



# Mahere Whānui 2024-2034 Long Term Plan

**F<sup>10</sup> FORWARD**  
YEARS **What matters most**

**Waikato**  
  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
*Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato*

# Takatū Waikato

## Making a stand for the Waikato

### Matawhānui ▲ **Our vision**

Waikato mārohirohi: Manaaki whenua, whakamana tangata.

The mighty Waikato: Caring for our place, empowering our people.

### Aronga ▲ **Our purpose**

Working together for a Waikato region that has a **healthy environment, vibrant communities** and **strong economy**.

### Ngā aronga nui ▲ **Our strategic priorities**



Wai  
**Water**



Takutai moana  
**Coastal and marine**



Hononga hapori  
**Community connections**



Rerenga rauropi, tiakitanga taiao  
**Biodiversity and biosecurity**



Hanganga tauwhiro  
**Sustainable development  
and infrastructure**



Whakaheke tukunga  
**Transition to a low  
emissions economy**

# Resilience and efficiency matter

- In recent times we have faced some big challenges, including COVID-19, extreme weather events and a cost-of-living crisis.
- So this long term plan focuses on what matters most – the resilience of our rohe (region).
- Resilience includes social and economic wellbeing, as well as infrastructure that can withstand climate change.
- A spatial plan will be developed to ensure good decisions are made for the entire region.



**2 April  
-2 May**

## Consultation

Consultation is open for you to tell us what you think about our proposals.

**14-17  
May**

## Hearings

You can present your feedback to councillors in person (if you wish). Details will be available online at [waikatoregion.govt.nz/council-meetings/council](https://waikatoregion.govt.nz/council-meetings/council). All meetings are open to the public.

**24-29  
May**

## Decision making

Councillors make decisions on the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan. Your feedback will be taken into account along with other submissions from across the region.

