

Submission opposing the Ōhoka Residential Subdivision

Dr Ollie Bourke and Louise Bourke
Application FTAA-2606-1253

Contact details

Organisation	Not applicable
First names	Oliver and Louise
Last name	Bourke
Postal address	[REDACTED]
Home or mobile phone	[REDACTED]
Work phone	Not applicable
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Receiving communications and draft conditions

Select one option and complete the relevant contact details above.

☒ We can receive emails and our email address is correct.

☐ We cannot receive emails and our postal address is correct.

1 Introduction

We strongly oppose the proposed Ōhoka Residential Subdivision in its entirety and ask the Panel to decline the application. We consider this the wrong location for a development of this scale. Our opposition is based on the existing flooding and drainage problems we experience, the permanent loss of rural character, pressure on roads and infrastructure, and the prolonged disruption that construction would bring directly opposite our home.

We have lived at [REDACTED] for three years. We are retired general practitioners who, between us, spent around 50 years caring for people in our communities. Louise is 75 and Ollie is 85. We chose Ōhoka for a peaceful rural retirement, space for our six alpacas and dogs, and a home close to our eight grandchildren.

Our home is [REDACTED] by our estimate. We would live with the consequences of this development every day. We ask the Panel to give full weight to the effects on our home, our land and our daily lives.

2 Flooding

Flooding and slow drainage are our most serious concerns. The water race beside our property repeatedly floods after rainfall. Following heavy rain, water can take weeks to drain away and the ground around our home remains sodden. In winter, it can be too wet to mow the grass. These are recurring problems that we already live with.

We have installed French drains, approximately 600 mm wide and 1.5 metres deep, at our own expense to manage water around the property. Our 1910 timber bungalow sits close to ground level. Any worsening of water levels or drainage could have serious consequences for our home and our ability to use the land. It is unacceptable to us that this development could add to those problems.

Our experience shows how difficult drainage already is at our property. We cannot predict the precise changes the development would cause, but we strongly object to exposing our home to additional flood or drainage risk. The consequences of getting this wrong would fall directly on us.

Introducing extensive roofs, roads, driveways and earthworks into this setting raises serious concerns about where water would go and how existing drainage would be affected. We are particularly concerned about changes to ground levels and water flows, and what would happen during heavy rain or when drainage systems cannot cope.

The following matters are central to our opposition and require specific answers:

- Whether our property could be exposed to additional water or slower drainage, taking account of the adjacent water race, existing drainage connections, wet ground conditions and groundwater levels.
- Whether earthworks, filling, roads, additional hard surfaces or changes to watercourses could increase the depth, extent, frequency or duration of flooding at our property, or obstruct its drainage.
- Where water would flow when stormwater storage or outlets reach capacity, including during extreme rainfall, with climate-change allowances, or if an outlet is blocked.
- How neighbouring properties would be protected during each construction stage, before the permanent stormwater system is fully operating.
- Who would maintain the stormwater system, monitor its effects, respond to problems and fund remedial work if the development worsens flooding or drainage on neighbouring land.

We ask the Panel to consider the actual conditions at [REDACTED] and the consequences for our house and grounds. The need to protect existing residents extends beyond preventing water from entering a building. Prolonged saturation, loss of usable land and worsening drainage would also be serious effects. We should not have to absorb additional risk or pay to remedy problems caused by this development.

3 Rural character and amenity

The open rural setting is a fundamental part of our home. We look across countryside towards the Southern Alps and value the quiet surroundings and space for our animals. Replacing this setting with a large residential development would permanently change the character of the place we chose to live.

The proposal includes 856 residential lots, a retirement village and a village centre. In our view, this scale of development is wholly inappropriate beside the existing rural properties. Landscaping and areas of open space would not change the fact that a substantial urban development would be introduced into this rural setting.

We strongly object to the resulting loss of rural character and amenity. We would experience that loss every day from our home and garden. It would be a substantial and lasting change to our surroundings and to the enjoyment of our property.

Screen planting may soften views of buildings, but it cannot recreate the open countryside we currently enjoy. We are also concerned about the years before planting matures, new lighting and the continuing presence of urban activity. In our view, screening would not adequately address the overall change to our living environment.

4 Infrastructure

Whites Road is currently a quiet rural road. In our experience, surrounding roads are narrow in places and Tram Road is already busy. We strongly oppose a development that would place substantial additional traffic demands on this network and change the conditions for existing residents.

Our concerns include safe access to our property, the movement of heavy construction vehicles, and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic from the residential lots, retirement village and village centre must be considered together, alongside construction traffic and other growth in the area. The combined effects matter to the people who already use these roads.

There is no public transport serving our immediate area that we can use, and our part of Whites Road has no street lighting. We consider the reliance on private vehicles a further reason why this location is unsuitable for such a large development.

