

10 April 2015

Fran Wilde
Chairperson
10 Year Plan
Freepost 3156
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Manners St
WELLINGTON 6142

Dear Fran

Kapiti Coast District Council Submission on the Greater Wellington Regional Council Draft Ten Year Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the above plan. We welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss how our agencies can best plan and provide for the communities we share responsibility for and are accountable to.

Broadly, this Council is supportive of the direction and approach set out in your Ten Year Plan.

There are some challenging issues facing the Kapiti Coast community (and the wider Wellington region) over the next decade, and we share responsibility for managing many aspects of these challenges. This Council opted to enter into discussions regarding amalgamation with an open mind, as we could see a number of distinct benefits; particularly from some functions being joined up and hence avoiding some of the confusion and “churn” that both councils and communities face as a result of unclear definition of responsibilities, with both gaps and overlaps being apparent. This Council is therefore keen to further pursue those issues, whether or not amalgamation occurs, to ensure the best outcomes for our shared communities.

Our submission will therefore be couched in those terms.

The Kāpiti District occupies a strategic location and plays a critical role in the success of the Greater Wellington Region – whether by accommodating growth with increased provision of housing and work opportunities for Greater Wellington population, or providing strategic access from Wellington to the North Island.

A concentration of growth is predicted to occur in the north western corridor. A number of critical infrastructure projects are taking place which will change the shape and dynamic of the entire Wellington Region.

Consequently Kapiti District seeks greater engagement from GWRC in order to front foot a number of critical issues, and to ensure that growth is effectively managed and adequately supported.

The key future issues that our Councils face jointly are:

1. Population growth and changing demographics
2. Changes to transport needs
3. The challenges of meeting expectations around climate change
4. Working with communities to achieve environmental outcomes

1. Areas of the Ten Year Plan Supported

1.1. Getting people out and about

1.1.1. This Council strongly supports the concept of improving community wellbeing by encouraging a more active lifestyle. Improving facilities that encourage activities such as walking, running, cycling and horse-riding are strongly supported. Many of these have the dual impact of supporting uptake of modes of transport that reduce private vehicle use.

1.1.2. This Council supports the current approach to Queen Elizabeth Park and other regional facilities, and we are pleased to see this continuing.

2. Areas Where We Would Like Further Discussion and Involvement

2.1. Biodiversity efforts

Outcome sought: GWRC and KCDC work together in a joint programme to align assistance packages for biodiversity protection and enhancement

2.1.1. The Kapiti Coast is fortunate that it retains significant biodiversity assets, albeit drastically reduced, in the case of wetlands, from the original footprint. This Council supports approaches by GWRC to continue to support regional biodiversity through advice, plans, assistance, pest control and regulation. Further, we invite GWRC to work with this Council on how these important values can be maintained for future generations. The Kapiti Coast District Council currently offers

financial support to landholders seeking to protect and enhance biodiversity values on private land. With GWRC increasing its level of support into this area, there is a significant opportunity to increase our collective reach by ensuring our incentive packages work together. We are very keen to further discuss with GWRC how we might achieve this.

2.2. Nature Central

Outcome sought: Continuation of the Nature Central approach via a Pilot specifically for the Kapiti District

2.2.1. The Kapiti Coast District Council has been deeply involved with a range of parties (including GWRC) in initial conversations on developing a Kapiti Coast Environment Accord, for how all parties will work together to assist landholders to protect and restore vital habitat. We strongly support the Nature Central approach developed by GWRC, and encourage you to continue this approach, as we see this as being the critical element (as opposed to using regulation) to enhancing biodiversity values on the Kapiti Coast.

2.3. Working together in statutory planning

Outcome sought: a commitment to work together closely via a joint working party of staff on statutory plan development and implementation

2.3.1. Both Councils are currently deeply involved in statutory plan development. This Council is in a process of working through its revised approach to resource management with the community, and will be publishing an engagement version (for submitters) of the proposed District Plan by the end of May. This is an interim step prior to formally hearing submissions (already lodged) on our Proposed District Plan. GWRC is operating to a similar timetable to reach the notification phase of its revised Natural Resources Plan.

