

Councils give massive subdivision green light

By GRAHAM SKELLERN

DEVELOPERS hope work on the Western Bay's biggest subdivision will start by the year's end after getting council approval.

A joint hearings committee involving Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District councils has approved a private plan change and granted a series of resource consents to Pyes Pa west developers Grasshopper Properties.

Tauranga-based Grasshopper is planning to transform 280ha of farmland on the southern outskirts into a bustling suburb of more than 2000 sections catering for between 6000-6000 people, equivalent to the present population of Te Puke.

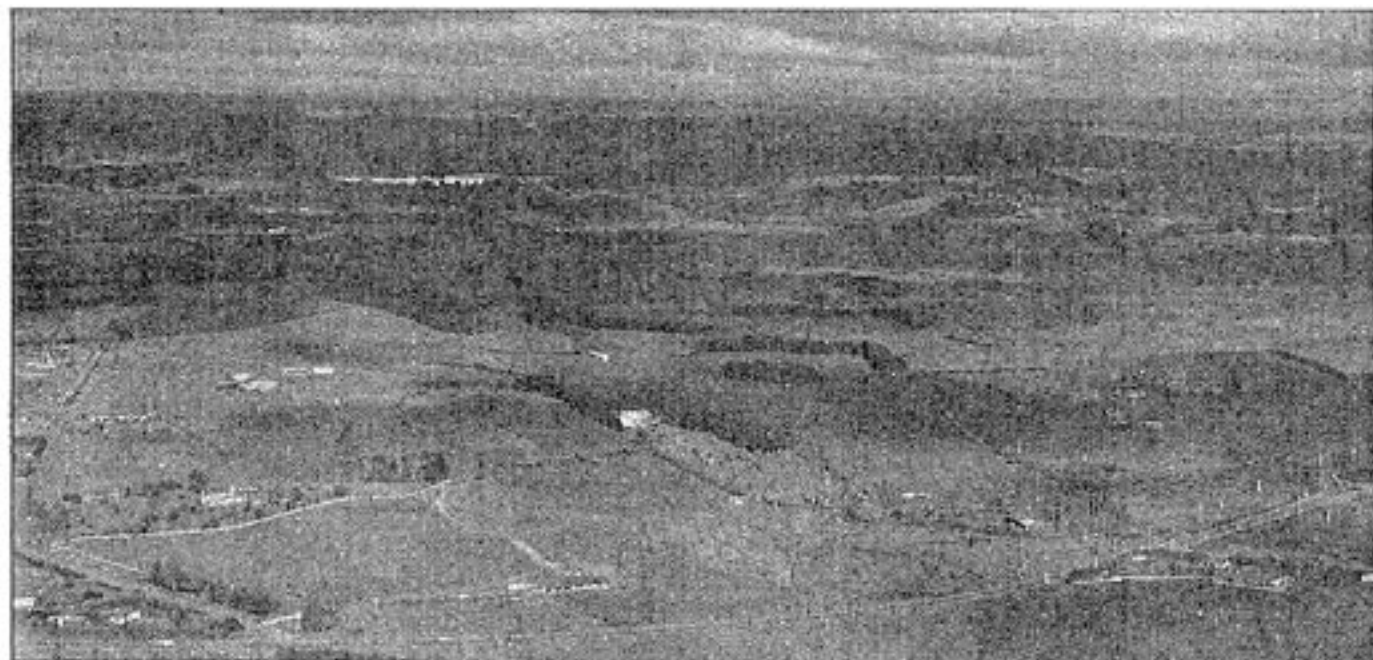
Before the developers finalise their plans, they have a three-week wait to see if any appeals will be launched before the closing date of July 1. An appeal would delay the residential development for more than a year.

Grasshopper wants to move into the full engineering design phase and begin the earthworks for the first stage of 200 sections in October. But director Graeme Lee said: "First, we have to see if any appeal is coming."

The massive development will stretch across the council boundaries from State Highway 29 near the Route K roundabout along the sloping valley between Koparererua Stream and the Pyes Pa ridge to the crematorium past Kennedy Rd.

There will be a mixed density of housing, a 2ha shopping centre, 25ha of parks, reserves, a man-made lake and walkways and cycleways and across the stream 82ha of business land.

Running alongside the stream will be a \$26 million, 4.5km bypass which will be the main access to the subdivision and become an extension to Route K.



FIELD OF DREAM HOUSES: An aerial shot of the new subdivision.

FILE PICTURE

Negotiations are continuing between Grasshopper, Transit New Zealand and the two councils to jointly fund the new road, which would be a main route to and from Rotorua.

Mr Lee said the development would generate 19,000 cars a day. "We want to help solve Route K's problems."

In its decision, the joint council hearings committee said a separate agreement for the funding and construction of the road should be finalised before subdivision work begins.

The committee said Kennedy

Rd, the other access into the subdivision, should also be upgraded, including the intersection with Pyes Pa Rd.

Under stage one, Grasshopper will need to develop 400m of the bypass to the first of three roundabouts to get access to the first sections.

Grasshopper will be developing the entire subdivision in 13 stages over eight to 10 years. When completed there will be 66 lifestyle blocks of 1ha, 850 standard sections of about 700 sq m and 1200 medium density sites of around 400 sq m.

Mr Lee said there was a pent-up demand for the sections. "We could sell 1000 tomorrow but we can't physically do that."

Pyes Pa west has been identified in the SmartGrowth strategy as a new area for urban development to cater for population growth over the next 20 years.

Outside the Grasshopper land, another 150ha — a lot of it is kiwifruit orchards — is designated residential and the whole area could eventually cater for 3000 sections and nearly 9000 people.