

LTCCP 2009 -19 Community Engagement, Communications and Consultation Strategy

1. Background

Greater Wellington (GW) has a statutory responsibility (under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002) to produce a Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP), also known as the 10-Year Plan. Although these plans have a 10-year life, they are prepared on a three yearly basis. Annual plans provide updates to the LTCCP. The LTCCP also incorporates the annual plan for its first year of the three year cycle. GW is at the beginning of its next three-year cycle as it develops its 2009-19 LTCCP, incorporating the 2009/10 Annual Plan.

The LTCCP outlines key issues and work programmes for the period in question. It sets priorities and timeframes, and allocates funding.

The release of a proposed (draft) LTCCP begins a process of extensive public consultation to test the community's acceptance of GW's approach.

2. 2009-19 LTCCP

In initiating public engagement for this LTCCP, GW is mindful of the financial pressures on ratepayers as the impacts of the global economic recession are felt. These same pressures also impact on GW, most notably through the price of oil and the US\$/NZ\$ exchange rate which have a significant impact on the costs of public transport services. The issue of affordability is as important as addressing community wants and needs. We are acutely aware that even the modest portion of residents' overall local government rates that go to the work of the region will be difficult for some to afford in the current situation and this may last for some time.

There are many elements to the proposed LTCCP. Attempting to give public profile to all of these could be counterproductive and disperse public engagement on the more significant matters contained in that document. Narrowing these down to a "Top Five" should help enhance the effectiveness of the discussions GW wishes to have, particularly through the media and *Our Region*. These five issues have been selected because they touch all of GW's communities in a significant way.

This selection does not mean that other LTCCP issues will not be canvassed. It means that those other issues may not receive the same public promotion across the whole region as those on the Top Five list. Any strategy of this type needs to be flexible to adapt to public concerns (eg, bovine Tb in the Wairarapa). If any matter not initially listed on the Top Five list looks like it has captured the public's attention, then GW needs to be able to reprioritise its approach to match public concerns. Presentations and messages should be able to be adapted for local communities to focus on LTCCP matters that are particularly relevant to them.

The Top Five issues are outlined in section 11 of this paper.

3. Greater Wellington’s communications’ objectives/success measures

- 1) GW’s communities believe that they have been presented with an accurate picture of the issues, and have had a fair opportunity to discuss and respond to matters raised in the proposed LTCCP (fair and transparent process)
- 2) Key issues identified in the final LTCCP are widely accepted by GW’s communities (mandate to act).

4. Key messages

- 1) GW wants its ratepayers and affected communities to inform its priorities for the next 10 years
- 2) There are some major issues facing the Greater Wellington region over the next 10 years. These will have significant implications for regional ratepayers. GW is keen to get feedback on its proposed response to these issues.
- 3) **Other messages:**
 - A Top Five list of issues has been developed for discussion.
 - The list of issues is bigger than this Top Five
 - The list is open for public discussion and feedback
 - Responses are welcome
 - This is what GW thinks. Do you agree?

5. Spokesperson/people

- GW’s Chair, Fran Wilde, should be the central figure for public comment on the LTCCP consultation process
- All Councillors will play a role with constituency-based presentations as necessary.

6. Key people and audiences

- All regional ratepayers and community members
- GW will need to closely engage with the region’s city and district councils, and a range of other partnering organisations and interest groups. As these organisations could make public comment about GW’s draft LTCCP and its accompanying consultation process, it is important that they are well briefed.

7. Risks and issues

| Risk/issue | Mitigated by |
|---|--|
| The region's city and district councils are consulting on their LTCCPs at about the same time | Liaising closely with the TAs about their consultation processes |

| Risk/issue | Mitigated by |
|---|--|
| Matters raised in other LTCCPs differ from matters raised in GW's | Develop responses to these if there is potential for confusion or conflict |
| There is limited public interest in GW's proposed LTCCP | Doing the best we can in the time available |
| There are time and key people availability issues for the necessary public engagement | Doing the best we can in the time available |
| GW is consulting other matters at the same time, eg, RLTP, RPS | Taking care to clearly delineate each issue and mitigate confusion about the submission process for each |
| The breadth of issues being dealt with makes them hard to specify | Picking issues that are most relevant to each community or audience, and limiting the conversation to just those |

