

Your written comments on a project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Project name	Orchard Grove
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Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

All sections of this form with an asterisk (*) must be completed.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)	Waikato Regional Council		
*First name	Miffy		
*Last name	Foley		
Postal address	Private Bag 3038 Waikato Mail Centre Hamilton 3240		
*Contact phone number	s 9(2)(a)	Alternative	s 9(2)(a)
*Email	s 9(2)(a)		

2. Please provide your comments on this application
<p>Waikato Regional Council (WRC) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on this application for referral under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).</p> <p>The following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Firstly, respond to the matters under section 17(3) of the Act that a local authority must provide comment on (PART A), and• Secondly, comment on some of matters the Minister will consider under section 22 of the Act (PART B). <p>PART A</p> <p><u>SECTION 17(3)</u></p> <p><i>Are there any applications that have been lodged with Waikato Regional Council that would be competing applications if a substantive application for the project were lodged?</i></p> <p>As of the date of this response WRC is not aware of any competing applications.</p>

Are there any section 124C(1)(c) or 165ZI applications?

WRC can confirm that as of the date of this response, there are no competing applications or existing resource consents to which section 124C(1)(c) of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) would apply if the approvals sought were to be applied for as a resource consent under that Act.

Further, WRC can confirm that 165ZI of the RMA does not apply because the proposed project is not located in the common marine and coastal area in accordance with the Waikato Regional Coastal Plan (proposed or operative).

PART B

SECTION 22

WRC provides the following comments which are aimed at informing of certain matters relevant to the Minister's considerations under section 22 of the Act.

WRC considers that the only criteria of potential relevance to the project under section 22(2)(a) are whether the project:

- (iii) will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020)
- (iv) will deliver significant economic benefits
- (x) is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies.

22(2)(a)(iii) & (iv) Will the project increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment and will it have significant regional benefits?

WRC has undertaken a high-level review of the proposal to date.

The economic benefits of the project and whether it will contribute to a well-functioning urban environment have not been assessed in depth, however we highlight the following points for consideration. These must be addressed in any subsequent substantive application that may be lodged to enable a more detailed review to occur.

- The proposal would increase the supply of residential land near Hamilton City. WRC notes that the Future Proof Residential Capacity Assessment 2023 (HCA)¹ identifies that there is sufficient land for residential development for Hamilton City in the long-term. We also note that there are significant areas of residential development proposed as part of other projects listed in Schedule 2 of the Act and other fast-track referral applications being prepared around the periphery of Hamilton, as well as Resource Management Act processes. These collectively will exceed the demand for residential land identified in the HCA (see attachments A and B which

¹ Business Development Capacity Assessment 2023

show the current and proposed fast-track projects around Hamilton and in the Waikato Region). We consider this to be relevant context when assessing criterion 22(2)(a)(iii), particularly the cumulative impacts on infrastructure and servicing if all these projects are progressed in the short term (as is the purpose of the Act).

It would aid WRC when providing comment on a substantive application (should this referral be accepted) if assessment by the applicant provides further analysis of how this proposal fits within the residential development currently proposed within Hamilton City and its wider periphery.

- The proposal forms less than 10% of the overall HT1 growth cell. Integration of the proposal with the wider growth cell, particularly in regard to infrastructure provision is required to be provided in any substantive application. Considering the proposed development in isolation from the wider growth cell could lead to inefficient provision of infrastructure.
- WRC is of the understanding that there are capacity constraints with the nearby infrastructure – specifically transport, wastewater and water supply. Any substantive application for the proposal should address the infrastructure capacity constraints associated with this project in more detail. In particular, WRC would expect to see identification of where the wastewater for the proposal will be treated and disposed of, where water for the proposal will be supplied from, how the proposal is provided for within the stormwater network and how the development will impact on nearby roading networks.
- The project site is located within WRC’s Waikato Central Land Drainage Scheme. Impacts of discharges from the proposed development on the rural land drainage system need to be addressed. This includes potential upstream effects (such as flooding and pasture die off caused by standing water) and downstream flooding and ponding effects. Given that rural drains are not designed for urban runoff, it will be imperative that the development mitigates stormwater runoff for volume retention. This will be a key limiting factor for the proposed development. Stormwater needs to be considered in the context of the wider growth cell.
- The majority of the site meets the transitional definition of ‘highly productive land’ under the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 (NPS-HPL). The loss of highly productive land associated with the proposed development will need to be considered as part of any substantive application.

22(2)(a)(x) *Is this project consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies?*

The HT1 growth cell, within which the project site is located, is an envisioned future growth area in the Future Proof Strategy, however, the timing of this growth cell is not in alignment with that Strategy which does not identify it as being needed within the 30-year timeframe of the Strategy.

Overall, WRC considers the project is partially consistent with criterion (x) relating to regional or local planning documents, including spatial strategies.

Further comments in relation to relevant planning documents are provided below.

WAIKATO REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT

Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato

Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato - the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River is incorporated into the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (WRPS) and is relevant to this referral application. Given the site's location within the Waikato River catchment, any substantive application must address in further detail how the proposal will give effect to Te Ture Whaimana.

Urban form and development

The location of the proposal is consistent with the Future Proof settlement pattern, which is embedded in the WRPS and the decisions version of Proposed WRPS Change 1 - National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, and the Future Proof Strategy Update [2023]. Specifically, Map 43 within Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version, depicts the Future Proof indicative urban and village enablement areas.

The subject site is identified as an urban enablement area on this map, however, the timing is not in alignment with the timing specified in the Strategy (it is not identified as being needed to provide sufficient capacity during the 30 year timeframe of the Strategy). The proposal therefore represents an out of sequence development as per the timing and staging in the Strategy. Given this, a number of specific provisions from the WRPS are relevant to the proposal and should be assessed. In particular, this includes Policy UFD-P11, Method UFD-M49, and Appendices APP11 – General development principles and APP13 – Responsive planning criteria (out of sequence and unanticipated developments).

Assessment of these provisions is necessary to understand matters such as whether the development would add significantly to meeting a demonstrated need or shortfall of housing, how it would contribute to well-functioning urban environments and how it would impact infrastructure capacity and contribute to infrastructure affordability.

Land and freshwater

The subject site contains Land Use Capability Class 2 soils that meet the definition of high class soils under the WRPS. The relevant policy is LFP11 – *“Avoid a decline in the availability of high class soils for primary production due to inappropriate subdivision, use or development”*.

As highlighted above, the majority of the site also meets the transitional definition of ‘highly productive land’ under the NPS-HPL. Therefore, an assessment will be required against the relevant clauses of the NPS-HPL as part of any substantive application. If the proposed development proceeds, it will contribute further to the irreversible, cumulative loss of highly productive land in the region.

Ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity

The provisions of the Ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity (ECO) chapter of the WRPS are relevant in this project. This includes policies ECO-P1 – Maintain or enhance indigenous biodiversity and P2 - Protect significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.

We note the following specific matters in relation to the referral application:

- The application has determined that the main watercourse through the site is an artificial watercourse, however further investigations are required to be confident that this statement is correct e.g. retrolens photos or other methods may provide information that indicates that this is a modified watercourse as well.

- Any substantive application will need to undertake further assessment to determine the presence of natural inland wetlands on the site.
- Fish sampling over one night is not necessarily indicative of excluding mudfish as being present or absent. Typically, sampling would occur over various times in the year to capture seasonal variations that affect mudfish activity. Any substantive application should include further assessment of effects on freshwater fish species and habitats.
- The Ecology Assessment identifies that the site has potential to provide foraging and roosting habitat for bats. Potential impacts on long-tailed bats and their habitat should be addressed further as part of any substantive application.

FUTURE PROOF STRATEGY

The Future Proof Strategy² 2024, is a 30 year growth management and implementation plan for the Hamilton, Waipā, Waikato and Matamata-Piako sub-region and is the Future Development Strategy for the sub-region (as per the requirements of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD)).

The Strategy aims to manage growth in a staged and coordinated manner. It has a compact and concentrated approach to growth, with future development focused in and around key growth areas that are identified on the settlement pattern map. The Orchard Grove area has been identified for growth as part of the wider HT1 growth cell in the Future Proof settlement pattern. The growth cell is identified as being subject to a Strategic Boundary Agreement between Hamilton City Council (HCC) and Waikato District Council.

