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Online Community Webinars

Transcript

Webinar West Auckland

Thursday, 18th March

5.30 pm



Sally Woods: Welcome to tonight's webinar of the 10 year plan, the recovery budget. This is the last in our series. And tonight, the focus is on the West. To begin with, we'll just go through and introduce our panel, starting with Councillor Fletcher is a ward councillor for Albert-Eden Puketepapa.

Cr Christine Fletcher: Thanks. Thank you very much. Yeah, I'm Christine Fletcher and really looking forward to hearing what you've got to say this evening, I represent Albert-Eden Pukepapa ward, but I'm sitting here as a regional councillor. Thank you.

Sally Woods: Thank you. Councillor Cooper.

Cr Linda Cooper: How is everybody? I'm Linda Cooper. I'm the Councillor of the Waitakere, which includes the Henderson and Massey local board, and then Waitakere ranges local board area. And we're looking forward to hearing your questions tonight and being able to answer them.

Sally Woods: Thank you. And Councillor Sayers.

Cr Greg Sayers: Thank you very much, Sally. So I represent the Rodney Ward, which is quite a large chunk of the Auckland area, but it interfaces with Councillor Cooper and Councillor Henderson's ward. So I'm particularly interested to be listening in tonight and getting the thoughts and ideas from constituents from the West. Thank you. Thank you, Sally.

Sally Woods: Thank you. And I think we have Kay Thomas, the chair of the Whau Local Board. No, then, perhaps we can go to Lucy Hillcroft.

Lucy Hawcroft: Kia Ora, I'm Lucy Hawcroft. I'm from the Climate action Programme Manager.

Sally Woods: Sorry, So back with Kay.

Cr Greg Sayers: This is Councillor Tracy Mulholland.

Sally Woods: Beg your pardon, sorry. Beg your pardon. Actually, that is a big issue and I'm guessing from everyone.

Cr. Tracy Mulholland: Kia ora Everyone, I'm Tracy Mulholland followed and outlined by Councillor Fletcher. I am too regional, have a regional view. So nice to see you around and looking forward to hearing from people. Kia Ora Tatou.

Sally Woods: Thank you and apologies, Councillor. And the Jennings's come to you.

Anna Jennings: Kia Ora. I'm Anna Jennings. I'm a principal advisor on housing and urban growth. And looking forward to any questions around that topic.

Sally Woods: And we have two of our financial experts here Pramod and Andrew Duncan.

Pramod Nair: Everyone said, my name is Pramod and the council's finance team, I helped support with the budgeting inside for the long term plan, and I'll be doing a brief presentation later this evening and helps answer your questions that you may have.

Andrew Duncan: Good evening, I'm Andrew Duncan, provided by the Council on Rates and Development Contributions.

Sally Woods: Fantastic, and we've got one last person who's joined us. Sorry, I'm not sure of your name. Maybe this is my Kay that I'm looking at from the chair of the board. Thank you. Welcome Kay. So the format for the same thing is that we'll play a brief video from our mayor, Phil Goff, to introduce what's happening with this budget. And then we're going to go into a presentation from Pramod and Andrew to run you through the financial details of what's represented in this budget.

And we've got this great panel of experts here who will be really waiting for your questions. So you'll see down the bottom of your screen the questions and answers, if you could put those questions and why you're listening to the videos and the presentation. And we'll come to you and answer those after these presentations. So over to you, Marina. If we could start the video, thank you.

Video

This year is the year of recovery from covid-19 we stop the spread of the disease, but the economic impact it had on council revenue was real, this 10 year budget is about how we get the best outcomes for Auckland. It will provide for our city's future while keeping our rates and prices low compared to other growth. Cities in New Zealand will help Auckland's economy recover, support our communities, build water and housing infrastructure and improve. Our transport network will continue to make progress on cleaning up our beaches and streams and on our long term response to climate change. Auckland Council is forecast to take a one billion dollar revenue hit because of covid-19. This budget aims to find a balance between investing in our city and not overburdening our residents. We need your feedback on these issues and how we pay for them. To have your say, go to AKG, have your say dot NZ slash recovery budget and tell us what you think of our plans for the future of Auckland.

Sally Woods: And sorry, here we go. We're joined by a number of other people tonight in just keep coming into this Webinar. We've been asking why to keep introducing them? But I think now we will cut to our financial presentation if we could start with them. I think Pramod will introduce it first.

Pramod Nair: Thank you, Sally. I'm just sharing the presentation, hoping people can see it. Yeah, OK, great. OK, as Sally's mentioned and I mentioned earlier, I'm Pramod, I'm from council's finance team, and I'll be walking you through the key regional issues that we are consulting on the deal with Aucklanders for our proposed long term plan. And Andrew Duncan will be supporting me through this process.

So first of all, what does a 10 year budget or long term plan. So councils across the country prepare a 10 year budgets, often called long term plans every three years, and look at the activities the councils will focus on and how they will fund them. I don't think it comes as a surprise to anyone at the moment that this is not a business as usual 10 year budgeting process, hearing from all countries on our planes as a key part of the process.

And we want to hear from as many as we can. Your input will be support by elected members as they might final decisions and during. The council, like so many others, is feeling significant impacts of covid-19, we are projecting to lose around a billion dollars in revenue over four years. Meanwhile, we still need to plan for the projected growth of the city and to look after the infrastructure that delivers the services that we all value.

