

To TCDC Annual Plan Hearing

Monday 4th May 2020

Unfortunately I am unable to speak to my submission as my technology is not modern enough to mesh with that being used by TCDC. I am also disappointed my expanded submission in writing is not what you have in front of you as I twice lost it on the online form ( 8 solid hours down the gurgler!).

So what you have are just my notes.

My appreciation to staff who have endeavoured to help me make my submission given the technological and covid constraints. I especially acknowledge Anahera who may be reading this on my behalf.

**Firstly I wish to emphasize huge disappointment that a 10% rates rise is sought.** The results of the 2018 Census are now out. The median income for Whitianga was \$26,000. Rates account for 10-15% of peoples pre-tax income either directly or through rents paid. A rise of 7% on top of the projection is a serious ask.

I'm surprised that inflation and rubbish are given as the explanations. I would have thought if anything, the provision of the "3 waters" and roading would have been more likely candidates. The rise is also way above the forecast in the 2018-2028 LTP which was more-or-less on track with the forecast rate increases for 2018/19 and 2019/20 but for this year 2020/2021 was 3.15%. It appears ambitious "nice to haves" plus mismanagement of waste contracts have led to this.

This is hardly surprising given the foundation on which council predicates all its decisions, that of **constant growth**. The Covid-19 epidemic is a manifestation of larger issues confronting the whole of humankind and will only get worse if we collectively do not rethink the way we live. I am referring to our life-styles and expectations exceeding the natural boundaries of healthy nature on land and sea, clean fresh water, emission-free air, and productive soils and an increasingly disruptive climate due to rising temperatures. Therefore I would recommend that TCDC uses the year leading up to the next Long Term Plan to have a serious rethink about priorities and coping mechanisms .

An illustration of this need can be found in the effect of the drought in Mercury Bay (where I have lived for 30 years.) Farmers have been having to cart water for stock, use winter feed early and reduce herd sizes. Whitianga has been experiencing severe **water shortages**. To some degree this has been exacerbated by the rapid growth of the town, with more to come. I know from my own time 20 years ago on MB Community Board that opportunities for expanding the town water supply are limited so as a response TCDC could, for example, revise building codes for all new builds to include rain water storage , grey water systems, budget for more public water storage and also look to limiting further growth until water issues are resolved. This is also known as building **resilience**. Take another example. As we look to keep our people employed, how about a major reset for our visitor industry into **Green Tourism** which embraces low environmental impacts, low use of fossil fuels, and collaborative thinking to reduce negative impacts on both our natural and social environment. There are unlimited opportunities to rethinking the next ten years (solar water heating, solar and wind energy, increasing public transport, tree planting , ..... ) we just need the commitment to do so.

On a different note, **my primary purpose for speaking to my submission is to strongly argue for bringing forward the budget for Mercury Bay Cycle Way development to this 20/21 year instead of next year.** There is a lot of discussion and planning to be had before putting paint on the roads or building more separate bikeways and promoting new biking opportunities. In Whitianga during the lockdown there has been a very big increase in the numbers of cyclists (and walkers). This is the year to get the planning for this growing sector of local transportation done. Central government is currently indicating funds for cycle ways ( and walkways). Why not take advantage?

We have all noticed positives from the covid-19 lockdown. Let's use these new learning's to change our attitudes towards methods of transport. Even for a small district such as Mercury Bay , it can make a huge difference for students getting to school independently, older people to exercise as well as shop; and parking places saved and so on. I'm so sorry that I could not connect to your chosen IT I could have explained the work of the cyclists and TCDC staff who have already worked diligently with MB Community Board for over 4 years to promote safe cycling and active transport in general and to open up bike tourism. I can direct you to so many examples of towns, rural areas and cities throughout New Zealand where the benefits of encouraging cycling are observable. The costs are very modest and the benefits excellent. Therefore I hope you will bring forward some budget for us to progress this need and opportunity.

If any of you would like to call me to discuss my submission, I would welcome your enquiry. I'm at 866 4637 or 021 0222 1389.

Anna Horne

Whitianga

To whom it may concern

This is a brief note to reaffirm the support of Mercury Bay Area School for the implementation and advancement of the Mercury Bay Cycling strategy, as adopted by the Thames Coromandel District Council on 20 August 2019. The next steps in the advancement of this strategy into an implementation phase are urgently required.

Our school has long supported the development of a cycling strategy to assist our students getting to and from school, safely. We are also aware of the significant number of scooters, skateboards and powered boards that are now being used by students and adults in our community; and it is timely to advance this strategy without delay.

I am happy to provide whatever support may be needed at any time to advance this strategy.

John Wright  
Principal

29 August, 2020

---

*Unity - Positivity - Achievement*

---

Mercury Bay Area School  
20 South Highway  
Whitianga 3510 NZ

Phone: 0064 (0)7 866 5916  
Fax: 0064 (0)7 866 4002  
Email: [mbas@mbas.ac.nz](mailto:mbas@mbas.ac.nz)

Principal: John Wright  
MSc (Hons); Dip Tch; CSMM  
Email: [john.wright@mbas.ac.nz](mailto:john.wright@mbas.ac.nz)

**web: [www.mbas.ac.nz](http://www.mbas.ac.nz)**