrastructure funding constraints. This situation often positions councils as protectors of the environment, while developers are viewed as pursuing profit at the expense of community interests, reinforcing a binary perception.
Fischel, W. A. (2001). <i>The homevoter hypothesis: How home values influence local government taxation, school finance, and land-use policies</i> . Harvard University Press.	Fischel's seminal work argues that local government decisions are often influenced by homeowners' desire to protect property values, leading to restrictive land-use policies that limit housing supply and worsen affordability—particularly for new entrants and renters.
Flyvbjerg, B. (1998). <i>Rationality and power: Democracy in practice</i> . University of Chicago Press.	Flyvbjerg discusses how experts can manipulate planning processes to serve specific interests, leading to outcomes that reinforce existing power structures and process capture that prevents access by public interests.
Frethy, M. (2024). 'Eyes glaze over' - Councils struggle to get engagement (August 26, 2024).	A 2024 report by 1News Local Democracy Reporter Max Frethey highlights that nearly 70% of New Zealanders believe communities should be more involved in council decisions. However, actual engagement remains low, with many residents feeling disconnected from the planning processes.

Friedmann, J. (1986). The world city hypothesis. <i>Development and Change</i> , 17(1), 69-83.	Introduces the idea of spatially balanced growth and critiques over-centralisation of economic development.
Gallent, N., Durrant, D., & May, N. (2017). <i>Housing supply, choice and affordability: The governance of housing and planning</i> . Bristol University Press.	This book examines the structural governance frameworks that shape housing supply and planning decisions in the UK but with relevance to other liberalised planning regimes like New Zealand's. It critiques how centralised decision-making, developer-driven processes, and overly rigid planning orthodoxy marginalise local needs and diminish community agency. This supports assertions about community frustration with opaque planning systems that favour large developers and overlook small-town realities.
Glaeser, E. L. (2011). <i>Triumph of the city: How our greatest invention makes us richer, smarter, greener, healthier, and happier</i> . Penguin Press	Glaeser contends that restrictive land-use policies and constrained housing supply limit urban potential, increase inequality, and hinder labour market flexibility. The work provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how planning choices impact economic dynamism—particularly relevant to debates around land availability in regional settings.
Glaeser, E. L., Gyourko, J., & Saks, R. (2005). Why is Manhattan so expensive? Regulation and the rise in housing prices. <i>The Journal of Law and Economics</i> , 48(2), 331-369.	This study analyses how regulatory and planning restrictions—not natural scarcity—drive housing prices higher in urban and rural areas. It underscores that restrictive land policies reduce affordability and economic opportunity, supporting critiques of reactive or overly cautious planning.
Greenaway-McGrevy, R., & Phillips, P. C. B. (2020). <i>Rural-urban migration and housing demand under remote work conditions</i> . University of Auckland Business School (Working Paper).	This working paper examines how remote work is influencing internal migration trends within New Zealand. The authors suggest that demand for rural and semi-rural living is rising, especially as digital connectivity reduces the need to live near employment hubs. The study supports the idea of latent demand in regional areas like Geraldine that is not captured by conventional demand modelling.
Hawke's Bay Regional Council. (2020). <i>Regional growth strategy and planning framework</i> .	This report highlights the importance of regional planning that balances urban and rural needs, emphasizing sustainable growth and community engagement over reactive policies.
He, D, Miao, P., & Qureshi, N.A. (2022). Can industrial diversification help strengthen regional economic resilience? <i>Frontiers in Environmental Science</i> , 10, 987396.	This study in <i>Frontiers in Environmental Science</i> explored the impact of industrial diversification on economic resilience. The findings indicate that diversified industries enhance a region's ability to withstand economic shocks, further supporting the argument for land availability across multiple locations to facilitate diverse economic development.
Hodgson, K. (2019). Leadership and innovation in local government. <i>Journal of Public Administration</i> , 34(2), 110-125.	Discusses the need for courageous, visionary leadership in local governments to break free from outdated bureaucratic practices and foster innovation responsive to community needs.
Huang, T., Katz, A. and Dunn, T. (2024). Housing availability and affordability. A	This report analyses housing pressures in Canterbury, highlighting how limited land release and servicing delays contribute to unaffordability and constrain