The Strategy recognises the need to be flexible when considering development proposals (as required by the NPS-UD) and includes a set of criteria, which has been embedded in the WPRS. As noted above, these criteria are particularly relevant to the proposal and should be assessed.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Acid sulphate soils

WRC's preliminary regional Acid Sulphate Soils Probability spatial layer³ indicates a high probability of acid sulphate soils occurrence across approximately 40% of the site. When disturbed (e.g. excavated) and exposed to oxygen, acid sulphate soil materials can produce sulfuric acid which can become mobilised following rainfall. This can lead to impacts on the environment, including aquatic ecosystems, and infrastructure. The potential for the occurrence of acid sulphate soils at the site should be considered in relation to the proposed development.

It is recommended that the applicant develops a strategy for managing acid sulphate soils encountered during the various stages of construction and addresses this matter in detail within any substantive application.

² Our strategic direction | Future Proof

³ Waikato region acid sulfate soils preliminary risk assessment | Waikato Regional Council

Stormwater

The applicant has provided an indicative stormwater design for the proposal that includes dividing the property into five sub catchments and replacing the current farm drainage system with a 'Greenway' conveyance system, with five stormwater ponds, to treat and discharge runoff from the development. This urban drainage system is proposed to connect to the existing rural drainage system within the Otama-ngenge Stream Catchment, which drains to the Waikato River.

Any future substantive application must include further detailed information on the proposed urban stormwater system, that demonstrates appropriate treatment and attenuation of stormwater flows from this development, in line with the WRC stormwater technical guidelines and best practice principles.

Water supply

The applicant is proposing to connect to HCC water supply infrastructure, subject to HCC approval, or alternatively take groundwater and/or rainwater.

If the HCC water source is not available, then consent for ground or surface water will be required to take water along. If groundwater is to be taken, then a land use consent for the construction of ground water well(s) will also be required. If surface water is to be taken, then additional consents associated with an intake will also be required. Further details would be required before WRC can provide any comment on likely or potential consents if this option proceeds.

Further, there may be consents associated with a water treatment plant to enable potable water to be supplied to the development.

Wastewater

The applicant is proposing to connect to the HCC wastewater reticulated sewerage system, subject to HCC approval.

If this option is not available then WRC understands that the proposed alternative is to construct a private wastewater treatment plant, presumably with disposal field(s) within the footprint of the development. Further details would be required before WRC can provide any comment on likely or potential consents if this option proceeds.

Potential HAIL sites

WRC notes that the applicant has developed a strategy to further investigate potential HAIL sites on the property. Such a strategy would be required in any substantive application to appropriately identify and potentially ameliorate any HAIL areas.

Public transport

With respect to public transport solutions for the new development, Orchard Grove's location means it could be served by extensions to the proposed future routes serving Flagstaff or Rototuna North. Any extensions would be contingent on factors like funding approval, housing density, appropriate roading infrastructure and walkable catchments for bus stops.

This development is part of a larger growth area (HT1) that, in time, will require public transport provision. Orchard Grove's location at the southeastern corner of HT1 and connection to the northern boundary of Hamilton could make it a logical entry point for a service extension. Any substantive application should provide confirmation that, at a minimum, the collector road will have provision for bus bays and stops to cater for this eventuality. As WRC shifts to operating electric buses, which are typically heavier, WRC would anticipate that any indicative bus route (including bridges) can cater for a full-sized electric bus based on NZTA guidelines.

Any subsequent application must provide for alternative modes of transport such as footpaths, cycle paths and shared paths, linking with established active mode transport infrastructure in Hamilton.

Further information is needed on the proposed stages and timing of the development to be able to assess in detail how public transport services can best serve the area. At this stage WRC's preference would be for development to begin in the southeastern corner along Kay Road, the closest part of the site to the existing network (and any planned extensions).

Should the application be referred, WRC welcomes working with the applicant and HCC to develop a public transport service staging plan, aligned with the Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan.

Waikato Regional Plan – Activities and rules identified

From the review of the referral application documents, WRC advises the following activities would trigger the following corresponding rules in the Waikato Regional Plan (WRP):

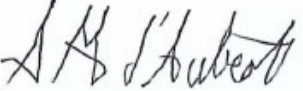
1. Earthworks including cleanfilling, sediment and dust discharges - 5.1.4.15 Discretionary Activity Rule – Soil Disturbance, Roding, Tracking, Vegetation Clearance, Riparian Vegetation Clearance in High Risk Erosion Areas
2. Drilling below the water table for dewatering spears - 3.8.4.7 Controlled Activity Rule – Drilling Below the Water Table
3. Groundwater take dewatering - 3.3.4.24 Discretionary Activity Rule – Groundwater Takes
4. Stormwater diversion and discharge - 3.5.11.8 Discretionary Activity Rule – Discharge of Stormwater
5. Diversion of existing drains and associated flows into Greenway - 3.6.4.13 Discretionary Activity Rule – Stopbanks, Diversions and any Associated Discharges of Water
6. Damming of water associated with the Greenway - 3.6.4.9 Controlled Activity Rule – Offstream Damming and Damming Ephemeral Streams and Damming of Artificial Watercourses
7. Bed disturbance associated with the construction of the outlet(s) to watercourse(s) - 4.3.4.4 Discretionary Activity Rule – Bed Disturbance Activities
8. Outlet structure(s) to watercourse(s) - 4.2.4.4 Discretionary Activity Rule – Structures In, On, Under or Over the Beds of Rivers and Lakes.

Additional activities and corresponding rules if connection to HCC reticulated wastewater and potable water services are not possible:

9. Wastewater discharge - 3.5.4.5 Discretionary Activity Rule – Discharges – General Rule
10. Groundwater take for potable and irrigation water use - 3.3.4.24 Discretionary Activity Rule – Groundwater Takes.

Note: All comments will be made available to the public and the applicant when the Ministry for the Environment proactively releases advice provided to the Minister for the Environment.

Managers signoff

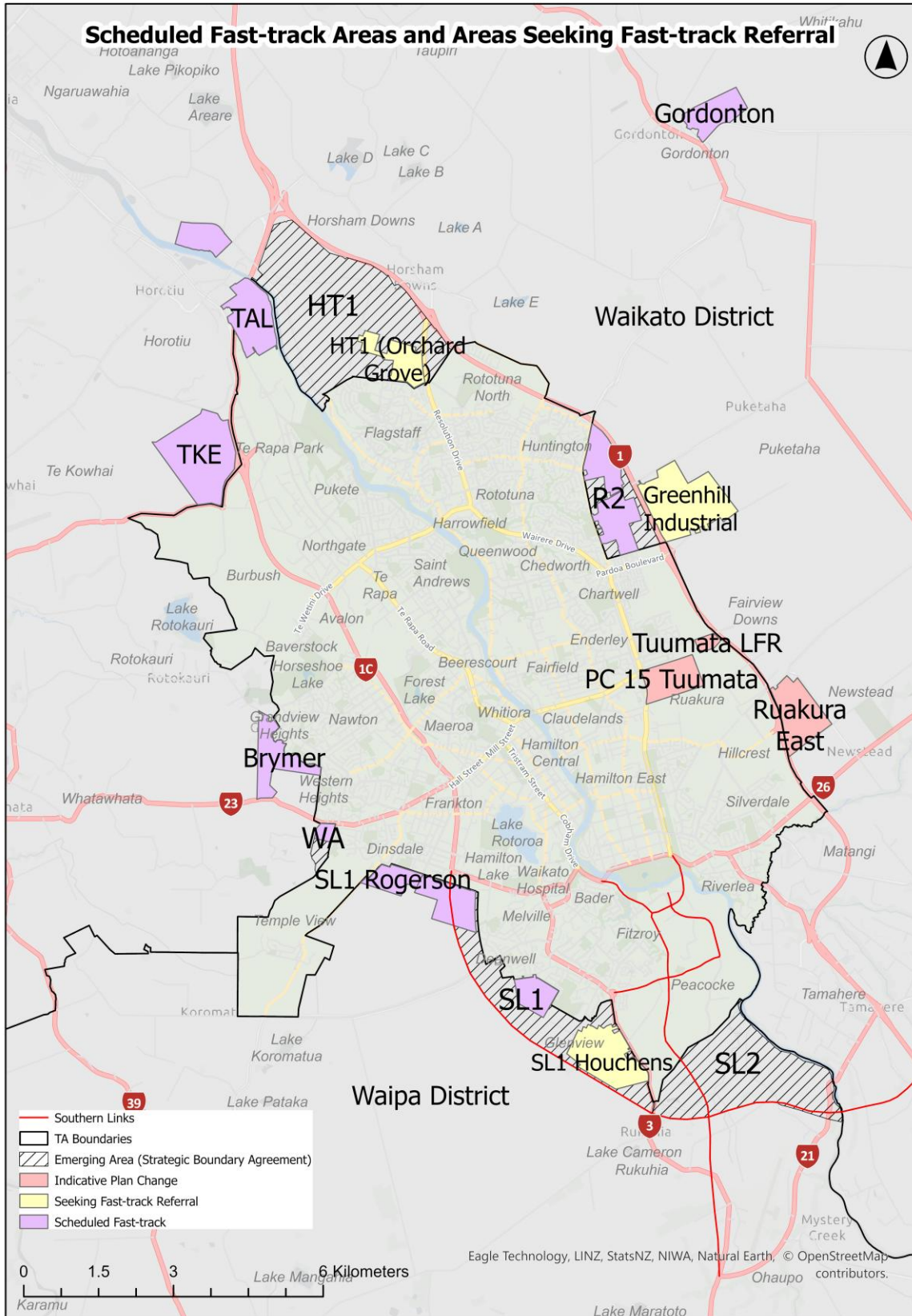
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AM d'Aubert', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

