

Vision Kerikeri

Growth with Vision

Thoughts for the day

The less talent they have, the more pride, vanity and arrogance they have. All these fools, however, find other fools who applaud them. Erasmus 1509.

We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office. Aesop

The greatest threat to humanity is not artificial intelligence it's the same one it has always been – authentic stupidity. Ben Elton British comedian

In this newsletter

We urge everyone to make a personal submission to The Draft Spatial Plan. **We have summarised the plan and highlighted our preferred option** and reasoning. Submissions must be made by 22 April 2025. There are updates on **The Kerikeri Transport Network**, the **Proposed District Plan & Tubbs farm** plus our usual roundup on happenings on **The Wairoa Stream** and at **Carbon Neutral NZ Trust**. In this newsletter Rod Brown also does a deep dive into the **weed problem in Kerikeri**.

As always, we welcome your feedback on anything in this newsletter or any other matter that has been vexing your mind. Write to us at: visionkerikeri@gmail.com

Council Matters

Te Patukurea Spatial Plan for Kerikeri/Waipapa

The Draft Spatial Plan which will guide our town's growth over the next 30 years, considers six locations for housing and commercial opportunities (Options A to F). The council's public consultation data ranks Options D (south of the CBD along Kerikeri Road) and E (east of Waipapa) highest and Option F lowest. After three years of stakeholder and community engagement (favouring Option F), only 700 feedback responses were collected from a population of over 14,000.

What is option F?

Option F is a greenfield development proposed by the local landowner of the Brownlie Farm, between Kerikeri Golf Course and the new Council sports fields on SH10 in Waipapa with space for up to 4,000 new homes. The developer plans to cover infrastructure expenses for roadworks between Kerikeri CBD and Waipapa, cycle and walking tracks, water, wastewater, electricity, a possible 4.5-star hotel, recreational areas, and flood mitigation.

Greenfield development tends to have lower costs compared to piecemeal brownfield development. Lower cost of land would enable more affordable housing, which is badly needed in Kerikeri.

The Draft Spatial Plan (P48) ranks Option F lowest due to comparatively higher infrastructure costs, impacts on highly productive land and environmental constraints. This is rather misleading. Option F is pastoral land, not highly productive horticultural land, which the Spatial Plan aims to conserve. The developer plans to cover infrastructure expenses including flood mitigation. In extreme weather some of the area could flood: we should certainly not underestimate the power of water. The developer has presented mitigation plans, which would require approval by consenting authorities to ensure proper water management and control.

Although several community groups, including Vision Kerikeri, which have well informed members, supported Option F, this is not mentioned in the Draft Spatial Plan other than as note in the Growth scenarios Evaluation Report (P17) attached to the Draft Spatial Plan. Option F was omitted when first submitted by staff to the Council for approval and therefore not considered but was subsequently included following dismay expressed by community groups before going out for public consultation in October. Yet, the consultation document did not mention its potential benefits, probably leaving many confused. It is understood that the Hapu Ropu were also not comprehensibly informed about Option F.

Because of the low number of responses, the data is likely to be statistically insignificant. If it is not statistically significant, it would mean there is no statistical difference between the 6 scenarios, based on responses (on p.9-11 & 26-27 in the consultation document). Any ranking would therefore be inappropriate (not relevant). In fact, scenarios D and F had the highest number of 'likes' on the interactive map (p.26-27), while scenarios C and E had the highest number of 'dislikes'!

Why VKK likes Option F

- The Spatial Plan has a 30-year planning horizon; the population is estimated to increase to 24,000 people within 25 years. Concentration on Options B to E would all increase traffic on Waipapa and Kerikeri Roads. The Spatial Plan (P58) shows upgrades of Kerikeri and Waipapa Roads under staging of infrastructure (presumably widening), but these roads and their traffic, without an alternative route, would still be linked and overburdened via the two-lane Heritage bypass bridge.
- Connectivity is poor in Kerikeri. Option F proposes a new road from Golf View Road to SH 10, an alternative link between Kerikeri and Waipapa, providing shorter travel distances to key destinations such as sports fields, schools, and social services, and reducing emissions.
- The Draft Spatial Plan (P45) identifies walking and cycling pathways as key priorities. The new sports fields at Te Puhawaitanga are isolated from Kerikeri and only accessible by vehicle perpetuating dependence on them. Option F would provide alternative cycle and walking paths whereas The Spatial Plan provides only limited opportunities.

