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18 April 2024

Submission on Porirua City Long Term Plan 2024-2034

From: Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchments Community Trust and the Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet

Overview

This submission is made jointly by Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchments Community Trust (PHACCT) and the Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet (GOPI). Both trusts have a strategic and long-term interest in the Council's Community Outcomes and Strategic Priorities: protecting the harbour, climate change and young people.

The harbour and catchments are a community commons and PHACCT/GOPI are community-focused catalysts for the community and public involvement in the long-term management of the harbour and its catchments.

General

We support very strongly the message of Callum Katene and his proposed shared vision of a "beautiful city of two harbours" (p 5 of the LTP).

We strongly support and endorse:

- The Council's strategic priority of "committing to the health of Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and its catchment..";
- Building towards a low carbon city and proactively address the challenges of climate change.

- Asset management that is strategic and supports the city and harbour strategic priorities. The significant renewal to the sewer and upgrade to the stormwater networks, and related capital and operational expenditures are an important part of this.

Of particular **concern** are, and these comments reflect those we made on the 2021 LTP:

- The expenditure on wastewater and stormwater and the harbour are proposed without any reference to an overarching harbour strategy and action plan;
- There is absolutely no reference to the Whaitua Implementation Process and the accompanying report from Ngāti Toa Rangatira.

Water infrastructure investment

We note that considerable investment will be made into wastewater upgrades and especially resolving problems where wastewater discharge overflows into the stormwater system. This is **strongly supported**.

We **commend** the Council for making this a very high priority. Effective wastewater and stormwater systems are essential to the health of the harbour.

We **support** the Council's outcome of protecting the harbour although the LTP places some of the context for the increase in expenditure on asset renewal and providing for growth.

We note that the Council has limited ability to invest in stormwater (p.13) and it seems to accept that there will be damage from intensive weather events. It would be helpful for the community to have more clarity on when the Council might complete its modelling and to have set priorities.

Protecting our harbour

We **support** the Council's continuing investment in its riparian planting programme. We congratulate the Council and officers on the ongoing success of this programme and the way in which it involves the community.

We **support** funding being maintained at the level it has been for the past three years including adjustments for inflation. This latter point will ensure the protection work is maintained rather than goes backwards.

Harbour strategy

In preparing this submission we reviewed our submission on the Council's 2018 and 2021 LTPs and we find it **disconcerting** to note that there has been absolutely no evident (that is, public) progress with reviewing and publishing a harbour strategy. We understand that a harbour accord involving PCC, WCC, GWRC and Ngāti Toa may be signed this year and suggest this is needed urgently. If the Council is serious about its harbour related strategic priority then it should provide the resources to advance a harbour strategy and involve the community in the process.

Monitoring and compliance

We reiterate our point made in our 2021 submission about the Council having sufficient resources to ensure effective monitoring and compliance. We note with interest that that observation is reflected in the statement on p.10 of the proposed LTP that there will be a

'tightening' of compliance on earthworks. We look forward to seeing a rigorous monitoring regime and a willingness to enforce resource consent conditions.

Water meters

We **support** the introduction of water meters. It is unclear when this might come into play as the proposed LTP states that it is a medium term /4year project but expenditure begins a lot earlier.

We note that the proposed LTP is silent on the rates effect: Will there be an assurance that the charge for water consumption will be reflected in a reduction in rates or will it become an added cost?

Infrastructure

We note that the proposed LTP does not seek comment on Council infrastructure expenditure plans although there are significant projects in the short to medium term which are not featured in the covering document, for example, the Titahi Bay shared path.

We **urge** the Council not to defer the Titahi Bay shared path project and to redouble its efforts to secure transport agency funding.

Rural Environment

The non-urban environment comprises a large portion of the city, but no mention of it is made in the plan.

We reiterate our proposals made in 2021 where we recorded our concerns that increasing amounts of fine mud are entering the harbour and possibly increasing nutrient loads are threatening its ecology. Some of the sources of this are urban and roading systems, but some is also rural. Stormwater management can help reduce the urban sourced sediments and contaminants, provided the stormwater system is environmentally sensitive. But other sediments and contaminants are rural and related to farming, lifestyle and forestry practices.

One of the standard ways of helping manage these problems is using education and incentives, which are especially appropriate for the considerable number of lifestyle blocks. The Council should have a role in this sort of activity in conjunction with Greater Wellington and Wellington City.

While we are told that a significant percentage of the riparian planting involves working with private land-holders we **submit** that the harbour and catchment would be much better off if some money was put into supporting education, and rating incentives (such as discounts for environmental management planting and related water management initiatives).

Conclusion

The proposed LTP is heading in the right direction in respect of water infrastructure and we commend the Council for the priority it is giving this.

We encourage the Council to hasten its work on replacing the harbour strategy, implementing the recommendations of the Whaitua report and the accompanying Ngāti Toa Rangatira statement as well as GWRC's proposed Natural Resources Plan Change 1.

We wish to be heard in support of this submission.

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