



# ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

23 February 2010



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# Foreword by the Mayor and Chief Executive

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The Waipa District environment has been significantly modified as a result of human habitation and development, with a fraction of the pre-European indigenous vegetation cover and wetland areas remaining today. Despite this level of change, the District is renowned for its park-like landscapes and special sites, including forested volcanic cones, peat lakes, kahikatea stands and built and cultural heritage features.

Over the years a combination of national and local policy initiatives has seen the most significant natural features preserved in public ownership. In addition, a wide range of enlightened private sector initiatives have protected many further areas from development. However, protection alone was not considered sufficient to ensure the future of these areas, so in more recent years key areas have been subject to enhancement initiatives, where the focus has been on increasing ecological health.

During this time Waipa County Council, and then Waipa District Council since 1989, has championed a number of enhancement initiatives working towards sustaining the more fragile environmental features. The Council's actions were borne out of enlightened foresight and stewardship (kaitiaki), rather than any statutory obligation.

This early environmental leadership, which received wide community support, was able to be translated, in part, into the policies, objectives and rules of the first (and current) Waipa District Plan prepared under the Resource Management Act. The District Plan is due to be reviewed, so it is timely current environmental policies are reviewed.

To support and lead the District Plan review process, a more strategic approach to environmental (sustainable) management and development is considered appropriate. Such an approach is warranted given the increasing complexity of ecological enhancement programmes and the fact that no individual or agency has the ability or resources to 'go it alone'. More recent environmental initiatives, particularly the Maungatautari Ecological Island project, Clean Streams and peat lakes restoration programmes, demonstrate that significant progress is generally only possible through collaboration and cooperation.

We are entering a new era of environmental enhancement, and the preparation of an Environmental Strategy is timely. It seeks to provide the necessary strategic direction, while recognising the progress already made or underway. It also serves to draw various organisations and the wider community together to maximise limited resources for a common purpose.

# Introduction and Purpose

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Many of the choices people make have environmental consequences, either positive or negative. The collective impact of these decisions can, over time, either enhance or potentially irreversibly alter key aspects of our environment. These choices can also reduce opportunities available to future generations. Through the community outcomes process and the development of the Waipa 2050 Growth Strategy, Waipa residents have confirmed their desire to improve the District's overall environmental wellbeing by protecting key features and managing the environment more sustainably.

The purpose of the Environment Strategy is to provide a pathway along which the Council in partnership with Tāngata Whenua, collaboration with communities, organisations, industry and statutory agencies, can travel to enhance the environment and achieve the outcomes expressed by the communities of Waipa. Waipa District Council, along with Environment Waikato, the Department of Conservation and other organisations, have particular statutory functions and duties in respect of the environment. The Environment Strategy will help clarify these functions and duties and assist Council in focusing on those matters it has primary responsibility for.

The strategy will achieve this by:

- promoting a vision for change in the Waipa District;
- setting goals that will achieve and sustain the vision over time;
- identifying the issues to be managed;
- identifying current actions, probable solutions and clarifying functions;
- prioritising each issue according to its significance and achievability; and
- implementing a monitoring and review process.

With a pro-active, long-term and environmentally sustainable approach, Council, Tāngata Whenua, key stakeholders and the community can protect and enhance the quality of the environments within which we live, work, invest in and play. This will ensure that future generations will be attracted too and will support the communities of Waipa District.

# Strategy Development and Implementation Process

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## Development

A range of environmental outcomes were identified as part of the Community Outcome development process for the 10 Year Plan. The Waipa 2050 Growth Strategy further refined and expanded on these outcomes. These outcomes have provided the basis for the themes identified in this document. In this draft Strategy goals have been listed under four key themes areas. For each goal the key issues to achieving the goal have been identified and in turn probable actions are listed.

It is proposed to develop the Environmental Strategy in two parts. The first part (this document) focuses on the development of goals, issues and probable actions.

Feedback from public consultation has assisted in determining priority issues. The following issues have been identified as having priority (in no particular order):

- There is a need to identify, promote and protect those aspects that give our towns and villages their character or sense of place (Theme 3, Goal 3, Issue 1).
- Developments and activities in inappropriate locations and / or poor land use practise can damage the environment (Theme 2, Goal 3, Issue 1).
- **Additional resources or incentives are required to maintain and promote heritage sites and features (Theme 3, Goal 1, Issue 1).**
- **Environmental factors are not always considered in operational and business practises and there needs to be more consistency in the application of environmental standards by all sections of Council (Theme 1, Goal 1, Issue 1).**
- Managing growth and development (Theme 4, Goal 4, Issue 1 and Theme 2, Goal 1, Issue 1).
- Managing supply of rural residential and non rural activities in rural areas (Theme 2, Goal 1, Issue 2).
- **The waste minimisation philosophy needs to be embraced District wide and supported with mechanisms and incentives that encourage good practise (Theme 4, Goal, Issue 1).**
- Connecting communities with the environment (Theme 1, Goal 5, Issue 1).
- Many remaining habitats are small and fragmented (Theme 2, Goal 4, Issue 1).
- Water is a limited and essential resource but is not always treated as such (Theme 4, Goal 1, Issue 1).

The identified issues do not include issues that are of priority to Tāngata Whenua these have been discussed separately and have been identified as:

- Theme 1, Goal 3 and the 5 related issues. The issues being:
  - Define how Council will engage with Tāngata Whenua in the future;
  - Understanding Tāngata Whenua values, perspectives and identifying the best means to recognise these in policies and strategies;
  - Developing further capacity and / or capability at a Iwi / Hapu level to effectively engage in planning processes;
  - Management partnerships as a result of Treaty claim outcomes will require a change to the way we currently work;

- Recognition of the importance of cultural sites, marae and papakainga for cultural wellbeing.
- Theme 3, Goal 2 and the 2 related issues. These being:
  - The lack of knowledge / awareness about the importance of cultural sites, and the sensitivity nature of some information to Tāngata Whenua;
  - To celebrate Māori heritage in our towns.

The second phase will take the priority issues and develop an action plan. The action plan will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders. It is proposed to complete the second phase in early 2010.

Key stages in the development of the first phase of the strategy have included:

- a review of key stakeholder environmental strategies and policy documents;
- a hui with Tāngata Whenua representatives the purpose of which was to identify key issues;
- a workshop with the Waipa Biodiversity Council at which the ideas in the strategy were tested;
- contact was made with staff at stakeholder organisations and the proposed environmental strategy development process was discussed with them;
- meetings with Environment Waikato to discuss the purpose of the strategy plus roles and responsibilities;
- a stakeholder workshop, the purpose of which was to assist in defining priorities.

