

Whangarei District Sub-Regional Growth Strategy Sub-Committee

Creating the ultimate
living environment



WHANGAREI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the Whangarei District Sub-Regional Growth Strategy Sub-Committee
will be held in the Council Chamber, Forum North, Whangarei on:

**Monday
15 February 2009
3.00 pm**

Vision Statement

To be a vibrant, attractive and thriving District
by developing sustainable lifestyles based around
our unique environment; the envy of New Zealand
and recognised world wide.

Committee

Cr S J Deeming (Chairperson)
Cr C B Christie
Mr M Kake
Cr G M Martin
Cr K J Sutherland
Cr W L Syers
Cr M R Williams

1. Update on Growth Strategy

Reporting Officer: Dr Kerry Grundy (Team Leader Futures Planning)
Date: 2 February 2010

Vision, Mission and Values

This agenda item, together with its recommendations, was written with the Whangarei District Council's Vision, Mission and Values in mind. It is felt that the recommendations, if adopted, would contribute to the Vision, Mission and Values, particularly to the values of customer first, innovation and excellence and visionary leadership.

Local Government Act 2002 – The Four Well-Beings

- Cultural:*** *The Growth Strategy will address cultural issues with the intent of improving cultural well-being over the 30-50 year time frame adopted by the Strategy.*
- Economic:*** *The Growth Strategy will address economic matters with the intent of improving economic well-being over the 30-50 year time frame adopted by the Strategy.*
- Environmental:*** *The Growth Strategy will address environmental concerns with the intent of improving environmental well-being over the 30-50 year time frame adopted by the Strategy.*
- Social:*** *The Growth Strategy will address social issues with the intent of improving social well-being over the 30-50 year time frame adopted by the Strategy.*

1. Introduction

The development of a Sub-Regional Growth Strategy was approved by the Environment Committee on 10 September 2008. The Whangarei District Sub-Regional Growth Strategy Sub-Committee (Governance Committee) was established and its terms of reference approved by the Environment Committee on 10 December 2008. The purpose of this agenda item is to update the Committee on the progress of the Growth Strategy, together with an outline of future actions. A PowerPoint presentation will accompany the agenda item.

2. Progress to Date

2.1 Background Reports

The Futures Team is in the process of completing a range of background reports that will feed into the Growth Strategy. These reports will be grouped under the four well beings:

- Sustainable economy (economic well being);
- Sustainable environment (environmental well being);
- Sustainable society (social well being); and
- Sustainable culture (cultural well being).

At present there are 17 background reports completed. These include:

- Whangarei District Council Growth Model;

- Analysis of Public Feedback Report;
- Demographics Report;
- Historical Performance of the Northland Economy (Infometrics);
- Drivers of Economic Growth in the Northland Regional Economy (Infometrics);
- Summary Economic Performance of Whangarei District (Infometrics);
- Whangarei Land Use Report;
- Natural Hazards Report;
- Socio-economic Indicators Report;
- Historic Heritage Report;
- Infrastructure and Services Report;
- Iwi/Hapu Report;
- Ethnic Diversity of the Whangarei District;
- Sense of Place: Urban Design, Amenity, Local Character and Heritage;
- Climate Change Report;
- Ecosystems Services Report;
- Assessment of Alternative Futures Report.

All reports are on the Futures 30/50 website except for the last five which will go on the website once received by the Sub-committee.

2.2 Ethnic Diversity of Whangarei District

The Ethnic Diversity Report follows on from the demographic and socio-economic reports, by providing key ethnic population and socio-economic characteristics that can influence future social, cultural, economic and environmental needs of the District.

Ethnicity is defined as the ethnic group or groups that people identify with, or feel they belong to. It is self perceived, and people can belong to more than one ethnic group. Ethnicity is primarily a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship.

The biggest benefit of ethnic diversity comes from the diversity and dynamism that foreigners bring. An ethnically diverse society tends to be more productive than uniform ones. Ethnic diversity increases economic growth through increased innovation and productivity. Ethnic diversity provides international connections, and is a magnet for talent.

