

Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012



SUMMARY

Putting Northland first

NORTHLAND
REGIONAL
COUNCIL



a word from the chairman and chief executive officer

Unlocking Northland's untapped economic potential has occupied a great deal of councillors' collective attention since their election in October.

Over the past few months your councillors and staff have devoted significant time and effort trying to identify how best to do this, while at the same time ensuring real – and lasting – economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits.

We want to partner with infrastructure and economic development leaders, our local authority counterparts and other parties to open up opportunities that will reverse a cycle of regional underinvestment. We'll support projects that create new opportunities and provide Northlanders with a better standard of living.

We have set up a new Regional Policy and Development Committee (whose members include district council representatives from around our region) to spearhead a Northland Community Growth Programme. The committee will also help ensure our regional planning regime is as flexible and responsive as possible to support economic, environmental and other initiatives.

Councillors believe that if we can increase disposable incomes in our region, improvements across multiple fronts – from health and education to reductions in unemployment and crime – should naturally follow.

One of the ways we can help achieve this is by redirecting council's investment income from subsidising Northland Regional Council services, to directly funding specific projects via a dedicated Regional Investment Fund.

The core capital of all council investments will remain protected to continue to provide benefits to future generations of Northlanders. Redirecting our investment income will reduce the need to introduce new targeted rates. To that end, we're proposing an annual rate increase of \$17.80 per ratepayer over each of the next five years (less than 35 cents a week) that will enable us to phase in this new direction over the next five years.

Another way to help advance Northland is to ensure we have the right planning framework in place and work is well-advanced towards developing a new Regional Policy Statement (RPS) to do exactly that.

Our environment will remain at the core of council's business and we will continue to build on recent environmental gains, including improvements in water quality and flood management work.

Council's priority rivers project to develop (or update) flood risk reduction plans for the 27 rivers in Northland with the highest levels of flood risk is progressing well.

The 2011-2012 year will mark a crucial stage in this project. We're proposing to introduce a new rate in the Whāngārei District to fund an initial \$681,697 (incl GST) programme of river maintenance works in urban Whāngārei rivers, with the work carried out in the coming year.



Council is concerned that apart from the obvious financial costs, flooding has a bad effect on Whāngārei Harbour's water quality because of the associated sewage overflows.

We'll also be watching closely the possibility KiwiRail may mothball the Northland rail line which we believe is integral to the region's future. We'll work with others and do all we can to ensure it is retained. We'll also be approaching central government to ensure work progresses on the Puhoi to Wellsford State Highway project.

Nearer to home, Northlanders have clearly indicated in recent months they want to see a much closer, more productive working relationship between the region's local authorities.

Efforts to strengthen ties – including new committees with region-wide representation – will be ongoing, as will investigations into the possibility of sharing services wherever possible. Full Northland Regional Council meetings will also be held in both the Kaipara and Far North Districts on a regular, alternating basis from now on.

Council has also been working more closely with iwi groups over the past year. Hui have been held for treaty settlement discussions and input to the new Regional Policy Statement.

On the financial front, councillors are all too aware that many in Northland are still suffering the lingering effects of the recent drought and global recession and do not wish to unnecessarily add to the pressures many continue to experience.

However, Northland is also at a crossroads of sorts and we're effectively asking ratepayers to make some hard choices this year in terms of whether they wish to support a number of new initiatives or not.

Northland Regional Council rates are currently among the lowest in New Zealand, a situation we expect to continue even if the public supports the proposals outlined in this draft.

We urge you all to take the opportunity to comment on council's Draft Annual Plan and let us know whether you think we've got it right or not. A submission form can be found on page 15.

Craig Brown
Chairman

Ken Paterson
Chief Executive Officer

focus for the year 2011-2012

In this section you'll find the key issues, actions and projects your council has identified as priorities for Northland in the coming year.

1. New Regional Policy Statement

Your council is currently making good progress on a rewrite of its Regional Policy Statement (RPS).

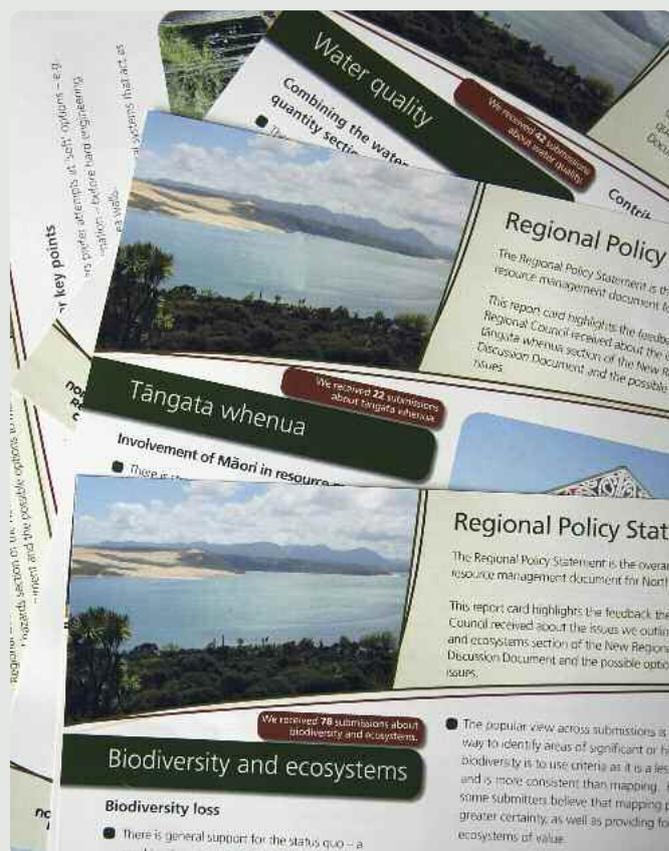
The RPS is one of our region's most important planning tools and is designed to ensure Northland's natural and physical resources (things like its land, water, air, soil, minerals, energy, plants and animals and built structures) are sustainably managed. It also guides the development of our other plans, as well as district plans prepared by the Whāngārei, Kaipara and Far North District Councils.

