

Otama Community Plan



March 2009

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Why do a Community Plan?

As a short to medium term initiative for the communities of Otama, the community plan will:

- Focus community debate and get people involved in making decisions and taking responsibility for our communities
- Set direction and common goals, promote consensus and avoid division
- Safeguard the community and the environment from exploitation
- Capture all good ideas and identify initiatives suitable for external funding
- Assist Community Board decision-making and allow more effective use of ratepayer funds
- Ensure the small settlements are able to develop facilities that suit the area
- Help avoid haphazard development
- Help influence Thames Coromandel District Council's programme of works during its annual and long-term planning processes
- Show opportunities for individuals and groups to develop new projects and provide goods and services

Reporting on this Plan each year will enable the community to record achievements and to check that the identified priorities are still correct. It will also be a chance to include new information and new ideas.

How will this Community Plan work?

This Community Plan is a collection of aspirations and priorities for future directions. It is a community-owned document and provides a framework to be used to guide decision making for local planning purposes. For example, individuals and groups who may be wishing to undertake a community project could use the Community Plan to determine priorities for action or to support their requests for external funding.

As part of the Council's planning process, the Mercury Bay Community Board will use this Plan to determine local priorities and to recommend future work programmes to council. The Thames Coromandel District Council will take into account the principles and priorities as outlined in the Community Plan when deciding its annual and longer-term work programmes. The Council will use the Community Plan as a basis for developing policies for desired growth within the District.

The plan will be used to secure support from within and outside the community for funding for specific projects and will be reported on regularly to the Community Board and the public. Annual reporting will enable success to be measured and information to be checked and updated.

There is opportunity for involvement at every stage of the process. The Community Board will take an active role in promoting the Plan to the community and where appropriate, facilitating project development.

Others who have an interest in the future of the area will find the Community Plan an essential planning guide. These include:

- Government Agencies
- Other Councils
- Developers/Investors
- Visitors and Tourists

Who will have access to the plan?

This Community Plan is available from the local Council Office at 10 Monk Street, Whitianga or by telephoning Council on 07 867 2010.

How will progress and success be measured?

A central record of activity will be kept at the District Council office, 10 Monk Street, Whitianga and through the Mercury Bay Community Board. Progress will be reported to the community annually. Maintaining the integrity of the Plan and monitoring its use is a necessary part of the implementation. A review of the Plan's highest priorities will be carried out by the Community Board at a time to coincide with the preparation of Council's annual plan budgeting process.

A major review of this Community Plan will be undertaken every three years to coincide with the review of Council's LTCCP process. This will involve public consultation and input.

How can new ideas be incorporated?

The Community Plan has been arranged like a workbook so that an individual or group may use it to keep a record of their activity and ideas. The central record of activity, maintained by Council, will form the basis of the annual report to the community and the Community Board.

All comments on or contributions to this Community Plan should be made to the Thames Coromandel District Council's Mercury Bay Area Manager, 10 Monk Street, Whitianga.

Description of our Community

Introduction

Otama, Opito and Matapaua Bays, in the Mercury Bay area, contain small pockets of coastal development surrounded by pasture and bush covered hills. In recent years these coastal settlements have become popular destinations for holiday home owners and visitors alike.

Growth management has been identified as a key issue for the future of the Thames-Coromandel District. As part of addressing this, the Thames-Coromandel District Council has prepared information on development and population trends for settlements in the District, including some of the smaller settlements such as Otama, Opito and Matapaua Bays.

What is there at the moment?

At the time of the 2006 Census, Otama had a usually resident population (all people who usually live in the area) of approximately eight people (based on local knowledge).

In terms of development trends, Otama consists predominantly of small pockets of coastal development surrounded by production pine forest covered hills and farms. Minimal subdivision has occurred in Otama.

Census data available for Otama from the 2006 population census includes part of Opito and Matapaua Bay. The population statistics available are therefore for these three areas and not Otama specifically.

Land Use Planning

Otama

The small pocket of coastal-residential zoned land at Otama which allows for medium density housing is already developed to capacity under the District Plan's rules. There are sand dunes and wetlands that are regionally significant. A small number of conservation covenants currently protect native bush on privately owned land adjacent to the conservation-zoned land and the Otama camping ground.

What could happen in the future?

