

Normandale Residents Association

*c/o 301 Normandale Road
Lower Hutt*

SUBMISSION

Greater Wellington Regional Council On the Draft Annual plan 2011

The Normandale Residents Association wish to make the following submission on the proposals in this draft. We have listed our comments under the headings used in the draft.

We would also appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of our submission at the appropriate time.

Resource Management

We consider the development of a regional plan for water allocation and land use essential. We submit however that such a plan should incorporate information on endemic species, habitats and ecosystems in accordance with the proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity. We particularly applaud any move to a water allocation policy that gives primacy to the maintenance of long term water quality and supply. We are concerned that the apparent divorcing of 'Land management' and 'Biodiversity' as shown in the draft and submit that a whole of catchment approach should be adopted for resource management.

Safety and flood protection

Whilst recognising the imperative for flood protection of core infrastructure, particularly Hutt hospital, we submit that canalisation of rivers has an unenviable record of failure as a long term measure, and that wider flood plains and wetland as buffering should be the preferred methodology. We also applaud the commitment to work with HCC to develop and integrate the flood plain between the stop banks with the development of the CBD.

Transport

With the majority of our households using commuter services, we support the key deliverables listed for this heading. However, whilst we appreciate the problems the commuter system is currently experiencing is not of GW's making, we feel that the introduction of the new rolling stock has been mismanaged, with unrealistic expectations set to the detriment of the ultimate outcome. We are particularly concerned at the replacement of peak hour services on the Melling line with buses. A deeply unpopular move.

We are also concerned to note that our predictions at the start of the Dowse interchange work, that the planned park and ride capacity at Petone was inadequate have been born out.

We also consider that the integration of bus and train ticketing is long overdue and note that the required technology is well established in New Zealand as elsewhere. We submit that introduction of this enabling technology should be a requirement of all Public transport contracts within the GW region.

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Water supply

Whilst we recognise that GW is concerned with bulk water supply only, we are concerned to note that no mention is made of demand management methods in this section.

Parks and forests

We applaud the Council for extending the regional park network with the acquisition of Baring Head and Whitireia park, but are concerned to note that there has been no commensurate increase in the budget for parks.

With the evidence of the local railway system to hand, GW is well aware of the dangers of deferring or ignoring maintenance of capital assets. We submit that the budget for parks should be increased to reflect both the increased area for which GW is responsible, but also set in place a specific policy to increase the budget in a way that will allow continuity to improving and sustaining park infrastructure; particularly those that also host farming activities; with a view to transitioning their primary aim from production to landscape management.

Local Government funding agency

Whilst we appreciate the potential savings this approach could deliver, we are concerned that in the current world economic situation, plus the ample evidence of the impact of natural and man made disasters on specific authorities, which this scheme would require GW to underwrite; it is a high risk strategy and the potential gains are not commensurate with this risk. We submit that GW withdraw from any involvement.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft annual plan. We wish to speak to our submission at the appropriate time.

P. Matcham
President, Normandale Residents Association