

Community Summary Long Term Plan - Matamata-Piako Council

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.

We have a role to play in supporting council in this work, by letting them know that we will support them to deliver these wellbeings. We can share with the council and with 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 that we value in our lives.

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

[https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/long-term-plan#:~:text=The%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20\(LTP,\(including%20proposed%20rate%20increases\).](https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/long-term-plan#:~:text=The%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20(LTP,(including%20proposed%20rate%20increases).)

⁴ Ibid.

[Here is a link](#) to the council's resources 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: <https://ltp.mpdc.nz/images/Downloads/Final%202024-34%20CD%20-%20with%20Audit%20Opinion.pdf> and feedback form here: <https://ltp.mpdc.nz/start-submission>

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

The Matamata-Piako Council is seeking feedback for: what our priorities should be to help create a vibrant, passionate, progressive district.

There is a focus in this draft long term plan on balancing what is affordable, and what is essential. The mayor's message shares a vision for 'a place that put people at the heart of everything we do'.

Arts, culture and creativity are essential for community connection and wellbeing, and the activation of public spaces and assets.

The feedback process for the Long Term Plan is arranged around some key projects, and you can click on each project in order to learn more about the options council are presenting.

Remember, you do not have to submit on every section- and when you do submit on a section, you will see a green tick to show you have completed this bit :)

We have pulled out some key moments where arts, culture, creativity and community are mentioned, or could be included. 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.

Te Aroha Spa-

Potential responses to this could include:

- If continuing the investigation phase, the opportunity to engage local artists and creatives to enhance storytelling around rich spa history and potential as a tourist destination, in order to attract third party investor/s.

Stage for Matamata Civic Centre:

Potential responses to this could include:

- In 2020, the community strongly advocated for the development of stage, green rooms and dressing rooms. This development would contribute to creating spaces for community to come together and develop storytelling and creative experiences, supporting social inclusion.
- Creative spaces like this are key to catering to a growing district.
- Performing Arts spaces provide opportunities for development, community connection and the opportunities to develop creative careers.

If you think that this development should remain a priority, share that. What value would this bring to your life, and who else would it affect?

Town Centre Infrastructure

Potential responses to this could include:

- It is essential to invest in the partnerships and people that work to create a sense of vibrancy and chances for people to connect.
- Arts, culture and creative activity only happens because of the work of highly skilled, dedicated people.
- In order to realise the vision of Pride of Place, it is essential to budget for, and invest in soft infrastructure-that is, the people, groups and programmes that activate bricks and mortar assets.

What key events and groups do you value in your community? Where might there be room to engage other communities?

Additional Playgrounds

Potential responses to this could include:

- As our towns grow and families move to our district, they need free, accessible spaces to play and connect with others in their communities.
- There is opportunity to engage local artists in the development of public play spaces, and to consider how creative activation can contribute to thriving neighbourhoods.
- Public art and creative events can enliven spaces where hard infrastructure may be delayed.

What value do playgrounds and other public play spaces bring to your life? If council do not add more built assets, what could they do to bring life and play into neighbourhoods?

Te Aroha Library

Potential responses to this could include:

- Libraries are an essential service. They contain resources, spaces and which support community wellbeing. We support the provision of continued and future access to libraries.
- The provision of community libraries are named components in local government legislation, they contribute positively to cultural wellbeing

through access to knowledge and resources, but also provide spaces for social connections.

- Investment in libraries, in conjunction with investment in soft infrastructure can support community groups and local artists to work in partnership with the council to deliver creative activities, community activation, and (depending on the design) potential space for shared creative and cultural activities.
- Libraries are community spaces, where people connect and can access education, digital spaces, things like Wi-Fi, computers, printers and scanners, which are necessary in this digital age. It is important that people can access these, even if they do not have them in their own homes.

How do you feel about the possibility of the library closing? Do you use libraries, and/or do you think they are important even if you do not access them? Share your view.

The services we provide

Potential responses to this could include:

- Community facilities like pools, parks and libraries are key to community wellbeing. They provide educational, recreational and social cohesion benefits.
- Community grants ensure that communities have access to vibrant events and opportunities, and help to retain the people who bring vitality and joy to our towns. It is important that we prioritise investment in this soft infrastructure.

Share about how having access to these community facilities makes Matamata-Piako a place you are proud to call home. You might want to share your support to maintain these essential services.

Matamata Stadium

- There is potential to include provision for creative spaces as part of this development. This could include: Sprung floor spaces for dance (important for the health and safety of performers); soundproofed rehearsal rooms for kapahaka, theatre, and music.
- Engagement in dance, creative movement and music has similar benefits to physical health as other forms of active recreation, so it would be effective to incorporate provision of these activities into this multi-use space.

Creative Waikato are submitting to the long term plan too, and advocating for support for arts, culture and creativity in Matamata-Piako. 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.