

19 April 2021

Carterton District Council  
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E. [submissions@cdc.govt.nz](mailto:submissions@cdc.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe

**Re: Carterton District Council 10 Year Plan Te Māhere Ngahurutanga Consultation 2021-2031**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission on the Carterton District Council 10 Year Plan Te Māhere Ngahurutanga consultation.

Regional Public Health (RPH) is the public health unit for the greater Wellington region. We work with communities and local organisations to make the region a healthier and safer place to live. Our vision is **Pae Ora: Healthy futures for the greater Wellington region**. We promote good health and work on disease prevention to improve the quality of life for our population, with a particular focus on children, Māori, Pacific peoples and low-income households. Our staff include 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. We would welcome the opportunity to speak to our submission. The contact point for this submission is:

Demelza O'Brien, Technical Officer  
Email: [Demelza.obrien@huttvalleydhb.org.nz](mailto:Demelza.obrien@huttvalleydhb.org.nz)

Nāku noa, nā

Dr Craig Thornley  
**Medical Officer of Health**

Peter Gush  
**General Manager**

## INTRODUCTION

Regional Public Health (RPH) is the public health unit for the greater Wellington region (Wairarapa, Hutt Valley and Capital & Coast District Health Boards). Our business works to improve the health and wellbeing of our population and to reduce health disparities through public health action. We aim to work with others to promote and protect good health and prevent diseases to improve quality of life across the population. We are funded by the Ministry of Health and also have contracts with District Health Boards and other agencies to deliver specific services.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

We read with interest your 10 Year Plan Te Māhere Ngahurutanga 2021-2031 and note the potential it has to support community health and wellbeing. We are heartened to see that you are using your local government role in strengthening community wellbeing through local economic development and through creating a healthy physical and social environment for all residents.

RPH recognises the important role that social and economic factors such as housing, healthy food, water quality, transport, the shape of our neighbourhoods, and health related behaviours play in our communities' health. These factors together drive as much as 80% of health outcomes leaving medical care to account for only 10-20% of the modifiable contributors to health for a population.<sup>1</sup> Health truly begins where we live, work and play.



RPH **commends** Council on the publication of Te Māhere Ngahurutanga. We recognise the changing context within which you work, in particular the reform of Three Waters, the Resource Management Act, and the regional approach to managing future population growth.

Our submission will offer some general comments on current public health concerns of relevance to Council as well as some specific comments on elements of your plan that could impact on health outcomes and equity in the Carterton community. We then raise some opportunities to work together to address our shared challenges that will help to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and build local neighbourhood resilience.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nam.edu/social-determinants-of-health-101-for-health-care-five-plus-five/>

## COVID-19

**Together**, we need to ensure that community organisations are well supported over the next ten years to meet community needs resulting from the social, economic, cultural and health impacts of COVID-19.

Over the past year, the pivotal role local government plays in the response to and recovery from the COVID -19 pandemic has been made clear. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of building local neighbourhood resilience to the challenges that our communities face. It has shown how features of our neighbourhoods such as access to safe and healthy housing, community facilities, public transport options, active connections, water quality, parks and open space as well as local food sources all contribute to individual and collective resiliency.

COVID-19 has also demonstrated the impact of unequal distribution of these features on our communities. The burden of negative economic and social impacts of COVID-19 continue to be significant for communities and these exacerbate existing inequities for Māori, Pacific, low-income families, refugees, and seniors. The pandemic increased the challenge of providing vulnerable people with access to health and other resources, and safe, secure and healthy accommodation. It also highlighted the level of food insecurity and the need for food resiliency in our communities with demand for food assistance growing exponentially across the country. An enormous amount of work was done by councils and local groups in providing food parcels to whānau in need of support. RPH recognises that greater collective investment and resource is required to address the causes of food insecurity.

Community organisations and groups in Carterton and across the region were, and continue to be, at the forefront of the response and recovery from COVID-19. Many of these groups are under immense pressure meeting the needs of the community. RPH is committed to working with Council to support our communities.

## Climate change

Climate change is a serious and imminent threat to population health. New Zealanders are at risk of both:

- The direct health effects of climate change e.g. extreme weather events, injuries, heat waves and damage to infrastructure
- Indirect health effects e.g. changes in ecosystems and subsequent disease patterns, microbiological contamination of water, poor mental health, food insecurity, destruction of infrastructure, homes and livelihoods.



**Strategies to  
address climate  
change can provide  
significant health  
benefits to the  
population**

Climate change is likely to exacerbate inequities in Aotearoa, particularly for Māori, Pacific and low-income communities who are at greater risk of poorer health and social outcomes<sup>2,3</sup>. Reducing emissions involves changes to behaviours and environments that can significantly improve peoples' general health. Strategies that address climate change can often provide significant health co-benefits (e.g. increased physical activity, dietary improvements and reduced air pollution) and decrease existing inequities when implemented appropriately<sup>4</sup>.

