



WAIKATO CREATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN:

Summary Document

Prepared for Creative Waikato, August 2014

THE STAFFORD GROUP





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1. INTRODUCTION

The Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan (the Plan) provides the first opportunity for the Waikato Region (the Waikato) to review current and future creative sector facility needs. The primary objectives of this exercise are to identify the current facilities available throughout the Waikato, to ascertain any gaps in the facility offering and to determine how best to fill these gaps over the next 30-year period.

This Plan is being undertaken because of the important role the creative sector plays in helping to grow the liveability¹ of the Waikato and its communities. The arts enable individuals to express themselves through various forms, providing opportunities to connect and contribute directly to the sense of place and community wellbeing. The arts also provide financial and economic benefit for the region, through driving increased tourism and local resident demand.

The creative sector is also an important intrinsic component of the wider visitor economy and a driver of consumer interest and demand. The sector should be viewed by stakeholders and the wider community as not only a provider of important social capital, but as a major potential driver of the regional visitor economy and wider economic development. Creative sector events and activities such as performances and exhibitions drive visitor spend in many areas including accommodation use, restaurant and cafes, general retail and event merchandise.

As a result of its importance in supporting a healthy and dynamic community, the creative sector needs to have a long term (30 year) vision to strive for and appropriate infrastructure to deliver its social and economic benefits.

This Plan aligns with Local Government's long term planning requirements (30 year period) to assess infrastructure needs in the short, medium and longer term and to integrate into the broader spatial planning being undertaken for the Waikato Mayoral Forum.

Importantly, this Plan identifies that for many elements of creative infrastructure within the Waikato, there has often been a lack of reinvestment and refurbishment leading to significant challenges now in funding these creative sector facilities so they can remain operational.

The creative sector's infrastructure needs compete with the funding needs of sporting and other recreational infrastructure. Due to limited funding, a paradigm shift is needed to find an agreed workable funding model for creative sector infrastructure within the Waikato for the future.

¹ Liveability is the broad concept which includes a combination of the social, cultural, economic and environmental attributes of a place. These attributes determine the attractiveness of a city or region as a place in which to live, work, invest and raise a family.

Without change, there is a real risk that parts of the Waikato may actually lose elements of creative infrastructure and some activities (performance art, visual art, music, dance etc.) could eventually be lost for some communities.

Conversely, the development of improved creative infrastructure via a possible shared regional funding model (where the notion of district boundaries can be disregarded), has the potential to achieve a sustainable outcome for the sector over the longer term. The notion that every TLA requires its own locally driven creative facilities is no longer viable or economically sustainable. Most councils in the Waikato now recognise this.

It is also important to note that this is the first time the Waikato have undertaken a coordinated approach to collating regional creative sector infrastructure data. The findings illustrate that gaps in data exist and updates will need to be made as more information comes to hand. This Plan needs to develop therefore as a living document as ongoing refinements will be needed.

2. INFRASTRUCTURE HIERARCHY DEFINITIONS

The following infrastructure hierarchy definitions have been applied to the Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan² because the brief for this plan was focused only on those facilities classified as national, regional or sub regional:

NATIONAL	A facility with the ability to cater for professional level creative events, exhibitions, festivals, concerts, performances and/or to serve as a national rehearsal and/or training hub for one or more creative sectors.
REGIONAL	A facility with the ability to cater for professional and larger scale amateur/community creative events, exhibitions, festivals, concerts, performances that draw audiences from across the region and/or serves as a regional rehearsal and/or training hub for one or more creative sectors.
SUB REGIONAL	A facility with the ability to draw a number of creative events, exhibitions, festivals, concerts or performances from across adjacent territorial authority boundaries for exhibitions, performances or rehearsal purposes.
LOCAL (OUT OF SCOPE)	A facility with the ability to serve a local catchment's performance and rehearsal needs. This catchment will predominantly be drawn from within a single territorial authority.

² It is important to note that the Sports Facilities Plan included the International category for facilities because there were a number of facilities in the Waikato with this definition. The only creative facility in the Waikato which could be possibly placed in this category would be Claudelands however, we have included this as a national facility as the majority of performances it caters for would appear to align more appropriately with the national category.