We also need to face up to the challenges of climate change, both in terms of emissions reduction and adaptation to climate change. This is why we are referring to this as our recovery budget. The real challenge behind this budget is one of balance. On one hand, an increased need for capital distance, but on the other, less availability of funds to make this invisible. I've already mentioned Auckland's growth, infrastructure needs and climate change, but we also need to continue the work we have started on our transport network. We need to ensure our activities match the changing

needs of our people, and we need to play our part and support a recovery from covid-19. At the same time, we have less capacity to invest. We have talked about the reductions in expected revenue due to covid, but we also need to be careful how much we borrow to ensure we have headroom for any future shocks. Large sections of our funding is already committed through major projects such as the Central, such as the CRL and the central interceptor.

We also need to consider the overall impact of funding options we propose on the communities we serve. Sorry, Marina. Trying to take over the presentation by any chance. OK, so our long term plan looks at five key issues, our first key issues around our proposed investment package. This is essentially our response to balance, to the balancing challenge in the last slide. We are proposing to invest thirty one billion dollars over the next 10 years. The timing of this investment is crucial given the challenges we are facing.

A proposal enables this investment to average two point nine billion dollars for the next three years. This total nine hundred dollars more than we would otherwise be able to afford. To achieve this, we will continue our focus on savings in value and lock in at least 90 million, a permanent ongoing annual savings. As we did in the emergency budget, we will look to release 17 million a year over the next three years by selling or leasing surplus properties. Sorry there is a bit of a delay in my slideshow.

We're also increasing our borrowing to temporarily higher debt to GDP ratio of up to two hundred and ninety percent for the first three years, gradually returning to two hundred and seventy percent thereafter. And we are also proposing to stick with our rates increase of three point five per cent per annum over the long term, but have a higher increase of five percent for the next year. So what are we proposing to do with this additional investment? First of all, we're proposing to invest in the additional five hundred and fifty million on all transport network, an additional fifty four million on our stormwater infrastructure.

Sixty five million on tax and community funding. And this will go towards more renewables and also additional parks and sports fields and areas of greatest need. We're also proposing a decent investment for our art gallery Heritage Building, as well as accelerating work on landfills to address health and safety concerns. Our second key issue is related to climate change. It's not down to the council to tackle climate change on their own, but we want to lead from the front. We're already doing a lot of work to tackle emissions, including phasing out spoilers in council aquatic centers, introducing more electric vehicles in the council fleet and providing walking, cycling and public transport options.

Marina - Event Lead: Sorry, Pramod. I just want you to change the mode of the presentation, please, and tried to contact you. Oh, did you.

Pramod Nair: Sorry. Yeah. Yeah. How would you like this? OK, let's say you've got the control of it.

Marina - Event Lead: I don't actually. So I'm going to just stop the presentation and I will come back to the same slide for you. OK. Yep. I would do the slides for you. Sorry about everyone just trying to fix the problem here. One minute. It would do this sharing screen now. OK, can you see this going up? Yes.

Pramod Nair: Yeah, I can go the proposed package includes.

Marina - Event Lead: Just say yes and next slide, and I will change it.

Pramod Nair: OK, no worries. OK, so the proposed package includes no new diesel buses, all electric or hydrogen from this year, big planting projects including by street trees and more native forest, increasing our zero waste recovery with improving efficiency of our facility facilities and partnering with others and supporting our communities to reduce emissions as well as energy costs.

Next slide please. Sorry. Our third key issue is about responding to housing and growth. Next slide, please. Over the next 10 years, we expect two hundred and sixty thousand more people to call Auckland home. The Auckland unitary plan has enabled the development of more than a million homes and existing residential areas and a hundred and fifty thousand and planned future urban areas. We need to provide infrastructure and services to support this development, but cannot afford to do it all now.

We propose to focus our resources on a few key locations, areas agreed with the government as part of the Auckland housing program, which include about Mt Roskill, Tamaki and Manguere, among a state where there is other significant government investment plans, such as Drury and other areas of the Northwest. Where investment on big projects like CRL is being made. Next slide, please. A fourth key issue is about our investment in our community. Next slide, please. Councils have traditionally provided community services using a large network of buildings. Over time, the native communities have and are changing.

We need to become more adaptable and how we provide community services to keep up with the changing needs. With much of our investment locked into community buildings and facilities. We are spending more on renewables and maintenance. This detracts from the amount we can spend delivering the services of Aucklanders does need. This recovery budget is proposing a move away from an incident dominated approach to community services. We propose to consider how to better use partnerships, grants, digital and non-asset base approaches more tailored to community needs over time.

Implementation of this new approach would see us closing some community assets that accept for our purpose and reinvest in services and facilities that are better. Better may be to meet the needs of our communities. Thanks, Marina. Next slide please. The previous 10 year budget accelerate of actions to improve our water quality and natural environment. This was funded by the water quality targeted rate in the natural environment target rate. We are proposing to extend and increase this investment so that we can continue to invest in different parts of the city.