case study on the Canterbury region. NZIER Insight 111-2024.	regional growth. It argues for more integrated land-use and infrastructure planning and critiques reactive council policies that overlook latent demand in smaller centres. The findings provide empirical support for addressing planning-induced supply constraints in towns like Geraldine.
Hudson, J., & Clapham, S. (2022). Economic resilience in regional New Zealand: Challenges and opportunities. <i>New Zealand Economic Papers</i> , 56(1), 23-41.	Analyses how regions affected by major industrial closures suffer from short-term reactive policies, and recommends proactive economic diversification and local leadership.
Hudson, J. (2022). Infrastructure bottlenecks and housing development in New Zealand: Breaking the silos. <i>New Zealand Planning Journal</i> , 37(1), 24-30.	Hudson reviews New Zealand case studies where delays in infrastructure investment cause bottlenecks in housing development. The article argues for integrated land-use and infrastructure planning to overcome siloed governance and support economic growth.
Legacy, C., & Gethin, D. (2020). <i>Reconfiguring community engagement in planning: Rearticulating the state-civil society relationship</i> . <i>Urban Policy and Research</i> , 38(2), 192-207.	This article critiques traditional forms of community consultation in urban and regional planning, arguing that they often serve as symbolic participation rather than genuine collaboration. It proposes rethinking how planners engage with communities to foster inclusive and equitable governance. The paper reinforces concerns in report about consultation being perceived as tokenistic and disconnected from the lived experience of smaller communities.
Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ). (2021). <i>Future-Ready Communities: Planning for Growth</i> .	A policy brief emphasising local government's role in facilitating sustainable growth through deliberate strategies supporting inward migration, enterprise, and place-based development.
Donovan, S. (2025). Less Crowded Houses: The Success of NZ's Housing Policy Reforms and Implications for Australia. Centre for Independent Studies.	Donovan analyses New Zealand's ongoing housing policy reforms, highlighting how previous zoning restrictions and planning preferences for increased residential density, coupled with limitations on greenfield development, have contributed to housing scarcity and increased prices. This paper highlights how upzoning in cities like Auckland and Lower Hutt led to increased housing supply and improved affordability, but the study focuses on Tier 1 local governments where state government intervention has focused. It discusses the distributional effects of these reforms and notes that incumbent homeowners often resist changes that might affect property values, illustrating a bias towards maintaining the status quo.
Mckay, M & Petersen, K. (2015). <i>Rural community resilience: Research stocktake and annotated bibliography</i> . Research Report Prepared for AgResearch Limited.	This study on rural community resilience in New Zealand by Lincoln University researchers for AgResearch found that locations with more diversified services and resources are perceived by residents as more resilient. This suggests that spreading economic activities across various areas within a regional and district context bolsters community stability and adaptive resilience.