For the purpose of the Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan, local level facilities have been excluded as part of the brief. These would primarily include facilities such as community halls and other smaller local facilities. It is however important to note that for some communities, local community halls (mostly owned by district councils and managed by council or local committees) provide important rehearsal spaces for dance groups, musical groups, theatre groups, visual artists and other forms of creative expression.

This study also recognises the importance of Marae as critical spaces for local delivery of creative and cultural events and development. The numbers of Marae and local halls are included to indicate the extensive number of these as well as the location and capacity (where data was readily available).

3. THE MAJOR STRATEGIC ISSUES & GAPS

A number of major issues exist which challenge the ability of council's, funding bodies and other stakeholders to provide appropriate facilities for the creative sector for the longer term. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that the utilisation levels of many facilities is relatively low (20-30%) negating the need for further facilities. Based on the research and analysis the major strategic issues are noted as:

- A lack of asset data management for creative facilities within the Waikato;
- Based on the demographic trends in particular, there is minimal need for new creative facilities (bricks and mortar) and very limited interest from funding bodies and councils willing to fund new development;
- A lack of rehearsal spaces is the major infrastructure gap identified by creative sector stakeholders which needs to be addressed;
- A lack of quality storage spaces for theatrical equipment, orchestras, bands and the visual art sector is a further major infrastructure gap needing to be addressed; and
- The lack of administrative facilities (meeting rooms, back of house supporting facilities) is a further infrastructure gap which also effects the organisational ability of the sector.

The population of the Waikato Region as a whole is projected to increase from its present day 413,000 to a peak of 505,000 in 2047 before declining to 494,000 in 2063. The pattern of growth followed by decline for the region is not followed uniformly by all territorial authorities. Over 90% of total population growth is projected to occur within the wider Hamilton urban area including neighbouring towns and rural residential areas in Waikato and Waipa District. The other local authorities are expected to be largely static or decline.

Age driven growth is a key feature with a significant majority of all regional growth in the next 30 years being in the 65+ age group. Hamilton is the youngest local authority nationally with a median age of 32, which is due in part to its vibrant tertiary sector. Hamilton City is projected to age at a faster rate than many of the other TAs in the Waikato Region, considering its initially youthful age profile, and has the highest projected number of people in the 65+ age group.

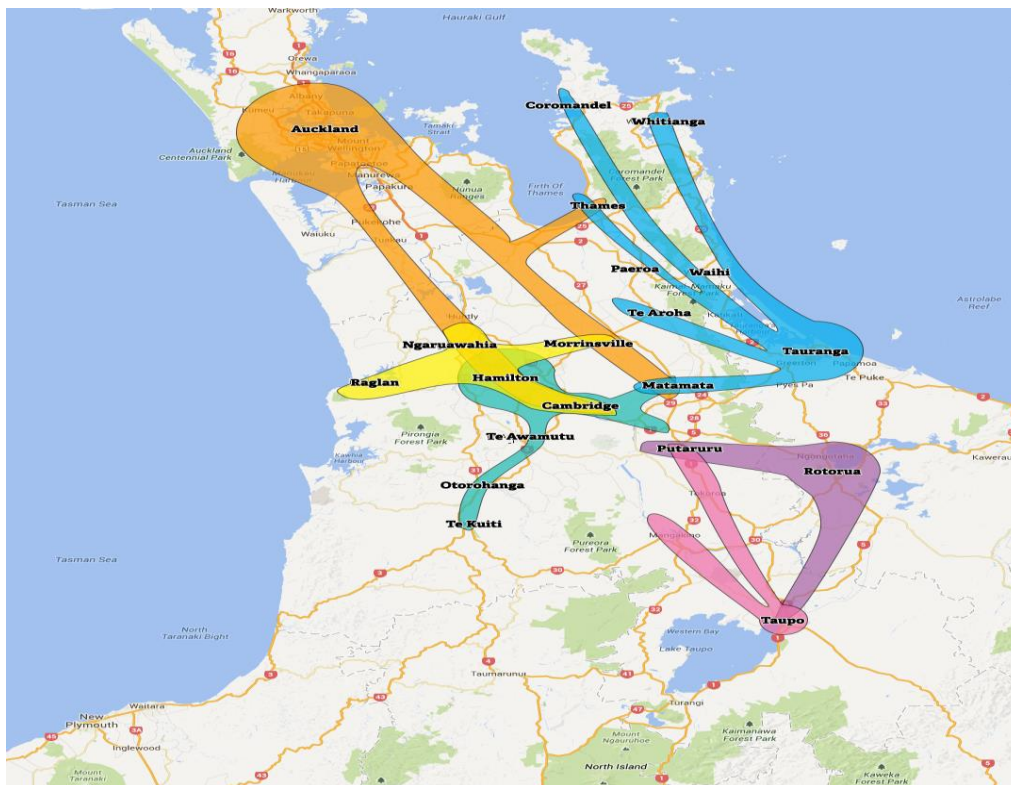
The research findings in this report indicate that not only is there an ageing population base of audience attendees but the same issue confronts ageing arts based practitioners. With low growth expected in younger people attending creative sector exhibitions and performances as well as participating, the need for so many creative facilities would appear to be diminishing.

