



Keeping you up to date with Opotiki District Council activities

Submissions influence changes to the Community Plan

A total of 91 public submissions were received to the Draft Community Plan. These covered a range of views on such issues as representation, economic development and facilities and services. Council considered all the submissions and in response decided to make a number of changes to the final plan. These changes include:

- An amendment to the proposed Promotion and Development rate so that 30% of the visitor information costs are recovered from properties with a commercial and industrial land use. A Uniform charge of \$30 being levied on visitor accommodation where that activity is not the prime use of the property. A more commercial approach from the visitor information so that the shortfall in rating is recovered from revenue.
- The decision to exit the provision of pensioner housing over the next twelve months while ensuring that existing tenants are provided for.
- To provide the option for payment of Development Contributions either at resource consent or building consent stage.
- To make the Events Co-ordinator position a full time position.

Council thanks all submitters for their input which has helped guide the final decision making and signals support for the direction that Council is taking.

Pinpoint that puppy

As from 1 July 2006, all puppies (except working farm dogs) or dogs that have not previously been registered in New Zealand, or dogs classified as dangerous or menacing must be identifiable by registration and microchip.

Microchipping is a simple and painless process that can be carried out by your vet at vaccination time for a cost of \$25. Both microchipping and dog registration will help you identify your pet if lost or stolen and assists Council to manage effective animal control.



Community Plan sets new way forward

The publication of the Opotiki District Community Plan heralds the beginning of a new way of governance and direction for our district.

"From now on our focus will be on achieving the goals we have collectively set for the next ten years and beyond," says Mayor John Forbes. "The Local Government Act has brought about changes in the way both local authorities and government agencies will work and I believe this will ensure a more strategic and community focused approach in the future."

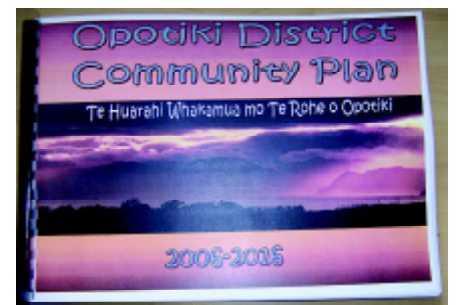
Mayor Forbes admits that the change has not been easy and legal requirements have imposed a lot of extra cost and work on Council and Council staff. However he is pleased that council has managed to double its capital works programme while maintaining a 4.1% average rate rise for 2006/07 and an overall tenyear average of 3.4%.

Creating the Community Plan has been a two year process, starting from the consultation that was undertaken to identify what sort of future the community wanted to create. Hundreds of people put their ideas forward at community workshops and discussions and through surveys and feedback forms. These thoughts from the community formed the seven final outcomes the community agreed on.

Council will help the community reach those outcomes and over the past year Council and staff have spent an enormous amount of time plan-

ning how they will do that. The results of that planning were put forward for public comment and a further 91 submitters made suggestions and recommendations.

"With this plan there has been a noticeable increase in the number of submissions and most ventured support for the general direction Council is taking," says Chief Executive, Vaughan Payne. "We have also had some very good comments on the presentation of the information and the format of the document. I hope people will take some time to look over the document either on the Councils web site or at the library, Council and Rununga offices and that more are encouraged to get involved in the way our district progresses."



The Community Plan will be available for viewing or on CD by mid August.



Civil Defence everyone's business

Being prepared for a civil defence emergency is everyone's responsibility and the way we work together is critical to the management of any situation.

Council staff, the police, fire service, ambulance service, Works Infrastructure, Whakatohea Social Services, Coast representatives and private business all learned more about effective interagency

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management at a recent two day Co-ordinated Incident Management course.

"We all know that being prepared in our own homes and daily lives is important but the course brought home just how important preparedness is. There is no guarantee that at a time of emergency someone will be available to help so having your own emergency plan is essential. We all need to take responsibility for ourselves, our family and whanau and the people we are with at any given time," said Council's Chief Executive Officer, Vaughan Payne. "Being well prepared yourself means that you are more likely to be able to help others."

"Working with other emergency services and Civil Defence personnel on various scenarios helped clarify roles and responsibilities and law in different emergency situations. It was also valuable to involve a local business and to find out what sort of emergency procedures they have in place and our capacity to work with them in an incident." Council has also commenced its pandemic planning and many of the incident management processes will be used in the event of a disease outbreak.