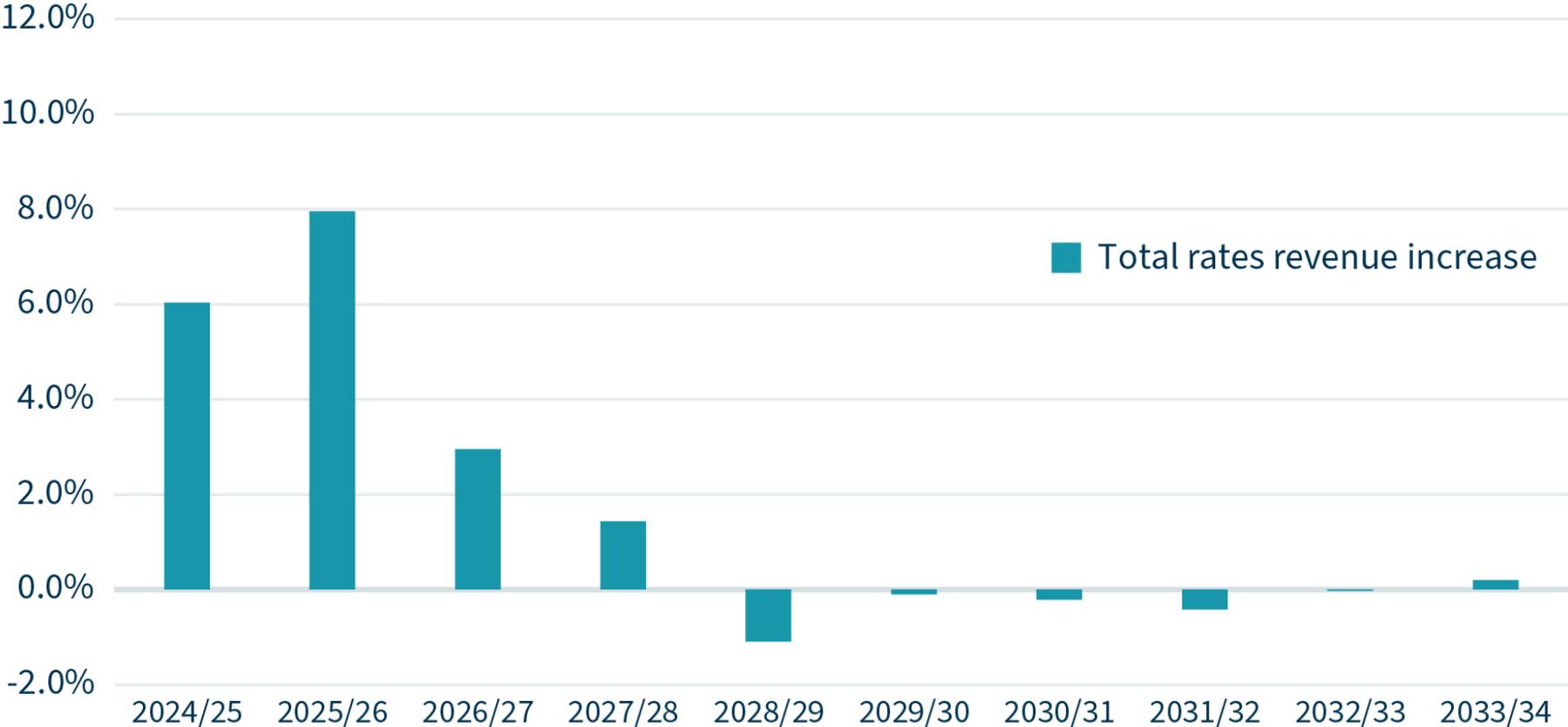
**25  
June**

## Final decision

The 2024-2034 Long Term Plan is adopted  
A copy will then be made available online at [waikatoregion.govt.nz/ltp](https://waikatoregion.govt.nz/ltp).

