

MOTUEKA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2014-2026

Proposal for Motueka Community Board approval

Executive summary

During 2013 a Vision Motueka strategy group developed a strategy concept intended to put the community more directly in charge of its own destiny. At its April 2014 meeting the Community Board accepted the concept in principle, subject to further detail and Board consideration. This document is the next step in developing the details of the strategy.

The purpose of tabling this paper is to seek the Board's endorsement of the principles set out, which would enable the proponents to:

- Form a steering group to begin building a framework to advance the idea further, and to draft the outlines of a constitution for the proposed Community Development Trust, in line with the proposal paper document.
- Discuss the ideas one-on-one with the Tasman District Mayor, Community Development chair, CEO and other major community and civic leaders to gauge their support (or otherwise); and to hear their ideas on how the strategy could be improved and implemented, or what barriers there may be.
- Research in greater detail the various funding models that are used in other NZ districts and overseas for similar schemes.

The authors are open to suggestions that could improve the concept or provide alternative ways of achieving the same results (including funding models).

They also want to emphasise that the examples quoted under "Strategic plan example" and "Signature project examples" are possibilities only. The types and details of actual visions, plans and projects would be determined by the proposed Community Development Trust.

Introduction

During 2013 a Vision Motueka strategy group met to discuss the Motueka ward's future. Out of it came a strategy intended to put the community directly in charge of its own destiny. At its April 2014 meeting the Community Board accepted the concept in principle, subject to further detail and Board consideration.

The strategy is driven by the reality that the community will have to be the author of its own future. The TDC is unlikely to have significant funding in the foreseeable future for the sort of projects that would advance development within the ward. If the ward wants to advance its prospects, free of competing district-wide interests and severe funding restrictions, it will have to draw on its own resources.

The whole exercise should work around a 'grand organising principle'. Given concerns about environmental degradation, quality of life issues and long-term sustainability it is recommended that all projects should revolve around a single vision. The overall effect should benefit all of the ward's social and economic sectors.

Foundations

The strategy rests on these pre-requisite principles:

- ❖ The strategy is about development, not maintenance. The aim is to advance the ward's long-term resilience as a town and as a community.
- ❖ The community takes direct action to secure its own future without relying on outside agencies or ad-hoc improvements.
- ❖ The current local body governance structures have to be respected.
- ❖ The TDC will have to support this initiative. Without it the strategy cannot work.
- ❖ This initiative can operate concurrently with the TDC's 10-year plan.
- ❖ The community must be given every opportunity to fully participate in the design of a community development plan.
- ❖ This initiative should complement the work of active existing groups within the community.
- ❖ Democratic principles must be followed. The plan cannot proceed without a majority vote in a ward referendum.

Underlying assumptions

It is assumed that a vision for the Motueka ward would focus on four main areas – the natural environment, its economic base, community facilities and the community's overall quality of life. Completion of a development strategy should leave the whole community feeling justifiably proud and privileged to live in the area. For the purposes of the strategy the four areas need to be properly defined. A preliminary outline of their scope follows:

- ❖ **Natural environment:** This category should include recreational opportunities, bio-diversity, freedom from pollution and visual attractiveness.
- ❖ **Economic base:** Because a community plan cannot fund private interests directly, a community project's plan should be aimed at making the area attractive for commerce, manufacturing and retailing, while ensuring the sustainability of existing industries. An improved labour market for all ages would be a natural bi-product of this focus. The challenge is therefore to develop a vision for the town and engage in suitable projects that will make this a reality.
- ❖ **Community facilities:** Motueka's community facilities should be upgraded to encourage the highest possible level of community interaction, health, and satisfaction. Visitor need should also be considered since many sectors within the Motueka community depend on domestic and foreign tourism.
- ❖ **Quality of life - for economic sustainability:** The three previous categories should promote the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Building the reputation of Motueka as a high quality living environment may well prompt young people to invest their futures in the area. It should encourage enterprise and boost existing industries by encouraging spending within the ward. This in turn should mitigate the risk of a population decline over time; something many areas across the country are already experiencing.

The strategy

The actual idea is quite simple: Establish a community development trust (CDT) charged with the responsibility of working with the community to develop a future vision for the town and then design a series of projects to achieve that vision. Essential elements in this process will be TDC cooperation, Board oversight, unimpeachable democratic legitimacy and funding certainty. The benefits of this strategy proposal are clear:

- ✓ It would be mandated by the community.
- ✓ Development projects that are impossible at the moment would become possible.