8. Tactics/Community engagement

- Profile the proposed LTCCP (together with other major GW consultations) in the March issue of *Our Region*.
- Build a web page that contains background information, key messages, meetings and events, links to relevant documents, etc. This will have a link on the GW web site home page
- Distribute a media release, customised for regional constituency audiences, to kick off the public engagement process
- Produce media releases to support specific public engagement events
- Develop a presentation for Councillors that has tailored but consistent messages
- Participate in combined meetings with TAs where possible
- Encourage community organisations to invite GW to speak at their existing events/meetings (partnering with TAs in the first instance)
- Use targeted radio advertising (with the existing contract) to highlight the submission process and public meetings
- Profile the submission form, particularly the ranking scores for each of the key issues
- Produce media "think pieces" for major media (eg, Dominion Post, Newstalk ZB Justin du Fresne or Gary Ward shows)
- Produce feature articles on selected key issues for targeted community and daily newspapers
- Monitor letters to the editor, Blogs, etc and respond to these as necessary

9. Key steps/actions

| Action | By when |
|--|-------------|
| <i>Our Region</i> published, featuring LTCCP, RLTP, RPS and other GW consultations | 17-18 March |

| Action | By when |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Include mentions in other GW newsletters that are released during this time (eg, <i>Greenshoots</i> , <i>Rural Focus</i>) | To match their respective deadlines |
| Build web site information page | By 16 March. Go live for 23 March |
| Build online submission form | By 16 March. Go live for 23 March |
| Write launch media release. Reference the submission process and forms (physical and online) | By 20 March for 23 March |
| Write reminder media release for consultation mid point | By 11 April for 11 April |
| Prepare Councillors' presentation. (PowerPoint and flip charts) | By 16 March, ready for 23 March |
| Arrange meetings with TAs | By 16 March |
| Distribute invitation to community groups and organisations | By 16 March |
| Prepare a feature article on each of the selected key issues | By 16 March, ready for 23 March |
| Source photos to accompany feature articles and other purposes | By 16 March |
| Prepare pieces for major media (Dom Post & Times Age) | By 23 March for 26 March |
| Advertise meeting times and locations | From 16 March |
| Investigate feasibility of enclosing/publishing a submission form in the Dominion Post | By 6 March |
| Investigate the feasibility of targeted radio advertising | By 6 March |

10. Key dates/project timeline

- LTCCP made public: Monday 23 March 2009
- Public consultation period starts: Monday 23 March 2009
- Submissions close: Friday 24 April 2009

11. The Top Five key issues

11.1 Key issue – Public transport

11.1.1 What we want:

A well patronised public transport network that aims to get people around the region easily and reduces road congestion. To achieve this we aim to:

- Increase the proportion of people travelling by public transport in peak periods
- Increase off-peak passenger transport use and community connectedness
- Increase passenger transport accessibility for all, including disabled people or from low income groups
- Reduce passenger journey times compared to travel by private car

- Increase passenger transport reliability.

11.1.2 The big issues

- Our patronage growth targets will only be met through attracting new users. However, people are reluctant to give up the convenience of their cars. To be attractive to users, public transport must be convenient, reliable, simple to use, high quality, user friendly and affordable
- To attract more users, we need to introduce modern features such as real-time information and electronic ticketing. However, these are very costly and Greater Wellington needs to take a measured approach to network improvements
- People often have high expectations about service levels (frequency and coverage) without realising the cost implications of their demands. This is particularly the case for off-peak services, which may please a few people but require a high level of subsidy. Also, congestion is often not a problem at these off-peak times which makes car use even more attractive. Greater Wellington has to balance the cost of providing services with the use of those services
- The full rating impact of rail improvements starts in 2010/11 when new Matangi trains start arriving in Wellington. While the majority of the costs are met by central Government funding from the Wellington Transport Package, the rates impact is still significant. It is part of the additional \$95 million that the region agreed to fund as a condition of receiving Government funding.

