

Oratia District Ratepayers' and Residents' Association Inc.  
**SUBMISSION**  
to Auckland Council and  
Waitakere Ranges Local Board on the  
**DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2014 / 2015**

1 Executive summary

The Oratia Ratepayers' and Residents' Association finds that there is no specific support in the Draft Annual Plan or the Draft Waitakere Ranges Local Board Agreement for the Association's objectives as stated in its constitution or the objectives of the Oratia Local Area Plan, which together comprise the best expression of the Oratia people's vision for their community.

Following is a concise summary of our requests, followed in sections 2 - 7 by a more detailed explanation of each one.

We request that the the Waitakere Ranges Local Board:

- adds to its key initiatives for Local Built and Natural Environment<sup>1</sup> **"significant progress in implementing the five objectives of the Oratia Local Area Plan and their associated actions"** and, after consultation with the community, adds budget lines to the Operating Expenditure budget<sup>2</sup>, the Capital Expenditure budget<sup>3</sup> and the Capital Projects List<sup>4</sup> which reflect commitment to this key initiative (see 3).
- adds to its key priorities for Local Community Services<sup>5</sup> **"significant progress on the implementation of the Oratia Village Masterplan"** and allocates funds for this from the \$511,000 allocated to local community development initiatives in its Operating Expenditure budget (see 4).
- adds to its key initiatives for Local Parks Services<sup>6</sup> and to its Capital Projects List under Local Parks Services **"significant development of the Oratia Domain as provided for in the Oratia Masterplan"** and allocates funds for this from the \$5,616,000 allocated to local parks in its Operating Expenditure budget, and the \$1,991,000 allocated to local parks in its Capital Expenditure budget, as appropriate for the type of development (see 5).

We also request that Auckland Council

- extends the sewerage line to make a direct connection with

---

<sup>1</sup> Vol 2, p275

<sup>2</sup> Vol 2, p277

<sup>3</sup> Vol 2, p278

<sup>4</sup> Vol 2, p280

<sup>5</sup> Vol 2, p271

<sup>6</sup> Vol 2, p273

- Oratia District School
  - the Settlers' Hall
  - the Small Hall
  - the cluster of buildings which includes the Oratia Superette and Dragiceviches' Orchard buildings
- and allocates funding for this from the \$38,000,000 allocated to Collection System Expansion and the \$25,100,000 allocated to Collection System Improvement in the Wastewater section of the Capital Projects List<sup>7</sup> (see 6).
- provides rates relief (or a rates rebate or a rates subsidy) of at least 50% of current total rates to owners of land or businesses which significantly contribute to the rural built and natural landscapes of Oratia (see 7).

## 2 The Oratia R&R

The Oratia Ratepayers' and Residents' Association Inc. was incorporated in 1952 with the stated objectives of **"co-operating with the Council in looking after the affairs of the District and to secure the maximum fair expenditure of the General Rates levied by the Council within the District for the benefit of ratepayers, residents and visitors; and to pursue any activities which aim at improving or preserving the social, sporting, safety, beauty or any other utilities or amenities of the district."**<sup>8</sup>

## 3 The Oratia Local Area Plan

"The Oratia Local Area Plan presents the outcome of a series of conversations, meetings, and workshops with members of the Oratia community and beyond. The workshops and meetings held between November 2008 and May 2009 provided a chance for the Council to listen to people about the kind of future they want for Oratia."<sup>9</sup>

The Oratia R&R believes that the LAP is still the best expression of the vision the people of Oratia have for their community. The LAP consists of five clear objectives, and the actions required to achieve them. In brief, these objectives are about:

- Protecting, restoring and enhancing our heritage features;
- Providing for the social and economic well-being of the community;
- Managing subdivision and development so that Oratia's rural character and heritage features are retained;
- Providing for future uses of rural land that will retain Oratia's rural character;
- Being active in communicating and implementing the LAP.

---

<sup>7</sup> Vol 1, p188

<sup>8</sup> Oratia R&R constitution, clause 2.

<sup>9</sup> from the introduction to the Oratia LAP, "The future of Oratia."

This last objective has one associated action: "Prepare an implementation and funding plan to contribute towards Annual Plans and Long Term Council Community Plans." The Draft Waitakere Ranges Local Board Agreement makes a commitment to Local Area Plans only in general terms, which could be fulfilled without any action directed towards Oratia. The community of Oratia is named just once in the entire Draft Annual Plan, in a list of rural villages in the WRLB area.<sup>10</sup> We would like a firm, express commitment to implementing the Oratia LAP, and therefore:

*We request that the the Waitakere Ranges Local Board adds to its key initiatives for Local Built and Natural Environment "significant progress in implementing the five objectives of the Oratia Local Area Plan and their associated actions" and, after consultation with the community, adds budget lines to the Operating Expenditure budget, the Capital Expenditure budget and the Capital Projects List which reflect commitment to this key initiative.*

#### 4 The Oratia Village Masterplan

The Oratia R&R would like to thank the Waitakere Ranges Local Board for its most recent step in progressing the LAP by approving, at its 12 December 2012 meeting, the expenditure of \$40,000 from the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Protection budget for documenting Oratia's historical and cultural heritage, and designing enhancements to improve it's public spaces.

This resulted in

- a booklet, "The Oratia Historical Thematic Study" compiled by Zarah Burnett of Rod Clough and Associates;
- public consultation meetings about a possible design for Oratia Village, centred around the School, the Halls, and the Domain, led by Council officers Claire Liousse, Richard Mann and Eryn Shields;
- the development of the Oratia Village Masterplan by Helen Kerr, Nada Stanish and Ralph Johns of Isthmus Group.

