

Do the needs of the many outweigh the wants of the few?

PPC48: NPDC Hearing presentation

Submitter – Ngaio Crook

I have taken inspiration from a famous Star Trek quote today, as the well-being of the 'many' — both now and in the future — really matters. The well-being of the many — in this case Oakura village — should be the Council's primary concern, and the lens by which to make the right decision in regard to proposed plan change 48. That is to reject the request wholly, and outright.

The proposed plan change provides for the sole enrichment and benefit of the Applicant and their family, while at the same time our community will inherit vast amounts of costs, stress, inconvenience and an overall loss of well-being if this proposed change is not rejected.



Key points

- Consider the bigger picture:
 - An unnatural approach to growth
 - Erosion of trust
 - A solution to a problem we don't have
- Well-being of our community
- Our voice matters

Today I would like to outline some key points in relation to:

-The importance of taking a holistic approach when considering this proposal, and that so far what has been considered is not holistic enough.

-The value of well-being within a community and how that really contributes to the Taranaki economy, and how this is under threat by this proposed plan change.

-That our community's voice matters — despite the fact that this process is heavily weighted in favour of the Applicant, we must be listened to and the collective good must prevail.

Consider the bigger picture

This proposed change is a greedy and an unnatural approach to growth for Oakura

There are next to no positive examples in nature or in the human world where 60% growth has occurred sustainably and without environmental impact.



This proposed change is no different.

60% growth is a ~~greedy~~, unnatural and risky approach to any kind of change in relation to humans or nature.

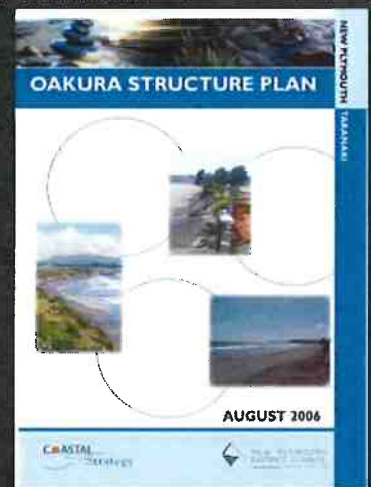
We would not want to consider having our taxes increase by 60% (although pay rises might be another story), or want to approve the growth of New Plymouth at the same rate, so why is this even being considered for Oakura?

History has shown us time and time again that for communities and nature to co-exist, cooperate and adapt, growth must take an evolutionary approach, not the revolutionary approach of this proposed plan change.

The bigger picture (continued)

There has been an erosion of trust.
There has been a lack of consultation and
sufficient planning process.

Our community has clearly signalled that sustainable
growth = smart and targeted growth that preserves the
character of our village



Lot 29 is the balance farm allotment and has an area of 66.5ha in size. It is intended this land will continue to be used for farming purposes. An 8.5ha bush

The main part of the existing site, the balance lot (Lot 29) will be retained as a 'protected farm' unit, anticipated to remain as a dairy unit. Generally the balance lot lies to the north and west

Our community has suffered an erosion of trust in a number of areas:

Firstly with the council whose key aspects of their strategic framework include:

- Putting people first
- Caring for our place, and,
- Supporting a prosperous community

All the consultation and collaboration the Oakura community has participated in over the years as part of developing a sustainable plan for growth and the enhancing of our community, are made a mockery of with this proposed change.

The council should not compromise all the work that has gone before — that is to take a targeted and adaptive approach to growth in our community — because someone sees a financial opportunity too good to be true.

Many of us in the community also have a low level of trust in the Applicant, based on the supposed intentions and promises made in relation to Lot 29 with The Paddocks sub-division. It is also one of the reasons that a phased approach to growth via this proposal or a scaled-down version of this plan change is unacceptable and untrustworthy, and cannot be considered.

I say:

This proposal cannot possibly honour NPDC's strategic framework.

Our community cannot possibly trust the intentions of the applicant and this proposed change.

The bigger picture (continued)

The scale and density of this proposal does not account for the long-term negative impacts on our environment and infrastructure.



