

Long Term Planning a Community Affair

Council considered almost 300 comments from 157 submitters making the 2009 to 2019 Opotiki District Community Plan one of the most discussed council plans for some time.

Of the submissions received 70 people raised community sponsorship, 46 referred to parks and recreation, 31 submitters covered environmental management and 24 people raised issues relating to transport. Twenty one people chose to address council in support of their submission.

According to Mayor John Forbes the standard of the submissions was very high with many offering carefully considered comment and suggestion.

"Council always endeavours to run a very tight ship but the current economic downturn presents even greater challenges to the district. At such times it is important not to sail too close to the wind and risk stalling progress and prolonging the situation but, it is also vital that people are not burdened with avoidable cost."

"It is acknowledged that 2009 has been one of the most difficult budgeting periods for some time and the input council received from the community assisted council in making its decisions and is greatly appreciated," Mayor Forbes says.

Many residents made submissions on the beach bylaw and it was agreed that this issue would be dealt with outside of the ten year plan process as the setting of bylaws is covered under a different legislation.

The main changes made as a result of submissions include moving a net increase of \$14,500 for the upgrade of the Te Kaha water supply. This upgrade will now occur a year earlier in 2009/10. An additional \$25,000 for community sponsorship and an increase of \$5 and \$10 in the registration fees of urban and rural dogs respectively, to assist the Opotiki SPCA in implementing an animal welfare programme are also key changes to the plan.

Hoorah ! Another harbour hurdle handled

Piles of paper and laptops containing complex calculations and information dominated the tables at the Coast Guard Building over the three day harbour development hearing.

A total of 208 submissions were received of which 191 were in support of the applications made by Opotiki District Council to allow resource consent for the harbour entrance improvements, 10 opposed the development and 6 were neutral. A panel of three commissioners with ecological, planning and independent engineering expertise heard from 16 submitters on a range of issues.

Most of those opposing the consent had reservations related to adverse effects on the natural environment and dotterel habitat, the impact on the landscape and natural character qualities of the site, and the possibility of negative impacts on the Waioeka Otara Flood Scheme and concern about the impact of design failure of the groynes.

Supporting Submissions referred to the social and economic benefits through job creation,



development potential with aquaculture and tourism, improved navigation and safety assisting rescue operations of the local Coast Guard, recreational and amenity values including fishing and surfing.

A number of issues were raised outside the scope of this process which considers mainly the environmental impact of the proposed project.

A big night out for the people that make Opotiki tick. 2009 Opotiki Community Contributions Awards



Winners of the Outstanding Community Contribution Award. The Opotiki Charity Concert Trust.
Left to Right: Beth Brown, Cleone Cawte, Mike Bitterworth, Jan Fisher, Peter Lambert, Barbara Williams (back), Kahu Abbot, Mayor John Forbes.

Other award recipients from the eighty seven nominations are on page 3.

Where do our rates dollars go?

An average total rate increase of 3.66% for 2009 -2010 and 1% expected to come from growth.

Financial Implications of the Ten Year Plan

The Draft Ten Year Plan put forward a number of proposals for residents to comment on. A number of submissions raised more projects and activities for Council to consider. The result is that Council will require \$7,178,000 to meet expectations in the 2009/10 financial year.

This means that in 2009/2010 residents can expect an average rate increase of 3.66% and a further 1% increase will be met by new development in the district.

From 2010 to 2019 rates will increase by an average of 3.82% per annum.

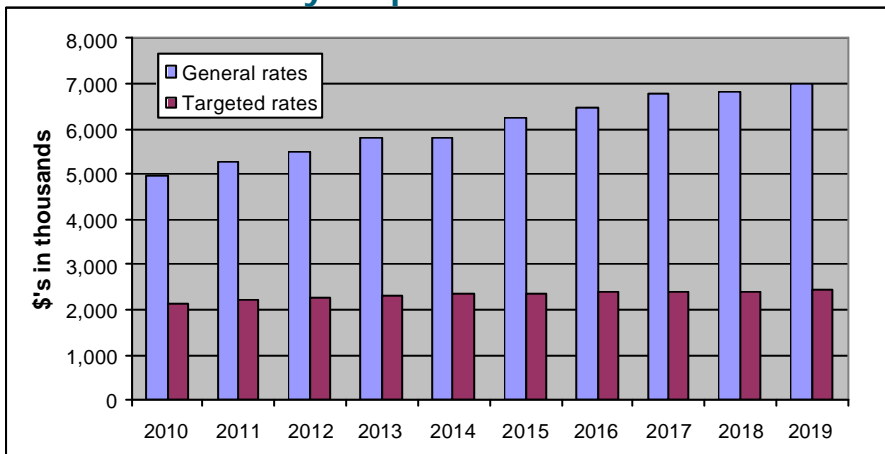
Opotiki District is one of the smallest local authorities in terms of population and a recent study of performance ranks Opotiki as having the lowest income out of other, similar sized local authorities.

However, the study also concludes that although Council operates on a very low revenue it has displayed "fiscal prudence" and, by managing down its borrowings and is well placed to borrow for future projects.