Furthermore, for many communities within the Waikato Region, it is just as easy to access event and performance venues in Auckland, Manukau, Tauranga and Rotorua which are outside of the region whilst improved highways are making the drive time shorter.

4. CREATIVE FACILITY HUBS OUTSIDE THE WAIKATO

The figure below demonstrates the links to creative infrastructure easily accessible outside of the Waikato that people within the region can travel to attend creative events, shows and exhibitions.

FIGURE 1: EXTERNAL CREATIVE HUBS AND ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITIES IN THE WAIKATO





5. BENCHMARKING BEST PRACTICE

As part of this Plan a detailed benchmarking assessment was provided to illustrate what other regions had developed particularly as performance and exhibition venues (rather than rehearsal or storage spaces). Of the 58 facilities assessed the majority were located with a similar population catchment to the Waikato and/or situated within 1-2 hours' drive of a major urban centre. The relevance and implications of this benchmarking for the Waikato are as follows:

- Major regional centres tend to offer quality public art galleries and performing art centres regardless of demographic trends;
- The strongest argument applied for supporting the investment into these quality facilities is enhancement to the liveability and appeal of regional cities and towns;
- There is recognition of the need to growth in the visitor economy through creative festivals and events;
- There is a recognised need to help support and stimulate employment via the creative sector; and
- There is a need to address social and community issues and to help create more inclusive communities where different cultural groups can participate.

6. OPTIONS GOING FORWARD

The sustainability of creative infrastructure for the Waikato region raises various options to be considered for the future. Options include the following:

1. Status Quo

The status quo is an option but is not supported because it is not considered sustainable particularly from a financial perspective. There is a need to rationalise the number of creative facilities because of the inability of councils and communities to continue to fund them and the supply of performance venues in particular in surrounding cities which are easily accessible (Auckland, Tauranga etc.).

2. Regionally shared facilities

Offering regional shared facilities is seen as a highly pragmatic solution for the sector. This model anticipates rationalisation of some existing facilities and the sharing of venues for performances, exhibitions, rehearsals and storage. This option would lead to a reduction in the number of facilities but offer fewer better maintained facilities overall.

3. Consolidation or dispersal strategy

The potential exists to either consolidate the facilities in and around Hamilton as the largest urban centre or to encourage dispersal throughout the region. As facilities particularly for performance and exhibition venues are easily accessed outside of the region (Auckland, Rotorua, Tauranga and Taupo) there is limited regional demand to consolidate facilities in Hamilton other than to support Hamilton and surrounding council areas specifically.



4. Stronger regional infrastructure support

Stronger regional infrastructure support needs to focus particularly on rehearsal and storage spaces in particular and fewer performance venues of a higher quality. The potential exists to create centralised storage, rehearsal and administrative hubs for the creative sector in 2-3 locations throughout the region which can be jointly shared.

5. Non-permanent facilities

The option also exists to introduce non-permanent facilities such as a Spiegeltent or Crystal Palace. These non-permanent pop-up facilities offer quality performance and exhibition venues, can be erected and taken down in a day and could be rotated throughout the region to enable communities to benefit from touring shows and performances. This option offers lower capital cost and may be a useful addendum to facilities available on a regional basis.

