
Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee

Te Komiti Rautaki Tipu me te Maahere Rautaki aa Rohe

OPEN MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee held in Council Chamber, Municipal Building, Garden Place, Hamilton on Tuesday 12 August 2025 at 9:31am.

PRESENT

Chairperson Cr Sarah Thomson
Heamana

Deputy Chairperson Cr Geoff Taylor
Heamana Tuarua

Members Mayor Paula Southgate
Deputy Mayor Angela O’Leary (Via Audio-Visual)
Cr Kesh Naidoo-Rauf (Via Audio-Visual)
Cr Anna Casey-Cox
Cr Maxine van Oosten
Cr Louise Hutt
Cr Andrew Bydder
Cr Ewan Wilson
Cr Emma Pike (Via Audio-Visual)
Cr Tim Macindoe
Cr Maria Huata
Maangai Jaydene Kana

The meeting was opened with a karakia.

1. Apologies – *Tono aroha*

Resolved: (Cr Thomson/Cr Taylor)

That the apologies for partial attendance from Mayor Southgate, and for absence from Cr Tauariki are accepted.

2. Confirmation of Agenda – *Whakatau raarangi take*

Resolved: (Cr Thomson/Cr Taylor)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee confirms the agenda noting that:

- a) Item 12 (Wastewater Update) be accepted as a late item. This report was circulated late to enable to most up to date information was available and was unable to be deferred to a later meeting due to this being the last one for the 2022-25 triennium. It was circulated to Members on 7 August under separate cover;
- b) **Attachment 1** to Item 11 (General Updates) has been updated to include historic data and was circulated to Members and will be added as **Appendix 1** to the minutes; and
- c) the order of the agenda will be flexible to accommodate availability.

3. Declarations of Interest – *Tauaakii whaipaaanga*

No members of the Committee declared a Conflict of Interest.

4. Public Forum – *Aatea koorero*

Grayson Bell spoke to Item 6 (Chair's Report) in support of the fast-track building consent process noting that the central government has established some mandatory deadlines and processes needing to be improved.

Mayor Southgate joined the meeting (9.41am) during the discussion of the above item.

5. Confirmation of the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee Open Minutes 10 June 2025

Resolved: (Cr Thomson/Cr Wilson)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee confirms the open minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2025 as a true and correct record.

7. General Manager's Report

The General Manager Strategy, Growth and Planning spoke to the report highlighting the challenging rate of legislative reform and economic challenges affecting the work programme. Staff responded to questions from Members concerning sites of significance for Maaori and the Urban Design Panel.

Resolved: (Maangai Kana/Cr Hutt)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee receives the report.

8. Council Submission – Package 4 of the Resource Management Act National Direction – Going for Housing Growth

The Unit Director Urban and Spatial Planning and Urban and Spatial Planning Team Lead spoke to the report noting that the submission is to a central government discussion document. Staff responded to questions from Members concerning cost of growth, affordable housing, impact on Maaori, intensification, development feasibility study, shared infrastructure investment and standardised zoning.

Resolved: (Cr Taylor/Cr Macindoe)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee:

- a) receives the report;
- b) approves the **Draft 1** Council submission (**Attachment 1**) to Package 4 of the Resource Management Act National Direction – Going for Housing Growth including any feedback provided at this meeting; and
- c) delegates staff to work the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee to agree changes and finalise the submission, should substantive changes be required before lodging it with Parliament's Environment Committee by the 17 August 2025 closing date.

9. Strategic Issues

Staff spoke to the report regarding the central city transformation plan and the communications plan, the greenfield growth benefits annual report, requirements of industrial land supply and the Metro Spatial Plan transport programme. Staff responded to questions from Members concerning the central city response plan, enabling more industrial land and rules of industrial zones.

Resolved: (Cr Thomson/Cr Taylor)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee:

- a) receives the report;

- b) recommends to the incoming Council the establishment of a central city transformation reference group which includes central city representatives and an elected member representative, with the purpose of providing advice and support regarding communication and minimisation of disruption for central city businesses and organisations relating to Council approved and funded projects.

