

DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW 2015 UPDATE REPORT

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 WARD/COMMUNITY: District wide
 DATE: 26 August 2015
 FILE REFERENCE: DM 6650806

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress with the District Plan Review. The current focus of the review is on the preparation of a Draft District Plan for informal comments. Regular update reports will be provided to the Regulatory Committee on the District Plan Review to report on key phases.

RECOMMENDATION

That, having considered all matters raised in the report, the report be received.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

This report is provided for information purposes only, and has been assessed as being of some significance. Informal comments will be sort on a Draft District Plan prior to formal consultation being undertaken in 2017.

DISCUSSION

Overview

The District Plan Review was commenced in May 2014 following the resolution of the Regulatory Committee. The project is divided into four project phases as follows.

Phase 1: Review preparation (June 2014-December 2014): Review preparation has been undertaken, including consideration of monitoring gaps and areas for focus.

Phase 2: Strategic Alignment (June 2014- July 2015): To ensure a broader context to the District Plan the New Plymouth District Blueprint and key directions have been developed and adopted by Council.

Phase 3: Draft Plan Preparation (August 2015-August 2016): Draft plan provisions will be developed for consideration by the community. This will allow for issues to be openly discussed and potentially resolved before the release of the full Proposed District Plan.

Phase 4: Proposed Plan (mid 2017):

The Proposed District Plan will be publicly notified in accordance with Resource Management Act requirements and will involve submissions, hearings, decisions and the opportunity for submitters to appeal to the Environment Court.

Phases 1 and 2 are complete and the focus is now on Phase 3: Draft Plan Preparation. An outline of progress to date and next steps is provided below.

Progress to date:

Phase 1 and 2 of the District Plan Review are now complete.

A New Plymouth District Blueprint and key directions have been adopted by Council as part of the Long Term Plan. The New Plymouth District Blueprint is a high level spatial plan for the district that supports and implements the Shaping our Future Together vision and outcomes and will help guide Council decision-making to deliver more integrated social, economic and environmental outcomes. The adopted key directions are:

- Environment: Enhance the natural environment with biodiversity links and clean waterways:
- Communities: Strengthen and connect local communities
- Citizens: Enable engaged and resilient citizens
- Growth: Direct a cohesive growth strategy that strengthens the city and townships.
- Industry: Strengthen and manage rural economy, industry, the port and the airport
- Talent: Grow and diversify new economies that attract and retain entrepreneurs talented workers and visitors
- Central City: Champion a thriving central city for all
- Destination: Become a world class destination

The Blueprint provides significant direction for the District Plan Review in particular by signalling the need for a more strategic and integrated approach to planning in the District.

It is noted that a variety of consultation techniques were used to receive feedback on the Blueprint¹. A lot of the feedback received is on matters relevant in the District Plan and will be considered in the preparation phase of the review.

Phase 3: Draft Plan Preparation:

This phase is now underway where proposals for change and draft plan provisions will be developed for consideration by key stakeholders. This phase will allow for issues to be openly discussed and resolved before the release of the full Proposed District Plan.

Working under the adopted key directions of the New Plymouth District Blueprint and the objectives of the district plan review, officers have commenced work streams to help identify where more significant change to the district plan is required.

These work streams cover the following general areas:

- Zone Reviews (zoning controls and land-use interfaces);
- Roading, Transport and Infrastructure;
- Hazards (Natural Hazards, Hazardous substances and Contaminated Land);

¹ Stakeholder meetings with community and business groups; Hui at Waitara and Oakura; Open days; written and on-line comments.



ITEM FOR DECISION**ITEM**

- Tangata Whenua;
- Natural Environment, Landscapes and Public Access;
- Heritage (Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage).

Assessment of these areas has identified the following top four issues for consideration as described below.

- **Central City and Local Centres:** The central city is a key direction of the Blueprint. There is opportunity for the District Plan to direct and better facilitate desired development into the central city. Likewise other key suburban centres and townships will benefit from more deliberate planning provisions that encourage activities (including residential living and commercial activities) to locate close to these centres.
- **Residential Growth:** Providing for a cohesive growth strategy is a key direction of the Blueprint and the District Plan has a role in ensuring that the growth areas are located in appropriate locations with supporting infrastructure to meet wider sustainability objectives and to strengthen local communities. There is significant opportunity to provide for a range of housing choices with more intensive housing and activities around key centres, small towns and settlements.
- **Industry:** The need to strengthen and manage rural economy, industry, the port and the airport is a key direction of the Blueprint. There is a need to ensure there is sufficient employment land supply for the district and that appropriate land uses are located around the Port and the Airport. There is also a need to ensure that the effects of large scale rural industry are managed and protected from encroaching uncomplimentary uses. There is a need to deliver a pragmatic solutions focused District Plan and regulatory framework to support these industries and the communities in which they locate.
- **Coastal Management:** A strategic approach is required to coastal management to ensure activities do not impact the natural values of the coast and that developments in low lying areas are managed in accordance with climate variability.

Underlying all four specific considerations is an overlying objective of moving towards a more certain regulatory framework. This will deliver a new District Plan that provides clear regulatory signals for business and industry to provide investment certainty.

Next Steps:

The work programme will progress with a particular focus on these four work areas for targeted consultation with key stakeholders.

A draft District Plan is scheduled for release in mid 2016 for stakeholder consideration. The draft plan stage will allow for detailed consideration of proposed changes before being progressed through statutory changes.

A proposed District Plan will be notified in accordance with the Resource Management Act later in 2017. The release of the Proposed District Plan will be publicly notified in accordance with RMA requirements and will involve submissions, hearings, decisions and the opportunity for the submitter to appeal to the Environment Court. This is the formal statutory consultation phase, with an estimate release date of early 2017.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCING IMPLICATIONS

The District Plan Review will be undertaken within existing budgets.

IMPLICATIONS ASSESSMENT

This report confirms that the matter concerned has no particular implications and has been dealt with in accordance with the Local Government Act 2002. Specifically:

- Council staff have delegated authority for any decisions made;
- Council staff have identified and assessed all reasonably practicable options for addressing the matter and considered the views and preferences of any interested or affected persons (including Māori), in proportion to the significance of the matter;
- Any decisions made will help meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses;
- Unless stated above, any decisions made can be addressed through current funding under the Long-Term Plan and Annual Plan;
- Any decisions made are consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- No decisions have been made that would alter significantly the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council, or would transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

