

town & country matters



March 2010 | Issue 57

From the Mayor, Meng Foon



Tena koutou katoa, ki nga mate o nga marae maha o te Tairāwhiti, haere atu ra.

Greetings as Ying and I offer the very best of the Chinese New Year to you all, the year of the

tiger will be another challenging but rewarding one for all.

This month is about meeting you at your place to discuss the annual plan. This plan outlines what we have done and what we are going to do for all in our region.

Council has done much to attract business and encourage job opportunities, while looking after the environment. This includes:

- providing 36ha, fully-serviced, for heavy and light industry
- better planning for the city, through the urban development plan, to enhance natural features
- improving the environment with our new wastewater treatment plant
- investing in stop banks on the flats to mitigate flooding
- encouraging infill housing and designated residential zones
- working to ensure horticulture on the flats is not complicated by lifestyle subdivisions
- supporting "adding value" to primary produce to create more jobs
- supporting harbour development as part of our tourism plan
- enhancing the CBD with better footpaths in development and reconstruction areas
- endorsing the aim of Arts in Public Places and the Navigation Projects to encourage pride in our communities, extend our visitors' stay and provide more opportunities for the tourism business sector.

Our door is always open and we encourage you to have a chat to us about anything. Please don't let things fester for years on end, we are here to try to help.

Kia ora

Meng



The wastewater treatment plant site at Banks Street is abuzz from dawn to dusk with sheet piling (left of frame) for the three pump stations and the construction of more than 1300 stone columns (right) to support the main structures. Project engineers Sheridan Peckett (HEB Structures, left) and Michael Yukich (Gisborne District Council) discuss progress to date.



Treatment plant now on firm footing

The new wastewater treatment plant in Banks Street is moving on up.

While the focus for the past few months has been on improving underground conditions, this month the focus shifted to works above ground level with work starting on foundations for the pre-treatment and control buildings.

Three cranes and about 20 people are now working on site. The largest crane – which at 120 tonnes and 80 metres dominates the city skyline – is working on sheet piling for the three pump stations on site; the two smaller cranes on constructing the underground stone columns. More than 5000 cubic metres of stones go into constructing these 10 metre columns, sited 1.5 metres apart centre to centre. About 685 columns have been built under the pre-treatment and control buildings. Another 650 are being built under the biological trickling filter tank.

It takes a crane and two diggers about 25 minutes to form each column, and together they can create 25 on average a day. With two cranes operating, they build about 56 columns a day. The cranes use a metal drilling head, assisted by a water jet and vibration, to force the ground apart down to

a depth of 10 metres. Once the hole is created and the silty sand displaced, about 4 cubic metres of gravel is progressively put in and compacted from the bottom up.

Project manager Peter McConnell says the columns will support the buildings and help prevent liquefaction during earthquakes.

Three below-ground pump stations are being constructed on site. The big crane and a 5-8 tonne vibro hammer are employed to drive the 1-1.37 tonne sheet piles slowly into the ground using a combination of mainly vibration and weight. The piles are 18mm thick steel sheets that interlock to create impenetrable barriers within each pump station.

The outfall pump station, the largest of the three, has 13m piles driven 11m into the ground. Work began in early March to excavate 1700 cubic metres of soil from the pump stations before concrete linings could be poured.

The \$39.5M upgrade of the city's wastewater is the largest infrastructure project since the late 1960s. HEB Construction has the main \$21M contract to build the treatment plant and the main industrial separation scheme. The treatment plant is on track for commissioning by 31 December 2010.

Have your say on Annual Plan

Do you think that the proposed rate increases (and decreases) for various properties in the district are reasonable value for the service you get? Do you support Council's plans to upgrade, build, repair, install, extend, develop or realign various services? Whatever your views, make sure you have your say on **Council's draft plan for the next year (July 2010-June 2011)** before submissions close on Friday, 26 March. Because if you don't tell Council what you agree with and what you don't, who will?

The draft plan proposes an overall 6.1 percent rise in rates revenue, slightly less than the 6.37 percent forecast in the Ten Year Plan. Council plans to raise \$45.32M in rates, which accounts for just over half of Council's forecast income of \$81.86M. The rest comes from grants and subsidies, dividends and interest and other revenue.

The average city residential ratepayer will pay an extra \$170 a year – a rise of 7.2 percent on last year's rates.

Continued on page 4

Enrol, stand, vote and have a voice in your community

Do you want to have a say about who represents you on Council or the Tairāwhiti District Health Board? Have you thought about standing as a councillor yourself?