Mills, E. S. (1992). <i>Studies in urban economics</i> . Johns Hopkins University Press.	Mills' influential work provides a theoretical framework linking land availability, labour mobility, and economic growth. It supports the argument that constrained land supply reduces local economic dynamism and resilience.
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). (2023). <i>Regional Economic Development Strategy 2023-2030</i> .	Outlines New Zealand government priorities for economic resilience, highlighting the importance of localised strategies and integrated land release and infrastructure planning.
Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) (2017). Urban development authorities discussion document, Section E. Stakeholder Guide: Developers. 7 April 2017.	The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) discusses the government's proposal to streamline and expedite large-scale projects, such as suburb-wide regeneration. While aimed at accelerating urban development, this approach can inadvertently favour developers with substantial resources, potentially sidelining community input.
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. (2024). <i>Going for Housing Growth: Implementing the First Stage</i> .	This cabinet paper discusses the fundamental problems driving New Zealand's housing crisis, including insufficient land supply, infrastructure funding challenges, and poor incentives for councils to support growth.
Murphy, L. (2014). To the market and back: Housing policy and state housing in New Zealand. <i>GeoJournal</i> , 79(4), 487-498. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-014-9547-9	Murphy discusses how housing policy in New Zealand has long been shaped by ideologies favouring homeownership, and how political and planning decisions often reflect the interests of incumbent homeowners, contributing to systemic affordability issues.
New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER). (2023a). <i>Rural Towns and Regional Growth: Unlocking Potential</i> .	Examines demographic shifts and economic opportunities in smaller towns, underscoring the potential for lifestyle and innovation-driven population growth if land and planning policies are aligned.
NZIER. (2023b). <i>Assessing Housing Shortages in New Zealand</i> .	This report presents results from a housing shortage model, estimating that New Zealand could have accumulated a shortfall of over 80,000 dwellings since 2001, highlighting significant regional disparities.
NZIER (2015). <i>Land use regulation in New Zealand. Improving the Evidence Base. NZIER report to the New Zealand Productivity Commission</i> . (Author: Dr Lees, K).	Commissioned by the New Zealand Productivity Commission, this report surveys land use regulation within New Zealand's fastest-growing local authorities, providing insights into how regulations affect land availability for housing.
NZ Infrastructure Commission / Te Waihangā. (2022). <i>The decline of housing supply in New Zealand: Why it happened and how to reverse it</i> . Wellington: New Zealand Infrastructure Commission / Te Waihangā. Te Waihangā Research Insights series.	This research explores how infrastructure and urban planning policies have shaped housing markets in New Zealand, presenting options for making housing more available and affordable.
NZ Infrastructure Commission / Te Waihangā (2021). <i>Infrastructure for a Better Future: Aotearoa New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy</i> .	This strategy acknowledges that local councils face infrastructure funding and financing challenges that influence their growth planning decisions.

NZ Productivity Commission. (2019). <i>Better Urban Planning: Supporting Balanced Regional Development</i> .	Critiques the current compliance-driven planning system in New Zealand and calls for more proactive, evidence-based approaches that incorporate community input and local economic contexts.
NZ Productivity Commission. (2015). <i>Using land for housing</i> .	This report examines how New Zealand's planning and land use regulations impact the supply and affordability of housing. It highlights the critical role of land availability and infrastructure provision in addressing housing shortages.
NZ Productivity Commission (2017). <i>Better Urban Planning</i> .	The Productivity Commission's "Better Urban Planning" issues paper highlights concerns about the current planning system, noting that it can be complex and difficult for the public to navigate, potentially leading to perceptions of bias toward well-resourced stakeholders.
NZ Productivity Commission. (2012). <i>Housing Affordability Inquiry - Final Report</i> . New Zealand Productivity Commission.	This foundational report explicitly discusses how councils' perceived infrastructure costs and limited revenue streams act as a barrier to land release and urban expansion, but provided strategic insights into how councils can navigate these issues with lending and user-pay mechanisms.
Nunns, P., Hitchins, H., & Balderston, K. (2021a). <i>Rural Housing Preferences in New Zealand: Trends and Policy Implications</i> . New Zealand Productivity Commission.	Examines the demand for rural and lifestyle housing in New Zealand, relevant to the Geraldine case.
Nunns, P., Hitchins, H., & Mitchell, I. (2021b). <i>Urban form, transport, and infrastructure: Literature review and policy implications</i> . Ministry for the Environment.	This New Zealand-based review synthesises research on the interconnections between land use, housing demand, and transport infrastructure. It highlights the continued preference among many New Zealanders for rural and lifestyle housing, particularly in the context of changing work practices post-COVID. The report underscores the importance of proactive planning to accommodate these evolving preferences.
OECD (2020). <i>Regional Development Policies in OECD Countries</i> . Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	Provides insights into best practices for regional economic planning and proactive governance.
OECD. (2018). <i>Rural Well-being: Geography of Opportunities</i> . OECD Publishing.	Provides an international perspective on the strategic value of smaller towns in supporting broader economic and social resilience within regions.
Quigley, J. M., & Raphael, S. (2005). <i>Regulation and the high cost of housing in California</i> . <i>American Economic Review</i> , 95(2), 323-328.	This empirical research shows how stringent land-use regulations contribute to housing unaffordability and limit economic mobility, often by underestimating latent demand. Their findings parallel challenges faced by smaller towns restricting growth.
Quigley, J. M., & Rosenthal, L. A. (2005). <i>The effects of land use regulation on the</i>	This article reviews empirical evidence on how land-use regulation affects housing costs. The authors conclude