The study which was carried out by local government finance and policy analyst, Larry Mitchell, also shows that Opotiki District Council spends less on "niceties" than other councils and focuses on provision of core services, collects less per ratepayer than any other council, receives less land transport funding and has a very low debt level.

In preparing the ten year plan council has endeavoured to strike a balance between what the community can afford, levels of service that are expected and the need to set a positive course for the future.

Rates over a ten year period.



Councillor Comments



Mayor
John Forbes

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.

Aquaculture is continuing to be acknowledged as having a huge potential to enhance our community and the whole region. The jobs, opportunities and money that will flow from this new and exciting industry will have a very positive impact on Opotiki. The benefits are so big that over time they will spin off not only into the region but also nationally.

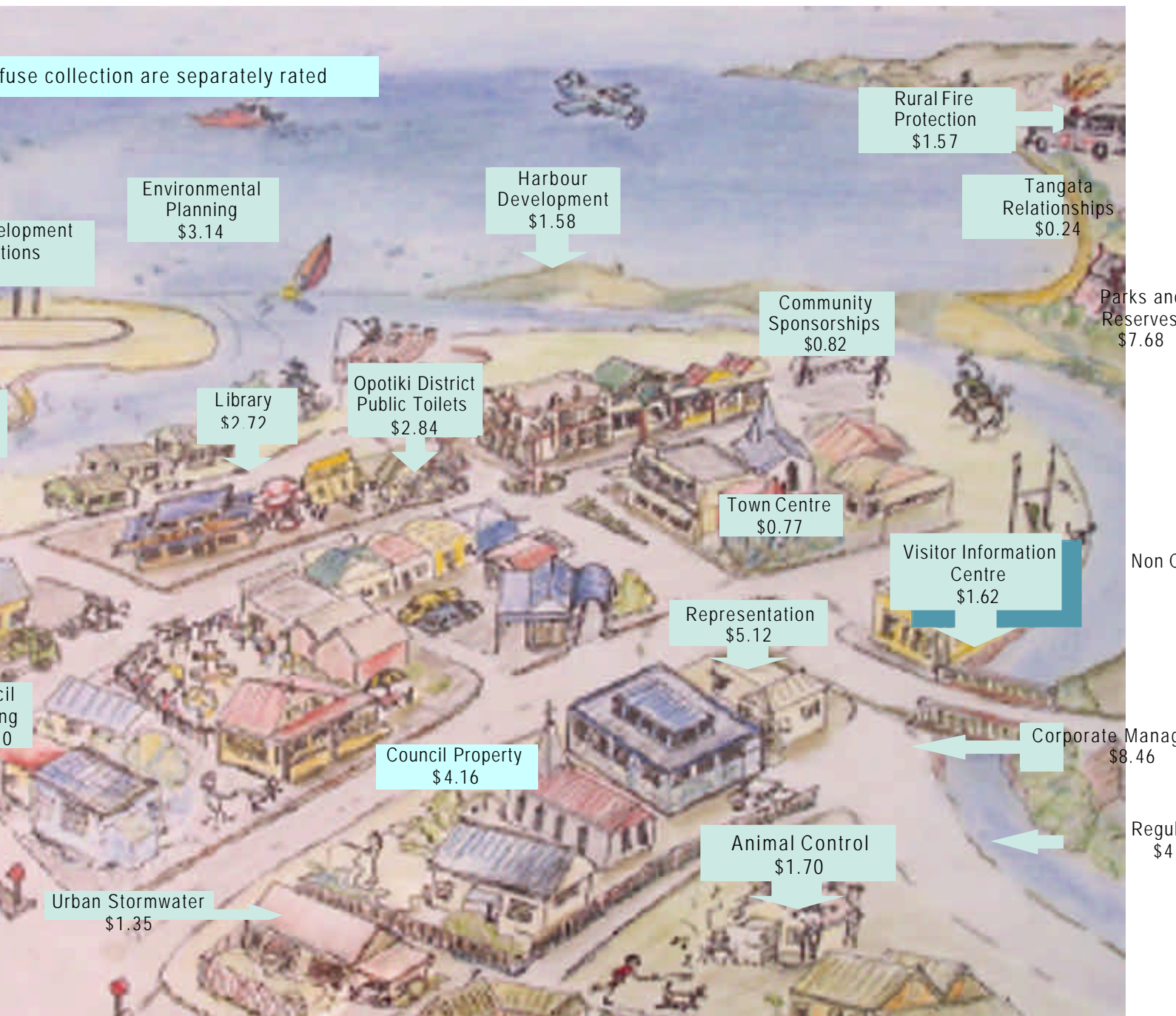
The completion of the resource consent hearings for the harbour improvements is another step on the journey. Many people have been involved in presenting clear and detailed submissions to the hearings panel and I would like to thank them all on behalf of the district.

