BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL
OF HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL

UNDER	the Resource Management Act 1991 ("**RMA**")
AND	
IN THE MATTER	of Private Plan Change 17 to the Hamilton City Operative District Plan ("**PC17**")

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF EXPERT EVIDENCE OF SAMUEL JAMES COLES ON BEHALF OF FONTERRA LIMITED

URBAN DESIGN

2 DECEMBER 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is Samuel James Coles. I am a Technical Director – Urban Design at Harrison Grierson. My qualifications and experience are set out in my Primary Statement of Evidence.

1.2 I confirm that I have read the Expert Witness Code of Conduct set out in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2023. I have complied with the Code of Conduct in preparing this evidence and I agree to comply with it while giving oral evidence before the Hearings Commissioners. Except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person, this written evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this evidence.

1.3 My evidence concerns the urban design aspects of Private Plan Change 17 ("**PC17**"). This summary draws only on my primary statement of evidence (7 October 2025) and my rebuttal statement (20 November 2025) already filed for PC17.

1.4 It provides a concise overview of my findings and responses to other evidence to assist the Panel.

2. SCOPE OF MY EVIDENCE

2.1 My evidence addresses the proposed rezoning of approximately 91 hectares surrounding the Te Rapa Dairy Manufacturing Site at Te Rapa North (**"Plan Change Area**") from Deferred Industrial Zone ("**DIZ"**) to Te Rapa North Industrial Zone ("**TRNIZ**").

2.2 Topics within my evidence comprise the following:

(a) Outline of the existing environment and site context as a precursor to the design of the proposed Structure Plan;

(b) Summary of the urban design process of the PC17 framework;

(c) Summary of the key outcomes of PC17 from an urban design perspective, including the following topics that are within my area of expertise:

(i) the transport hierarchy and spatial design of the roading network;

(ii) the central focal hub and amenities within the Plan Change Area;

(iii) the integration of open space within the Plan Change Area;

(iv) interfaces at the edges of the Plan Change Area and effects on neighbouring land; and

(v) activities proposed to be enabled within the Plan Change Area.

(d) Response to urban design matters raised in the Section 42A Report;

(e) Response to urban design matters raised in submissions; and

(f) An overall conclusion on PC17 from an urban design perspective.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Overall urban design outcome

3.1 PC17 enables a well-functioning industrial environment that leverages the site's strategic transport context, protects key natural features, and provides for worker wellbeing.

Site Context

3.2 The PC17 Area has a logical boundary, framed by the Waikato River and State Highway 1C ("**SH1C**"). This land is well suited to industrial development and, once developed, would contribute to a significant corridor of industrial activity located between Hamilton and Horotiu.

3.3 The PC17 Structure Plan has been designed to complement the Te Rapa Dairy Manufacturing Site ("**TRDMS**").

3.4 Key transport routes include SH1C, Te Rapa Road, a future Northern River Crossing ("**NRC**"), and the North Island Main Trunk Railway Line ("**NIMT**"). These contribute to the strategic value of the PC17 Area.

Design Process

3.5 An appropriate urban design process was undertaken through the development of the Key Design Moves, an Illustrative Master Plan, and the PC17 Structure Plan. The process has been iterative, with numerous

amendments made to the design in response to technical inputs and stakeholder feedback.

3.6 Urban design outcomes enabled by PC17 include:

Urban structure and staging

3.7 The Structure Plan establishes a clear transport hierarchy and urban pattern, including large development blocks defined by topography, infrastructure and stormwater catchments. This enables proportional delivery of enabling infrastructure alongside land release.

3.8 The structure of the PC17 area is supported by a strong transport strategy. This includes potential future upgrades and connections into neighbouring land, including the Koura Drive extension to the NRC.

Te Rapa Stream and Waikato River

3.9 The Waikato River's margins are protected within Natural Open Space zoning.

3.10 The entire Te Rapa Stream corridor is identified as a future reserve. An adjacent collector road increases visibility and activation of this open space corridor, and stormwater management areas will contribute to its physical scale and environmental footprint. This makes the Stream a character-defining element of the Plan Change Area.

Transport connectivity

3.11 The Structure Plan proposes a multi-modal movement hierarchy with an efficient layout. This provides for internal servicing of industrial sites while retaining Te Rapa Road as an arterial corridor supporting bus and cycle movements.

3.12 Internal roading adopts cross-sections have been tailored from Operative District Plan ("**ODP**") baselines to include cycling facilities and amenity landscaping.

3.13 The pattern of internal roads and intersections encourages loops for efficiency, while minimising crossings of the Te Rapa Stream.

3.14 Provision is made to support a rail siding / spur to the NIMT, with adjacent industrial blocks sized to enable rail-integration.

Focal Area for worker amenities

3.15 The two hectare location provided for a Focal Area is well-connected to main roads and the Te Rapa Stream corridor. It enables food and beverage and other worker-oriented amenities at a scale that supports wellbeing without undermining the role of established retail centres.

Built form, setbacks, and landscaping

3.16 The Structure Plan will enable a variety of industrial activity, including for example, large-scale logistics operations.

3.17 A maximum building height of 20m is appropriate for industrial operations at this location. Landscaping buffers and building setbacks are calibrated to achieve better streetscape outcomes on Te Rapa Road, including by enabling built form near the road boundary.

3.18 Landscape buffers to sensitive interfaces provide screening to support amenity values until development beyond the edges of PC17 occurs.

3.19 Detailed building and site design is left to consenting, providing flexibility to accommodate the wide range of industrial activities anticipated.

Policy alignment

3.20 PC17's urban design outcomes align with the urban design aspects of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development, the Future Proof Strategy, and relevant ODP provisions for good urban design.

4. RESPONSE TO OTHER EVIDENCE

Horotiu East South (HES) Block interface with PC17

4.1 The planning evidence of Mr Grala identified that the HES Block has Te Rapa North Industrial zoning, is within the Deferred Industrial area, and is subject to the TRDMS Noise Emissions Boundary overlay. In this context, PC17's interface provisions are proportionate.

4.2 I do not support the additional controls sought by Mr Collier and Mr Bilsborough. These seek to restrict maximum building height to 12m within 40m of the HES boundary and impose a 20m setback to industrial operations. In urban design terms:

(a) A stepped height limit would be even more onerous than typical standards applied at industrial–residential or industrial–open space interfaces;

(b) The large 20m setback is unnecessary. This open area could result in external activity (parking / loading / storage) that produces adverse effects at the site boundary. Built form, with landscape buffers, typically achieves a suitable edge to industrial development, so should not be discouraged;

(c) The requested additional controls, in combination, would unduly constrain site layouts and building envelopes across a sizeable strip of TRNIZ land; and

(d) The specific controls sought do not reflect an industrial context or respond to the mitigating effect of the Interface Landscape Buffer.

Potential for proliferation of non-industrial activities in the Zone

4.3 Industrial zones today accommodate a wide and evolving mix of activities. Enabling a broad range of activities supports a functional industrial environment, while restrictions on large-format retail activity will avoid unintended impacts on established centres.

Extent of the Plan Change Area

4.4 Submissions seeking to include additional DIZ land south of the TRMS are noted. From an urban design perspective, the PC17 extent is appropriate and does not conflict with the ability for adjoining DIZ land to be live zoned in future.

5. CLOSING STATEMENT

5.1 In my opinion, PC17 represents sound urban design. It establishes a clear and workable urban structure, safeguards the Te Rapa Stream and Waikato River margins, provides proportionate interface treatments, and enables amenities that support a well-functioning industrial environment.

Samuel Coles

2 December 2025