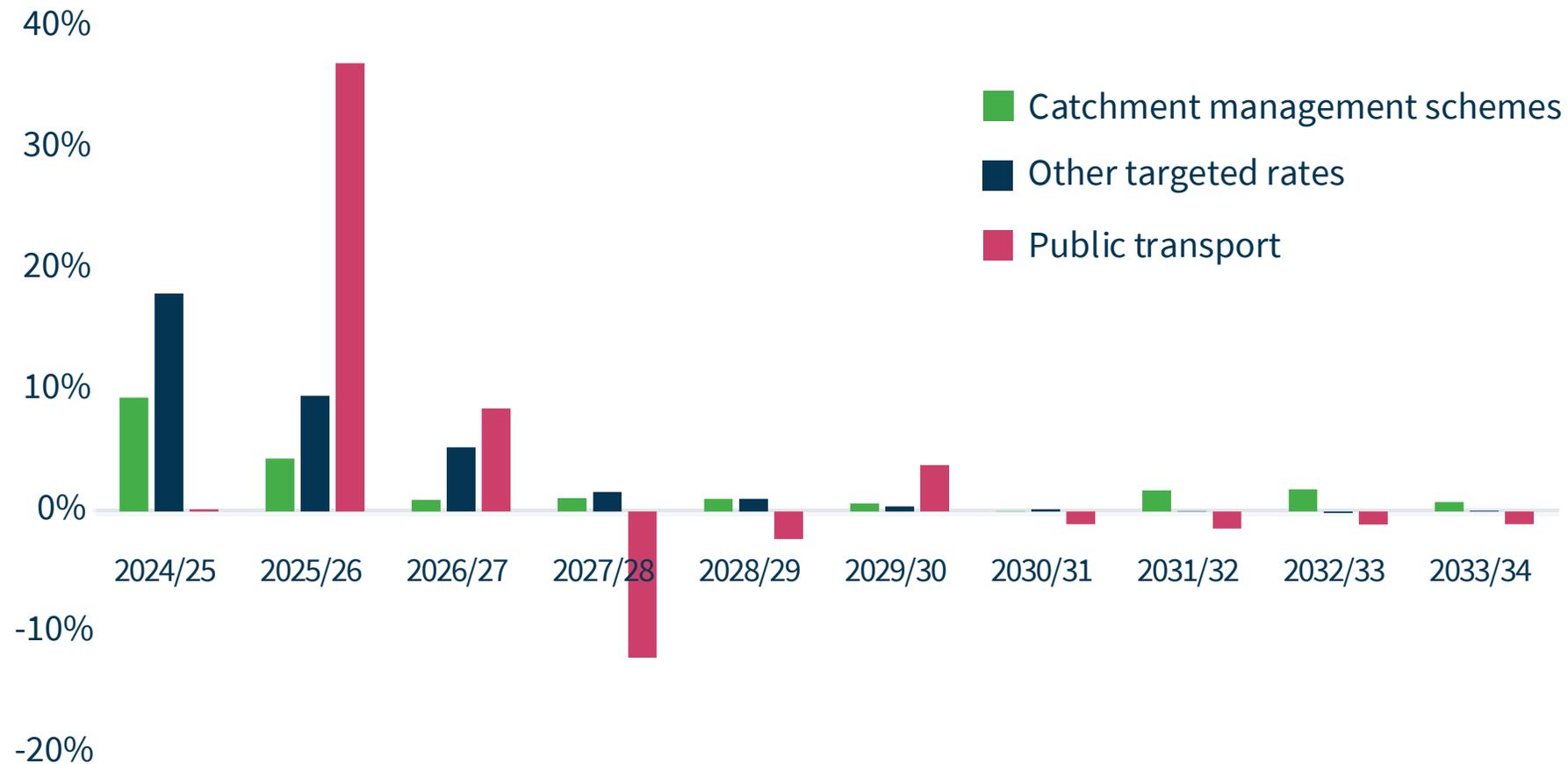
# A snapshot of the impact on rates

## Increase in total rates revenue from current ratepayers



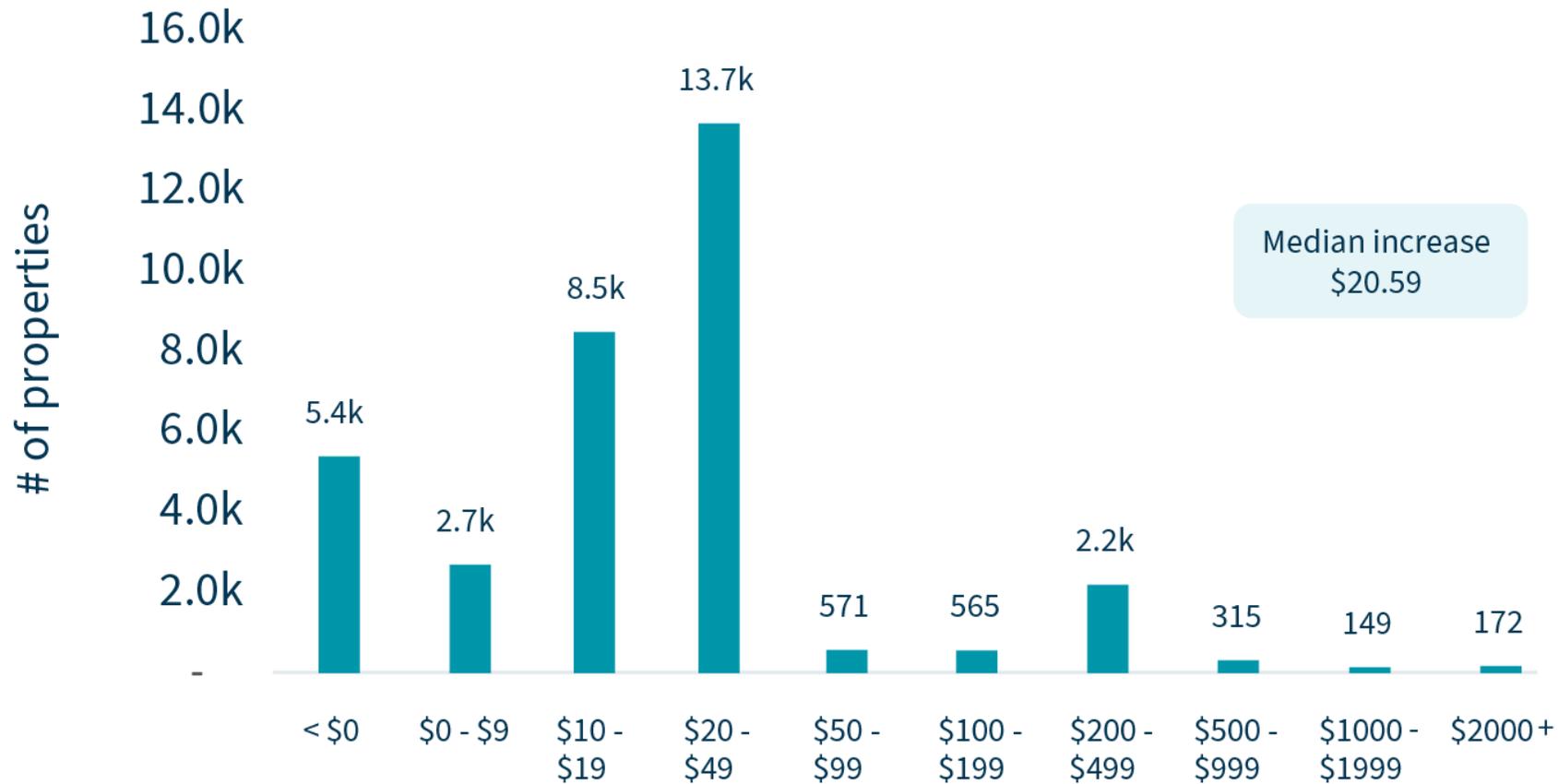
# A snapshot of the impact on rates

## Year on year % increase in targeted rates revenue from current ratepayers



# Proposed rates impacts: Waikato

## Waikato District



# Our proposals



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## Investing more in our region's biodiversity

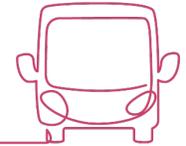
- Increasing our natural heritage rate



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## Regional economic development funding

- Discontinuing the Regional Development Fund
- Funding for Te Waka



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## Simplifying public transport investment

- Collecting a region-wide public transport rate



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## Investment and affordability

- Changes to the funding of primary industry compliance

# Investing more in our region's biodiversity

## Increasing our natural heritage rate

- Funding for conservation projects hasn't kept pace with demand or inflation.
- At the same time, more people are involved in conservation efforts, requiring more support.
- Existing funds have successfully enabled valuable projects like planting, predator control & ecological restoration.
- Increased project complexity and multi-year needs have outpaced current resources.

### Proposal

- Preferred option is to catch up with inflation (\$8.68 per property).

### Benefits

- Fund more community conservation projects.
- Protect and restore our region's unique biodiversity.
