

What matters most?

Understanding Waikato District Council's 2025-2034 Long Term Plan

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What is a Long-Term Plan (LTP)?

A Long-Term Plan (LTP) is the Council's strategic planning document that sets out for the next decade:

- The vision and community outcomes for Waikato district
- Financial, growth and infrastructure strategies
- Key strategic priorities
- Projects
- Levels of service
- Work plans
- Key financial policies
- Budgets

The LTP outlines when and how the Council intends to invest in infrastructure, services and community projects to support growth and development.

This LTP covers a nine-year period between 2025 and 2034, as last year we took central government's one-off offer to produce an Enhanced Annual Plan in 2024.

Why is the LTP important?

The LTP impacts rates, services, and the future of the district. It ensures the Council has a clear direction for how it will maintain essential services and plan for future challenges.

When does consultation on the draft 2025-2034 begin?

Consultation opens on 11 April 2025 and closes on 11 May 2025.

When will the 2025-2034 LTP be adopted?

The 2025-2034 LTP will be adopted by 30 June 2025 and will come into effect on 1 July 2025.

What are some of the key issues in this draft LTP?

Major matters impacting the Waikato district include:

- Rooding
- Proposed changes for water services

We would also like to hear from our community on a range of other issues including:

- Waste services (rubbish and recycling)
- Community halls
- Fees and charges
- Development contributions

What are the major matters for the Council

1. Changes to roading

- Funding from NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) has been reduced, impacting new projects.
- NZTA will contribute around \$90.3 million through a subsidy for roading maintenance across the district in the first two years of this LTP.
- Uncertainty about the impacts of these changes on our budgets, means that outlining a viable funding plan for the next 10 years is not possible at this time.
- If we extend our roading maintenance programme, these will need to be funded solely through rates.
- In two years, we will submit another bid to NZTA to provide more funding, but in the meantime, we have had to carefully prioritise our work programme as rates affordability remains a major concern.
- NZTA are not funding capital project for the next 2 years as the focus is on roads of national significance.

2. Changes to Waters

- New Zealand faces growing challenges in waters, including infrastructure limitations, environmental obligations, climate change, and population growth.
- Government launched 'Local Water Done Well' in 2023. By September 2025, councils must submit detailed water service delivery plans.
- We need to make decisions about the future of water management in our district to comply with new legislative requirements, meet growth needs, and ensure resilience, efficiency, affordability and sustainability.
- The council is currently considering two options
 1. Form a new Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) with Hamilton City Council to manage water and wastewater services from 1 July 2026. This is our preferred option.
 2. Retain the status quo model using an external contractor to deliver our water services.
- The existing contract between our council and Watercare ends on 30 June 2028. If we retain the status quo model, Waikato District Council will need to contract an alternative waters service provider from 1 July 2028 to deliver water, wastewater and stormwater services.
- This is not Council's preferred option because it will not allow the same level of borrowing as a CCO model, it will be harder for us to meet the requirements of the new waters legislation and we consider the opportunities for efficiencies will be lower.

What are other matters Council is seeking feedback on?

- **Community Halls**

There are 34 Council-owned community halls across our district funded through a targeted rate paid by properties within the hall's catchment area.

- Many of these halls need ongoing repairs and maintenance, and as we plan for the future, we need to consider changes to the targeted rates paid to fund them.

- **Changes to waste management and recycling**

A review of rubbish and recycling services aims to ensure they are fair, cost-effective, and sustainable.

- This includes increases to tags and sticker prices, moving to rubbish bags for all areas of the district, providing an additional glass recycling crate for those that receive a kerbside collection, and a new recycling collection point in Te Aakau.

- **Growth**

The population is expected to grow by 36.7% to 126,454 by 2054.

- Urban areas will continue to grow, requiring new or upgraded infrastructure.
- \$167.5 million of capital projects are related to growth, with developers contributing through development contributions.
- Infrastructure assets will be impacted by growth, and our district may need additional services and new or updated infrastructure to manage increased demand. We will continue to work with local developers to make sure the right infrastructure is in place, projects proceed in a smooth and seamless way, including through the consenting process, and that developers contribute towards their share of the cost.