We have already reviewed our current RPS, assessed relevant monitoring information (including community outcome monitoring and specific economic and environmental information), held workshops and sought your feedback on our 'New RPS Discussion Document 2010'.

That extensive work – and your comments – are now helping us shape a draft new RPS, which should be going out for public comment about the middle of 2011.

The draft new RPS is being developed by our new Regional Policy and Development Committee, which also has members representing Northland's three district councils.

It focuses on what the committee thinks are the regionally significant resource management issues in Northland, the big picture outcomes we should be aiming for, and the policies and resource management tools we can use.



The committee will use any feedback you give us to flesh out the proposed new RPS. This will be followed by yet another, more formal consultation process. This will include opportunity for another round of public submissions – and formal hearings – before final decisions on the new RPS are made.

Further information is included in the project update section on page 10 and the Resource Management Planning Group of Activities in the full Draft Annual Plan or visit: www.nrc.govt.nz/newrps

2. Proposed redirection of council investment income

Your council wants to help transform Northland into one of the best places to live in New Zealand. We believe it's important to find new ways to develop the kind of growth that creates jobs and wealth for Northlanders while at the same time safeguarding our spectacular natural environment.

We're keen to lead by example, reverse a long history of regional underinvestment and directly fund projects that will deliver real benefits to Northlanders, and raise our overall living standards.

Council – which currently has one of the lowest rates in New Zealand – wants to support projects that create new opportunities for Northlanders and will improve our economic, environmental, social and/or cultural well-being.

To do this, we're proposing to redirect the way council uses its income to directly fund specific projects that meet these aims. This will reduce the need to introduce fresh targeted rates to fund new initiatives.

have your say

Your views are important to us. Please take advantage of this important opportunity to let us know where – and how – we should spend ratepayers' money.

A public submission period on the Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012 runs until 06 May, 2011.

The Draft provides update financial information on the budget and rates for the 12 months from 01 July 2011. It supports the Northland Community Plan 2009-2019, but only focuses on identifying any changes/additions to – rather than repeating – the detailed information contained in the Community Plan.

Copies of the Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012, the Northland Community Plan 2009-2019 and this summary are available from all Northland Regional Council offices. The Draft Annual Plan and this summary are also available online at www.nrc.govt.nz/draftannualplan and the Community Plan from www.nrc.govt.nz/ltp You can also contact us on (0800) 002 004 to request copies.

focus for the year 2011-2012 continued

If council goes ahead with this proposal, the impact on rates will vary depending on the length of time it takes to implement the change.

Our preference is to phase this change in over five years, which would result in an annual rate increase of \$17.80 (incl GST) per ratepayer over each of those five years. If phased in over five years, it will have created a new investment pool of approximately \$20 million over that period.

A longer seven-year implementation period would result in an annual increase of \$12.71 (over each of those seven years) and introducing the change over 10 years would cost an extra \$8.90 annually.

Should this proposal go ahead, the resulting Regional Investment Fund may help fund projects identified in the Regional Community Growth Programme. However, regardless of the proposed changes, the capital of all council investments will remain protected and continue to provide benefits to future generations of Northlanders.

Further information on the proposed redirection of council investment income can be found in the full Draft Annual Plan.

3. Proposed roadside pest plant control programme

We're proposing to contribute \$115,000 (incl GST) towards a new joint initiative to control the spread of pest plants from roadsides. We want to work with the New Zealand Transport Agency, district councils, power lines companies and private landowners to ensure the most cost-effective, co-ordinated response to this issue. Each partner would need to contribute similar funding. We're proposing to raise our \$115,000 share this year by increasing our Land Management Rate by about 50 cents for every \$100,000 of land value. Overall responsibility for running the project would fall to one, yet-to-be-determined partner and would see an initial 'knockdown' of pest plants, then one or two years of follow-up control. Roading authorities and neighbouring landowners would then be responsible for ongoing maintenance. The project would initially target state highways, then progress to district roads.

4. Northland Community Growth Programme

Finding the best ways to unlock our region's untapped economic potential has been at the forefront of councillors' minds since their election in October.

Councillors are particularly keen to support projects that bring investment into the region and create rewarding business employment opportunities.

However, we must ensure that not only is any approach successful long-term, it must also have support and buy-in from local communities, iwi, industry and business sectors and other sectors of local government.

Northland has a number of communities and interest groups that are willing and able to take up the challenges involved and we want to partner with them to open up opportunities that will reverse a cycle of regional underinvestment.

