

Northland Community Plan 2009-2019

Long Term Council Community Plan – Volume One



Creating a region of choice

Your Regional Council

Our vision

Creating a region of choice

Our mission

Through growth, putting Northland first by providing regional leadership, environmental protection, economic opportunities and integrated infrastructure.

Our motto

Putting Northland first

Our values

To achieve our vision and mission the Council will:

- Put our community and region first
- Be a champion for our natural environment
- Be forward thinking and innovative
- Be flexible and open
- Be responsive and deliver value
- Be professional and accountable
- Work with others.

Our values in action

Put our community and region first

Provide regional leadership, focussed on working towards strategies and action which will make a positive difference to Northland's communities and people.

Be a champion for our natural environment

We will provide policies, guidance and resources to enable our community to manage and enhance its environmental sustainability.

Be forward thinking and innovative

We will always look long-term at issues facing our region and seek innovative solutions.

Be flexible and open

We will adapt to change quickly, listen carefully to our communities and act fairly and openly in everything we do.

Be responsive and deliver value

We are committed to understanding what is important to Northlanders and take action to deliver value to them.

Be professional and accountable

We strive to deliver the highest levels of professionalism and we are responsible to the people and ratepayers of the Northland region.

Work with others

We will work together and in partnership with others to achieve the most effective and affordable outcome for the Northland region.



Northland Community Plan

Northland Regional Council Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-2019

Volume One

Adopted by the Council at its Meeting on 24 June 2009

You can also view this Plan on the Council's
website: www.nrc.govt.nz/ltccp

ISSN 1176-6255

Whatungarongaro he tāngata toitu te whenua – Mankind passes on but the earth remains for all eternity

E rua ano nga hua e kite ana e te tāngata i te wā e ora ana e ia i runga i te mata o te whenua.

Ko nga mea na Te Atua i hanga, me nga mea na te tāngata ano i hanga.

Ta Te Atua i hanga ai, he taonga, he mea tapu, tapu rawa, mei ata tiaki marika, mehemea ngaro ai, ka ngaro mo ake tonu atu.

Ta te tāngata i hanga ai, he taputapu noa iho māna, ka whakamahia, ka whakapaua, ka whakarerea, e taea noa iho te whakahoua.

During a person's time on earth, he or she will see only two things; Things created by the hand of God and things manufactured by the hand of man.

Things created by the hand of God are of divine creation and are given the sacred description of taonga. Being most sacred, they must be protected at all costs for once lost, they are lost forever.

Things manufactured by the hand of man are personal belongings and are for his or her convenience only. As such, they are usable, consumable, disposable and replaceable.

Contents - Volume One

Council Offices	4	Northland's natural environment is sustainably managed	59	Maritime Operations	205
Foreword	5	Northland is prosperous	67	Support Services	213
Welcome to Northland Regional Council's Long Term Council Community Plan	7	Northland residents are educated and skilled	71	Transfer of Northland Port Corporation (NZ) Ltd shares to an Infrastructure Development Agency	217
Council Planning Process	8	Northland has cohesive communities	75	Establishment of a new Council-Controlled Organisation	219
About this Community Plan	9	Northland retains and enhances its regional identity	79	Existing Council-Controlled Organisations	220
Update on existing Council projects	10	Northland residents have access to recreational and leisure opportunities	83	Northland Regional Council Community Trust	220
New issues - Northland Community Plan 2009-2019	12	Creating a sustainable organisation	87	Subsidiary Organisations	222
The future of Northland – platforms for sustainable growth and development	15	How regional community outcomes relate to the Council's key strategic documents and processes	90	Northland Port Corporation (NZ) Ltd	222
Your Regional Councillors	17	Financial Overview	93	Policy on Significance (summary)	223
Governance Structure	18	Financial Strategy	98	Audit Report	224
Council Committees and Advisers	19	Council Groups of Activities	101	Glossary and Abbreviations	226
Council Management Structure	21	Overview of Council Groups of Activities	102	Contents – Volume Two	229
Policy on the development of Māori capacity	23	Democracy and Corporate Services	103		
Northland Region Today	25	Regional Information and Engagement	113		
Northland's economy	26	Regional Economic Development	127		
Northland's infrastructure	29	Resource Management Planning	137		
Northland's people	31	Transport	145		
Northland's culture	34	Consents	153		
Northland's environment	35	Environmental Monitoring	161		
Climate change	38	Land and Rivers	181		
Regional Community Outcomes	41	Biosecurity	193		
Northland residents are safe and healthy	49	Emergency Management	199		
Northland's infrastructure is developed in a sustainable way	53				