To vote, you have to be enrolled on the electoral roll. Registration on the roll closes on 20 August but don't wait until then. Do it soon.

Voting packs will be sent out from 17 September. Postal voting takes place over three weeks from 20 September until 9 October.

To stand, you need to be nominated between 23 July and 20 August. Again, don't leave it until the last few days. That puts unnecessary pressure on electoral

staff. Last election, a third of the nominations were lodged in the last two hours.

The district's track record for voting is poor. In the 2007 local body elections, just over half the nearly 30,000 eligible voters in the Gisborne district actually voted. About 14,000 people did not bother.

A high voter turnout benefits voters – who get to have their say about how they are represented – and Council – which gets a really strong mandate from its community. This year Ka Pai Kaiti is working with the two runanga, Council and the district health board in a Voter Participation Project. The aim is to encourage communities like Kaiti and Elgin with

poor voter participation – particularly Maori and young people – to enrol on the electoral roll, stand for election, question candidates about their policies and VOTE.

Enrol. Vote. Be part of the democratic process.

For further information, go to www.gdc.govt.nz or contact Simon Jeune (Electoral Officer) or Donna Shaw (Deputy Electoral Officer)

Local Elections 2010

**YOUR VOTE
YOUR COMMUNITY**



Wheels starting to mooove

Gisborne's love affair with cycling is shifting up a gear or three.

The old Motu Coach Trail is edging closer to being part of the NZ Cycle Trail, with a \$25,000 feasibility study grant approved. And Council staff and councillors are watching the finish line in the hope that Gisborne could become a model community for cycling and walking – an initiative that could bring long-desired funding to complete the Sponge Bay to Wainui walk and cycleway, as well as other projects.

Engineering and works manager Peter Higgs says Gisborne has what it takes to be a model walking and cycling community as outlined by the Government. "We have had tremendous community support for our application and should know by the end of March whether we have been successful. Walking and cycling are of great importance to the community and comprised the highest number of submissions during the Ten Year Plan process last year. Council in response approved only two capital works projects – river and beachside walk and cycleways, and the wastewater treatment plant."

He says the main outcome the Government is looking for is to create a community where walking or cycling is the easiest choice.

"That's easy. We have flat, easy walking and cycling terrain and most city residents live and play near where they work. Council remains committed to making walking and cycling the easiest transport choice. We are developing our walking and cycling networks, improving safety for walking and cycling, and improving awareness of the many opportunities to walk and cycle in the city and district."

Better walk and cycleways will also result in improved



safety and public health, and reduced environmental impacts. Meanwhile, the Gisborne and Opotiki councils and Department of Conservation are working together to cost out concept plans for the Motu Coach Trail to ensure they can be built and will deliver what they promise.

The yet-to-be-confirmed route is likely to follow stock routes, old coach roads and 1880s military tracks, and offer a view of rugged inland scenery and unique history through the heart of the Raukumaras.

Discussions and consultation will start soon. The feasibility study is expected to be completed by the end of May and, all going well, construction could begin by year's end.

New city face in wake of quake

It may have taken longer than expected but Gisborne city is starting to reveal a new face with earthquake-damaged buildings being repaired, painted and, importantly, made safe.

Construction and consents administrator Ian Petty says that repairs are well under way on most of the buildings that suffered damage in December 2007. Just a couple of owners await final clearances before work starts on the Albert Building in Peel Street, and the Lyric Café, Moleta Brothers and No.9 buildings in Gladstone Road.

Repairs are in full swing at the Bain and Sheppard building in Customhouse Street and the Allen Trading Co building across the road is nearly finished. New trusses have gone in and the side parapets knocked down on the Food For Thought building, damaged by both earthquake and fire. The building will be rebuilt with two rather than three storeys.

Mr Petty says the strengthening and redevelopment of the Rosies building on the Bright Street-Gladstone Road corner is a success story.

"The owners now have nationally prominent tenants in the NZ PostShop and KiwiBank, which will occupy part of the upstairs. The ex-Leisure Inn premises on the ground floor will be developed into a larger open retail space once renovations to the upstairs access take place."

With toppling parapets causing the bulk of damage in the earthquake, Council last month advised more than 100 central city property owners that they had two years to strengthen their parapets or prove they were not quake-prone. Another 40 people were advised to either strengthen their buildings by 2018 or provide evidence that they were not a quake-risk under the conditions of the 2004 Building Act.

Tsunami generates reminder

February's tsunami was a reminder to everyone to find out whether they live in a tsunami-risk zone and what their actions should be in the event of any type of tsunami.