- ✓ Securing the ward's future would be more likely than it is at present.
- ✓ The community would take charge of its own future.
- ✓ The TDC would be free to concentrate on its key responsibilities

Steps to a development strategy

The initial stage in launching the strategy is critical. The following steps are recommended:

- Select an initial steering group to oversee the creation of a properly constituted community development trust (CDT), the selection of trustees, the preparation of a constitution, setting timelines and the establishment of appropriate lines of communication from the CDT through the Board to the TDC.
- Gain Board and TDC agreement to support the administrative and funding elements within a development strategy.
- Identify the direction a development strategy should take; including its goals, the outcomes expected and the specific projects needed to achieve the goals.
- Engage in a comprehensive process of consultation, planning and communication to settle on the strategy.
- Prepare the final development strategy; present it to the community and after suitable 'campaigning' put it to a ward referendum, which may form part of the next round of local body elections.

Strategic plan example

This proposal rests on the design of a strategic development plan. What follows is a demonstration of what a strategic plan might include. It is emphasised that this is only an example; it is not intended to be a statement of intent.

The vision (example only)

To sustain and secure Motueka's long-term future by making it one of New Zealand's most desirable living and holidaying areas in New Zealand.

Mission (example only)

To realise this vision the Motueka ward could:

- Select and achieve a range of local project-centred objectives compatible with, but additional to, the TDC's ten-year district plan.
- Empower its Community Board to focus on the objectives.
- Have access to the financial and other resources it needs to achieve project goals.

Broad objectives

- Reinvigorate the town's CBD with good design, an improved retail precinct and high quality community services.
- Follow the lead of Keep Motueka Beautiful in using an environmental, parks and recreational plan that is fully integrated and makes Motueka a fascinating place to visit and live in.
- Use the arts and culture in ways that build community pride, preserve its history and engage visitors.
- Embark on projects that secure the ward against natural disasters.
- Introduce a 'cents-per-day', grant and fundraising regime to finance all projects.
- Complete all projects within a defined time frame.

- Find ways to springboard off the foregoing to encourage economic growth in locally based industries and commerce compatible with these objectives.

Signature project examples

Example One: Market town. Create a new 'market town' square linked to Decks Reserve beginning with a new community hub with library, information centre and exhibition/ community gathering spaces. This should, in time, encourage a natural market driven process of land swaps and buy-outs that would shift the west side of 'Main Street' into Decks Reserve around public spaces or market square. Iconic shops established to make the retail area more attractive should also be encouraged.

Example Two: Make Motueka 'picture perfect'. Bring everything in the ward's environs up to a near perfect state of presentation and repair. As part of this, adapt the Motueka Inlet as an ecological, boating and swimming park, linking it to Thorps Bush with a 'grand canal' for kayaks and punts. Upgrade the saltwater pool and improve amenities along the coastal foreshore as part of this park. Build a large activities park on the field beside the freedom camping area that relies on natural rather than machine driven activities. Use the inlet gates to control water flows on a short term basis during the summer season. Then promote the area nationally and internationally, drawing on an annual budget from the cents-per-day fund and a koha required of visitors using the activities park.

Example Three: Build a large interactive ecological visitor park that celebrates New Zealand's natural heritage and link it to eco-tours to Kahurangi and Abel Tasman. This park might have a number of locations using existing locations linked by designated access routes. Small gold coin entry fees could be charged or requested on a koha basis to fund on-going maintenance, making the projects largely self-sustaining.

Smaller scale project examples (Many of these examples would probably fit within larger signature projects)

- Create a more extensive network of cycle and walking routes within the ward.
- Implement a truck bypass policy covering business hours and redevelop High Street in the CBD to make it more pedestrian friendly, pushing parking more into the designated off-street car parks.
- Conduct a promotions campaign on a targeted national basis to promote the ward and its associated recreational resources.
- Festoon the area with art on a large scale to make it the outdoor arts and crafts capital of New Zealand – linking it all to the walk-ways and CBD.
- Restore the historic wharf, including a rebuild of the original timber wharf extension with replica sheds housing fishermen's facilities and for-hire 'tinnies'.
- Establish a regional picnicking park from the Motueka Bridge to the mouth of the river.
- Create a walk-cycle way across estuarine area from a restored Riwaka wharf to the Motueka River.
- Establish a walk/cycle path along the stopbank from Motueka River to Wakarewarewa Street.
- Convert the Motueka port headland into a park.
- Construct a large native bird enclosure for weka and pukeko in the Thorp Bush area.

