



Submission on the WCC Long Term Plan from Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents Association

Contact person

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Thank you for agreeing to accept this as a late submission. We look forward to making our oral submission.

Priority Area: Resilience and environment | Te Manahau me te taiao

Our Association notes that increased investment is proposed in water-related infrastructure, and we are strongly supportive of this. However, we would be concerned if this was to completely dominate spending over the next ten years at the expense of other important areas relating to resilience and environment. In particular, we note that resilience-related projects dominate proposed spending, with little for protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

We are disappointed that resilience is presented solely as an infrastructure issue. Equally important is building resilient communities whose response in an emergency focusses on “we all need to help other” rather than “every person for their selves”. Substantially greater funding for activities such as Neighbours Day events would help here. We strongly support finding and funding effective ways of building inclusive communities well motivated to see that no one is left behind in emergencies and disasters.

Our comments on the spending areas addressed in the consultation document are as follows:

Water infrastructure

We know that a major earthquake will occur in Wellington, if not in our lifetimes then in that of our not-so-distant descendants. Security of water supply will be a crucial determinant of how well we survive. While this adds significantly to our rates if savings elsewhere are not forthcoming, we agree that it is something we need to do.

Our Association rates water storage capacity and network improvement ahead of waste water and storm water projects as a priority because of a likely greater benefit to our survival prospects following a major disaster.

We support Option 1, but not necessarily to the full extent and expense outlined if resistance to increases in the total rates bill would lead to cut-backs in other vital areas. Option 2 (keep current levels of service) is not acceptable given the current state of and future demands on our water infrastructure.

Building accelerometers

This sounds sensible. We look forward to seeing further details on the proposal, including funding implications.

Resilience of the transport corridor

We address this below under Transport.

Strengthening Council buildings

We address this below under Arts and Culture.

Built Heritage Incentive Fund

We support the need to either repair or remove unreinforced masonry, particularly in well-frequented areas. Given pressure on funding we believe to “remove” rather than “repair” option needs to be given substantial consideration when removal is significantly cheaper in individual cases.

Water security of supply

We strongly believe the focus needs to be on reducing demand for water rather than increasing supply. We would support serious investigation of “user pays” options such as water meters. Lawns that stay green all year, for example, should be seen as a luxury that may be more costly to achieve with climate change, and not something all ratepayers should be paying for.

Waste management and minimisation

Given there are no additional costs for this work at this time we strongly support the proposed action.

Storm cleanup

We accept the climate change logic for additional funding here.

Predator Free Wellington and community-led trapping

We have ample evidence from the support for both Predator Free Crofton Downs and Predator Free Ngaio that residents in our suburbs are strongly focussed on predator control and eradication. We accept the logic of starting from the Miramar Peninsula to progressively achieve Predator Free Wellington by 2050, and we would hope earlier than that.

Nevertheless we would support substantially greater funding than \$89,000 per year for community-led projects which could involve activities beyond just trapping. We have many highly-motivated residents prepared to help. Not only can we help protect our native wildlife locally. We have found that working together on protecting wildlife brings people from different backgrounds and political views together and is an ideal way to help build more inclusive and resilient communities.

Addition of land in the Wellington Town Belt

We note that private land covered by regenerating native bush, some of it zoned residential, lies between Ngaio and the Town Belt. The land use consent for residential development lapsed in 2016. We request that Council look to ways for acquiring the private land not zoned residential in the event that a further land use consent is sought. This would bring the Town Belt to our doorstep, as well as protecting and improving access up to the Skyline Walkway.

Priority Area: Housing | Ngā Kāinga

Our Association found a lack of clarity in the consultation document about what exactly was social housing and what was affordable housing, including are target groups are for each. We hope this will be clearly stated in the Plan, both so that residents can clearly understand this and to guide future planners.

We think it important that a community cares for those who require help at any stage through their lives. Housing has a key role to play. We support increasing the level of expenditure on social and affordable housing. Our Association therefore supports Option 1.

However it is provided, Wellington needs a much higher proportion of housing accessible for disabled residents. Lack of such housing can mean people moving into aged care facilities when they should not need to.

