

Future of district in your hands

Hours of work have gone into preparing the draft Long Term Council Community Plan and now the spotlight is on the people who make up our community to have their say. From Monday, May 5, everybody will have a chance to be involved in the process of creating the ten year plan that will determine how the district is run, where rates will be spent and what work will be carried out.

The plan itself consists of over 700 pages of detail, so to make it easier for more people to take a stake, Council has come up with a summary pamphlet outlining the main points for consideration. These will be delivered to all households and will also be available from various points around the district.

The key challenge for the Councillors and Council Officers has been to work up a budget

that reflects the currently depressed economic environment, while at the same time maintaining the standards of service and development that will keep the community moving forward.

The effects of the current recession will almost certainly filter through, so we need to be prepared. The result is a pared down budget including only the most necessary activities, so that the impact on ratepayers is minimal.

Yes, there will be a rates rise over the next three years. How much that rise is each year will depend on your feedback.

We are asking that you read the summary, and the plan if you choose to, and provide feedback that can be used by Council to come up with a final LTCCP.



Significant Issues



A number of "significant issues" have been identified as being of particular interest to the community because of their impact on service levels, cost, or effect on the social, economic, environmental or cultural wellbeing of the district. This is a brief summary of those issues, some of which list options for your consideration.

USE OF RESERVE FUNDS TO OFFSET RATES INCREASE

To minimise the effects of the global recession on ratepayers, Council has pruned the budget and maximised the use of reserves in the 2009-10 financial year. The outcome is an overall reduction in rates required of 1.05% for 2009-10. Please note, this year 1 reduction does not translate into a rates decrease for all ratepayers, it is the overall calculation of rates for the whole district. The draft LTCCP currently proposes that this reduction be followed by increases of 12.64% in 2010-11 and 9.74% in 2011-12. Council wants to know whether residents would prefer a more balanced budgeting approach with equal increases in years 1, 2 and 3 of this LTCCP, as opposed to a reduction in year 1 and sizeable increases in years 2 and 3.

OPTIONS:

1. Status quo, run with the plan as is (1.05% reduction in 2009-10, increases of 12.64% in 2010-11 and 9.74% in 2011-12).
2. Adopt a more balanced budgeting approach over the three years (e.g. equal increases of 7.11% in each of the three years - 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12).

LOSS IN INCOME

Council has experienced a significant reduction in income from interest and dividends. The financial crisis has resulted in a fall in interest rates, which has severely reduced our income from interest earnings. In addition, our subsidiary company Quality Roding and Services (Wairoa) Limited has experienced very difficult trading conditions that has also impacted on Council income due to lower dividends. The overall effect on Council is a reduction of \$400,000 or an effective 4.50% rates increase.

NEW RATES DIFFERENTIAL

Each rating unit is allocated to a rating category for the purpose of calculating the general rate or any specified targeted rate. A rates differential attempts to provide a more equitable spread of rates across the district. The base rate has a factor of 1.0. Rates are split into differentials to recognize the different classification and uses of land and the varying consumption of Council resources relative to other ratepayers in the community. For example, the differential applied to Mahia is 0.50 (50% of the base rate) to take account

of the relatively high property values in this area. Council has introduced a new differential of 1.25 for the rural townships of Nuhaka, Raupunga and Frasertown to recognise the relatively low property values in these areas and the low level of rates relative to services received for these properties. This new differential will translate into an increase of approximately \$20-\$30 per annum for the average property in these areas.

MAHIA WASTEWATER

This remains the largest capital project on Council's horizon with an estimated cost in the order of \$12 million. The current proposal is to reticulate the communities of Mahia Beach, Oraka and Opoutama and treat the wastewater at a central treatment facility prior to disposal to land. Following several rounds of general public consultation and further specific consultation with tangata whenua, Council is currently investigating options for alternative disposal sites. The Ministry of Health has approved a subsidy of approximately \$4.5 million towards the scheme, with the remainder to be funded by those who would be connected.

In the past 12 months there has been growing opposition to the cost of the scheme and the Council must balance the concerns of those residents/ratepayers with the needs of the wider district and the environment.