Council Offices

Northland Regional Council address and contact details

Main Office

Street Address: 36 Water Street, Whāngārei.
Postal Address: Private Bag 9021, Whāngārei Mail Centre, Whāngārei 0148.
Telephone No: 09 438 4639
Facsimile No: 09 438 0012
E-mail: mailroom@nrc.govt.nz
Freephone: 0800 002 004
24/7 Environmental Hotline: 0800 504 639
Website: www.nrc.govt.nz

Dargaville Office

Street Address: 61B Victoria Street, Dargaville.
Telephone No: 09 439 3300
Facsimile No: 09 439 3301

Kaitiāia Office

Street Address: 192 Commerce Street, Kaitiāia.
Telephone No: 09 408 6600
Facsimile No: 09 408 6601

Ōpua Office

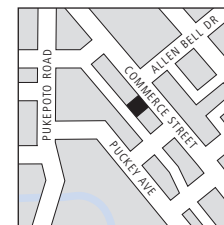
Street Address: Unit 10, Ōpua Marine Park, Ōpua.
Telephone No: 09 402 7516
Facsimile No: 09 402 7510



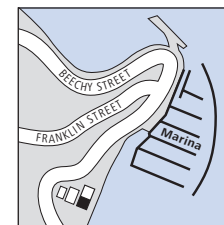
WHĀNGĀREI



DARGAVILLE



KAITĀIA



ŌPUA

Foreword

A word from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

The 10 year period this Community Plan covers – and in particular the next several years – is poised to be among the most exciting and challenging our region has faced in decades.

Together we must negotiate a host of issues from the impacts of global problems such as the world economic crisis, to a raft of locally generated environmental, infrastructural and other matters.

The document you're reading now effectively sets the Northland Regional Council on the path it – and the community it represents - will follow until 2019 as it tackles these issues, albeit with regular reviews along the way.

The Northland Regional Council has identified the sustainable growth and development of Northland as a key priority over the next 10 years. While this Plan takes a longer term view until 2019, it also has a strong focus on the next three years – the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2012.

Current indications are that for much of this time – and certainly the next 12 months or so – Northland (and New Zealand) will remain firmly in the grip of the global economic crisis that has developed in recent months.

Council will be keeping a close eye on events as they unfold, in particular the impact of the crisis on the revenue streams from our investments and our resulting ability to fund the infrastructural and other developments our community wants.

An ongoing and extensive across-the-board review of the way the Northland Regional Council operates over the past 12 months has seen a revamp of the Council's political arm and Committee structures and an internal staffing restructure.

These changes have led to improved internal operating efficiencies and mean the Council is well placed to responsively address growing public concerns in New Zealand over the amounts people are being asked to pay in rates.

In a similar vein, the Council has reserved the option to transfer its majority shareholding in the Northland Port Corporation to a new Infrastructure Development Agency. This will offer a number of financial benefits, including



increasing our ability to raise money to finance future infrastructure projects, without altering our investment risk profile.

These and other measures outlined in this Plan represent Council's determination to 'cut our cloth' - ensuring that our rates are kept as low as possible, but that non-negotiable bottom lines designed to protect our environment are enforced and that much needed infrastructure is allowed for.

Over the next decade, Council expects to continue to fund its operations via a roughly even split between rates, income from investments and fees and charges.

With one or two exceptions – the reasons for which are detailed in this Plan – your Council intends to hold annual rates increases at, or close to, the rate of inflation for the next decade.

The Council expects to collect about \$13.5 million in rates (incl GST) over the next 12 months with that annual figure rising to about \$17.1 million (incl GST) in 10 years time.

At about \$154 on average (including GST, but excluding targeted river rates) Northland Regional Council rates will be significantly less than all other local authorities in the region for the 2009-2010 year, a situation expected to continue over the life of this Plan.

