

Presented at hearing 3 July 2019 by Carolyn Squires. (17)

Submission Regarding the Proposed Private Plan Change 13

Submitted by Carolyn and Matthew Squires, 281a Pearson Rd, Cromwell.

Thank you for the opportunity to present at this hearing. I am here speaking from the perspective of a local resident. I do not possess any professional skills relating to traffic, noise or planning issues. But I provide my perspective as a mother and as a resident living within the Cromwell Community.

I was born in Cromwell, and grew up largely in this district. After living in Wanaka for five years, and starting a family there, my husband and I decided that due to Wanaka's rapid growth and tourism it no longer possessed the kind of qualities we needed in a town to raise our children in a supportive family environment.

So we moved to Cromwell. We have now been here for 9 years.

Since moving here, we have been amazed at the range of opportunities there are to connect with local groups through sports and early childhood activities. Cromwell is a quiet community on the surface, thanks to the mall design, but underneath it is humming with opportunity for connection and support networks. When you are raising three young boys, this sense of inclusion and support is essential.

The Cromwell Masterplan process has been a learning opportunity for me. I have greatly appreciated the opportunity to contribute my ideas on what type of growth will work for our landscape and our community. After all, we do live here. We know the intricacies of traffic flows; and the challenges of living out of town as opposed to in town. We know what we have as far as community support goes, and what is necessary to maintain this. And most crucially, we know what we want for our children, and what they need to thrive in this fast paced world that they are exposed to.

I believe that any residential planning should carefully consider the well being of the potential residents to that site, and I have concerns about the health and connectivity of the environment that River Terrace proposes.

Connectivity of Facilities

For me, when I see the small lot sizes of the River Terrace proposal I think immediately of my kids. I have three boys aged between 7 and 13. I know that within minutes of moving into a 160sqm section like those proposed, which is pretty much all house, they would spill out onto the street and take up permanent residency there. The only way I would get them to stay inside our house or our back yard (strip) would be to give them a device, which would have the remarkable effect of turning them into a silent, screen crazed zombie straight away. I am not happy to do that. So instead they would take their scooters and freestyle bmx bikes and set up jumps on the footpath. At River Terrace, it seems likely that the 2 plus cars of each household would be battling for the same space. They would crash off their bmx's onto the street regularly and unpredictably.

They would roam around and see what bit of nature they could find. They would look over at the Speedway, and Highlands nice climbable high fences, and the orchards new ripe fruit, at the nearby council pines. They would get into mischief. And anyone who says to me "sounds like you need to get your children under control", simply have never looked after 3 boys. Not even for 2 minutes

My point is that providing just a couple of green spaces is not sufficient for growing children who live on a small town section. Small lots sizes, I believe, should always have direct and safe connectivity to a range of amenities such as the pool, bike parks, playgrounds, library, schools, fields, and a good dose of informal play areas, for example the lakes edge. Cromwell town centre has all these things, however River Terrace planning, as far as I can tell, currently does not.

I am also aware that this same concern could be equally applied to the elderly. Proposing to home elderly residents, while not providing them safe walkable access to services within town is not good planning. Instead they will be required to battle the congested traffic at the first main intersection, and then again the fast paced traffic at the intersections into Cromwell.

Spray Drift

I am also concerned about the impact that orchard sprays will have on the residents at River Terrace. Adults can make a conscious decision to live near the source of potentially damaging chemicals, but children do not get that choice. They would not stay inside on the days spraying is taking place, and they would roll all over the lawn that has recent wind blown spray on it. I am also wondering who would notify the residents when spraying is occurring so that they can take their washing in? Would they send out a bulk email and hope that the folks working in Queenstown will make it home in time? None of this sounds ideal to me.

Noise

Another aspect I am wanting to discuss is the noise. We live quite close to the proposed site, around 2km distance, on Pearson Rd. I have heard other submitters mention the character of the noise relating to the Motorsport Park and the Speedway, and I would like to elaborate on this. Race engine noise is fundamentally different to motorway traffic. It is aggressive. The revving of the engines is a harsh aggressive noise that is, for those not in love with the sport of motor racing, simply unpleasant at best, and at worst anxiety producing. A lot of the discussion on the impact of this type of noise, occurring consistently day to day and to a very significant level on tier 2 days and Speedway events, has been looking at relatively healthy adults. We easily imagine the residents would be like you are I who have made it to this meeting, relatively capable, functional and healthy. In actual fact, a community this size will always have a proportion of vulnerable people amongst it.

There would be those who are pregnant or with newborns and toddlers, struggling to sleep and desperate to take a nap during the day. My sister in law, who also lives nearby, was in this position a few years back. She was faced with the challenge of a newborn, along with three young children, who needed to be able to settle easily for afternoon sleeps and bedtimes. This was right in the middle of the Highlands/Speedway summer period. In this situation my sister in law found motor noise particularly anxiety producing and stressful.

There would be those recovering from injuries, and significant operations. Recently my 92 year old friend, a Cromwell resident, was sent home the following day after a hip replacement. She was already very distressed about being sent home so soon after surgery, and it took her several months before she was mobile again. I don't think aggressive motor noise would have helped her rest and recovery.

There would be those who are suffering severe illness and mental stress who need a safe and comfortable environment. 7 years ago my father was within a hairs breadth of dying after sustaining a head injury. When he returned home he suffered daily extremes of dizziness, nausea, depression, constant extreme fatigue and pain. For the following several years every day he felt some level of desperation. The days on which the Motorsport Park and Speedway events were held caused him significant stress and added to his suffering. His home is 2km further away from this motor noise than the proposed site.

I would also like to explain that the frequency and duration of motorsport noise is unpredictable, which amplifies its impact. When you compare the predictability of the noise of an airport, which is at regular time frames and regular amplitude, you can understand how people could live next to it. In comparison, day to day noise from the Motorsport Park is unpredictable. You may just have settled into a good book on the patio and be suddenly interrupted by a Fast-laps car. Moreover you

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won't know how long the noise will continue, or how many Fast-laps circuits are planned for that day. The Race Days and Speedway events also involve unpredictable fluctuations of higher and lower amplitude noise.

Summary

In summary, I have concerns that the disjointed location of the subdivision, and its proximity to noise, means that it does not provide a suitably nurturing and healthy environment for children, the elderly, or the vulnerable. In reality it would seem to only provide entry level housing options for those who simply sleep and eat at home, and are happy to commute to work. But again the reality is that once settled, these people too would need facilities and a healthy environment.

They would go on to get pregnant, have newborns brought home, house elderly relatives. They would get sick, have significant operations they are sent home to recover from, or suffer severe illness. They would need everything at different times of their lives we might expect anyone to need. And they may not have the option or the resources to sell up and move when their house is on the lower end of the housing market.

The Cromwell Masterplan has indicated that built up developments, apartment style living and small lot sizes are most suitable within Cromwell's town margins. We got to this decision because most Cromwellians know what is best for their families. I am in favour of sticking to the plan as we now have it, as outlined in the Spatial Framework, and only moving forward with development that is in accordance with this.

River Terrace is a great site, and has great potential for development. I would like to see the applicant take more time to talk to the community, and consider more appropriate options that fit in with the surrounding land uses and the aspirations the Cromwell residents have for their future.