AnaMaria d'Aubert

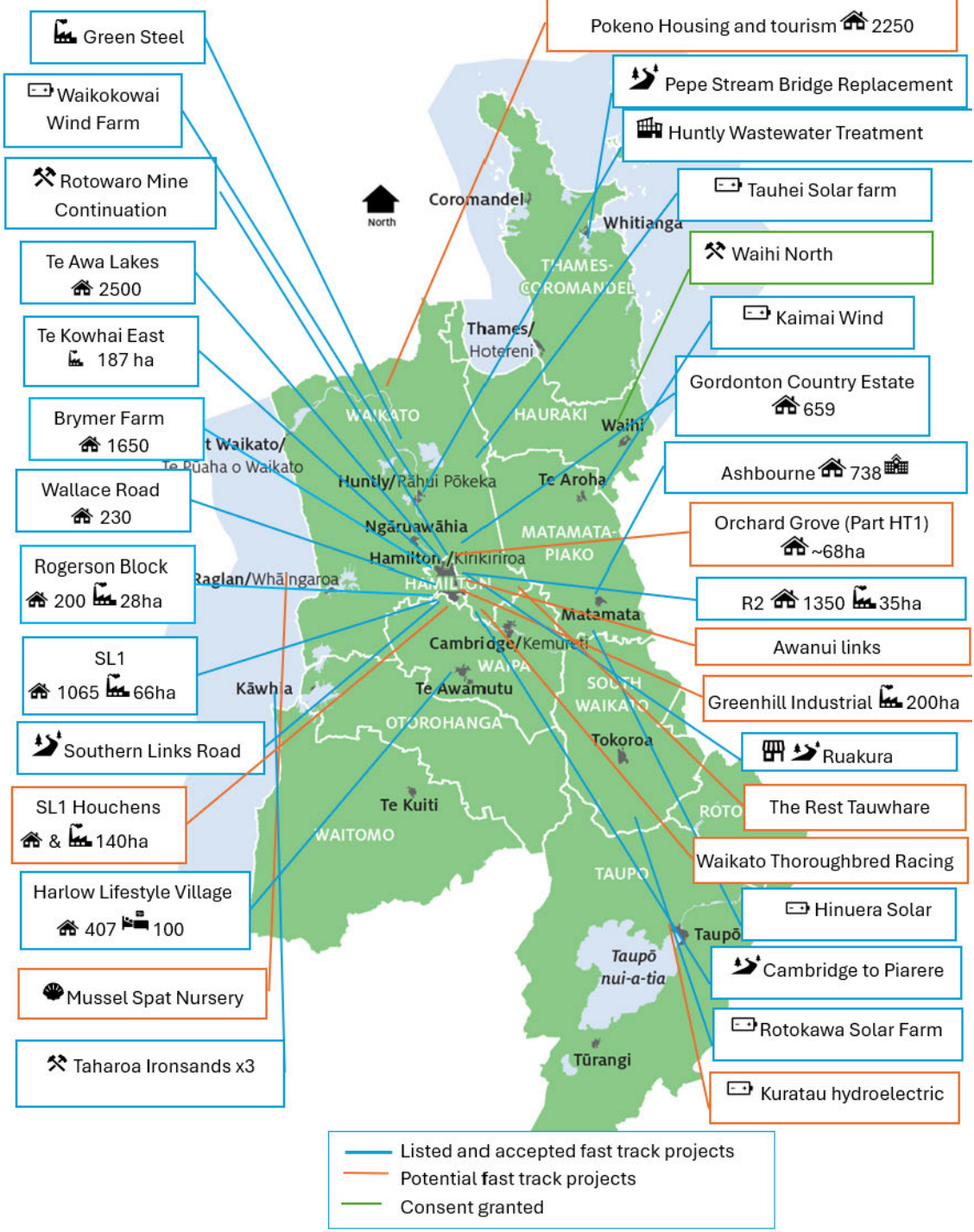
Date 27 February 2026

Manager – Regional Consents

Scheduled Fast-track Areas and Areas Seeking Fast-track Referral



Waikato Region current and proposed Fast Track projects February 2026



Your written comments on a project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Project name	Orchard Grove - FTAA-2512- 1154
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Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

All sections of this form with an asterisk (*) must be completed.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)	Waikato District Council		
*First name	Kelly		
*Last name	Nicolson		
Postal address	Private Bag 544 Ngāruawāhia 3742		
*Contact phone number	0800 492 452	Alternative	
*Email	s 9(2)(a)		

2. Please provide your comments on this application
If you need more space, please attach additional pages. Please include your name, page numbers and the project name on the additional pages.

Note: All comments will be made available to the public and the applicant when the Ministry for the Environment proactively releases advice provided to the Minister for the Environment.

Managers signoff



Paul Conder

Acting Chief Executive

Date 24 February 2026

24 February 2026

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations
Minister for Infrastructure
C/o Ministry for the Environment
contact@fasttrack.govt.nz

Dear Ilana Miller

FAST-TRACK PROPOSAL: Orchard Grove - Reference FTAA-2512- 1154

Thank you for inviting Waikato District Council to provide written comments on the referral application for Orchard Grove.

Please find attached staff response and general comments regarding the proposed development.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this document please contact Kelly Nicolson, Infrastructure Development Advisor directly on s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

Kind Regards



Paul Conder
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE
WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mandatory Comments

Waikato District Council, under section 17(3) of the Act and without limiting any general comments under subsection (1)(a), provides comments advising on the following matters:

- 1. Any applications that have been lodged with the Council that would be a competing application or applications if a substantive application for the project were lodged. If no such applications exist, please provide written confirmation.***

Waikato District Council confirms that no such applications exist.

- 2. In relation to projects seeking approval of a resource consent under section 42(4)(a) of the Act, whether there any existing resource consents issued where sections 124C(1)(c) or 165ZI of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) could apply if the project were to be applied for as a resource consent under the RMA. If no such consents exist, please provide written Confirmation.***

Waikato District Council confirms that no such applications exist.

General Comments

Strategic Land Use Pattern and Strategy Alignment

We record the following in relation to the referral application for the Orchard Grove Development Area:

1. The subject site lies within the 'HT1 Growth Cell' which is identified as an Urban Enablement area under the Future Proof Strategy (FPS). Situated north of Hamilton City, the growth cell lies within the Waikato District Council's (WDC) jurisdiction and is strategically earmarked for future urbanisation.

HT1 is bounded by the Waikato Expressway to the east, the Waikato River to the west, and Kay Road (one of Hamilton city's northernmost roads). The area represents a strategically positioned growth cell that aligns with Hamilton City's long-term development objectives. The Orchard Grove site forms part of the southern portion of HT1, bordered by Resolution Drive, Reynolds Road, Osborne Road, and Kay Road. The proposed development would represent

the contiguous urban expansion of the Flagstaff and Rototuna North suburbs in Hamilton City.