price of housing: What do we know? <i>Cityscape</i> , 8(1), 69-137.	that restrictive planning frameworks contribute to housing unaffordability by reducing the elasticity of housing supply. The paper provides a strong empirical foundation for claims that poor land-use policy undermines housing markets and economic dynamism.
Property Economics. (2024). <i>Timaru District Property and Growth Report</i> .	A consultancy report criticised for its limited engagement with local communities and reliance on aggregated data that fail to capture latent demand and nuanced local conditions.
Reid, A & Schulze, H. (2019). <i>Engaged communities How community-led development can increase civic participation</i> . BERL - Helen Clark Foundation co-publication.	The BERL report, "Engaged Communities," notes a decline in voter turnout for local authority elections in New Zealand since the 1980s. This trend suggests that people may not feel their voices matter or see their concerns reflected in policy discussions, leading to increased disengagement from local governance, leading to expert capture and being 'spoken for' due to having no access or cut through within local government processes.
Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2018). The revenge of the places that don't matter (and what to do about it). <i>Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society</i> , 11(1), 189-209	Highlights the need for policies that support smaller towns and regions, rather than concentrating economic activity in single urban centres.
Rydin, Y. (2007). Re-examining the Role of Knowledge within Planning Theory. <i>Planning Theory</i> , 6(1), 52-68.	Rydin explores how planning knowledge is constructed and used, highlighting the potential for expert knowledge to dominate planning processes and marginalise other forms of knowledge and local perspectives.
Sager, T. (2009). <i>Planners' role: Torn between dialogical ideals and neo-liberal realities</i> . <i>European Planning Studies</i> , 17(1), 65-84.	Sager examines the tension planners face between participatory ideals and the realities of neoliberal governance, where consultants may prioritise market-driven outcomes that align with their interests.
Saiz, A. (2010). The geographic determinants of housing supply. <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> , 125(3), 1253-1296.	Saiz develops a model that quantifies how geographic constraints and regulatory barriers interact to restrict housing supply in the United States. The paper is widely cited for its finding that both physical and regulatory constraints lead to higher house prices. Its methodology is relevant to New Zealand towns constrained not by geography but by planning frameworks.
Savage, J., & Wills, T. (2020). Community-led development: lessons from New Zealand's regional towns. <i>Journal of Regional Policy</i> , 12(3), 99-117.	Presents case studies illustrating successful local government leadership in small towns through proactive local government planning and community engagement.
Simpson Grierson (2023). <i>Critical thinking for a critical role: the future of local government</i> .	Statement offers industry insights following The Future for Local Government Review Panel's release of its final report, concluding a two-year process that involved the preparation of interim and draft reports, and extensive consultation with key stakeholders