We've already set up a new Regional Policy and Development Committee (whose members include district council representatives from around our region) to spearhead a Northland Community Growth Programme. The committee will develop the Community Growth Programme to a point where specific recommendations and a draft action plan can be recommended to council.

Further information on the Northland Community Growth Programme can be found in the Regional Economic Development Group of Activities in the full Draft Annual Plan.

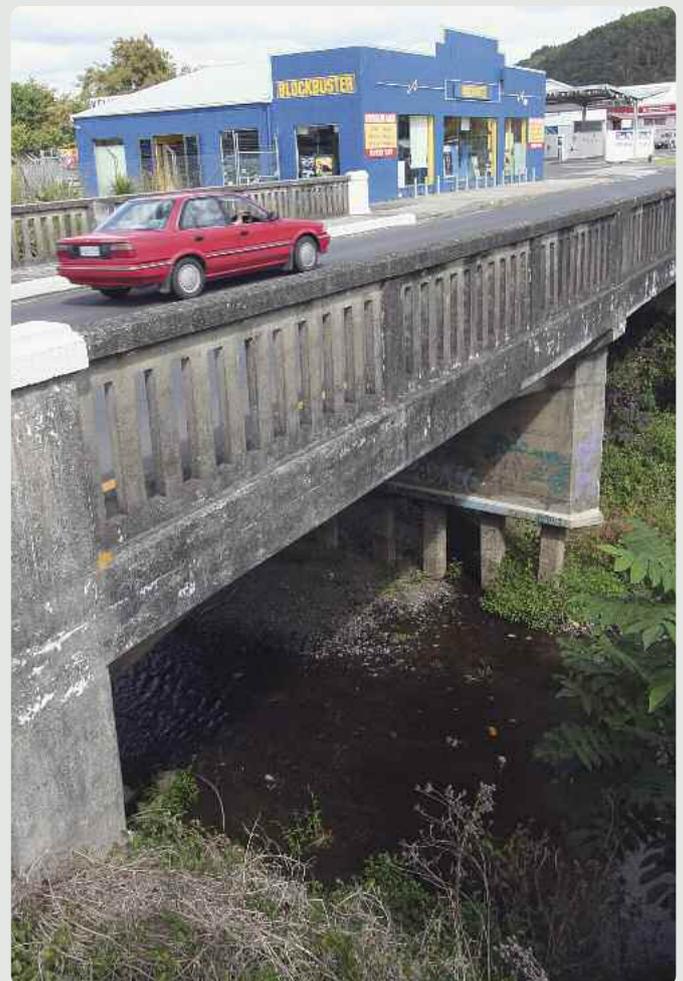
5. Priority Rivers Programme

5a. Proposed new Whāngārei Urban Rivers Management Rate

Our ongoing priority rivers project to develop or update flood risk reduction plans for the 27 rivers in Northland with the highest levels of flood risk is progressing well.

In our last Annual Plan, we said we'd assess flood risk reduction options for Whāngārei's central business district (CBD) and would have estimated costs and targeted rates options ready for public consultation in this year's Annual Plan.

We've now developed River Management Plans for the Hātea and Waiarohia-Raumanga River catchments and set up an Urban Whāngārei River Management Liaison Committee.





Council is also proposing a three-stage flood risk reduction scheme for the CBD to significantly reduce the effects of potentially costly future floods.

These include an initial \$681,697 (incl GST) programme – funded via a new targeted rate – to pay for the first stage of river maintenance works on urban Whāngārei rivers which will be carried out over the coming year. (Stages Two and Three will be subject to further community consultation in coming years.)

Stage One will focus on channel maintenance within the CBD and will include work designed to free up the flow of water, particularly in rivers' lower reaches. Work will also be undertaken to allow floodwaters to pass more easily under the Rust Avenue bridge.

Stage One could be funded by two different rating methods:

Option 1: An annual charge of \$17.39 (incl GST) for every ratable property in the Whāngārei District; OR

Option 2: A differential uniform annual charge. This would see commercial properties in the Whāngārei CBD flood area pay \$178.55 (incl GST) annually and residential properties in the same area \$68.06. Properties in the Waiarohia, Raumanga, Kirikiri and Hātea river catchments would pay \$23.93 and those in the rest of the district \$8.20.

More information on this proposal including maps of the proposed rating areas can be found in the full Draft Annual Plan.

5b. Kaeo-Whangaroa River Management Rate

We have been working with the Kaeo River – Whangaroa Catchment Management Liaison Committee since August 2008 to reduce the flood risk in rivers and streams from Taupo Bay to Te Ngāire. (This work includes the Kaeo and Pupuke Rivers and other smaller streams in the former Whangaroa Ward). Work has been done to maintain river channels and floodplains, to free up the flow of water and lessen flood risk. We've also identified flood risk reduction schemes for Kaeo and Tauranga Bay.

The proposed Kaeo township scheme uses stopbanks and other 'engineered works' to reduce the depth and speed of floodwater in Kaeo. Construction of a stopbank and other works are also proposed to reduce the risk of flooding for properties next to Beach Road in Tauranga Bay.

The total cost of these capital works is \$1.365M (incl GST) which we propose to fund from a new targeted uniform rate on all rateable properties in the former Whangaroa Ward. (This new rate would replace the existing targeted Kaeo-Whangaroa River Management rate.)

