



HDC NEWS



Economic Development Update

Regional Strategy: A draft Economic Development Strategy for the Thames Coromandel and Hauraki region has been prepared and released for public comment. To date there has been good feedback and constructive comment from industry, environmental groups, Councils and business persons. The submissions made will be reviewed by APR Consultants and presented to the Hauraki Coromandel Development Group for discussion and where appropriate included in the strategy in the first quarter of 2007.

The draft covers a wide range of topics that impact upon regional development and the current structure of the Hauraki Coromandel Development group would not be able to deliver on more than a small number of topics.

Options for delivery are therefore being considered and include

- Setting up a strategic / governance group that directs the implementation and engages with other agencies, Government Departments etc to undertake the work required
- Prioritise the possible activities that are covered in the Strategy and work with Industry and others to deliver on the top 5.
- Set up an Economic Development Agency to implement the strategy and work with agencies, Government Departments, industry etc.

One of the key considerations is funding and this would generally rely on Local Government as being a major contributor for operational costs. Some project funding could be sourced from Central Government as currently happens but this is presently being reviewed by the Ministry of Economic Development. Indications are that this will be a nationally contestable fund as opposed to the present "regional" contributions. This would mean that only projects that increased NZ's overseas income would likely receive funding.

Karangahake Gorge

The Karangahake Gorge is developing into one of the area's must see attractions and The Department of Conservation (Doc) have done some excellent work over the past 3 years to open up the tracks and expose the wonderful mining heritage on which that area was built. Hauraki District Council have provided a welcoming Reserve that provides easy access to the area.

Early this year a strategy was completed on how the Karangahake Gorge might develop and how commercial activity be able to capitalise on the strong visitor market that does not leave as many \$\$\$ in the area as they might if more opportunity to spend was available.

Hauraki District Council have begun discussions with Transit and DoC on how they might progress some of the issues that will arise as visitor numbers grow.

Signage on State Highways is always an issue. Businesses need to advertise and Transit do not want motorists distracted while they are driving. There is some common ground but it will require some work to achieve a result that both parties are happy with.

In the interim Hauraki District Council have granted consent for an information board to be sited in the Karangahake Reserve that allows businesses operating within the gorge area to advertise their services and location. The sign has space for 16 businesses and carries a map of the Karangahake Gorge showing business locations. This will be managed by the Karangahake Promotions Group.

Commercial Development

Waihi is leading the way with increased commercial activity and the development of the Waihi NZ's Heart of Gold concept engendering enquiries from business people who see opportunities to grow with the town.

Paeroa has recently become the home for a neutraceutical company and further industrial site development. The availability of industrial sites now means that business enquiries can be provided with options

Kerepehi is the site for a large industrial subdivision being undertaken by Council. Ground works have commenced and services have been provided. Two sections have been sold and further sections of around 2500m² are now available.

2007 will be an exciting year in the District as further development takes place.

Protecting our Landscape

One of the lesser-known areas of planning the District Plan provisions is that of protection of landscape values. The Resource Management Act says that we must protect outstanding landscape features and, as we have mentioned on this page before, consultants were engaged to give us a report on the landscape features of the District. Councillors were a little surprised to note that only landscape feature that was classed as outstanding was that of the mountain ranges - Coromandel and Kaimais, with the Karangahake Gorge only classed as of regional significance.

At the last District Plan Committee Meeting councillors suggested that more emphasis should be put on the gorge area including the Waitawheta Gorge and that less emphasis should be put on the discouraging of monoculture forestry as suggested in the report. Remembering that this report was looking solely at landscape, the suggestion was to make forestry a discretionary or non-complying activity so that Council could consider the effect it would have on the landscape.

This did not meet with wholehearted approval from a number of councillors who did not think that pine forests were so bad aesthetically as they had been painted and pointed out that there may be other overriding factors, other than landscape, that would mean that forestry was desirable. These could include economic reasons and being more suitable land uses for steep areas than pastoral activity because of the ability of trees to prevent erosion. Certain sensitive areas such as the two mountain ranges may need to have forestry as a discretionary or non-complying activity, both for landscape and conservation purposes but it was not thought that the Western Hills should come into this category.

Rather interestingly the meeting coincided with Government releases about possible taxes on converting forestry to farmland and the need to encourage people to go the other way and convert pasture into forestry in an attempt to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

District Plan Consultation

The main consultation round of the District Plan review will take place over most of next year. A programme of consultation will be released early in the year and it is planned to have regular meetings with interest groups and individuals interested in giving their opinion on the wide range of topics dealt with in the plan. Some of these will be specialised focus groups of invited participants but some will be open to the public so if you have a particular interest or even a general interest in the planning of your district keep your eyes open from February onwards for opportunities to participate in planning this important document. By mid year it is hoped that the writing of the Plan will be well advanced and it is expected to have the draft accepted by Council at its last meeting of the electoral term in September.

After the October election you will have another opportunity to have your say when the draft plan is open for submission and hearings of those submissions will take place in 2008. A final draft will then be produced and after any appeals are settled will be eventually adopted by Council.

Elected Members' Diary

Meetings for the week of 8th to the 14th January 2007

Everyone's still on holiday!



SITUATIONS VACANT

Drainage Foreman

Due to internal promotion we are looking for a Drainage Foreman who can help with the operation and maintenance of our land drainage and stormwater systems.

This will suit a real hands on person who enjoys being out in the field. You will need to have had practical experience and ideally have or be working towards a certificate in drainlaying. Being available to respond to storm warnings or emergencies related to land drainage and having the ability to ensure stormwater systems, pumps and drains are maintained are all part of the job.

To be considered for this role in the operational team that maintains the Districts extensive and varied drainage system you can request a recruitment pack from:

Erin Wood (07) 862 5022
Alternatively e-mail jobs@hauraki-dc.govt.nz or visit our website www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz or pick up a pack from one of our offices in Paeroa, Waihi or Ngatea

Please send us your application by Friday 26th January 2007