For more information, see the Civil Defence section of www.gdc.govt.nz or phone 867 2049. During an event, listen to local radio.

Lighting the way to a safer future and better environment

Bright, consistent and innovative lighting could be the beacon for a safer, more connected community. During the next five years, Council plans to install white-light street lamps, encourage under-verandah lighting, and innovatively highlight heritage buildings, bridges, landmarks and the inner harbour.

Principal urban design planner Duncan Rothwell says a lighting audit, spearheaded by Council, the police and Heart of Gisborne, highlighted that the inner city has inconsistent, dim lighting under

verandahs, around ATM machines and at taxi ranks. Pubic carparks are also poorly lit.

"The new strategy looks at short to long-term ways to promote safety and security, help pedestrians more easily find their way around the city after dark and make the city a more attractive and safer place to live, work and visit. We want to get projects happening that are relatively cheap and can significantly improve safety and security in the city."

Already street lights in two city blocks have been converted from yellow to white lights, which are

brighter and enable better facial recognition, an important factor when streets are viewed from CCTV cameras.

"We're working with Heart of Gisborne to encourage a consistent level of lighting through the city with well-lit window displays, and the use of internal see-through security grilles rather than roller shutters. Lighting a building or location can make an area more welcoming and vibrant. It can enhance quality of life through improving the environment, and reduce crime and the perception of safety."

In short

Youth council to have a say

Bridge jumpers and the Annual Plan are expected to be hot items on the agenda for the new Gisborne District Youth Council when it next convenes. The group of 12 to 24-year-olds met for the first time last month and will meet every two months at different venues around the district as part of having a greater say in Council's decision-making processes. Council appointed Tairawhiti Youth Voice as the Gisborne District Youth Council – to ensure the unique youth-driven nature of Youth Voice wasn't usurped by council bureaucracy – and approved the ground rules for how the two councils would interact. The youth council includes councillors Nona Aston, Andy Cranston and Brian Wilson. Community development officers also support the group.

Waipaoa scheme options up for discussion

Preliminary consultation will begin shortly to gather feedback on options for upgrading the Waipaoa River Flood Control Scheme. Options include protection levels from 100 to 200 years and costs ranging from \$3M to \$12.6M. The plan is to split the cost between people who benefit directly, 65 percent; those who benefit indirectly, 20 percent; and groups that contribute to the need for the scheme, 15 percent. A do-nothing option will also be considered. The existing scheme offers protection for a 70-year return period, similar to a Cyclone Bola-type storm. Future aggradation and the expected increase in intense rainfall events as a result of climate change would also need to be considered.

Wider consultation will take place once a preferred option is identified with direct beneficiaries. Formal consultation will run concurrently with the Ten Year Plan next year.

Getting Max out of team

Rural communities and the city are getting a well-deserved spruce-up thanks to seven teams of Community Max workers operating around the district. From Te Araroa to Te Karaka, the teams of four, and their supervisors, have been cleaning up beaches and marae, clearing vegetation and tidying public spaces. At Ruatoria, the team's work has included maintenance of Mt Hikurangi huts and nursery work. Each project also has a separately-funded training component to help build skills. One group is working towards a revised Certificate in Rural Studies in conjunction with Tairawhiti Polytechnic. A Te Araroa worker has begun on-line teacher training.

Infrastructure standards under review

People with an interest in subdivision and land development are being asked to comment on a review of infrastructure standards now under way. The aim of the review is to incorporate more sustainable and low impact design options into the mix and improve how Council's planning and engineering standards are integrated. Planner Kurt Ridling says the design of any development is subject to various infrastructure standards from roads and accessways to water management and landscaping provisions. A key change will be a new approach to road design and stormwater management. "We would like to hear from people who have experience in this area and want to contribute as we work towards a plan change and new infrastructure code."

A discussion document is available at www.gdc.govt.nz or contact Kurt Ridling, 867 2049.

Website interest grows with blogging, agendas

Forget the snail mail. Blogging or posting a comment on Council's website www.gdc.govt.nz is the way to quickly make your views known. Since late February, dozens of people have made their views known on a variety of issues including the draft Annual Plan. The facility is available on media releases and through the Have Your Say section. The website, which is continually being refined to better meet public needs, has also attracted a steady stream of visitors viewing meeting agendas and minutes. Web administrator Karen Hadfield says that increasingly

more people are checking out the meetings calendar, agendas, post-meeting minutes and staff reports. "People can also use keywords to search agendas, minutes and reports. Their search can be narrowed further if they know the approximate date or committee. If people want to check the progress of a particular topic of interest that has been to a committee or council meeting they can search and find all the relevant reports and appendices. Agenda reports are available two days before each meeting."