- **Changes in district plan provisions**

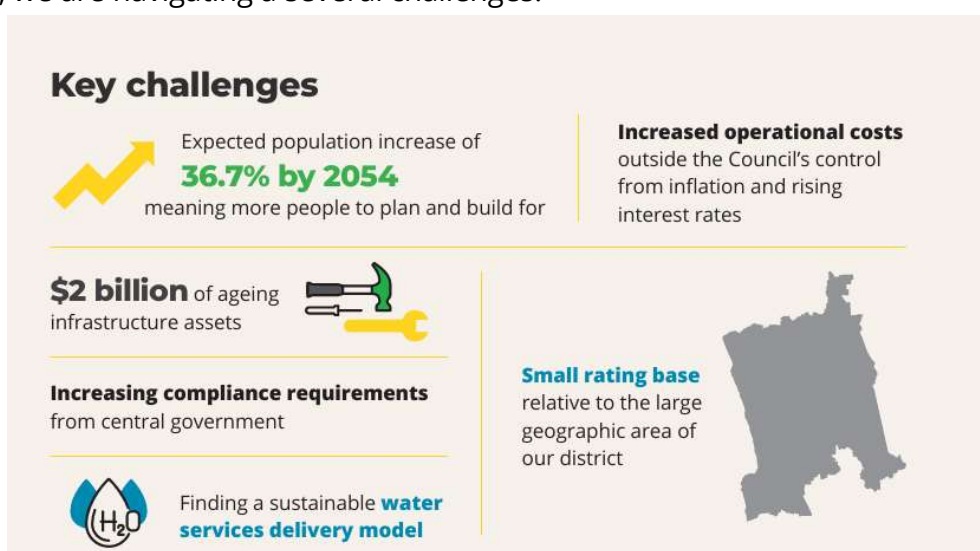
- Proposed changes in the draft Development Contributions Policy 2025 include:
 - Assessment for minor/additional dwellings. The draft policy allows for different levels of development contributions to be applied to minor dwellings based on size and number of bedrooms, as set out in the table below. Specific details are included in our consultation document.
 - Assessment for retirement villages. The policy now addresses how retirement villages are assessed for development contributions, considering the types of buildings and their impact on Council infrastructure.
 - Considerations for Maaori land. The draft policy includes considerations for Maaori land as required by the Te Ture Whenua Maaori Act 1993, in

accordance with the Local Government Act 2002. This aspect is not open for consultation.

- The updated proposed capital expenditure programme included in the 2025-2034 Long Term Plan affects development contribution charges. We'll review development contribution charges later, using updated growth forecasts and informed by government reform direction and Council's water services decisions. For now, the 2021 charges will continue with an inflation adjustment from 1 July 2025. For full details, visit waikatodistrict.govt.nz/say-it and access the supporting document.

Key challenges

In this LTP, we are navigating a several challenges.