Vision Kerikeri's summary and conclusion

- A hybrid development incorporating several of the options is considered sensible and practical. Vision Kerikeri believes that Option F, when properly understood, should be included as it offers an improved alternative route and shorter connectivity between Kerikeri CBD and Waipapa, provides connections for cycling and walking, reduces CO2 emissions, and offers potential time savings. Getting around safely for our children and grandchildren should be paramount.
- Option F is strategically placed. Not taking this option now will likely have adverse impacts in the future. This may be the last opportunity for Kerikeri to secure an integrated development plan of such scale on greenfield land. Once subdivided further it will become impossible to influence multiple owners to come together and create an integrated plan.
- We propose adding Option F to the presented options D and E.

Submissions by April 22, 2025

We urge everyone to make a personal submission to request the inclusion of Option F in the Draft Spatial Plan. You can do this at the following link: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/f0ac21d0233b494f83ee84d428aad58e>

- Under 1, 3, 4, 5: tick “No”
- Under 2. of the online form, you can briefly comment and explain your preferences incl. Option F.

The whole Draft Spatial Plan is here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f66bcc60f1bd43199ee2c55ef72c2a10>

The Kerikeri Transport Network Plan

As reported in more detail in newsletter86 in August 2024, the Council was developing a Transport Network Plan for Kerikeri, which would contribute evidence for the spatial plan (Te Patukurea). A computerised model of the existing traffic network was built and peer reviewed (we would be interested to see the peer review and its methodology). A PowerPoint presentation to Council in March indicated the following key conclusions

Existing network results:

- *No significant road capacity issues.*
- *Some peak period speed reduction Kerikeri Road*
- *Limited delays in peak hours for majority of intersections*

Summary

- *Currently insufficient traffic problems to warrant justification of need for network upgrades in a Programme Business Case*

People waiting in queues trying to get through the Hobson Ave./Kerikeri Road roundabout at certain times of the day would be surprised to hear these conclusions.

The study concluded that current traffic problems in Kerikeri are insufficient to justify the expense of preparing a ‘business case’ for upgrades to the road network. This will make it difficult to get the necessary funding for road upgrades in Kerikeri.

FNDC has declined to provide the information on which this computer model was based claiming that it is commercially sensitive and that there is no public interest in releasing it that would outweigh the need to withhold it. This refusal makes it virtually impossible to evaluate if this investigation is well conceived and/or accounts adequately for all transport options for Kerikeri

A request has been made under the LOGIMA (Local Government Information and Meetings Act 1987) for the computer model on which this report to Council was based. A response from the Ombudsman is awaited.

Community groups were not consulted or involved with the Council’s transport planning for Kerikeri and much of the draft transport plan is inconsistent with their general goals. Kerikeri Rd is the only feasible route for a large proportion of origins/destinations at present. The transport plan’s approach gives the impression that the council is reverting to form and top-down planning which has dogged Kerikeri for decades. It is also contrary to the Far North Future Plan (Far North 2100) with its focus on putting community well-being first and includes developing things like networks of safe cycleways and walkways which Option F favours but the draft Spatial Plan does not favour.

Tubbs Farm Development on Kapiro Road

A non-complying development of more than 100 sections was approved in principle by the Environment Court last year, however some aspects are still being negotiated by lawyers. In the meantime, the court has given permission for earthworks to commence. A further Court Hearing is expected in April. Details will be publicly available after the Court ruling, so please watch this space...

FNDC Proposed District Plan (PDP)

Vision Kerikeri has been working with other interested community and conservation groups hoping to get some improvements in the proposed new District Plan (PDP). We submitted comments to various Council Hearings, covering topics such as climate protection, biodiversity protection, environmentally friendly lighting, stormwater issues, priority areas for new esplanade reserves, and rural zone policies. Sadly, the responses made by FNDC planning team (staff & consultants) appear to be very resistant to improvements. Hearings continue to the end of this year. The Commissioners' recommendations are not going to be released until the end of this process, so at this stage the outcome is difficult to predict.

Pest weeds and Kerikeri – the problem

By Rod Brown

The CBD has looked spectacular this summer with its well-watered, colourful hanging baskets of flowers. Something to be proud of. Well done and congratulations, [Kerikeri District Business Association!](#)

Elsewhere Kerikeri's (and Northland's) natural environment is threatened by weeds.

