



INFORM - ADVOCATE - EMPOWER

The Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council appreciates the opportunity to have its say on the FutureKāpiti consultation document. The OPC congratulates the KCDC on the attractive and engaging layout of the document, the relative simplicity and directness of the language used and also the innovation of supplying choices on spending options.

Age Friendly Kāpiti

While we welcome the new approach, we are concerned that not all issues are covered in the consultation document, especially that the Council's commitment to Positive Ageing did not rate a mention. The Kāpiti Coast Older District Council and Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council jointly hosted a forum recently which led to the formation of a widely-representative steering group. The stage has come where the the KCDC's commitment to Positive Ageing has to progress from lip service, and be a full partner in the effort to create an Age Friendly Kāpiti.

As an example of where the KCDC could contribute, promotion of the Lifemark Standards and in particular the Lifemark 5-Star Rating System (<http://www.lifemark.co.nz/>) would materially contribute to greater proportion of new homes built being suitable for older people and people with disabilities to live in for a longer period of time.

Funding Community Groups

The Older Persons' Council represents a wide range of opinions and organisations, and as such it is difficult to come up with one view on many of the options presented, however one on which there is unanimity is listed on page 41 of the document under "Other ways to reduce rates"; "Reduce funding for community groups".

The Older Persons' Council strongly submits that funding for community groups be retained. One of the reasons that the KCDC is in its current financial difficulties is that it services a relatively new community with large infrastructural costs. That relative immaturity also affects the voluntary sector, and – particularly in recent years – those organisations are finding it extremely difficult to find the funds needed to keep those organisations going. Other areas of New Zealand that may be seen as largely similar such as Southland, Nelson and Taranaki are in fact much more mature economies, with well established local benefactor organisations (such as SBS Bank, Invercargill Licensing Trust and TSB) that local organisations can reliably turn to for funding. No such benefactor organisations exist in Kāpiti, and the Older Persons' Council strongly submits that funding for community organisations be retained. If the voluntary organisations fail, the costs to the community would be much greater than the \$100,000 proposed in the Long Term Plan.

Kāpiti College Community Performing Arts Centre

The Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council has already supported the application to the Lottery Grants Board of the Kāpiti College Community Performing Arts Centre, and is pleased to endorse the KCDC proposal to support the Kāpiti College Community Performing Arts Centre. It is a low cost way to supply a current need of affordable venue(s) for local productions that are serviced by public transport. We believe that the capacity is not sufficient for the community's need in the long term for larger productions, however we believe that we do not at this stage know what that optimum capacity should be, as the future shape and size of Kāpiti will be influenced by the expressway in ways that are not yet certain. Until there is more certainty, the Kāpiti College Community Performing Arts Centre provides a credible interim solution, and means that the investment of much greater public monies in a performance center can be delayed.

Saving Money

We do propose a way of saving considerable money that is not included in the document. The Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council proposes a pause in the funding of the Town Centres projects until the full impact of the expressway is fully understood. We are not at all certain that, in a commercial sense, the effective Town Centres will be where they currently are. There are many examples of towns being bypassed, making the existing commercial areas – which often grew up around the main road of the time – irrelevant and nonviable. Market forces are showing preference for locations near the Expressway, and we are not sure that public money should be invested in improving areas where private money is not. This has the potential of saving millions of dollars, at least in the interim. If Town Centres projects prove necessary, we can then make the investment knowing that we are not applying cosmetics to a white elephant.

If there is a migration by commercial interests from the current town centres, opportunities may arise for economic re-purposing of existing stock for such activities as a Performing Arts Centre, a Drop-In centre and a Youth Centre.

Aquatic centre charges

Members of the community have raised concern about the Aquatic centre charge increases particularly with their impact on the elderly. While pool services are partly user funded, the proposed increase is higher than inflation. The entry fees for seniors were raised last year from \$2.20 to \$2.50. It is now proposed that it be increased to \$3 while standard adult admission will remain the same. We believe the older members of the community are being unreasonably penalised. This is a huge increase over a two year period relative to the rate of inflation.

Paraparaumu Marine Parade walkway

We would like the Council to install exercise equipment dotted around the grass area adjacent to the walkway in Marine Parade, Paraparaumu. These devices could be static or contain outdoor fitness equipment with some signage on how they can be used. They should be used by the whole community but specifically designed for older persons who frequently walk the flat path for exercise. Free, public outdoor fitness facilities for all ages are common sights in public parks and green spaces across China, Spain, Germany and much of Europe. There are so few facilities for older people in our parks and many older

people find indoor gyms expensive and intimidating with all that firm flesh on show. We propose a fun outside gym for those who are still young at heart and want to exercise.

It is a well known fact older persons are more content and likely to flourish if they can get out and participate in local life. The existing benches and posts along the path could also be used as an alternative public gym. The ability to do leg-lifts along the walkway may not reverse the Council's desire to have a more balanced population but it will enable the older people to look at things differently and with more supple joints.

Housing for Older Persons

Some of the housing rentals for new tenants will be \$143 per week. This is 33% of a beneficiary's income including the housing allowance. According to the OECD, households in New Zealand on average spend 25% of their gross adjusted disposable income on keeping a roof over their heads, one of the highest levels in the OECD, where the average is 21%. The KCDC is requiring older people to contribute a much greater proportion of their income on housing, and the Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council submits that those costs should be closer to national and international levels.

With the demographic trends in this area now well established and projected, it follows that there will be an increasing need for low cost rentals that private enterprise will not fulfil, particularly for the elderly and disabled. The KCDC has established a proud record in the provision of such housing, however that stock has not been increased for many years.

The Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council submits that the KCDC investigate the leveraging of the increased value of its current housing stock and take advantage of the current historically low interest rates to provide more housing units. Examples exist where other councils have worked to provide additional housing without additional Council capital expenditure.

Affordability

This year New Zealand Superannuitants received a 2.07% increase. The proposed increase in rates for all areas except Otaki far exceed that amount. Waikanae's rates are proposed to increase by 8.5 %. Many of our retired people live in Waikanae and will experience a substantial lowering in their standard of living. The Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council submits that the current trend in rates is not sustainable.