## Implementation

The implementation phase will take the priority issues and develop an action plan. Council will seek Tāngata Whenua, stakeholder and public input into the development of the action plan before approval. The Action Plan will:

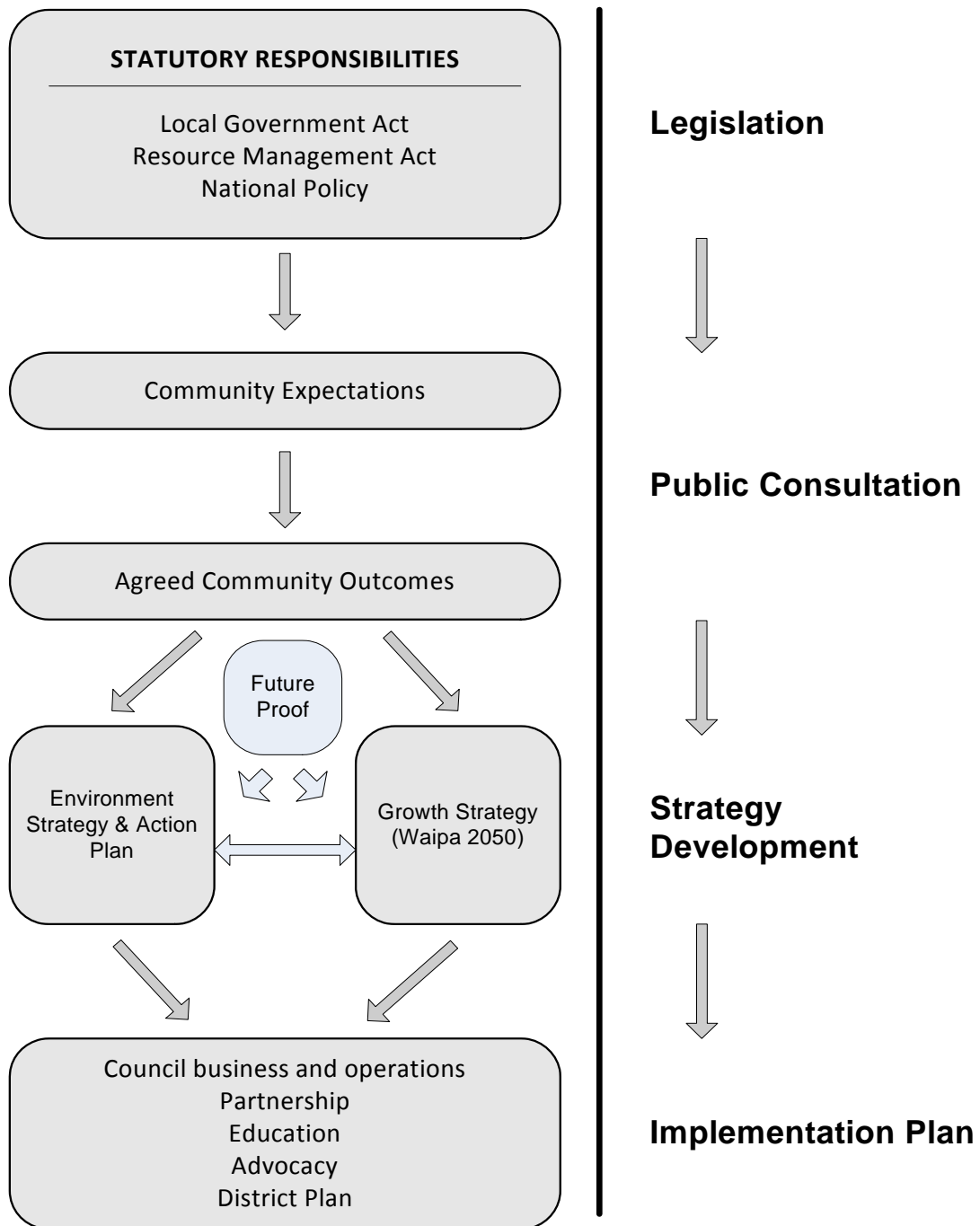
- confirm the appropriate actions;
- define the implementation period; and,
- identify the agencies involved and their role.

In some cases the Council's role will be provider, in others it could be regulator, facilitator or an advocate to other agencies.

The Action Plan will then be used to assist policy, planning and budgeting for all statutory, service delivery and advocacy functions of Council. It will also guide the development of the Annual Plan, the review of the District Plan and the LTCCP.

The relationship between Environment Strategy and other policies and plans is shown in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1. WHERE THE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY FITS**



## Review

It is anticipated that the Strategy will have an interim review every three years and a full review every 10 years to coincide with the review of the District Growth Strategy.



# A Draft Vision for Improving Environmental Wellbeing in Waipa

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## Waipa is a place where:

*“communities value their environment and work collaboratively to ensure Waipa remains a productive, attractive and a desirable place to live, work and play”*

*and*

*“communities strive for continual improvement, environmental understanding together with economic, cultural and spiritual wellbeing”*

The draft vision was derived largely from Community Outcomes identified within the Council Long Term Community Consultative Plan (LTCCP) and the Waipa 2050 Growth Strategy.



Paddlers at the World Waka Ama Festival

# Theme Areas and Goals

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To assist in developing goals and clarifying the issues to be addressed four Theme Areas have been identified. The Theme Areas and supporting draft goals are listed below.

## Council and Community Leadership and Action

### Supporting Goals

- Waipa District Council demonstrates leadership in environmental sustainability
- Waipa works collaboratively with Environment Waikato and its neighbouring councils / agencies to achieve sustainable outcomes.
- The role of Tāngata Whenua as a partner is respected and reflected in Council and community processes.
- Waipa District Council actively seeks partnerships to achieve strategic environmental management goals / outcomes.
- We are aware of the links between the health of our environment and our own health and wellbeing. Waipa District Council facilitates and supports local organisations and individuals to be regularly involved in environmental care activities.

## Sustainable Landuse

### Supporting Goals

- Focus residential and rural-residential growth around existing settlements to protect prime agricultural soils and access to mineral resources where appropriate.
- Future generations inherit healthy and productive soils.
- To improve water quality in the District.
- To protect, enhance, restore and reconnect indigenous habitats to improve their long-term viability.
- To protect the unique and special landscape features within Waipa.

## Heritage and Culture

### Supporting Goals

- Protect and promote historic and cultural heritage of Waipa.
- The special relationships Tāngata Whenua have with heritage sites and features is promoted and respected.
- Special character of towns and villages is retained and promoted.

## Sustainable Communities

### Supporting Goals

- Water is conserved and used wisely.
- Sustainable transport alternatives are promoted and increasingly used.
- District's zero waste philosophy will be fully implemented.
- High quality and strategic infrastructure planning that enables Waipa to grow.
- Our town centres are vibrant and easily accessible by all users.
- Waipa District is prepared for and adapts well to climate change.
- Efficient and Sustainable Energy Use.



View into Lake Te Ko Utu, Cambridge

# Working with Tāngata Whenua

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Tāngata whenua<sup>1</sup> have a unique relationship with the wider environment. This encompasses a physical, economic, mental, emotional, spiritual and metaphysical relationship that is given effect in a way that may be unique to the tikanga (practices) and kawa (guiding principles) of each marae, hapū or iwi. Tāngata Whenua have responsibilities as kaitiaki to ensure that the mauri, or vital life essence, of the environment is healthy and strong. The concept of kaitiakitanga also includes the ethic of stewardship. The health of the environment, particularly of the awa tupuna (ancestral waterways) and their tributaries, is considered an indicator of the health of the people; Healthy Awa - Healthy People.

The significance of the role of Tāngata Whenua and the significance of the relationship and partnership between the Crown, Government, and Tāngata Whenua is reflected in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi), and in legislation, such as the Local Government Act and the Resource Management Act. Current and future settlement legislation, such as the Waikato River Settlement, will also reflect the significance of this role as will current and future Tāngata Whenua documents of significance (such as Iwi / Hapū Management Plans).

Tāngata Whenua have values and aspirations with respect to the environment including a desire for drinkable water at point of discharge to waterways; more effective waste management to ensure that the quantity of raw waste input is reduced while the quality of waste management output is improved; ensuring soil health is improved and controlled through management of sedimentation, soil loss, mining, and riparian planting; effective pest management; increased biodiversity; reconnecting with the environment through practical education; and celebrating the connection with awa tupuna. Many of these aspirations and values are shared by the wider community.

There is likely to be ongoing capacity and capability building of Tāngata Whenua, supported by the settlement of outstanding claims regarding breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, along with an increasing population that identifies as Māori / Tāngata Whenua. Therefore, the roles and responsibilities of Tāngata Whenua in a pro-active, long-term and environmentally sustainable strategy will continue to evolve. This will ideally be complemented by capacity and capability building of Council, stakeholders, and the wider community to work collaboratively with Tāngata Whenua.