Thanks Marina. This budget proposes to extend the water quality targets right in twenty twenty eight to twenty thirty one, so that so that we can continue to invest in different parts of the city. And it also proposes to increase this rate in line with the projected average increase in general rates. This will be an increase for the average value of residential property of three dollars thirty a year. This will enable us to extend our water quality work to do more in the Manukau Harbour, the Tamaki Estuary and the beaches stretching from Parnell to Glendowie and for construction to start in twenty, twenty two, twenty three rather than six years later.

It will also fund additional little trips across the entire region to remove contaminants and improve fresh water and coastal water. We're also proposing to extend the natural environment targeted rate from twenty two eight to twenty three one. This allows us to maintain the work we are currently doing on things like addressing Kauri dieback and predator and weed control. Our other priorities include investing in Maori outcomes. Councillor is committed to treaty based partnerships with Maori. We enable delivery against ten Maori outcomes strategic priorities through our Maori outcomes portfolio.

The portfolio includes our day to day activities, supplemented by the targeted use of the outcomes fund, which is one hundred and fifty million dollars of investment over the next 10 years. Examples include the Marae infrastructure program, which helps but I to be healthy and sustainable cultural hubs, Ngā Kete Akoranga is our cultural capability program and Te Kete Rukuruku who is returning names to parks and places across Tāmaki Makaurau and helps ensure the Māori language is seen, heard, spoken and learnt in everyday life

Thanks, Marina. And finally, our other priorities include investing in social outcomes, this recovery budget reinstates the contestable funds which were reduced as part of the emergency budget for this year. We are also proposing to embed a five hundred thousand dollar annual operational fund to work with the other organizations to support homeless people. Continued work with the Southern Initiative, a recent initiative will help disadvantaged sections of our community with skills training and employment pathways. I'm going to hand over to Andrew Duncan now, my colleague, to talk about annual rates and other.

Andrew Duncan: Good evening. A key part of the balance that Pramod is talking about to enable us to deliver on those key areas is just discussed as a one off five percent increase rates. For an average value residential property, should Aucklands over a million dollars, that will be an annual increase of one hundred and fifty dollars or three dollars a week. For the average value of business property of two point eighty four million. That's five hundred and eighty three dollars a year.

Now, that includes the general rates increase, the increase to the water quality targeted rate of three dollars 30 a year, more discussed earlier and a small increase to the base waste management targeted rate we all pay. You can see exactly how your rates will be affected by the proposed changes, we're going to AK have your say backslash, ratesguide. This will show you how each of the changes we're talking about will affect your property. And we also have some other changes to our rates policies this year.

You could also see how each of these, as I go through the next few slides, will impact on you at that website before they're in Auckland. At present, we charge slightly lower rates to business and residential properties outside our urban racing area by paying 90 per cent of the rights of the neighbors. Now, we set out urban ratings area many years ago when we were established about 10 years ago. The city's been growing and expanding since then. There are areas being developed just outside the old urban boundary and these properties are paying lower rates than their neighbours.

We also have some increases to our services and the availability of services and some of our more rural townships. So we're proposing to expand the urban racing area. To include all the land within the rural urban boundary can be developed now. And this proposal will affect properties in Pine Valley and Whenuapai, Herald Island, parts of Dairy Flat, Hobsonville, some other areas of the city.

We're also proposing to charge Farmland lifestyle properties that are within the urban rating area, the urban residential rate now present these properties only pay 80 per cent of the urban residential rate.

So for those farm and lifestyle properties that can be developed for residential or business use, we're proposing to charge them the full residential rate, the same as the neighbours. They've got access to similar levels of service as their neighbours. But paying lower rates cost a similar amount of services available, this change won't affect farm and lifestyle properties that are unable to be developed, or in particular, the farm properties with as high value soils that aren't able to be developed.

Got a few other changes to our rating policies we are consulting on and we want your feedback on. We have an accommodation provider targeted rate, that's paid only by owners of properties like motels and hotels and Airbnb, to recover from them a fair proportion of the money we spend on visitor attraction and major events. Now, with covid-19 hitting us last year, borders closing and an end to international tourists coming to Auckland, we cut our spending on visitor attraction and major events and we suspended the accommodation provided targeted right until the thirty first of March this year.

We've gone out to consult on three options for when we would reinstate that 1st of April this year in line with that one year suspension. First of January next year or 1st of July next year, we're going out with three options so we can get the community's views and the councillors can consider those. But also so we can take into account the latest information on where our borders may open and what's happening with the tourism sector and the accommodation sector, but we have a decision to make.

We're also proposing to put a rate on Vector. To raise money, additional expenditure, so we can undertake an enhanced management of our trees that are near their power lines. And this would enable us to improve public safety around power lines and to reduce power outages. We also have a city center targeted, rate. It's paid for by residential properties and business properties only and the city center, and we use this money to undertake additional investment in redeveloping the city center and making it an attractive place to live, work and do business.

At the moment, this rate expires in two thousand and twenty four. Twenty five. We're proposing to extend it to two thousand thirty one and that additional five years will enable us to invest an extra one hundred and fifty seven million over time. There's also a proposal to introduce a bus service connecting Paremoremo to Albany and allowing the residents in the Paremoremo area to connect to our wider public transport network. The proposal was that we would fund that service with a targeted rate on the primary residence.

