

Your Comment on the Ōhoka Residential Subdivision

Please include all the contact details listed below with your comments and indicate whether you can receive further communications from us by email to substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz.

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)			
First name	Jo and David		
Last name	Haigh		
Postal address	██████████ ██████ ██████████		
Home phone / Mobile phone	██████████	Work phone	
Email (<i>a valid email address enables us to communicate efficiently with you</i>)	████████████████████		

2. We will email you draft conditions of consent for your comment			
☐	I can receive emails and my email address is correct -YES	☐	I cannot receive emails and my postal address is correct

Please provide your comments below, including additional pages as needed.

1. Introduction

My name is Jo Hopkinson-Haigh and I have lived at ██████████, Ohoka since I was 6 years old. I am now 52 years old. I live in my family home that my parents purchased in 1981. This property was advertised by the real estate company as "Clarkville". Ohoka was known as a swamp and not good for marketing purposes.

Currently I live at ██████████ with my husband and four children. My family and I feel incredibly fortunate to call Ōhoka home. My children were second generation Hopkinson's at Ohoka school, as they attended the school as did myself and my two siblings. My husband and I chose to purchase my family home off my parents in 2007 to give our children the same rural upbringing in a village that I was blessed to experience.

We chose to live here because of its peaceful, rural and spacious character, its strong sense of community, and the unique lifestyle that comes with living in a small North Canterbury village surrounded by open farmland and natural landscapes. Ōhoka has a quietness, openness and sense of space that is becoming increasingly rare, and these qualities are a significant part of what makes this community so special to us.

Living here gives our family the opportunity to enjoy a relaxed rural lifestyle while still being part of a friendly, connected and close-knit community. We wake up every morning to open paddocks rather than dense residential development. We cherish the space around our home, enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside, and know the people who live within our local community. There is a genuine village atmosphere in Ōhoka - something very different from living in a suburban town or large residential development. Our children are safe.

For our family, Ōhoka is more than simply the location of our house. It is the lifestyle, landscape, sense of space, tranquillity and community that surrounds it. Once these qualities have been lost they cannot easily be recreated. I therefore believe it is extremely important that the effects of a development of this scale on existing residents, the rural landscape and the established character of Ōhoka are carefully and fully considered.

After reading this introduction, it is hard to comprehend why a **Social Impact Assessment** has not been completed. **Please explain why?** It is my understanding that the current information about the social impact on the community has been taken from the applicant himself and the owner of the farmland where the proposed urban development is happening. A sample size of 2 is not grounds for a decision that is going to change a small village into an urban development.

The social impact on the community would be far larger than minor as documented by the applicant. A **Social Impact Assessment** must be performed, the applicant has failed to do this.

2. Flooding

This is a major and a very real concern. Our property is directly adjacent to the Sheriff's farm. The applicant's flood modelling has not been independently tested. Once 850+ homes are built, any error cannot be undone.

I have lived in this village for 46 years and our land gets so wet in winter. As a child I always wore gumboots through the months of Autumn and Winter and it has not changed since I raised our children here. Gumboots are an absolute must!! I note that the applicant says the site is outside the Council's mapped 1-in-200-year flood hazard area. My photos demonstrate the flooding we experienced in 2024. The map does not reflect the reality of what our family has experienced since 1981!! The water sits on top of the paddocks for weeks after a heavy rain! Swamp country sums up this land!!!

See below for a snap shot of photos taken in the village of Ohoka in winter of 2024. Not a winter that is "on record" for a 1 in a 100 flood - just a snap shot of what Ohoka looks like after a heavy rainfall, that we experience most winters since I've lived here since 1981!!

