



Milford Residents Association submission on Auckland Council Annual Budget and Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Agreement 2017-2020

27 March 2017

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board

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Milford Residents Association members have had the opportunity to comment for this submission.

We have looked back on our submission on the 2015-2025 budget and local board agreement and congratulate Council (and Auckland Transport) on the introduction of integrated public transport fares (and many other public transport related improvements) and Devonport-Takapuna Local Board on the completion of the Wairau Estuary pedestrian and cycle bridge. As we noted in that submission, the bridge has quickly become a highly popular Milford/Castor Bay icon. It may not be paved in pink but it has been in constant use since it opened.

Submission on the Council annual budget 2017-2018

1. Rate increase of 2.5 per cent

We agree with the proposed average general rates increase of 2.5% for 2017-2018. We expect Council to be careful and efficient in all aspects of its services and public projects. We also agree that major new and replacement capital projects should be funded across the generations and not paid for entirely out of current funding.

Many Milford residents are on fixed incomes and we would not support an increase over the proposed 2.5% annual increases.

We believe that the current Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC) is currently too low and should be \$500 or even more. The current amount should be higher to more closely reflect the value of the basic services Auckland Council provides annually to every household.

A higher UAGC would also spread the overall rates more evenly across the region and remove the lowest and highest rates. Milford is an area in which some people pay extremely high rates, which bear no correspondence to the services they receive.

Those people are usually able to and are willing to pay more than the average but not to the point where they feel they are being gouged. There is a very real feeling in some areas that people are paying far too much, and this unfairness should be addressed.

2. Business rates decrease as a proportion of total rates

We **disagree** with the current policy of reducing business rates as a proportion of all rates. We **agree** with the 2017-2018 policy of making no additional adjustments to the difference between business and residential rates. Businesses have already received substantial decreases in rates since the inception of Auckland Council. They have the ability to claim GST and write rates off against tax, unlike householders.

3. Council spending on tourism promotion

We are not convinced of the need or desirability for the Council to spend heavily on tourism promotion and certainly do not think such spending should come from residential ratepayers. We believe the Council needs to urgently source funding from a wider variety of sources than rates. It seems that tourism promotion – and possibly a targeted rate on accommodation providers - is a good place to start.

5. Living wage by 2019 policy

We whole-heartedly support this policy.

6. Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Priorities

Our members were circulated for their comments which have been included in this submission. We support the Milford Centre Plan (MCP) (2015-2045) and its five outcomes and have referenced it below where appropriate.

Milford projects and issues MRA wishes the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board to assign high or higher priority are:

Takapuna to Milford Coastal Walkway

We support the project to replace Black Rock Bridge which is essentially the replacement of a storm-damaged bridge. If it has not been possible to secure a land-based track for the Milford to Takapuna coastal walkway, a bridge option should be pursued.

We support accelerated progress on the Milford to Takapuna walkway. We ask that it is developed: (1) in a natural and low-profile way that is in keeping with the rough and tumble nature of the lava flows over which it passes, (2) allows people to transfer easily between walkway and rocks throughout and (3) as a walkway of regional significance, is funded regionally and not from Milford reserve funds.

A comment from a member is:

My wish for the area is to have a world class promenade coastal walkway connecting Milford with Takapuna. The sort of walkway that is so common in overseas holiday spots. The walkway at present is really only for mountain goats and very fit people and even so it is hugely popular with walkers having to wait in single file areas.

Please refer to the Milford Centre Plan for the following Outcome and Action Points: MRA and other community and business representatives worked with Auckland Council to develop the Milford Centre Plan (2015-2025). We strongly support both the vision of Milford articulated in the plan and the proposals it contains to give effect to this vision. It is a plan which acknowledges and develops Milford's strengths and it is coherent and achievable. While one or two projects have been achieved since 2015, the Local Board is now asked to follow up the soft words with actual budget. We are happy to further refine priorities in consultation with the Board.

Outcome 1, Actions 2, 5, 15. Improve access to Lake Pupuke

Milford people would very much like the long-planned walkway around Lake Pupuke to be completed. We understand that there are issues around riparian rights. However, in certain areas, this could well be overcome by using floating pontoons (as is used along the river in Brisbane).