We're keen to get your views as part of this decision making on our recovery budget. There's a number of different ways you can do that. You can attend a webinar as we have this evening. You can provide feedback online. You can do it in a Writting form, you can get our documents online or our libraries or service centers, got a number of translations, Maori, Korean, Chinese, Samoan, Tongan and sign language videos available. You can also provide feedback on social media with Facebook through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

We want to hear from you. Your views are very important to the councillors and helping make their final decisions on the budget and what we're going to do to support the city over the next 10 years. Finally, we repeat our website again, please go to the website, have a look at the information we've got there. Make a submission. Let us know your views. Thank you very much.

Sally Woods: Thank you, Andrew, and Pramod was very comprehensive in terms of seeing out the proposed changes.

Now we've got some people out there who would really like to hear from and we've got a panel here of our councillors and all sorts of experts that can answer your questions. So if you could pop something into the questions and answers, we'd be really delighted to to speak to exactly what you hear listening for. But in the meantime, we'll have some thoughts, I think, from our councillors about this budget and some key messages that I'd like to share, some thoughts. Can I start with you, Councillor Fletcher. You are in the top of my screen.

Cr Christine Fletcher: Of course, I'm here tonight because I want to hear from all of the region, I think I've attended all but two of the webinars and that's because they sort of crossed over. So I've been very keen to hear what the priority issues are as we travel around the region. It is a juggling act. And for those of you who have heard me speak before, know that while there is a Covid dimension to this, I think as much as anything, this is a really good attempt to try and address some of the renewals that we have long needed to try and come to grips with. So, it's trying to find the right balance between supporting growth in areas like the north west, like the South, and making sure that there is equity in terms of the amenities and the services and things that people expect in terms of the infrastructure in these new communities. Because otherwise they're not going to be cohesive communities. But by the same time, we've also got a huge network coming through from amalgamation of all sorts of facilities that we haven't done our renewals on.

So how do we get the balance right there? How do we make sure that government is paying its fair share? How do we you know, given that a unitary plan came in and we didn't stage it, we decided we'd have an all or nothing approach to things. So we don't have the luxury now of looking at a stage in sequence that the new growth, it is quite a juggling act. And and I think the issue of affordability is one that we really have to come to grips with. Yes, we we must continue to invest in our city. But by the same time, nor do we want to drive people out of the city. And so I'm really keen to hear from the community in the West. I've got a concern around the targeted accommodation rates, that Andrew referred to it. It's something we're seeking particular feedback on. But if we are to reintroduce it, should there be exemptions, you know, should part of the city be exempt and the other part have to pay it? Is that fair to the the little motel here and in the smaller towns, the, you know, the larger hotels and so forth, that requires some consideration. But ultimately, you don't have to submit on everything. This is the business of council. It's quite complex. But you can tell us what you think on those aspects that you feel particularly strongly about. I feel passionately about parks. And I think most Kiwis really see that network of regional parks.

And the Department of Conservation state as part of who we celebrated as we won the America's Cup yesterday. And it's that big picture of what touches our heart. But, you know, we're not going to see an extension to those inside the current budget. And, you know, I'm a great believer in partnerships. The most recent acquisition of a regional park was very much a partnership between the Department of Conservation Foundation North the community, with Auckland Council doing the seeding to get it off the ground.

And I think that will be the way of future. But what do you prioritise? Do you want to see more regional parks? Do you want to see less investment in other things that might be tourism? I don't know. But those are the things that we need to hear from you. So I don't want to monopolize the time. Madam Convenor, but really appreciate the opportunity to throw my thoughts on.

Sally Woods: Thank you, Councillor Fletcher. I think Councillor Cooper is our West representative, can we come to you next to talk about specific things that now customers out there listening might be interested in for the West?

Cr Christine Fletcher: Good evening, everyone. Good evening Mia and Natasha. I'm not quite sure what area you from, but we have a regional role as councillors, as Councillor Fletcher said and council size here as well. And and Councillor Mulholland. And we have to look at the bigger picture. But of course, we'll always have our own things that we know our local people are really keen to have done. And a lot of that overlaps. And Rodney, Waitakere and the Whau. Some of the things that we're looking at, like we're asking you if you're willing to pay five percent extra and for the West it's around, Andrew might correct me, I mean, we're saying around one hundred and fifty dollars extra a year. I think it's a little bit lower for the average time and want talking about one hundred and fifty a year. So think of it as about. You know. Ten dollars a month, but over that, that some of the things are going to get is really important to a lot of people in West Auckland, as we finally will get, if we have a five per cent increase for one year, we will get Lincoln Road started. And that's been a huge bugbear. And we've been waiting for ages and we've had lots of stock stats for different reasons. So that's a really important one. We'll also get more of our Kauri dieback standard traps done to open more tracks in the ranges and on local parks. And our people are being very anxious about that. It's really important, you know, to protect the Kauri. But at the same time, we've got to be able to recreate an original parks.

And for a lot of the locals mixed to regional parks, it's important for their physical and mental well-being. I've been told that a lot. Some of the other things, you know, often the cost per year, which is really Rodney's Councillor Sayer's area, but it's our region has half of that Kauri area. We're able to put 10 million dollars and matched it with government funding to do a lot of work. There will also be able to start a lot more water quality work.