2. The applicant seeks a referral to fast-track approvals for residential and rural lifestyle lots of various sizes, a neighbourhood centre, stormwater and open space networks, and associated three-waters and roading. They request servicing from Hamilton City Council's (HCC) urban water and wastewater networks.
3. HCC and WDC have a Strategic Boundary Agreement (SBA) framework in place for the HT1 Growth Cell containing the Orchard Grove site. The SBA provides for the future transfer of HT1 growth cell from WDC to HCC. There is no guarantee that a boundary change will occur as a direct result of this Fast Track consent. However, without a boundary change and infrastructure servicing being clarified early, there is a risk of misaligned staging and suboptimal integration with Hamilton's existing infrastructure networks and investment programme. Complexities of development immediately adjoining HCC's territorial boundary and landowner expectations need to be managed carefully throughout the Fast Track process.
4. The Orchard Grove site is only 8.8% of the total HT1 Growth cell area. HCC have identified the need for an integrated approach when planning any development within the HT1 Growth Cell. WDC fully support this approach. WDC consider it critically important that key considerations such as land use, strategic transport routes, three-waters servicing, open space and social infrastructure requirements, and urban design are informed by a coordinated approach that considers the context of the wider growth cell. The development and design of Orchard Grove should not be developed in isolation or in a way that may undermine or constrain future sequencing, infrastructure provision and development across the wider HT1 growth cell

Transportation

5. A wider area masterplan will need to include consideration of road hierarchy, safe intersections, public transport routing and infrastructure, and walking/cycling connectivity to neighbouring suburbs within Hamilton City. Network modelling is required to test capacity, safety and cross-boundary integration. It is expected as a minimum that some level of network modelling for the whole HT1 growth cell will precede modelling for the specific development proposal.

Northern River Crossing (NRC)

6. The NRC is a long-identified east-west strategic corridor connecting State Highway 1C to Resolution Drive. The indicative alignment and an envelope sufficient for construction and long-term function (potentially up to 80m designation width in places) should be protected through the proposed development site. Intersection performance at Resolution Drive, access control, corridor speed environment (up to 80 km/h), and provision for co-located utilities must be anticipated.
7. Engagement has taken place with the developer's agents regarding the integration of the NRC corridor within their proposed development. This corridor is strategically significant for Hamilton's long-term transport network and will also serve as a key connection for the HT1 area, likely including future bulk water supply, wastewater, and other essential services such as power, telecommunications, and gas.
8. The applicant has proposed the arterial route along Reynolds Road. HCC has concerns with its ability to achieve the intended strategic outcomes and have highlighted that further joint work in this area is required. This matter can be examined through the preparation of an integrated masterplan for the entire HT1 growth cell area, and any impacts and costs adequately reflected in the master planning for the Orchard Grove application and any agreed conditions and a Private Developer Agreement. WDC support the need for further consultation with the developer on this matter and the need for a masterplan approach for the HT1 Growth Cell to ensure an optimal outcome for this strategically important transport route is achieved.

Three Waters Servicing

9. Waikato District Council has limited water supply networks and no wastewater networks in the HT1 Growth Cell and currently there is no funding allocated for public infrastructure in that area. We do acknowledge that HCC and WDC have agreed to the establishment of an asset owning joint waters company (CCO), IAWAI. This joint waters company will be involved in future discussions about HT1 - Orchard Grove. WDC's expectation is that infrastructure growth is to be paid by the Developer.
10. The subject area will require coordinated planning across territorial and regional authorities. Engagement with Waikato Regional Council (WRC) will be necessary to secure water-related consents and ensure alignment with regional frameworks.

Water Supply

11. An extension of the current water servicing within the HT1 Growth Cell is not currently planned by WDC. Integration with HCC's infrastructure should be explored, with consideration given to long-term solutions such as reservoir and water treatment facilities. Reliance on bore water is not preferred, alternative water sourcing options should be investigated.

Wastewater

12. Due to capacity constraints in surrounding networks, early assessment of servicing options is recommended. These may include connection to existing infrastructure or the establishment of on-site treatment systems.

Stormwater

13. Stormwater management should be integrated with the wider catchment context. When designing or managing on-site watercourses or drainage features, dual use of open space should be avoided, and appropriate buffers and flow paths should be maintained to support effective stormwater management and downstream protection. As this area is located within the Waikato central drainage scheme, development of this area will need to ensure that there is no impact on the level of service provided to the remainder of the drainage scheme.

Reserves and Open Space

14. WDC support the preparation of a masterplan for the entire HT1 growth cell that assesses and makes provision for open spaces and recreational opportunities.

15. We have identified a gap in urban parks provisioning within the Orchard Grove development plan, with the western end of the development being beyond the 500-metre walkable catchment from the identified public parks shown in the development plan. This gap can be resolved through provision for another urban park in the western end of the development.

Affected Neighbouring Landowners

16. The change in land use from Rural to Residential may have a significant impact on neighbouring properties that needs to be considered. WDC recommends that if this referral is approved, that the Panel appointed by the Environmental Protection Authority adequately considers engagement with all adjoining properties and the wider area potentially affected by the development with regard to reverse sensitivity, visual amenity, lighting effects and traffic movements.

Summary

17. The Orchard Grove Fast Track development proposal is located within the Waikato District and the HT1 Growth Cell (identified for future urban development) and is adjacent to the HCC's northern urban boundary. While this application is within an identified growth cell, no master planning or structure planning work has been carried out by either HCC or WDC.

18. There is a strategically important transport link identified to provide access from the western side of the Waikato River through the HT1 Growth Cell, to provide a transport connection from Te Rapa North to Resolution Drive. It is of critical importance that all strategic transport routes within the growth cell and connection points into the city are considered carefully through a master plan approach.

19. If the referral application is approved, WDC will welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with the applicant, HCC, WRC, IAWAI and central government agencies prior to the lodgement of the substantive application.

Hon Nicola Willis

Minister of Finance
Minister for Economic Growth
Minister for Social Investment



05 MAR 2026

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

REQ-0027430

Dear Chris

Thank you for the opportunity to comment under the Fast-track Approvals Act (FTAA) on the following applications:

- Orchard Grove, FTAA-2512-1154
- Out of Scope
- [REDACTED]

I am providing comments in my capacity as Minister for Economic Growth, focusing on whether these applications are likely to have significant economic benefits under section 22(2)(a)(iv) of the FTAA, based on the information provided. I defer to you and other relevant Ministers to assess the remaining criteria.

Orchard Grove, FTAA-2512-1154

The project is to establish a new residential development over approximately 73 hectares of rural land located in Horsham Downs within the Waikato District. The project involves:


- approximately 815 residential lots
- a new neighbourhood centre of approximately 4,000 square metres
- stormwater management features, pedestrian and cycle paths, landscaped areas and new reserves and open spaces within a connected greenspace network
- associated roading and three waters infrastructure
- provision for a future arterial road along the existing Reynolds Road corridor.

According to the economic assessment provided by the applicant, during the 10-year development period, the proposal is estimated to have a direct contribution to GDP of \$78 million with an additional indirect contribution of \$212 million to GDP. The proposed development is estimated to provide full-time work (across planning, land development and construction) for 206 people for 10 years, generating approximately \$52 million in direct wages and a further \$123 million in wages indirectly in the wider economy.

This project makes a significant contribution to the regional economy and aligns with the Government's economic growth plans to increase jobs and contributing to GDP.

The primary long-term benefit of this proposal is its provision of additional housing. Given that this application would provide a considerable boost to the regional housing supply, it could also be assessed under increasing the supply of housing, address housing needs or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (s22(2)(a)(iii) of the Fast-track Approvals Act).

Out of Scope



Out of Scope



Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, connected loops and strokes. The signature is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister for Economic Growth

Hon Shane Jones

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Resources
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Energy



2 March 2026

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Orchard Grove referral application (FTAA-2512-1154)

Dear Chris,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this referral application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA 2024).

The FTAA 2024 has been established to provide a regime that makes it easier and quicker for regionally and nationally significant infrastructure projects to gain the approvals needed for development, in support of this Government's economic growth objectives.

I have considered the application and its alignment with the priorities of my Regional Development portfolio. My comments are attached as Annex One.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shane Jones'.