Many social and environmental problems come about as result of governments not taking a holistic approach when bringing about change.

This proposed plan change does not take a holistic view of the environmental and infrastructure impacts for our village. This proposed plan change does not take a realistic view of the level of investment required to adequately scale up all aspects of our infrastructure and what impacts that might bring.

The consequences of this proposed change are many, and will long out-live any financial, legal and moral obligations that the Applicant may have. This application does not provide solutions; for example, like how to ensure the safety of our kids, on all roads in our village; with what will be the extreme increase in traffic and congestion that this proposal will bring.

I use the intersection at Dixon Street and SH45 every day. This is where a girl was recently hit by a car and where many pedestrians have experienced near misses as people enter the village at high speed. There is no provision or impact assessment of this proposed change on this part of our roading infrastructure, as well as areas such as the park and the beach.

We cannot put a price on the impact of the additional pollution caused by 60% growth in air quality, noise, light, waterways and the landscape.

Oakura's fibre internet connection has not been developed with this kind of growth in mind. Many people within our village work from home and we have a higher percentage of internet users in our village than New Plymouth. I imagine the Applicant will not be paying once we reach and exceed maximum capacity.

The bigger picture *(continued)*

The scale and extent of the plan change proposes a solution to a problem that Oakura doesn't have:

- Expansion of Oakura village is better served by the NPDC 2006 Oakura Structure Plan
- There is sufficient short and medium-term housing available to meet the need
- Oakura has fewer elderly residents and more children in its population than New Plymouth (2013 census)