The Bay of Plenty is developing a regional economic development strategy and aquaculture is one of

three main platforms for growth. The strategy sets a target of \$200 million to be generated by this industry within the next 16 years. Opotiki and the waters of the Eastern Bay have been identified as the place for aquaculture to develop. This is very good for us as the strategy also identified our harbour entrance as required infrastructure for this strand of economic development.

Now we need to work with our regional and central government partners to ensure that the funding we require to improve the harbour access is made available.

Mayor John Forbes



.... and the winners of the
2009 Opotiki Community Contributions Awards
 are ...

Outstanding Community Contribution
Opotiki Charity Concert

Volunteer of the Year
Jane Jackman

Best Community Volunteer Group
St John Ambulance

Best Community Project
East Cape Free Holiday Guide

Outstanding Achievement
Opotiki College Cadet Unit

Opotiki Business Award
Waiotahi Contractors

Most Deserving Youth Achiever
Janell Dymus

Youth Volunteer of the Year
Youth Charity Concert Helpers
 Toiroa Williams, Lloyd Williams, Josh Waterson Speak, Thomas Lyall.

Special Awards:
Willie Apiata
Michelle Anderson
Opotiki Mural Project

Congratulations and thank you from the people of Opotiki !



(Spike) Petersen of Waiotahi Contractors receives the Opotiki Business Award from Pio Terei.

The new Te Kaha sports pavillion is up and running in time for the Tai Mitchel Tournament

Te Whanau A Apanui Area School and the Coast Community Board have seen a joint partnership initiative come to completion just in time for this years Tai Mitchell Rugby event, which kicked off on 4 July on the school sports grounds. Council has approved funds each year in the 10 Year Plan for "coast initiative" projects and the community board decided this year to work in with the school to share costs and have a changing room facility built on the school grounds. As well as rooms for two sports teams, there is a referee's room, toilets and heated showers.

In the coming year the joint partnership will put together a suitable plan for a whare kai and then apply for Gaming Trust funding to build this addition alongside the sports pavillion.

The facilities will be used and shared by both the school and the community who utilise the sports grounds at the area school.

An application for funding for the Te Kaha water supply and treatment plant upgrade has been made

The Ministry of Health has been encouraging communities throughout the country to improve the quality of their water supplies and have offered substantial subsidy money for schemes that warrant improvement. The Council has prepared an application for such funding for upgrading the Te Kaha supply. If this is successful work will be carried out in early 2010 to put in new filters, ultra violet light treatment units, a new chlorine injector system together with new monitoring and control equipment. At a total cost of \$230,000 the new system will serve to eliminate possible protozoa contamination (for example, giardia and cryptosporidium), reduce bacterial and supply failure risks.

Upgrade may lead to an extension of supply

When the treatment plant is upgraded the Council will then be able to assess and if suitable, apply for Ministry of Health funding for constructing extensions to service community outside of the existing reticulated areas. Inquiries have come from as far south as Little Awanui and from Maungaroa in the north. Provisional assessments indicate the Te Kaha water source has capacity to meet domestic supply for the extension areas. Whilst subsidy money may become available, part of the cost of the extension work will have to be met by the new consumers. When further progress has been made consultation will be carried out with the affected communities.



The brand new toilets and changing rooms were put in place at Te Whanau A Apanui Area School in time for the Tai Mitchel Tournament.

Harbour Consent Hearings

Such things as relative benefits of alternative entrance options, cost and funding options for the project, the need to provide for onshore processing of marine farm product, and sovereignty issues in regard to the Treaty of Waitangi are to be considered by the community outside of the consent process.

At the end of a three day hearing the chairman of the commission Mr. Greg Hill thanked the applicants and submitters for the comprehensive evidence that had been provided and noted the number of members of the public who had attended the hearing each day.

Having considered all the evidence and submissions the commissioners will make a decision on whether or not the construction can proceed. If the consent is granted it is likely to be subject to numerous conditions around the construction and maintenance and the reduction of environmental impacts. Submitters who have reason to believe their concerns have not been considered can make an appeal to the Environment Court. Such action may extend the process for months or even, years until resolution is reached.



Project Manager Steve Everitt and Lawyer Vanessa Hamm seem comfortable amongst the paper at the Opotiki Harbour Development Resource Consent Hearing.

Road projects for 2010

The 10 Year Plan makes provision every year for sealing at least one kilometre of unsealed road in the district and upgrading at least one 200 metre long street block in Opotiki township.

In early 2010 the final 1.3 km of the unsealed length of Papanui Road will be sealed and the length of Buchanan Street between Ford and Richard Streets in Opotiki township will be upgraded. This upgrading will include new kerb and channel, piping the open drain, new footpath and driveway entrances. Discussions are underway with Horizon Energy for possible undergrounding of new power cables to then eliminate the poles and overhead wires as well.

OPOTIKI Big Success



More than just a fishy story from David Jonston.

This years Opotiki Biig 3 was a record year with 87 teams of 3 entering. Teams had 3 days to bag a snapper, pheasant and Stag or Boar. The whole weekend was filmed by Hunting Aotearoa and will be on Maori TV within the next couple of months. Congratulations to the organising committee for organising a fantastic event.



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