The funds needed to do the work will be borrowed and can be repaid over a period of five, seven or 10 years. (We're not looking at a repayment period of longer than 10 years because more flood protection works may need to be funded in the future.)

focus for the year 2011-2012 continued

The shorter the repayment period, the higher the annual targeted rate will be so we're seeking public comment on the following options:

Option 1: Repayment over five years – an annual charge of \$174.50 (incl GST); OR

Option 2 (Council's preferred option): Repayment over seven years – \$137.02 annual charge; OR

Option 3: Repayment over 10 years – \$108.93 annual charge.

(These amounts include the continuation of river maintenance work on smaller rivers and streams from Taupo Bay to Te Ngāire).

Further information on proposed flood management works for Kaeo and Tauranga Bay including details on the costs, work phasing, funding and other options considered are detailed in the full Draft Annual Plan.



6. Awanui River Flood Management Rate

We've been working with the Awanui River Flood Management Liaison Committee and are proposing to revise the targeted rate for work on the Awanui River. The proposed revision is designed to better reflect the actual cost of managing and maintaining the scheme, including additional slip repair work in the urban Kaitāia stopbank areas. Council is proposing to cut the Awanui River Flood Management Rate from \$603,251 (incl GST) to \$486,288 for the 12 months covered by this plan. (This reduction would only affect the rural rate contribution to Awanui River flood management; urban rates would not change.)

More information on the proposed reduction of the targeted Awanui River Flood Management Rate can be found in the Funding Impact Statement and the Land and Rivers group of activities in the full Draft Annual Plan.

7. Project Promise

The council has decided not to contribute any funding to Project Promise at this time.

8. Northland's Long Term Plan 2012-2022

Recent law changes mean the 10 year plan previously known as the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) will be reborn as a more streamlined document known as the Long Term Plan (LTP).

Our next LTP must be adopted by 30 June 2012 and will:

- Provide a long-term focus for council's decisions and activities.
- Describe what council does.
- Provide integrated decision-making and co-ordination of council activities.
- Provide a basis for accountability and an opportunity for you to take part in council's decision-making processes.

Work is already underway and public consultation will occur around April and May of next year.

The new LTP will outline our levels of service, along with new performance measures and targets for the work we intend to do in future years.

money matters

We are forecasting total operational spending of \$25 million during 2011-2012.

Operational spending provides for the council's day-to-day operations and services; things like working with the community to care for Northland's environment – air, land, water and coast.

The council is also responsible for flood management, looking after the navigational safety of all vessels in our region's harbours and working with regional and national agencies to help ensure the provision and security of core regional infrastructure like transport, energy and telecommunications.

The council also administers Whāngārei's urban bus service, helps plan the region's transport network, and ensures there is enough water for everyone. It protects our environment from the harmful impacts of pest animals, pest plants and diseases and co-ordinates Northland's Civil Defence Emergency Management Group.

The prospective Statement of Comprehensive Income shows our budgeted operating revenue and expenditure.

Prospective Statement of Comprehensive Income

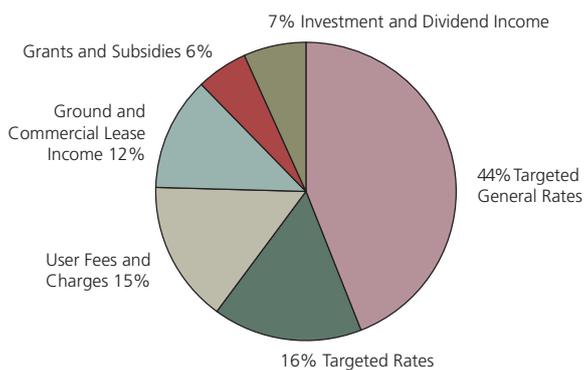
	LTCCP Forecast 2011-2012 \$ Excl GST	Draft Annual Plan Forecast 2011-2012 \$ Excl GST	VARIANCE
Total Revenue	26,019,123	27,546,732	1,527,609
Total Operating Expenditure	25,403,295	25,052,743	350,552
Net Surplus/(Deficit) from Operations	615,828	2,493,989	1,878,161
Transfer from/(to) Reserves	(494,979)	(2,466,840)	(1,971,861)
Total Comprehensive Income after Transfers from/(to) Reserves	\$120,849	\$27,149	(\$93,700)

Where will the money come from?

Operating expenses are funded through rates, fees and charges, grants and subsidies and other income. Rating provides 60% of the council's income, fees and charges another 15% and grants and subsidies 6%. The balance comes from investment and dividend income 7%, and ground and commercial lease income 12%.

The graph below shows these funding sources for the next 12 months.

2011-2012 Proposed Sources of Operational Funding



Rates

Our Draft Annual Plan 2010-2011 calls for a general rates increase of between 5.51% and 15.3%, excluding river rates.

The final rates increase adopted by the council will effectively depend on submissions made during the public consultation period on the Draft Annual Plan and which – if any – of several proposed initiatives the community supports.

At the lowest end, the Draft Annual Plan calls for a 5.51% general rates increase generating roughly \$611,769 extra (incl GST). This follows a comprehensive review of council operating budgets and is equivalent to a rates increase of about \$7.05

(incl GST) per ratepayer. It would cover inflationary increases and minor adjustments across a number of regional council activities.

