

April | Aaperira
Paenga Whaawhaa 2021

LINK TE HONONGA

WAIKATO DISTRICT NEWS
NGAA PAANUI O TE TAKIWAA O WAIKATO



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**Make sure you have your say on the future of the
Waikato district before 5pm, Friday 7 May 2021.**

Time is running out - have your say today!

Time is running out to have your say on our plan for the district for the next 10 years.

Feedback on our Long Term Plan consultation document opened on 7 April and this year we're asking three key questions: what general rate increase option do you prefer, should we sell our pensioner housing and should we continue our inorganic kerbside collection service.

Waikato district Mayor Allan Sanson says we need to balance what we can deliver with what is affordable in terms of rates and debt. "As a fast growth area council, this balancing act will prove to be a huge challenge for us all in the coming years. We need to keep up with this growth, while making sure our community is a desirable place to live, work and play.

"As we worked through preparing for the next 10 years, we knew we were looking down the barrel of rising costs in the three waters area. This is mostly driven by stricter controls for water quality and by the growth in our district.

"We need to balance the services we provide with what our community can afford. As elected members representing you,

we have had to make some tough decisions. We've had to weigh up what is best and right for the district, with what we feel is affordable. Trust me when I say there have been many sleepless nights mulling this dilemma over."

As we worked through preparing for the next 10 years, we knew we were looking down the barrel of rising costs in the three waters area. This is mostly driven by stricter controls for water quality and by the growth in our district.

Hear more from Mayor Allan on pages 2-3.

In the meantime, make sure you grab a copy of our Long Term Plan consultation document from any of our Council offices or libraries. Otherwise, phone us on **0800 492 452** or check out **www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/ltp** for more information and don't forget, have your say before 5pm Friday 7 My 2021.



Balancing what's right with what's affordable

A Long Term Plan (LTP) sets out our vision, direction, work plan and budgets for the next 10 years.

The journey so far

Our role as a council has evolved over time. While we used to focus mostly on delivering core services like water and roads, we have a responsibility to support our district's environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being after these four well-beings were re-introduced to the Local Government Act. With this in mind, we need to balance what we can deliver with what is affordable in terms of rates and debt.

As a fast growth area council, this balancing act will prove to be a huge challenge for us and our community in the coming years. We are faced with an uncertain economic outlook due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related alert-level changes.

In our consultation document we outline what we will likely be dealing with in the years to come from central government, in particular legislative reform in the three waters area (drinking water, wastewater and stormwater) and National Policy Statements that relate to urban development (the growth in and around towns) and freshwater management.

We are facing an enormous task. Our district is growing quickly and we need to keep up with this growth, while making sure our community is a desirable place to live, work and play.

We know we are looking down the barrel of rising costs in the three waters area. This is in part driven by stricter controls for water quality and also by the growth in our district. Our independent Waters Governance Board painted a picture to us as elected members of necessary but unaffordable yearly increases to our waters rates.

We need to balance the services we provide with what our community can afford. When we came to you as part of the last Long Term Plan 2018-28, we asked your thoughts on how we should manage our three waters for maximum benefit for the district. The outcome was a partnership with Watercare, overseen by an independent Waters Governance Board. This partnership was intended to offer reduced future cost increases and a reduction in risk because we could use Watercare's expertise and economies of scale. This is still our goal, and in fact, if we hadn't entered this partnership, we would be in a worse position going forward.

The reality is that the three waters financial challenge is going to have an impact on our ability to carry out the rest of our business activities. On this challenge, the Waters Governance Board is in contact with the Minister for Local Government, to make this case clear and seek additional central government funding support.



There are many reasons why we're proposing to increase rates, including our need to provide infrastructure to support growth and replacing and renewing assets earlier than planned due to increasing standards that we need to comply with.

While our response to COVID-19 has been strong as a country, and our district's consistent presence in the productive sector has placed us well to recover from any global recession, we also know that there are certain sectors and parts of our community that are struggling. We aim to respond to this by balancing the need for growth and investment with rates affordability.

Many in our communities will need our support if they are to recover from the current economic hardship and keep socially strong. Our vision of liveable, thriving and connected communities demands that we deliver this balance.

