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Committee Planning and Monitoring Subcommittee
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Summary of submissions received on proposed ten-year plan 2006-16 and proposed annual plan 2006/07

1. Purpose

To provide an overview of the submissions Greater Wellington has received from the public on the proposed ten-year plan 2006-16 and proposed annual plan 2006/07.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The consultation period on the proposed Long-Term Council Community Plan 2006-2016 (LTCCP) ran from 1 April to 4 May 2006. Submissions received after that date have been accepted. A total of 402 submissions have been received to date and are being circulated to councillors for consideration. Some 56 submitters have asked to be heard.

The big question councillors need to focus on through the Subcommittee meetings on 16 to 18 May 2006 and the Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee and Council meetings is “Are there changes we should be making to our plan as a result of the views expressed?”

4. Comment

4.1 Origin of submissions

The table below shows the numbers of submissions which have come from organisations, local authorities, government departments and state owned enterprises.

Organisations (including community groups)	33
Local Authorities (including 1 community board)	6
Government Departments ¹	1
State Owned Enterprises	2

4.2 Submitters' responses to specific questions

A summary document of the LTCCP was circulated to all households in the region. The summary document asked 4 broad questions of the region's public. Unsurprisingly, many of the submissions the Council has received address these questions. The vast majority of submissions received related to transport and water issues. Below is a compilation of submitters' common responses to each question.

4.2.1 *We'd like to know if you agree to our approach to funding transport improvements in the region.*

About 30 submitters commented specifically on the transport rate. A number of submitters were concerned about the transport rate rise for Upper Hutt residents and the transport rate rise for rural ratepayers.

A large number of submitters also commented on the proposed train fare increase. The majority of submitters did not support the proposed rail fare increase.

Some submitters stated that they would rather a rate increase than the proposed 15% rail fare increase, while others said they would rather a user pays system. A number of submitters suggested that the funds for increasing train services should come from boosting the number of passengers.

A large portion of submitters were concerned that increasing fares would turn people away from public transport. Several submitters said that the Council should be actively discouraging people from driving. A number of other submitters stated that the fares should not rise until the train service is improved.

Some of submitters also felt that the proposed level of investment in passenger transport was too low.

There was some concern surrounding the Council's proposal to set up 4 Council Controlled Trading Organisations (CCTOs) to invest in rail. A few submitters questioned the need for the Council to own rolling stock and other rail infrastructure and, indeed, whether the Council required an additional 4 CCTOs.

¹ Crown Minerals Group Ministry of Economic Development.

4.2.2 We want to know if you agree with the planned additions to our regional parks network or whether you would prefer to have additional facilities and services in our current parks.

Sixty-six submitters commented on regional parks. The submitters seem to be divided as to whether or not the Council should enhance existing parks or expand the region's park network. While approximately one third of the submitters stated that they would like to see the regional parks network expand, five submitters said they would like to see the existing regional parks enhanced. Four submitters said they would like to see neither enhancement nor expansion, while seven said that they would like to see both.

A small number of submitters commented on the proposed addition of Whitireia Park to the regional parks network. Whitireia Park is administered by the Department of Conservation and already provides public recreation; some submitters felt there would be no additional benefit to the people of the region.

4.2.3 We'd like to know whether you agree with our approach to flood protection.

Forty submitters commented on flood protection. The majority of submitters supported increasing expenditure on improving flood protection works. A few submitters believed that while investment in flood protection work was necessary, the Council should ensure that structures are not built in flood-prone areas. Some submitters were concerned that climate change and its ensuing effect on floods in the region had not been taken into account in the LTCCP.

4.2.4 Should we put our increased resources into water conservation measures, such as education or metering, to try and reduce consumption levels, or should we put our resources into finding a viable new water source?

The Council received a large number of submissions in response to this question. In general there seems to be more support for educating people regarding water conservation and introducing water conservation measures than building a new water supply source. A large number of submitters suggested there should be rainwater and grey water tanks on properties.

With regard to water metering, submitters would seem to be divided. Approximately 42 submitters were in favour of water conservation, while approximately 22 were against installing water meters in the Wellington region. Among the people who were in favour of water metering there seemed to be a split between submitters who were in favour of it as a user pays mechanism and those who were in favour of it as a means to conserve water.

Some submitters were in favour of water conservation but at the same time would like the Council to investigate a new source.