Maori were unfamiliar with weeds, but the Kerikeri Mission brought in seeds from Britain for establishing agriculture and in fodder for horses. But these perennial weeds are not our principal problem. The problem is that our environment is rapidly becoming overwhelmed by vigorously flowering Taiwan Cherry, Privet and Tobacco Weed supplemented by ginger, Moth Plant and other vines like Jasmine, Japanese Honey suckle, Ivy, German Ivy, Blue Morning Glory, Black Eyed Susan, Climbing Asparagus.

Alien pest plant species outcompete native species wherever land has been cleared or neglected and thrive in our (generally) good soil and high rainfall.

Privet has just flowered in January and has provided a yellow roadside hedge along far too much of our roadside when travelling north to Mangonui or travelling south to Whangarei (and beyond). Its pollen affects some people with breathing difficulties. Soon Taiwan Cherry will be erupting all over Kerikeri - colourful but an ecological menace. Ginger and climbing asparagus thrive in the understory and inhibit natural regeneration. Both Taiwan Cherry and Privet seed prolifically and out-compete native species. They are well on their way to becoming the canopy forest in untended areas.

In August 2024 Yahoo News Australia reported on Kerikeri and its weeds which it showed in a single shot many of our worst in all their glory. See the photo on the next page that features the opposite bank of the Wairoa Stream by Alderton Park. ***This is not what we want Kerikeri to be known for.***



Kerikeri is possibly the weed capital of the world.

Regenerating areas or uncared for plantings in our locality show increasing evidence of Taiwan Cherry, Privet, Tobacco Weed, Brush Wattle & Acmena, all growing faster than natives, becoming forests with an understory of ginger, or are being overwhelmed by Moth Plant and Jasmine vine infestation. Moth Plant with pods erupting, litter our hedgerows. Each pod contains 500 to 1,000 windblown seeds that perpetuate the problem.

Parts of Kerikeri's natural environment are already dominated by Taiwan Cherry or Privet. The Heritage Bypass, fully landscaped with native trees in 2007, is now a forest of Taiwan Cherry, as are parts of DOC's Kororipo Reserve.

Pest Weeds in Kerikeri – the way forward

The weed problem in Kerikeri has reached epidemic levels. Each year of inaction magnifies the problem. Birds or the wind distribute seeds and frustrate the efforts of those few who are trying to control weeds.

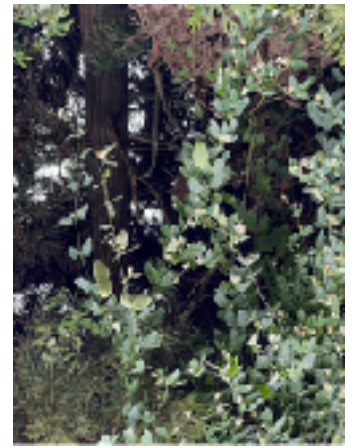
There is a lack of civic pride!

Kerikeri's weed problem is now an epidemic and needs the combined efforts of NRC, FNDC, DOC, community groups and individuals, in short everyone, to play their part.

Community groups are managing weeds in localised areas:

- **Friends of Wairoa Stream (FOWS)** along the Wairoa Stream public walkway on Council land.
- **Kapiro Conservation Trust** is forming networks of ecological corridors along the Rangitane Stream.
- A **South side track team** has commenced an immense task of weed clearance on Council and DOC land.
- **The Kerikeri River Restoration Project** is commencing weed management on DOC land.
- A **weeding group** works at Kororipo Basin.

The problem exceeds the capability of community groups.



Moth plant

FNDC

Vision Kerikeri has requested that FNDC manage Taiwan Cherry and ginger infestation along the Heritage bypass and lead community engagement, but no action has been taken yet. The council has few resources but finance for weed control is needed. Neglected weeds have a similar effect to neglected water pipes unnoticed until the results of inaction become visible to all.

NRC

The NRC provides useful weed advice online, but more public education, promotion of key weed species, and a budget are needed.

The Community

The community has a big part to play. Neglected hedges and wind breaks are festooned with Moth plant pods. Some owners are unaware and will be responsive if it is brought to their attention.

Wairoa Stream Update

The new road from Mill Lane to Hall Road & track maintenance

In April 2022, Far North Holdings submitted a Resource Consent for a 56-house development which included a new road connecting Mill Lane to Hall Road. The government has changed and the housing development at 57A Hall Road appears to be in abeyance, but the new road is included in the Draft Spatial Plan in all options.