11.1.3 GW's response

- Focus on peak-period commuting, while trying to grow off-peak use
- Continue to improve the rail network by:
 - o Purchasing new trains
 - o Upgrading the rail network (with Kiwi Rail) and extending the electric network to Waikanae
(This work is already underway)
- Further improve rail services by increasing capacity, reliability and frequency in line with patronage growth
- Improve the bus network by:
 - o Ensuring existing services provide value for money by redistributing resources from poorly performing services
 - o Providing future funding to expand the network
 - o Supporting bus priority measures, particularly in Wellington CBD
- Make the Metlink network more attractive to users by:
 - o Providing a real-time information system
 - o Working towards a network-wide electronic ticket
 - o Working towards standardised fares
 - o Ensuring the network is easy to use
- Manage the volatility of cost changes caused by fluctuations in the world oil market and in the NZ/US dollar exchange rate by adjusting budgets yearly and using reserves to smooth costs.

11.2 Key issue – Water supply

11.2.1 What we want

A safe and secure reticulated water supply that provides high quality water to meet the reasonable current and future needs of the population and which is cost-effective and environmentally responsible.

11.2.2 The big issues

- Greater Wellington’s water storage system has relatively little capacity and we rely largely on there being enough water each day from our rivers and aquifers to meet the day’s water use. In the past we have been able to meet demand, but there has been higher than anticipated population growth and climate change predictions are for drier than anticipated summers. New water sources are required in the short-term if we are to have a secure supply of water
- A major new water storage facility will almost certainly be needed in the long-term if we are to meet the demand of a growing population. However, this will be very costly and will possibly have significant environmental impacts. Importantly, we can defer the need for increased storage if we reduce the demand for water to offset population growth.

11.2.3 GW’s response

- By 2012 return to a 2% security of supply standard by implementing the short-term options – Kaitoke (2009) and Stuart Macaskill Lakes (2011)
- Complete the central Wellington reservoir (2013) to retain the security of supply standard for another year
- Continue our water conservation programmes by promoting voluntary measures
- Complete construction of the Upper Hutt aquifer wells, treatment plant and pumping station by 2014 – \$16.9 million (today’s dollars)
- Complete the design of the Whakitikei dam in the Akatarawa Forest and associated treatment plant, and start developing the dam in 2014. The dam and treatment plant is planned to come into operation in 2022 – \$135 million (today’s dollars).

This approach may change if the four city councils and Greater Wellington commits to a more aggressive approach to water conservation through the Regional Water Strategy.

11.3 Key issue – Flood protection

11.3.1 What we want

Our community to understand the risks from flooding and erosion and has acceptable and affordable solutions in place. We want to ensure that we protect both property and natural resources with appropriate development.

11.3.2 The big issues

- We have a 40 year programme and we are proposing to continue with this – but it is expensive. An option is to slow it down – with the consequences that are outlined here
- There is an expectation that we should be identifying flood risks so that we avoid inappropriate development in flood risk areas. However, by identifying these flood risks, we can create anxiety in the community and expectations that we will carry out necessary flood mitigation works – and these will only add to the rate burden
- Our funding arrangements provide for half of the costs of flood protection works to be paid by the region (rates) and half to be paid by the local area of benefit. This funding model has advantages (we can get on and do necessary works) and disadvantages in that it can create a demand that cannot be reasonably met
- There will shortly be a new National Policy Statement on flood risk. We already have a New Zealand Standard for flood mitigation best practice which means that carrying out flood risk investigations and drawing the risk to the attention of the affected community is something that we expected to do – thereby raising expectations. People understandably don't like us turning up and saying their house is at risk without a plan to do something about it!

11.3.3 GW's response

Greater Wellington decided to provide the same level of funding for capital works and continue with a measured programme of investigations. Our existing schemes will be maintained and we'll continue with the planned environmental improvements. The flood contingency reserve funding has been maintained at existing levels, which means that Greater Wellington will:

- Continue with the capital works programme for the Hutt, Otaki and Waikanae rivers, and the improvement to the Waiohine and Lower Wairarapa Valley development schemes at the rates that were agreed in 2000 and 2006 and included in our last 10-year plan
- Clean up the contaminated sediments from the Waiwhetu Stream and improve the channel downstream of the Bell Road bridge to reduce the flood risk
- Carry out flood risk investigations by completing the:
 - Waiwhetu floodplain management plan (by 2012)
 - Pinehaven flood hazard investigation (by 2011)
 - Waiohine floodplain management plan project (by 2014)
- Complete the reviews of the Otaki and Waikanae floodplain management plans, and the Waingawa River scheme (by 2011)

- Continue with carrying out our environmental strategies that are associated with capital works to improve the river environment.