Using Simpson's Diversity Index as a measure of ethnic diversity, Whangarei District has the fourth lowest index of ethnic diversity in the G9 group of councils, ahead of New Plymouth, Wanganui and Tauranga. Rotorua, Hastings and Gisborne Districts have the highest index of ethnic diversity in the G9. As a result of having one of the lowest index of ethnic diversity, the Whangarei District also has one of the lowest index of language diversity, religious diversity and cuisine diversity.

The residents of the Whangarei District belong to at least one of 74 ethnic groups, with the majority belonging to New Zealand European. A total of 72% identify as European, 25% Maori, 2% Pacific, 2% Asian, 0.3% Middle Eastern/Latin America/African. The Whangarei District is largely bicultural European/Maori, with a small mix of other ethnicities.

As ethnicity diversifies in the Whangarei District, it can be expected to have a positive overall effect economically, socially and culturally, and Whangarei can be expected to become a more cosmopolitan, diverse and interesting place to live and visit. Ethnic diversity can be expected to increase business diversity and employment opportunities as well, as migrants are more likely to bring with them a variety of skills and life experiences along with business contacts in other countries.

2.3 Sense of Place: Urban Design, Amenity, Local Character and Heritage

Sense of place is an important, multifaceted concept that attracts, retains and enriches communities in relation to a particular locality. A sense of place emerges through knowledge of the history, geography and geology of an area, its flora and fauna, the stories associated with a place, and the relationships of communities with the land.

A number of aspects contribute to a sense of place and can be improved to enhance that sense of place. These include natural and historic heritage, landscape, land uses, gathering places and focal points, views and gateways, and the built environment encompassing aspects such as local character and amenity, neighbourhood identity, and urban design.

This report sets out how urban design will contribute towards achieving attractive urban environments that complement our unique natural setting and act as an enticement for people to visit, work and live here. It provides an overview of urban design concepts, such as mixed use, heritage, sense of place and local character. It also discusses ways in which the District can find its niche through marketing unique assets and uncover the benefits that come from maintaining local distinctiveness and place identity.

A sense of place serves to attract visitors and tourists thereby contributing in economic terms to employment and social development. A strong sense of place contributes to economic wellbeing, and economic prosperity contributes in turn to a positive sense of place. Both contribute to the sustainable development of the District over the long term.

2.4 Whangarei District Climate Change Constraints Report

Climate change has long been perceived as a threat to the environment, but in recent years this threat perception has expanded to include social, cultural, security, and economic concerns. As global temperature rises, it is expected to have an impact on the habitable ranges of flora and fauna, increase natural hazard risk, impact on traditional methods and areas of food production, increase infrastructure costs, and, in short, impact on many other areas of global human life.

The projected changes for Northland in terms of temperature range between 1.1° C and 6.4° C by 2100, with the best estimates being between 1.8° C and 4.0° C. Under climate change scenarios, the number of hot days locally could double by 2040 compared with present, and increase by 40 - 50 extra days per annum by 2090 within Whangarei District if the mean annual temperature is 2.3° C above present mean annual temperatures. This would change the frequency of hot days from the equivalent of three weeks per annum to almost 10 weeks. Precipitation projections have more variability across the District, according to the season, with an overall decline in precipitation. In terms of seasonal changes, major decreases are likely in winter and spring precipitation, and very small changes (with possible increases) in summer and autumn precipitation around the eastern hills north of Whangarei Harbour, but an overall decline south and west of Whangarei City.

The projections suggest that Northland is likely to have sub-optimal conditions for the production of many of its 'traditional' primary products, with subsequent loss of productivity in some years. Overall, the drying of pastures in spring is expected to be advanced by one month and potential moisture evaporation is likely to increase, with severe droughts (equivalent of present 1 in 20 year events) are likely to occur more regularly. A changing climate will have an impact on infrastructure in Whangarei District, with larger peak flows in stormwater systems, potential water supply problems, effects on wastewater disposal, damage to roading infrastructure, and changes in the coastline all being of importance.

2.5 Whangarei District Ecosystem Services Report

Ecosystem services refer to the many goods and services emanating from the functioning of the local environment. People benefit from many different ecological functions, from water purification services within water bodies to wild pollination. Many of these services are simply by-products of natural processes and functions happening within ecosystems, but as environmental pressures increase, greater cognisance is being taken globally of the benefits derived from these historically 'free' services. Taking an ecosystem services delivery approach expands the focus beyond understanding how development affects ecosystems, but also includes understanding how development is dependant on ecosystem services.

