

FTAA-2605-1240: Application received for referral of the project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Stage 1 decisions

Project Name: Waitiri Project

Date submitted:	10 June 2026	Tracking #: 26-BRF-01523	
Security level:	In-Confidence	MfE priority:	Urgent

	Action sought:	Response by:
To Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure	Decisions on recommendations in Table A	17 June 2026

Actions for Minister's Office staff	Return the signed briefing to: FTAreferrals@mfe.govt.nz Send email to Ministers to invite written comments
Number of appendices: 3	Appendices: 1. Statutory framework summary 2. Application documents for the Waitiri Project 3. List of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Ministry for the Environment contacts:

Position	Name	Cell phone	1 st contact
Principal Author	Rebecca Burton		
Manager	Stephanie Frame	s 9(2)(a)	✓
General Manager	Ilana Miller	s 9(2)(a)	

Project location



Image 1: Approximate location of the project area



Image 2: Approximate location of the five development areas proposed for the project

Key messages

1. This briefing seeks your initial decisions on an application from Oaks Living Limited (the applicant) to refer the Waitiri Project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process.
2. At this stage you can either decline an application for the reasons set out section 21, or provide the application to, and invite comments from, the parties identified in section 17. If

you do not decline the application, you will receive a further briefing following receipt of comments, to inform your final decision on whether to refer the project.

Project description

3. The project is for a mixed-use development across five geographically distinct but interrelated sites within Gibbston Valley, Queenstown, with a total area of approximately 828.2 hectares (ha).
4. The five sites within the project area are described as:
 - a. Ara Tihi – Eastburn (approximately 127.7 ha), located at 108–117 and 163 Eastburn Road, and 54 Preservation Lane, Arrow Junction
 - b. Mānia – Glenlee/Glenroy (approximately 398.8 ha), located at 1786 Gibbston Highway
 - c. Taiheke – Riverside (approximately 30.99 ha), located at Gibbston Highway and 48 Rafters Road
 - d. Karapuke – Drystone (approximately 74.72 ha), located at 2188 Gibbston Highway
 - e. Kūrae – Waitiri (approximately 196.01 ha), located at 3207 Gibbston Highway.
5. The project includes the subdivision, construction, and establishment of residential, non-residential, and associated infrastructure and open space areas, including:
 - a. subdivision and development of approximately 1,115 residential lots across a range of densities and typologies, including approximately 167 high-density lots, 209 medium-density lots, 393 low-density lots, 183 large lot residential lots, 114 rural living lots, and 49 rural lots
 - b. subdivision and development of allotments to enable non-residential and community activities, including a resort precinct (approximately 3.96 ha), an 18-hole golf course, and approximately 2.63 ha of clubhouse and community hub space
 - c. provision for community and service elements, including a village precinct incorporating approximately 7,200 m² of commercial gross floor area, a 2.10 ha school site, and approximately 6.15 ha identified as a cultural node for a conference centre and visitor accommodation
 - d. provision and construction of supporting infrastructure and land use components, including a nursery (approximately 4.47 ha), solar farm (approximately 3.73 ha), and mitigation buffer (approximately 5.11 ha)
 - e. establishment of an open space network of approximately 284 ha incorporating native restoration, revegetation, and mitigation planting
 - f. provision and construction of infrastructure and transport elements to support the development, including an underpass across State Highway 6 to connect the north and south sides of the highway.
6. The application is not proposed as a staged project under the Act. The applicant intends to lodge one substantive application for the whole project, if referred to the fast-track approvals process.
7. The applicant seeks the following approvals through the fast-track approvals process to authorise the project:
 - a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991
 - b. wildlife authority under the Wildlife Act 1953