"A little forethought and effort goes a long way in any time of emergency and Council is constantly reviewing its plans and practicing for events that impact on the Opotiki community," Mr. Payne says.

"Being well prepared yourself means that you are more likely to be able to help others."

Have a plan and be prepared.



Emergency Plan

- ☞ Choose safe areas to shelter in earthquake, flood or storm.
- ☞ Have one person responsible for keeping the survival kit supplied.
- ☞ Know how to turn off gas, water and electricity at the mains.
- ☞ Know how you will contact each other in an emergency
- ☞ Learn first aid
- ☞ Know what essential items you may need to take if evacuated
- ☞ Prepare an escape plan for fire.
- ☞ Learn the civil defence procedures that are published at the back of the

Survival Kit

You may need to care for yourself for three days or more without help.

- ☞ Water (3 litres per person per day)
- ☞ Canned and nonperishable food (Don't forget your pets)
- ☞ Torch and radio (with batteries)
- ☞ Toilet paper, plastic bags and a bucket
- ☞ First aid kit and handy or essential medicines
- ☞ A means of cooking.
- ☞ Tarpaulin or shelter and clothing may also be required



Opotiki District Council
Strong Community - Strong Future

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Rates Rebate Scheme

Changes have been made to the Rates Rebate Scheme which might mean you are eligible for assistance with your rates bill.

As from July:

- The maximum rebate increased from \$200 to \$500
- The income threshold increased from \$7,400 to \$20,000
- Additional income allowance for dependants increased from \$156 to \$500 per dependant.

To find out more or to apply for a rebate contact Council. You will need to provide:

- Your rates invoice for the 2006/07 rating year.
- Information about what your income (before tax) was for the previous tax year (to 31 March 2006).
- Proof of your partner/joint homeowner's income if he/she lives with you.

The Rates Rebate Scheme is provided by the Department of Internal Affairs. If you are granted a rates rebate Council will be able to reduce your rates by the amount of the rebate.

Rates Information Database

Pursuant to the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 Section 28 a copy of the Rates Information Database is available for inspection at the Council offices and will include the name and postal address of the owner of each rating unit.

Under Section 28 (C) owners may request to have their names and/or contact details withheld from the Rates Information Database as long as the request is made in writing to the Opotiki District Council.

Councillor comment



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Deputy Mayor
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In this column Opotiki District councillors are invited to share their views with residents. The views expressed are those of the individual councillor and not necessarily of the collective council.

It is not by chance that this issue of the Panui focuses on working together, it is an indication of the way we want to do business in the future. Now, more than ever before, the emphasis is on community involvement. We are a small community with big hopes for the future and it will take all of us to make our visions a reality. An example of how working together can realise

a goal is Fibre and Fleece. Thousands of hours go into the production of this bi-annual event and thousands of people were able to enjoy the end product.

The town was a vibrant and busy place and our artists and young people had a chance to show their talents alongside other national and international participants. Our district is promoted in the lead-up to the event and showcased afterwards. By getting involved in the event volunteers have shown their commitment to progressing the vitality of our district and by opening our town for this special event we offer a welcoming face to our visitors.

We know that economic benefits can be derived from such events, if we get behind them. It is up to us all to make Opotiki an event friendly place. The same can be said for progressing the social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects of our district. We will get much further, much faster if all 9,000 of us (according to the latest census figures) roll up our sleeves and get involved. As an elected member of the Council I welcome

your involvement in the governance of the district as do other councillors and the council staff. Making submissions to the Community Plan, addressing Council at its public forum or representing your district well outside the area are obvious ways to be involved. So too is being a member of a community group, supporting a local cause, caring for others in the community or picking up a piece of litter in the street.

Henry Clothier - the person behind the revitalisation of Tirau - recently spoke to the Tourism and Promotions Committee of Council. He told us that in his experience generosity now would be repaid three times over in the future. By investing in a positive idea, even if he could not yet see direct benefits, both he and the town of Tirau, had gained advantages from opportunities that would not have otherwise come their way.

These opportunities are there for the people of Opotiki district too and we can be confident that we will be well rewarded for the effort and investment we make now.