And the Manukau and a lot of the Waitakere, and the southern part of the Waitakere Ranges, is affected by that. And we're asked about that a lot. And we know we're putting a lot of money into water quality and the water meter at the moment. That's a huge project. But once that's over, there's going to be more money for our other Harbours. So we haven't forgotten about the Manukau and the cost at all. I think they will be funding to get going on the Northeast and bus line.

That's really important. I know that it's really important. We don't have a rapid transit network north of Henderson, really. We've got our railway trains out, but we need to get that big catchment and that will also help our people in Kumeu, because if we can reduce the amount of cars on that motorway, Councillor Sayers, of your constituents will be blocked up on the motorway and we'll have more room for freight and our businesses to get moving.

So these are just the highlights. If we can get that five per cent over the line, it's only for one year. And we'll go back down to the three and a half that would give us right across the region a lot. But those are some of the highlights.

Sally Woods: Right, thanks, Councillor Cooper. We also have Councillor Tracy Mulholland, who's the Whau councillor, which obviously is also in the West. So can I come to you now, Councillor Mulholland?

Cr. Tracy Mulholland: Thanks for your input. Sure, look, my view is the purpose of these are actually to listen to people, so I feel a level of discomfort that we are talking about issues that I think we actually need to be listening to issues. I do want to touch talk with what has been said by Councillor Fletcher with regards to the green spaces and challenge of the accommodation providers. And thanks, Councillor Cooper, on the basis of sharing information about the best way, you know, I had some concerns for parts of the area, but really, you know, this is actually an opportunity for us to be listening to, what, our attendees. And we said we have been in terms of participants. I said we had two attendees here, so that's great. I would really like to hear from the Mia or Natasha, with regards to your view and opinion, it's also lovely to say the chair of the local board here to answer any questions relative to the area we've been advocating all along the same lines for the likes of the poll rate and the recovery budget. So really, you know, I think that it's critical for us to hear from Mia and Natasha or any others who might like to join and ask questions.

And Natasha said that you had talked about the top five new serious funding government. We're very generous with a project recently that there was about thirty five million dollars allocated and we will do some additional funding, although that's not all for the firm.

Unfortunately, it's a little different when the council would be able to get a taste of it. But it is a shared pathway for all people so that we can connect up our communities and we do have to think regionally. So that's pretty exciting. So, yes, I'm in my thoughts. The we're about I'm being asked questions and also I'm happy to take any private emails or councillor emails if anyone would like to email direct questions. And I'm sure that I can't speak for other councillors, but I'm sure we all are in such a way. We would like to hear from you or your friends or associates. Kia Ora.

Sally Woods: Thank you. And I support that. The more we can get direct questions, the more that we can actually share with the people who want and need to know. We do have another question from Mia, which is she'd like to thank you for your hard work and she'd like to know what we will have as investments and libraries, roads and preservation of our environment. So who would like to take that question? Perhaps Councillor Cooper.

Cr. Tracy Mulholland: Could I start on just the one Avondale regeneration. So I think it's critical just to share. We are local. And I do want to also acknowledge that Councillor Cooper and others that have supported the Avondale regeneration, I'm so proud of the work that's gone into that. And as the previous chair, we've spent a lot of time on it. So yes, the Avondale Library and community facility is actually allocated and it is proceeding.

So that's pretty exciting. I'll just leave it for that. Obviously, we do have great libraries very well. Blockhouse bay has been fabulous library and also New Lynn. Very, very popular one of the busiest CAB actually. So just sharing with you there is that bit and someone else might like to take the other subjects there.

Sally Woods: Perhaps, on the environment question Councillor Cooper. Could we bring you? Are you able to answer that?

Cr Linda Cooper: So I think I touched a little bit on the fact that we still continue with the environment targeted rate to be able to do work on protecting our Kauri and also weed and pest management and upgrading our tracks to dry tracks. So we're not tramping mud around and spreading Kauri dieback. But I think also probably cheering Greg Presland of the Waitakere Ranges Local Board might want to speak a little bit to that. But also we've got these some stormwater issues we're dealing with in Henderson at Corban Reserve.

With that five per cent, we'll be able to get that done faster because that's a flooding issue. So we're keeping working on everything. We had to put some things in our emergency budget last year, but we were able to get going again. But anything we deferred on the environmental targeted rate and the water quality rate last year, that money stayed in the pot. We just couldn't use it at that time. But we will be continuing to use that money and still have a commitment through those targeted rates to that. The other thing was we're going to talk about libraries. I think it was we were very lucky in the Waitakere. I was on the Waitakere city council and also Tracy worked for us them. Greg was on the Waitakere city council at one stage as well, Greg Presland, and we did libraries really well and we did a lot of libraries. And we've been able to build, I think, two more three more since amalgamation we planned beforehand. But we opened the Ranui library, The Manawa Library and Te Atatu library and community center. So, we're pretty well served for libraries compared to a lot of area, other areas. So as far as I know, there's no major plans for new libraries in our area. We need to concentrate on some other areas because we've done so well with libraries and of course, acknowledge our voluntary libraries out of Piha, which the council do give a grant to Waiatarua Library.

