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SUBMISSIONS ON 2008/2009 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN AND LTCCP

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We wish to be heard in support of this submission preferably in Kaikohe on Tuesday 13 May.

SUBMISSION

The Russell Business Association broadly supports the submissions made by the Russell Ratepayers and Citizens Association and the Russell Protection Society.

In particular we agree with the Russell protection Society on:

- Submission Process
- Water Schemes, New Works
- Broadband
- Stormwater
- Structure Planning
- Russell Sewage upgrade

and with the Russell Ratepayers and Citizens Association on:

- Flood mitigation
- Wastewater
- Maritime facilities
- I-Site
- Rates
- Development Contribution

In addition we make the following comments:

PROPOSED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATE

The Association supports and encourages the promotion of the district as a place to do business but questions whether the relatively small sum of \$45,000 could not be raised elsewhere rather than by levying an extra rate on businesses, most of which in Russell are small with very tight overheads.

SEWERAGE PLANT

Russell is a major tourist destination one of whose attractions is the apparent cleanliness and pristine nature of its environment especially its coastline and waters. The current sewerage system is now working satisfactorily, producing good quality effluent without, bar a recent accident, any impact on waters of the Peninsula which are such a huge draw-card for visitors as well as an



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amenity for locals. The plant is now well managed and supervised, and its success has been due in no small part to the way which council and the Russell community (through the Russell Executive) have worked together over the years to ensure it meets community needs. We are astonished therefore to see that Council plans to spend yet more money on an upgrade when one is not needed. It is also not clear exactly what Council intends by this upgrade; if reticulation by pipeline to Paihia or the proposed new Waitangi mega plant, the Russell community has made it clear it does not want this. We request Council to delete this proposal from the Plan and to consult with the Russell community before making any future decisions.

STORMWATER

The central business area of Russell, especially York Street south of Cass St, has suffered very badly in the past year from flooding due to poorly maintained and installed drains. Individual businesses have had to close, have lost and had to replace stock, in some instances have had to replace flooring and fittings, and the business owners themselves suffered enormous personal stress. Without vigorous lobbying from a member of the RBA this situation would still be the same. We have also discovered that Council has not fulfilled its statutory responsibilities by fully implementing its existing stormwater catchment management plans for Russell Central and Matauwhi Bay. We are very glad to see Council has committed to rectifying the situation and we expect that the FNDC will finally implement the already approved, comprehensive catchment management plans for the area.

EXTENSION OF RETICULATED WATER SUPPLY TO RUSSELL

The communities of the Russell Peninsula have already made it clear they do not support the extension of reticulated water into Russell. Importantly, there has been no proper public consultation by the FNDC. The RBA is therefore surprised to see this scheme appear yet again in the Plan. This is a perfect example of the FNDC largely ignoring collective community opinion and thus undermining faith in the submission process. The RBA asks that this item be deleted from the Plan and that a proper consultation process be implemented before any further decisions are made.

BROADBAND

Broadband is incredibly important to the majority of businesses in Russell. We support any Council initiatives to improve services to the Russell Peninsula.

MARINE FACILITIES

The Russell Wharf is our seaward front door. Its importance for many businesses and tourism operators in Russell (and elsewhere in the Bay) cannot be overestimated. Its appearance for visitors is important too as it is the first impression many get as they enter the town. It is also a focus for the community, a great source of pride, part of what Russell "is". Because of this the RBA is part of and supports both the recently formed Russell Wharf users group and the existing Russell Executive which act on behalf of the community to liaise with both the FNDC, NRC and FNHL regarding the wharf's use, maintenance, development and management. The Plan, especially that covering FNHL's activities, seems not to address the issues regarding the Russell Wharf nor the repairs/replacement of the Tapeka boat ramp and maintenance of the Russell boat ramp. These issues need to be addressed immediately. Any plan by FNHL or Council to sell or alter the ownership of our boat ramps or wharf must be notified to the Russell community.



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We are also concerned that the Paihia wharf development is diverting Council's gaze from maritime facilities elsewhere in the region.

I-SITE REVIEW

We support the i-Site review. And suggest that Council look closely at supporting the role of privately run Information Centres in the region such as the one on Russell Wharf. Russell's own office works closely with Paihia's i-Site and we recommend that Council consider offering funding to private information centres such as ours in providing extra, valuable support in promoting the region.

RUSSELL LANDFILL CLOSURE

The opinion in Russell is that due to the extra recycling being done and thus less refuse being put into the landfill that it has many good years to go yet. Nothing has been said about what would replace it once it does close. Or how the land will be managed, used and monitored. The RBA believes plans for the Landfill's closure are premature.

LIBRARIES

Russell's library is a community facility run by volunteers. Could it be linked to the Council library system so the people of Russell can have better access to a wider range of books and other publications? A computer link for lending from the Paihia and Kerikeri libraries would be relatively inexpensive to install and easy to implement.

FOOTPATHS & WALKWAYS

Walking is popular with almost all visitors to Russell. The Okiato-Russell walkway has the potential to become a major attraction to the Peninsula linking with the Paihia-Opua walkway and we urge council to consider funding for the further development of the walkway. In Russell, we suggest an extra footpath up the steep hill of busy Robertson Road.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

The RBA believes a Visitors Information map sign on the Russell Wharf for visitors coming by water and another one at Matauwhi Bay reserve for visitors coming by road would be invaluable. We request consideration for this in the Plan.