We note that SHAs are proposed that will possibly entail a streamlined resource consenting path and several incentives. While we applaud finding ways of speeding up the consent process, this must not be to the detriment of protecting the environment, existing residents' rights, and the character of our city and suburbs. Streamlining of resource consent processes must be carried out very carefully and with community consultation. Incentives need to be clearly designed to assist those who will use the housing.

From the exposure that some of our members have had with WCC's resource consent process, it appears that existing residents' rights are not accorded high priority relative to developers interests and WCC's interest in driving growth. Housing developments, particularly those with Council investment, must value community input and communicate openly through all resource consenting processes. It is the community's own character, infrastructure, and day to day living that will be impacted by significant housing

developments, therefore existing residents' opinions deserve to be heard and carefully considered.

Priority Area: Transport | Ngā Waka Haere

There is insufficient Park and Ride capacity at all three stations in our suburbs, and very limited scope to increase this. As well we are experiencing and will continue to experience increasing local congestion, both from the new housing in our suburbs and increased through traffic along Churchill Drive/Waikowhai St / Ottawa Rd, Perth St/Cockayne Rd and via the Ngaio Gorge.

Our Association is aware there are no easy solutions. But we also know that the number of our residents who cycle is increasing. Given the substantial uphill climb home to our suburbs from the CBD, and home from stations and shops to many of our streets, as e-bikes become more popular there is great potential for many more people to consider cycling as an option.

Anything that encourages greater use of cycling will help slow the increase in local congestion and lack of parking. We therefore support delivery of the Cycling Master Plan at an earlier rather than later date. We also would support any other initiatives to encourage more people out of cars and onto bikes.

We also support initiatives that will increase use of public transport from our suburbs. Improving the capacity of bus services and the number and quality of bus shelters is important for us.

Also important is making walking access to railway stations feel safer for those travelling by train after dark. Better lighting and clearer access not hidden by trees is needed to make residents more willing to use trains at night. This is particularly important for older residents who may not drive.

Priority Area: Sustainable growth | Te Kauneke Tauwhiro

We comment on three issues relating to sustainable growth.

Sustainable growth and people with disabilities

Our Association is strongly committed to inclusiveness for all groups within our community.

The vision is for Wellington to grow and be sustainable as 'an **inclusive** place where talent wants to live'. There is a need to understand what Council means by 'inclusive' particularly for its Deaf and disabled citizens. The draft Long Term Plan does not reflect or recognise Deaf or disabled people. It does recognise other groups within the community.

Sustainable Growth planning within Wellington City Council needs to recognise that sustainable development **MUST** take into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as they include the expectations of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which New Zealand committed to in 2007. Council's business as usual approach needs to adopt a culture of inclusiveness for Deaf and disabled people.

Council cannot become a sustainable city going into the future if it does not take into adopt initiatives to promote equality of opportunity and non-discrimination of persons with

disabilities. This includes access and inclusion while also taking action to ensure disabled Wellingtonians have the right to live independently and the ability to participate in all aspects of life including times of risk and emergencies.

Council needs to collect data to measure the wellbeing of Deaf and disabled citizens, beginning with the development of baseline data.

Initiatives must be developed follow codesign principles and by welcoming leadership from disabled people and their organisations while maintaining a focus on reducing inequalities.

The first step in this process is to rename the Accessibility Advisory Group and to give it a strategic role within the work of the council.

The Movie Museum and Convention Centre

We find it very strange that a Convention Centre for Wellington is thought to be part of sustainable growth. There is growing support for the idea that conventions, which typically involve a high level of air travel, have a limited future. Travel by air is in the hard basket for reducing greenhouse gases, and concerns about this are growing. It is likely in coming years there will be national and international action to reduce incentives for air travel.

Travelling by air to conventions makes little sense given the explosion in technological alternatives based around video links. It is less justifiable than travelling by air to visit distant family. Growing concerns about climate change could well leave to a cultural change that see conventions involving air travel as unjustifiable.

We also regard inter-city rivalry to attract conventions within New Zealand as undesirable nationally, and probably bad news for some existing or planned convention centres, which could include Wellington.