6. Chair's Report

The Chair took the report as read. She responded to questions from Members concerning the Ministry of Education engagement. Staff responded to questions from Members concerning timing for building consents, capacity to handle a fast-track process, education of the process, number of consents, possibility of notice of intent for fast-track and efficiencies.

Resolved: (Cr Thomson/Cr Macindoe)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee:

- a) receives the report;
- b) requests staff investigate options for Hamilton City Council to deliver quicker, more efficient consenting pathways for residential building projects—while still meeting all regulatory requirements—including a fast-track option and improvements to the standard processing times;
- c) notes the scope of investigation includes:
 - i. exploring a user-pays model to ensure the service is financially sustainable and fair;
 - ii. identifying dependencies across other Hamilton City Council departments—including any processes, policies, or resources that would need to align with or support the fast-track framework;
 - iii. exploring technology solutions, including AI and automation tools, to enhance the customer experience and support a fast-track service;
 - iv. considering how this service could help Hamilton City Council stay competitive, especially with the recent introduction of a private Building Consent Authority in New Zealand; and
- d) requests staff investigate options to support Community Housing Providers and charitable trusts focussed on affordable housing.

The meeting was adjourned from 11.31am to 11.59am during the discussion of the above item.

Deputy Mayor O'Leary left the meeting during the above adjournment and was not present when the matter was voted on.

6. District Plan Update - August 2025 (Recommendation to the Council)

The Unit Director Urban and Spatial Planning spoke to the report noting the Plan Change 19 decision was made by the Commissioner.

Resolved: (Cr Bydder/Cr Huata)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee:

- a) receives the report;
- b) recommends that the Council approves Private Plan Change 19 – Ruakura Electricity National Grid Corridor be made operative on 11 September 2025, in accordance with Clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (Option 2 of the staff report); and
- c) notes that staff have responded to a request on behalf of four submitters to pause Plan Change 14 – Flooding that their request has not been accepted for the reasons outlined in the staff report.

7. General Updates - Information Only

The General Manager Strategy, Growth and Planning spoke to the report noting the addition of commuting data to **Attachment 1** of the report. Staff responded to questions from Members concerning governance in the waters space.

Resolved: (Mayor Southgate/Maangai Kana)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee receives the report including the updated **Attachment 1** attached to these minutes as **Appendix 1**.

The meeting was adjourned from (12.34pm) to (1.23pm).

8. Wastewater Update

The General Manager Infrastructure and Assets and Technical Director Strategic Waters spoke to the report in particular the results of the 6 August briefing highlighting a pause to the connections policy until after local elections, a recommendation to allow onsite storage and off-peak pumping systems and a meeting with Waikato Regional Council. Staff responded to questions from Members concerning onsite wastewater solutions, compliance, risk mitigation for residential development, consultation with iwi, locations of upgrades, limitations of Infrastructure Acceleration Fund Reactive Fund, capacity for unconstrained parts of Hamilton, unlocking constrained developments and completion of the programme.

Resolved: (Cr Thomson/Cr Taylor)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee:

a) receives the report;

b) notes that:

- i. Te Ture Whaimana will continue to be considered at the forefront of any further work relating to wastewater network management, including the work requested in the following resolutions;
- ii. the criteria and approach outlined in the paper, subject to feedback at the 6 August 2025 Information Session (including a higher weighting for an area being commercially feasible to develop and consideration given to general affordability of housing prices within an area), will guide prioritisation of the reactive wastewater upgrade fund for identified projects
- iii. the first priority area for further investigation of the reactive wastewater upgrade fund will be Frankton;
- iv. any reactive wastewater upgrade works procured this 2025/26 financial year that exceeds the available budget will require a future decision by the Council, and staff will report back in these cases if additional funding is required to ensure an adequate reactive fund is still available for upsizing where required;
- v. staff will investigate more enabling resource consent options where there are planned and funded infrastructure projects, given the new context of the waters Council Controlled Organisation;
- vi. staff will continue to engage with Iwi in the development of policy and proposals regarding water and wastewater network management including the matters outlined in ii. – vi. above; and
- vii. staff will engage with IAWAI – Flowing Waters early in the development of policy regarding water and wastewater network connections and ensure that the policy options sought in v. and vi. above are an agenda item to be discussed in the IAWAI – Flowing Waters forum.