However, the Draft Annual Plan also includes proposals to fund two optional initiatives including:

- The proposed Staged Redirection of Council Investment Income – \$1,543,193 (incl GST).
- The proposed Whāngārei Urban Rivers Management Rate – \$681,697 (incl GST).

If the public is supportive of the Staged Redirection of Council Investment Income and is adopted by council, the average rates bill would increase by an additional \$17.80 per ratepayer.

The fixed charges for the Regional Recreational Facilities Rate, Helicopter Services Rate and Transport Rate (Whāngārei only) have not been increased. The Targeted Regional Infrastructure Rate revenue has increased by \$26,081 (4.5%) representing an average 35 cents (incl GST) increase to each ratepayer.

The overall total rating increase, combining the 5.51 percent base increase and the increase for the proposed redirection of investment income, would equate to a total average increase of approximately \$25.07 (15.3%) per ratepayer annually.

Note: Rates collected for river management schemes are excluded from the above calculations. However, if the public is supportive of the Whāngārei Urban Rivers Rate and it is adopted by council, the average rate increase applicable to ratepayers within the Whāngārei district would increase by a further \$17.39. This would bring the total rates increase in the Whāngārei district to a total of \$42.46 (incl GST).

Understanding the impact of inflation on rates

Total council rates for the 2010-2011 financial year are \$15,710,876 (excl GST).

1% rate increase = \$157,108 in revenue
1% increase in expenditure = \$250,527

This means council must increase rates by 1.6% for every one percent increase in its spending.

money matters continued

Proposed 2011-2012 Financial Year Rates

(assuming Land Value is \$225,000)

Targeted Council Services Rate	82.31	102.74	95.11
Targeted Land Management Rate	52.66	49.27	53.53
Regional Recreational Facilities Rate	5.75	5.75	28.75
Regional Infrastructure Rate	6.70	6.26	6.81
Rescue Helicopter Services Rate	8.22	8.22	8.22
Transport Rate (Whāngārei district)			12.04
TOTAL (including GST)	\$155.64	\$172.24	\$204.46

	Far North (per SUIP) \$ Incl GST	Kaipara (per RU) \$ Incl GST	Whāngārei (per SUIP) \$ Incl GST
Targeted Council Services Rate	82.31	102.74	95.11
Targeted Land Management Rate	52.66	49.27	53.53
Regional Recreational Facilities Rate	5.75	5.75	28.75
Regional Infrastructure Rate	6.70	6.26	6.81
Rescue Helicopter Services Rate	8.22	8.22	8.22
Transport Rate (Whāngārei district)			12.04
TOTAL (including GST)	\$155.64	\$172.24	\$204.46

Targeted general rates are made up of two rates; a Council Services Rate and a Land Management Rate. Targeted general rates are paid on all rateable properties in Northland.

Other targeted rates include River Management Rates, a Northland Regional Recreational Facilities Rate, a Regional Infrastructure Rate, a Transport Services Rate (Whāngārei only) and a Rescue Helicopter Services Rate.

What level of rates can you expect to pay?

The above table identifies what your rates will be if your property has a land value of \$225,000. It should be noted the Targeted Land Management and Targeted Regional Infrastructure Rate are set as a rate in the dollar per dollar of land value. The rate in the dollar is different for each district as the rates are equalised using data provided by Quotable Value to effectively align the three districts values dates. If the valuation dates were aligned, the Land Management and Regional Infrastructure Rate would be set as the same rate in the dollar across all three districts.

User fees and charges

We also impose fees and charges for some of our services. Fees and charges are applied in accordance with the council's Fees and Charges Policy.

The council is proposing to increase its hourly staff charge-out rates and fees across all areas by approximately four percent. Generally, these have not been increased since the 2009-2010 financial year.

A number of amendments to our charges for the Navigation, Water Transport and Maritime Safety Bylaw Charges are also incorporated into the 2011-2012 Draft Annual Plan.

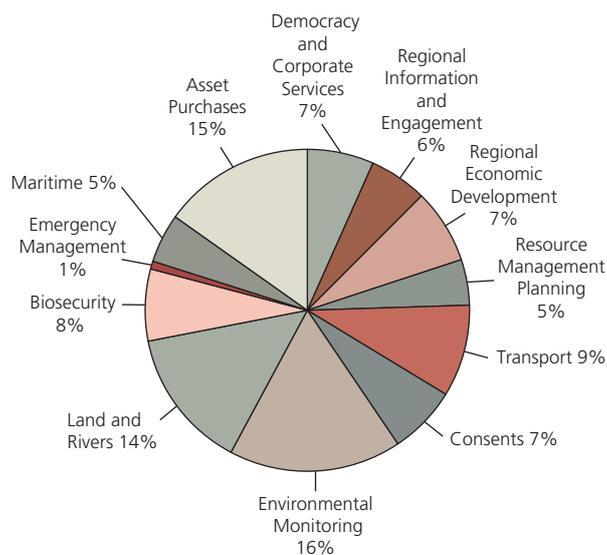


Our expenditure

We are forecasting total gross spending of \$29.7 million during 2011-2012.

The graph shows the allocation of our proposed spending by activity.