- c. an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

Initial recommendations

8. We have undertaken initial analysis of the referral application, and this is presented along with our considerations and recommendations in Table A.
9. We have decided the application is complete and complies with section 14 of the Act, as the application complies with section 13 requirements, may be capable of satisfying the criteria in section 22 and does not appear to involve an ineligible activity. The applicable fee and levy have been paid.
10. We recommend you progress consideration of the referral application to the next stage of analysis (Stage 2) and invite written comments from the parties prescribed in section 17(1) of the Act being:
 - a. Queenstown Lakes District Council and Otago Regional Council as the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
 - c. the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, and the Associate Minister of Housing as the other relevant portfolio Ministers
 - d. Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga as the relevant administering agencies
 - e. the parties in Appendix 3 as the identified Māori groups.
11. The project area, as illustrated, appears to include public conservation land. As such, we note you must obtain a report from the Director-General of Conservation in accordance with section 19(1) of the Act.
12. We recommend that you invite written comments from the following additional persons under section 17(5) of the Act, for the reasons specified:
 - a. *the Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi*, as the project area adjoins State Highway 6
 - b. *the Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited*, as the National Grid overhead transmission line traverses the northern part of the site.
 - c. *the Minister for Sport and Recreation*, as the project includes a subdivision to create allotments to enable the construction of a golf course
 - d. *the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality*, as the project includes a subdivision to create allotments to enable the construction of tourism accommodation and a resort precinct
 - e. *the Minister for Energy*, as the project includes a subdivision to create allotments to enable the construction of a solar farm
 - f. *the Minister of Education*, as the project includes a subdivision to create allotments to enable the construction of a school site
 - g. *the Minister for Regional Development*
 - h. *the Minister for Economic Growth*.

Action sought

13. Please indicate your decisions on the recommendations in Table A.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Frame', written over a light gray horizontal line.

Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Table A: Stage 1 analysis

	Project Name	Applicant	Project Area		
Project details	Waitiri Project (the project)	Oaks Living Limited (the applicant)	The project area comprises five distinct development areas over a total area of approximately 828.2 hectares (ha) within Gibbston Valley, Queenstown. These sites are: – Ara Tihi – Eastburn (approximately 127.7 ha), located at 108–117 and 163 Eastburn Road, and 54 Preservation Lane, Arrow Junction – Mānia – Glenlee/Glenroy (approximately 398.8 ha), located at 1786 Gibbston Highway – Taiheke – Riverside (approximately 30.99 ha), located at Gibbston Highway and 48 Rafter Road – Karapuke – Drystone (approximately 74.72 ha), located at 2188 Gibbston Highway – Kūrae – Waitiri (approximately 196.01 ha), located at 3207 Gibbston Highway.		
Project description	The project is for a mixed-use development across five interrelated sites within Gibbston Valley, Queenstown. The project includes the subdivision, construction, and establishment of residential, non-residential, and associated infrastructure and open space areas, including: a. subdivision and development of approximately 1,115 residential lots across a range of densities and typologies, including approximately 167 high-density lots, 209 medium-density lots, 393 low-density lots, 183 large lot residential lots, 114 rural living lots, and 49 rural lots b. subdivision and development of allotments to enable non-residential and community activities, including a resort precinct (approximately 3.96 ha), an 18-hole golf course, and approximately 2.63 ha of clubhouse and community hub space c. provision for community and service elements, including a village precinct incorporating approximately 7,200 m² of commercial gross floor area, a 2.10 ha school site, and approximately 6.15 ha identified as a cultural node for a conference centre and visitor accommodation d. provision and construction of supporting infrastructure and land use components, including a nursery (approximately 4.47 ha), solar farm (approximately 3.73 ha), and mitigation buffer (approximately 5.11 ha) e. establishment of an open space network of approximately 284 ha incorporating native restoration, revegetation, and mitigation planting f. provision and construction of infrastructure and transport elements to support the development, including an underpass across State Highway 6 to connect the north and south sides of the highway. The applicant seeks the following approvals through the fast-track approvals process to authorise the project: a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 b. wildlife authority under the Wildlife Act 1953 c. an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.				
Notification and/or consultation undertaken	As required by section 11, the applicant has:				
	Notified in writing, the relevant local authorities	Notified in writing, the relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities	Consulted, ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou, or the relevant MACA groups	Notified in writing, the relevant administering agencies	Notified in writing, the holder of land to be exchanged
	- Queenstown Lakes District Council - Otago Regional Council	- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu - Te Rūnanga o Moeraki - Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki - Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou - Hokonui Rūnanga - Waihōpai Rūnaka - Te Rūnanga o Ōraka-Aparima - Te Rūnanga o Awarua	Not applicable to the project	- Department of Conservation - Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga	Not applicable to the project
Section 22 assessment criteria					
The project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits [section 22(1)(a)]	You <u>may</u> consider any of the following matters, or any other matters the Minister considers relevant: <i>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) [s22(2)(a)(iii)]</i> The applicant states that a key regional issue is the shortage of housing in Queenstown Lakes. The applicant notes that the Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan (July 2021) identifies affordable housing as one of the district’s most pressing issues. In that context, the applicant considers enabling the project through the fast-track process would assist in addressing land supply and infrastructure constraints. The applicant outlines that the project will: - enable 1,115 residential units, representing a material increase in housing supply in the context of Queenstown Lakes and Otago’s housing shortage and affordability pressures; - improve housing choice and affordability by increasing the availability of housing across a broader range of typologies and price points, thereby assisting to relieve house price and rental pressures. <i>Will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)]</i> The applicant states that the project will provide the following economic benefits: - generate approximately \$2.17 billion in direct capital expenditure over the 11-year development period, excluding land; and - generate significant employment benefits, including approximately 2,028 FTE years in the peak development year and around 12,507 FTE years in total over the full 11-year development period; and - of the total employment effects, approximately 5,138 FTE years are identified as direct employment, with a further 5,732 FTE years arising indirectly and through induced effects across the wider regional economy; and				