Hon Shane Jones
Minister for Regional Development

Annex One – Regional Development comments

Project overview

1. The applicant, Gordon Litt Farms Limited, is seeking referral under the Fast-track Approvals process to progress the Orchard Grove development. This is a proposed project that would develop 72 hectares of land in Flagstaff (part of the Hamilton City district), and establish a new residential area of approximately 814 lots, a neighbourhood centre, and associated civil infrastructure.
2. According to the economic assessment provided by the applicant, the expected regional impacts over the ten-year development period include:
 - a. a one-time boost to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of around \$290 million, of which \$78 million is a direct boost to GDP, and \$212 million is a boost from indirect impacts
 - b. employment for 2,060 full-time equivalent years (or 206 people employed full-time for 10 years)
 - c. additional household incomes of \$175 million.
3. Once operational, the proposal's neighbourhood centre could sustain full-time employment for 41 people.
4. The economic assessment also noted that the proposed development will generate a significant increase in the housing supply by providing a variety of dwellings, land market competition and fostering a well-functioning urban environment. Wider economic and social benefits also noted include improved local retail and social provision, the highest and best land use and investment signal effects.

Regional Development comments

5. Analysis provided by the applicant suggests that Hamilton City could experience a shortfall of 2,000 to 3,000 dwellings in the short-term, with around half of this deficit concentrated in the city's north-east catchment (immediately adjacent to the proposed Orchard Grove site). As such, the proposed Orchard Grove development is expected to contribute significantly to meeting this requirement.
6. If realised, development is expected to offer important economic benefit to the region through employment, a one-time GDP boost, and the subsequent benefit to the housing market. For context, however, Hamilton's GDP for the year ending September 2025 was estimated as \$15.3 billion (source: Infometrics), so the expected average annual GDP boost of \$29 million across the project's 10-year lifetime could be considered modest.
7. It is not clear how the assessment came to the conclusion that the proposal will enable the land to be put to its highest and best use. There may be other economic opportunities not realised as a result of this development, although that is not set out in the application.
8. You may wish to suggest the applicant provide further information on how the proposed development and its resulting dwellings will impact on local resource availability, and how this might impact on existing communities and businesses.

Hon Tama Potaka

Minister of Conservation
Minister for Māori Crown Relations
Minister for Māori Development
Minister for Whānau Ora
Associate Minister of Housing



Hon. Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz
Parliament Buildings
Private Bag 18041
WELLINGTON 6160

27 FEB 2026

Tēnā koe Hon. Bishop

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the fast-track consent application for the Orchard Grove project, proposed by Gordon Litt Farms Limited, located at Horsham Downs in the Waikato District. The project proposes a 73 hectare residential development including around 815 residential lots, a neighbourhood centre, a connected network of reserves and open space, pedestrian and cycle connections, and associated infrastructure.

The Waikato District is experiencing sustained population growth which has exacerbated issues including house and rental prices. The proposed development would add to housing supply and help to address these issues.

The proposed development area is planned for future urban development. Councils have indicated that development in this area is expected to align with strategic infrastructure planning and funding arrangements, including work being progressed through a Strategic Boundary Agreement. They are likely to raise concerns at the scale of infrastructure coordination required to service this project. These matters could be examined at subsequent stages of the fast-track process.

The site is immediately adjacent to the Hamilton City boundary, which raises cross-boundary considerations for infrastructure provision, servicing, and funding. Hamilton City Council (HCC) and Waikato District Council (WDC) have advised that a local government boundary adjustment is anticipated through their existing Strategic Boundary Agreement. The boundary adjustment would be needed to enable HT1's connection to HCC infrastructure, and funding of capital and ongoing operating expenditure through development contributions and rates. The boundary adjustment would go through the standard process via the Local Government Commission, taking approximately 18 months.

The expert panel, should this application proceed, would be required to consult all relevant local authorities. You could require that the panel consult HCC if you are concerned that this may not otherwise take place.

I have no objection, from the perspective of the Housing Portfolio to this project being referred to the next stage. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Mauriora,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tama Potaka".

Hon Tama Potaka
Associate Minister of Housing

From: [Infrastructure Portfolio](#)
To: [Nicola Willis \(MIN\)](#); [Shane Jones \(MIN\)](#); [Penny Simmonds \(MIN\)](#); [Tama Potaka \(MIN\)](#)
Cc: [FTAreferals](#)
Subject: CORTP-6721 Invitation to comment on Fast-track referral application for the Orchard Grove project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2026 12:15:51 pm
Attachments: [Comments Form for Invited Ministers.docx](#)
[image001.jpg](#)

To:
Minister for Economic Growth
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for the Environment
Minister of Conservation
Associate Minister of Housing

Dear Ministers,

Hon Chris Bishop, the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister), has asked for me to write to you on his behalf.

The Minister has received an application from Gordon Litt Farms Limited for referral of the Orchard Grove project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track process (application reference FTAA-2512-1154).

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

Invitation to comment on referral application

I write in accordance with section 17 of the Act to invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. I have provided summary details of the project below.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received by **return email** within **20 working days** of receipt of this email, being 27 February 2026. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Any comments submitted will contribute to the Minister's decision on whether to accept the referral application and to refer the project.

If you do not wish to provide comments, please let us know as soon as possible so we can proceed with processing the application without delay.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the Applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Process

The application documents are accessible through the Fast-track portal. Please note that application documents may contain commercially sensitivity information and should not be shared widely. If you haven't used the portal before, you can request access by emailing ftareferals@mfe.govt.nz. Once you are registered and have accepted the terms and conditions, you will receive a link to view the documents. Existing users will be able to see application documents via the request when logging into the portal. Should you need for your agency to provide any supplementary information, a nominated person can be provided access to the portal, access can be requested by emailing ftareferals@mfe.govt.nz.

To submit your comments on the application, you can either provide a letter or complete the attached template for written comments and return it by replying to this email, infrastructure.portfolio@parliament.govt.nz.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this email or need assistance with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz. Further information is available at <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/>.

Important Information

Please note that all comments received from Ministers invited to comment will be subject to the Official Information Act 1982. Comments received will be proactively released at the time the Minister for Infrastructure makes a referral decision, unless the Minister providing comments advises the Minister for Infrastructure's office they are to be withheld, at the time they are submitted.

If a Conflict of Interest is identified by the Minister providing comments at any stage of providing comments, please inform my office and the Cabinet Office immediately. The Cabinet Office will provide advice and, if appropriate, initiate a request to the Prime Minister to agree to a transfer of the project/portfolio invite to another Minister (a request to transfer a COI from one Minister to another can take 1-7 days).

Project summary

Project name	Orchard Grove
Applicant	Gordon Litt Farms Limited
Location	Horsham Downs, Waikato
Project description	<p>The project is to establish a new residential development over approximately 73 hectares of rural land located in Horsham Downs within the Waikato District.</p> <p>The project involves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">approximately 815 residential lotsa new neighbourhood centre of approximately 4,000 square metresstormwater management features, pedestrian and cycle paths, landscaped areas, and new reserves and open spaces within a connected greenspace networkassociated roading and three waters infrastructure; andprovision for a future arterial road along the existing Reynolds Road corridor.

