

# Submission on the Kāpiti Coast District Council Long-term Plan 2021-41

30 April 2021

By Low Carbon Kāpiti

## Who we are

Low Carbon Kāpiti (LCK) is a grassroots community organisation made up of local people who want to see more action to reduce the causes of the climate crisis. Established in 2017, we have a current membership of 200 based across the Kāpiti Coast District. Our focus is both national and regional.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit our views on the Kāpiti Coast District Council Long-term Plan 2021-41. Long-term plans are an important opportunity for residents to not only answer the specific questions posed by councils, but also to send a clear signal about our expectations for the future direction of our districts, and this submission will cover both of these areas.

**We would like to speak on this submission in-person before Council.**

## Our views on the key decision questions

### Should Council take a bigger role in housing

While others will be better placed to comment on the overall role of Council in combating the local impact of the national housing crisis, LCK wants to ensure that any role Council does play in housing takes into account climate change across a range of areas, including:

#### The location of future housing development

Where greenfields housing is planned, it must be done in places that are not at-risk from the increased coastal erosion and flooding expected as our climate continues to change.

Any greenfields housing projects must be limited to areas in our district where climate change is expected to have comparatively minimal impact over the next 100 years, so as to avoid contributing extra houses and costs to the inevitable managed retreat issue.

Council zoning should take into account the climate risks associated with development in particular areas.

## The type of future housing development

Council should consider options to incentivise climate-friendly building practices and buildings, where houses are contributing minimal emissions during the construction process and during their lifespan.

Certainly, any development directly by Council (whether for social or market housing) must adhere to the best environmentally friendly practices, creating lasting benefits for our climate as well as for the whānau who will live in these homes.

## Good urban design is vital

Council should ensure that all new developments are built with high-quality active transport options. While individual developers are responsible for the areas within their developments, Council has a key role to play in linking new developments with existing the active transport network and with local amenities once they leave the border of the development.

When consenting new subdivisions, Council should always ensure active transport connectivity, and connectivity to public transport spines (train and bus), are present.

## Encourage medium-density housing along public transport spines

Council should consider incentivising medium-density housing along public transport spines, in particular the Waikanae and Paraparaumu train stations.

This will also require an easing of the regulations around infill housing and tiny houses, in order to provide additional options for densification to building up.

## Planning for future growth

Council should plan now for public and active transport in the areas identified by the Regional Growth Framework as being necessary for new housing development.

Mode shift is difficult, but if we can ensure that these new/densified areas have high-quality public and active transport options ready for use at the same time as the houses are built, then we can create positive and climate-friendly transport habits for those new residents from day one.

## What should happen with the Paekākāriki seawall

With increased storm surges, sea level rise and coastal erosion, the continued rebuilding of the Paekākāriki seawall is fundamentally unsustainable in the long-term.

We support the rebuilding of a like-for-like wooden seawall, in order to provide the community with 25 years to determine a locally-driven plan for the long-term future of beach access and any necessary managed retreat.

Fundamentally, in the long-term LCK believes maintenance of The Parade is not possible, and Council should support Paekākāriki residents to identify the best way to protect access to properties on The Parade without continued reinvestment in a seawall that will see diminishing returns every couple of decades.

Over the coming 25 years, it is expected that central government will develop a national framework for managed retreat, including some form of funding for those whose properties will become victims of climate change.

A commitment to rebuilding the seawall to last for the next 25 years will give Paekākāriki residents the time needed to understand their options and collectively decide on the best way forward.

## Should KCDC set up a council-controlled organisation

Firstly, LCK believes strongly that this process is a terrible one, putting the structure ahead of the need. LCK believes that Council should decide what it is trying to achieve and then consider the best mechanism for doing so - and if that is a CCO, then it can consult on it at that point.

Asking residents to agree or disagree with creating a holding organisation without any stated purpose is poor consultation and shows a complete lack of direction or strategy.

If a purpose is later identified, and Council believes a CCO is the best way of achieving that purpose, then LCK expects that the CCO must still sit within KCDC's climate obligations.

Having committed to being carbon neutral by 2025, KCDC cannot outsource its emissions to a CCO and so any emissions generated by the CCO's activity must continue to be calculated as part of KCDC's overall total position.

## Should KCDC be involved in the airport

No. Kāpiti Coast Airport is a significant contributor to emissions on the Kāpiti Coast. In 2019 air travel was estimated at 9% of total emissions on the Kāpiti Coast.

For those who need to fly, improved public transport links in the coming years are likely to make low-carbon travel to both Palmerston North and Wellington airports significantly easier and faster.

Meanwhile, improved rail infrastructure investment will continue to provide better alternative domestic transport options for both business travellers and holiday makers.

Any involvement in the airport will cost significant money for Council, while providing benefits mostly to the wealthiest residents on the Coast who use the airport for business and hobby flying. In effect it would be a money transfer from all Kāpiti residents to the richest few.

LCK believes it should be closed and the land returned to the hapū it was taken from for them to use as they see fit.