	(including LGNZ and Taituarā), local authorities and communities.
Simpson Grierson & New Zealand Planning Institute. (2023). <i>Future of planning – legal & institutional barriers to reform</i> .	This joint report outlines systemic issues in New Zealand's planning legislation, including overly prescriptive frameworks, inflexible zoning practices, and resistance to innovation. It critiques how the legal structure and institutional inertia limit councils' responsiveness to changing demographic, economic, and social conditions.
Shahzad, W. M., Hassan, A., & Rotimi, J. O. B. (2021). The challenges of land development for housing provision in New Zealand. <i>Journal of Housing and the Built Environment</i> , 37, 1319-1337	<p>This study investigates the challenges in land development processes that contribute to housing shortages and affordability issues in New Zealand. It emphasises the need for efficient operations and stakeholder collaboration to overcome these challenges.</p> <p>A key finding is also that people in positions of power in local government own homes in the local areas they represent, so have benefited from inflationary dynamic of constrained supply being passed off as 'no demand'.</p>
Statistics NZ (2020). Housing in Aotearoa: 2020 (updated 2021). Retrieved from www.stats.govt.nz , 21 April 2024.	This comprehensive report provides an overview of New Zealand's housing landscape, examining aspects such as tenure, affordability, habitability, and suitability. It highlights significant disparities in housing affordability, noting that house prices have risen faster than wages, particularly in urban areas like Auckland and Wellington. The report also discusses the impact of limited land availability on housing supply, indicating that constraints in land development contribute to the ongoing affordability issues. By analysing data across different demographics and regions, the report underscores the challenges faced in ensuring equitable access to affordable housing in New Zealand.
Storper, M. (2013). <i>Keys to the city: How economics, institutions, social interaction, and politics shape development</i> . Princeton University Press	Discusses the role of land use planning and economic geography in shaping regional and local economic development outcomes.
Stigler, G. J. (1971). The theory of economic regulation. <i>The Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science</i> , 2(1), 3-21.	Stigler's seminal work introduces the concept of regulatory capture, explaining how regulatory agencies can be dominated by the industries they are charged with overseeing, leading to decisions that benefit incumbents over the public interest. Regulatory capture is defined as a process where regulatory agencies become dominated by the interests they regulate, resulting in actions that benefit incumbent firms rather than the public good.
The Guardian. (2024). 2m x 6m with a composting toilet: New Zealand embraces tiny home living.	This article discusses the growing trend of tiny home living in New Zealand as a response to housing

	affordability issues, highlighting innovative approaches to housing in the face of land availability constraints. ¹²
Wheen, N & Geddis, A. (2024). New Zealand plans to put big developments before the environment. That's dangerous. <i>The Guardian</i> (22 April 2024).	Nicola Wheen and Andrew Geddis, both professors of law at the University of Otago report in the <i>The Guardian</i> on New Zealand's Fast-Track Approvals legislation, which allows major development projects to bypass existing environmental laws. Critics argue that this undermines public and parliamentary scrutiny, enabling large-scale developers to further dominate decision-making processes at the expense of community interests and economic equity who are silenced due to unavailable channels of democratic recourse.
Wolch, J. R., Byrne, J., & Newell, J. P. (2014). Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: The challenge of making cities 'just green enough'. <i>Landscape and Urban Planning</i> , 125, 234-244.	While focused on environmental justice and green space, this article is influential in exposing how urban planning decisions often reinforce existing inequalities by prioritising dominant interests. It argues for more just and participatory approaches in urban policy, substantiating assertions about structural imbalances in who benefits from planning decisions—relevant when discussing power dynamics and marginalisation of rural voices.

¹² The article does not address explicitly but speaks to the systemic issues associated with housing affordability and land supply issues as encompassed within the reports summarised within this bibliography, and particularly by the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission's (2022) analysis and report.

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Section A. About You and Your Business

1. What is your connection to Geraldine?

- Business owner
- Resident
- Hopeful resident (living elsewhere)
- Community organisation representative
- Other

2. If you are a business owner or community organisation representative, how would you describe the size of your business or organisation?

- Sole trader
- 2-5 Employees
- 6-10 Employees
- 11-20 Employees
- 21+ Employees

3. How long have you been operating in Geraldine?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- Over 10 years

4. What sector best describes your business or organisation?

- Retail
- Food production
- Agriculture or rural services
- Professional services
- Building and construction
- Real Estate
- Other

Section B. Housing and Land Availability in Geraldine

Housing Availability

1. How would you describe the current availability of housing in Geraldine?

- Ample / adequate housing available
- Somewhat adequate housing available
- Limited housing available
- No housing available

Feel free to explain your answer: [long answer question]

Land Development Needs

2a. Is there sufficient land available for residential development in Geraldine?

- Yes, there is enough
- No, there is not enough
- Unsure

2b. Is there sufficient land available for rural lifestyle development in Geraldine?

- Yes, there is enough
- No, there is not enough
- Unsure

3. Has housing or land availability impacted your ability to run or grow a business or community organisation in Geraldine?

- Yes, significantly
- Yes, somewhat
- No impact
- Not applicable

Feel free to explain your answer, or provide an example: [long answer question]

4. Do you think housing and land availability affects Geraldine's ability to attract and retain new residents and workers?