Yours sincerely

Hon Chris Bishop

Minister for Infrastructure



Office of Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing | Minister for Infrastructure | Minister Responsible for RMA Reform | Minister of Transport | Associate Minister of Finance | Associate Minister for Sport & Recreation | Leader of the House | MP for Hutt South

Office: 04 817 6802 | EW 6.3
Email: c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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Your written comments on a project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Project name	Orchard Grove
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Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

All sections of this form with an asterisk (*) must be completed.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name	Department of Conservation (DOC)		
*First name	Bridgette		
*Last name	Munro		
Postal address			
*Contact phone number	s 9(2)(a)	Alternative	
*Email	Fast-track@doc.govt.nz;		

2. Please provide your comments on this application
Comments follow overleaf.

Manager's signoff



Jenni Fitzgerald

27th February 2026

Director-General of Conservation s17 comments

Project name	Orchard Grove
Applicant name	Gordon Litt Farms Limited
Application number	FTAA-2512-1154
Project summary details	<p>The Orchard Grove project is to establish a new residential development. The project involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approximately 815 residential lots; • a new neighbourhood centre of approximately 4,000 square metres; • stormwater management features, pedestrian and cycle paths, landscaped areas, and new reserves and open spaces with a connected greenspace network; • associated roading and three waters infrastructure; and • provision for a future arterial road along the existing Reynolds Road corridor. <p>The project area covers approximately 73 hectares over 40B & C, 66 and 126 Reynolds Road, and 78 Osbourne Road, located in Horsham Downs, within the Waikato District.</p> <p>The Applicant seeks the following approvals under the fast-track approvals process to authorise the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 ('RMA'); and • wildlife authority under the Wildlife Act 1953. <p>The Orchard Grove project involves a prohibited activity under both the Operative ('WODP') and Operative in Part ('WDP-OP') versions of the Waikato District Plan (refer to rules 25.5(e) and 25.5(f) of the WODP and rule SUB-R41 of the WDP-OP) – specifically, the subdivision of high-class soil and land located within an Urban Expansion Policy Area.</p>

1 General comment

- 1.1.1 As the project includes an approval under a specified Act for which DOC is the administering agency, the Applicant was required to undertake pre-lodgement consultation in accordance with section 11(e) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 ('FTAA'). DOC and the Applicant met on the 24th of September 2025. DOC provided written feedback to the Applicant on the 21st of October 2025.

- 1.1.2 While DOC does not have sufficient information to determine the level of any actual and potential environmental effects, DOC considers that it is likely that with the appropriate design and conditions, effects can be managed to appropriate levels.

2 Minister’s decision on referral application

- 2.1.1 FTAA sections 21 and 22 set out matters to be considered in determining whether a referral application should be accepted.
- 2.1.2 DOC notes that other agencies are better placed to comment on most matters. Comments below are limited to sections where DOC has specific interests or information relevant to the Minister’s decision.
- 2.1.3 DOC has considered the criteria in section 22 and has not identified anything it considers the Minister should take into account that has not already been acknowledged by the Applicant in its referral application.
- 2.1.4 DOC has the following comments on sections 21(3) and (4), and section 22:

Section	Criteria	Comments
21(3)(b)	Does the project involve an ineligible activity	DOC has considered section 5(1) (f), (h), (i), (j) and (k). DOC has not identified any aspect of the project that would be ineligible under these sections.
21(3)(c)	Is there adequate information to inform a decision	<p>While DOC considers the information adequate in terms of a referral decision, DOC notes that the Ecology Assessment provided with the referral application includes a preliminary assessment of ecological values and summary of the ecological baseline for the project area using existing ecological databases and a site survey undertaken on the 18th and 19th of June 2025. Within the information provided, ecological features were indicatively mapped, however, no detailed ecological information was included.</p> <p>In summary, if the project is referred, detailed ecological surveys (including for lizards, bats, avifauna freshwater, wetland and other ecological values) should be undertaken with methodologies and results provided in the substantive application. This will inform what wildlife approvals will be required for the project.</p> <p>With regard to lizards, it is noted that a baseline survey should be undertaken in advance of preparing a Lizard Management Plan ('LMP'). This is required to determine which species are present, how many lizards are likely to be impacted and how they are distributed around the landscape. The baseline survey will be</p>

Section	Criteria	Comments
		<p>critical to determining and reviewing methods for mitigation (i.e., salvage and proposed release area/s).</p> <p>It is noted that the native freshwater fish diversity within the area, despite the waterways being degraded, is high. Comprehensive indigenous fish surveys will be required as part of the substantive application. The plans provided in the referral information indicate that there will be significant reduction in the length of watercourses on the project site. Given this, the substantive application should also demonstrate that a suitable offsetting site is available. Similarly, the substantive application should demonstrate how wetland loss is to be avoided or offset.</p> <p>Further, long-tailed bats are also present in the vicinity of the site. The substantive application should address these values and how potential adverse effects on them will be managed.</p>
21(4)	Are there any other reasons not specified	DOC has not identified any other reasons why the project should not be referred.
21(5)(a)	<p>Is the project inconsistent with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Treaty settlement; • Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019; • Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011. 	<p>DOC has not identified any inconsistency with any relevant settlement or other obligation. Relevant Treaty Settlement Acts are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010; • Ngāti Hauā Claims Settlement Act 2014; • Ngāti Tuwharetoa, Raukawa, and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010; and • Nga Wai o Maniapoto (Waipa River) Act 2012.
21(5)(b)	Would it be more appropriate to deal with the proposed approvals under another Act(s)	DOC has not identified any reason why the wildlife approval identified should not be dealt with under the FTAA.
21(5)(c)	Would the project have significant adverse effects on the environment	While the site is highly modified, due to the scale of the project, DOC considers the project may have significant adverse effects on the ecological values anticipated to be present. However, based on our knowledge of the existing environment and species expected to occur on the site, our understanding of the project, and our experience of the kinds of design measures and conditions that could be implemented, DOC considers that once more detailed information is available, it would be possible to achieve a project with the

Section	Criteria	Comments
		imposition of conditions (that are appropriate, enforceable, include best management practice, and apply the relevant ecological management plans, where required), that does not have significant adverse effects on the environment.
21(5)(d)	Does the applicant(s) have a poor compliance history under a specified Act	DOC has not identified any issues with the Applicant's compliance history under the Wildlife Act 1953.
21(5)(g)	Would a substantive application have any competing applications	No competing applications relating to wildlife approvals have been identified.
22(1)(b)(i)	Would referring the project to the fast-track process facilitate the project, including in a way that is more timely and cost-effective than under normal processes?	A Wildlife Act approval would generally take approximately three-four months to process, which is not significantly longer than the FTAA process is expected to take. However, there may be benefits for the Applicant in terms of consideration being combined with RMA approvals (rather than being advanced by a separate process) and given the different decision-making framework under the FTAA.
22(2)(a)(ix)	Will this project address significant environmental issues?	No.
22(2)(a)(x)	Is the project consistent with local or regional planning document, including spatial strategies?	<p>The following Statutory Planning documents are relevant to the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation General Policy 2005; and • Waikato Conservation Management Strategy 2014. <p>The project is not inconsistent with the relevant statutory planning provisions. However, in preparing their substantive application the Applicant should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevant provisions in Te Ture Whaimana with respect to streams which are tributaries of the Waikato River; • Maintaining and restoring the ecological integrity of relevant ecosystems and habitat types; and • Conserving any threatened and at-risk species to ensure persistence; protecting freshwater habitat, fish passage and the maintenance of habitat connectivity and water quality or any waterway.

Section	Criteria	Comments
		It is noted that the Orchard Grove project involves a prohibited activity under both the Operative (' WODP ') and Operative in Part (' WDP-OP ') versions of the Waikato District Plan (refer to rules 25.5(e) and 25.5(f) of the WODP and rule SUB-R41 of the WDP-OP) – specifically, the subdivision of high-class soil and land located within an Urban Expansion Policy Area, as such the project is not consistent with these provisions.
22(b)	Any other matters the Minister may consider as relevant?	The populations of long-tailed bats in the vicinity of the site are low due to the past impacts of land use intensification and developments. It is noted that bat habitat is not restricted to tree roosts. The Waikato Regional Council bat layer maps show that the entire area is habitat for bats. This will need to be addressed within the substantive application, should the project be advanced.

3 Other considerations

- 3.1.1 DOC has provided input to a number of fast-track projects to date where additional conservation approvals that would have been available under the FTAA have not been included in a substantive application. In some cases, it has been necessary for applicants to seek additional approvals via normal processing. This can result in inefficiencies, additional costs and undermining of the benefits of the 'one stop shop' approach of the FTAA.
- 3.1.2 DOC considers the Applicant should contemplate whether it should seek to include additional approvals that may be required for the project, and suggests the Minister consider whether further information should be sought from the applicant under section 20 before making their referral decision, to ensure all approvals in scope of the FTAA and necessary to implement the project are included in any referral notice.
- 3.1.3 DOC understands that the Applicant seeks to realign approximately 500m of highly modified watercourse, that there is potential for loss or modification of artificial drains that may provide native fish habitat and that culverts are anticipated as part of the project. Given this, DOC recommends consideration of whether any culverts to be installed as part of the project might require a complex freshwater fisheries activity approval, as highlighted to the Applicant in the Consultation Summary provided to the Applicant as part of pre-lodgement consultation.