As a result of public submissions, the Council has resolved to introduce two targeted rates as specified below:

- A \$12.83 (incl GST) annual rate levied across the Whāngārei District to help fund the public bus service in that area;
- A new rate of \$8.56 (incl GST) per rateable property that would help fund the provision of rescue helicopter services in the region.

Council will also provide:

- A \$10,000 contingency fund for expert assessments of applications for outdoor trials or use of genetically modified organisms in Northland by the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA), if required.
- A total of \$50,000 as a contribution towards the co-ordination and development of the Arts sector in Northland.

Other key issues, actions and projects identified as priorities for the Northland region over the next 10 years can be found on pages 12 to 14 and include:

- Development of a Regional Growth Programme
- Future river management
- Sustainable Water Allocation Plan
- A new Council-Controlled Organisation.

As well as looking forward, this Plan also includes updates (see pages 10 to 11) to let you know the current state of play with a number of previously-approved Council projects/initiatives. These include:

- The Northland Events Centre & other recreational facilities in Northland
- River management
- The Marsden Point rail link designation
- Hātea River maintenance and dredging
- Broadband.

Given Northlanders high expectations for their environment, we will continue to undertake a range of environmental management activities – including monitoring – over the life of this Plan.

Climate change is one of the key environmental issues facing our region over the next decade and we have already made significant efforts to ensure that mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change is an integral part of day to day Council operations. These efforts will continue.

We will also strive to further strengthen our relationship with the region's three District Councils to ensure that collectively we achieve the best outcomes for the people we represent.



Mark Farnsworth
Chairman



Ken Paterson
Chief Executive Officer

Welcome...

Welcome to Northland Regional Council's Long Term Council Community Plan

The Local Government Act 2002 made changes to the way Councils engage, plan and report to their communities. The legislation is based on a philosophy that effective, responsible, responsive and accountable local government is fundamental to achieving the long term well-being of communities. The Act provides greater scope for community participation in determining what local authorities do and how they do it. Central to this philosophy is the requirement to adopt a Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).

During 2005, the Northland Regional Council and the Far North, Kaipara and Whāngārei District Councils, decided to undertake a joint process to identify regional community outcomes for Northland. Community outcomes describe what the people of the Northland region value, and what they would like the region to be like in the future. More information on community outcomes can be found in the "Community Outcomes" section of this plan starting on page 41.

Being regional community outcomes, they cannot be achieved by the Northland Regional Council alone. The Council will continue to work with a range of other organisations including government departments, industry and community groups, Māori, private enterprise and the region's three territorial authorities to achieve community outcomes.

The activities that the Council intends to undertake in the future to help achieve regional community outcomes are detailed in the "Council Activities" section of this plan starting on page 101.

N.B. For ease of communication, the title "Long Term Council Community Plan" is often referred to as the "Northland Community Plan".

What is a Community Plan?