Those for the Motion:

Cr Thomson, Councillors Casey-Cox,
Bydder, Pike, Taylor, Naidoo-Rauf, van
Oosten, Wilson and Macindoe

Those against the Motion:

Mayor Southgate, Deputy Mayor O'Leary,
Councillors, Hutt, Huata and Maangai
Kana.

The Motion was declared carried.

Resolved: (Cr Thomson/Cr Taylor)

That the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee notes that staff will undertake further work to develop a proposal for Members to consider that would enable the use of on-site interim solutions for at scale residential developments with appropriate organisational capability and resources to manage the interim onsite solution, only where strategic solutions are planned while minimising risk, and will work with planning to identify strategic locations to prioritise the use of onsite-solutions.

Those for the Motion:

Councillors Casey-Cox, Bydder, Pike,
Taylor, Naidoo-Rauf, Thomson, van
Oosten, Wilson and Macindoe

Those against the Motion:

Mayor Southgate, Deputy Mayor O'Leary,
Councillors Hutt, Huata and Maangai
Kana.

The Motion was declared carried.

Deputy Mayor O'Leary rejoined the meeting (2.06pm) during the discussion of the above item. She was present when the matter was voted on.

The meeting was adjourned from 2.13pm to 2.30pm during the discussion of the above item.

9. Resolution to Exclude the Public**Section 48, Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987****Resolved:** (Cr Thomson/Cr Wilson)

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely consideration of the public excluded agenda.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution follows.

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reasons for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
C1. Confirmation of the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee Public Excluded Minutes 10 June 2025) Good reason to withhold) information exists under) Section 7 Local Government) Official Information and) Meetings Act 1987	Section 48(1)(a)
C2. Strategic Issues (Public Excluded)		
C3. Rotokauri Strategic		

Infrastructure
Designation – Property
Matters

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by Section 6 or Section 7 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public, as follows:

Item C1.	to prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage	Section 7 (2) (j)
Item C2.	to enable Council to carry out commercial activities without disadvantage	Section 7 (2) (h) Section 7 (2) (i)
	to enable Council to carry out negotiations	Section 7 (2) (j)
	to prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage	
Item C3.	to maintain legal professional privilege	Section 7 (2) (g)
	to enable Council to carry out commercial activities without disadvantage	Section 7 (2) (h) Section 7 (2) (i)
	to enable Council to carry out negotiations	

The meeting moved in the Public Excluded at 3.07pm.

The meeting was declared closed at 4.05pm.