The \$40M city wastewater project is the largest infrastructure project undertaken in more than 40 years. Clockwise from left, the dance of machinery; constructing stone columns; sheet piling; and operations committee members with project manager Peter McConnell.

New development runs smoothly

Millions of dollars worth of building work is bringing an air of optimism to the city. In the three months to February, Council issued consents for \$45.7M of building work – the highest quarter on record. The peak November month of \$22.5M included the consent for the city's wastewater treatment plant in Banks Street; December's \$12.7M included the new courthouse extensions; and January's \$10.5M was boosted by the \$7.5M value of work for The Warehouse. Building is expected to start this month on The Warehouse and in the next few months on the \$40-50M Ryman Village at Lytton West. The new Warehouse will have twice as much floor space and three times the parking. And an 800 square metre Warehouse Stationery will be built as part of the project on the Pitt and Customhouse Street corner. Resource consent has also been granted for Hikurangi Forest Farms' mill at Matawhero where \$3M in site preparation work is under way. Ryman development manager Andrew Mitchell says the retirement village will provide accommodation for nearly 300 people with independent townhouses, assisted living and care beds. Occupying 3.7ha, the new village will be Ryman's 24th. "We expect the first townhouses to be occupied by the end of the year with the main building completed midway through next year. We believe the market is here in Gisborne for a village offering a continuum of care. This has been designed for the local market with all the quality and amenities of our other villages." He complimented Gisborne District Council on the

smooth consent process to date, which rated highly against other councils in the country. "We do a lot of pre-submission consultation. Gisborne's Council has been easy to work with, available and receptive to discussing any issues." The Ryman development is expected to provide a bounty of work for local tradespeople during construction and to hundreds of people staffing the facility. On a daily basis, jobs would be available for up to 40 fulltime equivalents, possibly more than 100 part-timers. Chief executive Lindsay McKenzie is heartened that Council's planning framework is enabling such developments to take place. "Both Ryman and Hikurangi were dealt with as non-notified consents because our District Plan already allowed for the activities. Where resource consents were required, the effects were no more than minor. What this tells me is that our planning is supporting our district's economic and social wellbeing. "Given the scale of what was proposed, I am delighted with how Council policies and people have responded to requests from those wishing to establish businesses or themselves in the district. If we do it well, we will assist developers. We certainly recognise any delays come with a cost." Council offers a case manager approach to consents with a single point of contact in the organisation. "We are also looking at how people who strike problems, or with multiple consents, can escalate their concerns up the organisation – for instance to a case manager – and still get good service."



Senior planner Keriana Wilcox addresses a group at Te Iritekura Marae, Waipiro Bay (left) as Waiapu councillor Bill Burdett (centre) watches Waipiro and Te Puia Springs residents get down to business at the township workshop. At right, Matawai and Motu residents discuss how they could help improve their township, seen by many as the gateway to both Gisborne and Opotiki.

Townships take to development plans with gusto

Natural resources team leader Yvette Kinsella gets excited about the township plans she and senior planner Keriana Wilcox help communities to prepare.

She loves the way people turn out for meetings and the way they quickly map out township features that are important to them, what they love, their ideas for improving what they don't and who they think should lead and contribute to the change. She's fascinated by how people allocate their \$1000 in "funny money" to various projects and relishes the way people make things happen for themselves – from renovating a township sign to holding fun activities to bring the community together – and the way they realise that agencies other than Council can help. And then

there's the children's artwork depicting how they want their place to be in 20 years – that's a real buzz, she says.

Yvette and Keriana are this year helping to put together four sets of township plans for Matawai-Motu, Manutuke, Rangitukia-Tikitiki and Waipiro Bay-Te Puia. Workshops have been held for three of them to date and ideas are flowing thick and fast.

The six completed township plans are already helping to realise community aspirations. At Ruatoria, river erosion work to protect the township is off to a good start and the community is working together through Te Puawaitanga o Ruatorea Trust. More regular community happenings are happening at Patutahi and plans are afoot to set up a community garden in

conjunction with the polytechnic using Council land and community resources.

"Patutahi held Socktober last October to celebrate the humble sock, which was a heap of fun with dogs and children wearing costumes, and they set up a skate park with Council's help.

