

## PC23 - Whisper Creek Residential

### Submitter Details

**Submission Date:** 26/11/2025

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**Resident or Ratepayer \***

**Which Area is your property in? \***

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I could not **Gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission**

**directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that:**

**a. adversely affects the environment, and**

I am not **b. does not relate to the trade competition or the effects of trade competitions.**

**Note to person making submission:**

**If you are a person who could gain an advantage in trade competition through the submission, your right to make a submission may be limited by clause 6(4) of Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991**

### Consultation Document Submissions

**Provision:**

**Oppose**

**Decision Requested:**

Decline the changes proposed for the current Resource Consent.

**Reason for Decision Requested:**

**Specific Provisions**

This submission relates to the entire proposal

**Reasons**

Affected local Residents

# Assessment and Recommendations Regarding the Satellite Suburb Proposal

## Concerns with the Current Whisper Creek Satellite Suburb Proposal

The proposed RNN- “Residential New Neighbourhood”, satellite suburb at Whisper Creek is located in a distinctly rural lifestyle setting and poses several significant concerns relating to its density, design, and location. One of the primary issues is the suburb’s considerable distance from essential amenities—supermarkets are approximately 6 kilometres away, and high schools are about 10 kilometres distant. The limited commercial allotment included in the plan is insufficient to support the day-to-day shopping and commercial needs of a development of this size.

A major concern is the potential negative impact on the existing Ouruhia village and school area, which is situated over 2 kilometres away. The forecasted demand generated by this development would result in more than 6,000 daily vehicle movements, most of which would traverse Turner’s Road. The proposed alternate routes are not as direct to the city via SH74/Marshlands Road, and this would overwhelm both the small rural school and the village.

The commercial and economic assessment for Whisper Creek underscores its remoteness from Christchurch, noting that most residents would be almost entirely dependent on personal vehicles for daily activities outside the subdivision. This reliance should be emphasised, as the vehicle movement estimates provided—based on 800 completed homes—appear to be significantly underestimated. Increased reliance on vehicles would further contribute to Christchurch’s already high vehicle emissions, which currently sit at 54%, and no alternative public transport options have been proposed for the site.

Developers have claimed that a 150-section semi-rural golf resort is uneconomic. However, if this is truly the case, it would be more appropriate to sell the land to a developer specialising in golf resorts and high-end, luxury, larger-lot lifestyles. Government policy changes, such as the introduction of the “Active Investor Plus” scheme, have opened new opportunities for investment, making it possible to finance and complete the original golf resort. The 150 lots would likely be highly desirable in the current market, especially given the hospitality and accommodation demand with the stadium opening soon. This would create more ongoing employment for Christchurch rather than this proposed smash and grab development.

The developers' argument regarding economic viability appears out of step with both national and local government changes and evolving investment and housing density trends.

The shift from a golf resort to an 800-lot RNN subdivision at Whisper Creek appears motivated by the pursuit of short-term profit, with little evidence of substantial benefits for Christchurch. Similar RNN developments—often described as “cookie cutter, spec-homed, postage stamp” subdivisions—should remain within the current CCC Greenfield zones, where significant undeveloped land is still available. For example, 25 hectares between SH74 and Hills Road offer more convenient access to the city. The proposed development would also compete economically with recent city zoning changes, such as the Housing & Business Choice Plan PC14, which with 30 years of zone changes intensifies already established commercial hubs in Christchurch with the potential of 65,000 extra dwellings. These recent changes confirmed in September make WC's Economic plan released obsolete.

Permitting intensive allotment sizes of 250–600 m<sup>2</sup> in a location so remote from urban centres, motorways, or public transport is unwise. Demand for these small, isolated sections is likely to diminish, potentially resulting in a stagnant, incomplete, and unsightly development over many years—a risk highlighted by the protracted completion of the Pegasus development, which only succeeded after a decade and a major natural disaster.

Turner's Road, currently a quiet local road, would require significant upgrades if the subdivision were to proceed. This includes reclassifying Turner's and Spencerville Roads as minor arterial roads, widening them beyond the proposed 6 metres, adding cycleways, and installing traffic lights at the Marshlands Road intersection. These infrastructure upgrades should be completed during the first stage of development and funded upfront. Additionally, heavy and trade vehicle traffic should be redirected away from the Ouruhia suburb and school during all stages of construction.