- Achieve biodiversity goals faster.



# Investing more in our region's biodiversity

Preferred option

## OPTION 1

Council increases the Natural Heritage rate to \$8.68 per property per annum, with further increases for the proposed work programme after this.

## OPTION 2

Council increases the Natural Heritage rate to \$15 per property per annum (to enable more work to be done sooner to improve biodiversity).

## OPTION 3

Council keeps the Natural Heritage rate at \$5.80 per property per annum.

# Simplifying public transport investment

## Collecting a region-wide public transport rate

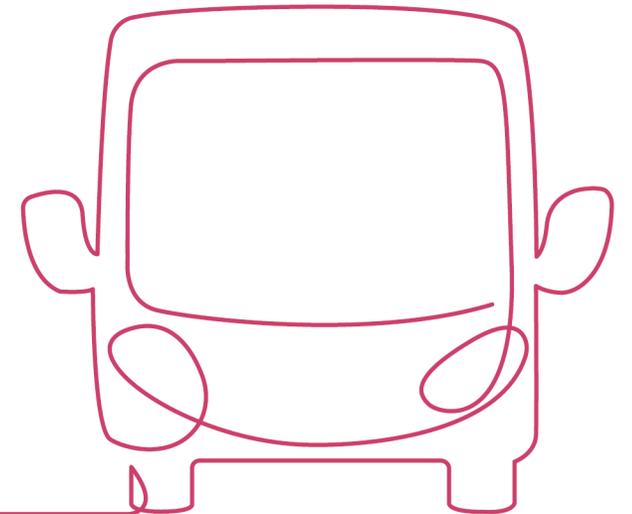
- Complex funding creates delays and hinders strategic planning for a connected region-wide network.
- The current system is fragmented – Waikato Regional Council rates some areas, others use general rates.
- This creates challenges such as:
  - lengthy planning and approval processes
  - unclear cost contributions for cross-jurisdictional services
  - inequitable funding across districts.

### Proposal

- Region-wide public transport rate – with further opportunity for more detailed engagement on options through the next annual plan.

### Benefits

- Streamlined planning and administration.
- Fairer cost sharing based on proximity to services.
- More efficient response to changing community needs.
- No impact to levels of service or council borrowing.



# Simplifying public transport investment

Preferred option

## OPTION 1

- > 80 per cent of the funding required from rates comes from properties within 5km of a bus route.
- > 20 per cent of the funding required from rates is paid by all other properties in the area.