Photo 1- culvert on Bradely's rd

Photo2 - culvert on Mill Rd

Photo 3 - culvert on Whites road running alongside the Peter Sherriff's property

Photo 4 - culvert on Whites road running alongside the Peter Sherriff's property

Photo 5 - a paddock on the Sherriff's farm

Photo 6 - a paddock on the sheriff's farm

Photo 7 - another paddock on the Sherriff's farm

Photo 8 - 

Photo 9 -Sherriff's paddock

Photo 10 - 

Photo 11 - Bradley's Rd culvert

Photo 12 -Mill Rd

Photo 13 - Whites Rd

Photo 14 - 





























3. Rural Character & Amenity

Paragraph 1. The applicant reports this development is an extension of Ohoka. This is not an extension of our village. It is 8x the size of the existing village, this proposed development would replace it! Looking out my kitchen window to the East we look at open paddocks and open space. The whole reason I have chosen to live here for 46 years! Myself, my husband and children do not want to look at multiple houses and roads! If we wanted to look at that we would have lived in a subdivision somewhere else to raise our children. It is laughable that some plantings around the edges proposed by the applicant will respect our current view. No amount of plantings can hide 850+ houses. The applicant has not demonstrated that the adverse impact will be less than minor. The adverse impact will be major!! Below is the current view from my kitchen. This is the view our family chose to have as we live in a village!!! We do not want to look at a township! If I wanted that I would move to a township !!!



Paragraph 2: Star gazing is something we do as a family regularly. Appreciation of the dark night skies. This would be destroyed. Street lighting where there is currently none! Just as we like it!! We live in the country, not the town!

Paragraph 3: The day to day living for my family will change forever. My children all walk our dog along Bradley's. The increased number of cars would make this unsafe. Our dog has never been to a dog park as we just walk her along the side of the road. This is the joy of living in a village in the country! This is what Ohoka is and why we live here.

We raised our children on farmland with livestock. This is what living in a village is all about. This development would rob our village of being a place where children can be amongst animals. This is so important for their well-being.

4. Infrastructure

Paragraph 1: I have relied on artesian groundwater since I was six years old, and our property has a private bore that provides our household drinking water. The same groundwater supply is also used to fill the troughs for our livestock. In addition, our property relies on an on-site septic tank system for wastewater treatment. As a result, the protection of groundwater quality and quantity is of fundamental importance to our family and our property.

My husband and I are extremely concerned about the potential effects of the proposed development on our private well. In particular, we are concerned about the possible effects of large-scale earthworks, stormwater discharges, dewatering activities, and the drilling and operation of both shallow and deep bores.

Paragraph 2: In my view, the applicant has not yet demonstrated with sufficient certainty what effect these activities may have on existing private wells in the surrounding area, including our own. Given that our bore is our sole source of drinking water and also supports our livestock, any reduction in water quantity, change in groundwater level, contamination, or interference with the reliability of our supply would have serious consequences for our household and property.

I have lived on this property since 1981, and during that time our water supply has never been disrupted. We have depended on this reliable source of groundwater for decades and we have no alternative water supply available to us.

For this reason, I consider it essential that the applicant provide robust and independent hydrogeological evidence demonstrating that the proposed earthworks, stormwater management, dewatering and bore drilling will not adversely affect the quantity, quality or reliability of our existing groundwater supply. This should be established before any development proceeds, rather than relying on mitigation after an adverse effect has already occurred.

Given the importance of this water source to our household, livestock and day-to-day life, I believe the protection of existing private wells must be treated as a significant consideration in any decision regarding this development.

Paragraph 3: It is simply not acceptable for a development of this scale to be approved while fundamental infrastructure and servicing issues remain unresolved and are left to be “worked out later” through consent conditions. That approach does not remove the risk, it merely transfers it from the developer to existing residents, neighbouring property owners and, potentially, ratepayers.

The applicant should be required to demonstrate, before approval is granted, that the necessary infrastructure can be delivered safely, effectively and without unacceptable consequences for our existing well. We should not be expected to carry the uncertainty, disruption or financial consequences of problems that should have been properly investigated and resolved as part of the application itself.

Paragraph 4: I am particularly concerned that the land within the proposed development is to be raised, while our house and property will remain at their existing ground level. In very simple terms, the development will be built higher while our home stays where it is. As a neighbouring property owner, I find this extremely concerning. Water naturally seeks lower ground, and I need to be satisfied that raising such a large area of land will not redirect, concentrate or worsen stormwater or floodwater onto surrounding properties that remain at their current levels.

