



The Northern Action Group Incorporated

“Welcome to 2021”

We hope you have had a great Christmas and New Year break. A month has gone by already! but we can still look forward to a much more prosperous year!

Rodney Subdivision boundary review

We ended 2020 on a good/bad note in that we had a good presentation of our subdivision reorganisation proposal at the December Auckland Council governing body meeting and it was well received. Our proposal was well supported by Councilor Sayers and with letters of support from our local MPs Chris Penk and Marja Lubick. [Thank you!] A third of councillors voted in support, but sadly the prospect of a review of their representation was enough of a concern to the other councillors to persuade them to vote against the proposal.

Councillors seemed a little preoccupied with the Government’s announcement that it was planning a review of Auckland Council’s governance and were keen to ensure their early involvement to help shape the outcomes. Hopefully the government will see through this and ensure that any review is appropriately independent of the interests of existing members and employees and focuses on the problems and demands from different ratepayer groups such as ours to fix the structure - of a council which most now believe is not fit for purpose and not fairly and equitably representing the interests of the people they represent.

As for the proposal to change the subdivision boundaries in Rodney that will now be deferred to the compulsory 2025 review , unless the government's plans for local government and electoral reforms create opportunities for us to further press the case.

Government review and reforms?

Government seems to be paying some attention (although this is a long way from any action to benefit us) in its proposals to reform local government and representation. The shape of any changes is not yet clear but the incoming brief for the minister last year is an indication of government's intentions (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-12/Local%20Government%20BIM.pdf> [paras 24-26] and <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-12/Local%20Government%20BIM.pdf>).

We are hopeful this will create an opportunity for us to push again for the separation of the governance of North Rodney from Auckland Council .

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Government cancellation of referenda on Maori wards

The proposal of the government to cancel the provision for referenda on the establishment of Maori wards in local government (under urgency!) is a direct “big government” attack on localism and the right of communities to set appropriate governance for themselves.

Members may want to sign the [Taxpayers Union’s petition against the proposal](#).

As [Kiwiblog points out](#) we already have a fair and balanced level of Maori representation in our local government elected representatives.

Local communities should be able to elect representatives based on the quality of the candidates and not be forced to choose from a restricted selection based on any special characteristics. Partitioning local government electors into two different categories by racial, ethnic, cultural, or any other background characteristics goes against the democratic concept of everyone having equal and the same voting rights.

Referenda on decisions that impact on representation are one way we can keep elected officials accountable. **It has been a long tradition that electors can vote on, and veto, fundamental changes to local voting systems.**

That is how electors were able to prevent several amalgamation proposals by the Local Government Commission. Unfortunately the legislation only works one way so we were unable to demand a referendum on whether North Rodney should be part of the Super city. The consequences of Government’s forcing of that amalgamation proposal without community support should be a good demonstration of why all electors should oppose the current proposal.

In our [submission to Auckland Council on the subdivision boundaries for the Rodney local board area](#), our proposed subdivision groupings were rationally based on the types of local government services provided rather than as traditionally on population centres. For the proposed Rural subdivision there is an opportunity for Maori concerned about their Kaitiakitanga of the area to nominate and support a candidate to represent them and their manaakitanga approach, and this was part of our proposal.

This is the way forward rather than introducing voting discrimination. Groupings of individuals are free under the current system to put forward and support candidates representing the interests of their group. This currently means we have political parties like Labour and (locally) groups like Rodney First presenting and supporting Local Board candidates. But electors are still free to choose, amongst themselves and without voting discrimination, the best candidate for the position from their subdivision. [We argue elsewhere that [adopting recall elections](#) would further improve democratic rights and be a



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cheaper and more efficient way of ensuring that candidates represent the people who elect them].

Campaigns

Our billboard campaign to draw attention to the poor state of Rodney's roads , the unacceptable proposal to create a new regional landfill in the Waby Valley, and the exploitation of Rodney's resources to benefit greater Auckland (recently selling council land in Wellsford and using the money to fund central city spending is another example) will continue . There are some small costs involved for materials and your continued support through donations will be greatly appreciated please!.

