

24 November 2009

Mr G. Dyet
Chief Executive
Waipa District Council,
Freepost 167662,
Te Awamutu 3840.

Dear Sir,

SUBMISSION TO WAIPA DISTRICT COUNCIL'S DRAFT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Hamilton City Council (HCC) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to Waipa District Council on the Draft Environment Strategy (referred to throughout this submission as the Draft Strategy).

2.0 GENERAL COMMENTS

2.1 HCC acknowledges the significance of the Draft Strategy, the Draft Town Concept Plans and the recently adopted 2050 Growth Strategy as key inputs into the current review of the Waipa District Plan.

2.2 HCC notes that it is unclear as to how the list of 'possible actions' identified throughout the Draft Strategy will be incorporated and prioritised in the Final Strategy. HCC would like further discussion with Waipa District Council on prioritisation of any of the possible actions that have cross boundary implications.

2.3 Although HCC is in general support of the Draft Strategy it has a number of comments around specific areas of the Draft Strategy.

3.0 SPECIFIC COMMENTS

3.1 Alignment with Future Proof

3.1.1 HCC has considered the goals and actions of the Draft Strategy to see if they are in line with the objectives of the sub regional growth strategy Future Proof.

3.1.2 HCC is of the view that the goals relating to Council and Community Leadership and Action, Sustainable Rural Environment and Landuse, Heritage and Culture and Sustainable Communities are in accordance with Future Proof.

3.1.3 A possible action outlined on page 19 of the Draft Strategy is *"Provide opportunities in the rural area for a variety of alternative uses but, where possible, cluster these to minimise their effects and maximise their efficiency"*. HCC would like clarification of the alternative uses that Waipa District Council might consider appropriate in rural areas. It is considered that urban uses outside of urban limits are not appropriate.

- 3.1.4 A possible action outlined on page 22 of the Draft Strategy is to “*Investigate the possibility of applying the rural residential zone to land where significant biodiversity/environmental gains can be made from its use*”. HCC would like to see this action prefaced by a statement that rural-residential development will be planned in accordance with Future Proof and the Regional Policy Statement.
- 3.1.5 A possible action outlined on page 23 of the Draft Strategy is to “*Investigate the application of Transferrable Development Rights (TDRs) as a tool for incentivising the protection of some sites whilst potentially encouraging favourable development elsewhere*”. HCC would like greater clarification from Waipa District Council regarding how TDRs would work in order to ensure that the location of ‘transferred’ development was appropriate and in accordance with the principles of Future Proof.
- 3.2 Sustainable Rural Environment and Landuse**
- 3.2.1 *Goal: To improve water quality within the District (Page 20)***
- 3.2.2 HCC supports Waipa District Council’s proactive approach to managing the impacts on water quality from within their district, as listed in the current and possible actions. HCC would like to see these actions developed further through the review of Waipa’s District Plan.
- 3.2.3 HCC would also like to see an objective added in which Waipa would work with neighbouring councils to identify methods to improve water quality in streams draining productive farmland - e.g. the Waitawhiriwhiri stream that drains the swampland around Templeview.
- 3.2.4 *Goal: To protect, enhance, restore and reconnect indigenous habitats to improve their long term viability (Page 22)***
- 3.2.5 As mentioned in the Draft Strategy, agricultural land changes and urbanisation in the greater Waikato Region have significantly impacted on the region’s biodiversity, with Hamilton having the most depleted area.
- 3.2.6 HCC recognises the important role that Waipa’s natural areas have in helping to support and reintroduce species back to Hamilton and the region.
- 3.2.7 HCC supports those current and proposed actions of the Draft Strategy that reduce fragmentation of habitats. This will help to protect and improve the district’s biodiversity, which in turn will have a flow on effect for the rest of the region.
- 3.2.8 HCC would also like to see Waipa work with neighbouring councils to identify methods and programmes to develop the banks of the Waikato River and tributary streams in a pattern of vegetation characteristic of that which existed pre-human arrival.
- 3.3 Sustainable Communities**
- 3.3.1 *Goal: Sustainable transport alternatives are promoted and increasingly used (Page 30)***
- 3.3.2 Approximately 6,000 people travel between Hamilton and Waipa to work each day¹. This provides both Waipa District Council and HCC with an opportunity to work together and devise travel demand management tools for subregional travel. This could significantly influence the number of single occupancy trips between the city and district each day.

¹ 2006 Census of Population and Dwellings Travel to work data.

- 3.3.3 HCC is in favour of working with Waipa on such projects to deliver the outcomes of both the Waipa Environment Strategy and those of the HCC's transport strategy, Access Hamilton.
- 3.3.4 HCC supports any current and possible actions which encourage as many trips as possible to be made by either walking or cycling, particularly given the cost effectiveness of these modes and the associated health and environmental benefits.
- 3.3.5 Issue 1 under this goal appears to be relatively negative and HCC suggests that it be reworded to read:

Although our small communities and relatively low densities mean providing facilities for public transport and alternative modes can be expensive these modes still form an integral part of Waipa District having a more sustainable transport network.

4.0 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- 4.1 HCC trusts that the points made in this submission are helpful to Waipa District Council when considering all submissions to the Draft Environmental Strategy.
- 4.2 HCC **does not wish to be heard** at the hearings held by the Waipa District Council in support of this submission.
- 4.3 If you require clarification of the points raised in this submission, or additional information, please contact Nicole Hubbard in the first instance on 07 838 6769 or email nicole.hubbard@hcc.govt.nz

Yours faithfully



Michael Redman
CHIEF EXECUTIVE