

Establishing a Special Kerikeri-Waipapa Flood Mitigation Zone to the proposed FNDC Spatial Plan

Enhancing Waipapa/Kerikeri Resilience through Strategic Planning

Introduction

Flooding poses significant risks to the Waipapa/Kerikeri communities, as set out in my 2023 Flood Mitigation Report. As climate change accelerates the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, local governments and planning authorities must proactively address flood risk within their jurisdiction. Integrating flood mitigation strategies into District Scheme Plans is a crucial step towards creating resilient, sustainable, and safe communities. Following in excess of hundreds of thousands of \$ ratepayer investment over the last 12 years, almost nothing has been achieved. Most other aspirations of Te Patukurea Spatial Plan are without meaning, until the problem of flood mitigation is addressed.

The Importance of Flood Mitigation in Planning

District Scheme Plans set the regulatory and strategic framework for land use and development within a district. Northland Regional Council fund flood protection infrastructure and Far North District Council fund stormwater management, land use planning and emergency management risk in relation to managing flood risk.

Up unto now the co-operation between the two councils has been less than ideal, with the very latest flood assessment Lidar modelling only now underway. This upgrade has only been **made after** an intervention from Northland Regional councillor Joe Carr, supported by the local Kerikeri River Working Group. Far North District Council's management of the existing regulations have been demonstrating-ly weak.

The opportunity of strengthening these issues by creating a 'Special Waipapa/Kerikeri Flood Zone' should not be missed, it will restore confidence in the council's operations

By embedding flood mitigation measures into these plans, councils can:

- Reduce the vulnerability of existing and future developments to flooding, by enacting specific regulatory requirements for the zone, until such time as there is flood mitigation in place.
- Protect critical infrastructure and public assets.
- Safeguard public health and safety.
- Enhance environmental outcomes and biodiversity.
- Demonstrate to central Government that the combined councils are proactive when applying for capital funding assistance.

Key Elements of Flood Mitigation in District Scheme Plans

Incorporating flood mitigation into district-level planning typically involves several core components:

1. Reviewing Risk Assessment, now underway, with the comprehensive mapping and analysis of flood-prone areas.
2. Land Use Zoning of hazard zones where development will be subject to special conditions to minimise flood risk, inclusive of all downstream flood risk zones e.g. Historic Stone Store basin precinct etc.
3. Strict development controls, including Implementation of building standards and site drainage requirements.
4. Encourage natural protection and restoration of natural floodplains, wetlands, and green spaces to enhance water absorption and slow runoff.
5. Investment in stormwater management systems, levees, and retention basins to reduce flood impact.
6. Emergency planning, integration of evacuation routes, warning systems, especially in the closure of SH10 during flood events.

Benefits to the Community

By introducing robust flood mitigation measures into District Scheme Plans, communities and central government will benefit from reduced disaster recovery costs, improved public safety, and enhanced long-term resilience. Additionally, these efforts support environmental stewardship and can increase property values by lowering insurance risks.

Conclusion

The integration of flood mitigation zone into District Scheme Plans is essential for future-proofing communities against the growing threat of flooding. Through strategic planning, the council can shift from a system of disaster response, towards a more proactive risk response, before a disaster inevitably occurs. This through informed decision-making, and the creation of a Special Kerikeri-Waipapa Plan Zone.

Far North District Council and Northland District Council, through a newly established special zone can foster safer, more regulatory sustainable development, for current and future generations.

Thanking you

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