Streamlined consenting

We note that Council is planning to make “consenting and compliance functions faster, easier, safer and more sustainable”. We expect to advocate strongly when the time comes that “streamlined” must not mean a reduction in community input. It is very important to us that input into planning processes becomes more available, easier and safer for our residents.

Priority Area: Arts and culture | Ngā Toi me te Ahurea

We note the arts and culture expenditure, when looking at the wider initiatives in scope, is very much focused on “big ticket” infrastructure; namely the Town Hall redevelopment, Movie Museum, and indoor arena, which between them account for \$306.3m of additional borrowing.

Strengthening cultural facilities

We commend work done to partner with Victoria University of Wellington and the NZSO to get this much needed work on an important heritage building under way. We would like to see commercial options such as naming rights etc. pursued to ease the financial burden on ratepayers.

St James also a valuable asset but has been an on-going drain on city funds. A more commercially driven model, either with a business partner (as previously with Westpac naming rights) and/or a board administrative structure (as when it was run by the St James Theatre Trust) to ensure viability by strengthening its commercial nous and developing strong arts and entertainment industry connections.

However, these venues and the fare they offer have often been of a more elite nature of marginal cultural benefit to wider community. They will continue to not be used by large proportion unless inclusive, equity-of-access initiatives are required of them (such as a certain number of free or low cost community events per year), with appropriate support behind them. This may be from the *Additional support for the arts* funding pool

We are happy to see support for more community focused attractions such as pools and libraries, but do wonder if the overall proportions are right. That said, we acknowledge the earthquake strengthening of the two main venues plays a big part in this imbalance, and was not by choice.

Additional support for the arts

We note that this is redirected funding from elsewhere. Our Association would like to strongly advocate for the concept of free public art, and would like to see this initiative used to draw visitors and residents to other parts of the city to stimulate those communities culturally and economically.

Te Whare Hēra and the Arts and Culture fund

We believe these are funds with tangible benefits now for a modest investment and would support securing them on an ongoing basis.

Movie Museum and indoor arena

As noted above, we have also considered these two big ticket items in the wider arts and culture scope.

As characterised by independent economist Geoff Simmons, these fall into the “nice to have” category. Has cost-benefit analysis been done across the entire network of arts/entertainment venues in the city? The reality may be that to get some of these new projects some rationalisation may be required. For example, the St James and Opera House are very similarly sized venues (1,200-1,400 seats) close to each other . We would question whether the city need both and along with the 2,000 seat venue proposed as part of the Movie Museum and conference centre.

The slowness of the Movie Museum project is also concerning. From what the public sees the goal posts keep moving. If the city genuinely believes it is needed, we need to see some progress or more and more costs will be incurred with increasing risk over time of nothing to show for it.

With regard to the indoor arena, the Council needs to be working closely with the existing network of major concert promoters already operating in New Zealand to justify this investment. We need to have a realistic expectation that international acts currently skipping Wellington when coming to New Zealand, not just operating on a premise of “if we

build it, they will come". The Council need to work with and listen to promoters to make Wellington attractive and competitive, e.g. not locking in to sub-contractors in areas like ticketing, security, catering.

The Council also needs to work with WREDA and with, not in competition with, other councils, collaborating rather than competing to get international acts to New Zealand. That said, ideally Council's focus should be also need to provide a welcoming environment as a catalyst and logistical partner for a wide range of national and international acts, but wherever possible let others (promoters, investors) take the financial risk.

Additional budget item: Turf renovation at Cummings Park

We had been advised by Open Space and Parks Manager Myfanwy Emeny to ask that provision be made to repair the turf in the Dog Exercise Area at Cummings Park. The area was inspected recently by Myfanwy and by Matt Beres (Mowing Team Manager) who agreed that turf renovation was required to make it suitable for wider community use, such as for picnics, in the event that it is no longer required for off-leash exercising of dogs. Council has received a quotation of \$21,390 plus GST for this work.

The funding will only be required if Council decides, following community consultation currently being conducted by our Association, that the area is no longer required for exercising off-leash dogs. If the community decides the area should be closed as a Dog Exercise Area, and Council agrees, this will be a strong signal that our community places a lot of importance on bringing the turf up to a standard to make it suitable for other uses.

We therefore request that funding provision be made for this work.