- Yes, significantly
- Yes, somewhat
- No impact
- Not applicable

Feel free to explain your answer, or provide an example: [long answer question]

5. What do you see as the biggest barriers to Geraldine's ongoing economic growth and community prosperity?

6. Would you be interested in participating in a follow-up workshop to discuss the survey findings and explore next steps?

- Yes, I'm interested
- Maybe, I'd like more information
- No, I'm not interested

Appendix C: Summary of Survey Results

The following graphs provide an overview of data from survey questions 2, 3 and 4. These questions were only relevant to business owners and representatives of community organisations, comprising approximately 43% of total respondents.

Figure 1. Overview of organisation sizes (survey question 2) (n = 57)

2. If you are a business owner or community organisation representative, how would you describe the size of your business or organisation?

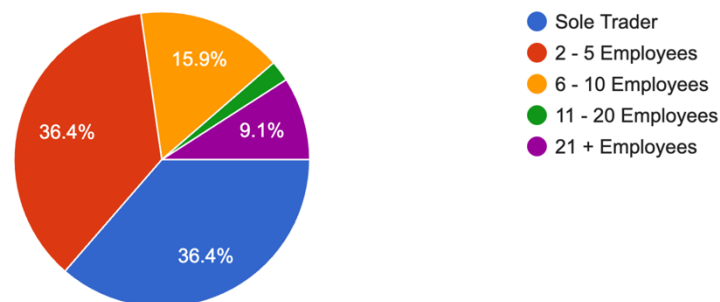


Figure 2. Length of time operating in Geraldine (survey question 3) (n = 57).

3. How long have you been operating in Geraldine?

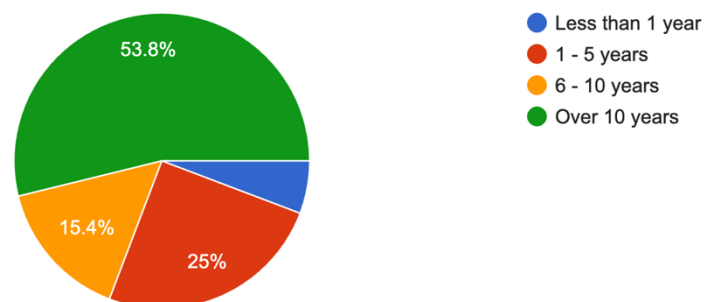


Figure 3. Overview of sectors represented among business and community organisation respondents (survey question 4) (n = 57).

