

Review of Appendix 1

Greater Wellington is grateful to submitters for bringing their support or concerns about Appendix 1 to our attention. We are currently contacting all landowners who submitted in opposition to an aspect of draft Appendix 1 and offering to meet with them on site to review information contained in Appendix 1 and hear their ideas and concerns.

We will review Appendix 1 and the policies in the draft Regional Policy Statement that relate to it, based on the concerns and feedback from submitters.

Our wish is to provide certainty to landowners about how Appendix 1 will affect their property, as well as to identify any potential benefits of including a property in Appendix 1.

Timeline

Greater Wellington is now preparing responses to submissions and recommending changes to the draft document. The Council will consider the submissions, responses and changes in October.

The approved changes will be fed into the proposed Regional Policy Statement which will be presented for endorsement by the Council in early December, with consultation to begin next January.

All submitters will receive correspondence prior to notification, advising them how their submission was responded to.



REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT REVIEW NEWSLETTER

No 5: August 2008

Draft Regional Policy Statement – summary of submissions

Greater Wellington Regional Council is currently revising the Regional Policy Statement for the region. The Regional Policy Statement is all about sustainable management – using resources today in a way that doesn't compromise our natural systems and the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

It identifies the regionally significant issues with the region's natural and physical resources and sets out what needs to be achieved (objectives) and the way in which the objectives will be achieved (policies and methods).

Both regional and district plans are required to give effect to the Regional Policy Statement, so it has a direct bearing on what councils can do to protect and enhance our environment.

Greater Wellington released the draft Regional Policy Statement in March. The aim of this non-statutory document was to open discussion with all interested parties and receive feedback.

A total of 107 groups, organisations and individuals responded to the draft Regional Policy Statement during the submissions period between 10 March and 16 May. Between them they contributed close to 1400 submission points on the draft.

Submission highlights and themes

It's apparent from submissions that there are differing views on the best way to manage growth and development in the Wellington region. Some offered support, others sought refinement, while a few asked for more significant changes to how the draft Regional Policy Statement addresses specific issues ranging from waste and water conservation to air quality and energy efficiency.

A key issue that emerges from submitters is how appropriate attention can be given to significant projects – such as Transmission Gully and wind farms - while protecting the region's landscapes, coastal environment, waterbodies and ecosystems. Determining an approach to addressing all of these submissions is the key hurdle faced by Council as it progresses with revising the Regional Policy Statement.

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Other key themes to emerge

- Submitters were generally positive about the layout and readability of the document. There were also helpful suggestions for improvements, including areas where the relationship between different topics could be further explained and improved.
- Support for objectives and policies in the coastal environment section, but some sought greater clarity on the application, intent and impact of this section on land use activities.
- Support for the objectives and policies that seek to protect small streams and encourage water conservation and efficiency.
- General support for how historic heritage has been addressed but some submitters have sought that its importance be recognised as a theme at the start of the document.
- Support for the approach to natural hazards. Some sought that the “avoidance” approach be strengthened for new development; while others have highlighted that total “avoidance” in areas with existing development is unachievable.
- Support for how indigenous ecosystems are addressed. Some submitters have sought greater emphasis on the role of pest management activities and the inclusion of “threatened species”.
- Support for the objectives, policies and methods on regional form. Some submitters suggested the need for a separate section on minerals, waste and energy.
- Some submitters asked for additional themes (such as heritage, landscape and community resilience to peak oil) to be included. A few submitters raised concerns as to whether carbon neutrality was achievable.
- Others wanted the air quality topic to address climate change and emissions from motor vehicles, and domestic fires.
- Others suggest the impacts of climate change be better reflected in the coastal environment and fresh water chapters.
- There may also be a need for more certainty over how stormwater discharges will be managed and the implications for land use activities.
- Greater recognition could be provided to hapu and not just iwi authorities in the iwi resource management topic. Other submissions sought greater involvement of tangata whenua in resource management decision making.

Appendix 1 – Sites of Regional Significance in the Coastal Environment

Appendix 1 identifies sites (on public and private land) with regionally significant values (ecological, heritage, landscape and/or geological) within the coastal environment.

There are three policies in the Draft Regional Policy Statement relating to Appendix 1:

- Policy 3 directs that the region’s city and district council’s include policies and rules in their district plan to protect the values of the sites identified in Appendix 1.
- Policy 33 requires that when resource consents, designations or changes to plans are undertaken, particular regard be given to protecting the values of Appendix 1 sites.
- Policy 50 requires that councils have particular regard to enhancing public access to the sites when processing resource consents, designations or when changing plans.

14 submissions were received in support of Appendix 1, 18 submissions were in opposition and 4 were neutral. Some of those supporting Appendix 1 sought that additional sites be included while those opposing wanted either the Appendix or specific sites listed on it to be deleted (particularly where they apply to private land). Private landowners are particularly concerned about the implications for future land management.

A number of submitters highlighted that there are missing nationally or regionally significant Maori historic heritage sites in Appendix 1.

Why include Appendix 1?

Feedback on the 1995 Regional Policy Statement highlighted the limited usefulness of the tables of regionally significant sites in the coastal environment because they were not mapped and their values were not described. It was suggested that the tables would be more useful if there was information about the values and the extent of the sites. In addition, we need to check whether the sites were still regionally significant and whether other sites should be included.

Greater Wellington engaged consultants to review the current sites, identify any new sites and describe the values. The sites were then mapped using this information. This work was included in Appendix 1 “Sites of Regional Significance in the Coastal Environment” in the draft Regional Policy Statement.

Greater Wellington’s purpose in including properties on Appendix 1 is to signal that they have special qualities, and to highlight the importance of protecting these, as we believe future generations will also wish to enjoy them.

Retaining significant values on both public and private land is core to promoting sustainable management. Greater Wellington is charged with looking out for not only current interests but for the needs of future communities.