

Statement of position on the draft Local Board plans

To
Henderson-Massey Local Board
Whau Local Board
Waitakere Ranges Local Board

On the matter of
Draft Local Board Plans 2020-23

From
Waitakere Ethnic Board (WEB)

March 2020

Kia Ora and greetings from the Waitakere Ethnic Board (WEB).

Thank you for this opportunity to represent the voice of the ethnic communities¹.

WEB has been actively advocating and representing the voice of the ethnic communities of West Auckland since its establishment in 2003. With our vision of enabling ethnic communities to settle, connect and thrive, among other goals, WEB intends to create opportunities for ethnic communities to have a voice about things that matter to them. This statement of position has been provided as part of the WEB's function of being a voice of the ethnic communities.

The points outlined below are based on our experience of interacting with a range of ethnic community members over the period of 17 years since the establishment of WEB².

1. Rationale for providing input to the draft Local Board plans

- 1.1. We are of the view that the Local Board plans are an important document as they guide the Local Board to prioritise projects, activities and funding within the Local Board area for the next three years. We have provided this statement with an intention of informing the Local Board about the interests of the ethnic communities who reside within the Henderson-Massey, the Whau, and the Waitakere Ranges local boards.
- 1.2. Ethnic communities are an integral part of the diverse fabric of the West Auckland community. West Auckland is increasingly growing as a more diverse community, similar to the demographic trends throughout the Auckland region. Ethnic communities make significant contributions towards the well-being of West Auckland through their active involvement in a wide range of social, cultural and economic activities.
- 1.3. We request the Local Board to consider the matters outlined in this statement so that the views of the ethnic communities are taken into consideration throughout the various stages of the plan preparation – from an early stage of drafting prior to the formal statutory consultation stage to the advanced stage of finalising the plans.

2. Meaningful representation of the voice of the ethnic communities in the Local Board plans

We request the Local Board to ensure that there is a meaningful engagement with the ethnic communities during the Local Board plan process by:

¹ WEB has adopted the definition of “ethnic communities” as adopted by the Office of Ethnic Communities as “The term ethnic (matawaka) in the context of the mandate for the Office of Ethnic Communities refers to people who are migrants, refugees, long-term settlers, and those born in New Zealand who identify their ethnicity as Asian, African, Continental European, Latin American and Middle Eastern.”

² To clarify and to avoid any potential confusion, we have not consulted with members of the ethnic communities exclusively for the purpose of preparing this statement of purpose. The statement is based on our experience and interaction with ethnic communities over the years since 2003.

- 2.1. proactively engaging with the members of ethnic communities from an early stage of plan preparation.
- 2.2. approaching and reaching out to the ethnic communities, rather than asking for feedback and waiting for the members of ethnic communities to come forward. For example, Council officers may utilise the opportunity to collect input by attending events held by the ethnic communities.
- 2.3. encouraging the members of ethnic communities to provide input by means other than the standard written format and statutory process. For example, information may be gathered by direct person-to-person conversation.

3. Provisions in the Local Board plans to clearly and directly speak to the needs and aspirations of the ethnic communities

- 3.1. We are of the view that there is scope in the Local Board plans to acknowledge the contribution of the ethnic communities by accommodating their needs and aspirations as one of the key outcomes. During the implementation of the plans, such key outcomes will assist both the Local Board and the community to identify specific actions that are of interest to the ethnic communities. Which in turn will enable the Local Board to allocate funding to support specific outcomes, projects and programmes.
- 3.2. During 17 years of working with a range of ethnic communities, one of the matters we have come across consistently is the chronic lack of access to funding. The lack of funding hinders the ethnic communities' ability to carry out the activities that they wish to deliver. Funding needs of the ethnic communities usually tend to be of a small amount of a few thousand dollars. On one hand, ethnic communities invest a significant amount of effort to seek funding. On the other hand, the majority of ethnic community organisations lack capacity and expertise to apply and access available funding. It is our view that the Local Board plans may enable a dedicated funding mechanism to support activities of the ethnic communities. Such support may be extended in the form of long-term memorandum of understanding (MOU), in addition to the general contestable fundings process.
- 3.3. We have observed that many members of ethnic communities, in addition to serving their own community, want to contribute towards the welfare of the wider community. We think that there are opportunities for the Local Boards to encourage the ethnic communities so that they are more forthcoming to engage with and serve the wider community.
- 3.4. We are aware that ethnic communities acknowledge they have a duty to collaborate with Council and Local Board to find solutions to complex challenges such as the impact of climate change. Similarly, ethnic communities are keen to be part of a more sustainable Auckland. Productive engagement with ethnic communities would be required for any successful local response to climate

change and sustainability. It is our view that the wider community would benefit from involvement of the ethnic communities in any plans to combat issues such as climate change and sustainability.

- 3.5. In addition to collaborating with ethnic communities, the WEB has successfully established a strong working relationship with the Local Boards and various government and non-government institutions. Over the years, we have learned that if we bring them together, ethnic communities tend to achieve more and contribute effectively to the wider society. While the WEB and other community organisations have been carrying out their functions for more than a decade, the operational and delivery model has basically remained unchanged. With the increasing ethnic population, new and complex issues are emerging. Finding solutions to those new issues requires us to think and work differently.

It is our view that now is an appropriate time to facilitate a process by which ethnic communities in West Auckland can come together under an umbrella. Being in closer proximity and having more frequent contact will enable the ethnic communities to function more effectively and efficiently. We think such acts of coming together will facilitate cohesion and collaboration among the ethnic communities. This will add positively to the social capital not only of the ethnic communities but also that of the wider West Auckland residents. While the new plans are being drafted, the Local Boards have a wonderful opportunity to be the instigator and facilitator of this process to bring the ethnic communities together.

If you have any query about this statement of position, please contact WEB by phone or email below.

Nga mihi,

On behalf of the WEB,
Baljit Singh, Co-ordinator
Waitakere Ethnic Board,
Email: contact@waitakereethnicboard.org.nz
Phone: 09 836 0169