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<sup>1</sup> 'tāngata whenua' means 'Māori and their whanau, marae, hapū and iwi that whakapapa, or have genealogical connections, back to the land by virtue of first or primary occupation of the land by ancestor(s) through a variety of mechanisms such as maintenance ahi kā roa (long term occupation) or conquest. This also includes those tāngata whenua who refer to themselves by terms such as 'ahi kā roa', 'mana whenua', and 'hau kāinga.' Tāngata Whenua groups may choose to have all or part of their interests represented by various bodies such as hapū or iwi authorities, or other groups such as Ngā Iwi Toopū o Waipā.

# Theme One: Council and Community Leadership and Action

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## Background

Success in managing environmental issues often requires full community awareness and engagement. As our populations become more urbanised there is an increasing risk of people becoming more disconnected with the natural world and the realities of managing natural resources. Improved education and information sharing, and regular celebration of our natural and cultural heritage, is needed to make people more aware and to impart a sense of collective responsibility for the environment in which they live, work and play.

Public interest and involvement in conservation is increasing as demonstrated by the number of volunteers assisting with pest control and restorative planting in a number of areas such as at Kakepuku and Maungatautari, and around lakes and along river margins. There is also an increasing expectation among residents for more indigenous character in urban centres.

Industries are voluntarily seeking to develop and adopt management practices that result in environmental improvements. These include: waste recycling, Clean Streams Accord, Primary Sector Water Partnership, among others. Council has a role as a facilitator and enabler as well as a regulator to assist the community in achieving the environmental aspirations the communities of Waipa desire.

For many residents there is uncertainty around the roles and responsibilities of District and Regional Councils. This is particularly so in the areas of rural land use, water quality, drainage and the protection of indigenous biodiversity and can give rise to confusion.

While Council decisions need to be made in recognition of the economic constraints of the time an integrated decision making framework that includes environmental goals will give the community more confidence that agreed environmental outcomes are being actively pursued.

## **Goal 1: Waipa District Council demonstrates leadership in environmental sustainability**

### **Current State**

Council has set a high standard for itself and is highly regarded in many areas of environmental management, such as conserving natural heritage sites and features. This environmental performance needs to extend to all aspects of its business and decision making.

**Issue 1: Environmental factors are not always considered in operational and business practises and there needs to be more consistency in the application of environmental standards by all sections of Council**

## CURRENT ACTIONS

- Review of the procurement policy to include environmental considerations and standards is underway.
- Waste reduction and recycling initiatives have been implemented in Council offices.

## PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Develop an environmental management system<sup>2</sup> which acts as an overarching tool to:
  - set, measure and monitor Council department's environmental performance; and
  - strives for continual improvement.The system could include energy, waste and travel efficiencies.
- Priority is given to funding environmental projects to achieve the goals of the strategy.
- Greater focus on minimising environmental effects through Council's everyday operations, e.g. efficient street lighting, fish-friendly culverts, roading projects, use of agrichemicals, drain maintenance, parks and street tree management that fosters biodiversity as well as amenity values.
- Greater focus on managing reserves administered by Council to protect natural values and ecosystem functions (weed / pest control, acquire and / or enhance buffers, use Council land to create wildlife corridors / stepping stones).
- Promotion of more hands-on type initiatives, such as fruit trees in reserves and bicycles for public use.

## Issue 2: Ensuring that Waipa District Council meets the conditions attached to the consents it holds

### CURRENT ACTIONS

- Set up database for all consents, key components will include:
  - List all consents held by Council.
  - Identify consents that require monitoring and reporting.
  - Identify consent expiry dates and put an action plan in place to undertake the renewal of consents.
  - Set up good working relations with consenting authorities to ensure ease of compliance and reporting.
- Upgrading the Cambridge wastewater treatment plant has been budgeted for.

### PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Develop and implement management strategies for all water, storm water and wastewater systems to meet statutory obligations.
- Continue to budget for required upgrades to infrastructure to meet required environmental standards through Annual Plan and LTCCP processes.
- Investigate environmental efficiencies.
- Refer also to probable actions listed under Goal 4 of Sustainable Communities.

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<sup>2</sup> An ISO14000 – based or similar Environmental Management Systems may be appropriate provided the system provides for review and improvement and includes quality management procedures.

## **Goal 2: Waipa Works collaboratively with Environment Waikato and its neighbouring councils / agencies to achieve sustainable outcomes**

### **Current State**

Legislative processes under the Local Government and Resource Management Acts require local government agencies to consult with stakeholders and communities when preparing planning documents. The Local Government Act encourages collaboration.

Collaboration is about avoiding duplication, recognising the specific roles and responsibilities of each agency and making the best use of available resources. While there is a degree of collaboration both within local government and between industry and stakeholders, more can be done. For example improving engagement during the development of regional policy, the development of District Plans and in the development of the Department of Conservation's 'Conservation Management Strategy' so priorities can be agreed, to maximise the use of available funds and share resources.

### **Issue 1: The community perceives that there is duplication in administrative and management functions**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Council staff collaborate in working groups on specific issues such as southern links study, sub-regional group for water and waste water treatment, Waikato Transport Study and Waikato Biodiversity Forum.
- Interagency collaboration in "Future Proof" an initiative to better manage regional growth and the provision of transport infrastructure.
- The Peat Lakes Accord between Waipa District Council, Environment Waikato, Department Of Conservation, Auckland Waikato Fish and Game and Nga Iwi Toopu O Waipa, for the management of the Waipa Peat Lakes.
- Waikato Catchment and Ecological Trust initiatives.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Seek better definition of statutory roles and responsibilities, especially for the management of land and indigenous biodiversity and ensure these are reflected in planning process such as Regional Policy Statement.
- Develop a collaborative strategy (or Memorandum of Understanding) with councils that adjoin Waipa, Department of Conservation (e.g. Mighty River Power) to protect shared environmental features like Mt Pirongia, Lakes Karapiro and Arapuni, the Waikato River, Puniu River, Te Miro and Te Tapui. (Note there is an existing strategy with the Department of Conservation for Mt. Kakepuku)..
- Contribute to the development of plans / strategies of other council's and the Department of Conservation and eventually converge on a common approach to how environmental issues are managed.
- Work co-operatively with Department of Conservation and Environment Waikato to develop and implement efficient pest and weed management strategies, particularly where Council land is adjacent to / upstream from Department of Conservation / Environment Waikato pest management areas.

## **Issue 2: Cross Boundary Effects of different regulatory approaches**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Council staff collaborate in working groups on specific issues such as southern links study, sub-regional group for water and waste water treatment, Waikato Transport Study and Waikato Biodiversity Forum.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Develop common approaches to waterways and habitats crossing administrative boundaries.
- Develop a collaborative strategy (or Memorandum of Understanding) with councils that adjoin Waipa and Department of Conservation to protect shared environmental features like Mt Pirongia, Lakes Karapiro and Arapuni, the Waikato River, Puniu River, Te Miro and Te Tapui. (Note there is an existing strategy with the Department of Conservation for Mt. Kakepuku).

## **Goal 3: The role of Tāngata Whenua as a partner is respected and reflected in Council and community processes**

### **Current State**

Council has been pro-active in seeking input from Iwi and Hapū and has established both formal and advisory committees for this purpose - the Iwi Consultative Committee and Nga Iwi Toopu O Waipa (NITOW). Council has also provided for Tāngata Whenua representation on formal Council Committees. “Partnerships” with Tāngata Whenua, resulting from Treaty settlements are still evolving and Council looks forward to adopting the partnership principles within its policies and processes.