From an environmental perspective, the rural area northeast of Christchurch should be preserved as semi-rural to prevent increased noise and light pollution. Consideration should also be given to designating the area as a dark sky reserve to further protect its night sky & rural character.

Importantly, the proposed RNN site does not fall within any existing CCC greenfield development zone along the motorway corridor and fails to maintain a semi-rural character.

## Compromise Solution for Whisper Creek

A more balanced approach to the development would be to amend the existing 150-lot golf resort design by introducing larger, semi-rural allotments, effectively utilising the

fairways. This modification would reduce pressure on Turner’s Road and the Ouruhia intersection, while maintaining the rural character of the area. There is also an opportunity to extend this semi-rural approach towards Ouruhia Village.

## Alternative Zoning Suggestion: Ouruhia Semi-Rural Rezone

There is clear, region-wide market interest in larger plots (ranging from 2,000 to 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>), with buyers willing to pay a premium for such properties. After years of zoning neglect, the Ouruhia suburb would benefit from being developed as a semi-rural village, encompassing the school, Everglades Golf Course, and the Turner’s/Marshlands intersection. The area already contains numerous small, historical (but now non-compliant) rural properties, and restrictive Resource Management Act (RMA) rules and urban fringe zoning have exacerbated these challenges since 1992.

Opportunities exist to expand Ouruhia village by converting the urban fringe into a semi-rural/large-lot residential zone, the Council could reduce the minimum lot size in the Urban Fringe Rural zone from 10 acres to a more practical lifestyle size of 2.5 acres (1 hectare) or adopt alternative semi-rural zoning models from neighbouring districts. This would foster a genuine community atmosphere, especially if accompanied by Neighbourhood centre zone community village rezoning at the Marshlands/Turners corners. Improved access to public transport, such as bus stops along Marshlands Road, would also become more feasible.

Similar semi-rural zoning approaches have proven successful in neighbouring districts. Waimakariri District Council, for example, has completed several rural villages—including Mandeville, Ohoka, and Woodend—while Selwyn District has also demonstrated success with this model.

The local school, which is currently facing critically low enrolment numbers, would benefit from a steady influx of families within a village environment, without being overwhelmed by hundreds of new student and vehicle commuters from a distant, high-density development. The proposed 800 homes at Whisper Creek would quickly exceed the small school’s capacity.

The Waimakariri District Council’s Large Lot Residential Zone (LLRZ) model features a high-quality, low-density residential environment with distinct character. Key features include:

- Average allotment size of 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> with a 20% site coverage allowance
- Minimal earthwork requirements, relying on site-specific geotechnical and foundation designs
- No curb and channelling requirements, with stormwater managed via swales
- Shared water wells, drip-feed 2000L/day systems for fire and water tanks, and advanced site-specific rural wastewater systems

- Low levels of noise, traffic, outdoor lighting, odour, and dust

This model encourages the construction of larger, architecturally significant homes, enhancing Christchurch's wealth and development without overburdening existing infrastructure. Expanding this semi-rural approach could transform the northeast of the city, maintain its rural identity while attracting high-end residential design. Adopting a zoning approach similar to the Waimakariri District would also allow Christchurch to leverage its proximity to the International Airport and compete with Central Otago for high-end architecture and quality of life, possibly including a local dark sky reserve.

## Summary

The future of Christchurch should not be defined by remote RNN urban sprawl. Instead, a balanced, semi-rural approach is both desirable and necessary to preserve the rural character of Ouruhia village and the northeast region. The projected 6,000+ vehicle movements per day through the Ouruhia suburb and school are unacceptable in a rural environment.

Recent national and local government 30years of zone changes in housing intensity have rendered the 800-lot RNN proposal uneconomical and risky, as it would compete directly with new zoning changes and slow their intended expansion. The Whisper Creek development risks repeating the mistakes of the Pegasus project—potentially resulting in stalled stages, inadequate infrastructure, and a negative impact on surrounding property values, which could, in turn, lead to legal challenges against the developer, its beneficiaries, or the Christchurch City Council. Ultimately, the risk to the community and local environment is too great, and such a development should not be approved.

The Residents: Lee, Petra, Tristan, Julie, Richard Bennett

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