11.4 Key issue – Parks

11.4.1 What we want

Park and forest areas that provide a real and lasting benefit to the region – open spaces that meet leisure needs and support healthy natural ecosystems.

11.4.2 The big issues:

- The community wants better quality parks at Whitireia and Lake Wairarapa, which are currently degraded. However, creating better parks costs money. Greater Wellington has had to decide whether to put resources into these new parks at the expense of existing parks or charge the community more via rates to bring all parks to the same level. Greater Wellington is proposing to bring these new parks into the network slowly while retaining the existing service levels in its current parks.
- There is uncertainty about the purpose of our regional parks and recreational areas. The park framework was developed in 1976 and, with increased urbanisation, people's leisure and recreational requirements have changed. Greater Wellington's idea of using park land for wind energy generation has encountered resistance. There is a need to re-examine the purpose of our parks and forest areas, clarify community priorities and avoid potentially competing and conflicting uses.

11.4.3. GW's response

- Start improving the new parks at a slower rate than originally anticipated and seek funding from external sources where possible. This plan provides for \$100,000 per year for Lake Wairarapa and \$75,000 per year for Whitireia Park
- Prepare a high level regional parks network strategy (for regional parks and recreation areas) that will clearly articulate a vision and purpose for our parks network. We will be consulting widely on the strategy, which will address:
 - How parks contribute to the community wellness
 - Future population trends and associated recreation and leisure preferences
 - Public views and aspirations for regional parks
 - The cultural and heritage values, environmental state and recreation potential of regional parks
- The intention is to not make any development decisions on our regional parks and recreation areas until the Strategy is completed (July 2010)
- Provide for any changes resulting from the Parks Network Strategy in our next 10-year plan (2012-22)
- Maintain current service levels in our parks and forests in the interim.

11.5 Key issue – Climate change

11.5.1 What we want

A resilient community that, as far as possible, is reducing its greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the effects of global warming, but is also adapting well to any changes caused by climate change.

11.5.2. The big issues

- New Zealand's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is small, which leads to a view that the Wellington region should simply focus its attention on adapting to whatever results from the rest of the developed world's activities. The other view is that if we wish to persuade the rest of the developed world to mitigate the effects of global warming, we need to practice what we preach
- There is uncertainty about how the effects of climate change will play out, making it difficult to plan how we will adapt to any effects. Despite this, we need to start thinking now about how we are going to adapt to the effects of climate change
- Greater Wellington has been supporting the development of renewable energy in the region through making Greater Wellington-owned land available to private developers for wind farms. However, there has been opposition to proposals from affected communities, highlighting the tension between the need for renewable energy, environmental protection and community well-being.

11.5.2 GW's response

Greater Wellington is currently participating in the Communities for Climate Protection-NZ programme, along with seven of the city and district councils in the region, and is leading the region's planning for dealing with climate change. We will develop strategies to support our communities to be resilient and adapt to the effects of climate change. Greater Wellington has also developed targets and a plan for reducing its own corporate greenhouse gas emissions.

We will also:

- Carry out the Regional Land Transport Strategy, which has a target to hold transport emissions to 2001 levels by 2016 and measures to reduce transport-related emissions, such as more public transport, school and business travel plan programmes and a web-based ride-share programme
- Continue to provide for the effects of climate change in our flood protection programme
- Work with other local councils and organisations to identify potential renewable energy options for the Wellington region, e.g. marine energy
- Support renewable energy in the region by making Greater Wellington-owned land available for private developers to construct wind farms at Puketiro in the Akatarawa forest and Stoney Creek in the Wairarapa
- Investigate mini hydro-generation projects for water supply purposes
- Construct a mini hydro-generator in Wainuiomata
- Continue to develop our integrated approach to catchment management

- Continue with identifying the potential for climate change to exacerbate natural hazards already occurring in the region (eg, storms, landslips, coastal erosion)
- Ensure our pest plant and pest animal eradication work is responsive to any increase in existing pests or any new pests arriving in the region as a result of climate change
- Continue with our biodiversity programmes
- Support Grow Wellington, the region's economic development agency, at least until June 2012. Grow Wellington is investigating the potential of carbon neutral technology
- Ensure we have the civil defence emergency management capability to respond to any major weather events.