### **Issue 1: Define how Council will engage with Tāngata Whenua in the future**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- The Iwi Consultative Committee has been established to formally represent Iwi / Hapu interests.
- Council has assisted in the production of Iwi Management Plans e.g. Hingakaka, and reserve management plans for key sites such as Matakītaki.
- There is Tāngata Whenua representation on all major Council Committees.



## **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Discuss and confirm roles and responsibilities of Tāngata Whenua and Waipa District Council under the articles and principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Identify key outcomes for the environment and look at areas to complement Tāngata Whenua management plans, including Tainui's the whole of Waikato River vision, strategy and approach.

### **Issue 2: Understanding Tāngata Whenua values, perspectives and identifying the best means to recognise these in policies and strategies**

## **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- In-house training is available to Councillors and Council staff.

## **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding that includes references to proactive consultation, engagement, participation and communication.
- Understanding and providing for customary rights and activities.
- Adopt and implement a formal protocol to identify, assess and mitigate issues around wāhi tapu and wāhi whakahirahira.
- Maintain register of key Tāngata Whenua documents. Assess Tāngata Whenua documents for relevance to the Environment Strategy and its Action Plan and consider how the Strategy aligns with such documents.
- Ensure Council is aware of and appropriately incorporates, utilises and reports against Cultural Health Indices and other monitoring tools.

### **Issue 3: Developing further capacity and / or capability at an Iwi / Hapū level to effectively engage in planning processes in the District**

## **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Committees have been established to formally represent Iwi / Hapū interests.
- Tāngata Whenua representation on Policy Committee and Strategic Planning and Development Committee.
- Council assisted in the production of Hingakaka and Matakītaki Management Plans.
- Assist Iwi / Hapū in preparing Iwi Management Plans.
- Consider the establishment of specialist sub-committees where necessary.

## **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Provide / initiate a staff secondment / training process between Tāngata Whenua authorities and Waipa District Council planning (and other) services. This includes participation in data collation and interpretation.

## **Issue 4: Management partnerships as a result of Treaty claim outcomes will require a change to the way we currently work**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under development.
- Waipa 2050 Growth Strategy Tāngata Whenua actions.
- Tāngata Whenua are represented on a number of Council Committees.
- Promote and implement an ongoing culture of communication, collaboration, engagement and participation between Council and Tāngata Whenua.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Educate and build awareness of staff and politicians to Treaty partnership principles.
- Ensure Mātauranga Māori indicators are monitored and reported on as part of the annual plan and SOE reporting processes.
- Incorporate Iwi / Hapū Management Plans in all Waipa District Council planning documents.

## **Issue 5: Recognition of the importance of cultural sites, marae, and papakāinga for cultural wellbeing**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Assisted with the development of Hingakaka and Matakītiki Pa Management Plans.
- Marae are recognised in current District Plan provisions.
- Provide assistance for Iwi / Hapū Management Plan development.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Identify potential areas for new papakāinga and Marae if required.
- Ensure other development initiatives align with existing and proposed papakāinga development.
- Develop a definitive programme for papakāinga definition, including any unique design and architectural elements, and successful development including the development of multiple owned Māori land.
- In the review of the District Plan recognise the significance of sites and areas and their importance for cultural wellbeing.

## **Goal 4: Waipa District Council actively seeks partnerships to achieve strategic environmental management goals / outcomes**

### **Current State**

Achieving environmental goals requires the engagement of all residents and communities. Waipa has been successful in forming strategic alliances and partnerships, like the Waipa Peat Lake Accord and Nga Iwi Toopu O Waipa, but there is scope to expand. Such partnerships with communities and landowners will be increasingly important in securing heritage sites and features on private land and supporting community endeavours.

Additionally, there is a need to improve communication between researchers and the public. Better co-ordination and partnerships in research has the potential to improve efficiency and ongoing improvements in 'best practice'. Currently, it is difficult to identify what research is being undertaken.

### **Issue 1: Stakeholder partnerships could be used to address issues in the strategy**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Various industry initiatives are currently underway.
- Existing partnerships and groups (e.g. Federated farmers, Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust, Lake Cameron Care Group, Waikato Biodiversity Forum, Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society,) are used to their best effect.
- Partnerships with community groups, e.g. National Wetland Trust, and Sustainable Cambridge are developed.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Opportunities for partnership with industry, rural and urban groups are identified and staff participate in these groups and report back to Council.

### **Issue 2: Researching and reporting results on environmental issues to determine best practice and reporting on the state of the environment is often difficult**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Environment Waikato's Sustainable Agriculture Strategy will help identify best land use practises.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Council to facilitate meetings of key stakeholder organisations to share research and monitoring findings.
- Council to report on key environmental indicators in conjunction with key stakeholders as part of the annual plan process.
- Council maintains copies of Industry Codes of Practice and other research material and makes it available on its own web-site / libraries.
- Council organises or assists other organisations to run regular seminars on best practice or environmental initiatives within the Waipa District.

## **Goal 5: We are aware of the links between the health of our environment and our own health and wellbeing. Waipa District Council facilitates and supports local organisations and individuals to be regularly involved in environmental care activities**

### **Current state**

There is an increasing separation between communities and the natural world as we become more urbanised. While there is increasing interest by local organisations and individuals in environmental activities and awareness more work is needed to identify projects to better engage in this growing interest. For Tāngata Whenua, the health of waterways is a marker of the health and well being of people.

### **Issue 1: Connecting communities with the environment**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Enviroschools programmes are well supported within Waipa.
- Restoration programme associated with peat lakes, Maungatautari and other key forested areas encourage community / individual involvement.
- Māori Woman's Welfare League actions including a Community Garden in Kihikihi promotes the value of community gardens and healthy food.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Expand and encourage EnviroSchool programme.
- Using the Kihikihi example, encourage Community Gardens via community organisational involvement.
- Environmental education programmes are established and promoted throughout communities.
- Council adjusts its reserves and street tree management programmes to provide greater opportunities for people to engage with their environment. For example the planting of edible nut and fruit trees and native plants reflective of the District's original vegetation on urban reserves and Council land.
- Keep communities informed of progress in water conservation initiatives.
- Publicly celebrate our natural and cultural heritage for example a tui / kowhai festival each spring, MEIT milestones and Maori Matariki.
- Recognise natural and cultural heritage through branding, public artworks / murals like the Te Kuiti giant weta.
- Support community-led education initiatives like the National Wetland Trust Wetland Centre, MEIT education programmes.
- Improve and enhance public access to natural areas, establish more heritage trails, interpreting natural and cultural history, and support other agencies developing trails like those being promoted by the National Wetland Trust.
- Establish an environmental youth forum.
- Consider assisting in establishing education centres that promote and encourage sustainability.

# Theme Two: Sustainable Landuse

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## Background

Economic wealth and prosperity within the Waipa District is largely derived from the land. . Its soils support an exceptionally productive rural sector with dairying, dry stock farming and horses thriving in lush pasture. The mineral resources of the District are also important including aggregate, sand and lime. Tourism too is becoming an increasingly important part of the economy, driven by major events and nationally significant ecological projects. In addition to supporting economic growth, the land, the water and the air support Waipa residents by contributing to overall quality of life. How land is used and the effects that are generated is a critical issue for the District.

Some trends have emerged over the past few decades. Prime agricultural land has been subdivided into residential sections and to accommodate industry and agricultural land use has intensified. Access to mineral resource has become increasingly difficult as development intensity increases. There is an increasing risk of soil compaction and contamination and enrichment of waterways both from urban and rural areas. The quality of our Waipa environs and the very existence of valued natural assets like native birds and iconic kahikatea stands is also being placed at risk.