LCK believes that if the hapū agrees, the land the airport currently sits on would be ideally suited to a mix of papakāinga and other housing, with parks and active transport links to the coast, the train station and shopping areas. Restoration of further wetland areas around the Wharemauku Stream would also assist with flooding in the area.

KCDC should have no involvement in the airport as an airport. Instead, KCDC should work alongside the hapū, central government and the current owners to return this land to its rightful owners, and to support them to develop it as they see fit.

## Other issues

### Waste

LCK supports an increased focus on waste minimisation but does not believe the current plans will achieve their goals, let alone come close to what is needed or is possible in our district.

We believe KCDC should bring waste collection back in-house, with the following benefits:

#### Fewer trucks

With waste collection controlled by KCDC, there would be only one set of trucks on the streets, rather than competing companies each sending their own trucks. This would result in less noise for residents and less damage to roads by heavy vehicles. It also provides the opportunity for KCDC to follow other councils and consider moving to fully electric trucks for further emission reduction.

#### Green waste collection

Centralising waste collection allows the introduction of districtwide green waste collection. This will provide significant emissions reductions, while also creating cheap or free compost for schools, community gardens, social housing and other uses.

#### Methane capture

With Hokino Landfill soon to close, KCDC will need to find a new location to dispose of our district's waste. While this challenge is not an easy one to resolve, it is one that Council must take responsibility for addressing directly, rather than trying to pass it on to private providers to dump wherever they can get the cheapest rates.

Methane capture should be part of Council's consideration when finalising where our district's waste will go in the future - while improved recycling, green waste collection and other tools will significantly reduce waste to landfill, it will not completely eliminate it, so we must mitigate emissions created through this process.

## Expanding the income base for waste collection

Currently waste collection is paid for to private providers by individual households. The Kāpiti Coast is home to a significant number of properties that are used as weekend homes for Wellingtonians or as AirBNB rentals, and these generally do not pay for rubbish collection. Many of these use Council-provided bins (e.g. in parks) for their waste.

Bringing waste collection back in-house allows it to be rolled into the base rates take, ensuring that all residential properties are contributing to waste collection that benefits us all, not simply those living here full time.

## Transport

### Vulnerability assessment

We believe Council should undertake a vulnerability assessment of all roads it maintains, to assess expected future repair and maintenance needs due to climate change. In particular, this should begin with roads along our coastline and waterways.

This assessment will help to ensure future transport planning is done in a sustainable way, by encouraging development of alternative options to what will become our most high-risk roads.

### Cancel the link road

At a time of rising groundwater levels, building a new road through a wetland / stream area is a terrible idea. Rather than building additional roads in this area, Council should be further restoring the Wharemauku Stream and wetlands to prevent flooding to nearby properties.

This could be done in conjunction with the development of the land currently occupied by Kāpiti Coast Airport (see earlier section for details of this).

### More footpaths

While we appreciate that the previous LTP provided a significant boost to funding for the maintenance and creation of footpaths, it is still insufficient and we believe this should increase further.

Quality footpaths are a key provider for active transport through enabling easy walking routes to public transport, local amenities and schools. They also provide a safe place for children to cycle in areas where full shared paths or separated cycleways are not built.

We also believe it is time to work with local communities who have previously requested not to have footpaths put in (e.g. Otaihanga) to encourage them to revisit this position. These decisions were made some time ago and the demographics of these neighbourhoods have shifted, along with the appreciation for footpaths more generally. LCK is aware of many residents in these areas who wish to turn some of their grass verges into footpaths.

## Safe crossings for cycleways

Our district is blessed with many excellent active transport and recreational cycle paths, and these are widely used by children and adults alike. However, there are a number of dangerous crossings where these interact with roads, and these need to be addressed for safety and mode shift reasons.

We know that where high-quality safe cycling options exist, many people will use them, however encouraging mode shift among the majority requires making it as easy as possible. We want to see cycle priority (through zebra crossings) along these corridors, or at the very least safe regulated cycle crossings (through pedestrian crossing lights).

Examples of these crossings include Poplar Ave between Te Ara o Whareroa and the M2PP shared path, the crossing of Rimu Rd between the Wharemauku Stream Track exits and Coastlands, and Kapiti Rd at the entrance to Kapiti Landing.

## Further Stride and Ride funding

We understand though not listed in the consultation document, that the overall budget includes funding for a second tranche Stride and Ride programme, and we support this.

We would like to see Stride and Ride funding, for the development of additional walking and cycling infrastructure, expanded further and taking its place as one of the Major Projects and Initiatives listed. Council's commitment to carbon neutrality and declaration of a climate emergency requires a prioritised significant investment in active transport now.

## Focus on mode-shift

Nowhere in this document do we see a focus on mode-shift - policies and investment decisions aimed at moving people out of cars and into active or public transport. Without this, Kāpiti risks being left behind as Waka Kotahi and many of our neighbouring councils (including Greater Wellington) understand the importance of transport in taking serious action on climate change.

## Otaki pool upgrade

We strongly support this investment and commend Council for including it. Reducing the carbon footprint of our district's built infrastructure through more efficient heating processes is the exact type of investment that we want to see Council continue to undertake.

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