

Pyes Pa bid may open floodgates

By GRAHAM SKELLERN

A \$100 MILLION subdivision planned for the southern outskirts of Tauranga could signal the start of a string of similar-type developments to meet the city's growing demand for new residential housing.

The developers, Grasshopper Properties, wants to rezone 280ha of farmland on the western side of Pyes Pa to create a 2000-section subdivision catering for up to 5200 people.

Grasshopper has conditionally bought two dairy farms for the development stretching from State Highway 29 along the sloping valley between the Kopurererua Stream and the Pyes Pa ridge to the crematorium just past Kennedy Rd.

The development — which is expected to be completed within the next 15 years — will also include a community shopping centre and professional services, parks, reserves, cycleways and a mixed residential subdivision.

Grasshopper wants to release the first 150 sections within two years and have the first residents moving into their new homes in

2007. Yesterday, a joint council hearing of representatives from Tauranga City and Western Bay District councils and Environment BOP began a four-day hearing on Grasshopper's application for a private plan change.

In promoting its application, Grasshopper told the committee how on current projections land now available for residential housing in Tauranga would run out in about 2010.

The Pyes Pa development would only cater for the city's housing needs for a little more than 12 months.

Every week 32 new houses were built, 100 new people arrived from other areas and 45 new jobs were created. A total of 52 people left the city every week.

Grasshopper lawyer Doug Arcus said the development was not just a grandiose idea of a developer.

Instead, it was playing a vital role in meeting some of the targets of SmartGrowth.

He believed if SmartGrowth predictions were accurate then planning on a scale of Pyes Pa west might become a necessity and



PICTURE: JOHN BORREN 190603JB03BOP

TAURANGA developer Grasshopper Properties wants to turn this Pyes Pa farmland into a bustling new suburb housing more than 5000 people.

happen on a regular basis.

Project manager Christine Ralph, of Beca Carter, said the Grasshopper proposal was more than just another housing development.

It provided a new community reflecting the live, work and play principles that encouraged social development and sustainable management.

Mrs Ralph said the development was contained within an area using

less productive rural land rather than more productive horticulture land which was prevalent in other parts of the district.

The land would become a mixture of residential, commercial and 25 hectares of reserves, walkways and cycleways.

The development area crossed council boundaries with two thirds in Western Bay and one third in Tauranga.

Grasshopper is also seeking sub-

division consents and regional resource consents for earthworks, stormwater discharge and building a bridge over Kopurererua Stream.

The development also involved a \$20 million, 4.5km bypass road which followed the stream from Route K roundabout to the crematorium.

The bypass would initially be two lanes but have provision for two more and could eventually be given State Highway status.

Motorists could access the new suburb from three turn-offs along the bypass road.

Mr Arcus told the committee the development plan included comprehensive stormwater management, an internal pattern of collector roads, a mix of residential densities, a 2ha shopping and commercial centre, and provision for community and neighbourhood reserves, walkways and cycleways.

There were more than 30 submissions and very little opposition.

Some nearby residents, who supported the proposal, wanted Kennedy Rd upgraded and other submitters pressed for more business land to be made available on the western side of Kopurererua

Stream adjacent to State Highway 29. At present 24ha was pencilled in for commercial development.

IMF Westland, which owned Fraser Cove Shopping Centre, was objecting on the basis that a proposed commercial business zone would weaken economic development and vitality in established areas.

Mr Arcus said in terms of the Resource Management Act, the committee should not take trade competition into account when considering Grasshopper's applications.

Graeme Lee, a Grasshopper director, said the Pyes Pa project was an essential element in the growth of Tauranga.

Based on SmartGrowth statistics, the proposed residential land would satisfy the demand for only 66 weeks.

"At the current rate of uptake the present supply for Tauranga City will run out in around 2010," he said.

"While this project cannot hope to satisfy all the future demand (of residential land) it is necessary to meet demand in the short term and it is needed now," said Mr Lee.