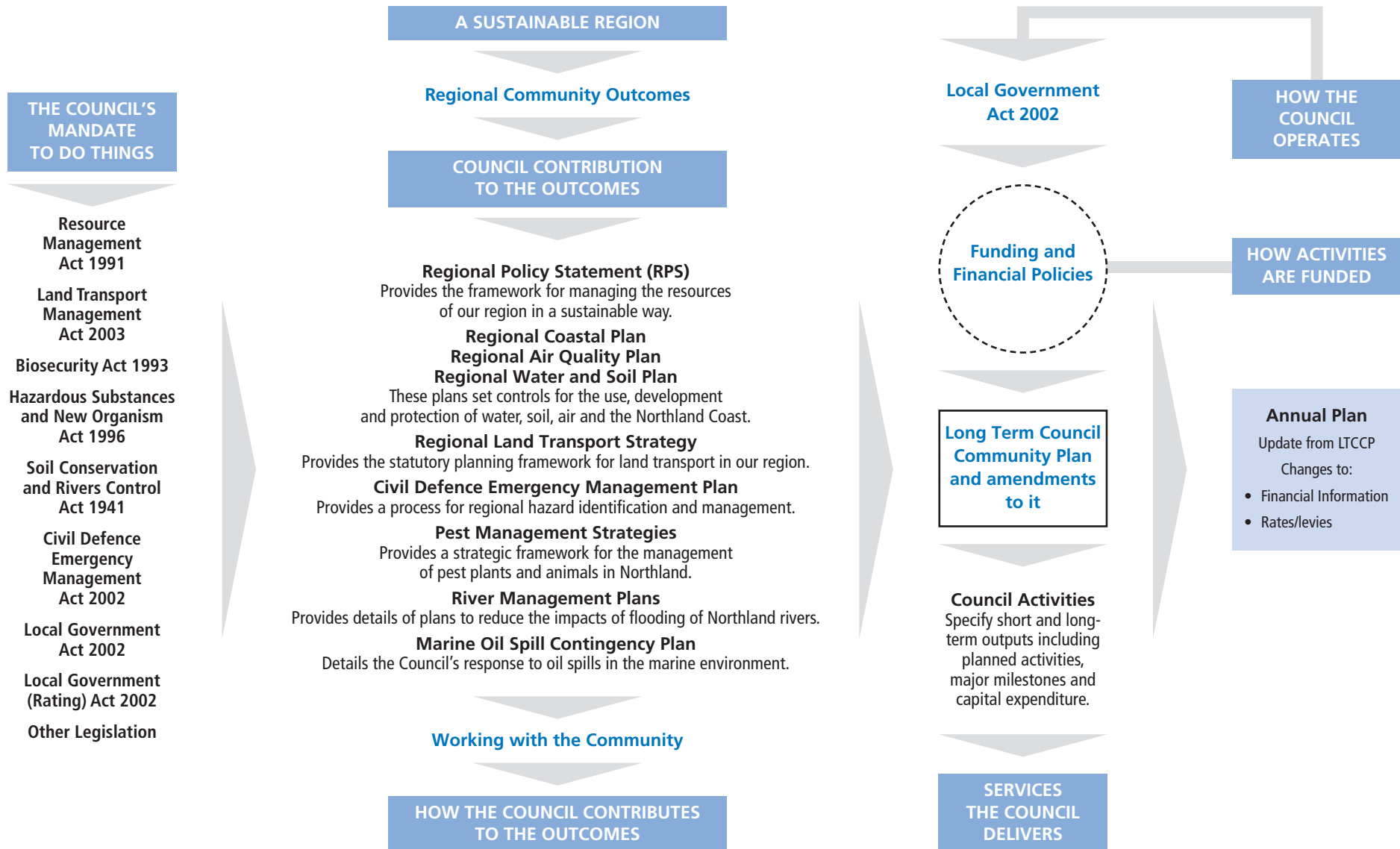
Under the Local Government Act 2002, Northland Regional Council is required to produce, once every three years, a Community Plan covering the next 10 years.

As the name suggests, a Community Plan is a document put together by the Regional Council and the community which sets the strategic direction for the Council. The diagram (overleaf) shows the major components of the Community Plan and highlights the links between regional community outcomes, Council activities, as well as the partnership approach to achieving the community outcomes. The end result is a document that outlines Northlanders' expectations (regional community outcomes) and shows how the Regional Council will work with the community and other organisations to achieve these.

The Community Plan must be reviewed and evaluated once every three years, and the community outcomes contained in the document must be reviewed and evaluated once every six years to ensure that the changing needs of Northlanders are reflected in future plans. The Council intends to update existing regional community outcomes during 2010/2011 for inclusion in the next LTCCP in 2012.

The Council will produce an Annual Plan in the years in between LTCCPs which will provide an update on how the region is progressing and include any changes that may occur along the way.

Council Planning Process



About this Community Plan

What is the difference between the Community Plan and last year's Annual Plan?

The main difference is that the Community Plan is an all encompassing document that includes:

- Community outcomes identified with the help of Northlanders for the region;
- Indicators that measure progress the community has made since the last LTCCP in achieving regional outcomes;
- Indications of how the Council currently works in partnership with other groups and organisations;
- The activities that the Council will undertake to help achieve community outcomes; and
- Council policies in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002.

This Community Plan has been provided in two volumes to make it easier for you to find the information that is of most interest to you.

Volume One includes information on:

- Regional community outcomes and how progress has been monitored;
- The priorities for Northland over the next 10 years for each community outcome; and
- The groups of activities that the Council will undertake to contribute to the achievement of regional community outcomes.