4.3 Key themes

While a significant amount of submitters responded to the 4 broad questions posed in the summary document, a considerable number of submissions related to additional concerns. Analysis of these concerns follows.

4.3.1 Passenger transport

By far the majority of submitters supported passenger transport being a top priority. A number of submitters said that they supported passenger transport because of increasing oil prices, low environmental impact, concern about global warming and the fact that much of the passenger transport network runs on renewable energy.

A significant proportion said they agreed with improving the quality and frequency of passenger transport services to remove barriers of use. Many had noted that the services were at peak capacity, and they often saw passengers having to stand for periods of time.

A limited number of submissions commented specifically on buses. Some submitters felt they wanted more buses with an extended timetable, while others noted the inefficiency of buses, especially during off-peak times. One submitter suggested having mini vans during off-peak times. The Wellington Zoo wrote a submission which outlined their recent success in encouraging their patrons to use buses instead of cars when visiting the zoo.

A large number of submitters said that the 2016 target of at least 15.6% of journey to work trips being made by public transport was far too low. A number of submitters also commented that a target of higher user satisfaction should be included for passenger transport.

Officers noted that we received at least 30 form letters relating to public transport in the region.

4.3.2 Roads

A number of submitters stated that they would rather see money put into public transport than roads. The reasons cited by the submitters included rising petrol prices, climate change and the Council's goal of sustainability. Key suggestions for reducing congestion included car-pooling/ride-sharing and car-pool lanes, using technology, such as broadband, and encouraging employers to provide flexible work hours for their staff. Several submitters also supported congestion charging as a way of discouraging single passenger journeys by private car.

4.3.3 Cycling and Pedestrians

Those who commented on cycling supported it for various reasons, including rising oil prices, climate change, and health and environmental benefits. Submitters made requests for more cycle tracks or lanes (one submitter suggested cycle tracks alongside rail corridors) and other facilities, such as

storage areas and easy carriage on passenger transport. A key concern was the safety of cyclists and suggestions were made as to how this could be remedied.

Of the small number of submissions received which dealt with pedestrians, there was support for the Wellington region being pedestrian friendly. Some felt that the Council needed to do more for pedestrians, such as key footpaths being protected from the elements.

Those submitters who commented on targets relating to walking or cycling supported them; but many felt they could go further.

4.3.4 Rates

Some submitters stated that they would like rate increases to be at, or below, the level of inflation. A small number of submitters voiced their objection to paying a rate for the Westpac Trust Stadium. Some submitters also questioned why the general rate differs depending on which city or district in the Wellington region a ratepayer resides in.

4.3.5 Environment

A number of submitters commented on the environment. A large number of these submissions related to the water quality of lakes, rivers and beaches within the region, both congratulating the Council for work done and stating that more work needs to be done. A few submitters commented that the Council should take a more proactive role in regulating the control of genetically modified organisms. Quite a few people raised climate change as an issue that the Council should be giving more attention to.

A small number of submitters discussed hydro, solar and wind generation, and the need for the Council to promote the use of renewable energy as part of being a sustainable region.

Approximately nine submitters commented on air quality in the region, the majority of whom stated that more should be done to reduce air pollution in the region.

Approximately 10 submitters discussed waste disposal, their comments largely related to recycling and waste reduction.

A few submitters stated their support for Council's environmental education programmes.

4.3.6 Biosecurity

The Council received 16 submissions which commented on biosecurity. These submissions were generally supportive of the biosecurity work undertaken by the Council. However there was some concern about the ongoing use of 1080 poison.

4.3.7 The LTCCP document

Submitters' views on the actual LTCCP document ranged from it being informative and easy to understand to excessively wordy and bureaucratic. Some submitters asked for more information to be in the document.

4.3.8 Other comments

A number of submitters commented that the Council needs to plan for the imminent energy crisis, noting that if the crisis arrives it could make the LTCCP redundant.

There were a number of requests for more information about the Wellington Regional Strategy.

A few submitters requested that the Council take more of an interest/leadership role in energy management, land use and economic development issues.

A small amount of submitters stated that the Council should support the region/city hosting the Commonwealth Games.

Overall there was good support for sustainability in the submissions.

5. Recommendation

That the Planning and Monitoring Subcommittee receives the report and notes the information.

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