Otama

Otama is largely undeveloped at present except for agricultural purposes and this level of development is seen as appropriate. Any potential development for residential purposes would need to meet the provisions of the District Plan.

It is planned the Otama Camping Ground will remain operating. Any potential development for residential purposes would need to be in accordance with the District Plan.

While any development within the Otama settlement and the surrounding area which may be approved may cause the population to grow slightly, the population is anticipated to remain a mixture of permanent and seasonal residents.

Mercury Bay demographics

The Mercury Bay Community Board area has experienced steady, high growth since 1996 which can be characterised by the following trends:

- In 2006, the usually resident population was 6,696 people. This was an increase of 1,650 people or 33% since 1996.
- The number of dwellings in 2006 was 6,837, an increase of 2,139 dwellings or 46% since 1996.
- Whitianga is the largest settlement in the Mercury Bay Community Board area, accounting for:
- -56% of the population (3,768 people); and
- -41% of dwellings (2,811 dwellings)

Over the peak summer period, Mercury Bay experiences high numbers of tourists and visitors, as well as part time residents and usual residents. The *2007/08 Peak Population Study* produced by TCDC found that the population of Whitianga increased 4.7% from the township's usually resident population during the Christmas and New Year holiday period – an estimated peak population of 18,600 people.

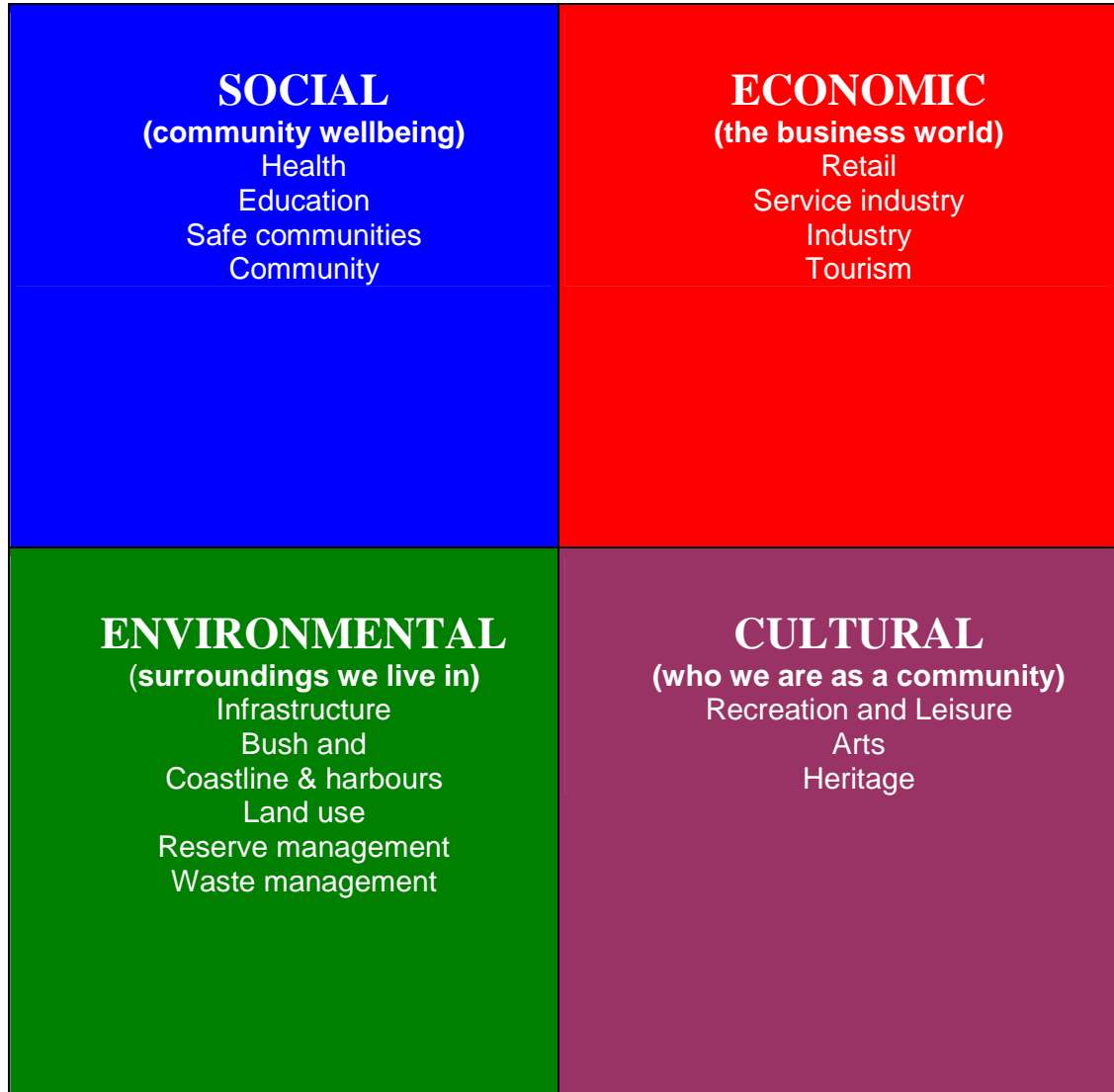
Map of Otama Area



Our process so far

Date	Action	Number
8 March 2007	Notice to ratepayers to advise of forthcoming meeting	Approx 46
22 & 29 March 2007	Public Notice – Bay Notes in The Bay Beacon advertising forthcoming community planning meeting	
7 April 2007	Public meeting held at Kuaotunu Hall	Approximately 25 attendees
April	Draft plan compiled from information from public meeting	
18 May 2007	Notice to ratepayers to advise of forthcoming meeting including draft plan details	Approx 46
3 June 2007	Public meeting held at Kuaotunu Hall to finalise draft	Approx 23
28 August 2008	Final amendments agreed.	
March 2009	Community plan finalised.	
April 2009	Reviewed by Ratepayers Assn committee member. (Chairman unavailable)	
June 2009	FINAL Plan received by Mercury Bay Community Board	

Key areas of focus



SOCIAL – (community wellbeing)