2011-2012 Proposed Spending by Council Activity



Capital expenditure

The proposed 2011-2012 capital expenditure for council assets totals \$2,536,142. This includes \$1,157,173 for Kaeo and Tauranga Bay river works. The remaining \$1,378,969 is for operational assets.

This does not include any proposed carry forwards of unspent capital expenditure from the 2010-2011 year. It is anticipated that for ongoing projects where capital expenditure remains unspent at the end of the current financial year, this will be assessed and with approval of the Audit and Finance Committee, be carried forward into the following year to enable projects to be completed.

Other matters included in the Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012

Proposed amendments to Charging Policy

The Resource Management Act 1991 and the Aquaculture Reform (Repeals and Transitional Provisions) Act 2004 authorise the regional council to fix resource consent charges relating to the council's functions and responsibilities under the Act.

Costs are also recoverable under the Building Act 2004, Biosecurity Act 1993, the Local Government Act 2002 and Property Law Act 2007 and under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. Costs may also be recovered under the authority of the council's Navigational Safety Bylaws.

Proposed, amended or new charges

The council is proposing to increase its hourly staff charge-out rates and fees across all areas by approximately four percent. (Generally, these have not been increased since the 2009-2010 financial year.)

As proposed, administration charges will increase to \$64 (excl GST) hourly. The hourly rates for more senior staff will fall in the \$75 to \$110 (excl GST) range and managers \$150 (excl GST) per hour.

Fees and charges across all areas have also been increased by four percent, including fixed initial deposits for consent applications.

Council's charging policy has also been amended to clarify the situation regarding fees for emergency works and environmental and maritime-related incidents.

More information on the proposed 2011-2012 Charging Policy can be found in the full Draft Annual Plan. A full copy of the Charging Policy is also available from council's website www.nrc.govt.nz/draftannualplan



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Proposed amendments to the Navigational, Water Transport and Maritime Safety Bylaw charges 2010

Proposed Amendments included in the Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012 are:

Section 2; amending the definitions of 'maritime facility' and 'mooring'.

Section 3(1); amending the fee category to cover every mooring, jetty, jetty berth, boatshed, boat ramp, minor structure, group of piles with 74 berths or less owned by one organisation. This was previously set at 24 berths or less and has been amended as there are no groups of piles with less than 24 berths owned by the same organisation.

Section 3(1) – (11); Navigation Safety Bylaw fees have increased between 10-20%. In most cases this means these fees will increase by about \$10. This is to more accurately reflect the time required to proactively manage problems and issues associated with moorings and due to the costs relating to the providing, improving and maintaining of navigation aids.

Removal of fees set out in clause 3(12)(a) – (0) of the 2010 bylaw. The fees have been removed as these functions are not undertaken by council.

Section 7(a); to encourage more superyachts to visit the Bay of Islands, the fee tier structure for pilotage fees inwards/outwards to wharf, Ōpua and to anchor in the Bay of Islands is amended to increase the number of smaller ships that will fall in the lower fee category. The minimum fee now applies to ships greater than 500 up to GRT 3000, whereas previously this was up to GRT1000.

Section 9; this section was amended to remove process covered in Navigation Safety Bylaw 2007.

More detailed information can be found in the Navigational Water Transport and Maritime Safety Bylaw Charges 2010 section of the full Draft Annual Plan.

update on existing council projects

New Regional Policy Statement

We have now completed the first two stages of a four stage process of preparing a new Regional Policy Statement (RPS).

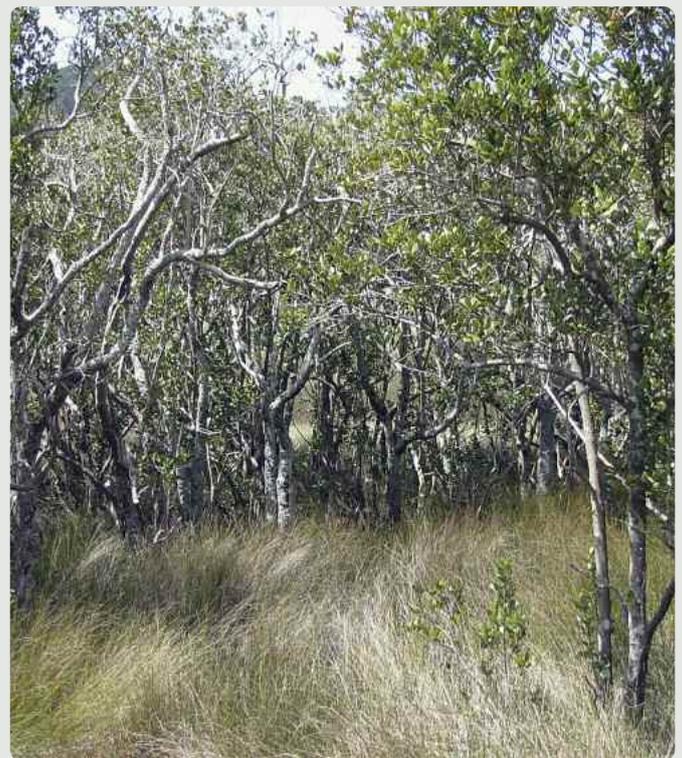
Stage One (completed in December 2009) involved a review of the existing RPS and included assessments of relevant monitoring information, incorporating community outcome monitoring and specific economic and environmental information.