How the community as a whole responds will be critical. The challenge will be slowing and eventually reversing, environmental harm while maintaining an economically viable urban and rural sector. Addressing these issues will take time and a clear direction for implementing actions over the next ten years, is essential. A successful programme will require:

- a strategic vision based on need and community participation.
- an understanding of the issues causing concern.
- Council being proactive with educating and informing residents, land owners and land managers.
- refining and continually adopting best management and land use practises.
- rewarding change where change is necessary.
- actively discouraging poor management and land use practises.

**Goal 1: Focus residential and rural-residential growth around existing settlements to protect prime agricultural soils and access to mineral resources where appropriate.**

### Current State

On average over the last 10 years 40% of the new houses being built in the District have been away from existing communities. This is not sustainable if prime agricultural land is to be retained for primary production. Further, pressure on agriculture farm practises and aggregate / mineral extraction can arise if incompatible land uses abut each other and, special sites can be adversely impacted by inappropriate land use.

## **Issue 1: Managing supply of rural residential and non rural activities in rural areas**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Current District Plan.
- Waipa 2050 Growth Strategy and Future Proof.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Provide lifestyle opportunities (i.e. rural – residential zones) in defined locations.
- Provide for Papakāinga in rural areas where its provision is sustainable and / or provides ancillary economic opportunities, is associated with special sites or is connected with nearby services.
- Provide opportunities in the rural area for a variety of alternative uses that traditionally require a rural setting but, where possible, cluster these to minimise their effects and maximise their efficiency. Attention will need to be paid to reverse sensitivity effects (e.g. odour, dust, noise).
- In determining the location of rural residential areas consider the issue of reverse sensitivity on existing activities and natural resources including: loss of productive soils, access to mineral resources, and on existing recreational activities that have effects such as the noise effects associated with duck shooting.
- Use the District Plan and Land Information Memorandums to highlight rural issues such as noise and odour and to provide a presumption favouring existing rural users.
- Consider providing limited additional opportunities for rural residential activities particularly where significant environment gains are made.

## **Goal 2: Future generations inherit healthy and productive soils**

### **Current State**

Monitoring of soil health within the Waikato Region has identified widespread issues like compaction, excessive nitrification, contamination by agrichemicals and fertilisers, and loss of soils to water ways. The situation for Waipa is unclear, however it is unlikely that we are exempt from such issues. It is important that these issues are recognised and addressed. While intensifying the use of land is inevitable as population grows, it must be accompanied by an improvement in land use practises.

### **Issue 1: Further deterioration in soil health and contamination**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Farm Environment Awards.
- Fertiliser Industry Code of Practice.
- Environment Waikato's Sustainable Agriculture Strategy is in preparation.
- Dairy Environment Strategy.
- Stock exclusion and nutrient rules.
- Fonterra Clean Streams Accord.

## **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- In collaboration with Environment Waikato, utilise land use capability / soil maps to better identify areas sensitive to intensification and tailor District Plan incentives to encourage land uses practises within these areas that avoid soil loss, compaction and contamination. Incentives could include Transferable Development Rights or Environmental Protection Lots.
- In collaboration with Environment Waikato, monitor areas where soils are being compromised and identify specific responses.
- In collaboration with Environment Waikato and industry, work with landowners to develop Farm Plans that address soil loss, contamination and excessive nutrient loss.
- Consider special incentives for land management activities or practises that reduce environmental impacts and enhance soil health.
- Collaborate with Environment Waikato, other agencies and industry groups on how best to approach and resource the promotion of best land practise on rural land.
- Promote land use capability maps to better match suitable land uses with contour and soil type. This information is provided to landowners and shown in planning documents.
- Promote use of native plants to re-vegetate riparian zones and steep land and work collaboratively with community groups involved in riparian planting and site restoration to achieve biodiversity outcomes.

### **Issue 2: Existing sites contaminated with hazardous substances can pose a risk to human and environmental health**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Maintaining register of potentially contaminated sites in conjunction with Environment Waikato.
- Require landowner to assess contamination levels of potentially contaminated land prior to seeking changes in landuse.
- Requiring landowners to undertake actions in accordance with the National Guidelines for the remediation of known contaminated sites should their land be contaminated.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Develop a protocol for the release and use of information relating to potentially or actually contaminated sites in conjunction with Environment Waikato.

### **Issue 3 Current land use and land use practices can result in degradation (including settlement) of peat soils leading to:**

- exhaustion of the peat soil resource.
- perched peat lakes with increased risk of flooding.
- impacts on adjacent infrastructure like roading and pipelines.
- carbon emissions from degrading peat (~1 tonne per ha per year).

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Written material on managing peat soil is available for distribution.

- Settlement rates for particular land use and land use practises are known.
- Acquisition of peat lake buffers to avoid perching of peat lakes.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Council provides advice on best practise use of peat soils. Land managers to be made aware of the environmental, drainage and infrastructure cost implication of excessive settlement.
- In collaboration with Environment Waikato consideration be given to restrictions on land use practices on peat soils including adjacent to key arterial roads.
- Research into alternative, more sustainable land uses on peat soil.

### **Goal 3: To improve water quality within the District**

#### **Current state**

Monitoring shows a trend of degrading water quality in Waikato lakes, streams and rivers, including those within Waipa. While we cannot substantially improve the quality of waters flowing into Waipa from other districts we can improve the quality of stream environments arising within the District. Council has responsibilities for the effects of land use and management practices. These effects can impact both positively and negatively on water quality.

#### **Issue 1: Developments and activities in inappropriate locations and / or poor land use practise can damage the environment**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Clean Streams Accord.
- Regional Farm Environment Awards.
- Dairy Environment Strategy.
- Environment Waikato Stream Care Groups.
- Environment Waikato Sustainable Agriculture Strategy development.
- Environment Waikato Clean Streams.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- A range of actions are likely to arise out of the Waikato River Settlement.

Work collaboratively with agencies and stakeholders involved in environmental issues to avoid duplication of regulatory / administrative functions and to:

- Promote management plans for land use activities in sensitive locations.
- Encourage farm management plans which address nutrient management for all farms.
- Showcase landowners who develop and adopt best practise (nutrient budgets, use accredited suppliers, utilise available tools<sup>3</sup>, and who have farm Quality Assurance systems).

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the overseer nutrient management tool is a freely available tool to develop a nutrient budget for farms. It is available at: <http://www.agresearch.co.nz/overseerweb/download.aspx>



- Provide incentives to industry / landowners to adopt best practises like riparian planting.
- Ensure close alignment between policies / objectives for the management of land and water and water quality.
- Promote the use of low impact storm water systems and the application of Low Impact Urban Design principles in all developments.
- Develop land use incentives and controls in the District Plan to promote best practise and discourage activities that can have harmful effects like poor siting of agricultural and industrial buildings.
- Provide advice and technical information to landowners on management and land use practises.
- Further develop planning incentives to promote sustainable farm practises i.e. rules that favour those who adopt best practise, financial incentives like rate rebates for retired / covenanted erodible land.
- Create wetlands to improve runoff from agriculture and industrial land to absorb nutrients.
- Continue to acquire land for buffering sensitive areas.
- Consider how the location and design of on-site wastewater disposal systems may assist in reducing the potential for contaminants to enter waterways.
- Refer to Theme 1 Goal 2 in respect of municipal wastewater systems.