It is important to note that many of these options are not mutually exclusive. What is clear from the consultation and analysis however, is that there are significant constraints on funding new creative facilities as well as the ability to pay for current and future operating expenses.

This necessitates the need for more strategic and pragmatic solutions to be found to support the sector.

The research and analysis highlights that the most strategic pathway forward is a funding and infrastructure model for the creative sector which offers:

- Shared regional facilities (and costs);
- Rationalisation of the number of facilities to focus on a fewer number of affordable facilities and venues; and
- Ensuring facilities for the next 30 years are more flexible in their design to cater to changing uses and changing market demand needs. This would also include options for non-permanent facilities (pop-ups) which are able to offer far lower capital cost options and which avoid the ongoing high annual maintenance and repair cost which existing bricks and mortar facilities create.

7. FACILITY SUMMARY

All TLAs have local facilities to support the creative sector, whilst approximately 60% have facilities classified as sub-regional, and 40% have facilities classified as regional or national level facilities.

The challenge however, is that whilst the inventory identifies a good range of built facilities to support the creative sector and a large number of locally classified facilities, the operational quality of many of these facilities is highly variable.

Bricks and mortar creative facilities in a poor state of repair are seen by councils throughout the Waikato as a liability, rather than an asset. The number of these needing upgrading, and/or with limited utilisation, reflects the lack of desire by Councils in particular, to build more facilities, as the ongoing cost of maintaining facilities is seen as prohibitively expensive and a major burden on local communities often with minimal or static population growth.

The figure below provides a summary of creative facilities in the Waikato, based on the type of facility and their classification (national, regional, sub-regional and local). Importantly, nearly all of the Councils did not have a detailed and up to date asset management data base of creative sector facilities (solely or jointly used by the creative sector). The assessment offered is therefore based on Council feedback rather than compiled from an asset management data base.

FIGURE 2: SUMMARY OF FACILITY TYPES IN THE WAIKATO

NATIONAL	Art Galleries	Dance Studios	Hall / Rehearsal Space	Marae / Māori Creative Spaces	Outdoor Spaces	Performance Spaces	Social History Museum/ Literature	Visual Arts Spaces	TOTAL
	0	0	0	1	4	2	0	0	7
REGIONAL	Art Galleries	Dance Studios	Hall / Rehearsal Space	Marae / Māori Creative Spaces	Outdoor Spaces	Performance Spaces	Social History Museum/ Literature	Visual Arts Spaces	TOTAL
	0	2	0	0	2	10	1	0	15
SUB-REGIONAL	Art Galleries	Dance Studios	Hall / Rehearsal Space	Marae / Māori Creative Spaces	Outdoor Spaces	Performance Spaces	Social History Museum/ Literature	Visual Arts Spaces	TOTAL
	2	0	4	0	1	7	0	0	14
LOCAL	Art Galleries	Dance Studios	Hall / Rehearsal Space	Marae / Māori Creative Spaces	Outdoor Spaces	Performance Spaces	Social History Museum/ Literature	Visual Arts Spaces	TOTAL
	72	10	170	130	8	32	28	22	472

**TOTAL =
508**

Feedback from councils and other stakeholders has provided an opportunity to estimate that less than 5% may be considered in an excellent or good operational state, approximately 15% at



best are in an average operational state and at least 80% are in a marginal or poor operational state.

8. WHO MAY FUND NEW MAJOR FACILITIES

The vast majority of creative infrastructure is funded by local councils. As councils have significant pressure to fund a variety of infrastructure (roads, sporting facilities, libraries etc.) creative sector infrastructure often struggles to be adequately supported.

Feedback from regional and local funding bodies as well as central government indicates:

- Limited interest to fund new creative sector infrastructure without strong empirical evidence to prove a major infrastructure gap or to support proven demand;
- A strong need for a number of funding bodies (trust, foundations, government at various levels etc.) to jointly participate in a creative facility funding initiative if it is to be successful;
- The need to show wide community benefits across the region to meet funding agency criteria support for creative sector projects including benefits not just to the creative sector;
- The need to recognise that individual funding agencies have limited funding capacity to individually participate in creative sector projects; and
- The need to develop robust business cases to compete successfully against other industry sectors also vying for funding support from the same sources.