2.3.2. The Resource Management Act obligates this Council to give effect to the now operative Regional Policy Statement; and not to be inconsistent with provisions of any regional plan. It also obliges the District to finish its plan without undue delay. This Council now faces a risk that future provisions in the Natural Resources Plan may force this Council to start some statutory processes again, if the District's Plan loses consistency as a result of changes arising from formal submission processes to

the Proposed Natural Resources Plan. This would come at considerable cost to our shared ratepayers. Even if the plans are not inconsistent, there is a risk that provisions may become duplicated between plans, risking inefficiencies for both councils and landholders, and risking inconsistent conditions and outcomes for consent seekers. To avoid these risks, staff have been working on a harmonisation approach. The provisions identified where this is possible include wetlands management, landscape (including earthworks and forestry), and coastal activities.

2.3.3. Harmonisation of policy however, is only the beginning of the process. To maximise outcomes for the district, region, and our natural resources, it behoves us to take a joined up approach to implementation and non-regulatory approaches (such as consenting, compliance, and assistance packages). This Council would be very keen to enter into more formal arrangements and specific projects for how the two Councils will work together, as per the Triennial Agreement to act cooperatively and collaboratively.

2.4. Timetabling for Kapiti Coast Whaitua Approach

Outcome sought: Definitive timetable for Kapiti Coast Whaitua approach

2.4.1. We note and strongly support the Whaitua approach to freshwater management in the region. We are concerned however that the Coast process is not timetabled; and while this Council can accept that perhaps issues are not as urgent in as they are in other parts of the region; nevertheless the approach forms a vital part of the backbone for how we manage our natural resources and improve our biodiversity outcomes. We would be very keen therefore to see a timetable for when this process might commence

3. Outcomes Kapiti Coast District Council would like to see

3.1. Approach to coastal hazards

Outcomes sought: GWRC to take a leadership role in the identification and management of coastal hazards, including setting aside funding and defining a work programme.

- 3.1.1. Managing the effects of coastal hazards on the community is very real on the Kapiti Coast. Policy direction from the NZCPS is very clear, in that regions and districts are expected to identify and take steps to address the impacts of such hazards. While the Regional Policy Statement clearly delineates responsibility for management of those hazards; what is clear is that for successful implementation, coordination at a high level is critical. This Council does not have the in-house scientific capability and expertise to assess and defend approaches in the long term; and to build such a capability would be duplicative of the capability that currently sits with the region and is needed across the Greater Wellington Region.
- 3.1.2. We acknowledge that GWRC has addressed this in part by appointing Councillor Laidlaw to the Coastal Advisory Group, and Dr Iain Dawe to the Technical Advisory Group dealing with coastal hazard matters, and we thank you for this support.
- 3.1.3. We also acknowledge and support the work that GWRC is leading with the territorial authorities on the Regional Natural Hazard Strategy. While this strategy will lead to a useful framework; it will not deliver on the investigations needed, or the definition work that needs to be done. The current model is not working effectively, with inconsistent application and approaches leading to confusion and frustration at the local level. This is most significant in Greater Wellington Regional Council not defining the Coastal Marine Area which is a responsibility of a regional council.
- 3.1.4. We therefore strongly encourage GWRC to assume strong leadership in this area, and formally resource and programme effort to manage these critical functions. We invite you to further discuss the risks, challenges and opportunities in this area with us.

3.2. Public Transport - Support the Capital Connection

Outcome sought: GWRC commits funding support to maintain the Capital Connection service

- 3.2.1. Public Transport has long been a major issue for this Council and community. Transport linkages from beyond the region that

support this district are vitally important for this and the wider community's wellbeing, and we request that GWRC prioritises better public transport for and through this district. In particular, we request that GWRC includes the Capital Connection in its upcoming tendering round for rail services. We encourage GWRC to adopt an approach consistent with the Horizons Regional Council, and support and grow this service.

3.2.2. We reiterate the point made in many previous submissions that the Capital Connection provides the only passenger rail service link for Ōtaki residents. This needs to be recognised by GWRC as an inter-regional service that delivers commuters into Wellington every day.

3.2.3. Without an alternative, the ending of the Capital Connection service would force its present clientele to drive through to Wellington or to park at the Waikanae or Paraparaumu train stations, exacerbating existing congestion and parking issues in the Western Corridor. The Kāpiti Coast District Council advocates the exploration of alternative rail passenger transport options to connect Ōtaki to the commuter rail network to avoid this, should the Capital Connection service be ended.