4 Matters for the Minister to specify (s27)

- 4.1.1 None identified.

UNCLASSIFIED

Jenni Fitzgerald
Fast-Track Applications Manager
Acting pursuant to delegated authority on behalf of the Director-General of Conservation.

Date: 27th of February 2026

Note: A copy of the Instrument of Delegation may be inspected at the Director-General's office at Conservation House Whare
Kaupapa Atawhai, 18/32 Manners Street, Wellington 6011

Your written comments on a project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Project name	Orchard Grove (HT1)
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Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

All sections of this form with an asterisk (*) must be completed.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)	Hamilton City Council		
*First name	Juliana		
*Last name	Reu Junqueira		
Postal address	Private Bag 3010, Hamilton 3204		
*Contact phone number	s 9(2)(a)	Alternative	s 9(2)(a)
*Email	s 9(2)(a)		

2. Please provide your comments on this application
If you need more space, please attach additional pages. Please include your name, page numbers and the project name on the additional pages.

Note: All comments will be made available to the public and the applicant when the Ministry for the Environment proactively releases advice provided to the Minister for the Environment.

Managers signoff

Dr Juliana Reu Junqueira



Date: 26th February 2026

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations
Minister for Infrastructure
C/o Ministry for the Environment
contact@fasttrack.govt.nz

Dear Ilana

FAST-TRACK PROPOSAL: Orchard Grove - Reference FTAA-2512- 1154

Thank you for the invitation to provide written comments on the Orchard Grove referral application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

The comments below summaries key matters already recorded in Hamilton City Council's (HCC) Statement of Facts for HT1 - Orchard Grove and highlight the risks and dependencies that in our view, should shape both any referral decision and the information requirements for a substantive application.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this document please contact me.

Kind Regards,



Dr Juliana Reu Junqueira
Director Urban and Spatial Planning Unit | Strategy, Growth & Planning Group
Hamilton City Council
s 9(2)(a)

Cc: Blair Bowcott
General Manager - Strategy, Growth & Planning Group
Hamilton City Council
s 9(2)(a)

Hamilton City Council Comments -

HT1 Orchard Grove referral application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

Orchard Grove (the site) is located immediately outside the Hamilton City boundary, within Waikato District, and forms part of the HT1 Growth Cell (an Urban Enablement area identified in the Future Proof Strategy and in the Waikato District Plan). The site is located in the south portion of HT1 and is bounded by Resolution Drive, Reynolds Road, Osborne Road, and Kay Road.

Proposed development and Strategy Alignment

The applicant seeks a referral under the Fast-Track Approvals Act for residential and rural lifestyle development, including lots of various sizes, a neighbourhood centre, stormwater and open space networks, and associated three-waters and roading. The applicant indicated preference for servicing from Hamilton City Council (HCC)'s urban water and wastewater networks.

HCC and Waikato District Council (WDC) have a Strategic Boundary Agreement (SBA) framework for the HT1 Growth Cell, which includes the subject site. The SBA provides for the future transfer of HT1 growth cell from WDC to HCC.

If the project is referred, a boundary adjustment may be required to support integrated servicing and funding outcomes. The recent establishment of the joint waters Council-Controlled Organisation (IAWAI) by HCC and WDC, will also be a key party to infrastructure servicing discussions.

A boundary change may not be a direct or immediate consequence of any Fast-Track consent being granted. However, without early clarity on boundary alignment and infrastructure servicing arrangements, there is a risk of misaligned development staging and sub optimal integration with Hamilton City's infrastructure networks and long-term investment programme.

The practical complexities of developing immediately adjacent to HCC's boundary, combined with differing landowner expectations across council jurisdictions, will require careful management to ensure well-coordinated, efficient and integrated urban development outcomes.

Integrated approach

An integrated and coordinated planning approach is expected for development within the HT1 Growth Cell, ensuring that key considerations such as land use, transport, three-waters, open space and urban design, are informed by a holistic understanding of the entire growth area, rather than individual sites in isolation.

The applicant's site represents approximately 8.8% of the total HT1 Growth cell area. As such, there is a strong need to ensure that the proposed development is assessed within the context of the wider growth cell, and that it does not proceed in isolation in a manner that

could pre-empt or prejudice optimal outcomes for the balance of the growth area. Ideally, prior to consideration of development proposals of this scale within a larger growth area, there would be clearly defined and agreed requirements for strategic transport corridors, parks and open space networks, stormwater management areas, commercial centres, schooling, and other large-scale integrated planning matters that collectively support high-quality and well-functioning urban outcomes.

This has not occurred in the case of the Orchard Grove proposal. Instead, the proposal needs to respond to, and be informed by, the broader HT1 spatial framework, with stormwater, transport, and land use outcomes designed to complement - rather than constrain - future sequencing, infrastructure provision and development across the remainder of the HT1 Growth Cell.

Three Waters servicing

Waikato District Council and Hamilton City Council have agreed to establish a joint waters CCO, IAWAI - Flowing Waters. In 2025, Waikato District Council and Hamilton City Council resolved to transfer responsibility for all Fast Track applications, to IAWAI – Flowing Waters.

As part of the preparation of any substantive application, input and Development Agreements will be required with IAWAI to in relation to any water, wastewater and stormwater services. All associated costs would need to be borne by the applicant, and a Development Agreement (Local Government Act sec 207A) is requested between the applicant and IAWAI. As a minimum, the Development Agreement must address the matters set out in Local Government Act sec207C (3) including any other matters IAWAI – Flowing Waters requires.

Notwithstanding the early transfer of responsibility for three waters to IAWAI ahead of its 'go live' operational start date on 1 July 2026, the following comments are made in relation to three waters:

Water supply

There is no planned water servicing for the HT1 growth cell, of which Orchard Grove forms a part. Integration with IAWIA's waters infrastructure is required. This is likely to necessitate long-term solutions such as a reservoir and treatment facility. Reliance on bore water is not accepted given legislative public health obligations and drinking water standards. An alternative reticulated water supply option is required to ensure resilience, public health protection, and long-term sustainability consistent with urban development outcomes.

Wastewater

There is no planned wastewater servicing for the HT1 growth cell, of which Orchard Grove forms a part. Existing wastewater networks in the surrounding area have identified capacity constraints, which limit the feasibility of immediate connection without intervention. Potential options to address these constraints may include connection to existing wastewater networks with upgrades however, technical investigation is required to determine the nature and scale of any upgrades, or whether a connection is even possible. I

note on-site or stand-alone wastewater treatment systems are unlikely to be sustainable over the medium term. Early optioneering and network modelling are necessary to identify any feasible options and must be agreed with IAWAI.

Stormwater

Stormwater design must be informed by, and respond to, the wider catchment context, rather than being assessed solely at a site-specific level. The primary purpose of areas identified for stormwater management and open space should be to meet their respective functional and operational requirements. Dual use of these areas is not anticipated as the default approach but may be considered where it can be demonstrated that minimum stormwater performance, safety, maintenance and open space requirements are achieved independently of any secondary use.

It is expected that wider HT1 Growth Cell stormwater management solutions are identified in the HT1 integrated master or structure plan, that will enable Orchard Grove specific stormwater solutions to be properly assessed.

Transport

Orchard Grove must be planned as part of a wider area masterplan and not a site-only solution, including hierarchy, safe intersections, public transport routing and infrastructure, and walking/cycling connectivity to Rototuna/Flagstaff and beyond. Network modelling is required to test capacity, safety and cross-boundary integration. It is expected as a minimum that some level of network modelling for the whole HT1 growth cell will precede modelling for the specific development proposal.

Northern River Crossing

The Northern River Crossing (NRC) is a long-identified east-west strategic corridor connecting SH1C to Resolution Drive and remains an important consideration for the development. An indicative alignment, together with an envelope sufficient to enable the construction and long-term function of the corridor needs to be recognised, including allowance for a potentially wide designation footprint in places (potentially up to 80 m designation width in places). Key matters include how future intersection performance at Resolution Drive, access control, the corridor speed environment (up to 80km/h), and opportunities for co-located utilities are enabled or not precluded by the proposal.

Further work is anticipated to refine the role, function and alignment of the Northern River Crossing in an integrated way. This includes understanding how alignment options discussed to date support the intended strategic outcomes of the corridor and how these matters are best addressed through future planning processes.

