

Re. Proposed Private Plan Change 48 - Wairau Road / Oakura Rezoning

Change, expansion and progress is inevitable and can be positive for a community. In Oakura we want to ensure that change is measured, sustainable and considerate of our community and natural resources.

As a fourth generation resident of Oakura, I have seen change over the decades. There has been development. There has been change in the numbers and backgrounds of people choosing to live in this village to enjoy the beach, the semi-rural lifestyle and access to the nearby city. The change has been gradual and enjoyable for the people and businesses in this community - largely because it has enabled the character of this beach village to remain intact, or evolve slowly.

However, the proposed addition of 400 new houses, and thousands of people, in a single development so close to our national park causes reason to pause. As a long-time resident, I have serious concerns about the scale of growth being proposed - especially with regard to the strain on our infrastructure, our culture and our environment.

A teacher for some years at Oakura School, I have seen the school grow and add classrooms to the point where it is a very vibrant institution - but it is also at maximum capacity. How can the school or the village provide education for hundreds of new children in the area?

My additional concerns regarding strains on Oakura's infrastructure and services include:

The impact on safety with increased traffic and transport on already busy rural roads (including the Wairau / SH45 intersection).

Lack of parking on the main road and at the beach front;

Strain on our storm water, sewage and water supply.

The proposal of high density housing so close to a national park will also cause significant environmental impact. My concerns include:

Water run-off in Wairau stream, where additional development has already caused flooding downstream;

Invasive plant species being introduced or mismanaged - a threat to our native bush.

Additional predators introduced to the area - a threat to our native birds;

Significant light, noise and general pollution putting overall stress on our native forest and its inhabitants.

There are already plans in place for sustainable growth in Oakura with input from our community. These plans include measured sub-division of ample land on the sea side of the main road, which seems far more practical and less invasive on our views, our infrastructure, our protected parkland and our way of life.

The sensible option is let our community continue to grow and evolve in a more controlled way, and work to preserve the benefits of this community and lifestyle for future generations.

For these reasons I oppose the proposed development.

Shirley Fisher