Wellington's economic prosperity depends on the strength of our international connections.

Wellington City Council is proposing to develop a runway extension at Wellington Airport as part of the city's Growth Agenda. This will facilitate more international arrivals and departures and support the central and lower North Island's land transport connections; allowing Wellington to be more accessible and 'open for business'.

We know that we must investigate extending the runway. The current runway, at just over 2km, is too short to deal with large, long-haul aircraft. A runway extension would allow larger planes to fly direct to and from Asia and North America and mean one-stop flights to and from other destinations that haven’t been able to access Wellington directly before.

A survey commissioned by the Wellington Chamber of Commerce of Wellington's businesses found that the airport’s limited international capacity is perceived to be the biggest obstacle to the region’s economic potential.

Good business planning means investigating if these things really are possible and the extent to which they are. The Council has committed $1 million to fund the resource consent process. It will look at all the essential issues – planning consents, environmental impact, the likelihood airlines would fly to and from Wellington – as well as inform the business case and funding for the required construction work.

Local business leaders have reiterated their support for investigating a runway extension as part of the airport’s Long Term Plan. Other mayors in the region also support investigating the extension.

We agree with Wellington’s business community – it is worth taking a serious look at the extension. And the time is right – if work starts on a second Mt Victoria tunnel in a few years’ time, we need to be considering the big picture for the region’s long-term infrastructure requirements now.

Let the Wellington Sevens begin!

Sevens Wellington is this weekend, and with Rugby Sevens now an official Olympic sport the tournament has taken on a whole new significance.

Wellington hosts the fifth leg of the HSBC Sevens World Series, and there’ll be 15 exciting international teams in action, as well as our own world champions All Black Sevens. While the qualifying for Rio began next season, players already have their sights firmly set on the Commonwealth Games.

Tomorrow, the Sevens Wellington street parade is a perfect chance to escape the office and give the sporting superstars the welcome they deserve. The procession will be filled with huge numbers of fans, not to mention the entertainment on offer. The parade starts at 1.30pm. Films by Starlight presents Whaka Rüber (rated PG) on the waterfront.

Celebrate Waitangi Day

As well as the visiting teams and their support crews, there’ll also be thousands of sports enthusiasts from all over the country making the most of a summer weekend in the Capital. Accommodation providers, bars and restaurants, and of course costume hire stores are all gearing up for a fun few days. In 2013, 23,857 out-of-town visitors came to Wellington to enjoy the Sevens, making up 63 percent of all Sevens attendees. The 2013 Sevens provided a direct economic contribution of over $18 million to Wellington city.

On Saturday night, Courtenay Place and surrounding streets including Dixon, Manners and part of Tory streets will be closed to traffic until dawn on Sunday morning.

For a detailed list of road closures, please visit our website. A limited number of tickets are still available at www.sevens.co.nz/tickets

Find out more

Wellington City Council continues to bring you a great selection of summer events. We proudly support the Fringe Festival, which starts this week and runs until 2 March. The next funding round for Creative Communities and the Tawa Community grant closes on 28 February. Gardens Magic was a great success. Thanks Wellington for coming along and helping make the magic!