Additional capital funding is required to keep existing facilities operational. This includes major upgrades required for facilities such as the Founders Theatre in Hamilton to ensure it is able to remain fully operational in the absence of alternative venues.

What creative stakeholders aspire to and what they can actually afford (capital development requirements and ongoing operating and maintenance costs) reflects a funding gap which has major regional funding implications.

9. PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS

The table on the following page provides a list of priority creative infrastructure projects for the Waikato for the next 30 years. The criteria for determining the priority projects was based on those which:

- Will encourage greater cross regional sharing of facilities;
- Can help meet the needs of the growth sectors identified;
- Can lead to consolidation of some elements of creative infrastructure and allow for higher utilisation levels through better sharing of facilities;



- Can offer greater flexibility for encouraging the use by different art forms, for different age and ethnic groups; and
- Can offer the best socio-economic return on investment to stakeholders, users, communities and funding bodies.

TABLE 1: PRIORITY PROJECTS (NOT IN PRIORITY ORDER)³

#	Project	Location	Facility Classification	Types Of Uses	Indicative Timeframe	Indicative Cost Only	Potential Funding Partnerships
1	Development of public art space/gallery	Hamilton (possibly as part of current Museum)	National	All form of fine art, craft art and design	2020-2030	< \$5m	Hamilton City Council and Others
2	Development of multi-purpose facility (all art forms)	Ngaruawahia (possibly as part of Tūrangawaewae Marae)	National	All creative expression	2020-2030	< \$5m	Tūrangawaewae Trust Board and Others
3	Creation of cultural, sculpture and art trails linking towns and creative sector venues	Throughout the Waikato to help tell the sub regional and regional history	Sub-regional	Visual art form display, event and communication information, Maori creative expression and welcome	2020-2030	< \$1m	Councils and Others
4	Upgrade of The Plaza	Putaruru	Sub-regional (South Waikato, Matamata-Piako, Hauraki)	All creative expression but particularly for performing arts	2025-2035	< \$1.5m	Local/regional Trusts, Foundations and Others
5	Upgrade of The Meteor Theatre	Hamilton	Sub-regional	Performing arts	2015-2020	< \$1m	Community Trust and Others
6	Upgrade for Clarence St Theatre	Hamilton	Sub-regional	Performing arts + storage	2020-2025	< \$2m	Community Trust and Others
7	New major performing arts auditorium – NZ Conservatorium of Music	University of Waikato – Hamilton	National	Performing arts	2025-2035	< \$55m	University of Waikato Foundation and Others
8	Upgrade of Founders Theatre	Hamilton	Regional/sub regional	Performing arts	2015-2020	< \$15m	Hamilton City Council and Others
9	Development of Storage facility	Possibly Frankton	Regional/sub regional	Costume storage, stage props, lighting equipment, instruments etc.	2017-2030	< \$1.5m	Local trusts, foundations and Others
10	Development of multiple rehearsal spaces	Matamata, Paeroa and Te Awamutu	Sub-regional	All forms of rehearsal and production facilities	2017-2030	< \$2m per facility	Councils and others

³ Please note, these projects are not in any priority order, they have simply been numbered to correspond to the map (Figure 2) on page 20.



#	Project	Location	Facility Classification	Types Of Uses	Indicative Timeframe	Indicative Cost Only	Potential Funding Partnerships
11	Upgrade for Waitomo Cultural Centre	Te Kuiti	Sub-regional	All creative expression but particularly for growing Kapa Haka	2020-2030	<\$0.5m	Waitomo District Council and Others
12	Outdoor stage for Amphitheatre	Taupo	Regional	All creative expression	2020-2030	<\$1m	Taupo District Council and Others
13	Pop up venue for touring performances and exhibitions	Throughout the Waikato	Regional	All creative expression (pop up is along lines of Spiegeltent or Crystal Palace)	2020-2030	<\$.2.5m	Local trusts, foundations and Others
Est. Total Cost:						\$99m	