"Te Araroa's request for a more attractive streetscape is nearly complete and Tokomaru Bay's call for improved relationships with Council staff is also happening, aided by the appointment of East Coast area officer Vance Walker. Talks have started about future options for the Waima wharf"

A second round of township workshops will be held in April with the aim of developing draft township plans in June, and final plans by the end of the year.

Local solutions help protect Ruatoria

Unusually shaped, large concrete blocks are being used to protect Ruatoria township and the Waiomatatini road at Kainanga Hill.

Dolosse, as they are known, have been used to create a groyne to protect the toe of the Kainanga Hill and Ruatoria-made dolosse will soon form four new groynes to protect the township itself. The Waiapu River erosion protection works are proving to be a cost-effective, innovative solution, cutting transport costs, providing local employment and using local resources.

The dolosse groyne, built between two existing rock groynes to protect Kainanga Hill, couldn't have been placed at a better time. Within days of its construction, late-January flooding saw the Waiapu River rise above expectations leaving the new groyne firmly in place.

Rivers and land drainage asset manager Jürgen Komp says the groyne worked extremely well. The groyne comprises more than 40 dolosse or large concrete blocks, most of which measure 2.5m and weigh 4



Dolosse in place in the Waiapu River. Ruatoria workers (right) help construct the concrete blocks.

tonnes. They are tied together with steel rope.

Unused concrete dolosse – initially used for the reclamation of the Kaiti log yards – were sourced at low cost from Gisborne and transported to the site. Ten new dolosse were made in Gisborne using crushed, recycled concrete; another was made of washed shingle from the Waiapu River.

The original dolosse moulds were found in Gisborne. Since late last year, a team of up to four Ruatoria people have built about 100 large and 50 smaller dolosse using washed Waiapu river shingle, and a washing plant made from scrap by Rock Products. This has halved the cost to about \$600 a dolos. Resource Consent has been granted and the four new groynes are expected to be built just north of the SH 35 bridge within the next few months.

Caretakers ready to help out communities

The idea of getting paid for looking after the community you live in and love sounds like a win-win job. The more than 40 people who applied for nine community caretaker contracts certainly think so.

Engineering and works manager Peter Higgs says the idea of community caretakers grew out of Council looking at ways to reduce costs.

This developed further into "a positive" of supporting local employment in the townships.

"We realised we could offer at least nine local people a regular income and that those with a passion and pride for their place were likely to do the best job.

"The plan is to wrap up some of our smaller contracts into one contract that provides fulltime work.

"In most townships, caretakers will look after their transfer station and public toilets, control litter, mow reserves, paint out graffiti and landscape parks.

"We believe this will be a more efficient way of operating and will certainly help reduce the travel costs incurred by out-of-township contractors."

However, with each of the various contracts having a different end date, it could be the end of June before contracts are aligned and caretakers appointed.

Most rates expected to rise 4.5 percent

From page 1:

This could be reduced if the Government agrees to put \$7.2M into the industrial waste separation part of the city wastewater project.

Ruatoria ratepayers will see a decrease in their rates while most other areas will see a rise of about 4.5 percent. Most fees and charges will rise 3-4 percent. Major projects planned for the coming year are to:

- realign Waiapu River to protect Ruatoria
- upgrade the War Memorial Theatre
- build a new wastewater treatment plant
- make minor repairs to Waipaoa River Flood Protection scheme

Council also plans to:

- extend cycle lanes, footpaths and walkways

- repair the Te Arai River bridge that carries the city's main reticulated water supply from Waingake
- replace various wastewater pipelines
- upgrade Whataupoko stormwater infrastructure
- run a major tsunami exercise
- encourage landowners to restore ecology of wetlands and waterways
- develop an arts and culture strategy
- build a new Waikanāe Stream footbridge to improve pedestrian access between Awapuni School, city beaches and Alfred Cox Park
- install interpretive information panels on Titirangi Reserve (Kaiti Hill) and the Botanical Gardens.

The full draft plan is available at www.gdc.govt.nz or Council's city and Te Puia Springs offices.

Talk to us at a meeting

Fifteen community update meetings have already been held but you still have time to attend another.

16 March Wainui Beach School, 5.30pm

17 March Whangara Marae, 5pm

Tolaga Bay Fire Station, 7.30pm

18 March Makauri School, 5pm

22 March Uepohatu Marae, Ruatoria, 6pm

23 March Matawai Fire Brigade Rooms, 6pm

24 March Waerenga o Kuri Hall, 5.30pm

25 March HB Williams Memorial Library, 6pm