

Community Summary Long Term Plan Hamilton City Council - Creative Waikato

Arts, culture and creativity contributes to thriving communities. When arts, culture and creativity is supported, strong and visible communities are strong and visible.

Arts, culture and creativity is woven through all aspects of life. It has a key role to play in creating thriving and liveable towns and cities. The creative activation of public spaces supports the preservation of council assets, and promotes social cohesion and community connection. Sustainable creative career opportunities attract and retain workers and innovative businesses.

Arts, culture and creativity supports community and individual wellbeing. In Waikato, those who report being highly engaged with arts, culture and creativity have 5% higher overall wellbeing as compared to those with little or no engagement.¹ Research has shown that recreational arts can support mental wellbeing. 'Those who engaged in 100 or more hours/year of arts engagement (i.e. two or more hours/week) reported significantly better mental well-being than other levels of engagement.'²

Councils are currently seeking community feedback around their long term plans (LTPs). Long term plans outline Council's activities and how they are managed, delivered and funded³. Under the Local Government Act, Councils must consult with their communities on the LTP (or 10 year plan) every 3 years.⁴ A common theme across these consultations is the need to be strategic around prioritising investment.

It is important that investment in community wellbeing is prioritised and protected. The core role of council, as outlined in the legislation, is to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities. This is the required (or statutory) purpose of council.⁵

We have a role to play in supporting our council in this work, by letting them know that we will support them to deliver these wellbeing outcomes. We can share with the council and others in our community that we know and care about more than solely economic concerns. It is important that we share about the other things

¹ Huber Social, 'Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in Waikato' (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022), p.22, <https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/researchandreports>.

² Christina Davies, Matthew Knuiman & Michael Rosenberg, 'The art of being mentally healthy: a study to quantify the relationship between recreational arts engagement and mental well-being in the general population, BMC Public Health, vol.16, <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-015-2672-7>.

³ Waikato District Council, 'Long Term Plan' <https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/long-term-plan#:~:text=The%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20>

⁴ Local government Council planning and consultation process http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lqip.nsf/wpg_URL/About-Local-Government-Participate-in-Local-Government-Council-planning-and-consultation-processes

⁵ New Zealand Legislation, 'Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Act 2019', <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2019/0017/latest/LMS30972.html>.

that we value in our lives. This can be as simple as providing a short paragraph to council about the things that you care about.

Please note:

Here is a [link](#) to the council’s questions for the Long Term Plan feedback process. It is important to know that you do not need to answer every question, or go into great detail. You can speak from your own experience, and share about what you really value and care about. Anything you can do to add your voice to the chorus is powerful. You can find the consultation document [here](#):

We have pulled out some key moments where arts, culture, creativity and community are mentioned below. You might want to mention some of these, and what you want to happen with regard to these. Feel very free to copy and paste from here, and make any edits or additions you would like.

Your rates support community services, venues, tourism and events, visitor destinations....arts, culture and creativity are in all of these.

Your say matters

It will take a few minutes of your time to put in a submission on what you care about. Our communities contribute significantly to making our city a more diverse, vibrant and creative place to live - it’s important that our voices are heard.

Consultation closes on 21 April 2024

Long-term priority areas

The proposed budget is based on the five priorities Council developed in consultation with the community in 2020. Key focus points related to *arts, cultures and creativity* are listed under the priority areas below. So if you talk about your own mahi, and use these keywords, then good stuff.

Priority Area	This means
Shaping a city that’s easy to live in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Revitalising neighbourhoods- Creating a liveable city- Neighbourhoods having community identity and spaces across the city
Shaping a city where our people thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hamilton is known as a great place to work and do business- Empower and enable our diverse communities to share their voice, and shape their city

Shaping a city where people love to be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of daytime and evening activity - Creation of performance spaces such as the new regional theatre and city spaces to support arts and culture initiatives which offer something unique to our city.
Shaping a fun city with lots to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop open community spaces - Celebrate and promote a city where residents have the opportunity to have fun with their friends and family
Shaping a green city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan the future as a sustainable city

Creative Waikato is submitting to the long term plan too, and advocating for support for arts, culture and creativity in Hamilton. If you want to read some of what we will be sharing, you can check out these documents on our advocacy page: <https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/standing-up-for-the-arts> - this will contain links to all our public submissions.

Important Additional LTP Information

Below is a summary of reductions that the Council has already considered. This is part of the current rate calculation, but this hasn't been specifically highlighted in the main consultation document. While this may not be specifically in the questions, you can make reference to these details if you like.

For context, “community grant funding” supports arts organisations, venues, events, and other creative and cultural activities. So cuts to these things would limit the support those organisations receive to create those initiatives.

If you believe ‘Community Grants’ are important (this would include funding to invest in arts, culture and creativity) then we encourage you to have your say.