Our property has its own shallow bore and private wastewater system. We are concerned that earthworks, any dewatering, additional groundwater use or changes to drainage could affect the water level, reliability or quality of our bore supply. We strongly object to any increased risk to this essential service.

We are also concerned about whether increased flooding or prolonged saturation could affect the operation of our private wastewater system. We ask for independent technical assessment of the potential effects on both systems at [REDACTED] before a decision is made. Existing residents should not have to fund replacement supplies, repairs or alterations because of this development.

The proposal would require substantial new infrastructure. Its capacity, funding and long-term maintenance must be considered alongside the effects on existing private systems. These concerns reinforce our opposition to development of this scale in this location.

5 Insurability risk

The possibility of increased flood exposure also creates a serious financial concern for us. If the development worsens flooding or drainage, this could affect insurance costs or availability, or leave us facing losses that insurance does not meet. We cannot predict an insurer's response, but the potential consequences for our home are too important to disregard.

We strongly object to being placed in a position where we might have to bear additional repair costs, insurance costs or uninsured losses because of development across the road. A complaints process or a promise to investigate after damage occurs would not give us the security we need in our retirement.

6 Economic benefits and costs

In our view, the benefits of providing housing and generating construction activity do not justify the scale of adverse change proposed for this location. Those benefits must be weighed against the lasting effects on existing homes, the rural environment and the wider community.

We ask the Panel to consider who would receive the benefits and who would carry the costs and risks. The expense of infrastructure, ongoing maintenance, traffic effects and any worsening of drainage should not be treated as secondary to the benefits of the development. The loss of our rural surroundings and the disruption to our retirement also have real consequences for us, even where they cannot easily be expressed in dollars.

We believe large-scale housing should be directed towards locations planned and serviced for urban growth. We strongly oppose this proposal because, in our view, the existing drainage difficulties, infrastructure demands and permanent change to the rural environment make this location unsuitable.

7 Other matters

Construction effects

Louise is 75 and Ollie is 85. A prolonged period of earthworks and house construction directly opposite our home could occupy a significant part of our remaining retirement. Noise, dust, vibration, heavy vehicles and disruption to access would affect the place where we live every day. We are also concerned about the effects on our animals and our family's enjoyment of the property.

The full duration of the works matters. Earthworks, infrastructure construction and later house building could create successive periods of disruption. Breaking the development into stages would not remove the combined burden on those of us living opposite it.

We do not consider construction hours, dust controls or screening an adequate answer to our objection to a major development in this location. Such measures may reduce particular effects, but they would not remove the prolonged disruption or the permanent change that would follow. We strongly object to spending this part of our lives beside a major construction site.

Decision requested

We ask the Panel to decline the Ōhoka Residential Subdivision application in its entirety. Our position is firm. We consider the scale and location of this proposal unacceptable because of its potential effects on flooding and drainage, the permanent loss of rural character, the pressure on roads and services, and the disruption to neighbouring households.

Our reasons for opposing the development are closely connected:

- We already live with recurring flooding and prolonged saturation. We strongly object to additional risk to our home, land, shallow bore, private wastewater system or drainage.
- A development of this scale would permanently alter the rural environment we chose for our retirement. Planting and infrastructure works would not restore that setting.
- The combination of construction disruption, increased traffic and service demands would place an unreasonable burden on existing residents, in our view.

We have explained the practical effects that concern us because we want the Panel to understand the consequences for people already living here. Our request is that the development be declined. We wish to remain involved in the process and receive any draft conditions for comment, without changing our opposition. If the Panel holds a hearing, we would welcome the opportunity to speak.

8 Photos

Photographs attached: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Attachment numbers and descriptions: See following two pages.

For each photograph included, record its date, location, viewing direction and what it shows.

Signatures

Signed: _____
Dr Ollie Bourke

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Louise Bourke

Date: _____

How to submit this form

Comments must be received by 12 October 2026. Email: substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz. Use "Ōhoka Residential Subdivision – FTAA-2606-1253" in the subject line and attach the completed Word document or a PDF. Alternatively, post to Ōhoka Residential Subdivision, Fast-track, Private Bag 63002, Wellington 6140.

27/09/2026 – [REDACTED]

View adjacent to the dwelling showing surface ponding following moderate rainfall. This is despite significant investment in deep French drains around the perimeter of the property to improve drainage and reduce ponding.

Prior to installation of the French drains, the backyard was frequently so wet that it was effectively unusable. Even after this substantial drainage work, ponding continues to occur following relatively moderate rainfall and remains a concern for the property.

Given the existing drainage conditions, we are very concerned that the proposed development could make the situation significantly worse. Ponding is already occurring despite the mitigation work undertaken, and any increase in groundwater levels, altered drainage patterns, or additional stormwater effects could increase the frequency or severity of ponding and potentially result in damage to the property.



27/09/26, [REDACTED], East view next to house, ponding after moderate rainfall.