It seems fundamentally unfair that the developer can alter the existing levels of a very large area of land while neighbouring residents are expected to remain at the existing ground level and carry the potential consequences if the flood behaviour of the area changes. If our property subsequently experiences increased flooding, water ponding or drainage problems, it will be our home, our land and our financial security that are affected. Once our house has flooded, the damage has already been done. Arguments about responsibility or liability after the event will not undo that damage.

The site is not part of the Council's planned wastewater network. Servicing the site means new pipelines and pump stations in our rural setting. It has not been demonstrated without reasonable doubt that there will be no over flows or odour.

Paragraph 5: The roads in Ōhoka were not designed to accommodate the volume of traffic that would be associated with development on this scale. Many of our local roads, including Bradley Road, are narrow, have no formed shoulders or footpaths, and in places the sealed road drops directly onto soft or muddy grass verges. This already creates safety concerns for pedestrians, cyclists and residents walking their dogs, particularly when vehicles are approaching and there is very limited space to safely move away from the carriageway.

As someone who has lived in Ōhoka since 1981, I have personally observed a significant increase in both the volume of traffic and the speed at which vehicles travel through the area. Even under current conditions, walking along the roadside can at times feel unsafe. I am therefore very concerned about the effect that a substantial increase in vehicle movements associated with approximately 800 additional houses, a retirement village and a large commercial development could have on Bradley Road and the surrounding rural road network.

One of the reasons families choose to live in a village such as Ōhoka is the ability to enjoy a peaceful rural lifestyle, including simple activities such as walking a dog around the local roads. These roads currently form part of the everyday life of the village, rather than functioning as high-volume urban transport routes. If traffic volumes increase substantially, the safety and enjoyment of these activities could be significantly reduced.

In my view, increasing the number of vehicles using roads that are already narrow and have limited pedestrian infrastructure raises serious concerns for the safety of existing residents. It is difficult to see how the current rural road network could comfortably accommodate such a large increase in traffic without fundamentally changing both the safety and character of the area.

Having watched Ōhoka change over more than four decades, I am particularly concerned that development of this scale would accelerate the transition from a small rural village into a much more urbanised environment. The increase in traffic would be one of the most immediate and noticeable consequences for those of us who already live here.

Paragraph 6: I am also very concerned about the existing level of traffic congestion on Tram Road.

On my daily morning commute to Christchurch, traffic is already regularly backed up as far as Clarkville School. Tram Road is one of the main routes used by residents travelling from Ōhoka and the surrounding rural area towards Christchurch, and it is already under significant pressure during peak commuting times.

This is not a future problem. It is happening now.

If hundreds of additional homes are built in Ōhoka, there will inevitably be many more vehicles using Tram Road each morning and evening. In my view, this would only make the existing congestion worse and could result in even longer queues extending kilometres back from the motorway connection.

I find it difficult to understand how a development of this scale can be considered appropriate when one of the main routes towards Christchurch is already heavily congested during peak periods.

The Panel should take into account the traffic conditions that existing residents experience every day, not simply modelling what traffic might look like in the future. From my own daily experience, Tram Road is already struggling to cope with the number of vehicles using it. Adding a large new population in Ōhoka would place even greater pressure on a route that is already congested. The applicant has not proven that the adverse impact of the increased traffic on Tram rd will be less than minor.

5. Insurability Risk

Paragraph 1: One of our biggest concerns is that any increase in flood risk could have a very real effect on our ability to insure, finance and eventually sell our home. These are not theoretical concerns, they could have a direct financial impact on my family, yet I do not believe these costs are properly recognised in the benefits being claimed by the Applicant.

We know people in Waimakariri who have had flood exclusions placed on their insurance policies. This shows how seriously insurers are already treating flood risk.

Insurance companies are increasingly making their own assessments of flood and surface-water risk rather than relying only on Council flood maps. If this development causes any increase in runoff, ponding or flooding, properties such as ours could be assessed as being at greater risk. That could mean even higher premiums, restrictions on cover, flood exclusions, or potentially difficulty obtaining insurance at all.