Cost reductions Council has made

Project/initiative	Annual saving
Reduction in Community Grant Funding by 20%, to be reviewed for the 2027-37 Long-Term Plan. The type of grants are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Service Grants (single year grants \$308,400) 	\$106,680

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Initiatives Grants (community event fund 2023/24 \$100,000) • Welcoming Plan Fund (\$75,000) 	
<p>Reduction of the Event Sponsorship Fund by 20%, to be reviewed for the 2027-37 Long-Term Plan.</p> <p>This is a contestable fund for sponsorship funding of major events within Hamilton that is to generate economic and social benefits for the city, primarily through the attraction of visitors to the city and by delivering wider exposure of Hamilton.</p>	\$100,000
<p>Reduction in the Hamilton Central Business Association Activation Fund by 20% for three years, to be reviewed for the 2027-37 Long-Term Plan.</p> <p>This fund is to promote central city activities and includes activities such as bands in Garden Place, and assistance with the erection of the Christmas Tree.</p>	\$20,000
<p>Reduction in funding for Hamilton & Waikato Tourism Limited by 50%.</p> <p>Council has a long-standing three-year purchase agreement for visitor industry promotions and campaigning to sell Hamilton and the Waikato as a compelling visitor destination. It directly supports economic and social benefit to our community, through the commercial accommodation, hospitality and retails sectors. The funding also drives visitation to Hamilton's destinations, including the H3 suite of event venues, Hamilton Gardens, Waikato Museum, and Te Kaaroro (Hamilton Zoo and Waiwhakareke precinct). HWT is co-funded alongside neighbouring Councils and private sector contributors.</p>	\$357,945

Potential examples responses:

As a member of the Hamilton community I support maintaining or increasing investment into arts, culture and creativity in the city. A thriving city with lots to do where people love to be must include a vibrant creative community - and that requires support.

This could include:

- Increased investment in community organisations and activities that contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of local communities
- Increase investment into the creative community and support more local events.
- Supporting more placemaking initiatives to share local stories through public art

- Working with local events providers to increase support and engagement to encourage events that support local communities and drive external outcomes as well.
- *Use examples from your own practice, or things you particularly enjoyed experiencing - local examples are useful to help elected officials understand the context of what is important to us!*

We encourage you to make strength-based responses to councils that talk to the things that are important to you and work towards “growing the pie”. Highlight things that are important - particularly if they have had council support.

There is a space near the end of the submission form (page 6) to add your response to provide feedback on Council business.

Another option is to make a submission via email - haveyoursay@hcc.govt.nz

Other components of LTP consideration:

Targeted rates

- Councillors agreed to consult with the community on two additional targeted rates, for community infrastructure and community resilience and extreme weather. These would allow Council to provide additional services not currently in the budget. **However, Council will only introduce these targeted rates if there’s support in the community for them.**
- A list of Council’s community services and administrative functions which may be reduced can be found under ‘**Council’s community services and back-office functions to consider how we can reduce our costs**’ in the submission form.

NOTE: These targeted rates will have an impact on your rates amount - but may be a part of ensuring the things you want supported are considered.

Other background information:

Discussions about Long-Term Plans, rates, and the business of council systems can be complicated and overwhelming. Context is useful, and civic education and information can be hard to come by. Percentage rate increases can seem like quite large increases - but this is made more complex when councils have consistently underrated and therefore required extra debt to maintain delivery of a level of service.

In this round of consultations, the historic underinvestment has coincided with a cost of living situation, which makes the proposed consultation more complex.

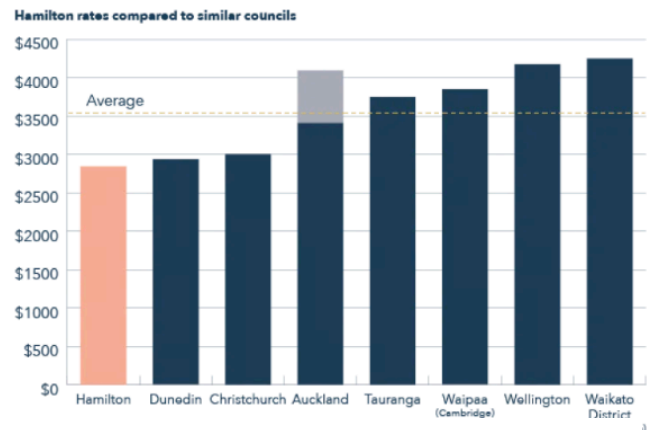
If we want to live in a city with a thriving cultural ecosystem with vibrant artistic experiences and accessible creative activity it is important that we use our voice in this process to encourage councillors to prioritise investment in this area. And for Hamilton that should include:

- Increasing community grant funding (currently proposed to be cut by 20%)
- Increasing investment to arts and cultural events and activity (through events funding and supplementing initiatives like the Creative Communities Scheme and a future iteration of the Creative Partnerships Fund)
- Increase sustained investment into our local creative infrastructure that supports accessible arts, culture and creativity.

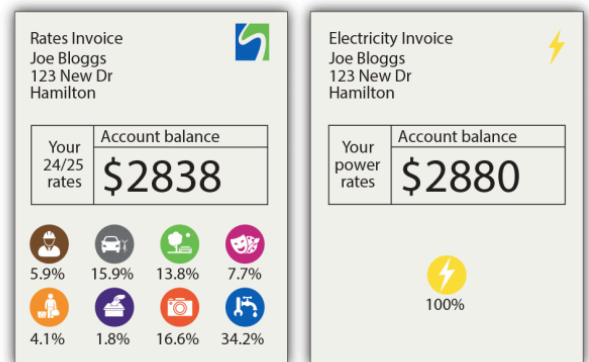
Putting rates in perspective

There is a lot of discussion around rates, but if you look at what Hamiltonians will pay compared to other districts, it is a lot less. We think Council needs to prioritise *arts, culture and creativity* because it is not only what makes our city vibrant, but it is essential for overall wellbeing and social cohesion.

The median home in Hamilton Kirikiriroa has a capital value of \$830,000 and pays annual rates of \$2,838 this year. This is around \$800 less on average than other Councils (see diagram below).



If the proposed rates increase goes ahead, the median residential rates will still be lower than most of the other big cities and neighbouring councils, who will also be increasing their rates.



The average residential electricity bill in New Zealand is \$2880 for just one service. Source: MBIE, September 2023