Stage Two – which took most of 2010 – saw us hold workshops and seek public feedback on a 'New RPS Discussion Document 2010'. This asked the public and stakeholders to tell us how we should balance use, development and protection of our natural and physical resources to meet Northland's needs now and in the future.

A summary of the discussion document feedback was presented to the council in March 2011. Copies of the discussion document, summaries of the feedback and special report cards on many of the issues raised are available on the council's website www.nrc.govt.nz/newrps

We've now begun writing a new draft RPS, which is scheduled for release for public comment in mid -2011.

Council has also contracted Te Rarawa (supported by the Iwi Technicians' Forum and resource management experts from Te Uri O Hau and Te Roroa) to consult with tāngata whenua of Tai Tokerau to identify their regionally significant resource management issues. This contract will continue in the 2011-2012 financial year to provide regional hui on the new draft RPS.



Mangrove Management Programme

After strong community support in last year's annual plan, we went ahead and worked with communities on mangrove control plans in their areas of interest.

We set aside \$135,000 (incl GST) to help community groups cover the costs of obtaining the appropriate resource consents for such management. The communities which stand to benefit are expected to cover the costs of actually removing any mangroves.

We have already met the consent processing costs of two groups and another six projects have been recommended for environmental effects assessments. Future updates will be provided in the 2012-2022 Long Term Plan.

Water quality initiatives

Improving Northland's water quality remains one of our top priorities and we received strong public backing in last year's annual plan consultation for an extra \$112,000 (incl GST) to fund new initiatives in this area. Over the past year, we used this money to support communities that are actively involved in monitoring water quality and working with us to improve things. (Examples include the Waiora Hokianga working group – which is monitoring to establish current water and shellfish quality – and groups in Kerikeri/Waipapa, Doubtless Bay and Kaipara Harbour.)

More information on council's planned activities in relation to water quality can be found in the environmental monitoring section on pages 161 to 176 of Volume 1 of the Northland Community Plan 2009-2019 and in the Land and Biodiversity activity on page 188.



Priority Rivers Programme

We've continued work on flood risk reduction plans for the 27 rivers in Northland with the highest flood risk and have completed Draft River Management Plans – which contain an assessment of flood risk reduction options – for each of these.

We consulted with affected communities over these draft plans in late 2010, holding more than 20 public meetings and hui throughout Northland.

Cyclone Wilma provided us with valuable information enabling us to further improve our flood risk modelling. Our plans can be updated as new information about our river systems comes to light in the future.

We also refined modeling for the Awanui, Kerikeri/Waipapa and Kaihū River catchments over the past financial year and have been working with local River Management Liaison Committees. Over the coming year we'll be working to further reduce flood risks in the Awanui and Kerikeri/Waipapa areas. In the Awanui catchment, we've assessed the possibility of better use of the Whangatane Spillway (including modification of Donald Road bridge) to further reduce flood risks. We'll be consulting on this over the next year. We're also proposing a flood management scheme for the Kaihū River Valley but will be seeking submissions before committing to further development.

Outcomes from the draft flood risk reduction plans for Northland's 27 priority rivers are already being used to develop a variety of flood risk reduction measures. These will be prioritised over the next year and reported in council's 2012-2022 Long Term Plan.

Kaihū River Management Plan

Results of council's investigations to manage flooding in the Kaihū River Valley are available on our website www.nrc.govt.nz/kaihu

The design of spillway overflow crests is now required to complete a feasibility investigation for this flood management scheme. However, because this work will need to be funded from our region-wide land management rate, we want the public's feedback before making a decision on the scheme's future direction. We're planning a public meeting during the public submission period on this Draft Annual Plan to provide further detail of the concept to stakeholders. No changes are proposed to the existing targeted rate for the Kaihū River management works.

More information on the council's Land and Rivers Group of activities can be found on Page 13 of Volume 1 of the Northland Community Plan 2009-2019.



update on existing council projects continued

Broadband

Central Government is keen to improve internet access speeds nationally through two broadband initiatives. The first is the Ultra-fast Broadband (UFBB) initiative, which involves urban areas and aims to reach 75 percent of New Zealanders within 10 years. (An additional aim is that 97% of New Zealand schools will also have ultra-fast broadband.)

The second proposal is the rural broadband initiative which aims to improve coverage, so that 97% of households and enterprises are able to access broadband services of 5 Mbps or better.

Crown Fibre Holdings has been created to manage the government's \$1.5 billion investment in Ultra Fast Broadband (UFBB) infrastructure. Locally-based lines company Northpower successfully bid for the roll-out of UFBB in Whāngārei – the first area in the country where this is happening.

In rural areas, the Ministry of Economic Development is helping with the rural broadband initiative. The Government intends to spend up to \$300 million to improve rural broadband and is currently negotiating a joint proposal from Telecom and Vodafone.

We indicated in last year's annual plan that the lead role in broadband development lay with organisations like Northpower, but we're ready to help in any appropriate way.

We're also helping develop a collaborative regional broadband strategy focusing on the opportunities available through UFBB. These include new business processes, economic opportunities, productivity gains and expansion of existing businesses.