Volume Two includes:

- The Council's funding, financial and management policies; and
- Comprehensive financial information for the 10 year period covered by the Plan.

Members of the public requesting a copy of the Community Plan will be sent Volume One. A copy of Volume Two, containing detailed financial information and Council Policies will only be sent if specifically requested.

Copies of both volumes of the Community Plan can be found on the Council's website www.nrc.govt.nz/ltccp

Volume One and Two combined are available on CD.

Why should I be interested in the Community Plan?

Input from residents is crucial to developing the Community Plan and to developing Northland's future...

You may want to know about a particular Regional Council activity...

You may want to know about your rates and how they are decided...

You may want to know about Northland's community outcomes...

You may want to know about what is being planned by the Regional Council for your region...

Keep reading!

Update on existing Council projects

Since the 2006-2016 Northland Community Plan and subsequent Annual Plans, the Council has consulted and made decisions on a variety of projects. Progress has been made in a number of areas of interest to Northlanders. These include:

Northland Events Centre

The Northland Regional Council has agreed to fund a \$13 million stake in a multi-purpose Regional Events Centre on the current Okara Park site in Whāngārei. The Whāngārei District Council will contribute \$3 million, with an independently appointed Trust to manage the facility. As detailed in the original Events Centre proposal, the amount that Whāngārei ratepayers contribute to the Events Centre will decrease from \$33.75 to \$28.13 from 1 July 2009. Contributions from Kaipara and Far North districts will remain the same at \$5.63. All figures are GST inclusive.

A contract with Argon Construction was finalised in early 2009 and construction of the Events Centre began in early 2009. The Whāngārei District Council has agreed to be responsible (together with an independent trust), for the Centre's future maintenance and operation. *For more information on the Events Centre project, visit the Council's website www.nrc.govt.nz/leventscentre*

Other recreational facilities in Northland

The Regional Council has agreed, subject to certain criteria being met, to contribute \$700,000 to the new 50m swimming pool complex in Dargaville and \$500,000 to the Far North District Council to help fund a \$2 million multi-purpose building at the Kerikeri Sports Complex. These contributions will be made from the Council's Recreational Facilities Rate established in 2006. *More information can be found on page 13 of this Plan.*

River management

Following allocation of \$1.6M of funding in its 2008 Annual Plan, the Council continues to work on the development (or updating) of flood risk reduction plans for the top 27 rivers in Northland that carry the highest level of flood risk. Nineteen of the rivers are in the Far North District, six in the Whāngārei District and two in the Kaipara. It is anticipated that the plans will be completed by the end of 2010. *More information can be found in the Land and Rivers Group of Activities section on pages 181 to 191 of this Plan.*

Dredging of the Hātea River Channel

The Northland Regional Council and the Whāngārei District Council formed a working party to dredge a 4.5km stretch of the Hātea Channel from Port Whāngārei into the Town Basin marina channel. Around 10,000 cubic metres of built-up silt was removed, providing a safer and deeper passage for boats. In addition, the buoys, beacons, mooring systems and lights in the area have also been upgraded. \$200,000 was allocated in both Council's 2008-2009 budgets to complete this work, funded by a combination of ratepayer funds and user charges. *For more information on this project visit www.nrc.govt.nz/hateariver*

Marsden Point Rail Link Designation

Following the Council's decision to establish a 50/50 joint venture with ONTRACK, the process has commenced to formally designate the land required for the Marsden Point rail link corridor by ONTRACK. The corridor is a 20 km section of rail line from the main North Auckland line at Oakleigh to the deep water port at Marsden Point. The main objective of the joint venture will be to legally protect the land needed for the rail link corridor from incompatible subdivision and development until the link is eventually built by central government. *More information can be found in the projects section of the Council's website www.nrc.govt.nz/marsdenrail*

Northland Regional Council Community Trust (Enterprise Northland)

Following a review of the Northland Regional Council Community Trust in 2008, the key focus for the Trust will be to work across all Northland industry sectors to implement the Regional Growth Programme. This requires Enterprise Northland, the District Councils, Northland Intersectoral Forum (NIF) the Regional Council and other key stakeholders to work together to ensure that all parties are jointly contributing to the success of Northland. *More information can be found on the Trust on pages 220 to 221 of this Plan.*

Broadband

The Northland Regional Council is committed to ensuring that Northland has the benefit of a world class broadband network. To this end, the Council has a memorandum of understanding with broadcast and telecommunications company Kordia™, Northpower and Top Energy with a view to developing, building and operating a fibre-optic based telecommunications infrastructure in Northland.