The new road would block the Te Tahawai track, a much-used community facility, by a 2.7M high wall which had been ignored and omitted in the initial consent. Representations have been made, and it has been agreed that the engineering plans will include steps up to the new road from the walkway. Discussion has been held with the Council Reserve planner about incorporating a pathway along the road reserve of the new road that Friends of Wairoa Stream (FOWS) would plant with natives.

FOWS ceased maintaining the Mill Lane extension but a narrow pathway has been kept mowed by a member of the public.

This year some maintenance by FOWS has resumed because of the unavoidable need for upkeep because of weed infestation. It took three hours to chainsaw through the well-developed tobacco weed on the raised bank and a recent working bee removed four buckets of Moth Plant pods.

Main activities since last winter's planting season

- Preparing the track surface for winter with gravel donated by Ventia Quarry has been a key activity.
- Our original mostly 50 rat traps have been extended with a new possum trap line, a new stoat line along the entire track, and an additional 14 rat trap line. Altogether Wairoa Stream now has 101 traps.
- Endless weed control in our planting areas and in continuation of our goal of trying to make Wairoa Stream weed free. 260 Bangalow palm seedlings were removed from one small bush area.
- Some smaller Privet trees have been felled on the Dalton tributary left bank.



Lyndsay Turnor dealing to a tree privet



Upgrading the track surface



Moth plant pods removed from Mill Lane extension



The faster growing bangalow palm (light green) will out compete the slower growing native nikau

Wairoa Stream by Numbers @ March 25

- ✓ 4km of track constructed and under maintenance
- ✓ Volunteer hours 2013 to March 2025 = 13,070 hours.
- ✓ Total project value to date = \$470,000 – 57% from volunteer labour @\$20/hr until 1 April 2022 thereafter @ minimum hourly rate.
- ✓ 43% funding in cash or in kind from institutions, NGO's, businesses and individual donations (Council contribution \$27,389).
- ✓ 2024 -1550 plants planted (funded by Trees That Count & Carbon Neutral Trust Kerikeri).
- ✓ Total native plants planted 2013 to 2024 = 24,870 of 70 species
- ✓ 2018 to 2025, 1525 pests eradicated (include 1128 rats, 71 possums, 5 stoats).

Climate Neutral NZ Trust - 2025 Goals

Carbon Neutral NZ Trust (CNT) was established in 2018 as an initiative born from Vision Kerikeri's commitment to sustainability and climate action. For 2025, CNT has set two key goals that align with our **mission to improve environmental health, community resilience, and carbon neutrality in the Far North**:

1. Investigating Electro-Coagulation (EC) as a Wastewater Solution

- The high cost and inefficiency of traditional wastewater treatment have created challenges for the Far North.
- CNT is leading research into **Electro-Coagulation (EC) technology**, a **low-cost, high-efficiency alternative** that could significantly reduce pollution and infrastructure costs.
- We have secured **funding** to support a **Ngāti Kawa, Ngāpuhi wastewater specialist** (Massey University, chemical technology) in conducting **scientific and economic assessments**.
- The aim is to make wastewater treatment more **affordable, effective, and beneficial**—turning waste into a resource (clean irrigation water and food-safe fertilizer).

2. Supporting Ngāti Rēhia's Kauri Sanctuary for Carbon Credit Revenue & Social Housing

- CNT is working with Ngāti Rēhia to register 34 hectares of the Kauri Sanctuary for carbon credits based on new plantings.
- **Older native trees** in the sanctuary, while not ETS-eligible, may contribute to **biodiversity credit schemes** in the future.
- The carbon credit revenue could be leveraged as collateral to secure financing for 90 social housing units at Takou Bay.
- This project aligns with **both environmental and social goals**, ensuring that conservation efforts directly support community wellbeing.
- We are collaborating with **Brightlight Impact** to explore investment structures that make this model scalable for other hapū-led projects.

Connections with Vision Kerikeri's Work

- Given Vision Kerikeri's shadehouse activities, which raise 20,000 native trees annually, this work aligns

closely with CNT's tree-related carbon sequestration efforts.

- There is strong potential for collaboration in seed raising, native plant restoration, and knowledge-sharing.
- Allocation of **Carbon Sequestration Donations** for Wairoa Stream Track planting

These projects **build on Vision Kerikeri's original goals** of promoting **sustainable development, water quality, and carbon reduction**. We appreciate the ongoing support and look forward to sharing updates as these initiatives progress.