Signed

Date

David McKenzie
Chair on behalf of the Russell Business Association

Address for service, as above.

SUBMISSIONS ON 2008/2009 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN AND LTCCP

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We wish to be heard in support of this submission preferably in Kaikohe on Tuesday 13th May.

SUBMISSION

Flood Mitigation:

We support Council pursuing flood mitigation problems so that the flooding potential in central Russell is managed and will stop being a problem to property owners.

Transport:

The shortest land-only route from Russell to the main highway system is via the Waikare Karetu road which is, in places, narrow and windy. In keeping with the district wide road safety improvements we would appreciate any corners that could be removed, or any road widening. We would also support a long term plan being developed for the general improvement of this road.

Footpaths:

We thank you for your consideration in the 10 year plan for work on footpaths. We assess our priorities to be;

1. Matauhi Bay Road: At the beginning of this road is a tight corner where stones are thrown up on the resident's house and pedestrians. There is no finishing at the edge of this corner to prevent this loose gravel from being gathered.
2. Pomare Road: The lack of footpaths on this street means children have to walk on the road. The lack of formed gutters means there is continual erosion of drains and driveways.
3. Long Beach Road: Footpath to the waterside. The good footpath suddenly stops and pedestrians have to walk on the road when approaching Long Beach. In the summer this area attracts high volume traffic.
4. Baker St.: Thank you for the footpath and car parks recently completed. We would like to see the completion of this project so that school children can cross safely from Matauhi Bay Road to Baker Street without walking on the road.
5. Constitution Hill Footpath and Cycle track. The Russell walkway from Okiato to Russell has been under construction for several years and is a valuable asset to our area. To be completed a footpath will be needed for Constitution Hill ie the first hill out of Russell. As development continues outside of the Russell township area more pedestrians will continue to use that road. We believe this road could be a transit road and may qualify for subsidy.

Wastewater:

Council has a large budget for new wastewater schemes and their upgrades. Where possible we support smaller onsite treatment systems than the mega system treatment plants as

planned for Waitangi Forrest.

Broadband:

We would like to see council proceed with its plans to provide high-speed quality broadband to everyone in the Far North; this is very important for the economy in our remote district.

Libraries:

We would like an archives room established at the Procter library in Kerikeri and improvement in library information systems.

Maritime:

Council and FNHL needs to understand that while Russell residents use marine facilities these facilities also attract business to our community. Russell needs to have efficient and well maintained maritime facilities. We have now successfully established a Wharf Group to liaise with Council and FNHL to provide, for the benefit of all concerned, a set of guidelines for future maintenance, development and management of the Russell Wharf which will be acceptable to all interested parties; we aim to achieve a working relationship with Council and FNHL so that the Russell maritime facilities will meet the expectation of our community.

There appears to be minimal funding in the proposed budget for maritime facilities for the whole area let alone the Russell area. We expect Russell wharf will require work to be done before 2016.

The Tapeka Boat ramp was destroyed in the bad weather earlier this year and we would like to see it replaced before the summer as this is a popular launching point for small boats.

The Tapeka and Russell facilities are both needed during the busy the summer period

The Russell boat ramp is highly utilized and already congested in the summer and may even need replacing within ten years.

As ratepayers we very concerned about the Paihia waterfront development and their costs which we fear will have to be borne by ratepayers. Before any approval for FNHL's plans we ask Council for full disclosure of the costs and indications how this huge project will be financed.

I-site:

We support I- sites being reviewed. We do not feel that Russell has been adequately promoted by them. Within this review we would like to see the contribution for I-site system being extended to smaller non-council run I- sites like the well-run and operated information and booking centre on Russell wharf.

Customer Services:

We would support provision for more Council Services being made available at places like our museum, the post office, or information centre.

Rates:

We support the Council's plan to limit levels of rate increase.

We do not support the discontinuance of the rates discount policy. Many in our community benefit from these saving. We question if Council has taken full advantage of the savings it can make with by banking that money to earn interest, not having to bill ratepayers quarterly, not having to chase up arrears, not having to account for each payment and by having the ability to forward plan with the rates that are being paid up front.

We support the introduction of the Economic Development Rate as we would like to see Council supporting economic development in the North but wonder what difference \$45,000 could make and if this amount could be found elsewhere in Council's budget.

Development Contributions:

We support the changes to the Development Contributions policy. We consider the current development contribution system to be punitive and arbitrary. Within a small town like Russell business's sometimes have to reinvent themselves to find something new that works. For Council to want more development contributions for spaces previously developed is unfair. Development Contributions should be spent in the area where they are collected and should be even localized as Council is proposing now. Many development contributions have been collected on the Russell peninsula and we have seen few improvements.

Coastal Access and Open Spaces

We support the development of a Coastal Access and Open Spaces Plan.

Russell Landfill:

Due to recycling the Russell landfill is expected to be operational much longer than anticipated in the proposed capital projects. When it does close we want to be assured that this land is put to the best possible use and will be safely monitored and managed. As a community we would like to be updated with regarding the expected life of our landfill and any future plan for it.

Recycling:

The trial of recycling bins on the Russell wharf has highlighted the problems with recycling of non domestic non commercial rubbish and it collection. We would like Council to revise its rubbish collection systems to achieve much more recycling.

General:

We support Council and its initiatives to tackle local government problems generated by Central government.

We support a Council where staff puts the customer first.

Signed _____ Date _____
Lois Elliott, Chairperson
On behalf of the Russell Ratepayers & Citizens Inc.

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