## **Goal 4: To protect, enhance, restore and reconnect indigenous habitats to improve their long-term viability**

### **Current State**

In Waipa District indigenous biodiversity is largely restricted to “islands” in a highly modified landscape. The area of indigenous habitat that remains is less than that recommended to ensure ecological viability or to adequately represent the former ecological character of the District. At a national level Waipa has less indigenous habitats than many other districts, but contains some internationally significant ecosystems, including rare peat lakes, a remnant (*restiad*) peat bog, one of the five known populations of the threatened giant cane rush (plus an additional restorative trial), and a world-class community-led ecological restoration project on the forested cone of Maungatautari. It also has temperate forest on Pirongia that is considered significant not only within the District but also to the region as a whole and a network of streams, gullies, kahikatea fragments and karst features. Exotic trees provide important sources of food and habitat and assist with the dispersal of native species.

### **Issue 1: Many remaining natural habitats are small and fragmented**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Peat Lakes and Wetlands Accord.
- Maungatautari Ecological Island restoration project.
- Pirongia Te Aroaro O Kahu restoration project.
- Environmental Protection Lot provisions in District Plan that reward landowners that legally secure and manage heritage sites and features on private land.
- Maungakawa / Gudex Memorial / Kakepuku pest control.
- Restoration of priority peat lakes like Maratoto, Serpentine (Rotopiko) and Ngaroto.
- Waikato Catchment and Ecological Trust initiatives.

## PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Continue to promote the importance of special areas and encourage their protection and restoration through education, advocacy and celebration.
- Complete an inventory of natural heritage and plan for a reserves network that will retain and potentially restore natural sites, features, habitats and rare ecosystems. This may involve the purchase (and maintenance) of new reserves where non-regulatory means are unlikely to be effective.
- As appropriate, provide incentives to projects, especially where directed at identified priority areas and self-sustaining outcomes.
- Investigate possibility of applying the rural residential zone to land where significant biodiversity / environmental gains can be made from its use.
- Develop a corridor strategy, incorporating existing biological and terrestrial features and water ways, to connect core habitats (like Maungatautari and Pirongia) to adjacent areas and urban areas with the aim of providing both for biodiversity and resilience.
- Investigate the role created wetlands / native vegetation can play to assist severely reduced ecosystems.
- Encourage the interaction of people and indigenous wildlife within urban areas by planting appropriate winter / spring food sources for iconic species like tui and bellbird in parks and street plants.
- Identify the role exotic trees can provide in providing food, habitat and assisting the dispersal of native species.
- Marketing key features the District does have, such as Maungatautari/Pirongia/Lake Ngaroto / Lake Serpentine / Lake Cameron / Yarndleys Bush) so the benefits can be more widely seen and appreciated.
- Undertake research to quantify the potential economic benefits of investing in the natural environments of Waipa and make this information available to landowners and other entrepreneurs.



Volunteer planters at Lake Serpentine (Rotopiko)

## **Issue 2: Over half the indigenous vegetation remaining is on private land and is not formally protected**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- QE II Covenants, consent notices and other options under the Reserves Act are promoted.
- Incentives like Environmental Protection Lots are available in the District Plan.
- Waikato Biodiversity Forum.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Complete the inventory of natural heritage including landscapes, cultural values, lowland streams and remnant habitats. Apply robust criteria to categorising special sites and identify mechanisms for their protection.
- Continue to work collaboratively with landowners and key stakeholders including Department of Conservation, Federated Farmers and Environment Waikato to identify key sites and features, potential conservation corridors and identify the appropriate method of protecting these sites and features.
- Ongoing development of incentives and enduring partnerships to protect and restore natural sites and features on private land.
- Investigate the application of Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) as a tool for incentivising the protection of some sites whilst potentially encouraging favourable development elsewhere.
- Evaluate the current effectiveness of retaining special areas in private ownership and changes that will both encourage greater participation and better conservation outcomes.

## **Issue 3: The Waipa peat lakes and wetlands are particularly sensitive to drainage, catchment development - especially enrichment and the pressures from introduced pests**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Peat Lakes Accord.
- Rules relating to drainage.
- Leading by example when managing peat lake reserve areas administered by the Council.
- Incentivising protection of buffer zones through subdivision rights, or via use of reserve contributions to purchase, fence and plant priority lake margin land.
- Encourage and facilitate buffer zone fencing and planting using appropriate native species.
- Recognising and rewarding landowners who demonstrate good stewardship of their natural wetland areas.
- Encouraging fencing of swamp forest fragments and control of exotic pests.

## PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Promote Landuse or Catchment Plans for peat lake catchments to reduce or eliminate adverse effects on peat lakes.
- Work with Environment Waikato to develop tools (incentives to regulatory control) to manage the application of nutrients and other potential soil contaminants within the peat lake catchments.
- Make technical information more available to landowners to encourage change in land management practises and to promote more sustainable land use practises.
- Continued support of the Council's active role in this area.

## Goal 5: To protect the unique and special landscape features within Waipa

### Current State

Intensifying land use is resulting in a landscape dominated by pasture and a reduction in natural features like wetlands, kahikatea stands and shrublands. Retaining biological features together with key geological sites helps ensure Waipa landscapes are diverse and interesting. There is increasing pressure to accommodate transmission lines, telecommunication sites, and quarries all of which have the potential to degrade landscape quality and important vistas.

### Issue 1: Inappropriate development can compromise key landscape features and landscape quality

#### CURRENT ACTIONS

- District Plan Significant Landscape Character Area rules and guidelines.

#### PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Continue to develop mechanisms that will ensure the special landscapes associated with the volcanic cones of Maungatautari, Pirongia and Kakepuku are protected. This involves recognising the public good associated with retaining sites and features on private land.
- Ensure outstanding landscape features (and limited ability to absorb change) are protected.
- Retain appropriate visual corridors through District Plan provisions, including the Waikato River, volcanic cones and the peat lake vistas from highways and roads.
- Through the District Plan ensure urban development is directed to appropriate land, and only locates within a special landscape where the effects can be adequately mitigated.
- Use advocacy, education and incentives to encourage people to consider landscape values when planning developments.

## Issue 2: There is inconsistency in how significant landscapes are identified and where Landscape Character Areas are applied

### CURRENT ACTIONS

- Ongoing re-assessment of landscape in light of Resource Management Act case law.

### PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Continue to review current District Plan provisions in light of current case law and best practice.
- Use “experts”, including mātauranga Māori experts, to develop landscape protection tools and guides and apply these tools across the District.
- Use community processes (engage in a detailed way) to guide the development of appropriate tools to manage these features.
- Complete the inventory of valued landscapes and key viewing corridors.
- Continue to encourage and support landowners to protect strategically valuable areas that make significant contributions to the quality of landscapes viewed from towns, rivers, lakes and transport networks through education, advocacy and incentives.



Aerial view of upper Lake Karapiro

# Theme Three: Heritage / Culture

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## Background

The Resource Management Act 1991 requires local authorities to protect historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development as a matter of national importance.

Tāngata Whenua have a profound spiritual attachment to the land, to the water and to many key geological features. This attachment was strengthened by important landmarks, sites that provided rich rewards, sites that caused disputes between Hapū or where battles between Iwi were fought.. This attachment endures today and together with more recent European religious practices and beliefs, it provides a diverse and rich cultural heritage.

By the 1860's the potential of the Waipa District, like much of the Waikato basin, to provide agricultural produce was clearly recognised by European settlers. A concerted effort was made by the British Government, land speculators and developers, to acquire more land. Tāngata Whenua resentment towards land sales, legislative changes to require Tāngata Whenua to prove land ownership and disagreement on Treaty of Waitangi obligations resulted in the Waikato Land Wars. Tāngata Whenua were dispossessed of their land, particularly the productive land, and titles were sold to European farmers.

The War, the conflicts and the eventual settlement of military personnel shaped a number of the rural villages and much of the early character of Te Awamutu and Cambridge. Pirongia, for example, was the Frontier Town bordering the Aukati Line which separated the King Country from confiscated land within the Waipa District, and includes a number of military sites.