Sally Woods: Thank you, Councillor Cooper. And as Councillor Cooper mentioned and make sure that she got the chair of the local board, Greg Presland, and I'm not sure I'm not sure if I can see him on the screen if you there Greg, do you want to add into this conversation? Your moment. Now, we seem to be having a few issues tonight with what we can say and what's there, so I beg your pardon to that. Well, given that we've also got Councillor Sayers here, perhaps we can cut to you. If it's not one, we'll go to another. And if you could share your thoughts on the budget and the particularly pressing issues for Rodney's connection into this, West space. Councillor Sayers.

Cr Greg Sayers: Thank you very much Sally. Very kind of you. I think probably what councillors do hear a lot about is like how come councils putting up rates when businesses and households don't have the same ability in the Covid environment? And I think that's quite an important thing to address in terms of why it's called the recovery budget recovery budget's trying to spend more money to stimulate the economy, to try and stimulate opportunity to stimulate construction, so or to move Auckland forward. So this is a chance for the viewers to say, well, look. I don't agree with that, although I do agree that OK, and I think that's something that we quite hear a lot about, the topic of the budget is complex to do a lot of topics that they are covering. And we ask a lot of questions about a lot of variety of issues if people do feel it's a bit daunting. I know that we can just take feedback directly to AK have your say dot Auckland council dot govt dot nz directly if people don't want to go through the whole form out. Exercise as well, because they could be things that people got specific feedback about rather than going through the whole feedback form as well.

So I just wanted to share that with our viewers as well. Constituents, I guess. And Councillor Cooper touched on this in the Northwest. And in The Whau, Councillor Mulholland are very keen advocate on this as well. And Shane Henderson, as well as Councillor of West as well. The traffic buildup up and congestion that's happening there seems to feel got my relief and some of that might be a central

government responsibility. Some of them might be local government responsibility. But I just wonder if the people listening in tonight, I'd like to ask the question of us, because I'd like to know I'm sure my colleagues know how we are communicating well enough about what solutions we're offering in terms of a three and a half percent or five percent rate increase in terms of elevating cars on the road, emissions and travel times, making those more more easy for people living in the west and northwest. So I'll just leave it at that. That's helpful. Thank you.

Sally Woods: Thank you. Thanks. And I think if I can call to the people that maybe have some questions that councillor has raised, if you want to just put some thoughts into the queue, and I would love to answer them. And the person we haven't heard from, of course, is our Whau local board, Kay Thomas. So can I come to you now for your thoughts and particularly relating to your area?

Kay Thomas: The first priority is actually to do with Urban Ngahere plant more tree, and as Councillor Mulholland mentioned, we have the priority of ensuring that the multi purpose facility and Avondale is constructed. So I think Councillor Mulholland cover the area quite well, and I'm happy to answer any questions that people attending making. Thank you.

Sally Woods: Thank you so much for that and some of the other sessions, we haven't got the questions here, but they've been particular questions raised around the fairness of rates and the opportunities for people. Andrew, perhaps you can talk to some of the options that we have for postponement and other things just to share the ways and means that that people can look at equalizing the way that they're paying their rates to Council.

Andrew Duncan: So if you or any of your friends or community is struggling with your rates, please get in touch with the council. Our rates team will look to talk to you about whether you can make some payment arrangements, will also help you apply for the government's rates rebate that we administer on their behalf. And this could offer you up to six hundred and fifty five dollars of your rates for Auckland Council. It has been tested. In addition, Auckland Council offers a rates postponement scheme to residential ratepayers, any residential ratepayers can apply. It's not means tested. You do have to have at least 20 percent equity in your property after postponing the rates. And our current interest rates, one per cent on the rates postponement. I'm happy to answer any questions that I can on any of those issues.

Sally Woods: Right. Thank you. And I'm conscious that we've got some of our specialists here in the panel. And I wonder if we can just cut to them, perhaps for some of the other stations you've been on, they might be some really useful questions. You might want to have a very quick word on and put just touch on, if it's possible.

Cr Christine Fletcher: If so, I'd just like to touch on the importance of what Andrew has just said, that. The way that we calculate rates is based on the capital valuation of the property, and that's going to vary enormously across the region. There's some areas and it's one of the dilemmas I have living in the central part of Auckland that we've got communities that people have lived there for a long time and they may have a valuable asset, but they may not have the income that actually is going to enable them. So what Andrew just told you is really important. I want to have your say on the estimates. You can actually see what the increase might mean for you personally. And in my case, the house, the old villa that I bought 42 years ago, it's going to go up by what I read nine hundred and sixty three dollars. And so I thought, well, I've been there a long time. I'll check out the person who mows my lawns. That's going to go up by three hundred ninety seven. And these are big sums for people these days, you know that. I know. And I can see the need and I want you to know how important those who are online this evening. You've had such passionate advocates in your elected members from the West, and they are articulating the need for that investment in the West. But it's about getting that balancing act right. So I do think these issues of mitigation and what Andrew has talked about in terms of options for people who might be struggling and sometimes people are really embarrassed to let on that they are struggling.

But that's just something that we've got to factor into that. And councillor Sayers talked about, you know, what's on people's minds when they say, well, how can it be that we just raised rates when we're going through some difficulties? And for those of us who lived through the crash of 87, you don't necessarily feel the pain of a recession until a year or two later. And so I think people are trying to be quite careful at the moment. They are a little bit concerned about the future. But by the same token, the city can't wait for us all to feel more comfortable about things. It has to keep investing because we've got contractual obligations and a lot of places. So I think Andrew has really given us quite a good little smorgasbord of those opportunities that people can avail themselves of.

