

Submission on Resource Consent Application – form number 13

Submitter Details

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Submission Details

Applicant: Atamai Village Council

TDC Application Nrs: RM080626, RM080636, RM080639, and RM080725

The following **3 page** letter is the additional information referred to in answer to **Question 2) The reasons for my submission are:**

As National Facilitator for Transition Towns New Zealand Aotearoa, I am most supportive of the Atamai Village project. This is one of the most comprehensively planned and well thought out concepts I have seen, and it holds the possibility of being a shining light for others wishing to develop land for the benefit of the land itself, the residents who will live and work on it, and the surrounding environment and its populations.

My submission is brief and takes the form of a concise description of just a few of the diverse functions that this project can serve as it begins to manifest some details of its larger vision. It is intended to highlight the benefits to the people of the greater Tasman district. I trust this will encourage the decision makers to vote in favour of approving the application.

A simple conclusion makes it clear that there is keen interest in this project and how its consent applications are handled by the local council.

In the following statement I have referred to the Atamai Village Project as simply "the village" or "Atamai village".

Atamai Village can serve many functions. It can be . . .

A place of educational benefit, by raising awareness of important issues relating to the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the village residents along with those in the wider community. This might take place by highlighting the important challenges of our time, namely energy, economics and climate, and the abundance of solutions that people are finding. The village could be offering educational workshops to teach valuable and relevant skills. People all over New Zealand are now relearning old skills and developing new ones, in order to engage in such initiatives as the growing of healthy food with minimal food miles. They are learning to exchange goods and services with a focus on quality and no harm to the environment.

The educational opportunity with phase 1 of this project is that of witnessing how whole systems design manifests during the process of undertaking earthworks.

An example of how to preserving the rural aspect of a site. By limiting the number of dwelling sites rather than fully exploiting what the regulations allow for, almost half the site will remain open land. Extensive tree planting and orchard preparation has already been put in place to ensure the rural feel is maintained. This limitation of housing numbers, along with the proposed permaculture design of the setting, will preserve the rural aspect of the site – leaving large areas that will not be disturbed by either earthworks or dwellings, but will be made attractive with trees and shrubs.

The proposed earthworks is similar to that already completed for the terracing done in the past – demonstrating the feasibility of such earthworks for this specific site.

An example of the integrated planning, is how the tree planting and storm water designs are integrated to increase the retention of storm water discharges. This will result in increased soil quality, less water being discharged, less erosion and less demand on local water resources. This carefully planning supports the longer term design of increasing the biodiversity of the site and its overall productivity.

Another example of the integrated planning has to do not only with the limiting of the number of dwellings but of the careful placement of dwellings on geo-technically stable locations, with good solar aspects – for both food production and passive solar designs.

The applicants have made good use of expert consultation and clearly indicate their intent to follow through on that advice by having the necessary experts on site during the earthworks.

A demonstration site, for showing the possible abundance which can be achieved in well designed integrated systems. People will be able to touch, smell, feel, see and participate in some of the diverse food production and income production initiatives. The village, in its fullness, has the potential to show how a well designed whole system need not produce waste that would in turn have to leave the confines of the village.

In the context of this application, the earthworks phase is highly visual and potentially disturbing (though this has been minimised through careful planning). The people behind the Atamai Village project have clearly detailed the process, and the extensive planning which is driving this project. This can be a wonderful demonstration of a benign and respectful approach to development and of earthworks undertaken with minimal disturbance for maximum beneficial effect. For example, there will be no removal of materials from the site, but all earth moved will be used within the site to make the land more productive, and reduce the need to transport materials on nearby roads.

Such examples will be of interest to other parties wanting to engage in development projects that respect the environmental limits of their sites rather than degrading the site's productive capacities – this is the basis of sustainability practice. The applicant has genuinely attempted to meet or exceed the rural 3 property development guidelines. This is the kind of development we need as we go into an uncertain future shaped by climate change and energy descent.

A place for socialisation, where the ability to easily and gracefully engage with one another under lots of different circumstances is enhanced. This is a sure benefit and contributor to the mental and emotional health and maturity of the village residents. This would be both between the residents of the property, for whom the benefit is likely to be the most long lasting (and a big jump up from isolated, in front of the TV, nuclear family living), and those who come to visit and interact with residents of the village.

While the current application is seeking consent for an initial phase of the project it has highlighted the socialisation aspect, and is already taking it into account in the overall design of the earthworks and storm water disposal. Large areas are left as open spaces for common buildings and community activities – way beyond any requirements specified by council.

These purposes above are a few pointers to a picture of what Atamai Village could become. While this part of the consent process has as its focus the initial phase of the project, it is an important step towards facilitating the greater vision to come to fruition, and consent decisions will obviously need to be made with the big picture in mind.

In conclusion, we are keen to see how this project progresses. I can only speak for Transition Towns NZ, but am confident many other organisations are also aware of this project and are watching with interest to see how it develops and how the initiators and governing bodies are working together to facilitate this important and visionary project.

James Samuel

National Facilitator

Transition Towns New Zealand Aotearoa

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