The delivery of many ecosystem services requires well-functioning ecosystems, and this includes major contributions from biological diversity. Ecosystem services are sourced from a variety of landscapes, including both rural and urban lands, developed or undeveloped. However, the way the resources are managed has an impact on the delivery and quality of those ecosystem services. The key areas of interest in terms of ecosystem services and future development would be:

- Provisioning services such as food (dairying, pastoral, horticulture);
- Fibre (timber);
- Freshwater (drinking and potential irrigation);
- Air quality regulation (around urban areas);
- Local climate regulation (especially in urban areas);
- Global climate regulation;
- Water regulation (especially run-off, flooding, and aquifer recharge);
- Erosion regulation;
- Water purification and waste treatment (especially around settlements);
- Pest regulation;
- Pollination;
- Natural hazard regulation (reducing damage from natural hazard events such as storms, or retaining enough moisture to avoid fire risk);
- Recreation and ecotourism elements;
- Nutrient cycling (efficiency of soil micro-organisms in processing and making available nutrients), and soil formation.

In general terms, habitats of larger sizes will supply more ecosystem services than modified landscapes of a similar size. However, modified landscapes will supply ecosystem services as well, irrespective of whether it is forestry, pastoral landscape or dairying. And these areas will often supply more than urban areas. Few significant natural areas are directly located within the projected areas for growth under any of the three futures. However, some significant natural areas are generally located within settlement catchment boundaries, and these will be supplying a range of ecosystem services that settlements are dependant upon.

2.6 Assessment of Alternative Futures Report

This report undertakes an analysis of the three alternative settlements patterns (Three Futures) contained in the Sustainable Futures 30/50 documentation and in the Growth Strategy Outline. The Three Futures were developed using information and community feedback obtained from the WDC Coastal Management Strategy, the Urban Growth Strategy, the Urban Form Report, the Open Space Strategy, the draft Marsden Point/Ruakaka Structure Plan, and the 20/20 Plus CBD Development Plan.

The three futures were presented to stimulate debate as to the preferred future settlement pattern for the District over the next 50 years.

The three alternative futures formed the basis of the first round of consultation with the community and Maori undertaken in early 2009. The community, stakeholder groups, and tangata whenua were encouraged to submit their views on the Growth Strategy generally and on the three futures specifically. They were asked to indicate which of the three future development paths they preferred and why they supported that particular future. The results of the consultation and feedback are outlined in sections 3 and 4 of the report. The results from this consultation and feedback exercise indicated strong preference from both the public and tangata whenua for Future Three.

Following feedback from the community, the three alternative futures were assessed using a range of criteria within a sustainable development framework (sustainability matrix), including:

- Sustainable economy and infrastructure;
- Sustainable environment;
- Sustainable society; and
- Sustainable culture.

Constraints upon, and consequences of, each scenario were analysed and recorded. Infrastructure provision, together with indicative costs for such provision, was assessed. Finally, a preferred option – a Sustainable Future – has been chosen and will be used to provide a broad conceptual development path around which further detailed analysis can be conducted. The assessment is outlined in section 6 and the assessment methodology in section 5 of the report. Future Three was identified as the preferred development path, the “Sustainable Future” for the District.

The preferred future is not an end in itself – rather it should be looked at as a general framework for more detailed work at local levels and as a framework around which we can obtain further input from the community on the future development of the District as a whole and on the future development of local nodes, neighbourhoods and precincts. But it does provide a broad strategic direction for managing growth in the District over the next 50 years.

3. Present Work Streams

A number of further reports are presently being finalised. These include reports on:

- Biodiversity;
- Landscape and Natural Character;
- Air and Water Resources;
- Social Services; and
- Culture, Arts, Civic Amenities.

These will be completed by the end of February and will be put before the next meeting of the Governance Committee in March/April 2010. These reports, although not finalised, are largely complete and have been taken into account in the assessment of the alternative futures report.

4. Consultation Programme

The timing of the public workshop series is between 16 February and 31 March before the Easter break, and will be held in partnership or association with community associations and marae wherever possible. Prior to the workshops, there has also been a series of articles in Council Connections. These began in January and will continue to run during the duration of the public workshop series.