Sally Woods: Thank you Councillor Fletcher. And I just remind people that all of that information is available on the council's website, if you want to go there and find out more.

There's a few of the key topics that have been raised in this presentation. One of them is the housing changes, particularly around the Kumeu area. And Anna, we have here the housing and urban growth specialist. Can I just ask you perhaps to share some information on where all of that fits for our audience tonight?

Anna Jennings: Thanks Sally. So within the consultation document for the long term plan, we talk about housing and urban growth and we're talking about a focused approach to there to supply infrastructure and location.

So we're seeing substantial growth right across the region. Our continuing numbers are hitting record highs. We can see seventeen thousand new dwellings in the last year. And this growth is happening right across the region in the west as well. And it's not just about building housing. We want to ensure that people have good access to public transport and employment as well on those locations. So but with this being a recovery budget and funds being limited, we really need to focus our infrastructure spend in some locations. So there's some examples within the consultation document, including examples in the northwest of where we can start to focus. And on these locations, we're working with central government to look at how we sort of unlock these areas as well, where there so there's been some funding through central government out of the northwest where the shovel ready fund for bus station and we get the third pathway, which was just touched on previously, as well as some form of funding from the government as well out in Whenuapai.

So I think it's really important. It's a big challenge looking at how we fund this infrastructure gap. But as I said, we are looking closely and not doing work on the waste as well as central government of a state. Housing affordability is a key concern for a lot of people, and that is something our planning committee has been doing work on and looking at advocating towards central government because many of the changes need to happen at the national level. So we are working as a state on that supply considering high numbers. But we know that there's a challenge to housing affordability and we're working to advocate central government for change at the national level and some of those areas. Thanks Sally.

Sally Woods: Thanks, Anna. Most of the councillors have touched on quite a lot about the environmental issues out in the West, and we know that it's quite passionate and green and there might be a lot of people there who want to know more about it. So we've got Lucy, who's a climate action specialist. Lucy, can you just have a perhaps to rip off some of the things that Councillors had shared?

Lucy Hawcroft: I'm sure. So I think, um, when you look at the climate investment package and the draft 10-year budget, it's around one hundred and fifty million and Pramod talked about some of the outcomes we can deliver through that. And so that's things like accelerating how quickly we can electrify the bus fleet, being able to expand our network of community recycling centers and resource recovery parks. And one of those resource recovery packs will be in West Auckland, the, you know, the side of the Waitakere transfer station.

So that's pretty exciting. I think that could be a source of local employment, as well as making a really big difference in terms of waste to landfill. Some of the other big changings will be more street tree planting. And I think obviously, you know, not so far, Waitakere, you have a really amazing kind of pickup already. But there are parts of the West with which would benefit from having more mature structures. And yeah, I think other things in the climate package that would put a benefit, West Auckland is there's quite a focus on equity.

So one of the projects is around establishing more community food hubs that take food from supermarkets that would otherwise go to landfill and share it with communities so that they have affordable, sustainable food options.

And yet those are some of the main things that would be relevant to the West. I guess the big thing, you know, that we know is that climate change is happening here and we need to start responding to it. This package won't solve all of our problems. And it's not the whole of council's climate response, but it is a good start and it puts us on the right pathway for more change and future.

Cr Linda Cooper: Sally, can I talk a little bit about that we do has not been talked about, but we had some funding for another big seedling nursery so we can actually have enough trees to plant and that's a regional budget.

But I see some real opportunities of spreading, sharing that love across the region and at the same like the same as the resource recovery. If we've got different areas around the city that can do that and right around the region, we can have local employment or even for example, we've got something like that. And yet we're really not run by the council, but council leads park with the local drug and alcohol court. Young people are doing the community hours there.

They're working with a Kamata often who can kind of mentor them, give them a real purpose, teach them a lot about our environment, comment about growing things. And so I see some real opportunities with that budget that's for climate change. But we can have multiple community benefits for our young people, for our communities and for jobs. So I think there's some you know, it's not use a climate change budget, but let's get some local benefits. And the other thing is there's a lot of climate change initiatives right through our budget, but they're not labelled climate change.

So just the fact that we're putting money into public transport, it starts to address those emissions. So it's not a climate change budget, but we want to impact the effect we're having on the environment.

Sally Woods: Thanks. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Now we've got no more questions in the questions and answers, and I'm quite keen that we just please, please, if you've got anything just send it through. But otherwise, we might just be round our panel with head talk to the key points. But there's probably some general thoughts just in closing on the budget and particularly in how we want all of you out there to have your say, because the more information we have, the more we can use to understand what we should be doing and prioritization all of those things that we need your input on. So that's something I'm going to start down the path and go to Councillor Mulholland, if you don't mind. Any final thoughts from you, any burning issues that we haven't talked about that you'd like to just finish on?

Cr. Tracy Mulholland: I realized that sorry, just give me a moment at some thanks. So mine is actually if Mia and Natasha are still online, sees that you are. Thanks for joining us. That's my thoughts. This is actually about you. So lucky you've got a wealth of knowledge here. And please feel free to contact myself or I know other councillors and elected members would be happy to support responding to any answers. And I don't want to acknowledge the staff for working tonight. I know I had to come home from committee and work as well on some other things. So nice to have the staff here Kia Ora for that and to say our fabulous councillors working together. I think that is something that's really important to acknowledge. We work together and we listen so to our team days. It's all about you. So please feel free to email. And if you have heard sufficient, that's great. Put your submission on. Thank you for joining us.