We submitted to the 2013/2014 Annual plan for funding to begin implementation of the Masterplan, but it did not become available. We repeat that submission now, and recommend the following stages which require funding:

- Drawing up of an implementation plan, which
  - details the order of works, so that each stage in the redesign of the Oratia Village is manageable, and leaves the Village workable (not a building site);
  - Provides a realistic costing for each stage;
- The reconstruction of Oratia Village in accordance with the plan.

Therefore:

---

<sup>10</sup> Vol 2, p269

*We request that the Waitakere Ranges Local Board adds to its key priorities for Local Community Services "significant progress on the implementation of the Oratia Village Master Plan" and allocates funds for this from the \$511,000 allocated to local community development initiatives in its Operating Expenditure budget.*

## 5 Oratia Domain

Oratia Domain is the grassy L-shaped public space beside and behind the two Oratia Halls. The Oratia Village Masterplan includes integrating this public space into the Village in a way which makes it accessible and attractive to the public - the community and visitors alike. Since the Domain is a public green space, we think it is legitimate for any development of this area to be funded from the Local Parks Services budget, therefore:

*We request that the Waitakere Ranges Local Board adds to its key initiatives for Local Parks Services and to its capital projects list under Local Parks Services "significant development of the Oratia Domain as provided for in the Oratia Masterplan" and allocates funds for this from the \$5,616,000 allocated to local parks in its Operating Expenditure budget, and the \$1,991,000 allocated to local parks in its Capital Expenditure budget, as appropriate for the type of development.*

## 6 Sewerage

The Oratia R&R leases the Settlers' Hall and the Small Hall from the Council, and manages their hireage and upkeep. We have a Hall co-ordinator who is paid a small monthly honorarium, and who takes bookings, notes required maintenance, and generally monitors the condition and use of the Halls.

Sewage from the Halls flows to a tank located beneath the children's playground, where it is pumped to the school, where it is in turn pumped to join the city sewerage system. This is unsatisfactory for two reasons.

The immediate problem is that the Halls pump is constantly malfunctioning. Our Hall co-ordinator is continually putting in requests for repairs, and getting bumped from Council to Watercare and back to Council again. Council believes it is not their responsibility to replace the pump or in some other way solve the problem. The result is that sewage regularly overflows, making the prospect of hiring the Small Hall in particular, unattractive.

A longer range problem is that if Oratia Village is to develop as a rural centre, and the area attracts the community and visitors to congregate there, the current sewerage system will clearly be inadequate.

Therefore:

*We request that Auckland Council extends the sewerage line to make a direct connection with*

- *Oratia District School*
- *the Settlers' Hall*
- *the Small Hall*
- *the cluster of buildings which includes the Oratia Superette and Dragiceviches' Orchard buildings*

*and allocates funding for this from the \$38,000,000 allocated to Collection System Expansion and the \$25,100,000 allocated to Collection System Improvement in the Wastewater section of the Capital Projects List.*

## 7 The rural built and natural landscapes of Oratia

The landscapes in Oratia are reaching crisis point. It is heartbreaking to see so much funding landing a stone's throw away from us - in particular to remodelling Titirangi as an Arts Precinct centred around Lopdell House. The arts are important because they uplift, refresh and inspire people, and give expression to the way we see ourselves and our world.

In exactly the same way, a rural landscape uplifts, inspires, and refreshes those who live here, and those who visit here from the city. Oratia is part of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area, and is affected and protected by the WRHA Act. However, the Heritage area is not a homogeneous zone. While the Ranges themselves are a wild and natural area, Oratia has been farms, orchards, vineyards and rural businesses. It is a human rural landscape whose attractive appearance has been sustained by the good will of the farmers, orchardists and vintners. These people are becoming disheartened.

We have taken as a model and source of inspiration a document from an English organisation called the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A pertinent excerpt reads:

*"Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are not wilderness areas or even, paradoxically, areas whose beauty derives from purely natural processes, but a group of distinct and recognisable areas arising from a long history of human occupation and sustainable exploitation of their natural resources.*

*"The interdependent relationship between land stewardship, natural beauty, community and the economy is clear and well-understood. A resurgence in land-based economic activity is essential to the long term future of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty but, for this growth to be truly sustainable and meet wider government objectives, economic growth and land stewardship within or affecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty must be based on the principles of both sound land stewardship and careful planning." <sup>11</sup>*

---

<sup>11</sup> "Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Working together to support the rural economy," a submission to the Rural Economy Growth Review, July 2011. ([www.landscapesforlife.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk))

Our landscape and economy are inextricably linked. If Auckland Council and the Waitakere Ranges Local Board share our vision of Oratia as an uplifting, inspiring, and refreshing rural village, an orchard, vineyard and rural market precinct, a locality that attracts visitors, and acts as the eastern gateway to the Waitakere Ranges, then they must invest in the local economy. They must support those who have created and sustained the rural landscape, and who are becoming disheartened through unsustainable rates demands for little return. The first (but not the only) step is rates relief.

Therefore:

*We request that Auckland Council provides rates relief (or a rates rebate or a rates subsidy) of at least 50% of current total rates to owners of land or businesses which significantly contribute to the rural built and natural landscapes of Oratia.*

We would like to speak to this submission in person when the opportunity arises.

Gary Henderson  
President

Penny Sparks  
Secretary

Oratia District Ratepayers' and Residents' Association Inc.  
PO Box 20184  
Glen Eden  
Auckland 0641

oratia@oratia.org.nz