It is anticipated that the role, function and alignment of the NRC will be examined through preparation of the HT1 Integrated Master Plan for the wider growth cell. The Orchard Grove proposal should therefore demonstrate how it protects the ability to deliver the NRC and how any potential impacts, constraints or costs associated with the corridor are appropriately considered and reflected through the master-planning process and any subsequent agreements.

Urban Design

HT1 has preferred densities of 30-50 dwellings per hectare under the Future Proof intensification targets. Orchard Grove, located adjacent to the Rototuna Town Centre, should therefore deliver a range of housing choices, including terrace and apartment typologies, and employ a place-based masterplan that respects site contours to minimise earthworks, optimises solar orientation, limits large blocks, avoids rear lots, and ensures walkability and integration to existing centres, schools, and parks. Current concept material needs to be strengthened to adequately realise these outcomes. In particular, the proposal needs to recognise that, over time, the HT1 growth cell is intended to transition into a fully urban environment. In any engagement on a substantive application, HCC will be strongly emphasising these considerations.

A key urban design and strategic planning risk is the potential for a sprawl-pattern yield that under-delivers on density, walkability and integration with existing centres. Such an outcome would place additional pressure on transport and three waters infrastructure and would diminish the long-term strategic value of the site and the wider HT1 Growth Cell for the sub region.

Reverse sensitivity

Given the site's interface with existing non-urban activities, it is expected that planning and design for Orchard Grove will clearly identify and respond to rural-urban edge conditions and explicitly outline how potential reverse sensitivity effects will be avoided or properly managed. Consistent with the approach anticipated through the Conditions Strategy, it is preferred that these matters are addressed through the master planning process and reflected in a Development Framework supported by appropriate performance-based development standards.

Conditions strategy: information and drafting expectations (if referred)

1. Taking the above into account, HCC supports using a standardised conditions strategy across FTAA projects, with scope for project specific tailoring where required. For Orchard Grove, we recommend that any substantive application is required to: Provide a whole-of-of-HT1 masterplan (growth cell scale), with Orchard Grove stages nested within it, reference the masterplan in conditions as an approved plan for the applicant's land, and treat third party land at a non-binding level.
2. Submit a Development Framework that:
 - Lists enabled activities and exclusions,
 - Sets development standards/bulk and location controls (largely drawn from operative provisions),
 - Includes design principles/criteria for attached typologies, and
 - Describes self-certification pathways to support building consents.

3. Use staging with infrastructure triggers (including open space/social infrastructure) tied to s224(c)¹ release for each stage; keep funding and responsibilities to commercial agreements (PDA) separate from conditions.
4. Protect the NRC corridor and any strategic utilities corridors in the approved plans/conditions, with intersection form/function and speed environment set at a network level.
5. Include stormwater performance requirements consistent with the catchment approach, including primary conveyance channels, appropriate buffers and overland flow protection. Evidence should be provided that Waikato Regional Council (WRC) drainage level of service is maintained.
6. Separate consent types (land use, subdivision, temporary works) and apply “fall-away” conditions for bulk earthworks and temporary activities.

Value Capture

Because Orchard Grove is currently located outside HCC’s administrative boundary, development contributions cannot be levied by HCC unless and until/if a boundary change occurs. In the absence of a boundary adjustment, HCC will therefore seek the application of value capture mechanisms, including conditions, a Private Development Agreement and a Cost Recovery Agreement, to fund both internal and external upgrades proportionate to effects and to ensure no unfunded burden falls on existing Hamilton City ratepayers. This approach is consistent with HCC’s position taken on comparable Fast track proposals in similar boundary and servicing contexts.

A key funding risk is progressing consents without agreed Private Development and Cost Recovery Agreements framework. In addition, premature signalling of a potential boundary change may create unrealistic expectations regarding the availability and timing of infrastructure funding, where such funding has not been secured or programmed, potentially delaying the delivery of critical transport and three-waters networks.

Summary

- The Orchard Grove site is strategically located to enable the planned expansion of Hamilton’s northern urban area and to leverage established investment in Hamilton North.
- An integrated land-use and infrastructure masterplan for the full HT1 Growth Cell is essential to ensure Orchard Grove is planned and delivered in a manner that supports coherent, efficient and long-term outcomes, rather than proceeding in isolation.
- Protection of the Northern River Crossing corridor, together with associated strategic transport and utility functions, is a critical requirement for development within HT1 Growth Cell.

¹ Resource Management Act. 1991.

- Potential reverse sensitivity effects arising from the site's interface with existing non-urban activities should be addressed early through appropriate rural-urban edge condition design, buffers, and development standards.
- Network-scale planning and servicing strategies, supported by appropriate modelling and a Development Framework, should be developed collaboratively with Hamilton City Council, Waikato District Council, IAWAI, and Waikato Regional Council to ensure coordinated transport, and three-waters outcomes.
- Early clarity on boundary agreements, value-capture mechanisms, private development agreement and cost recovery frameworks is essential to support integrated servicing, funding, and timely delivery of required infrastructure.

Thank you

Dr Juliana Reu Junqueira

Director Urban and Spatial Planning Unit | Strategy, Growth & Planning Group
Hamilton City Council

Your written comments on a project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Project name	Orchard Grove
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Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

All sections of this form with an asterisk (*) must be completed.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)	NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA)		
*First name	Nicola		
*Last name	Foran		
Postal address			
*Contact phone number	s 9(2)(a)	Alternative	
*Email	environmentalplanning@nzta.govt.nz		

2. Please provide your comments on this application
<p>NZTA thanks the Minister for the opportunity to comment on the referral of this application into the fast-track approvals process.</p> <p>NZTA has reviewed the application documents for the proposed 815 lot (approximate) residential subdivision of 40B & C, 126 Reynolds Road, and 78 Osbourne Road, Hamilton. NZTA note that there is no record of pre-application engagement between NZTA and the applicant in relation to the residential development.</p> <p>NZTA's comments on the referral application are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZTA note that the residential development would lead to an increase in vehicle movements on the immediate and wider roading network during construction and post development. NZTA would need to see the substantive application, including an Integrated Transport Assessment (ITA) completed by a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner, to be able to determine the actual and potential transport effects of the development on the state highway network.

Insert Fast-track logo

- Part of the application site, more specifically Lot 15 DP 327052, is subject to Designation NZTA-8 of the Waikato District Plan – Operative in Part (or J17 under the Waikato Operative District Plan). This designation relates to the State Highway 1 (SH1) Waikato Expressway and associated connection of local road to SH1. Section 176(1)(b) of the Resource Management Act 1991 therefore applies and will need to be considered as part of the substantive application.
- The applicants Transport Memorandum, completed by Commute Transportation Limited, provides background information on the proposed development and outlines the intended scope for the ITA and associated transport modelling that would be included in any future substantive application. Specific to the Transport Memorandum, NZTA notes:

Network Assessment:

- The Transport Memorandum identifies several required network upgrades. The triggers for these upgrades will need to be confirmed in the substantive ITA assessment.
- Given the close proximity of the proposed development to the Resolution Drive/ State Highway 1 (SH1) Interchange, it is recommended that an assessment of this interchange be included within the substantive ITA assessment. Including it will help determine the extent of development impacts on interchange performance.
- There are existing walking and cycling facilities along Resolution Drive that connect to the SH1 interchange, so walking and cycling should not present any significant issues.

Transport Modelling:

- The proposed transport modelling currently includes SIDRA intersection modelling only. As part of any substantive application, NZTA would also like the ITA to include modelling of the network wide effects.
- The methodology proposes to use existing traffic counts factored to reflect background traffic growth. This approach does not account for approved or committed future developments and projects and therefore may understate future traffic effects on the transport network.
- The Resolution Drive/SH1 Interchange should be included within the modelling.
- Sensitivity testing should also be included to account for key uncertainties and assumptions (e.g., trip generation rates, travel direction splits, and other variables).

Conclusion:

Overall, NZTA has no concerns with this project, Orchard Grove, being referred to the fast-track approvals process.

NZTA would welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposal further with the applicant and provide comments on any substantive application in due course.

Note: All comments will be made available to the public and the applicant when the Ministry for the Environment proactively releases advice provided to the Minister for the Environment

Managers signoff

Nicola Foran

Date 27 February 2026