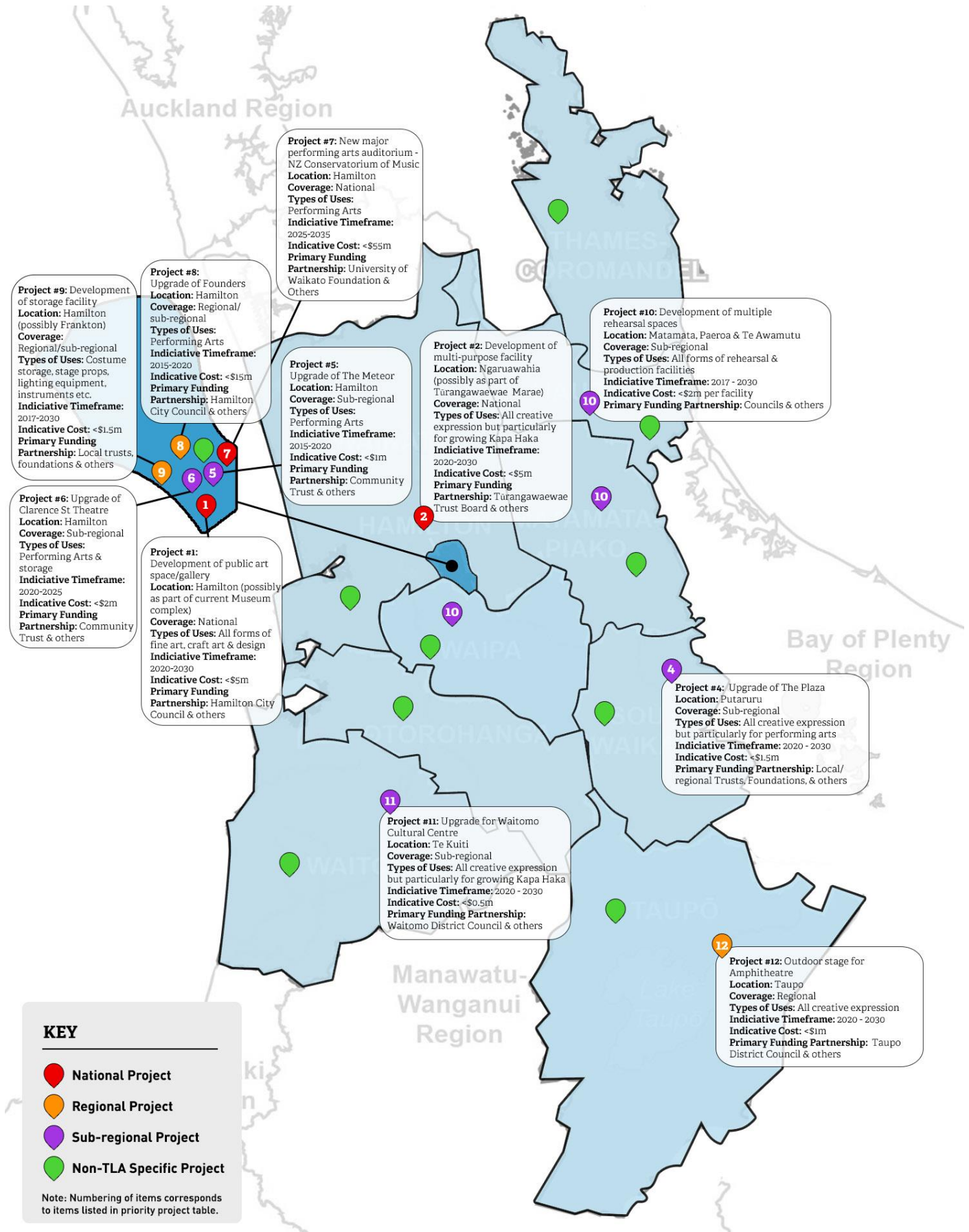
If it is possible to fund these projects (excluding project 7) on a per capita basis across the Waikato region over an estimated 20 year period, this would equate to just over \$2m per annum. Based on an estimated regional population of 418,500 (as at 2013) the cost of fully funding these projects on a shared per capita basis could equate to:

- \$106 per capita in total; or
- \$5.30 per capita per annum over a 20 year period.

Whilst the above example is for indicative purposes only it highlights that for the priority projects the quantum required is not significant if it is shared regionally.

The figure on the following page illustrates the location of the priority projects. Project numbers relate to the projects in the table above. Because project's 3 and 13 are across all the TLAs, they have been assigned a separate key (marked as green).