WASTEWATER COST ALLOCATION

OPTIONS:

1. Status quo. Costs are identified and allocated as accurately as possible to a specific area. The cost of operating the system is divided amongst the ratepayers using it, which in Tuai equates to \$600 per ratepayer (currently subsidised from other sources), while in Wairoa the cost is \$240 per ratepayer.
2. Uniform charge. Total cost of sewerage activity is evenly split amongst all customers. A small increase for Wairoa users will mean a great reduction for Tuai users – the cost will be around \$250 per ratepayer annually.

ROADING

The budgets provided in the Roding Activity Plan allow for us to maintain the current levels of service (the status quo). The status quo does not provide for any increase to the sealed network – unsealed roads will all remain unsealed. When considering what needs to be included in the roading budget, there is a very fine line between cost saving and running the risk of incurring further cost down the track to catch up with necessary work. The following points outline the most significant considerations for the Roding Activity. More information on each of

these points can be found in the summary or full draft plan.

- Increase Investment in Sealed Pavements.
- Increase Expenditure for Safety Projects.
- Seal Extensions.
- 'Shrink' Unsealed Network.

'GATEWAY TO MAHIA' ROADING PROJECT

In August this year, a section of Ormond Drive near Opoutama will be removed, as it lies over part of the Ruawharawhara urupa (cemetery). Public consultation as to where the main route onto Mahia Peninsula will run is well underway, having had a submission process and hearing. At present cultural and archaeological audits are being carried out, following which council will make a decision on how to proceed. Current budgets make provision of \$500,000 towards this project and it is expected that a significant proportion of the cost will be covered by central government (up to 76% could be funded by Central government with the remainder being funded by Council).

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The budgets provided in the Waste Management Activity Plan allow for us to provide the status quo. We can expect the landfill to continue to operate as it does now, the refuse collection to continue to be user-pays, and rural services for recycling to remain as they are. However, consultation has shown there are concerns, so several options for increased or decreased service levels, and associated costs, are being presented. More details can be found in the summary and draft LTCCP.

Long Term Disposal Options

OPTIONS:

1. Close Landfill.
2. Status Quo.
3. Enhanced Landfill and Recovery Centre.

Landfill Hours of Operation

OPTIONS:

1. Status Quo.
2. Increased weekend hours.
3. Increase hours throughout the week.

Waste Minimisation Education

OPTIONS:

1. No waste education.
2. Status quo. (School-focused education programme with some initiatives moving into marae, businesses and general public.)
3. More expenditure.

Litterbins in Streets and Public Places

OPTIONS:

1. Status quo.
2. More litter bins.
3. Less litter bins.

Domestic Refuse Collection Service

OPTIONS:

1. Status quo.
2. Partially subsidised system.
3. Fully subsidised.

PIPING OPEN DRAINS

Council currently pipes drains to the value of around \$110,000 per year, which equates to approximately 300m of open drain each year. There are over 22km of open drains in the Wairoa township and our assessment of cost to pipe them is a little under \$12 million so at the current rate of piping it would take 100 years to complete the programme.

OPTIONS:

1. Status quo.
2. Accelerate whole programme.
3. Smaller programme focused on less sites.
4. Suspend programme.

NEW FOOTPATHS

Council policy is to have at least one footpath on every residential street. Council currently constructs new footpaths to the value of around \$110,000 per year. This equates to approximately 1000m of new footpath each year.

OPTIONS:

1. Status quo.
2. Accelerate whole programme.
3. Smaller programme focused on less sites.
4. Suspend or cease programme.

How can I have my say?

- Make a submission.
- Go to the website and submit online www.wairoadc.govt.nz
- Go to one of the public meetings.
- Speak to your submission at the 10-year plan hearings.

Public Meeting Schedule

WAIROA: 7pm, Thursday, 14 May, Wairoa Community Centre

MAHIA: 7pm, Tuesday, 19 May, Mokotahi Hall

RAUPUNGA: 7pm, Wednesday, 20 May, Ngati Pahauwera Hauora

WAIKAREMOANA: 7pm, Thursday, 21 May, Tuai Hall

Additional LTCCP presentations can be carried out for your group or organisation on request.

Submissions close 5pm, Monday, June 8.