3.3. Public Transport - Improve linkages for Otaki

Outcome sought: GWRC commits to reviewing and improving Otaki public transport services

3.3.1. The Otaki community is currently weakly served by public transport. There are few services that enable transport-poor residents to connect to other parts of the district and the capital. This makes it particularly difficult for residents who can not drive, and are dependent on public transport for their wellbeing.

3.3.2. Further, many services for the community are provided from the north. Connections in both directions are therefore vital. We acknowledge that GWRC is running a series of rolling reviews for public transport, and we refer you to our previously made submission to the Regional Land Transport Strategy. The Council has also prepared in conjunction with the Ōtaki Community Board suggestions as to how this service can be improved. This will be submitted to you separately.

3.4. Improving Park and Ride facilities

Outcome sought: GWRC commits funding to developing Paraparaumu and Waikanae Park and Ride facilities

3.4.1. This Council has previously submitted on the need for improvement of park and ride facilities at Waikanae and Paraparaumu. GWRC will be undertaking a comprehensive review of Metlink services in Kāpiti in 2015, including park and ride facilities. This Council has previously requested that this review be closely aligned with the Waikanae and Paraparaumu Town Centre planning process and the revocation of the existing State Highway. We note that there is currently significant congestion in the current facilities; and with expected growth (and the risk of loss of the Capital Connection service) this is vital to ensure that commuters are not discouraged from using public transport by the lack of facilities.

3.5. Integrated Ticketing

Outcome sought: GWRC prioritises funding into critical public transport needs over integrated ticketing

3.5.1. While this Council is supportive of the concept of integrated ticketing, the cost at \$39M is too high for the benefit that will accrue, particularly while the district is still deficient in fundamental public transport as outlined in the sections above. We strongly request therefore that that this funding is instead directed to supporting better services, particularly in the northern sectors of the western corridor (Otaki), or into development of further park and ride facilities, as outlined above.

3.6. Establishing a Regional Presence on Kapiti Coast

Outcome sought: GWRC commits to establishing a greater physical presence on the Coast for managing its functioning and particularly its resource management functions

3.6.1. We have noted the increasing importance of public transport in the GWRC work plan and budget. While we agree that public transport is vital for the efficient functioning of the region and this district; we seek reassurance that the environmental responsibilities of GWRC do not assume a lesser importance in

the eyes of the Regional Council. We are concerned that already ratepayers face significant barriers when dealing with GWRC on environmental management matters, and in particular when seeking advice and lodging applications for resource consent. Applicants must either travel to Wellington, or pay staff to travel out to see them. This issue becomes stark when consents are required from both Councils for the same activity, that triggers both statutory plans. As discussed earlier in this submission, there are opportunities for the Councils to work more closely together to ensure that ratepayers and applicants do not face duplicated requirements.

- 3.6.2. One option that this Council would like to explore is establishing a regional office presence in the region for resource management matters and other Council business. This would enable staff to work closely together on implementation matters, reduce cost for applicants and enquiries, and bring the region closer to the ratepayers of the District.

3.7. *Managing Canada Geese*

Outcome sought: GWRC commits to reviewing the status of Canada Geese in its Regional Pest Management Strategy

- 3.7.1. With increasing efforts to restore wetlands, particularly around urban areas, wildfowl populations have increased. An unfortunate effect has been the dramatic rise in the Canada Geese numbers, which are proving to be a significant pest in urban and rural areas; and particularly in the vicinity of the airport, with attendant risks. We urgently need to develop methods of control of this unwelcome pest, and request that GWRC review the problem with a view to declaring Canada Geese as a regional pest.

3.8. *Process of hearing the LTP*

Outcome sought: GWRC commits to a dialogue with Territorial Authorities regarding the Long Term Plan

- 3.8.1. Council accepts and appreciates the challenges of running processes hearings such as the LTP. However, given the role of the District Council in the community, we request that GWRC programmes an adequate amount of time whereby the Councils

can discuss their respective issues. We are of the view that we either require an hour at the hearing; or invite GWRC to formally meet and discuss these issues with us separately.

4. Conclusion

4.1. The Council appreciates the opportunity to be heard on the Ten Year Plan. We are particularly keen on developing strategies and approaches for working better together to achieve the outcomes our communities are seeking. To that end we invite the Regional Council to enter into a dialogue as to how we collectively best give effect to the language of collaboration and cooperation in our Triennial Agreement, and use that process to refine our respective plans and strategies, including the Ten Year Plan.

Yours faithfully

Ross Church

Mayor

KĀPITI COAST DISTRICT