

consultation on draft ten year plan

Overview of Consultation Process

Eight page tabloid summaries of the draft Ten Year Plan and submission forms were distributed to every household and private mail box in the district, with additional copies mailed to out-of-town property owners. The summary, full draft plan and submission form were also made available for inspection at a number of council locations, and on the council website from where online submissions could be made.

A series of public meetings provided opportunities for residents to find out more about the council's proposals, and the chance to ask questions and comment on the draft Ten Year Plan. A communication campaign included newspaper public notices, media releases and radio commercials, drawing attention to the consultation process and encouraging the community to participate and give feedback.

A total of 762 submissions were received and 131 submitters took the option of speaking to the mayor and councillors in person about their submissions, over a five day period. Submissions tended to be supportive of the 2% general rates increase proposed in the draft Ten Year Plan for 2009/10 and of proposals to hold general rates increases to within inflation for the remaining nine years.

Other major issues identified by many submitters included waste minimisation, various rates issues (including the Business and Economic Development targeted rate proposal), forest recreational access, geothermal use, CBD revitalisation and the Lakefront development proposal.

All submissions were acknowledged in writing and submitters will also receive correspondence informing them of the relevant decisions made by the council in adopting the Ten Year Plan 2009-19.

Survey Results

As part of the process of feedback on the draft Ten Year Plan, 355 submitters completed a survey form identifying which council services they thought needed more attention, which were OK at current levels, and which could have less spent on them. In broad terms, most submitters thought that council resources presently allocated to the various activities were generally "about right."

The top seven activities that submitters thought needed more attention were:

- recycling facilities
- community safety
- attracting events
- processing building consents
- parking availability
- road safety
- district roads.

The top activities that submitters wanted to see fewer resources allocated to were:

- parking enforcement
- community arts
- tourism marketing
- assisting community groups
- City Focus events and entertainment
- processing building consents
- processing planning consents.

And those specifically identified as being at about the right levels were:

- downtown cleaning
- library
- rubbish collection
- museum
- parks, gardens & reserves
- visitor information centre (i-SITE)
- event facilities.

Other Feedback

The council has also compared these survey responses to preliminary results from the 2008 NRB (National Research Bureau) survey into community perceptions of council services and activities. The NRB survey comprises independently undertaken research targeting 400 demographically representative and randomly selected respondents from across the district.

A separate review of service levels and of RDC's performance framework, undertaken by consultants Synovate NZ, has also been considered by the mayor and councillors.

Focus for 2009/10

As a result of feedback the council has decided that in the coming year (2009/10) particular attention will be given to improving community satisfaction with the following activities and services:

- recycling: allocating more resources to recycling
- waste minimisation: preparing a detailed report outlining options to increase levels of service, including kerbside recycling, for possible implementation in the 2010/11 year.
- community safety: achieving more general awareness of the cooperation that exists to improve community safety, among the Police, Ministry of social Development and RDC.
- events attraction: increasing Rotorua's competitiveness and ability to attract significant events that boost the local economy.
- processing building consents: more effective measurement of satisfaction levels so improvements can be targeted if required.
- parking and roading: investigating and analysing a range of options that have been identified in officer reports.