## OPTION 2

- > 80 per cent of the funding required from rates comes from properties within 800m of a bus stop.
- > 20 per cent of the funding required from rates comes from properties between 800m and 5km of a bus stop.

# Regional economic development funding

## Discontinuing the Regional Development Fund

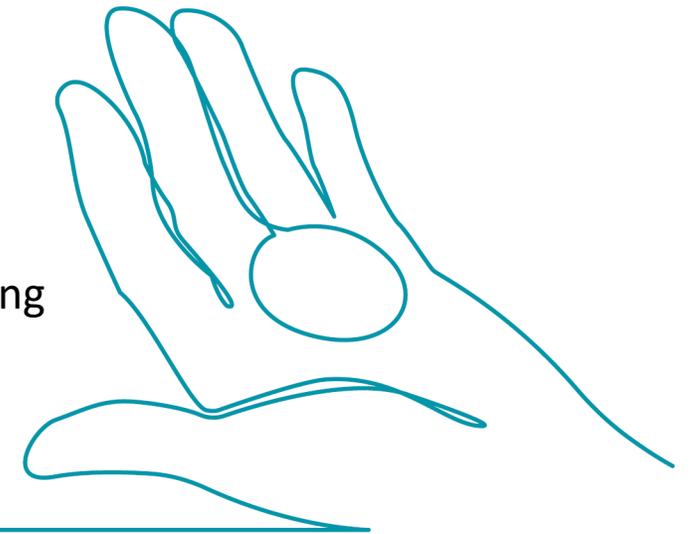
- Regional Development Fund (RDF) created in 2015 for environment-friendly economic projects.
- Low uptake – only 3 grants approved in 8 years.
- High staff time for administration.
- Limited impact compared to potential uses.

### Proposal

- Disestablish the RDF.

### Benefits

- Redirect unallocated funds (\$3.979 million) to higher-impact priorities.
- Free up staff time for strategic economic development initiatives.
- Repurpose RDF investment returns for better use – with an overall aim of finding more effective ways to promote a strong regional economy.



# Regional economic development funding

Preferred option

## OPTION 1

Council discontinues the Regional Development Fund.

## OPTION 2

Council continues to operate the Regional Development Fund.

# Regional economic development funding

## Funding for Te Waka

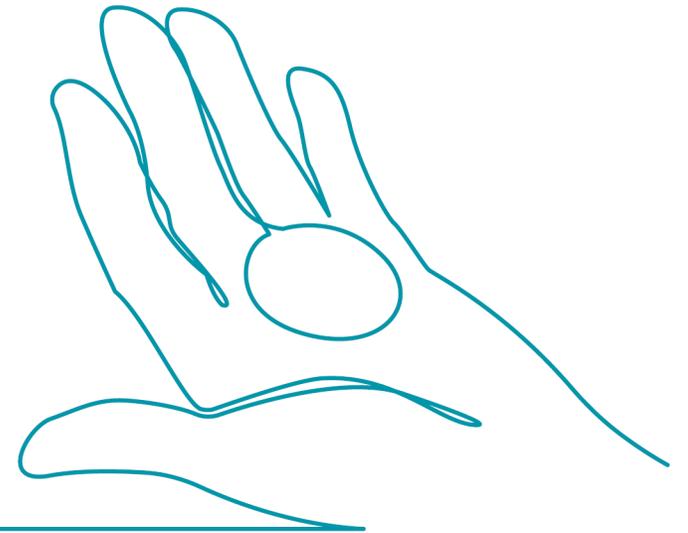
- Te Waka was established in 2018 by the Waikato Mayoral Forum.
- Its purpose is to champion regional economic growth through partnerships.
- Current WRC funding: \$750,000 annually from investment returns (past 3 years).

### Proposal

- Continue funding of \$750,000 per annum for 3 years using unallocated RDF funds.

### Benefits

- Continue to have an agency that can champion regional economic growth through partnerships.
- Continued funding would depend on new accountability measures to help ensure outcomes.



# Regional economic development funding

Preferred option

## OPTION 1

Council provides \$750,000 per annum over three years to Te Waka using unallocated money from the Regional Development Fund.

## OPTION 2

Council does not continue to fund Te Waka.