Health / Education / Safe Communities / Community

What do we have?

- Fire brigade at Kuaotunu.
- Schools at Te Rerenga and Whitianga.
- Kindergarten and playgroup at Kuaotunu.
- High percentage of non residents with just 7-8 permanent residents.
- Speeding cars.
- Dust and related health problems.

What do we want?

- To retain fire service at Kuaotunu.
- To reinstate first response at Kuaotunu/Whitianga.
- Control on speeding cars.
- Traction seal on Black Jack Road.
- School bus back to Otama.
- Resolution to dust issues and related health problems.
- Speed control (50kph from Kuaotunu Store to Otama Beach Rd).

What don't we want?

- To lose current services.
- Vehicular access onto the beach except in emergencies.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Issue	Action	Lead Agency	Partner Agency	Priority/Timeline		
				09/10	11/13	15/20
Deal with health issues re: dust	Apply dust seal adjacent to the houses	TCDC			√	
Reinstate first response unit.	Seek volunteers	ORA		√		

ECONOMIC – (the business world)

Retail / Service Industry / Industry / Tourism

What do we have?

- Pastoral farming.
- Production forestry.
- A developing camp ground.
- Small scale tourism operations.
- Access to service centres of Kuaotunu and Whitianga.
- Iconic artists.
- Regionally significant sand dunes.

What do we want?

- To retain the camp ground. It is planned that the Otama Campground will remain operating.
- Bylaws to be adhered to regarding housing sensitive to landscape.
- Differential rating to protect rural backdrops.
- Alternative methods of logging.
- Improved roading / access / infrastructure.

What don't we want?

- Any commercialisation at Otama i.e. shops, concessions.
- Vehicular access on the beach except in emergencies.
- Tractors on beach.
- Mining.
- Logging by Ernslaw One at Otama without consultation.
- Any potential development for intensive residential purposes should require a variation to the District Plan.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Issue	Action	Lead Agency	Partner Agency	Priority/Timeline		
				09/10	11/13	15/20
The need for tight controls on development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer District Plan 	TCDC		√	Ongoing	Ongoing

ENVIRONMENTAL – (surroundings we live in) Infrastructure / Bush, Streams & Coastline / Land Use Reserve Management / Waste Management

Infrastructure (Roading / Energy & Telecommunications / Water / Stormwater Wastewater / Waste Management.

What do we have?