We note that the existing walkways around Lake Pupuke encourage peaceful enjoyment and minimum disruption to birdlife. Parts are also closed for four months of the year for the bird breeding season. We feel that a cycleway around the edge of the lake is unnecessary and would adversely change the whole character of the lake edge.

Outcome 1, Action No. 17, Road end reserves in Milford: Our members have pointed out the very poor state of the road reserves leading to Milford Beach, in particular, Milford Rd, Cecil Rd and Craig Rd. In each case, access to a seat at the edge of the beach is impossible for anyone with a walker because the land is too rough (e.g. paths simply stopping, uneven cobblestone paving, kikuyu grass). Outdoor furniture is unmaintained and in rough condition. At Cecil Rd, the stone wall facing the beach was damaged at least three years ago and is continuing to deteriorate. This was reported to Council but no remedial work has been carried out.

Members have pointed out the poor state and very high use of the Milford Road end in particular: 'a disgrace to the Milford Beach users'; 'the shower area is very bad with dirty, mushy, wet, slimy, sand under foot', 'Norfolk Pine needles never cleaned up'.

The landscaping and redesign of the Milford Road, Cecil Road and Craig Road road ends should each be promoted into the 0-5 year category of the Milford Centre Plan.

Outcome 1, Action 18, Park Planning Milford Reserve

In view of the recent inappropriate proposal for sports development in the Milford Reserve, this comprehensive plan for the Milford Reserve should be of the highest priority. The community liaison referred to will need to be far more than the recent tokenism we have experienced.

Outcome 2, Kitchener Rd as a pedestrian-friendly main street

We agree that Kitchener Rd (between Frieston Rd and Shakespeare Rd) is now and should be a slow-speed zone. Priority should be given to ensuring that continues.

Outcome 2, Action 6 Pedestrian and cycle safety and amenity

Traffic flows and issues

Many of our members are concerned about the increasing levels of traffic around the Milford shopping area and feeder roads. They are also fear further increases after the Milford-Living apartments are built. They believe greater priority should be given to improving traffic flows. Their concerns include:

- The difficulty of making journeys from and to their homes through Milford:
 - Turning right from Shakespeare Rd into Milford Rd
 - Poor or no sequencing of traffic lights at the top and bottom of the Milford shops

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- The difficulty of making journeys from and to their homes through Milford:
 - Turning right from Shakespeare Rd into Milford Rd
 - Poor or no sequencing of traffic lights at the top and bottom of the Milford shops
- Pedestrian safety and amenity, especially for children and the elderly.
 - There is MRA member support for the removal of the slip lanes on the two signalised intersections (as is happening elsewhere in Auckland to improve pedestrian safety and community amenity). Others, however, use the slip lanes and do not want them removed. Communications on this issue would need to be very carefully handled by Auckland Transport. However, it could be treated as a model exercise to achieve this change.
 - Pedestrian facilities should be installed at the entrance to Fenwick Avenue as set out in Figure 6 on p. 25 of the Milford Centre Plan.
 - Street improvements to provide safe pedestrian access from the township to the beach as detailed in Figure 4 on p. 19 of the plan (Milford Road and adjoining streets). We would also like to see improved crossing facilities for pedestrians on Omana Road (getting kids across the road near the roundabout is extremely dangerous).

Outcome 3, all Actions. Milford town centre: an attractive, vibrant, community focal point.

This outcome needs revisiting in light of the dominant effect from the consented Milford-Living complex. The building's shading effect will surely have a negative effect on creating a warm welcoming pedestrian precinct in part of the present car park. The Kitchener Rd public car parks must be maintained here (with two supermarkets, the mall, and being in the centre of Milford).

Members have suggested that, twice a year, Kitchener Road (between Fenwick and Milford Road) should closed to all traffic for a community market and gathering. It would be so much better to have stalls in the main road rather than crammed on the footpaths and give a much greater community feel. Given there is an alternative route

around Milford (through Omana Road and Milford Road) and only the public carpark would be affected by access (Fenwick Avenue can stay open), the impact on the transport network would be limited but the benefit would be to provide the Milford community with the opportunity to host a much more significant event that brought together the Milford Business Association, Milford Residents Assn, local service clubs and arts, cultural and sports clubs. We would like the Local Board to support and facilitate such an event.

