

Essay Competition – Together We Thrive

I would like to start with a quote from the District Council website. “As part of *Project Thrive*, we heard from the community that while we needed to keep rates affordable, it is important for Council to balance affordability with creating a thriving district.” (pg15 of the LTP 2018-28 Consultation Document). This to me emphasises just how important it is that any future projects must be sustainable and renewable to save the rate payer money in the long term whilst at the same time creating a healthy, thriving district. This could include improving public transport, the pedestrianisation of Ruataniwha street and sustainable energy resources.

While there is very limited public transport in Waipukurau, there is no mention of rectifying this problem in the Long Term Plan; however thousands of dollars is being set aside for road surface renewals etc. If some of this budget was set aside for improved public transport, there would be fewer cars on the road, and as a result we would have less fuel emissions, fewer car accidents and remove the need for expensive road repairs. This could be achieved by consulting with NZ rail to make use of the train that already goes right through Waipukurau. By adding passenger carriages this would allow us to travel to Palmerston Nth, Napier and beyond. Also, by adding a bicycle carriage as many trains do in Europe, this would encourage us to leave our cars behind and cycle around the city centres – also creating fewer cars on our roads.



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Reduced fuel emissions could also be achieved by pedestrianizing the main street. Ruataniwha St has many nice cafes and shops to visit, but all the traffic is a major hazard for everyone. By blocking the entrances at the junction with Highway 2 and at the round-about, only pedestrians and cyclists would have access. The tarmac should also be removed and replaced with recycled rubber tiles that creates electricity when walked on using kinetic force as they have done in London's Olympic Stadium and the Westfield Stratford City mall. This would generate enough electricity to power all the lights within the pedestrianized area, making it a safer environment at night time. This environment could further be enhanced by planting trees such as palms for shade, fruit trees for public use, or natives to encourage flora and fauna. Imagine that! A hazardless, peaceful, sustainable environment for all ages.



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As we are in the top five places in New Zealand with the most sunlight hours according to currentresults.com, I think we could make good use of that by adding a Solar plant. This would create more energy for the town while minimalizing the carbon-footprint left behind. Also, we could build windmills to utilise the wind, as we tolerate a lot of it, and a Hydro plant to make energy from the rivers that surround us. This would generate Waipukurau a lot of relatively cheap, renewable and enviro-friendly energy.



We already have a recycling centre near the wastewater plant, but if we had more mini recycling collection points distributed about the town and in rural areas, as they do throughout France for example, it would encourage recycling while at the same time reducing the number of dedicated trips into the central recycling centre. This would lead to reduced pollution which contaminates our waterways at the same time as reducing carbon emissions.

Water collection could also be encouraged by the council subsidising water butts so every urban household could collect rainwater for watering their gardens and filling their swimming pools. This would result in more people growing their own fruit and vegetables which would reduce the carbon footprint of importing produce into the area.

For people who do not have enough space on their property, land should be set aside near town for community gardens. This not only provides people with fresh produce but creates a healthy, safe and relaxed community environment.

In conclusion I feel there are many long term sustainable measures that the Council could consider which would only enhance and protect the beautiful environment we are so privileged to live in.