

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	Melinda and Mark		
Last name	McKay		
Postal address	[REDACTED]		
Home phone / Mobile phone		Work phone	
Email (a valid email address enables us to communicate efficiently with you)	[REDACTED]		

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

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

1. Introduction

We chose to live in Ōhoka 11 years ago because we value its peaceful rural setting, open spaces, and dark night skies. These qualities are an important part of what makes this place feel like a rural village rather than an urban suburb. We are concerned that the scale of the proposed subdivision would fundamentally change the environment we live in, as well as affect how safely and comfortably we can use the local roads and enjoy our property.

2. Rural character and amenity

The open paddock beside our property currently provides a rural outlook in keeping with the village. The proposal would replace that open landscape with intensive housing, lights and associated roads. With

smaller urban-style sections along our boundary, we would experience a substantial and lasting visual impact as adjoining residents, with a clear shift from rural to urban-style living.

The planting proposed in the Draft Landscape Management Plan to soften the appearance of an intensive development over time cannot preserve the existing open landscape. Even with this planting, a development of more than 850 homes, a rest home and a commercial centre would not retain the rural character that we value in Ōhoka.

We are also concerned about the cumulative effect of more traffic, household activity and construction noise on the quietness of the area which could last for many years. In our view, the proposed scale and form of development would change the character of the rural village rather than simply extend it.

3. Infrastructure, roads and public transport

We use Whites Road and Mill Road regularly as pedestrians, drivers and cyclists. These are rural roads, and we are concerned about the safety and congestion implications of adding substantial traffic, heavy construction machinery, more vehicle access points and additional turning movements. We understand that the proposal could generate more than 6,000 additional vehicle movements a day. This represents a major change for the local road network and the people who use it, including children travelling to and from school, making these activities feel less safe.

There is no adequate public transport option to reduce the increased reliance on private vehicles that a subdivision of this size would bring. We commute to Christchurch for work, and a development of this scale without a practical public transport alternative is likely to add to traffic on roads that already serve a rural community. It is also our lived experience that there is already considerable congestion on Tram Road at peak hour traffic between Ōhoka and the Motorway onramp which will increase. We ask the Panel to consider whether the necessary infrastructure and transport options are in place, as it may not be possible to resolve these issues after approval.

4. Whether the proposal provides a net economic benefit

We question how much additional benefit this proposal would bring to the district when other growth areas, including Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Ravenswood, and Woodend, are already intended to accommodate development. If housing demand and construction activity could be met in those locations, some of the benefits attributed to Ōhoka may be activity relocated within the district rather than a genuine net gain.

5. Construction effects and the natural environment

The scale of the proposed development means construction could continue for many years. Ōhoka is exposed to strong nor'west winds, and we are concerned that dust from earthworks and building activity could be carried onto our property and others. This could make it difficult to enjoy outdoor spaces, increase dirt around our home and affect local air quality. We also need to work from home at times, so prolonged construction noise and the movement of heavy vehicles close to our property could disrupt our ability to work. Heavy vehicles using rural roads would add to the safety concerns already described above.

We are also concerned about the potential effects on wetlands, waterways and wildlife in and around the site. We walk regularly beside local streams and along nearby pathways, and value the natural environment that remains in this area. The proposal involves the loss of some existing wetlands and changes to waterways. While restoration and enhancement measures are proposed, we remain concerned about

whether these will adequately protect the natural environment and wildlife. We believe these environmental impacts are too important for key details to remain unresolved before approval.

6. Conclusion and request to the Panel

For us, this is not simply a question of whether more housing is needed. It is also a question of whether a development of this scale is appropriate for this location, given the rural character of Ōhoka, the capacity and safety of local roads and infrastructure, the lack of a practical public transport alternative, and the potential effects on wetlands, waterways and wildlife.

We are concerned that several of these effects would be difficult to reverse once the development is built, and that some of the costs and risks could be borne by existing residents and the wider community. We ask the Expert Panel to carefully assess the unresolved issues and the realistic net benefits of the proposal. For the reasons set out above, we do not support the application and ask the Panel to decline it.

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.