	- support the Queenstown Lakes and wider Otago tourism economy through the resort, lodge and golf course components, which are expected to attract visitors, stimulate expenditure, and contribute to the district's tourism recovery and resilience. <i>Will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions [s22(2)(a)(viii)]</i> The applicant states that the project will provide a reduction in reliance on travel to Queenstown, and a lesser extent, Cromwell, through the provision of village, retail, education and commercial components, designed to meet a greater share of residents' day-to-day needs within the Gibbston area. The applicant considers a greater proportion of trips are expected to be directed toward the Cromwell and eastern SH6 network rather than toward Queenstown, thereby minimising congestion. Overall, the applicant considers that the project will contribute to efforts to mitigate climate change and reduce net emissions of greenhouse gases. <i>Will address significant environmental issues [s22(2)(a)(ix)]</i> While the applicant states that no existing significant issues will be addressed, they also identify that the project will provide for a 280 ha area of ecological benefits, including provision of open space, riparian enhancement, creation of ecological corridors, wetland and gully protection, indigenous habitat enhancement, weed and pest management, and native revegetation across the project. For this reason, the applicant considers that the project will provide significant environmental benefits to the region.		
Referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]	<i>Would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes [s22(1)(b)(i)]</i> The applicant states that referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate its delivery by enabling the necessary approvals to be considered through a single, integrated statutory pathway, rather than through the standard planning processes that would be lengthy, uncertain, and resource intensive. <i>Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)]</i> The applicant states that referring the project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of that process. Although the proposal is substantial in scale, the applicant considers the issues it raises are not novel in either planning or technical terms. The applicant states that the project will be supported by detailed expert input across the relevant disciplines, enabling the substantive issues and effects of the proposal to be clearly identified and evaluated. The applicant considers that the project does not raise unusual legal or factual complexity that would be likely to place disproportionate demands on the fast-track system or require exceptional process adaptations.		
Minister invites comments	<i>You must copy the application to, and invite written comments from [s17(1)]:</i> - relevant local authorities: - Otago Regional Council - Queenstown Lakes District Council - the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development - other relevant portfolio Ministers: - the Minister of Conservation – as the project requires wildlife approval under the Wildlife Act 1953 - the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage – as the project requires approval under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 - the Associate Minister of Housing – as the project involves the construction and establishment of a residential development and subdivision - relevant administering agencies: - Department of Conservation – as the project requires approvals under the Wildlife Act 1953 - Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga – as the project requires approval under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 - the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3.	<i>You may copy the application to, and invite written comments from, any other person [s17(5)]:</i> We recommend you invite comments from the following additional persons, for the specified reasons: - the Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi – as the project area adjoins State Highway 6 - the Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited – as the National Grid overhead transmission line traverses the northern part of the site. - the Minister for Sport and Recreation – as the project includes a subdivision to create allotments to enable the construction of a golf course - the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality – as the project includes a subdivision to create allotments to enable the construction of tourism accommodation and a resort precinct - the Minister for Energy – as the project includes a subdivision to create allotments to enable the construction of a solar farm - the Minister of Education – as the project includes a subdivision to create allotments to enable the construction of a school site - the Minister for Regional Development - the Minister for Economic Growth.	<i>The Minister may request further information about a referral application from the applicant, the relevant local authorities, or the relevant administering agencies to be provided within the time frame specified in the request.</i> We have not identified any further information required at this stage.
Recommendations			Minister's decision
a. Note that section 25 of the Act permits you to decline the referral application without inviting comments from the parties under section 17.			Noted
b. Note that you have not yet provided the application to, nor sought any written comments on it from, the parties listed in section 17(1) but that you are required to do so if you do not decline the application under section 21 of the Act.			Noted
c. Note that section 17(5) of the Act permits you to forward an application to, and invite written comments from, any other person.			Noted
d. Note that if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame you are required to consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.			Noted
e. Note that section 20 of the Act permits you to request further information from the applicant or relevant local authorities or relevant administering agencies at any time before you decide whether to accept or decline an application.			Noted
f. Agree to progress the Waitiri Project to our Stage 2 analysis (invite written comments and request section 18 Treaty report).			Yes / No
g. Agree to provide the application to, and invite written comments from:			