The Council will continue to lobby the Government on the need to adequately resource broadband to the rural areas of the region. The Council will also apply to any funding source which Government makes available to facilitate broadband. *Any future updates on broadband will be published on the Council's website www.nrc.govt.nz/broadband*

Infrastructure Development Agency

The Council amended its Community Plan in 2007 to establish an Infrastructure Development Agency (IDA) as a Council-Controlled Organisation. The IDA is a separate legal entity whose primary focus is to facilitate infrastructure development projects, including the sourcing of internal and/or external funds to contribute to the region's infrastructure needs. *Full details of this can be found on pages 217 to 218 of this Plan.*

Shared services

The Council continues to investigate options and benefits of increased levels of shared services with the three Northland District Councils and external agencies where appropriate.

Single planning framework for Northland

Central government has indicated that as part of their Resource Management Act reform process, it will make it easier for councils to integrate their plans into a single planning document. The Council will use this legislative change to facilitate a move to a single planning framework for the Northland region.

New issues - Northland Community Plan 2009-2019

This section highlights the key new issues, actions and projects identified as priorities for the Northland region.

The future of Northland – platforms for sustainable growth

As outlined in the Annual Plan 2008-2009, the Council has commenced work on the development of a Regional Growth Programme for Northland. The result will be an action plan to develop the region to its full potential using a sustainable development approach. The programme will consider social, environmental and cultural factors alongside economic infrastructure, and growth opportunities. Once developed, it is anticipated that the Regional Council will work closely with its economic development agency, Enterprise Northland, Northland's three district councils, Northland Intersectoral Forum (NIF), iwi and other key stakeholders to implement, monitor and review the action plan over time to ensure maximum effectiveness and advantage for Northlanders is achieved. From 1 July 2010, the Council is intending to fund the Regional Growth Programme from a new targeted rate. The establishment of this new rate will be subject to further public consultation as part of the 2010-2011 Annual Plan process. *More information of the Growth Programme can be found in the Platforms for Growth section on pages 15 to 16 and the Regional Economic Development Group of Activities section on pages 127 to 135 of this Plan.*

Rescue Helicopter Services in Northland

The Council has resolved to establish a new rate to contribute funding up to \$675,000 to the Northland Emergency Services Trust (NEST). NEST is a non-profit Charitable Trust that provides an emergency helicopter/air ambulance service to all Northlanders. Due to the high cost of fundraising and the loss of a major sponsor, NEST needed to secure a more stable funding base if the current level of service was to be continued. While there has been ongoing central government and district health board reviews, there was no evidence of an imminent increase in funding to ensure continued rescue services for Northland.

New Transport Rate for the Whāngārei District

From 1 July 2009, the Northland Regional Council will take over the funding of the Whāngārei public transport services (\$460,000 including GST) from the Whāngārei District Council. Under the Land Transport Act 2003, the Regional Council is already responsible for administering this service. This will see the administration and funding of the service carried out by one organisation (the Regional Council) resulting in increased levels of efficiency and accountability. The introduction of the new bus service provider on 1 July 2008 resulted in the first fare increase in six years. Transferring the responsibility from Whāngārei District Council to the Regional Council will largely have a nil effect on ratepayers. The Regional Council has resolved to introduce a new fixed charge per separately used inhabited part in the Whāngārei District to further subsidise the increased costs of providing bus passenger transport services.

