

Council Briefing Agenda

Date: Wednesday, 4 December, 2019

Time: 9:00 am

Location: Council Chamber
Forum North, Rust Avenue
Whangarei

Elected Members: Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai
(Chairperson)
Cr Gavin Benney
Cr Vince Cocurullo
Cr Nicholas Connop
Cr Ken Couper
Cr Tricia Cutforth
Cr Shelley Deeming
Cr Jayne Golightly
Cr Phil Halse
Cr Greg Innes
Cr Greg Martin
Cr Anna Murphy
Cr Carol Peters
Cr Simon Reid

For any queries regarding this meeting please contact
the Whangarei District Council on (09) 430-4200.

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2.1 City Centre Planning – Complete Streets Masterplan

Meeting: Council Briefing
Date of meeting: 4 December 2019
Reporting officer: Sonya Seutter

1 Purpose

To provide an overview of the Whangarei City Centre Plan, the City Core Precinct Plan and the initial stages of work on the Whangarei Complete Streets Masterplan.

2 Background

In 2017, Council adopted the Whangarei City Centre Plan – a 30-year vision for the city centre focused on five key moves – Living, Experience, Employment, Design and Connections. Development of the plan included several business workshops, and a number of Council Briefings, in order to identify issues and opportunities for our city centre.

The City Core Precinct Plan was developed from actions within the City Centre Plan and focussed on design principles and opportunities around our city centre streets. The process for developing the plan included a business workshop, along with a number of briefings with elected members.

The resulting plan (adopted by Council in May 2019) included a clear implementation programme/timeline, while also identifying opportunities and potential solutions for the future of the streetscape in the City Core precinct.

The Complete Streets Masterplan and Design Manual are actions in the City Core Precinct Plan. Although the precinct plan sets out a clear vision, along with actions for implementation, the masterplan will offer another level of detailed design.

3 Discussion

A working draft of the Complete Streets Masterplan has been being developed over the past eight months. Feedback on the masterplan has been provided by elected members at key points in the process, with a multidisciplinary project team (including the consulting firms Isthmus and Flow Transportation Specialists) then working on the draft.

Deliverables

The Masterplan will be structured to:

- Deliver the vision, key outcomes and transformational moves outlined in the Whangarei City Centre Plan.
- Articulate urban design analysis, design ideas and preliminary investigations of design options and visualisation.
- Include assumptions, constraints, design principles, justifications and explanation/description of all elements.

As part of the masterplan, a movement network plan (traffic modelling) will ensure that the testing of proposed road movements, street /intersection layout changes is complete and fully functioning for initiation of detailed design work. The movement network plan will also examine all transport modes, including cycling and bus routes.

The design manual will be a detailed and technical document for street furniture and materials infrastructure which will establish 'treatments' based on the classification of street.

Initial Stages of Work on the Complete Streets Masterplan

The project began with an initial workshop and site visit from the consultants – Isthmus and Flow, followed by weekly skype meetings. The steering group includes members from the Strategy Team, Capital Works, Community and NTA (including NRC), resulting in a collaborative approach to the project.

In a May 2019 Briefing feedback was sought from elected members on a draft set of Design Principles, and six Key Moves around the city streets. These key moves tied back to the key outcomes set out in the Whangarei City Centre Plan.

Following this the team workshopped constraints and opportunities around the streets with elected members, as well as opportunities to model a variety of different ideas, including potential changes to Dent Street.

A variety of options for traffic flows within, and around, the city core were workshopped with councillors in June 2019. One option (scenario 4) was well received by the majority of elected members as an option for further modelling and a working draft. In the briefing feedback was received on the potential for a one-way arterial system, and an overbridge at Dent Street, both of which were then picked up for modelling/investigation.

In August an update was provided on the traffic modelling/working draft, options identified for modelling/investigation and work being done on long term bus options.

The information in initial Council briefings has been worked through with the community advisory groups (YAG, DAG, PAAG) and the walking and cycling strategy group. Council staff also presented this information to the Chamber of Commerce. So far, the information has been well received by stakeholders.

In this briefing, an overview of the Whangarei City Centre Plan and City Core Precinct Plan will be provided, along with an update on the working draft of the Complete Streets Masterplan. Key elements to be covered include:

- Design Principles
- Key Moves
- Street Typologies– existing and proposed
- Vehicular Movement – existing and proposed
- Pedestrian and Cycle Movement – existing and proposed
- Dent Street
- City Car Parking
- Public Transport

2.2 Strategy Updates

Meeting:	Council Briefing
Date of meeting:	4 December 2019
Reporting officer:	Tony Horton (Manager – Strategy) Alicia Lawrie (Strategic Urban Designer) Simon Weston (General Manager Infrastructure)

1 Purpose

To provide strategic updates for the Draft Whangarei District Growth Strategy, Spatial Planning and Four Waters.