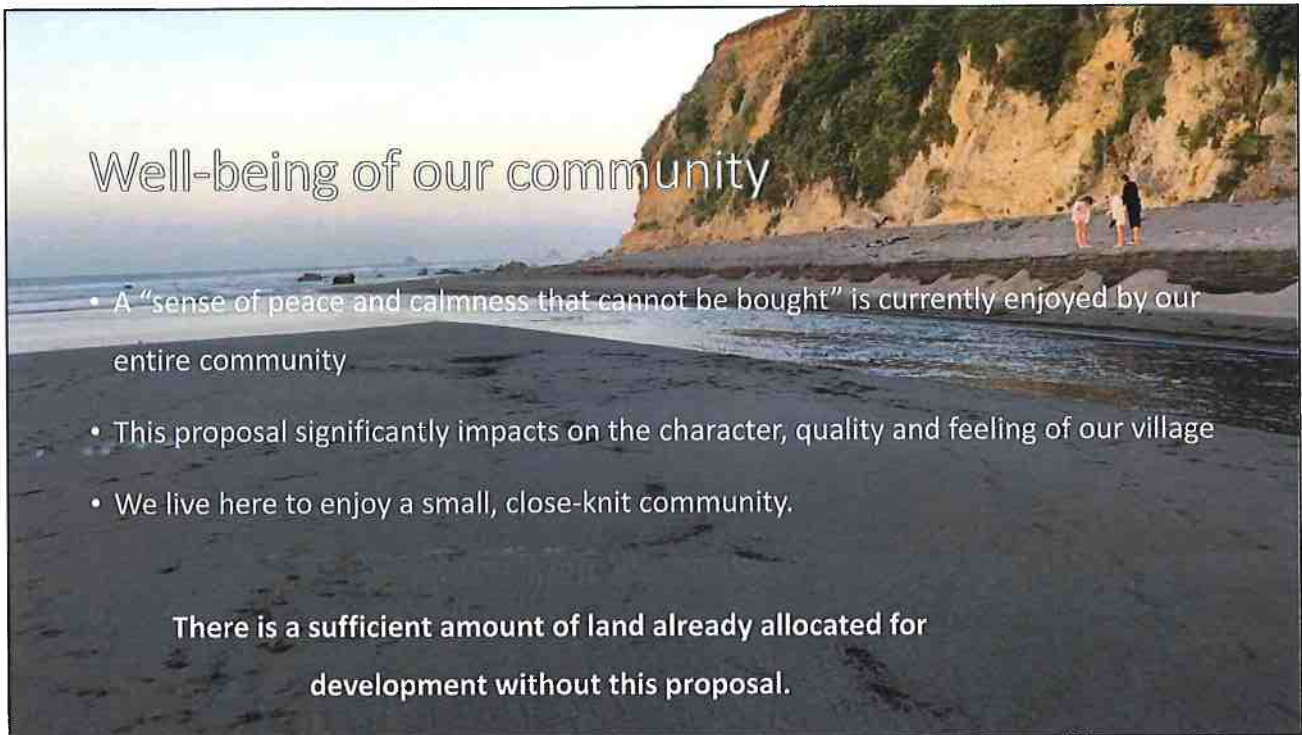


Not only is this whole process costing both ratepayers and us as citizens a lot of unnecessary time and money, but this proposed change is attempting to create a solution to a problem that our village doesn't have.

The community has clearly indicated how it would like to see future growth within our midst that maintains the character of village life and this proposed change has never been part of that.

The Applicant has indicated that the reasoning behind some of the dense housing within the proposed change is to service the needs of the elderly. It is interesting to note that according to our most recent census information, Oakura has proportionally fewer elderly residents and more children in its population than in New Plymouth. Our village currently offers all aspects of housing to meet the needs of the community and it has a strong family focus.

The night of the 2007 tornado in Oakura saw our volunteer fire brigade knock on every door within village, to ensure our elderly and people living alone were safe and supported. This action, and the way residents responded to help those in need that night when we were struck by a natural disaster says a lot about who we are as a community.



The Applicant describes the land subject to the proposed change as having a sense of peace and calmness that cannot be bought. This is how our community feels about our whole village, not just the land that is being considered within the proposed plan change. This sense of peace and calmness very much under threat with this proposed plan change.

Part of the Council's obligations within current legislation is to ensure that the use, development and protection of resources is managed in a way or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety.

This proposal without a doubt endangers the well-being of our community. Our village is populated by people who contribute positively in many ways to the Taranaki economy.

We live here to enjoy the slower village pace and the close-ness that such a small settlement brings. As I have said there are many elements within our community that have not come into consideration when assessing this proposed plan change and what 60% growth brings.

We are not prepared for nor have we signed up to live through the disruptions, interruptions and extensive lag times that will come about when our broader infrastructure quickly exceeds capacity due to the proposed change; followed by the time it will take for local and national government agencies to react, find and allocate the funding, plan and then attempt to rectify the capacity issues.



Our school is at the heart of our community. We have recently accommodated growth of the school with the addition of more classrooms and have given up green field space to ensure that the school maintains a coherent and cohesive layout.

Our school actively encourages kids to walk or bike to school and the location of this proposed change and development works directly against these council supported initiatives, as well as the 4,500 additional traffic movements per day contributing to more perilous road crossing and biking to school for our kids.

This proposed change has a lack of integration with our current amenities such as the park, skate-park and beach that make Oakura so special, and it will promote driving and less walking around the neighbourhood to enjoy all that Oakura has to offer residents.

Further growth and development within Oakura should be targeted and focused on the seaward-side of Oakura to enable fewer traffic movements and lessen the need for people to drive everywhere. This proposed development has not considered, and does not offer these things.