Northland Energy Forum

The council and regional economic development body Enterprise Northland has helped develop the Northland Energy Forum. This group comprises representatives of energy sector companies and consultants, large commercial energy users, local government and economic development practitioners. It will discuss, formulate, advocate and endorse regional energy policy, strategies and projects.

Minerals investigation

Northland boasts a wide range of minerals and currently produces cement, high quality ceramic clays, limestone for agriculture, and rock and sand aggregates. There are also prospects for aluminium, bentonite, coal, copper, diatomite, feldspar sand, gold, kauri gum, lead, mercury, nickel, peat, phosphate, serpentinite, silica sand, zeolite and zinc. The potential economic benefits of discovering and developing Northland's mineral resources have been estimated at \$47 billion. Following support from public submissions on last year's annual plan, we contributed \$112,000 (incl GST) to the cost of mineral investigations and/or assessments to be carried out with the additional financial support of the Far North District Council and the Ministry of Economic Development.

One of the largest airborne geophysical surveys to have been carried out in New Zealand took place over Northland in February and March this year. Data captured during this survey has a wide range of applications and results will be made public later in the year.



© KiwiAir



Northland Events Centre

This \$18.5 million facility was completed on time and under-budget with more than 80% of the work carried out by local businesses.

Stock effluent truck disposal facilities

Council previously budgeted \$101,250 (incl GST) to provide two additional stock truck effluent disposal sites in Northland. Agreement was reached with a private effluent site operator in the Kaipara district and a new site on Beach Road, off State Highway 12 opened in late 2010.

In the Far North, a site at Pakaraka on SH1 has been identified and work will be carried out once the relevant approvals have been secured. Work to secure a Whāngārei site continues after a previously identified site in South End Ave proved unsuitable.

Unitary authority debate

Independent commissioners have now released a report examining a proposal to reorganise Northland's local government into unitary authorities.

In the wake of this report, all Northland councils have agreed to actively seek ways to work more efficiently and effectively together to provide better services and value to the public.



This summary of the Northland Regional Council Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012 complies with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002 to have a summary of proposal.

submission process

Draft Annual Plan process and timeline

6 April 2011: The Draft Annual Plan will be made available at all council offices and on the council's website for people to read and make submissions. A copy of the plan will also be sent to organisations and individuals currently on the council's Annual Plan mailing list.

6 April 2011: The Draft Annual Plan is publicly notified.

Week of 11-15 April 2011: A summary document about the Draft Annual Plan will be distributed to households in the Northland region. People will be able to make a submission, or request a full copy of the Draft Annual Plan. Both the summary and the full plan are available on the council's website www.nrc.govt.nz/draftannualplan

6 May 2011: The four-week consultation period ends. People who wish to make a submission and have their say on the Draft Annual Plan must have done so by this date.

17-20 May 2011: Submission hearings will be held for people who wish to present their submissions in person to the chairman and councillors. Final decisions will be made about what is to be included in the Annual Plan 2011-2012 following the hearings and consideration of all submissions received.

21 June 2011: The council will adopt the Annual Plan 2011-2012 at its June council meeting.

28 June 2011: The final Annual Plan will be available on the council's website www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan

What is a submission?

A submission is a letter, fax, email or any other form of written communication, which outlines your opinion on a particular matter in the Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012. Please use the submission form (opposite).

The "focus for the year 2011-2012" section on pages 3 to 6 outlines what the council considers to be the important issues for the region for the year ahead.

Submissions on this section will be very helpful to the chairman and councillors when making decisions for inclusion in the final plan.

Guidelines on how to write your submission

- To make your submission clear to the council, it needs to be concise and to the point – background information can be important but the main points you are trying to get across should be highlighted in your submission.
- You need to make clear what you are supporting or opposing and why, and refer to the appropriate corresponding page numbers in the plan.
- If the topic in your submission is not in the plan now and you want to suggest a new project or expenditure, then please indicate what items currently in the plan you think are a lower priority.
- Requests for new projects or expenditure should include suggestions on how these projects should be funded – general rates, targeted rates, user fees etc.
- Please read all the information available before making your submission. The plan will guide you to the relevant page numbers and website references with extra information.

Post your submission to:

Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012 Submission
Northland Regional Council
Freepost 139690
Private Bag 9021, Whāngārei Mail Centre
Whāngārei 0148

Make your submission online at:

www.nrc.govt.nz/draftannualplan

Fax your submission to:

09 438 0012

E-mail your submission to:

mailroom@nrc.govt.nz

Submissions should reach the council by 3.00pm Friday 6 May 2011

Submissions received after 3.00pm are considered "late submissions". Late submissions are considered at councillors' discretion.

Hearing of submissions will be held 17-20 May 2011.

In accordance with Section 83(k) Local Government Act 2002 and subject to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, all submissions on this plan or policies will be made available to the public.

For more information:

Please contact Angela Jane with any questions relating to the Draft Annual Plan and submission process.
Telephone 09 470 1212 or 0800 002 004
Email angelaj@nrc.govt.nz

What are the issues in this Draft Annual Plan that you would like to make a submission on?

I support / oppose

Issue no:

On pages:

Because:

I suggest:

I support / oppose

Issue no:

On pages:

Because:

I suggest:

Are there any other issues that you would like to make a submission on?

Use further sheets if necessary.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Submissions presented to council are considered public documents subject to the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.