

16 October 2019

Porirua City Council
14 Hartham Place North
Porirua 5022

Re: Draft District Plan

Tēna koe

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Porirua City Council (PCC)'s 'Draft District Plan'.

Regional Public Health serves the greater Wellington region, through its three district health boards (DHBs): Capital & Coast, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa and as a service is part of the Hutt Valley DHB.

We work with our community to make it a healthier safer place to live. We promote good health, prevent disease, and improve the quality of life for our population, with a particular focus on children, Māori and working with primary care organisations. Our staff includes a range of occupations such as: medical officers of health, public health advisors, health protection officers, public health nurses and public health analysts.

We are happy to provide further advice or clarification on any of the points raised in our written submission. The contact point for this submission is:

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Naku noa, na

Dr Elinor Millar
Public Health Physician

Janice Hemi
Acting Service Manager

Regional Public Health (RPH) would like to **commend** PCC on the considerable work that has gone into drafting the district plan. RPH is also currently reviewing the government's proposed National Policy Statement on Urban Development and recommend that PCC incorporate these guidelines in the development of the District Plan.

Recommendations

- RPH recommends that PCC ensures continued meaningful consultation with communities who may not naturally connect online. This is particularly important for those who traditionally have less power and representation in the planning process; this includes Māori, Pacific peoples, migrant and refugee communities, older people and lower income families. Alternative approaches may be needed, including the use of focus group discussions or working alongside others who have existing connections with these communities.
- RPH recommends that there be no minimum car park requirements as proposed in the draft National Policy Statement on Urban Development. The benefits of this approach include efficient land use in areas providing for more intensive development.
- RPH recommends that PCC increase public and active transport options, including developing designated cycle lanes, public bike storage, and bike sharing schemes. Modelling studies show that accessible and affordable active and public transportation options in New Zealand will result in positive health and social benefits, as well as reductions in greenhouse gases.¹
- RPH recommends that PCC work together with the Porirua community, along with RPH, to understand the enablers, barriers and constraints involved in creating healthy urban environments and to co-create solutions together with the community.
- RPH commends the PCC's plans to develop a medium density zone. The medium density residential zone can provide an opportunity to support the health and wellbeing of people and communities in Porirua. Medium density housing (MDH) is recognized as one of the solutions to housing unaffordability. MDH can also meet the needs of diverse communities, such as an ageing population, single-person households and smaller families. Furthermore, MDH reduces urban sprawl, protects valuable productive land, and reduces the infrastructure demands on a city.²
- RPH commends the proposed storm water management plan which will ensure that waterways and the harbour are protected from hazardous run-off and decreases the risk of flooding. It is positive to see that the district plan reflects community feedback to ensure that development does not come at the cost of the environment. RPH recommends regular monitoring and maintenance of storm water devices as an essential function for protecting the harbour and waterways.
- RPH commends the introduction of the Papakāinga chapter which empowers mana whenua to make decisions on their own land.

¹ NZCPHM's Policy Statement on Transport (2018)

https://www.nzcphm.org.nz/media/124042/2018_11_20_nzcphm_transport_policy_statement_final.pdf

² Bryson & Allen (2017). Defining medium-density housing.

https://www.branz.co.nz/cms_show_download.php?id=8f539a4cd06da4fe57e215051ec5374eeb25628b

- RPH recommends PCC explores opportunities where other groups may want to build similar models of co-housing for extended families and/or closely connected communities.

The recent amendments to the Local Government Act to reinstate the four aspects of community wellbeing – economic, social, environmental and cultural – has highlighted the importance of putting the wellbeing of citizens at the centre of all that PCC does. Through the district plan, PCC has the opportunity to promote and improve the wellbeing and health of its citizens. Decisions around land use, housing, transport and the natural environment will all have a powerful impact on the health and wellbeing of those living in Porirua.

Should PCC be interested, RPH could facilitate a workshop for the planners involved in district planning to discuss how to achieve greater synergy between public health and council processes. Such discussions have the potential to strengthen what the district plan can achieve in terms of improved health and wellbeing for the Porirua community.

Useful Tools and Approaches

There are a range of practical tools that can be used during the planning process to ensure wellbeing is a core part of the final outcomes. These tools are all flexible, and can be used in their entirety or used as the basis for discussion and appraisal of spatial planning work. Tools and approaches include:

- **Health Equity Assessment Tool:** a tool that aims to improve equity in health in New Zealand. It consists of a set of ten questions that assess the current and future impact of policies on health equity.
- **Health Impact Assessment or Whānau Ora Health Impact Assessment:** a systematic way of assessing the positive and negative health impacts of a policy, with particular attention to inequities.
- **Health Promotion and Sustainability through Environmental Design:** a planning guide developed by Christchurch City Council and Community and Public Health (Christchurch's Public Health Unit). Divided into 14 themes that identify the links between environmental design and community health and wellbeing.
- **Integrated Planning Guide:** also developed in Christchurch, originally focused on earthquake recovery, but updated in 2018 to focus on city planning more broadly. Presents targeted questions to encourage critical thinking and innovation. Presents a way of ensuring sustainability, resilience and health are integrated into planning, alongside social, environmental and economic outcomes.
- **Identify opportunities to have dedicated public health expertise as part of the council workforce:** given the significant impact of spatial planning on wellbeing and health, PCC could consider funding dedicated public health expertise to work alongside planners for the duration of the project.

For further information on these tools, please do not hesitate to contact us. We welcome the opportunity to remain involved as the Porirua District Plan continues to develop, and to meet with planners to discuss how we can best support them in this work.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.