

My name is Thomas Robson I am Chairperson of the Oxford-Ohoka Community Board, and have been an elected member of the Board since 2016. I have lived in the Waimakariri District all my life. I grew up on a rural property and now live in the Oxford township. I have a deep appreciation of the unique rural country environment that we live in, and I enjoy the unspoilt aspects of the area that so many of us enjoy and which attracts many people to our District.

We are not here however to represent our own views but rather the views of the Community and their Community Board.

The Communities response to this proposal has been overwhelming in its opposition. Board members have been contacted numerous times by concerned members of the public, some of whom have been disillusioned by the complexity of the submission procedures and the sheer quantity of evidence that has come in in such a short time. At the time this plan change was announced a number of board members attended a public meeting held at the Ohoka hall where there was a large turn out in opposition to this proposal. After that meeting the Community Board decided to advocate for them in opposition to this proposal. Since then, we have had multiple phone calls and visits regarding this proposal, with many of the community afraid of the potential impacts on their lives and environment. The Board has engaged with other community groups to seek their opinion and their opposition has been universal.

While the Board has submitted against this proposal in terms of the effects regarding drainage, storm water and flooding, water supplies, the high cost and issues of the proposed waste water system, local roading impacts and the loss of the rural character of the area, the impact on the local power grid, local schools and the potential for reverse sensitivity effects, time restraints mean that we are today presenting our opposition in just a couple of these areas.

Firstly we want to highlight the fact that development in this area has already been considered by the Community as part of the District Plan, during the Rural Residential Strategy Consultation that was extensive and highlighted the overwhelming desire for the rural nature of the area to be protected. The existing rural character of the area and the large lot sizes were highlighted as the reason many had moved to the area and were seen as central to the desirability of the location. Ohoka is not the area for this level of intensive development, which would be far better suited on the out skirts of an urban setting with more appropriate facilities and services. We also agree with conclusions made by Richard John Knott in relation to urban design that the plan change proposes a new urban development which does not support the existing rural village character of Ohoka, on land which is not identified for such development and is out of step with the expectations of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS). We also agree that it is not a natural extension to Ohoka; it essentially is a new town within the rural area that no way reflects the low density living that Policy 18.1.1.9 intends.

The residents of Ohoka have chosen to reside in a rural village and have no opposition to sharing it and or even expanding it. What they are opposed to is the erosion of the village feel and the loss of the very character that enticed them to Ohoka in the first place. Residents believe that any development should be complimentary to the area and create community bonds, strength and resilience rather than opposition and disunity. There is a real danger that this development would be seen as a stand alone town rather than integrating into the Ohoka village in a meaningful way. This is the very reason why policy 18.1.1.9 exists, to ensure the growth and development in the Ohoka area maintains the rural village character, and encourages connectivity.

Secondly this proposal would have a significant impact on the rural roading network. Due to the lack of public transport in the area this development would rely on the existing roading network for residents to get to and from work and school. The roads in the area are currently nearing capacity and not designed for the amount of traffic that this development would create. There are sites that are currently very congested such as the Tram Rd to Motorway on ramp where there have been several serious accidents, and where there are often delays. To alleviate this the applicant has proposed an additional lane be added to the on ramp which would be extremely costly and would be an additional burden to the tax payer. We also agree with the evidence provided by Andrew Metherell when he says that -

*60. I also remain concerned that there is a high reliance on Tram Road generally for access. The step change of a 26% increase in traffic volume on an already very high 8,000vpd for a rural arterial is likely to substantially increase crash frequency on that road. It could influence the level of improvement already being considered by Council. The volumes also generate higher delays and consequential safety risk for all downstream intersections. Given the high speed nature of the road, crashes often result in high severity casualties. With some of its characteristics with the likes of risk of sun strike, I consider there will likely be a notable change in safety risk. I consider that needs to be investigated further.*

We also agree with Andrew Metherells conclusions regarding public transport when he states that-*Access is unlikely to be feasible for the PC31 site.*

In 2022 the Waimakariri District Council prepared a walking and cycling strategy for the District which included some unsealed cycle paths in this area designed to ensure safe cycling for local residents however these are not currently funded and are not currently planned to be built in the foreseeable future, The applicant is proposing to build some sections of cycleways but these do not seem to connect to any of the main cycling routes into Christchurch or Rangiora and would need significant Council investment to provide connectivity and safe cycling to any significant destinations.

In conclusion the Oxford Ohoka Community Board strongly opposes the proposed plan change. We represent the local

community who have chosen to live in a rural, village setting quite unlike the proposed development. The Community have been consulted through out the District Plan Consultation process and have clearly stated that they wish development in the area to be in keeping with the existing rural character. To change the nature of the village would be to undermine community adhesion and connectivity. Any development in the area should be seamless, in keeping with the current District plan, and would then integrate well with the existing village. Ohoka continues to grow and evolve but in a natural and cohesive manner that is welcomed by the community. The area is simply not designed to cope with a large, sudden increase in population and the resulting loss of rural aesthetic. The local roading net work is already operating at a very high volume and major works resulting in high costs to the community would be needed to improve infrastructure to the point that it would be safe for such an increase in traffic. The Board suggests that infrastructure upgrades in all areas would be needed before any significant increase in population were to occur to reduce the risk to local commuters and residents. The Board would also like to point out how difficult, time consuming and stressful this proposal has been for local residents. It is difficult to understand why anyone would propose changing a district plan when the Community is so adamantly opposed to such a change. We would suggest that developers consider their community and their neighbors wishes before they try to change what is essentially a document representing the Communities views.

Thank you for the opportunity to express these views and I hope that the Commissioners and Developers have heard the Communities concerns.