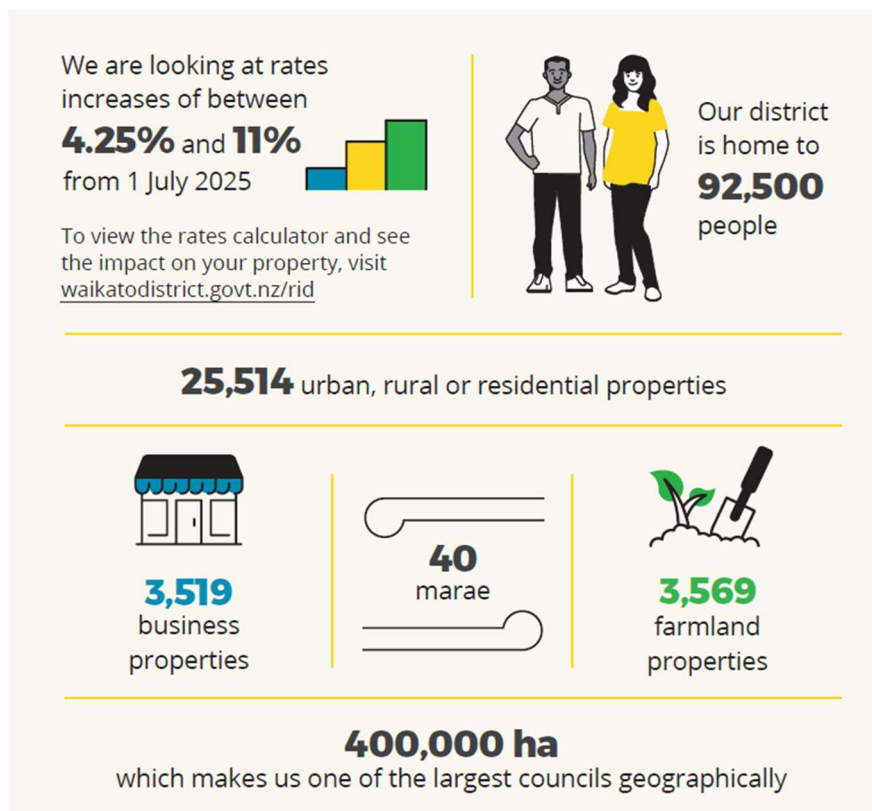
Increasing costs

- Inflation has had a major impact on the pricing of goods and services.
- For councils, the costs are magnified, because inflation impacts are much higher for many of the things we need to buy (such as building materials, roading, fuel, concrete and other materials) compared to many household things like bread, butter, vegetables and cleaning products. In other words, it's costing more to deliver the same services to you – our community.
- Even though developers pay a contribution to some of these costs (see Development Contributions section), the planning and investment required ahead of time to support community change and contribute to both new and older infrastructure is time-consuming, resource-hungry and costly.
- Growth also means there is increasing costs for our existing services, e.g. rubbish and recycling collection/disposal, water and wastewater treatment, consent processing, libraries, sports fields, and recreational facilities.

What are we doing to deal with our challenges?

- Listening to our communities and being as cost-conscious as we can be.
- Avoiding unnecessary and flashy projects.
- Council costs, many of which are outside of our control, have escalated by an average of 20 per cent since our previous LTP, with construction costs up 27 per cent. This has required careful planning and prioritisation for this draft 2025-2034 LTP and is reflected in the consultation document.
- Looking for efficiencies to reduce costs.
- Moving to an Enhanced Annual Plan last year instead of a Long-Term (10 year) Plan, allowed us some time to get much greater clarity about what we can and cannot afford over the next 9 years.
- Working with our neighbouring councils to address cross-boundary issues and collaborate where we can to share costs.
- Continuing to work with central government about local challenges and opportunities.
- Contributing to nation-wide conversations to ensure our District's voices are heard.