FIGURE 3: PRIORITY PROJECTS MAPPING





10. DELIVERING THE SECTOR'S NEEDS

The following tables list the Plan's recommendations for the Waikato for the next 30 years. These recommendations link to the delivery of the recommended suggested unified vision for the creative sector in the Waikato which is:

The Waikato Region will offer a network of quality rehearsal, storage and performance venues to support the growth and sustainability of the creative sector, providing for the changing nature of creative expression and the requirement to offer flexible supporting infrastructure over the next 30 year period.

The following recommendations⁴ support the delivery of this vision and deliver the needs of the sector.

TABLE 2: RECOMMENDATIONS – UPGRADE EXISTING FACILITIES

UPGRADE EXISTING FACILITIES			
#	Recommendation	Priority Project Link	Demographic Link
1	Update facilities to stimulate greater economic benefit	Priority Project 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13	Needed to support more local employment
2	Refresh/upgrade key performing facilities	Priority Project 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12	Encourage visitation to support local communities
3	Consolidation and rationalisation of rehearsal and performance spaces	Priority Project 10	Support greater community involvement
4	Flexible rehearsal spaces (as a priority)	Priority Project 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11	Encourage wider participation from broader demographic groups
5	Focus on smaller scale projects when a major primary funder is not the project driver	Priority Project 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	Facilities need to better match population trends
6	Flexibility to allow for new forms of creative expression	Priority Project 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Deliver usable performance spaces for the future

⁴ When reading this table it is important to note:

- Recommendations are not in priority order;
- Recommendations have been linked to gaps/issues which have been identified in the process of developing this Plan. Many of these gaps and issues have been highlighted in Section 5 of the Main Document of this Plan. Where appropriate, this Plan outlines which strategic gap/issue the recommendation aims to address; and
- Each recommendation is linked to its recommended priority projects.



UPGRADE EXISTING FACILITIES			
#	Recommendation	Priority Project Link	Demographic Link
7	Flexible use of facilities for late evening/early morning rehearsals and lower charging schemes for facilities	Priority Project 10	Improve utilisation of existing spaces to encourage more involvement
8	Multipurpose venue model	-	Encourage community interaction

TABLE 3: RECOMMENDATIONS – NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE			
#	Recommendation	Priority Project Link	Demographic Link
1	Profile significant Māori cultural activity in the Waikato	Priority Project 2	Encourage Māori youth involvement
2	Cultural and creative trails	Priority Project 3	Drive visitation to smaller council areas
3	Storage and administrative facilities	Priority Project 9	Support community involvement
4	Consider export potential of creative product	-	Help generate employment and encourage population growth

TABLE 4: RECOMMENDATIONS – NON-INFRASTRUCTURE

NON-INFRASTRUCTURE			
#	Recommendation	Priority Project Link	Demographic Link
1	Stronger collaboration	Priority Project 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	Encourage younger people to engage more
2	A unified vision for the creative sector	All Priority Projects	Link communities together to achieve critical mass
3	Introduce digital platform for the creative sector	All Priority Projects	Engage with more young people
4	Strategies to reduce venue insurance costs	Priority Project 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	Make it easier to achieve community involvement



NON-INFRASTRUCTURE			
#	Recommendation	Priority Project Link	Demographic Link
5	Development of a Creative Sector Transport Strategy	All Priority Projects	Make it easier to attend rehearsals and performances
6	Online “living database” of creative spaces	All Priority Projects	Encourage easier access for communities to find rehearsal spaces and performance-exhibition venues
7	Development of Creative River Strategy	Priority Project 3	Promote to communities to stimulate interest
8	Introduce mobile creative incubator	-	Improve access for communities to creative activity

TABLE 5: RECOMMENDATIONS – EVIDENCE BASED REQUIREMENTS

EVIDENCE BASED REQUIREMENTS			
#	Recommendation	Priority Project Link	Demographic Link
1	Quantifying the broader tourism and economic benefits the creative sector facilities generate	All Priority Projects	Provide the evidence base to encourage greater community interest
2	Robust statistical data collection process (audience data and facility use data)	All Priority Projects	Provide the data to promote back to communities and support future development
3	Creative infrastructure asset management review	All Priority Projects	Improve the information to support maintenance for community use of facilities

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