What concerns me most is that this is a cost that would fall on existing residents through no fault of our own. We cannot control increased runoff from a development of this size, and we cannot simply fix the problem ourselves if our property is subsequently considered a greater flood risk. We would be left carrying the financial consequence. This has a huge social impact, no minor as the applicant suggests!!

6. Absence of Net Economic Benefits

Paragraph 1: I believe the Panel needs to look very carefully at the actual regional benefit that this particular development would provide, rather than simply accepting the large headline figures being presented by the Applicant.

I do not dispute that Waimakariri needs additional housing as its population grows. What I question is whether those houses need to be built in the village of Ōhoka, and whether building them here creates the level of additional regional or national benefit being claimed.

The Council has already identified areas such as Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus for substantial future growth and has been planning infrastructure around those areas. If housing demand can already be accommodated within locations that have been specifically identified and planned for growth, then surely the Panel must ask how much genuinely additional benefit is created by placing approximately 800 houses, a retirement village and a substantial commercial development in Ōhoka instead.

The same applies to claims about construction activity and employment. Houses built in Ōhoka will certainly create construction work, but if those houses would otherwise have been built in Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend or another planned growth area, then much of that activity has simply been moved from one part of the district to another. It should not automatically be treated as an entirely new benefit created by this development.

This distinction is extremely important because the adverse effects will not simply move somewhere else. They will be experienced here, by the existing Ōhoka community.

We will be the residents dealing with increased traffic on our rural roads, pressure on infrastructure, changes to stormwater and flood behaviour, potential effects on groundwater, increased demand on local services and schools, and the loss of the rural village character that has defined Ōhoka for generations. My family is a perfect example!

Paragraph 2: There is also the question of who ultimately pays for the consequences of putting large-scale urban development in a location that was never planned to accommodate a town of this size. As an existing ratepayer, I strongly object to the possibility of ratepayers being expected, now or in the future, to subsidise infrastructure upgrades or resolve servicing problems created by a private development in an area that Council did not identify as one of its principal urban growth locations.

This is particularly frustrating when other areas of Waimakariri have already been specifically identified for growth and infrastructure investment.

The Fast-track process requires consideration of the regional or national benefits of a project. In my view, that makes it extremely important that the Panel distinguishes between a genuine additional benefit to Waimakariri and activity that would simply have occurred elsewhere in the district anyway.

Paragraph 3: The Applicant may present impressive figures for the number of houses built, jobs created and money invested, but those figures should not be considered in isolation. The real question is: what does this development in Ōhoka provide to the region that would not otherwise occur through development in the areas already planned for growth?

When that question is considered alongside the very real adverse effects that would be imposed on the existing Ōhoka community, I believe the claimed benefits need to be viewed in a very different light.

The adverse effects we are describing are not abstract. They involve our homes, our roads, our water supply, our flood risk, our insurance, our rates and the rural environment in which we have chosen to live.

Paragraph 4: The Panel has the ability under the Fast-track Approvals Act to decline an approval where adverse impacts are sufficiently significant to be out of proportion to the project's regional or national benefits. I ask the Panel to look beyond the Applicant's headline figures and carefully consider the genuine additional benefit of putting this development in our village rather than in the parts of Waimakariri already planned and provided for growth.

7. Anything Else



Paragraph 1: This photograph was taken today, Sunday 4 October 2026, and shows the tyre marks left by my lawnmower on our lawn. It is spring, yet the ground is already extremely wet under ordinary seasonal conditions. There has been no one-in-one-hundred-year rainfall event or exceptional storm; this is simply how wet the land in our village can be during normal weather.

This is why I remain deeply concerned about the proposed development and its potential effects on surrounding properties, including my home at 215 Bradleys Road. In my view, the applicant has not demonstrated that the adverse effects on our property from changes to drainage, stormwater flows, groundwater levels and the loss of surrounding permeable land will be less than minor. If this is the condition of our lawn now, before a major urban development is constructed around us, I am very worried about what will happen once large areas of land are covered by houses, roads, driveways and other impermeable surfaces.