i.	Otago Regional Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council as the relevant local authorities under section 17(1)(a)	Yes / No
ii.	the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development under section 17(1)(b)	Yes / No
iii.	the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, and the Associate Minister of Housing as the other relevant portfolio Ministers under section 17(1)(b)	Yes / No
iv.	the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga as the relevant administering agencies under section 17(1)(c)	Yes / No
v.	the parties in Appendix 3 as the identified Māori groups under section 17(1)(d)	Yes / No
vi.	any parties you are required to invite comments from under section 17(1)(d) and (e) who may be subsequently identified	Yes / No
h.	Agree to provide the application to and invite written comments from the following additional persons under section 17(5):	
i.	the Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi	Yes / No
ii.	the Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited	Yes / No
iii.	the Minister for Sport and Recreation	Yes / No
iv.	the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality	Yes / No
v.	the Minister for Energy	Yes / No
vi.	the Minister of Education	Yes / No
vii.	the Minister for Regional Development	Yes / No
viii.	the Minister for Economic Growth.	Yes / No
i.	Note that section 19(1) of the Act requires you to obtain and consider a report in relation to the use of public conservation land for the project from the Director-General of Conservation.	Noted
j.	Note that you have agreed to delegate to the Secretary for the Environment your responsibility to send all correspondence, other than to Ministers.	Noted
k.	Agree to send the email to invite written comments from Ministers.	Yes / No

Signed:

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure

Date:

Appendix 1: Statutory framework summary

1. You are the sole decision maker for referral applications. If you accept a referral application, then the whole or part of the project will be referred to the fast-track approvals process.
2. If a Treaty settlement, the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019, a Mana Whakahono ā Rohe or a joint management agreement provides for consideration of any document or procedural requirements, you must, where relevant:
 - a. give the document the same or equivalent effect through this process as it would have under any specified Act; and
 - b. comply with any applicable procedural requirements.
3. You must decline a referral application if:
 - a. you are satisfied the project does not meet the referral criteria in s22
 - b. you are satisfied the project involves an ineligible activity (s5)
 - c. you consider you do not have adequate information to inform your decision.
4. You may decline an application for any other reason, including those set out in s21(5) and even if the application meets the s22 referral criteria.
5. You can decline an application before or after inviting comments under s17(1). However, if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame, you must consider them, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.
6. If you do not decline a referral application at this initial stage you must copy the application to, and invite written comments from:
 - a. the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
 - c. any other relevant portfolio Ministers
 - d. the relevant administering agencies
 - e. the Māori groups identified by the responsible agency
 - f. the owners of Māori land in the project area (if applicable)
 - g. you may provide the application to and invite comments from any other person.
7. You can request further information from an applicant, any relevant local authority or any relevant administering agency at any time before you decide to decline or accept a referral application (see section 20 of the Act).
8. However, if further information has been sought and provided within the required time frame you must consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.

Appendix 2: Application documents for the Waitiri project

Appendix 3: List of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Name of group	Type of group (section of Act)
Aukaha	Other Māori group with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))
Hokonui Rūnanga	Treaty settlement entity – Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki	Treaty settlement entity – Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Ao Mārama Incorporated	Other Māori group with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))
Te Rūnanga o Awarua	Treaty settlement entity – Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Moeraki	Treaty settlement entity – Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu	Iwi authority (s18(2)(a)); Treaty settlement entity – Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Ōraka-Aparima	Treaty settlement entity – Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou	Treaty settlement entity – Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Waihōpai Rūnaka	Treaty settlement entity – Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))