2 Draft Whangarei District Growth Strategy

The Draft Whangarei District Growth Strategy is the culmination of two major work programs:

- A full review of Whangarei District Growth Strategy: Sustainable Futures 30/50
- The requirements of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity (NPS – UDC), which identified Whangarei as a high growth area.

The Strategy sets out a 30-year vision for how development will be accommodated and managed across the District. It continues the approach set by Sustainable Futures 30/50, which was to consolidate growth in and around our urban areas and growth nodes.

To create the Draft Strategy staff worked alongside Council (through Briefings and Scoping Meetings), and across key teams in the organisation including Infrastructure, Northland Transport Alliance and District Plan.

External input was also received from Northland Regional Council, New Zealand Transport Agency, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Ministry for the Environment and Northland District Health Board.

The Draft Whangarei Growth Strategy was finalised for consultation in April 2019. Public consultation occurred for five weeks in June 2019.

Staff reported back to elected members in July 2019 on the results of the public feedback. Since July 2019 staff have been:

- analysing the feedback received on the Draft Whangarei Growth Strategy
- reviewing and submitting on central government policy changes
- analysing the 2018 Census data
- undertaking continued engagement and communication with key stakeholders (e.g. NZTA) and other interested parties (e.g. communities and community groups)

2.1 Feedback on the Draft Whangarei District Growth Strategy

Consultation with the community generated a total of 408 responses from individuals, organisations and agencies, which delivered 688 separate items of feedback.

A summary of the feedback, along with a copy of all feedback, was worked through at a Council Briefing on 11 July.

The key issues raised through the feedback include:

- How development and growth will be managed in our coastal areas
- The balance between intensification and greenfield development
- Better recognize the importance of business and key industries
- Transport resilience
- The effects of climate change on future development.
- Housing choice and affordability
- Community involvement and engagement
- Design of subdivision and development

At that briefing staff outlined potential Central Government changes to the NPS – UDC under which the Strategy was developed (Central Government Reform is discussed in more detail below).

Given this, and public feedback that Council ‘delay the strategy until the 2018 Census data is released so we get a more accurate picture of population growth’, the Strategy was put on hold at that time.

2.2 Central Government reform and the Urban Growth Agenda

As outlined above one of the drivers for this Strategy has been Central Government policy, however in 2019 Government announced a wide-ranging reform of planning related policies. This included:

- A new National Policy Statement on Urban Development (the NPC – UD, which will replace the NPC – UDC)
- A National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land
- Actions for Healthy Waterways
- Stage 1 of Resource Management Act reforms (with phase 2 proposed next year)
- A review of Local Government Funding and Financing

These reforms are wide ranging and impact on how development and growth is managed in our District:

- Required to demonstrate we have enough feasible capacity to meet demand for housing and business land
- Monitor indicators such as building consents and house sales data, to inform decision making
- Show how future growth will be accommodated with a focus on intensification opportunities

While compliance with, and reporting against, these requirements have become less stringent through changes proposed, Council will still need to do this work.

2.3 2018 Census results / Estimated Resident Population

In September 2019 Statistics New Zealand released the initial results from the 2018 Census. This has given a more up to date picture of our population, occupied dwellings and demographic profile.

For the purpose of our obligations under the NPS-UDC (and the yet to be finalised NPC – UD), it gives us another tool to identify growth hotspots in our District. These hotspots generally align with what we are seeing through our subdivision and building consent data as well as what was indicated in the 2017 Growth Model.

The key implications of the new data includes:

- Adjusting the demand assumptions for new dwellings and business land
- Identification of hotspots and aligning planning and infrastructure to correspond
- Better understanding of how we are growing e.g. changes to our age profile

2.4 Potential changes to the Draft Growth Strategy

With Central Government direction under the new NPC – UD becoming clear, and census data now available, the following is a summary of the potential changes that may be required to the Draft Whangarei District Growth Strategy:

Potential change to the Draft Strategy	Reason for change
Greater priority to housing choice and affordability, rather than just focusing on supply of housing.	Feedback highlighted significant affordability challenges for our community Feedback also sought a greater choice of housing (apartments and townhouses) in our urban areas Proposed NPS-UD has a stronger policy focus on the provision of housing to meet community and market needs
Limit future (beyond the recent Rural Plan Change) development in Whangarei Heads and Parua Bay.	Large volume of feedback from Parua Bay and Whangarei Heads community seeking a limit to the amount of growth accommodated in the Whangarei Heads, Parua Bay area. Confirmation that Whangarei Heads is not a growth node. Parua Bay to remain a node, but with limited expansion and greater focus on infrastructure and amenity.
Strategic focus on highly productive land.	Direct response to the proposed National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land. Limit on future development on areas currently known to contain high class soils and note that identification highly productive land (based on the NPS) will be a key action.
Identification of intensification opportunities and delivery mechanisms	Feedback called for more housing and different types of housing in our inner city and urban areas. Strong driver from the draft NPS-UD to enable greater urban development and intensification opportunities.
Identification of economic opportunities for the District	Submission from key stakeholder suggested highlighting the District economic opportunities and how that will support the growth and development of the District.
Update to reflect 2018 Census Results.	2018 Census and an updated Estimated Resident Population have been released and will be incorporated in the assumptions of the Strategy.

Detail on the spatial planning programme	Feedback called for greater detail on what the programme will deliver, how it will be run and what locations will be prioritised.
Detail on when future development	NPS-UD calls for clarity on how and when development capacity will be released and what infrastructure investment is needed. This information in the urban areas and growth nodes will be available (short, medium, long) and what infrastructure and planning is needed to enable development to happen.
Acknowledge the impact of urban development on the natural environment	In response to the proposed National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management (acknowledging that only limited policies apply to District Councils).

This briefing will provide an overview of the Draft Whangarei District Growth Strategy before seeking feedback from elected members on the next steps.

3 Spatial Planning programme

The spatial planning programme has been identified as a key tool under the Draft Growth Strategy to assist in:

- Integrated planning for future development, which balances infrastructure, amenity and environmental outcomes
- Providing a vehicle for community input into planning and development decisions
- Creating a clear vision for how key locations will develop over the next 20 – 30 years
- Informing future planning and infrastructure decision making

The spatial planning programme will create strategic 20-30-year plans for key locations across our District, these plans will include:

- Future development opportunities (greenfield and intensification)
- Future infrastructure needs (Council and other agencies such as NZTA or MoE)
- Amenity and urban design opportunities

These plans will be created with the community and supported by a multidisciplinary project team (planning, infrastructure, transport, design).

One of the key areas where direction is sought is the priority locations. Elected members. Options will be presented to elected members for feedback based on a number of factors including:

- Rate of growth in population and dwellings
- Development opportunities
- Infrastructure constraints
- Design issues
- Community readiness

4 Waters Update

Council staff attended the Water New Zealand Conference and Expo in September this year. Although there was a strong focus on the Three Waters Review, regulation and delivery, and guest speaker's Hon David Parker and Hon Nanaia Mahuta, little new information was provided at the conference.

On 25 October 2019, three papers and Cabinet minutes were released by the Hon Nanaia Mahuta, these being:

- 30 September 2019, CAB-19-MIN-0506 Minute: Three Waters Review: Institutional Arrangements for a Drinking Water Regulator, Cabinet Office; and 30 September 2019, Cabinet Paper: Three Waters Review: Institutional Arrangements for a Drinking Water Regulator, Office of the Minister of Local Government. See attachment 1.
- 30 September 2019, Regulatory Impact Assessment: Decision on the organisational form of a new drinking water regulator, Department of Internal Affairs, 30 September 2019. See attachment 2.
- August 2019, Business Case: A New Drinking Water Regulator, Martin Jenkins for the Department of Internal Affairs. See attachment 3.

The main points include:

- These documents are currently being reviewed. The new regulator will be a Crown entity. The regulator will be set up in the Department of Internal Affairs in October 2019, and governed by a Transition Board, which will be appointed in early 2020, and accountable to the Ministers of Local Government and Health.
- Establishment Unit to be set up with 8-14 people, with the Director to set up the regulator over the next 12 – 18 months. It is likely that the Regulator will be fully operational by 2021
- Strong Regional presence will be required, either located with Regional Council Offices, or Worksafe.
- Regulator to have 50-70 staff in first year, rising to 125-155 staff by year 5.
- Estimate of private suppliers has been revised from 2,000 to 7,000 plus.
- Policy for the Regulator to be with the Ministry of Health.
- Water Services Bill to amend LGA 2002 to require Councils to do extended assessments of drinking water services to build connections with small suppliers.
- The new Cabinet paper indicates costs will be recovered from 3rd parties through fees and charges.

In October the Department of Internal Affairs convened the Local Government New Zealand Three Waters Reference Group to workshop three waters service provision and funding, to assist with the preparation of the December 2019 Cabinet paper. Although the discussion prompted a degree of speculation, no new information was divulged. Key dates for government announcements of December 2019 and mid 2020 remain.

The Four Waters Advisory Group continue to progress their work programme, as does the Drinking Water Joint Working Group.