River management

The Council has resolved to complete flood risk reduction plans for 27 rivers in Northland identified as carrying the highest level of flood risk by June 2010. Detailed action plans will then be developed and it is anticipated that implementation will begin by 30 June 2011. Specific catchment works detailed in the completed flood risk reduction plans will be undertaken during the remaining term of this Plan. Works will be funded from a further targeted rate levied on those properties that benefit from the works. No specific catchment works or setting of new rates will occur without full consultation with affected communities. *More information on Hazard Management and River Management can be found in the Lands and Rivers Group of Activities section on pages 181 to 191 of this Plan.*

Ongoing dredging of the Hātea River Channel

During 2008-2009, Whāngārei district ratepayers paid an additional \$2.82 per rating unit to fund the dredging of the Hātea Channel and the upgrade of navigation aids. From 1 July 2009, this rate will reduce to \$1.69 (including GST) per rating unit to collect \$56,250 (including GST) each year to pay into a Hātea Dredging Reserve. This reserve will be used to help fund ongoing maintenance dredging of the Hātea Channel, disposal of dredged spoil material, and an annual hydrographic survey to maintain the established depth. The Hātea Reserve is capped at \$225,000.

Other Recreational Facilities Rate

In recognition of the current economic environment with the need to rationalise and prioritise services, the Council will cease collecting the other recreational facilities portion of the Recreational Facilities Rate from 1 July 2009. Ratepayers across Northland currently pay \$5.63 (including GST) for the development of recreational facilities in the region. As a result of the submission process, Council has resolved to investigate the possibility of another similar rate, most suitable for this purpose, at a later date.

Sustainable Water Allocation Plan

To ensure the Northland's water resources are managed in a sustainable way and not over allocated, the Council has resolved to update and implement a more rigorous water allocation regime. This project involves firstly reviewing and improving our knowledge and understanding of Northland's water resources. In order to protect the environment and provide users with more certainty and legal security of supply, the Council will revise its water allocation policy and set appropriate limits where needed, through a consultative process. As water is an essential resource for almost all productive activity, the revised water allocation regime will be consistent with the actions detailed in the Regional Growth Programme. The implementation of the Sustainable Water Allocation Regime is also consistent with current government initiatives signalled in the Sustainable Water Programme of Action. The Sustainable Water Allocation Regime will be reviewed and implemented over a five year period commencing in the 2009-2010

financial year. Initially \$123,750 (including GST) has been budgeted to target known areas where there is significant risk of over allocation.

Stock truck effluent disposal facilities

In order to reduce the amount of stock effluent spillage on the region's roads, the Council has resolved to provide two additional stock truck effluent disposal sites at an estimated cost of \$101,250 (including GST). Provision of these sites will not only reduce the incidence of illegal discharges, but will also improve road safety and promote public and environmental health. There will be one new facility in the Kaipara district and one in the Far North district. The respective district councils are investigating suitable sites and it is anticipated that this process will be completed by 30 June 2010 and construction take place in the 2010-2011 financial year.

Climate change

Central government has determined that climate change is an issue of national significance that will impact on Northland. The Council will respond to government directions by ensuring that mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change is an integral part of day to day Council operations. The Council currently utilises a combination of adaptation and mitigation approaches to deal with climate change in terms of adapting where changes in climate are already having significant effect, and taking action to mitigate future effects where possible and/or appropriate. The Council uses risk management assessment procedures to help prepare the community to adapt to known climate change, and takes climate change considerations into account when making decisions. The Council has a number of initiatives that are aligned with central government's Climate Change Work Programme some of which are detailed in the "Creating a Sustainable Organisation" section on pages 87 to 89 of this Plan. Further references to climate change are contained throughout this 10 Year Plan as these considerations permeate all Council activities and processes and are not easily isolated.

Implications for Northland – Royal Commission of Inquiry on Auckland Governance

The Royal Commission for Auckland has reported and the Government has initiated a process to form one Council for Auckland. Northland Regional Council is committed to a collaborative approach to reviewing the way local government services are delivered in the Northland region.