Many of these strategies are directly within the locus of control of Councils and will have positive health and social benefits for the community as well as result in reduced emissions. For instance, Carterton District Council has the potential to create environmental, social and wider health co-benefits through:

- Continued prioritisation of walking and cycling routes and connections between towns
- Ensuring areas of new housing development have community facilities including communal areas to grow food, access water, play and socialise
- Supporting initiatives that improve the 'health' of existing housing stock and neighbourhoods across Carterton.

By investing in areas that provide long-term benefits such as Three Waters, sustainability initiatives and neighbourhood social/community infrastructure, Carterton District Council can build resilience and prevent or reduce the negative health outcomes that could otherwise deepen inequities and prevent our communities from experiencing full wellbeing.

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS

RPH **acknowledges** the significant Council resource that is going into resolving the current drinking water transgressions and note that this may alter the prioritisation for some of the asset management already planned to support the provision of safe drinking water. We also note the significant challenges of managing drinking water demand during summer periods and the associated asset management planning response.

RPH **commends** Council on progress with discharge of wastewater to land and the aim over time to remove all discharges into freshwater.

RPH **supports** town centre car parking.

RPH recognises the need to increase parking for accessibility to the town centre in particular for priority populations who have greater accessibility needs e.g. elderly, disabled, baby/pram parking.

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<sup>2</sup> New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine. Policy Statement on Climate Change. Wellington: New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine. (2013).

<sup>3</sup> Howden-Chapman P, Chapman R, Hales S, Britton E, Wilson N. Climate Change and Human Health: Impact and Adaptation Issues for New Zealand. In: Nottage RAC, Wratt DS, Bornman JF, Jones K (eds). Climate Change Adaptation in New Zealand: Future Scenarios and Some Sectoral Perspectives. Wellington: New Zealand Climate Change Centre. (2010).

<sup>4</sup> Climate Change: The Public Health Response. Frumkin. (2008).

We would also encourage the prioritisation of active transport by including more bicycle parking spaces.

RPH **supports** five towns trail project option B.

Cycling, walking and jogging/running are becoming increasingly popular in New Zealand, with both walking and cycling among the most popular sports for tamariki and whānau from low and medium economic backgrounds in urban areas. Active modes of transport enable our population to participate in higher levels of physical activity, resulting in reduced levels of long-term conditions which are some of the leading causes of health loss in New Zealand<sup>5</sup>. Additionally active transport helps to alleviate traffic congestion, save energy, reduce air and noise pollution, conserve land, and produce various other environmental benefits.

RPH **supports** town centre redevelopment option B.

A community hub is somewhere the community can come together in a space offering quality recreation, literacy and arts services. Community hubs help to build resilient communities, and act as a space for social interaction, a sense of community, and cultural wellbeing. Having a supportive environment for a healthy lifestyle at front of mind when designing and building hubs is central to achieving better population health and healthier communities.



Left: RPH 'hydration stations' at a community event. Right: Two breastfeeding mums at a breastfeeding event – The Big Latch On, Carterton.

Some key aspects to consider in the design and development of a community hub:

### **Adequate access to water fountains and drink bottle filling station**

- This ensures access to potable drinking water, limiting the need for people to purchase bottled water or other drinks when at the community hub which is better for their health and the environment.

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<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Health. 2013. Health Loss in New Zealand: A report from the New Zealand Burden of Diseases, Injuries and Risk Factors Study 2006-2016. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

### **A breastfeeding friendly space**

- Breastfeeding has many benefits for both mother and baby, and is recommended exclusively for the first 6 months of life. Having a supportive environment to enable breastfeeding makes it easier to fulfil this recommendation.
- Having a supportive environment for healthy lifestyle and nutrition for everyone includes providing spaces where parents are able to breastfeed, access hot water, sinks and power points for pumping, formula or bottle feeding.

### **Adequate toilet facilities**

- This includes disabled access toilets, an accessible change table and nappy bin, unmarked gender neutral toilets, and an adequate number for the size of the venue.

### **A supportive environment for healthy eating**

- Limiting or having no unhealthy food advertising including unbranded drink fridges or vending machines, consider having no or limited sugar sweetened beverages available, and having healthy food available at an affordable price.

### **Greenspace for mental and physical health**

- Engagement with greenspaces offers benefits in terms of mental health and well-being, with green spaces functioning as an upstream preventive mental health promotion intervention.<sup>6</sup>
- Green spaces provide vital health services as well as environmental services; they reduce socioeconomic health inequalities, facilitate activity and promote better mental health and well-being.<sup>7</sup>

### **Rubbish, recycling and composting options for bins**

- To reduce unnecessary waste and encourage recycling or reusing where possible.

### **A space that encourages being physically active**

- Equipment outside to encourage active play, increased physical activity.
- Bike stands or storage to encourage active transport to the hub.

### **Accessibility to the venue to ensure it is able to be used by all**

- Ensuring adequate pedestrian crossings or traffic light, wheelchair and pram accessibility.

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<sup>6</sup> Barton J, Rogerson M. The importance of greenspace for mental health. BJPsych International. Cambridge University Press; 2017;14(4):79–81.

<sup>7</sup> Barton J, Rogerson M. The importance of greenspace for mental health. BJPsych International. Cambridge University Press; 2017;14(4):79–81.