Outcome 3, Action 5. Car parking, pedestrian safety

The MCP talks specifically about installing wheel stops in the Kitchener Rd car park to stop cars rolling over and obstructing footpaths. MRA representatives also spoke to the Local Board in 2016 about wheel stops being **reinstalled** on the northern boundary of the car park following the construction of the New World supermarket. Nothing has happened since we spoke to the Local Board and this needs to become an immediate (6 months) priority.

Outcome 3, Actions 4 and 9. Community facility

The 'Milford Community Needs Assessment' (particularly with respect to a community venue) should be accorded a high priority. The Milford-Living residential development (115 residences) is planned for completion by 2019. With such an increase in population planned for the immediate future, it is well past time for Milford to receive its first-ever piece of civic infrastructure. It is needed now and will be more than ever in 2019.

Outcome 3, Action 9: High priority should be given to establishing whether the 'mall green space' proposed in this action is possible.

Outcome 4, A Healthy and attractive Wairau Estuary Action 1, Wairau Estuary Boardwalk

This action regarding 'Boardwalk Omana Road to Inga Road' (or any final design of a boardwalk in the Wairau Estuary here) should be promoted into the 0-5 years time frame. (There is a delightful boardwalk from the bottom of the Bayswater cemetery to the back of Hauraki, across mangrove mud flats, that Auckland Council built.) The Wairau estuary deserves to have its boardwalk now. It would be such a lovely asset for all to enjoy in this natural marine environment. This boardwalk would:

- Make a safer, flatter walk/cycle option to/from Milford / Shakespeare Rd from Inga Rd
- Be a quiet loop walk to the new Wairau lifting bridge and back via beach access roads.
- A way to include the mangrove forest as part of everyday activity.

Outcome 4, Actions 7, 8, 9, 10. Pedestrian connectivity and approaches to Milford

Members have commented on the need to improve the existing pedestrian pathway along Inga Road. With the increased foot traffic accessing the new Wairau bridge, this should be moved into the 1 to 5 year priority.

Create an alternate boardwalk on the marina side. A marina-side boardwalk would:

- Be much more pleasant walking next to the water and boats than on the existing footpath, particularly as traffic gets busier.
- Crossing Inga Rd at the road bridge remains a problem; maybe a pedestrian clip-on or an under pass.

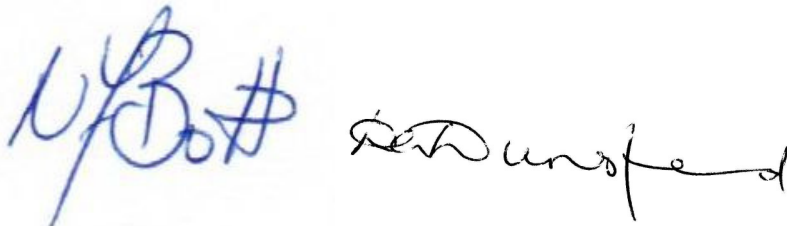
Outcome 4, Actions 1 and 5. Health of Wairau Estuary and associated water quality at Milford Beach

- Water quality at Milford Beach remains a major concern
- We believe work must be done on ascertaining the source of pollutants and silt in the Wairau Creek (from the top of the catchment area in Kaipatiki Local Board Area) and efforts made to clean it up. This important work should be led by Auckland Council with input by all local people and organisations.

Outcome 5, Tell our stories and celebrate our heritage

We ask for an increased Local Board priority to create heritage and educational trails that promulgate Milford's unique history and educate local people and visitors about our diverse environment. Emphasis should be given to projects initiated by the community and MRA in conjunction with Milford Business Assn and local businesses.

We acknowledge and are grateful for Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members' enthusiastic engagement with the Milford community.



Signatures: _____

Date of submission: 27 March 2017

Norma Bott & Deborah Dunsford, Co-chairpersons, Milford Residents Association