Funding model

A guaranteed funding stream will be essential. A strategic development plan would be unachievable if it must rely on donations and grants alone. This proposal therefore requires a variable **cents-per-day** targeted rate, supplemented by donations, grants or other fund raising and should be 'sold' to the community on that basis.

The following table demonstrates the funding range on this variable 50-80 cents per day model. The cents-per-day rate could be varied according to project requirements and rate payer status. For example; pensioners could be rated at the lower level (or not at all), while some plans may require moving to the higher 80 cent rate for most ratepayers, over certain years, to meet project timelines. Those with land titles or leased business premises that generate several rate demands, should only be subjected to a single targeted cents per day amount.

Table: Estimated cents-per-day funding possibilities –assuming >5,000 ward ratepayers

Rate payer numbers	Targeted rate (\$000) on an annual cents per day basis		
	50 cents (\$182.50/yr)	60 cents (\$219.00/yr)	80 cents (\$292.00/yr)
3000	547,500	657,000	876,000
4000	730,000	876,000	1,168,000
5000	912,500	1,095,000	1,460,000

The variable nature of this funding model might be reflected something like this: Pensioners could be allowed to contribute on a volunteer basis. If we assume there are 1,500 rate-paying pensioners and 500 decline to make any contribution the other 1000 would pay at the 50 cents per day rate. The remaining 3,500 ratepayers would contribute at either the 60 cents per day level in some years and 80 cents in other years, over [say] a 12 year projects period. On this basis the development trust’s annual funding would range between \$949,000 and \$1,204,500. This would give the total funding available over the 12-year life of the strategy, excluding grants and donations, of between \$11,388,000 and \$14,454,000, less the unknown contingency associated with those who have multiple rating demands on multiple titles or business leases.

Funding and projects

If [say] 12 relatively small projects and several large ‘signature’ projects were to be undertaken (e.g. the picture perfect and hub umbrella projects) the total cost would be spread over the number of years necessary to complete them within the ‘cents per day’ limits, with no borrowing and subject to donations or grants. If the development trust found itself in surplus once the developmental projects were completed it would return the money to ratepayers.

Reviews of the plan could be conducted at the same time as the TDC conducted its long-term plan reviews. If projects with a very high cost, running into millions, were selected then extending the time-line may be necessary, or the number of projects restricted. The community may have to make some hard choices between what would be nice to do and what is actually the most necessary. Criteria for project selection purposes would be needed.

The ward would be able to fund projects the TDC would never contemplate, given all the constraints and priorities it must work under. The time-lines for ward projects, even if they were funded by council, would stretch out into an indefinite future with inevitable cost increases that can ultimately frustrate the best of intentions, while adding to the risk that other regional priorities would overtake them. Extended time-lines also mean the ward cannot build on local advances to achieve a vision for the area’s future.

Managing the risks

The barrier and opposition risks that could frustrate this strategy can be anticipated and either side-lined, or eliminated. Some likely risks are set out in the next table:

Table: Managing the risks likely to confront this development strategy

Risks	Likely risk sources	Risk management
Some elected officials feel their role as elected representatives would be undermined	Councillors and Board members	Write the need to submit key CDT decisions to the Board for its approval. Establish the strategy's legitimacy through a community referendum.
Some sectors within the community oppose the strategy, threatening vital support for it.	Pensioners, the TDC, vocal activists, Board members	Appoint a steering group to hold a preliminary set of exploratory meetings with key players in the community and TDC. Widespread community consultation and planning involvement. Concentrated promotion of the benefits. A fully transparent process. A community referendum, binding on the Board and TDC. <i>Key message: This proposal is anchored in direct democracy. To oppose it is to deny a community the democratic right to self-determination on merely process or partisan grounds.</i>
Changing the strategy 'midstream'.	The Board, TDC, community groups, and individuals within the CDT.	Make changes to projects only possible as part of the 10-year plan reviews. Make CDT decision making subject to constitutional parameters. Provide for a mediation and arbitration process in the CDT's constitution. Ring fence the CDT's funding to ensure it cannot be taken for purposes outside the development projects.
Poor projects and financial controls due to inadequate CDT and Board oversight	CDT, Board.	Appoint an accountant and auditor with all normal oversight checks and reporting. Hold a yearly public AGM. Require regular financial reporting to Board and TDC. Management oversight by a project manager.
Project timelines begin to slip, putting the whole development strategy at risk.	CDT	Contract with a project manager to plan the implementation of all projects, set the critical path and oversee each project.
The community is confused about the strategy's parameters, purpose and benefits - threatening the referendum result	CDT, Board, media	Ensure the planning and promotions phase is fully documented with detailed designs in a form easily absorbed and understood by people. Identify those elements in the community most likely to oppose/ be confused/complacent about the strategy and target them with detailed information and calls to attend meetings held for them.
There is serious opposition to the cents per day scheme.	Community groups, Board members, councillors	Stress that the whole strategy will be subject to a proper democratic process, preceded by full consultation and community involvement. Apply pressure on opponents to respect democracy. Communicate that fact that the future of the ward is in the community's hands.

The CDT may be seen as a threat or an unnecessary additional community body.	Board and TDC staff or representatives	Meet during the initial steering group stages with key people to explain that the CDT is simply a community project implementation group and will be subject to community and local authority oversight. If necessary merge the CDT into Vision Motueka, so that there is no additional body.
The turnout for a referendum, held separate to the local body elections is poor.	The Motueka ward community.	Hold the referendum as part of a local body election, or use a letter box drop to ensure the vote comes to the direct attention of all rate payers.

TDC co-operation risks

The risk issues associated with the TDC are so significant they need special consideration. Providing there are no clear statute-based impediments to this proposal, any other opposition by the TDC could prove just as fatal. If the council is not prepared to collect the cents-per-day rate, any development strategy would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement. The absence of a secure funding base would make planning and execution too uncertain.

The TDC may also object to holding the referendum as part of the next round of elections. This can be overcome by holding the referendum independent of the council, but this may mean it will refuse to recognise or act on the result.

As part of the initial steering group work up meetings should be held with councillors to ensure there is majority support for the strategy. The TDC's CEO and senior managers should also be consulted to identify any legislative or administrative problems.

Community consultation and engagement

Community involvement will be critical to the success of the strategy. It will almost certainly fail at the referendum stage unless the communications, planning, marketing and consultation/ engagement process is not properly conducted. This process could include:

- A planned series of public meetings, debates, focus groups and ideas forums.
- Regular reports and surveys in the local media (radio, newspapers, internet).
- A dedicated internet site.
- A communication and promotions stand at the Sunday Market.
- Addresses delivered to community groups to explain the whole concept and its benefits.
- Have the projects fully documented and illustrated (diagrams, plans, drawings) and make them accessible to the community.
- A staged process of consultation, culminating just prior to the referendum, with full publicised details of all projects in the media, coupled with a number of Q&A public meetings.

Note: Public debates may be an effective way to convince those opposed to the strategy that they should support it in a referendum.

Making it happen

Recommendations for initial stages of this proposal were outlined earlier. Once they are under way, the next stage would be the proper establishment of the CDT, with a constitution and established lines of communication and authority from it to the Board and TDC.

Possible conflicts of interest inherent in appointing Board members or councillors to the CDT should be carefully thought through before doing so.

The CDT's work over the first 1 to 2 years will be an intense planning phase accompanied by comprehensive community consultation. All sorts of ideas may well come out of the woodwork. Without a clear vision, a raft of ideas may well cause confusion and argument rather than providing any directional clarity. Therefore, the CDT's first task should be to settle on a vision for the ward that can easily translate into one or two umbrella ('signature') projects, under which specific sub-projects can be grouped.

An initial set of visioning public meetings and targeted consultations with existing interest groups should precede settling on the vision.

Base-line factors

This initiative should only proceed if the Board and TDC back its key facets. Initial consultation with elements within the community should also indicate support. Conversely, where some opposition is indicated this should not discourage further action if obvious paths to overcome that resistance are available. In most cases the referendum would be decisive. Opponents would find it very difficult to maintain their opposition after a community vote in favour of the strategy – providing the turnout is good.

Forming the CDT should not proceed until the Board agrees to back the proposal, a majority of councillors are behind it, there are no legislative barriers and key groups within the community have been consulted.