We will continue to support our campaigns for recall elections and drawing attention to the way Auckland Council is ignoring the needs of Rodney through the blatant denial of resourcing (exemplified by:

- the regional fuel tax rort;
- the unwillingness to do anything about the imbalance in infrastructure assets across local board areas in the Service Level review;
- the denial of adequate funding in the current 10 year budget review; and
- the unwillingness to take action to deal holistically with the Auckland region's waste management challenges.

Donations to NAGs Bank Account ASB WW **12 3095 0233547 00**

Comments to northernactiongroup@gmail.com

Roading Funding

The local board has faced a lot of criticism over its allocation of targeted rate funding to public transport rather than on the maintenance and upgrading of our roads. Whatever your views on the allocation decisions, the board is strongly advocating that council properly fund the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of Rodney roading and that the \$121m allocated to this work (which has now been cut from the budget) be restored and proceed. Auckland transport has advised that it gets only half the money it needs just to maintain the status of Rodney roads and we all need to add our voices to the demands for that to change.

You can comment on the 10 year budget proposals when council seeks feedback on the budget from 22 February 22 March.

If we don't all clamor for change, the Governing Body will happily continue to ignore us in favor of its well-being priorities for Auckland city.

Attached below is the Local Board's pre-consultation flyer.

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Your voice is important

Due to budget constraints brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, your feedback will be crucial when Auckland Council seeks feedback on its next 10-year Budget from **22 February to 22 March 2021**.

The budget sets out funding for council's activities, services and investments for the next decade.

Budget constraints brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have left a \$1 billion shortfall in council's budget and will continue to restrict council's capacity to deliver services as well as our Rodney Local Board projects.

This shortfall will affect many areas, from maintaining community facilities, to funding transport and environmental work. There will need to be some tough decisions and tradeoffs.

This is why providing your feedback is so crucial. It helps us to understand what matters to you. Even if you agree with our priorities, we still want to hear from you because many voices help us to put forward a strong case to council for funding for our area.

Rodney Local Board's role

As a local board we receive a set budget each year that we can allocate based on our community's needs and preferences. Some of the areas where we have decision-making over budgets include local parks, libraries, looking after the environment, and maintaining and upgrading town centres and halls.

However, there are many other areas that are important to our community that sit beyond our decision-making responsibility. These include rates, regional parks, state highways and road sealing. Other organisations make decisions on these.

Advocacy

Below are our three proposed priority areas that we will advocate to council to allocate funding for as we don't make decisions on these areas:

- **Safe, well-maintained roads:** enough funding for Auckland Transport to renew and maintain 12 per cent of Auckland's roading network each year to ensure safe, wellmaintained roads.
- **Improvements to unsealed roads:** \$121 million in funding for Auckland Transport's Unsealed Roads Improvement Programme to improve unsealed roads through strengthening and other methods.
- **Sports provision:** funding to continue progressing the delivery of the Kumeū-Huapai indoor courts facility.

Local board-funded initiatives

There are initiatives where we have direct control over budgets. These are some of the items that we propose for the Rodney Local Board area for 2021/2022:

- Continuing to deliver improvements to our village and town centres.
- Continuing our focus to improve water quality in our waterways by restoring freshwater ecosystems, and through initiatives to reduce sediment.
- Improving our local biodiversity and natural environment by eradicating pests, carrying out restoration work and mitigating kauri dieback.
- Supporting the community, and community resource recovery and recycling centres, to minimise waste, turn waste into resources, and promote education on waste reduction.
- Progressing the outcomes identified in the Green Road master plan.
- Progressing renewals or construction of key community facilities including Wellsford toilets, Kumeū library, Mahurangi community centre.

Regional topics

With the proposed 10-year Budget, council is seeking feedback on regional priorities and levels of funding across many areas, such as:

- rates levels
- protecting the environment and responding to climate change
- maintaining and renewing community assets

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- transport infrastructure
- stormwater, drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

You can find more detail on the proposed budget, including supporting documents, here:

ouraukland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/articles/news/2020/12/recovery-budget-proposal/

Have your say

We want to know if you agree with these local priorities. Have we got it right? In addition to our local priorities, we also encourage you to submit your feedback on regional topics.

Please provide your feedback from 22 February to 22 March 2021.

For more information and to have your say:

- akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/10-year-budget-2021-2031
- facebook.com/RodneyLocalBoard
- Phone 09 301 0101

Stay Safe!

Yours sincerely

Bill Foster
Chairman
Northern Action Group Inc.