In total, these meetings will number 18 across the District along with four hui on different marae. All workshops and venue dates, bar one, have been finalised and these dates are being publicised in Council connections and in local venues.

They are as follows:

Workshop

Date (2010)	Venue	Start time
Tuesday 16th February	Cafler Suite, Forum North	18:30
Tuesday 23rd February	Kamo Bowling Club	18:30
Tuesday 2nd March	Memorial Hall, Hikurangi	18:30
Thursday 4 th March	Maungatapere Hall	18:30
Monday 8th March	Ngunguru Hall	18:30
Wednesday 10th March	Maungakaramea Hall	18:30
Tuesday 16th March	Ruakaka Recreation Centre	18:30
Thursday 18th March	McLeod Bay Hall	18:30
Monday 22nd March	Outdoor Education Centre, Pataua North	18:30
Wednesday 24th March	Church Hall, Waipu	18:30
Thursday 25th of March	Parua Bay Community Hall	18:30
Saturday 27th March	Oakura Hall	10:00
Monday 29th March	Church Hall, Onerahi	18:30
Wednesday 31st March	Cafler Suite, Forum North	18:30

Hui Workshop

Date (2010)	Venue	Start time
Wednesday 17th February	Takahiwai Marae	18:30
Wednesday 24th February	Otangarei Marae	18:30
Wednesday 3rd March	Otetao Marae (Whangaruru)	18:30
Wednesday 17th March	Te Puna Matuaranga Marae (Northtec)	18:30

There will be four main components during each workshop:

- Setup;
- Future minds;
- Booklet of settlement knowledge; and
- Playing the game.

Materials required include:

- A map of the whole District mounted on 10 tiles that can be placed together like a jigsaw puzzle;
- Twenty acetate overlays of various biophysical constraints;
- Cards for preparing future minds;
- Various blocks that can be used to indicate key features, populations, and infrastructure, etc;

- Booklets of settlement knowledge to pass out; and
- Sustainable Futures 30/50 brochures and feedback forms.

The first part of every workshop begins by outlining the purpose of Sustainable Futures 30/50 and some of the outcomes we are hoping to achieve. The next part of the project is to get the public interested in the process by getting them to lay out the various tiles, and possibly one or both sets of constraints acetates. The next part of the process is to get people thinking about the future and to have a quick session about futures thinking.

Each participant will then be given a booklet that contains information about the way settlements and nodes may develop over the next thirty to fifty years, and what this might entail. Each key node in the District will have key pieces of information including:

- Present population and future population projections;
- Present 'footprint' of the settlement in terms of urbanised areas;
- Future 'footprint' based upon adopted structure plans; and
- Future 'needs footprint' based upon the projected growth within a community.

This information plays a role in the sustainability assessment of the preferred future:

- Constraints mapping for each node - constraints include natural hazards, indigenous habitat, versatile soils, etc;
- Infrastructure provision costings – what are the projected costs to provide infrastructure for the projected settlement size; and
- Preferred approach for settlement, etc.

The final part of the session combines the processes and information from the setup, future minds, the book of settlement knowledge into work-shopping the preferred future, questioning assumptions, and confirming its validity as a preferred development path.

Outcomes from this process will include feedback from the community as part of the process, and then individual (or group feedback) after each session when participants have been able to give further thoughts to the matters raised. Feedback from stakeholder groups and Maori will also be encouraged.

This feedback will be used to inform the final preferred strategy for the District.

Recommendations

1. That the update on the Whangarei District Sub-Regional Growth Strategy be received.
2. That the reports on Ethnic Diversity; Sense of Place; Climate Change; Ecosystems Services; and Assessment of Alternative Futures be received.
3. That the Sub-Committee note that staff are presently focused on completing a number of other reports and preparing for consultation with the public and tangata whenua in February and March 2010.

Under Separate Cover: (available on request)

1. Ethnic Diversity of Whangarei District
2. Sense of Place: Urban Design, Amenity, Local Character and Heritage
3. Whangarei District Climate Change Constraints Report
4. Whangarei District Ecosystems Services Report
5. Assessment of Alternative Futures