

Submitter Evidence

General Plan Introductory comments

1. My Name is Hamish Robert Weir
2. I am a Licensed Cadastral Surveyor and Registered Professional Surveyor being a full Member of Survey Spatial New Zealand with 19 years' experience in the Industry
3. I am here to represent the Gore District's constituents in respect of the Proposed Gore District Plan (PGDP) from the perspective of a local RMA practitioner having been active in the Gore District since 2015.
4. The following points address my submissions and further submissions made.

Financial & development contributions in respect of S69.008 - FS5.6 – Oppose in part / disallow in part

5. Contributions have long been a source of controversy. I have recently been involved in a Central Otago situation where funds taken for the purpose of upgrading a sewer pump station were not spent on doing so and have now devalued to the extent that they fall well short of the current day cost of same. The OGD's financial contribution section was put into abeyance by Councillors due to the suppressive effect it was causing on development in the district. If they are to be reintroduced, then careful study of the impacts of doing so should be undertaken. If implemented, mechanisms to ensure that the funds are spent for the purpose taken, in a timely manner, should be instigated before contributions are taken.
6. The value of any contributions taken should be specific to the development proposed, accounting for only changes and acknowledging existing baselines. Consideration should be given to application of such by adjacent Councils, in terms of value, to ensure competitive advantage is not lost.
7. In terms of subdivision, this will prevent potential developers proceeding while the stock of consented non-contribution subdivisions works through the system. This will inevitably result in a reduction in supply and a following increase in land value. Further land value increases will be incurred directly by the payment of contributions.
8. I gladly acknowledge the Officers partial acceptance of this submission.

Forestry in respect of – S85.001 - FS5.2 – Oppose in part / Allow in part

9. Forestry where potential exists for 'carbon farming' whereby the exotic trees are planted with no intention of harvest is a significant risk to the Gore Districts less productive rural properties. If established, these forests create fire hazard, deplete valuable rural jobs

without creating new ones and often increase spread of 'wilding species' through sensitive environments in the district.

10. The Environment Southland (ES) submission goes a step too far by proposing prohibition as 'the right tree in the right place' is still appropriate for example steep gullies on farms which are inefficient to graze.
11. The issues arise mainly in the Rural Zone I would propose a rule prohibiting carbon farming in the district and requiring silviculture plans for all continuous forestry of 5 ha or more.
12. Additional Rules should be added to the Rural Zone chapter to control the extent and locality of forestry within the District as opposed to an outright ban.
13. A new PDGP chapter is an excessive request so I partially agree with the officers rejection of this submission by ES but want my concerns re forestry to be recorded.

Introduction of Engineering specification to the PGDP in respect of - S99.027 - FS5.10 – Support / Allow

14. The Clark Fortune submission has already identified a discrepancy between the Subdivision & Development Bylaw and PGDP which is a point of significant concern when noting that myself and other professionals only have limited time in which to assess these specifications. If they are inconsistent with the current Bylaw then they are likely to be inconsistent with the NZS 4404:2010 specifications as well.
15. Requiring specific engineering detail at consent lodgement stage will significantly increase the cost of applications. There are often applications where non engineering matters require testing by the lodgement of an application. These applications will no longer be viable to submit. Any experienced Civil design professional will tell you that it is possible to design around most constraints. No applicant wants to incur these costs if there are other 'planning' matters such as visual amenity or interpretation of National Environmental Standards, Policies or Plan Rules in question. Keeping Engineering specification outside of the PGDP would allow continuance of cost effective applications.
16. District Plans are expensive and time consuming to change. Engineering design continually changes with, and responds to, advances in technology. Putting Engineering matters into a likely 20yr+ document is nonsensical and will increase planning costs unnecessarily. The current bylaw has only recently been revised and is in line with current New Zealand Standards. It is my view that the system of having a separate Engineering Bylaw is working well and the old saying of 'if it isn't broken, don't fix it' comes to mind.
17. I have later identified another conflict in respect of 3m wide driveway allowance in Transportation table S10 when note 4 should be corrected to note 3. This is a further example of error in the current proposed plan which raises doubt about the other specific standards included.
18. I disagree with the officer and recommend that the PGDP stick to Planning and leave the Engineering specification for external processes as is the norm in other Districts.