Interesting facts about the Waikato District

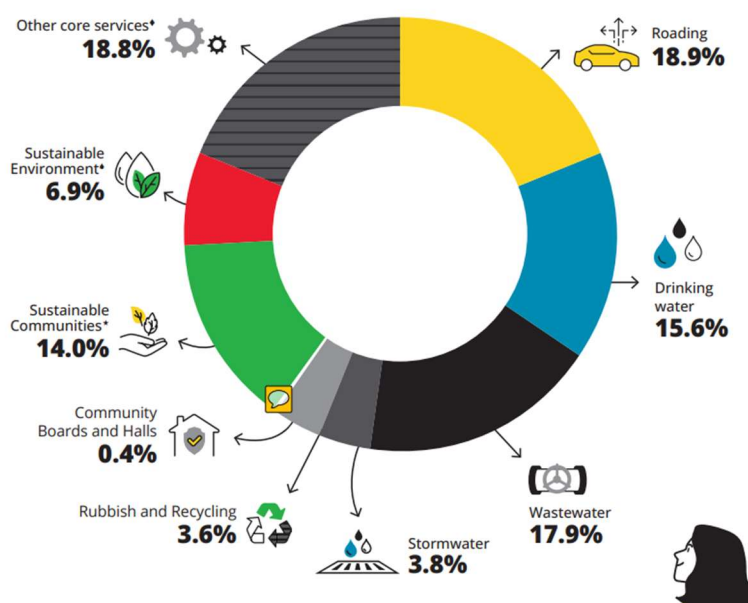


Dollars and cents

- The focus of this LTP is on the 'must haves' and effective delivery of what we said we were going to do.
- It is important to acknowledge that a lot of our infrastructure is ageing, and we have to put work into keeping it safe and up to date.
- About 67 per cent of our overall budget is funded by rates. A large portion comes from other sources like fees and charges (when someone pays for a Council service they use), government subsidies, development contributions and grants.
- Snapshot of where the money goes
 - 18.9% roading
 - 15.6% drinking water
 - 17.9% wastewater
 - 3.8% stormwater
 - 3.6% rubbish & recycling
 - 0.4% community boards and halls
 - 14.0% sustainable communities (e.g. community resilience, economic and community development, customer partnership, open spaces, such as parks and reserves, property, and community facilities, such as toilets and dog pounds)
 - 6.9% sustainable environment (e.g. consenting, regulatory services, and strategic and spatial planning)
 - 18.8% other core services (i.e. council operations – governance, leadership, buildings, vehicles and IT – focusing on making services more efficient and cost effective)

Where we spend our money

Here is an overview of how your money is spent.



Debt

- When we invest in building new things for our district like new roads, pipes or the land for a new sports park - these things are paid for by borrowing
- \$162.7 million of our capital projects are related to growth, which developers contribute to through development contributions.
- Debt is set to peak in 2025/26 at \$347 million (prior to the potential transfer of Waters to the CCO), and ranges from \$152 million in the year 2026/27 to \$283 million in year 2033/34.
- A portion of your rates are spent on paying back debt for assets we've already built that you get the benefit of e.g. bridges, treatment plants, wharves, libraries, playgrounds and event venues.

Rating impacts on different types of properties

- If you are a property owner, you'll pay rates each year.
- Rating impacts for individual properties can be found using the rates calculator on Waikato District Council's website at www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/rid
- A variety of examples of indicative property rates for 2025/26 for different properties throughout our district are in the Consultation Document.

Proposed spend over the next nine years

- \$2.9 billion (excluding Waters Yrs 2-9) will be invested in our district, including capital and operating costs.
 - Rates will fund \$1.3 billion
 - We are looking at a general rate increase of 4.25% for the 2025/26 year.
 - Including targeted rates, individual property rates are proposed to range between 4.25% and 11% in 2025/26
- The budget (Yrs 1-9) includes:
 - \$787.1 million for roads, with \$217 million spent on renewal and just over \$3.9 million for maintaining footpaths and cycleways.
 - \$79.4 million on wastewater treatment and disposal will be delivered by Council in Yr 1. For years 2 to 9, \$668.5 million is proposed to be delivered by the Joint CCO.
 - \$46.4 million will be spent to treat and supply water which will be delivered by Council in Yr 1. \$604.6 million for years 2 to 9 is proposed to be delivered by the Joint CCO, and another \$160 million for stormwater.
 - \$25.8 million will be spent on maintaining our buildings throughout the district.
 - \$125.8 million will be spent on our parks and reserves including \$20.5 million on new playgrounds
 - \$148 million on Rubbish & Recycling
 - \$20.6 million will be spent on upgrading our many community facilities and \$0.4 million spent on community halls

Feedback we'd like to hear from the community includes:

1. Roothing

In two years, we will be submitting a new three-year bid to NZTA to request funding. Until then, we would like to know if the community would be prepared to pay more in rates over the next two years to support additional maintenance.

- **Keep with the status quo? (*this is the preferred option*)**
- Increase the maintenance levels on our roading network for the next two years?

2. Waters

We are considering forming a joint water company with Hamilton City Council. This joint water and wastewater asset-owning CCO would provide stormwater services under contract to both Councils, and possibly to other Councils.

Should we:

- **Form a joint Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) with Hamilton City Council? (*this is the preferred option*)**
- Continue with an external contractor?