- Dust problem from gravel roads – unsealed gravel roads.
- Speed problem on roads.
- No footpaths.
- Access to Otama via a challenging road.
- Higher ration of heavy vehicles carrying logs, gravel and cement.
- Poor television, radio and cell phone reception.
- Property owner responsible for their own collection of rainwater.
- No reticulated water or sewage.
- No streetlights.
- Great increase in traffic on Black Jack Road.
- Weekly refuse collection.
- Access to green dump at Opito.

What do we want?

- Underground power.
- Improved television, radio and cell phone reception.
- Traction seal on Black Jack Road/adjacent to houses.
- Broadband and internet access.
- A permanent solution to flooding along Otama Flats.
- Alternative routes for logging trucks.
- Rubbish collection on Mondays/twice a week over summer.
- No decrease in refuse collection.
- Safer measures for large trucks/grader on Black Jack Hill.

What don't we want?

- Speeding cars.
- A decrease in current refuse services.
- Street lighting.
- Dumping of fill on road sides.

Bush / Streams / Coastline

What do we have?

- National significant sand dunes.
- DoC protected wet lands.
- Bush areas.
- Unique place with a sense of isolation and remoteness.
- Abundant and varied bird life.

- Stunning beach with a rural character.
- Good fishing / shellfish.
- No vehicle / boat access to the beach.
- Rare birds.

What do we want?

- For much of the character that is present at the moment to remain.
- Closer consultation between Council and Community.
- A sand dune management plan.
- A creek / stream management plan.
- To protect iconic landscapes.
- Animal and plant pest control that is targeted and efficient.
- Consideration for a marine reserve in the area.
- A change to the scallop tie lines.

What don't we want?

- To allow sand dunes to wash out to sea.
- Weeds in streams.
- Plant pest management.
- Gorse or pampas to be allowed to spread.
- Pine trees regenerating.

Land Use

What do we have?

- Ability to do sensitive development.
- Housing set back from the foreshore.
- Iconic landscapes.

What do we want?

- For subdivisions to require consultation.
- For subdivisions to focus on planting as part of process and to be enforced.
- Sensitive low key development.
- Eco type developments.
- Recognition and protection of iconic landscapes.
- Removal of pine trees over time.

What don't we want?

- Intensive development.
- High density or high rise.
- Any subdivisions that remove the uniqueness of Otama.
- Infill housing – no more than one house per lot.
- Large scale commercial development – hotels/motels.

Reserve Management

What do we have?

- No reserve land, just a small pocket of Council owned dune.
- DoC land and DoC ownership of dunes.
- Parking on DoC domain.

What do we want?

- Protection and enhancement of the dunes/wetlands.
- Managed / defined beach access.
- A close liaison with DoC.
- Angle parking along Otama Beach Rd and at corner with Black Jack Road.
- Completing a planting plan on DoC domain/resiting of fence.

What don't we want?

- Vehicles on dunes.
- Diminishing involvement of DoC in managing their land.
- Parking on the DoC domain.
- More pull over areas on Black Jack Hill.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Issue	Action	Lead Agency	Partner Agency	Priority/Timeline		
				09/10	11/13	15/20
Speed/safety issues on the road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seal Blackjack Rd over hill & flats by camp & houses 	TCDC		-	-	-
Parking plans at Eastern end of beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalise the existing pullover area 	TCDC	DOC ORA		√	
Completion of planting plan for the DoC domain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoC to initiate. 	DOC	ORA		√	

CULTURAL – (who we are as a community) Recreation & Leisure / Arts / Heritage

What do we have?

- Historic sites.
- History of Ngati Hei settlement.
- A community that enjoys diving, fishing, swimming and kayaking.
- Bird watching and protection of dotterels and other coastal species.
- A single well kept public toilet.
- Iconic artists.
- Crown land access from Otama to Sarah Gully.

What do we want?

- Portable toilet during summer period at Black Jack Rd end.
- To keep it small.
- Campervans on campsite only.
- Greater awareness of history of the area.
- A history of settlement in the area.
- Access from top of Black Jack Hill to Pa site.

What don't we want?

- Shops.
- Commercialisation.
- A boat ramp / launching area.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Issue	Action	Lead Agency	Partner Agency	Priority/Timeline		
				09/10	11/13	15/20
There is no documented history of the settlement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide on how the community would like its history documented and plan the project. 	ORA		√	Ongoing	