A number of Treaty Settlement processes will affect the District (Waikato River Treaty Settlement and other Treaty Settlements). All settlements are likely to require partnership obligations to be honoured. The roles and responsibilities of Tāngata Whenua will evolve as these processes continue. The need to more fully embrace and celebrate the District's heritage has been identified by community outcomes.

Advocacy and education are essential tools in safeguarding heritage values. Whilst it is recognised that Council does not (and should not) have sole responsibility for heritage protection, advocacy and education are complimentary opportunities for Council involvement.

## Goal 1: Protect and promote historic and cultural heritage of Waipa

### Current State

The existing District Plan contains a list of scheduled buildings and structures of heritage value in the District and there are rules within the Plan that promote their protection. There is also an existing Heritage Strategy that identifies a number of implementation measures. The existing schedule in the District Plan is in need of review which will be undertaken as part of the District Plan review. The Council holds biannual Heritage Awards and there is some promotion of existing heritage but more could be done.

## **Issue 1: Formal criteria is required to adequately assess the significance of heritage sites and features**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Waipa District Council Heritage Strategy.
- Current District Plan provisions.
- An active Heritage Council.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Develop criteria to identify locally significant heritage resources. Classify heritage resource consistently with other organisations with heritage responsibilities.
- Review heritage registers for completeness in light of criteria developed.
- Work with Tāngata Whenua to establish protocols on collection, collation, storage, and distribution of register/database information.

## **Issue 2: Additional resources or incentives are required to maintain and promote heritage sites and features**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Waipa Heritage Awards.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Investigate incentives (financial and non-financial) to assist owners with the essential maintenance and protection of significant heritage sites including buildings.
- Seek Environment Waikato's assistance in protecting regionally significant buildings/sites, and New Zealand Historic Places Trust for nationally significant sites.
- Implement education programs to inform residents about the importance of heritage resources.
- Continue to promote heritage as part of Town Concept Plans and special character areas.
- Review guidelines for heritage/special character areas within Waipa District.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies (e.g. DOC, iwi) in promoting heritage sites.

## **Goal 2: The special relationships Tāngata Whenua have with heritage sites and features is promoted and respected**

### **Current State**

Currently there are different expectations of the meaning of celebrating and showcasing our Tāngata Whenua heritage. Our knowledge of sites and their values is incomplete. As a result regulation is haphazard and awareness is limited.

## **Issue 1: The lack of knowledge/awareness about the importance of cultural sites, and the sensitive nature of some information to Tāngata Whenua**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Waipa 2050 Growth Strategy objectives.
- Regional Policy Statement Heritage review.
- Completion of archaeological review of registered sites within Waipa.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Hold hui with tāngata whenua and discuss additions to the schedule of cultural heritage items, landscapes, viewshafts, and management of cultural heritage.
- Develop a protocol or procedure to handle the sensitive information, in conjunction with other local authorities.
- Request New Zealand Archaeological Association to alert Waipa District Council to any anomalies in their recent assessment of archaeological sites within Waipa and complete a schedule of historic and archaeological sites and landscapes.
- Continue to assist with the development of Iwi/Hapū Management Plans.
- Consider tāngata whenua representation on Heritage Council.

## **Issue 2: To celebrate Māori heritage in our towns**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Town Concept Plans and Town Vision Groups have identified the importance of celebrating our heritage.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Town Concept Plans and other initiatives are used to establish what Tāngata Whenua heritage means for each town.
- Investigate and resource community-led efforts to promote and celebrate local heritage including the development and showcasing of Tāngata Whenua heritage and the correct spelling of tāngata whenua street names.
- Council tasks and assists Iwi/Hapū with developing appropriate initiatives.

## **Goal 3: Special character of towns and villages is retained and promoted**

### **Current State**

There is no formal protection against unsympathetic development on the main street(s) of Te Awamutu, Kihikihi, Ohaupo, or Pirongia. There are current queries over the extent and guidelines for the Central Cambridge Character Area. The effects of commercial growth in the historic towns and villages in the District could rapidly erode the heritage character of the townscapes.



**Issue 1: There is a need to identify, promote and protect those aspects that give our towns and villages their character or sense of place**

**CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Town Concept Plan and Vision Group projects.
- District Plan Heritage Area Guidelines.
- Town Concept Plans are used to establish what character means for each town.

**PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Investigation of options to incentivise building owners and occupiers to reinforce town character and sense of place including through building design.



**Tawhaio's House at Parawera Marae**

# Theme Four: Sustainable Communities

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## Background

Sustainable communities are vibrant, creative, mindful of environmental issues and live within their means. They recognise the interconnectedness of people - not only with one another, but also with the natural, physical and economic environments around them. Water consumption and waste generation are limited and best endeavours are made to reduce the effects of climate change.

Waipa comprises two larger townships that service a buoyant agricultural sector and are ringed by a network of smaller villages. Planning for the infrastructure needs of these towns is not easy, in particular providing infrastructure to a number of outlying villages e.g. buses are less frequent (if at all), travel distances are often greater, residents provide their own water and have on-site waste disposal.

The Waipa 2050 Growth Strategy provides a framework for managing expected growth and to contain the majority of this within existing urban areas. Strategic planning for infrastructure is required in advance of this growth.

## Goal 1: Water is conserved and used wisely

### Current State

The District urban per-capita water usage is higher than the national average.

### Issue 1: Water is a limited and essential resource but is not always treated as such

#### CURRENT ACTIONS

- Preparation of a Water Conservation Strategy, with the following key components:
  - Prepare water demand management plans for each water supply scheme.
  - Promote water conservation through media and education.
  - Identify and promote water saving techniques as part of the Code of Practice and District Plan.
  - Investigate the implementation of universal metering and volumetric charge for both water consumption and disposal.

#### PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Provide education programmes to community on water use.

## **Goal 2: Sustainable transport alternatives are promoted and increasingly used**

### **Current State**

Most people drive cars and most trips are occupied by a single person. The use of public transport, car pooling and greater trip sharing would reduce transport fuel demand and assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the District. This is an issue that the District will have to think further about particularly given concerns raised with 'peak oil' and the rural nature of the District contributing to high reliance on private motor vehicles.

### **Issue 1: Our small communities and relatively low densities present a challenge when planning/developing facilities for public transport and alternative modes of transport**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Walking and Cycling Strategies.
- Complete Waipa Integrated Transport Study, key components listed below:
  - maintain a safe and effective local transport network for Waipa with an adequate, affordable level of service.
  - ensure safe and efficient connections with the inter district networks.
  - reduce the need to travel.
  - change travel behavior.
- Waikato Regional Land Transport Strategy.
- Waikato Regional Transport study and model.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Review the Waipa Cycling and Walking strategy:
  - to compliment the Waipa Integrated Transport Study.
  - align walking and cycling strategy with codes of practice and District Plan .
  - promote passive modes of transport via media and education.
- Implementation of the outcomes of the Waipa Integrated Transport Strategy.

### **Issue 2: The ageing population requires public transport to access community facilities due to the dispersed nature of our communities**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Community van investigations.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Encourage housing for the ageing population to locate in urban areas where community facilities are easily accessible.
- Provide community incentives to provide transport solutions to rural communities, who do not have easy access to community facilities.

## **Goal 3: District's zero waste philosophy will be fully implemented**

### **Current State**

Council has committed to the zero waste philosophy, but targets and associated implementation programmes have yet to be fully developed. Kerbside recycling began in Waipa in 2007, resulting in around 300 tonnes of material being diverted from landfills each month. Currently a large proportion of waste (around 60%) sent to landfill is organic matter.