Transfer of Northland Port Corporation Shares to the Infrastructure Development Agency

As a result of the Council's ongoing focus on improving operational efficiency and effectiveness, the Council has reserved the option to transfer its majority shareholding in the Northland Port Corporation to the 100% Council owned and operated Infrastructure Development Agency (IDA). The timing of the transfer is yet to be decided and will be subject to further Council approval. The transfer may provide financial benefits to the Council. Transferring the shares would enable the IDA to benefit from the imputation credits attached to dividends received. The transfer would also provide other opportunities such as increasing the Council's ability to raise money to finance future infrastructure projects for the benefit of all Northlanders. The transfer would not alter the Council's investment risk profile. *Further information on the transfer of ownership of Northland Port Corporation shares can be found on pages 217 to 218 of this Plan.*

New Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) – Shared Services

The Council has resolved to establish a new CCO in partnership with a number of other regional councils in New Zealand. The Councils are working together for the purpose of collaboratively developing and maintaining a software application suite for use by those regional councils in the delivery of their activities. The suite has been called IRIS – Integrated Regional Information Software. The Council has a legal requirement to meet its statutory obligations and cannot do this without appropriate software. *Further information on the IRIS Council-Controlled Organisation can be found on page 219 of this Plan.*

The future of Northland

Platforms for sustainable growth and development

Northland Regional Council has identified the sustainable growth and development of the Northland region as a priority. Achieving a successful future for Northland will require a common understanding of where we are now and where we want to be as a region.

The Council has identified four main platforms for growth being; Economic Opportunities, Integrated Infrastructure, Regional Leadership and Environmental Management. These platforms for growth have been used throughout the Northland Community Plan to show how the Council's activities are being aligned to them. They will also be used as cornerstones for the development of the Regional Growth Programme for Northland.

The ability to converge economic growth, enhanced infrastructure, democratic leadership and environment protection will determine whether Northland has a prosperous future or continues with poor productivity and a low wage economy. Infrastructure, education, skills attraction, innovation, productivity and inward investment are all key areas that must be addressed with a focused approach and a clear direction, set objectives, timelines and measurable outcomes.

Economic opportunities

It is important to recognise that initially economic growth will be achieved through advancing Northland's main sectors which include; agriculture, forestry and fishing, tourism and hospitality, manufacturing, building, retail and distribution and the marine industry. The development of improved infrastructure will pave the way for other sectors to consider investing in Northland.

Increased productivity is a critical component for economic growth and in exploring ways of adding value to existing businesses. Consideration will be given to the development of leadership skills and the means of making informed decisions, an increased propensity to take calculated risks, striving for excellence, enhanced capacity and capability in the labour force/skilled labour force and investment in research and development.

Contribution to Growth Platforms	
✓ Economy	✓ Infrastructure
✓ Leadership	✓ Environment

Integrated infrastructure

The provision of improved basic infrastructure is a priority. This is much more than just roads and includes wider transportation including rail and the port, broadband, energy (both generation and availability), water and sewerage. The required investment in infrastructure is significant and often the benefits are not realised until many years later. This level of investment is beyond the financial resources of Northland and the Council and will require central government and private sector funding.

Regional leadership

There is a recognition that whilst there has been a considerable amount of work done already by stakeholders, there is a pressing need to provide regional leadership to ensure that the regional governance and planning frameworks are supportive and aligned to the agreed vision for Northland's future.

Environmental management

The Regional Council is responsible for the sustainable management of Northland's treasured environmental assets; this is at the heart of what we do. However, there should be no doubt that the long-term sustainable protection of this environment requires the Council to successfully manage the balance between these four critical building blocks. The Council will be ensuring that its decision-making is future focused.

What is known, is that the economic transformation of Northland requires everyone to pull together. It needs a committed collective approach with better co-ordination; this will require a change in focus from individual agendas to **putting Northland first**. Evidence from around New Zealand and globally, shows that partnership at a local and regional government level is essential to successfully achieve economic transformation.

Northland Regional Council will continue to work closely with a wide range of stakeholders including Northland Intersectoral Forum (NIF), district councils, iwi, industry sectors, communities, the Chamber of Commerce, the Northland Regional Council Community Trust (trading as Enterprise Northland), central government and other key regional organisations.

Growth in Auckland will increase pressure on Northland's infrastructure and economy, and needs to be planned for. The opportunities provided by Auckland's growth also need to be identified. Similarly, growth in Whāngārei and the Bay of Islands will provide opportunities to the surrounding areas.

Northland's economic programme will grow out of our unique industrial structure, economic assets and limitations and business culture. We will understand Northland's economic strengths and weaknesses and how best to exploit the hand we have been dealt. The importance of partnership and collaboration cannot be stressed too highly and in **putting Northland first** we can achieve a prosperous future for Northlanders.