Sally Woods: Thanks, Councillor. Councillor Cooper.

Cr Linda Cooper: I would have thought of sealing off tonight, but anyway, I'll take this opportunity as I mean, this is the good part of the job when we get to engage, you know, either not face to face, but pretty close with members of our community. And so that's important. Councillor Shane Henderson sent his apologies, he's on looking after Toddler Judith tonight because his wife's away for work. And but we will be at the Swansons Station Cafe at one o'clock on Saturday. If you do want to have a face to face, we're available. I think the other thing looking at this budget. Look. Nobody likes paying more rates, to be quite honest, but we've really we've looked long and hard in the options here and we truly believe the majority of us, not everybody, but the large majority, feel that we do need to catch up on some of our renewals of some of our facilities. We've if you look at our rates over years, I've been kept at historically low. If you compare them to other parts of the country, they're in the double digits they're proposing and and not just for one year. So we feel we've struck a bit of a balance. It's on that increase for one year. And I've asked Sally to share we've got a rates calculator on our website, which is really good. You just type in your address and it tells you under the proposal how much more you would pay. And I find that recombines two hundred and twenty three. So I'm a little bit above the average, but I feel for me it's about twenty dollars a month. I'm quite happy because I want us to look after the environment. I want us to get a bus way. I want the Lincoln Road to get done. I want our tracks to make to be open. And I do want a swimming pool for the northwest. And so all of those sorts of things can't be done without that.

So I'm happy to pay my share, but I know it's not easy for everybody and it's something you've got to conserve. So we would really love it if you'd seen this in your views, because it all counts and we do get a really good synopsis of everything we get. So thank you very much for joining us and thanks to all our staff and fellow elected members.

Cr Linda Cooper: Thank you Councillor Cooper. Councillor Fletcher. Any final thoughts from you?

Cr Christine Fletcher: I sat and watched, as everybody did last night, the excitement of what took place in the viaduct and I contemplated how long it takes to build a city.

I remember chairing the select committee that saw through some of the changes that allowed the public space to be created. I went through the investment that we needed is a member of the Legacy Auckland City Council. And now and all that that tells me is that it's not a short term thing to build something that's enduring, that's worthy of being the largest city in this utterly beautiful country is hard. And yet when it happens, everybody just takes it for granted and thinks, gosh, that was always going to happen.

So I want people to think strategically about that. But it must take everybody along on the journey. So that is know that playing Solomon people in my area are going to be because it's become probably more gentrified than it was when a lot of people bought their houses years ago. But they necessarily haven't got the money. They will probably receive less by way of services because we know that investment has to go on to the growth areas. And that's just about playing fair.

But what is fair, that's really the question tonight. And I hope that people don't just tell us what you don't like, tell us what you do like as well. And as Greg has said, you don't have to comment on everything. Tell us about those things that are really important to you. But I'd just like to thank you, madam. It's been a pleasant session to be part of and thank the officers and the passionate elected members that are here. So thank you.

Sally Woods: Thank you Councillor Fletcher., and I think with I'm not sure if we're running out of time, but let's go to our local board. Thomas, if you've got your last thoughts for us Kay.

Kay Thomas: It's hard to remember, but I want to thank Natasha and Mia for coming along, and if you are from the Whau area, I'd really like to hear any of your thoughts. And I'm sure that Greg Presland would be like to hear from you if you live in the Waitakere ranges area. Thank you.

Sally Woods: Thank you. And finally, over to you, Councillor Sayers final thoughts to wrap up.

Cr Greg Sayers: Thank you very much, Sally. I'll be quick. Sometimes public can feed back to us that they feel outcomes are predetermined and that their input isn't important. But that's not true. We all of us sit around that governing body table when we take in deep considerations of what we read and what does carry a lot of weight as volumes of submissions on certain items. So, you know, at this certain concerns or feedback that people want to give, they must give it. That's really important. And I do think people taking the time out tonight to tune in and listen to us and hopefully, hopefully they've picked up some words of wisdom, particularly from our officers and also from councillors and local board chairs. But I do want to thank you for hosting. I do want to thank the officers. But most of all, I do want to thank participants for being here, because this is a democracy. It is a strong democracy and it is an important one. And this is an important part of the process. So thank you.

Sally Woods: And look, I think the final thoughts for everyone is just to remind you and thank you so much for participating and listening and thank you to the panel and the staff. But the most important thing is that you do have you say go on the website, send that feedback. It is democracy in action. And all of that feedback is the valuable information that we need to make decisions on what's happening for the budget recovery budget and where we put our priorities and our money. So thank you so much, everybody. If anyone's got any final thoughts, put your hand up. Otherwise, we might wrap up there. Bear in mind, this is going to be recorded and presented on the website. All of that information, that Councillor Cooper mentioned the being able to check on your rates rises next on the website. We will share that. So the website could I have your say and please, please share your thoughts. We'd welcome them to.

Thank you, everybody. Kia ora and Good night.