We are proposing a general rate increase of 9% for the first year plus a number of targeted rate increases on top of this. There are several reasons we are proposing to increase rates by this much, including our need to provide infrastructure to support growth and replacing and renewing assets earlier than planned due to increasing standards that we need to comply with.

My Councillors and I have made some tough decisions. We've had to weigh up what is best and right for the district, with what we feel is affordable. Trust me when I say there have been many sleepless nights mulling this dilemma over.

To balance this, we have been investigating options for further cost recovery where we can. This means we encourage you all to look at our User Fees and Charges document, as we are proposing charging different rates for some things to make sure these activities are more fully paid for by only those who use them.

We will respond to the needs of the district, balancing affordability with adding value and enhancing community wellbeing – so we can all work towards a better, and more resilient, future together.

Check out page 4 for more information about how you can get involved and have your say. Make sure you do this before 5pm Friday 7 May 2021.

Mayor Allan Sanson



Come and have a chat with us at one of our many drop-in sessions.

Have your say

We're currently consulting on our plan for the next 10 years. This plan sets out our work and services, budgets and rates for the next decade, but with a particular focus on the next three years. It sets out what we will spend and where we will spend it in an effort to make your community better. We update our Long Term Plan every three years to make sure it is still relevant, accurate and keeping us moving towards our goals and community outcomes.

For a copy of the consultation document and copies of the supporting material, visit waikatodistrict.govt.nz/ltip or phone us on **0800 492 452**. You can also find copies of the consultation document in all our offices and libraries.

In summary, we want your feedback on:

- **General rates increases**

Do we go hard and early with a general rate increase in year 1 of 9%, and then 3.5% in year 2 and 3.5% in year 3 or... do we take a more cautious approach and have a general rate increase of 7% in year 1, 6% in year 2 and 4% in year 3?

- **Inorganic kerbside rubbish collection service**

Do we continue to deliver a kerbside inorganic rubbish service with an increase of 3% (\$6.68) to the solid waste targeted rate to cover the true cost of the service or stop the service from year 1 of the 2021-31 Long Term Plan?

- **Pensioner housing**

Should we continue to provide pensioner housing or sell them to a social housing provider?

Tell us what you think!

Online – Go to www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/ltip

Post – Phone us on **0800 492 452** to request a submission form. We'll post one out to you.

Email – Send your feedback to consult@waidc.govt.nz

Submissions close at 5pm Friday 7 May, 2021.

Want to know more? Come and see us!

We need your help – delivering on bold plans needs to be a genuine collaboration between us as the council and you as the community, along with our partners and stakeholders. We need to make sure we get the best outcomes and strike the right balance. The decisions we have to make affects you, your whaanau, your neighbours, (even your dog!). To make sure everyone can get involved, we will be coming to a town near you soon.



**Check out
www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/ltip
to see when and where.**

Te Huia service launched, Raahui Pookeka Huntly train station officially opened

A new era in public transport for the Waikato was celebrated at a special launch event for the new Te Huia passenger rail service ahead of it starting on 6 April.

This launch was followed by an open day at each of the three train stations including Raahui Pookeka | Huntly. These events gave the community the opportunity to come and check out the train and learn about the new service.

Dignitaries at the special launch included Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Kiingi Tūheitia, Transport Minister Michael Wood, Local Government Minister Nanaia Mahuta, MPs and opposition party members, regional, city and district councillors, local mana whenua, KiwiRail leadership and other distinguished guests.

Waikato District Council's rail governance working group representative, Cr Eugene Patterson, said Te Huia will change the face of public transport in the region. "We are thrilled to see this service become a reality and look forward to seeing people using our station Raahui Pookeka, in Huntly."

Waikato District Council Mayor Allan Sanson added: "We have big plans for the future of the station, including an improvement to our park and ride facility and the relocation of the original railway station, which currently sits at Lake Puketirini, back to the new rail platform. Here it will get a new lease of life as an art museum that will proudly showcase our region's rich history through carvings by local iwi and art by local schools. Waikato District Council is proud to have worked on Te Huia and we hope that generations to come will enjoy the train service."



Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern with students from Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga, who were part of the special launch event for Te Huia.

About the service

From Monday to Friday, Te Huia departs Frankton at 5.46am and 6.28am, stopping at Rotokauri and Huntly. The return service departs from Papakura at 4.42pm and 6.25pm. Bee Card fares are \$12.20 from Hamilton and \$7.80 from Huntly. Cash fares are available.

For the first few months, Te Huia will operate on select Saturdays only, starting with 17 April due to limited availability of the rail track as a result of Auckland rail project and Metro maintenance work.

More information about the service is available at tehuia.train.co.nz.

About the project

The passenger rail service project is led by Waikato Regional Council, working with partners KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Hamilton City Council, Waikato District Council, Auckland Transport and the Ministry of Transport.

We are thrilled to see this service become a reality and look forward to seeing people using our station Raahui Pookeka, in Huntly.



Waikato district Mayor Allan Sanson cuts the red ribbon to officially open the Raahui Pookeka | Huntly Train Station.

Inorganic rubbish collection service starts

Our inorganic rubbish collection for the 2020/21 financial year will start in the second half of April.

The collection will begin in the central/southern area on a weekly basis, determined by the day you usually have your rubbish collected. The service will then move up to the northern part of the district, determined by the area you live in.

Central/southern areas collection dates

(put your rubbish out the day before your collection week starts)

- **Rubbish collected on Mondays**
(Whatawhata, Te Kowhai, Ruawaro, Rotongaro areas)
– 19 April to 23 April
- **Rubbish collected on Tuesdays**
(Huntly, Glen Massey, Pukemiro areas)
– 27 April to 7 May
- **Rubbish collected on Wednesdays**
(Ngaruawahia, Taupiri, Horotiu, Gordonton areas)
– 10 May to 21 May
- **Rubbish collected on Thursdays**
(Tauwhare, Tamahere areas) – 24 May to 28 May
- **Rubbish collected on Fridays**
(Te Kauwhata, Puketaha, Meremere areas)
– 31 May to 4 June.

Northern area collection dates

(put your rubbish out the day before your collection starts)

- **Aka Aka, Otaua, Puni, Pukekohe South areas**
– 8 June to 11 June
- **Pokeno, Mangatawhiri, Mangatangi, Mercer**
(east of the river) – 14 June to 18 June
- **Pukekawa, Onewhero, Mercer**
(west of the river), Port Waikato areas – 21 June to 25 June
- **Tuakau, Harrisville, Whangarata** – 28 June to 2 July.

Only properties that have rubbish and recycling picked up weekly are entitled to the kerbside inorganic rubbish collection. Residents also need to make sure that their pile of inorganic rubbish is a maximum of two metres long, no more than one metre wide and no higher than one metre. Anything over this amount will be left behind – it is then the resident's responsibility to remove the remainder in a responsible way. It is also important to remember that rubbish should not be put out on the kerb until the day before the week of inorganic collection.

More details are available on our website at www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/inorganic

INORGANIC RUBBISH

Your pile of inorganic rubbish must be no more than 2m long, 1m wide and 1m high (a guideline is shown in the photo below).

Only two people are available to pick things up. Anything over this amount will be left behind.



YES we can collect

- ✓ Furniture, eg chairs, tables, cabinets
- ✓ Lawnmowers and bikes
- ✓ Metal items from renovations, eg pipes up to 2m long
- ✓ Appliances, eg washing machines, stoves (excluding fridges and freezers)
- ✓ Carpets

SORRY we can't take

- ✗ Any standard bagged rubbish
- ✗ Glass windows and windscreens
- ✗ Garden waste, tree trimmings and soil
- ✗ Commercial or farm waste/hazardous waste
- ✗ Bricks and broken concrete
- ✗ Oil, paint and chemicals
- ✗ Fibrolite or asbestos
- ✗ e-waste (electronic goods, computers, TVs)
- ✗ Batteries and gas cylinders/gas bottles
- ✗ Wire or corrugated iron
- ✗ Tyres
- ✗ Fridges and freezers
- ✗ Car bodies or car engines
- ✗ Builder's waste and renovation materials

DON'T BE A TOSSER



Have you seen our new signs? Similar signs have been used around New Zealand and the UK to raise awareness of illegal dumping, and we had requests for them on our Facebook group, Let's stop the Dodgy Dumpers.