# Investment and affordability

## Changes to the funding of primary industry compliance

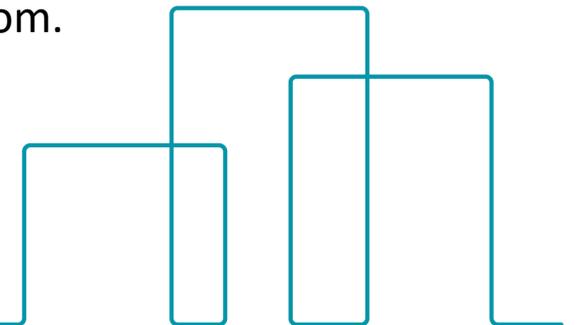
- Permitted activity monitoring is funded by all properties 2+ hectares.
- Farm plan implementation is funded by general rates.
- Challenges with the current model include:
  - Monitoring focuses on larger rural properties, 20+ hectares
  - Farm plan regulations impact properties 20+ hectares.

### Proposal

- New targeted 'Primary Industry Compliance Rate' for larger properties.

### Benefits

- Increased fairness – larger properties pay more for services they primarily benefit from.
- Modest general rate increase (0.3%).





# Other work we're prioritising

- Improving Whangamarino Wetland and Lake Waikare
- A strategy for water security
- Understanding our coastal marine areas
- Stepping up pest management
- For peat's sake
- Wharekawa Coast 2120
- Regional spatial planning
- Te Huia: passenger rail service
  - Future service improvements
  - Renewal of rolling stock

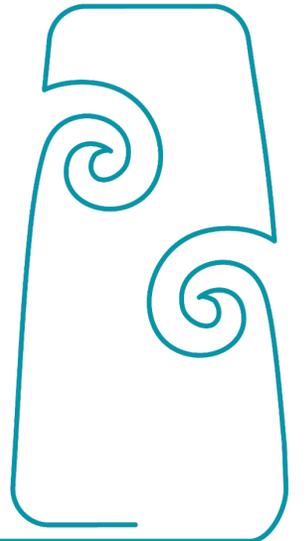


# Work we're not doing

- Eco Retrofit withdrawn
- On the house

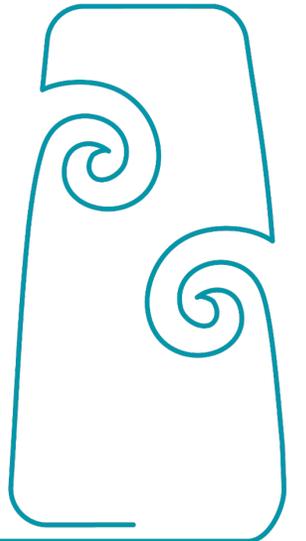
# Infrastructure strategy

- Over the next 50 years, it is expected we would need to invest over \$1 billion in the replacement of some of our assets, and a further \$1.87 billion on non-capital related costs like ongoing operating and maintenance, and depreciation.
- These cost estimates do not include consideration of the increasing challenges we are facing, such as climate change, new government legislation, affordability, morphology and business capability.
- Simply replacing or repairing assets, as we have done in the past, may no longer be economically or environmentally sustainable, affordable, or workable.
- Therefore, to account for these challenges, significant changes have been made to the Infrastructure Strategy 2024-2074.



# Infrastructure strategy

- Better alignment to our focus on wellbeing and climate change.
- Transition to more sustainable and holistic flood risk management by:
  - focusing on maintenance improvement for the next decade
  - applying strategic direction priorities and goals through a transparent decision making framework
  - prioritising nature-based solutions and water quality improvements
  - collaboration with others to address climate risks and secure funding.
- Key objectives in future investment decisions:
  - Cost effectiveness and alternatives
  - New or remedial capital works consider ecosystem services and long term risk reduction.
- Will include non-structural assets like monitoring and public transport infrastructure, etc.



# Share your views

➤ **Online:** [waikatoregion.govt.nz/ltp](https://waikatoregion.govt.nz/ltp)

➤ **Posted to:**

Corporate Planning  
Waikato Regional Council  
Private Bag 3038  
Waikato Mail Centre  
Hamilton 3204

➤ **Email:** [haveyoursay@waikatoregion.govt.nz](mailto:haveyoursay@waikatoregion.govt.nz)

➤➤ **Consultation closes at 4pm  
on Thursday, 2 May 2024.**



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