



COMMUNITY WAIKATO

"Supporting strong communities"

Hei tautoko kia tuu pakari ai ngaa haapori

17 April 2015

Waikato District Council
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Submission Due: Friday 17 April 2015, 5.00pm

Submission on the Waikato District Council – Long Term Plan 2015-2025

1. Community Waikato appreciates the opportunity to make a submission on the consultation document concerning the Waikato District Council Long Term Plan 2015-2025.

Background about Community Waikato

2. The core business of Community Waikato is supporting strong communities – we are a charitable trust providing capacity building, strengths-enhancing services for community organisations¹ throughout the Waikato region. We work to strengthen community organisations so that they can be effective and sustainable to maintain social wellbeing within their own communities. In turn, such wellbeing underpins and enhances the development and achievement of economic, cultural, environmental and social wellbeing of the community and its wider district.
3. Our services build and add to the knowledge and skills of personnel within community organisations to enhance local service provision and in turn, increase the region's social capital.
4. Community Waikato works one-to-one with community organisations to support their capacity and we provide training, support, and advice to organisations about: governance, management, planning (operational, strategic, financial and funding), financial systems, funding applications, accountability, legal structures, risk management, compliance and some employment matters. As well, we offer scholarships to support study towards higher qualifications or for training purposes.

¹ "Community organisations" includes: charitable trusts, incorporated societies, not-for-profit organisations, marae and community centres.

5. We facilitate and/or support community networks to provide opportunities for sharing information, advice, ideas, support and experience and it encourages strong relationships amongst peers.
6. We support collaborative projects, many of which arise from the networks that identify a common issue and then they work together towards a viable solution. Such projects range from local to regional, through to nationally related matters, and they are intended to benefit people, and communities in the district, and/or at times, for the whole Waikato region.
7. Community Waikato provides vital information across the region's social services sector, which includes over 1500 organisations. As a Tindall Foundation regional funding manager, Community Waikato contributes to the economic wellbeing of community organisations and therefore of the district. We also gain helpful insights into the work and needs of organisations, which informs our overall knowledge and sector overview. So we are able to advocate for the sector.

Community Waikato in the Waikato Region

8. Community Waikato actively supports community organisations in townships of the Waikato district, such as: Ngaruawahia, Huntly, Te Kauwhata, Raglan, Taupiri and Tuakau/Port Waikato. Some of those organisations have engaged in viable social enterprises too, which adds to the economic viability locally.
9. Key demographics impacted by the work we do includes children, young people, families/whanau, heritage, community houses/centres, Maori, older people, social services, culture and transport.

We submit as follows:

Comment on Long Term Plan (LTP) consultation document

10. We note this Council has responsibility for a district that sits within the "golden triangle" of Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga² and that the urgent needs required of these cities "for land, transport, resources, people, homes and businesses"³ impacts on the benefits and costs of growth within the Waikato district.

² Waikato District Council, Long Term Plan 2015-2025 Consultation Document, p3.

³ Ibid.

11. We understand that the five priority growth areas relate to the Council's 'significant financial and development plans', these being to:⁴
 - Support growth in targeted areas;
 - Maintain existing assets;
 - Modernise infrastructure where it is prudent to do so;
 - Do more within existing budgets;
 - Move the cost of providing a service to those who use them, i.e., user pays.

12. In the absence of a priority that specifically mentions social or community wellbeing or community development, we purposely emphasise that a long-term social wellbeing focus for communities is vital and ought to be at the forefront too, to ensure there is no or little adverse effect on the wellbeing of the district's communities generally.

13. We also emphasise the importance of investing in the work carried out by social sector organisations because their contribution to maintaining the social fabric and wellbeing of the wider population of the district is vital and significant.

14. We encourage the Council to ensure its strategic development activities consider the cultural, environmental and social influences, values and needs of marae, whānau, hapū and iwi throughout its district. We note this, mindful there are dozens of marae throughout the district. We support and encourage that the Council's 'growth priority' decisions and activities are exercised in a manner that is informed by marae communities, particularly when decisions impact on 'key identity features' such as wai, awa, maunga, whenua, waahi tapu and buildings (e.g., such buildings as wharenuī/whare tupuna; whare kai; whare iti etc) including access to and infrastructure of these places.

15. We highlight the importance of effective engagement and information sharing about local Council services in general, and, in particular for townships and marae that used to be within the Franklin district, and since the Auckland Super City set up, are now in the Waikato district. Such communities deserve to be transitioned well, feel that they belong and be served effectively.

⁴ Ibid.

16. We are aware of the importance of ensuring investment occurs fairly throughout the district. Similarly, with regard to proposed rate charges and which projects such funds will be invested in, these ought to be equitably considered. Of key social concern is the impact of rate charges, user pays and living cost challenges faced by the districts older and vulnerable populations. We highlight this for the Council to consider in its decision-making.
17. We raise concern about rural townships that experience depopulation of its youth and/or working demographic due to low prospects for jobs or training.
18. We also encourage the Council to provide support to overcome ongoing costs and transport challenges faced by rural communities so that access is improved for them and so that basic health and social needs can be met, particularly for the aged and vulnerable.
19. We reiterate the importance of supporting and investing in social well-being opportunities across the Waikato.
20. Mindful that the social services sector employs a sizeable population of residents, we submit that social wellbeing and community development is also key to growth in the district.

We thank you for this opportunity to submit, and welcome any opportunity to speak to our submission.



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