Dumped rubbish is a huge problem in our communities. It costs ratepayers a lot of money and is ruining our environment. In the past six months we've responded to more than 400 requests to pick up illegal dumping – that's more than 2 a day! But we can't clean it up unless we know about it.

We make every effort to identify people that dump their rubbish and we've issued about 50 infringements over the past six months. We have a camera that moves around the Waikato district in an attempt to identify people that are illegally dumping rubbish but we also need the community's help to identify those responsible.

We urge people to report any dumping they see, and to record any details of the vehicle involved (including the registration plate, colour, make and model of the vehicle and the time of day) so the appropriate legal action can be taken. By working together we can keep our district litter free.

You can report illegal dumping by phoning **0800 492 452** via our website **www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/dumpers** or directly to the Let's stop the Dodgy Dumpers Facebook group. All information is received in strict confidence.

There's a \$400 fine given to anyone caught dumping rubbish.



JUST BRIEFLY *He Paanui Whakapoto*

We also want your feedback on these items

At the same time as our Long Term Plan consultation, we're also asking for feedback on our user fees and charges, Development Contributions Policy, community hall catchments for Karioitahi Hall, Aka Aka Hall, Otatau Hall, Naikē Hall and the Te Akau Community Complex, and our proposed approach to Blueprints and funding.

For more information see www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/sayit. Have your say by 5pm Friday 7 May, 2021.



Save the date - Our popular Dirty Dog Challenge is back!



Waikato District Council and Hamilton City Council is pleased to announce that the 2021 Dirty Dog Challenge will be held on Saturday 26 June at the Ngaruawahia Christian Youth Camp.

This is a unique event where dogs and their owners make their way through a mud-filled obstacle course on the beautiful Waikato hillside. It's a fun, social event that you can do at your own pace. It's also an opportunity to raise awareness about the work our Animal Control teams do, including education in schools and the adoption programmes we run through Waikato Pound Pups and Hamilton Adopt a Dog.

This will be the third time the event has been held. Unfortunately the event in 2020 had to be cancelled due to Covid, so we're really excited to be holding the event again this year. If your dog loves running, climbing, water or mud, and you don't mind getting a bit grubby, then this is the event for you! For more information, check out www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/dirtydog. Keep an eye out for updates and exciting announcements on our Facebook pages [@waikatopoundpups](https://www.facebook.com/waikatopoundpups) or [@hamiltonadoptadog](https://www.facebook.com/hamiltonadoptadog).

Get your rates invoice online

Say goodbye to snail mail and get your rates delivered straight to your inbox. Sign up at www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz



Rates rebate available

Do you qualify for the rates rebate scheme? The scheme came into effect in 1973 and benefits home owners who have low incomes.

- The maximum rebate for the 2020/21 rating year is \$655.00
- The gross income threshold starts at \$26,150.00 (if you earn more than \$26,150.00 a year you could still be eligible)
- The additional income allowance for dependents is \$500 per dependent.

Find out if you're eligible for a rates rebate by visiting our website or contacting our rates team on **0800 492 452**. Applications for this year close on 30 June 2021 and cannot be accepted after this date.

GOT A QUESTION ABOUT COUNCIL BUSINESS?

 /WaikatoDistrictCouncil

 twitter.com/WaikatoDistrict

 [waikatodistrict.govt.nz](http://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz)

Postal Address

Poutaapeta Mahi
Waikato District Council
Private Bag 544
Ngaaruawaahia

Huntly Office

Te Tari O Raahui Pookeka
142 Main Street
Huntly

Ngaaruawaahia Office

Te Tari O Ngaaruawaahia
15 Galileo Street
Ngaaruawaahia

Raglan Office

Te Tari O Whaingaroa
7 Bow Street
Raglan

Te Kauwhata Office

Te Tari O Te Kauwhata
1 Main Road
Te Kauwhata

Tuakau Office

Te Tari O Tuakau
2 Dominion Road
Tuakau

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