3. Community Halls

- Feedback on the targeted rate changes for some of Council-owned community halls across our district.
- Feedback on the extension of the Whatawhata Hall catchment area boundary.
- For Ruawaro Hall catchment area, we want to hear feedback on the proposed plans for the current site.

4. Waste

- Following feedback from the Te Aakau community, we are proposing to set up a monthly pop-up recycling service and want to know if the community supports this.
- Following feedback from the Island Block Road community, we are proposing to extend the weekly rubbish and recycling collection service to include Island Block Road.
- The wheelie bin service in Tuakau will be replaced with a bag service from 1 July 2027.
- Sticker and tag prices will be increasing from 1 July 2025 to help recover the cost of delivering this service.

How can people provide feedback?

Between 11 April to the 11 May 2025 people will get the opportunity to attend face-to-face meetings and submit formal feedback.

People can go online or to the libraries/service centres and make submissions.

Find all the important information and have your say at waikatodistrict.govt.nz/say-it

Below is a list of locations for the upcoming community sessions you can also view the schedule on our [website](#)

Date / Time	Location
Friday 11 April 5-7pm	Raglan Growers Market 1 Stewart St Raglan
Saturday 12 April 2-4pm	83 Maunsell Road Port Waikato
Monday 14 April 7-8pm	Virtual Q&A Session Online (Zoom)
Tuesday 15 April 6.30-7.30pm	Maramarua Hall 2258 State Highway 2 Maramarua
Wednesday 16 April 11am-1pm	Te Kauwhata Library 1 Main Road Te Kauwhata
Wednesday 16 April 3-5pm	Meremere Library 17 Heather Green Ave Meremere
Wednesday 16 April 4-6pm	Taupiri War Memorial Hall 12 Te Putu Street Taupiri
Sunday 20 April 10am-3pm	Ngaa Tai e Rua Marae Poukai
Tuesday 22 April 6-7pm	Pookeno Community Hall 19 Market St Pookeno
Wednesday 23 April 9.30-11.30am	Huntly Library 142 Main Street Huntly
Wednesday 23 April 11.30am-1.30pm	Ngaaruawaahia Library 4 Jesmond Street Ngaaruawaahia

Date / Time	Location
Friday 25 April 10am-3pm	Tainui aa Whiro Poukai Waingarua Marae
Monday 28 April 6.30-7.30pm	Otaua Hall 34 Maoro Road Otaua
Tuesday 29 April 7-8pm	Virtual Q&A Session Online (Zoom)
Wednesday 30 April 11.30am-1.30pm	Tuakau Library 72 George Street Tuakau
Wednesday 30 April 6-7pm	Naike Hall 3648 Highway 22 Naike
Thursday 1 May 11am-1pm	Raglan Library 7 Bow Street Raglan
Thursday 1 May 5.30-6.30pm	17 Heather Green Ave Meremere
Friday 2 May 12:30-1:30pm	Virtual Q&A Session Online (Zoom)
Saturday 3 May 8am-12pm	Ngaaruawaahia Community Market Jesmond Street, Ngaaruawaahia
Saturday 3 May 8.30am-12.30pm	Glen Murray recycling pop up Glen Murray Memorial Hall carpark Highway 22
Sunday 4 May 2:30 -3:30pm	Whatawhata Community Hall Rothwell Lane
Tuesday 6 May 4.30-5.30pm	Tuakau Memorial Hall 70 George Street Tuakau
Tuesday 6 May 6-7pm	Tamahere Community Centre 21 Devine Road Tamahere
Wednesday 7 May 5.30-6.30pm	Te Kauwhata St Johns 4 Baird Avenue Te Kauwhata
Thursday 8 May 6-7pm	Gordonton Hall 1024 State Highway 1B Gordonton
Saturday 10 May 9am-12pm	Te Aakau recycling pop up

Date / Time	Location
	Te Aakau Community Hall carpark 953 Te Aakau Rd

Formal timelines

- **Public feedback** - 11 April – 11 May 2025
- **Council listens** - 20 - 21 May 2025
- **Council makes decisions** - 27 – 28 May
- **Council confirms the 2025-2035 LTP** - 30 June 2025
- **LTP in place** - 1 July 2025