## Space for community gardens or fruit trees

- Community gardens can be established to supplement the current food environment, providing opportunities for food and income generation and for urban residents to engage in outdoor physical and social activities.<sup>8</sup> Many of the outcomes of community garden participation positively influence wellbeing.<sup>9</sup>
- A space that encourages cultural wellbeing, sharing community history, expresses and explores identity, and preserves arts, culture and heritage.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK TOGETHER

We note Council has undertaken a lot of groundwork to shape the direction of the 10 Year Plan. RPH is always keen to participate in these early direction-setting discussions and understand that this is a significant opportunity to influence. Please add us to your database of community and agency consultation stakeholders.

RPH offers its support, skills and knowledge in the areas of emergency management, three waters, housing quality, public and active transport, community development and empowerment, and healthy food environments to ensure the people of Carterton are thriving.

In addition to the priorities outlined in your 10 Year Plan, RPH would like to suggest the following areas where we could work together to build resilience in our communities.

## Housing

RPH encourage Carterton District Council to actively participate in the [Wellington Regional Healthy Housing Group](#). As you will be aware, the vision for this group is “Everyone in the Wellington region lives in warm, dry and safe housing by 2025”. Using a collective impact model of shared governance, strategic planning, community involvement and evaluation the group develops creative solutions to address poor quality housing using a pro-equity approach.

A key value of the group from RPH’s perspective, is the strengthened connections between Council members and wider stakeholders such as ourselves on regional housing issues. The Group provides a forum for the sharing of ideas, information and resources and provides meaningful opportunities to work together toward the shared vision.

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<sup>8</sup> Egli V, Oliver M, Tautolo E. The development of a model of community garden benefits to wellbeing. Preventive Medicine Reports. Elsevier, 2016; (3):348-352.

<sup>9</sup> Egli V, Oliver M, Tautolo E. The development of a model of community garden benefits to wellbeing. Preventive Medicine Reports. Elsevier, 2016; (3):348-352.

## The local food environment

RPH welcomes the opportunity to work with Council on strategies for building food resilience and tackling food insecurity. A local food production and distribution system based on ecological sustainability, able to withstand natural and man-made shocks is a vital part of food resilience.<sup>10</sup>

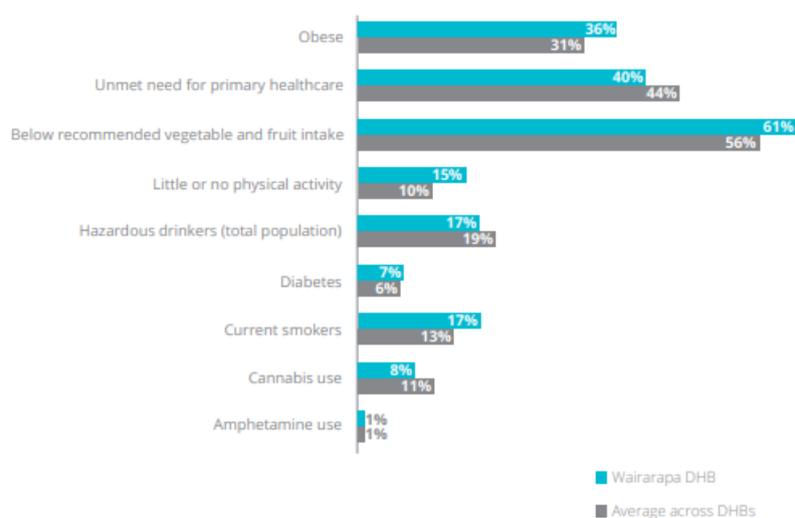
Currently too many people in our communities across the greater Wellington region are dependent on charitable food donations and food waste from industry. The Wairarapa DHB population profile in 2016/17 shows that 61% of adults across Wairarapa have an intake of fruit and vegetables below recommended levels.

In 2020/21, RPH and Common Unity Project Aotearoa co-hosted ‘Kai and Our Community’ hui across the greater Wellington region to explore the potential and purpose of a regional food network. This identified:

- The fragility of our current linear food system, requiring handouts and dependency for those who can’t afford to participate
- The need to begin a movement to develop a circular food system/economy which is participatory and ‘walking with’ vulnerable people and communities
- Providing ‘good food for all’ in a way that is mana-enhancing, which is vital for the well-being of our communities
- The importance of including those most affected and co-designing for change from the top down and the bottom up.

### DHB POPULATION HEALTH PRIORITIES

Adult prevalence of each indicator (health priority)



This graph shows the prevalence of specific key indicators (results of the 2016/2017 New Zealand Health Survey) per DHB, and the sub-regional averages. These indicators relate to the population health priorities identified for each DHB.

<sup>10</sup> World Health Organisation, 1996, World Food Summit definition of food security.

**RPH recognises and appreciates Council's participation in this work, including with council officers and the Mayoral Forum.** Addressing these issues and regionalising our food system will require a collaborative approach across councils, and has strong alignment with Council's structure plan to allow appropriate housing growth and activities to build in resilience to climate change and other public health threats.

## CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on your 10 Year Plan Te Māhere Ngahurutanga. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with Council officials on the opportunities we have raised.