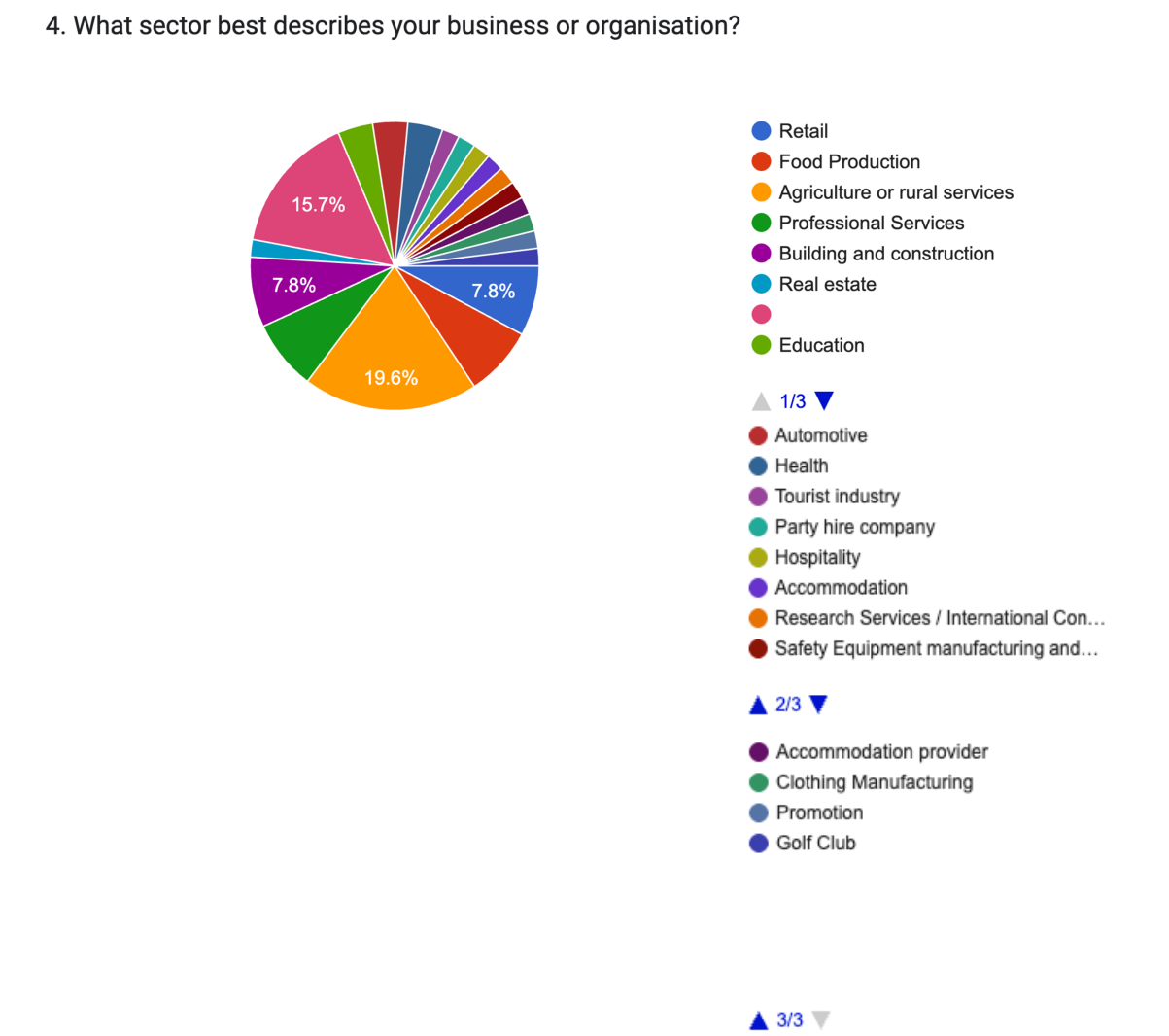
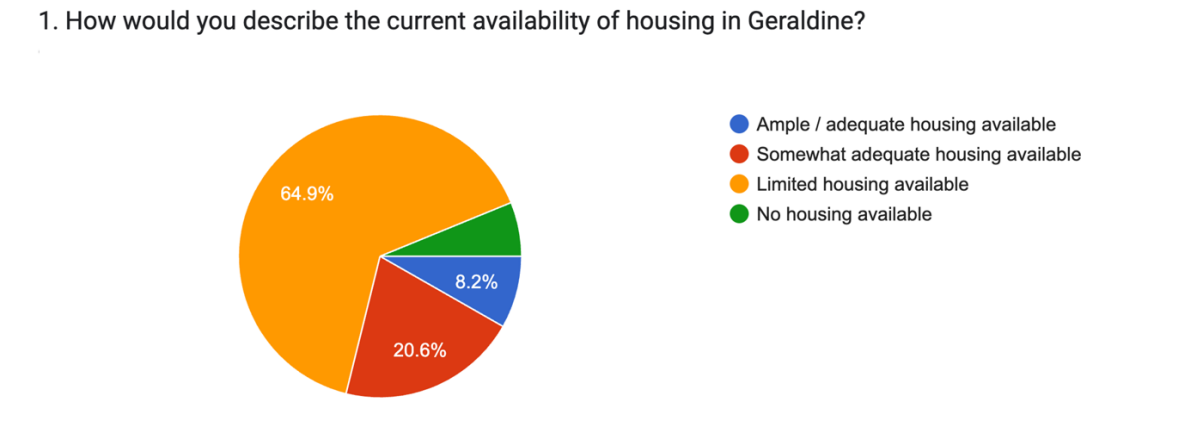


Figure 4. Graphed responses to Section B, Question 1.



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