**Issue 1: The waste minimisation philosophy needs to be embraced District wide and supported with mechanisms and incentives that encourage good practise**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Waipa District Council Waste Policy.
- Waipa Recycling initiatives.

### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- A review of the Waipa Waste Minimisation and Management Plan will be completed in the 2010/2011 year. It will consider a range of actions such as:
  - promoting reducing, reusing and recycling to industrial and agricultural users.
  - education programmes that encourage residents to minimise waste generation.
  - identifying necessary targets and responsibilities in accordance with the Waste Minimisation Act 2008.
  - reviewing Council's general policy of leaving refuse collection to the private sector.

## **Goal 4: High quality and strategic infrastructure planning co-ordinated with land use planning**

### **Current State**

Council is developing its asset management planning capabilities and is taking a more strategic view of the provision of infrastructure. This provides an opportunity to take a more sustainable approach to infrastructure planning and design.

**Issue 1: Managing growth and development in a planned and coordinated way to ensure adequate services that comply with best environmental practise, are provided**

### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Council 10 year Plan projects.
- Asset Management Plans.
- Waipa 2050 Growth Strategy.
- Town Concept Plans.

## PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Restrict and only allow development if appropriate infrastructure is available and has capacity to accommodate development.
- Plan to future proof infrastructure to accommodate additional growth, rather than building at size in the first instance.
- Systems and designs reflect current thinking and environmental standards.
- Review levels of service to ensure alignment with community expectations.
- Continue to ensure open communication and exchange of detailed information between Council and utility companies and infrastructure providers in the planning and development of future developments.
- Identify potential opportunities for alternative infrastructure provision, such as package sewage treatment plants and composting toilets.

## Goal 5: Our town centres are vibrant and easily accessible by all users

### Current State

The towns and villages do not consistently reflect good urban design principles and connections between new and existing developments are not clear. Some recent developments could also better reflect the existing character of areas. Our towns are distinctive but the visitor would have difficulty knowing why. They do not have distinctive entrances and the first impression can be of industry.

### Issue 1: Existing land-use patterns and new developments do not always support connections

## CURRENT ACTIONS

- District Plan Structure Plans.
- Town Concept Plans and Vision Group projects.
- Identify (and include in structure plans) connections between town centres, local amenities, working areas, sports facilities and residential areas and provide for their protection in planning documents.
- Provide design guidelines that restrict unnecessary cul-de-sac developments and recommend appropriate alternatives when processing subdivision applications (may require rule changes).
- Retain strong connections with existing town belts through upgrading and regular maintenance of existing connections.
- Establish a hierarchy of tree plantings and other enhancements of key walking and cycling routes/tracks to reinforce linkages with towns.
- Provide new pedestrian and cycle ways through open space that will connect new and existing routes.
- Set design standards in the District Plan, and through development codes to ensure consistency between new and old.
- Subdivision Code of Practice review.

## **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Implementation of the range of actions and projects identified as part of the Town Concept Plans for Cambridge, Te Awamutu and Kihikihi, Ohaupo and Pirongia.

### **Issue 2: Maintaining/improving the vibrancy of our towns and town centres**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- District Plan Structure Plans.
- Town Concept Plans and Vision Groups (Heart of Te Awamutu, Vision Cambridge).
- Subdivision Code of Practice review.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Consider incentivising built forms that are sensitive, of high quality and integrate urban landscapes and architectural design.
- Provide for compact housing in close vicinity to open space and community and sporting hubs with strong links to other land uses. Give preference to locations close to town centres.
- Establish an urban design panel or equivalent to provide advice to those developing in high profile areas.
- Prioritise the maintenance and enhancement of town centre public spaces and reinforce tree lined streetscapes.
- Design development fronting onto streets to create complete blocks and support small format shops for increased street vitality.
- Change design focus to fronting the rivers and streams which flow through our towns and villages.
- Highlight distinctive features of the towns including tāngata whenua heritage and connection with the towns and surrounding areas.
- Correctly spell tāngata whenua street names.
- Provide additional “street furniture” and interpretive material to showcase culture and heritage.
- Revise reserve management plans to ensure they make provision for town gateway reserves.
- Implement (through Town Concept Plans and the District Plan) landscape buffers and appropriate tree plantings to define the gateway to the town.
- Encourage landowners or community groups to adopt their town entrances (or use other voluntary measures).

### **Issue 3: Development can erode streetscapes and vistas**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Town Concept Plans and Vision Group projects.
- Subdivision Code of Practice review.

## PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Identify significant vistas to buildings and natural features and provide rules in the District Plan to protect these vistas (i.e. through structure plans).
- Ensure / advocate for state highway corridors to have more appropriate streetscape and building forms that enhance the image of the town.
- Develop a hierarchy of tree planting that enhances significant buildings, natural features, and street vistas.
- Use interpretive material to reinforce the value of heritage features such as views and buildings.
- Place conditions on consents to include plantings or enhancement of vistas where needed.

## Goal 6: Waipa District is prepared for and adapts well to climate change

### Current State

There are preliminary moves within industry and government to prepare people for climate change. A change in our climate as a result of global warming and other influences requires us to think about how we are going to plan for and manage the projected impacts of climate change in Waipa.

Climate scientists estimate that Waikato's temperatures could increase by 3<sup>o</sup>C by 2090, greater Waikato could be 20% wetter with more varied rainfall patterns and flooding could become more frequent (sourced from Environment Waikato). If extreme weather events become more severe there are likely to be significant costs to the community. Climate change also presents possible opportunities for agricultural crops and pasture to grow faster and new crops may be able to be grown.

### Issue 1: Action is required to manage the effects of climate change

#### CURRENT ACTIONS

- Guided by Ministry for the Environment advice on possible consequences and policy responses.
- Council is a member of Communities for Climate Protection.

#### PROBABLE ACTIONS

- Support Environment Waikato in providing assistance and guidance to communities on techniques to adapt to climate change.
- Have regard to climate change and, in particular, availability of water and flood hazard management in land use planning and infrastructure planning.
- Actively manage Council land as carbon sinks.
- Develop an Environmental Management System for Council operations and incorporate Carbon/Greenhouse targets.

## **Goal 7: Efficient and Sustainable Energy Use**

### **Current State**

Electricity prices are rising and there are savings to be gained by being more energy efficient. There is the potential to further increase the proportion of electricity generated from renewable sources. The cost of transport fuels is also increasing leading to increased costs for travel and transportation of goods.

### **Issue 1: Energy is not always used efficiently**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Waikato Regional Energy Strategy.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Make energy use efficiency a matter to consider in subdivision design.
- Review District Plan Bulk and location requirements to facilitate home food growing.
- Refer to Goal 2 for probable actions related to transport.

### **Issue 2: The initial cost of retrofitting sustainable solutions can be high**

#### **CURRENT ACTIONS**

- Energy wise program.
- Regional Energy Strategy.
- Waipa's Energy Supply Contract.
- Earth Hour.

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Investigate supplementing EECA healthy homes subsidies (i.e. through rates relief or other means).
- Investigate incentives for promoting green-star or equivalent certified building development.
- Ensure partnerships with energy providers and Council are established.
- Require energy efficiency to be considered as part of subdivision consent process.

### **Issue 3: Releasing the potential for appropriate small scale domestic renewable energy generation activities**

#### **PROBABLE ACTIONS**

- Develop policy in the District Plan to encourage small scale renewable generation where environmentally appropriate.
- Ensure partnerships with energy providers and Council are established and set acceptable standards and controls in the District Plan.



- Identify potential opportunities for alternative energy generation through liaison with energy providers and the community.



Waipa District Council staff assisting at eDay

#### **Te Awamutu Office**

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