

## CONCERNED RATEPAYERS

Reply for Dave Freeman. Candidate Paraparaumu Ward 2025  
9 August 2025

Good Morning, please find below my reply to your questionnaire. Sorry but I'm not up to speed with replying using the google docs. Also I don't use AI, and my reply and comments are just me..... if that makes sense.

1. Projected Rates Increase. I do not support rate increases of these projected levels. I feel that when we look back in 2034, the reality will be way north of that given the current attitudes to council spending. My average increase for the coming year on my properties is over 16.5%. Last year was a similar amount. So the last 2 years have seen an increase of over 33%. Increases have to be similar to the CPI. Capital projects should, and could, be funded differently.
2. Council Staffing Costs. As an outsider looking in, I have watched council staffing levels balloon. I can't see, to be honest, what additional services the council provides compared to 25 years ago when all the office staff were fitted into the old building on Rimu Rd.
3. Economic Development Spending. Sorry, I haven't done any homework on this. I do wish the council would put less barriers in front of small mom and dad businesses on the Coast. Personally I have seen the local bureaucracy break the soul of a few operators.
4. Toi Mahara Gallery Funding. Again, I have done no homework on this. I do support some funding of the arts and similar, but the council has to "cut its cloth appropriately".
5. Debt Reduction and Rates Burden. Debt reduction is important. This can be done by finding savings in the current system. The current system seems to be one of writing cheques that the ratepayers are expected to honour.
6. Capital Expenditure Programme. Haven't looked into what capital projects are programmed or planned. I assume you aren't lumping maintenance and upgrade of existing infrastructure into capital works?
7. Rates Cap Proposal. Sadly, why should the Central Government have to legislate with a big stick? It is a result of poor monetary skills at a local level. And it is an epidemic across the country. I agree it needs to happen to rein councils in. They are acting as monopolies rather than trusted servants.
8. Public Engagement. I feel they engage in it, but just go ahead and do as they like anyway.

9. Flood Mapping Consultation. These days flood mapping is achieved by computer mapping , using historical rainfall data. What changes the mapping is the input of perceived future rainfall patterns. We will see more dramatic rainfall events. I am NOT a believer in dramatic sea level change. The Kapiti Coastline has historically been an area of both erosion and excretion. I grew up on Marine Parade, Paraparaumu Beach in the 60's and 70's.
10. Decision-Making Behind Closed Doors. This should not be a common event. I would oppose any meetings that I saw were closed off to the public just to push some agenda or bad project through. Decisions should be publicly released in a time frame that is both prudent and fair to the general population.
11. Improving Transparency. As an outsider at the moment, my impression is that there is very little transparency at the moment.
12. Voting Rights for Non-Elected Members. Never knew this was happening. NO !! The elected members, and only the elected members, should be voting. It is important to listen to advice, because expert advice is critical for good decision making.
13. Maori Ward Referendum. Apparently there will be a referendum on the voting papers this year. Whilst we have Maori Electorates in our Parliamentary system, I feel that our local system should follow suit. One positive, is that our local council retained the total number of council members at 10. They didn't just add additional ratepayer costs with additional councilors.
14. Top Three Priorities
  - As a first time candidate, I haven't spent any time analysing the inside workings of the council system. I have just watched it from the outside becoming the behemoth I see today. 25 years ago I could pick up the phone or walk in, and get sound advice or guidance (around building and private infrastructure). That is extremely hard to do these days. But priorities as i see them at the moment are :
    - Scrutinise areas where there is council over-reach, "feel good projects", and consequential savings to ratepayers moving into the future.
    - Get in behind the closed door of the KCDC and attempt to find why there is such a discourse between them and us ratepayers. As trusted servants, I don't feel as "trusting" as I did 25 years ago.
    - Attempt to find why it appears Kapiti residents just don't seem to get good value for the rates paid (compared to other areas of the country with similar demographics).
15. My Experience. I want to give back and help the area I've proudly called home my entire life.
  - My background is in the Civil and Building industry, where I have owned and operated small businesses in Kapiti, along with a period in the Military. I understand the importance of making practical, common-sense decisions.

- I am a property owner with a mixture of properties, both residential and commercial, in both the Waikanae and Paraparaumu area. I have been physically involved in the construction in some of them from permitting to final sign off. I understand personally the high cost of compliance and the additional costs burdened onto home owners.
- Focusing on core issues is vital, especially given the current cost of living crisis. As a local property owner myself, I've seen fixed costs skyrocket, hurting both tenants and property owners alike.
- I promise, to the best of my abilities, if elected, to ensure our rates are spent in a way that I would spend my money.
- Although I'm unseasoned in politics, I bring an open and fresh set of eyes, with no hidden agenda or affiliations – only a genuine desire to serve this community.

Yours  
DAVE FREEMAN