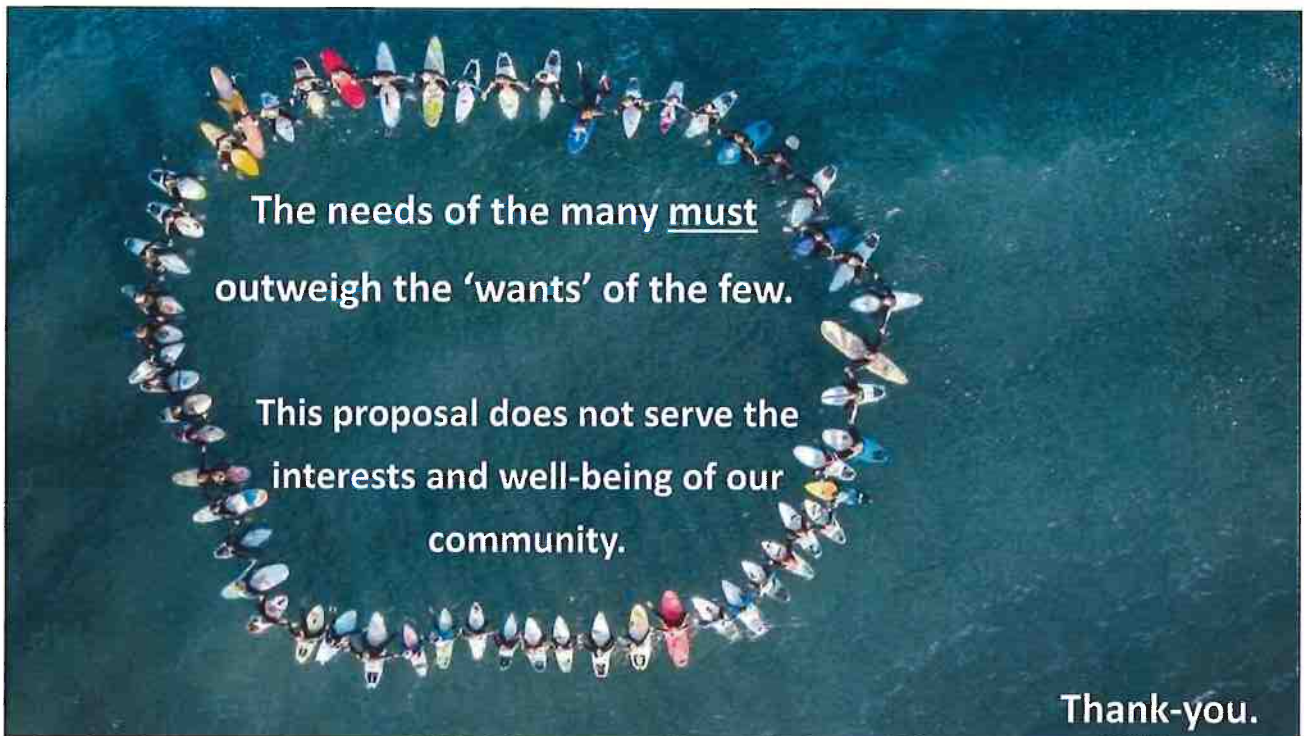


The decision to initially accept this proposed private plan change has been a very costly misjudgement by the Council. The numbers speak for themselves in terms of how our community feels about this proposal, with over 400 people submitting opposition to it.

Our community has only been strengthened by uniting together to contest this proposed plan change. The way this process works means that the odds are stacked against us and we have been fortunate that we have people in our midst who are able and prepared to contribute vast amounts of time, professional support and money to oppose this proposal in a bid to retain our quality of life and character of our village.

The council would never entertain a proposal to grow New Plymouth at a rate of 60% via one land-owner. No local government honouring its strategic framework of putting people first and caring for our place ever would.

It is often said that people fear public speaking more than they fear death, so that fact that over 100 people submitted evidence to this hearing over the course of the week, took time off work to do so and spend many hours in evenings and weekends reading plans and documents to be informed and be here at this week must surely be a wake-up call to the Council and perhaps maybe even the Applicant.



We are the community and our voice matters. We must be heard and listened to.

The needs and well-being of our community **MUST** outweigh the wants of a land-owner who has pledged in the past to keep their land for farming.

No matter how the applicant likes to frame it, this proposal and any watered-down version is being put forward solely to serve and provide benefits to the applicant and his family.

Our community is speaking, loudly and clearly to you. This proposal does not serve our interests or well being. The cost to our well-being is too high a price to pay. I ask that you please reject this proposed plan change and know that a whole community is supporting you in that decision.

Thankyou.