

The effect of the 'density' of the new subdivision at 215 Houghton Bay Rd on the character of Houghton Valley

Measuring 'density' by percentage of section coverage does not expose the intensive amount of human activity concentrated in the .5 hectare, or 5000 m², that make up the site at 215 Houghton Bay Rd. The subdivision plans show the total amount of land on the site, will be used by 69 people in three and four bedroom houses on 13 sections. There is no other area in Houghton Valley where this kind of intensive housing has been built.

235 Houghton Bay Rd, on the southern boundary of 215, is 2.5 hectares or 125,000 m². The only lot in this subdivision within the Residential Coastal Edge is Lot 9 which is 6000 m². That leaves the remaining 119,000 m² to be divided among the other 8 lots. For example Lot 1 at 235, located on the southern boundary ridge of 215 Houghton Bay Rd, is 1425 m². In accordance with this pattern of section size, the area at 215 should have no more than 3 – 4 house sections on it, bringing it in line with the rest of the housing density in the same area. North of 215 Houghton Bay Rd there are 4 - 5 houses in an area approximately the same size as the site at 215.

At 215 the density ratio of m² to resident over the whole site averages to 72.5 m² to each of its 69 residents. Following the same 'density' pattern as 215, at 235 Houghton Bay Rd, Lots 1 - 8 are not in the Residential Coastal Edge and are subject to the same rules in the District Plan as 215 Houghton Bay Rd, and could together have 1641 residents; an average of nearly 205 residents per lot. This clearly demonstrates how this significant area with high environmental and recreational values could be ruined by housing subdivisions being developed completely out of proportion with anywhere else in the whole of Houghton Valley, and with the adjacent built area. This kind of density is suitable in 'growth zone' areas where residents don't need cars as a necessity to travel to work or to shop. The below table demonstrates the development's 'density' scenario.

| | Section size in m ² | m ² / person | No of people in subdivision | No of Houses |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 215 Houghton Bay Rd Lots 1 - 13 | 5000 | 72.5 | 69 | 13 |
| 235 Houghton Bay Rd Lots 1 - 8 | 119,000 | 72.5 | 1641 | ? |

As this highly visible coastal area is zoned Outer Residential we accept development in this area but consider that it is important that some regard be given to the potential impact on coastal character. The land on the eastern and southern side of Houghton Valley is highly visible when viewed from the west and south-west, and forms an important landscape element that contributes to the character of the wider coastal area.

No one in the community made any fuss about the resource consent granted for 235 because the pattern of that housing subdivision sits all 9 lots lightly on the site and though 8 lots are not part of the Residential Coastal Edge they are, in many ways, consistent with the principles that underpin the purpose of the RCE; to help manage coastal areas that are sensitive to change, including areas that are currently relatively undeveloped including the eastern side of Houghton Bay. The consent was given for one dwelling per lot; 8 dwellings within 119,000 m².

We rely on WCC to protect the integrity of the scenic reserves which dominate the character of Houghton Bay by being consistent in managing this residential zone within this outstanding coastal environment. Many of us tried to persuade WCC to either decline the resource consent application for 215 or at least publicly notify it so that it could be expertly challenged but sadly, we have been ignored.

A judicial review of Council's consent is the only course left to us so we have formed an incorporated society to challenge the WCC decision. You can show your support of this course of action and help us by simply becoming a member of Friends of Houghton Valley Inc; our membership form is attached. The incorporated society protects any individual from fees or outcomes incurred by this legal action. Becoming a member means that if you like we can provide you with updates, but more importantly membership clearly shows the Court, or Judge, the level of community support. Thank-you for your support and interest,

Coral Hyam

For more information please email: friendsofhoughtonvalley@gmail.com
or phone Dolf on 9708948 or Jacob on 387954