I am concerned that the result could be more frequent waterlogging and flooding of our lawns and gardens and, in a serious rainfall event, potentially our home itself. These are not abstract concerns for our family, the photograph demonstrates the existing conditions on the ground today. In my view, it would be irresponsible to allow the village

to be transformed into an urban township unless it can first be clearly demonstrated that existing residents and their properties will not be exposed to an increased flood risk.

Construction Dust, Health and Loss of Amenity

Paragraph 1: One of the most upsetting aspects of this proposal is the prospect that my family could be expected to live beside a major construction site for many years, potentially a decade. This development is directly across the road from our home. The construction activity will not be occurring somewhere in the distance, it will be taking place outside our kitchen window. I will witness our village turn into an urban subdivision right before my eyes for 10 years!!

The scale of the proposed earthworks is particularly concerning to me because my daughter suffers from asthma. Large areas of exposed and stripped soil inevitably create the potential for dust, particularly during dry and windy conditions. Anyone who lives in Canterbury knows how strong our nor'west winds can be. My concern is what happens when that dust is blown across Bradley Road and into our home, our garden and the areas where my children spend their time.

Paragraph 2: For our family, this is not simply an issue of temporary inconvenience or a bit of construction dust. I am concerned that increased airborne dust could aggravate my daughter's asthma and directly affect her health and quality of life.

If my daughter is struggling to breathe because her asthma has been aggravated, it will not be the Applicant sitting beside her or taking her for urgent medical treatment. It will be my husband and me dealing with the consequences. That is the reality for the families who live immediately beside this proposed development.

I find it extremely difficult to accept that an existing family should potentially have to endure years of noise, dust, heavy machinery, truck movements and large-scale earthworks immediately opposite their home so that an entirely new urban development can be established in what is currently a rural village.

The Applicant should therefore be required to demonstrate clearly how construction dust will be controlled throughout every stage of the development, particularly during strong Canterbury winds, and how neighbouring households containing people with respiratory conditions will be protected. Saying that dust can be "managed" is not enough when people's health may be affected.

Safety of Our School Children

I am equally concerned about what the increase in traffic will mean for children travelling to and from Ōhoka School.

All four of my children have crossed the road outside our property to catch the bus to our local school for 14 years!!! When they were using the school bus, I made sure I was at the bus stop both morning and afternoon because I was already concerned about the traffic travelling along our road.

Even with today's traffic volumes, crossing the road can be frightening. In my experience, many vehicles do not slow sufficiently around children and the school bus. We live on rural roads without the pedestrian infrastructure that would normally be expected in an urban area. There are no proper footpaths or safe

pedestrian areas along much of the road, and children waiting for or getting off a school bus are therefore extremely vulnerable to passing traffic.

If this proposal results in thousands of additional vehicle movements through Ōhoka, I am deeply concerned about what that will mean for the next generation of children who need to cross these roads every morning and afternoon simply to get to their local village school.

It should not take a serious accident involving a child before these concerns are taken seriously.

The Panel needs to consider the situation from the perspective of a parent standing beside a rural road with young children while a continuous stream of vehicles travels past. Increasing the volume of traffic without first providing safe pedestrian crossings, footpaths, appropriate bus-stop facilities and other necessary safety infrastructure places an additional risk on children who already use these roads.

Ōhoka is our home. Our children should be able to catch the bus to their local school safely. Residents should be able to walk their dogs safely. Families should be able to live in their homes without years of construction dust blowing across their properties.

These may appear to be small matters when viewed on development plans and traffic models, but to the people who actually live here, and have done for 46 years, they are not small matters at all. They concern the health and safety of our children and the everyday quality of our lives.

The Applicant will eventually complete its development and move on. We are the people who will remain here and live permanently with the consequences. I ask the Panel to give these effects the weight they deserve.

How to Submit This Form

Your comments must be received by the Fast-track Team by 12 October 2026. Email is the preferred method — you can attach this completed form as a PDF or Word document.

Email (preferred): substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz — put “Ōhoka Residential Subdivision” in the subject line.

Post: Ōhoka Residential Subdivision Fast-track Application, Environmental Protection Authority, Private Bag 63002, Wellington 6140.

In person: Stewart Dawson's Corner, 366 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6011.