S147.026 - FS5.8 - Support Allow

19. The Operative Gore District Plan or OGDG is considered to be a permissive plan, and in my opinion has served its purpose well. It has been generally less cumbersome than the adjacent Southland and Clutha Plans, often providing comparatively more streamlined and cost-effective processes.
20. Times have moved on, development activity has increased and some tightening of the rules was always to be expected during this process. The default setting of the PGDP to apply 'non-complying status' to the majority of non-conforming activities is in my opinion a swing too far towards a rigid planning regime. The current plan's default Discretionary status has been fit for purpose and does not need a reset. In many instances the effects of non-conformance with the PGDP rules or standards does not constitute an activity that has significant adverse effects. Non-complying status will result in future processing RMA planners to be excessive in their assessments often requiring unnecessary reporting and applying unreasonable conditions. I have in my submission and further submissions specifically identified rules where non-complying status could be reclassified to discretionary but in general I appeal to you all for a reset to default discretionary for the PGDP.
21. I disagree with the Officer's recommendation of status quo default non-complying and implore you to further scrutinise this stance.

Copy of Previous Submissions Made

S69.008 - FS5.6 – Oppose in part / disallow in part

Submission

The District Plan is a valuable tool to provide for well planned and executed growth and development in a sustainable way. Supports the overall objectives and policies of the plan that values important natural and cultural assets and manages development. Concerned at the current lack of development contributions policy. New development without financial contributions places extra burden on existing ratepayer

Decision sought - Develop a development contribution policy to sit alongside the District Plan.

Further Submission

While I agree with Ian's concerns around cost falling on rate payers, I am concerned that this will considerably reduce subdivision consents for a period of time until all those consented without

contributions are given effect to. This lag will cause a supply restriction which will put upward pressure on property values. I would request that any Policy is formulated on a study of the current costs to rate payer of no contributions. I suspect that the increase in number of rate payers across the district is offsetting these costs. Specific consideration should be given to all of these matters before any Policies are implemented.

S85.001 - FS5.2 – Oppose in part / Allow in part

Submission

Exotic wilding tree species have the potential to cause widespread adverse ecological, amenity, economic and cultural effects. Establish a new chapter similar to chapter 34 of the QLDC PDP. Douglas Fir and other wilding species outlined in the QLDC chapter should be prohibited from being planted in the Gore District

Further Submission

I support establishment of exotic forestry in locations where they do not replace productive rural activities, can suppress weed species and produce timber.

I oppose establishment of exotic forestry on productive and well developed hill country farm land.

A balance needs to be struck between allowing forestry in inappropriate locations without resource consents and preventing entire productive farms being converted into carbon farms'. Carbon farming should be a prohibited activity in my view and all trees should be planted with a view to harvesting.

S99.027 - FS5.10 – Support / Allow

Submission

TRANS-S5 contradicts the Gore District Council (DGC) Subdivision and Land Development Bylaw 2019 (based on the NZS 4404:2010 national standard). Construction details should not be specified, but if they are, they should be consistent with other bylaws and standards. Specified gradient of no more than 5% (i.e. 1 in 20) within 6m of footpath contradicts bylaw specification of no steeper than 1 in 8 (i.e. 12.5%) for the first 5m, and 1 in 5 (20%) beyond that (with 1 in 4.5 permitted for short straight sections).

S147.026 - FS5.8 - Support Allow

Submission

Zone rules have a default non-complying activity status when it is not a specified activity. This is

considered unnecessary, particularly where activities are of low scale and may have minor effects.

Further Submission

Discretionary is the appropriate status