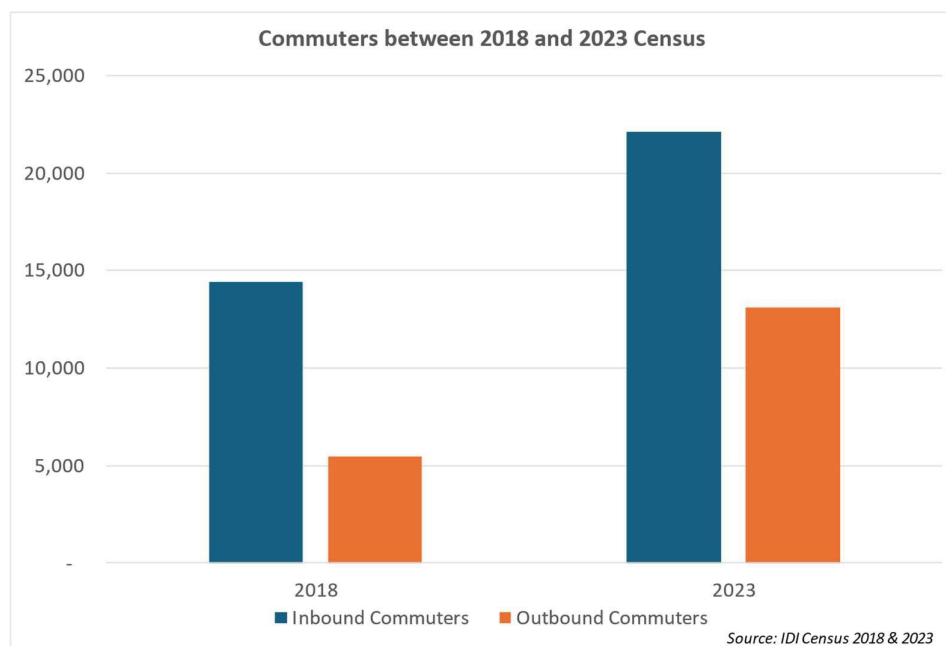
Appendix 1

Commuting Data

1. This report is the second and final insights report looking at individuals who commute to and from Hamilton for work. Specifically, it explores the historic data and the key profiles of commuters using 2023 Census data in terms of employment sector, income distribution, occupation, and educational qualification.
2. All data is sourced from Stats NZ's highly secure Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) lab, which is not publicly accessible. The IDI data contains comprehensive administrative datasets covering the entire New Zealand population, making it an invaluable resource for in-depth research, particularly for understanding population movement and their profiles, such as commuting patterns.
3. These statistics offer valuable insights for shaping more effective strategies to:
 - support urban growth;
 - attract the right skilled talent for both new and existing businesses;
 - inform planning and infrastructure investment decisions; and
 - enhance resource efficiency through deeper regional collaboration.
4. Collectively, these efforts can help elevate Hamilton's profile nationally.

Historic Data

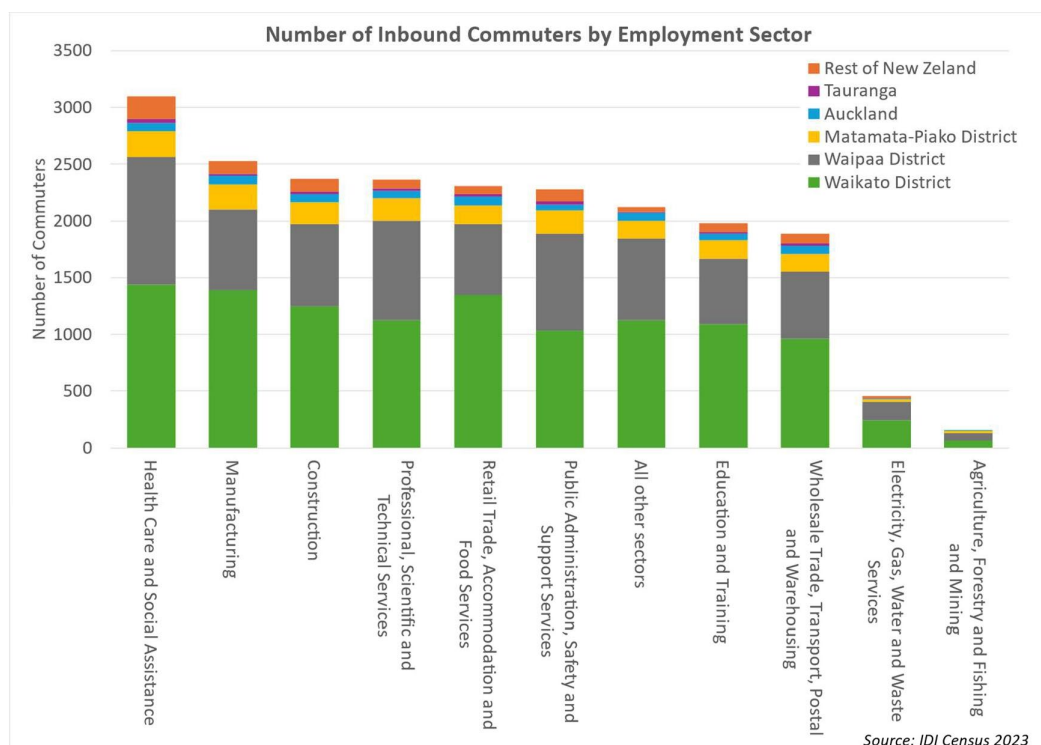
5. Commuting patterns between 2018 and 2023 show a sharp rise, with both inbound and outbound commuters increasing by approximately 7,700. In percentage terms, inbound commuting rose 54%, while outbound commuting surged 140%. This commuting growth far exceeds population (9%) and job growth (14%).
6. During this period, inbound growth was strongest from Waikato District (+4,200). Outbound growth was led by Auckland (+2,000). Waipā and Matamata-Piako saw constant increases in both directions.



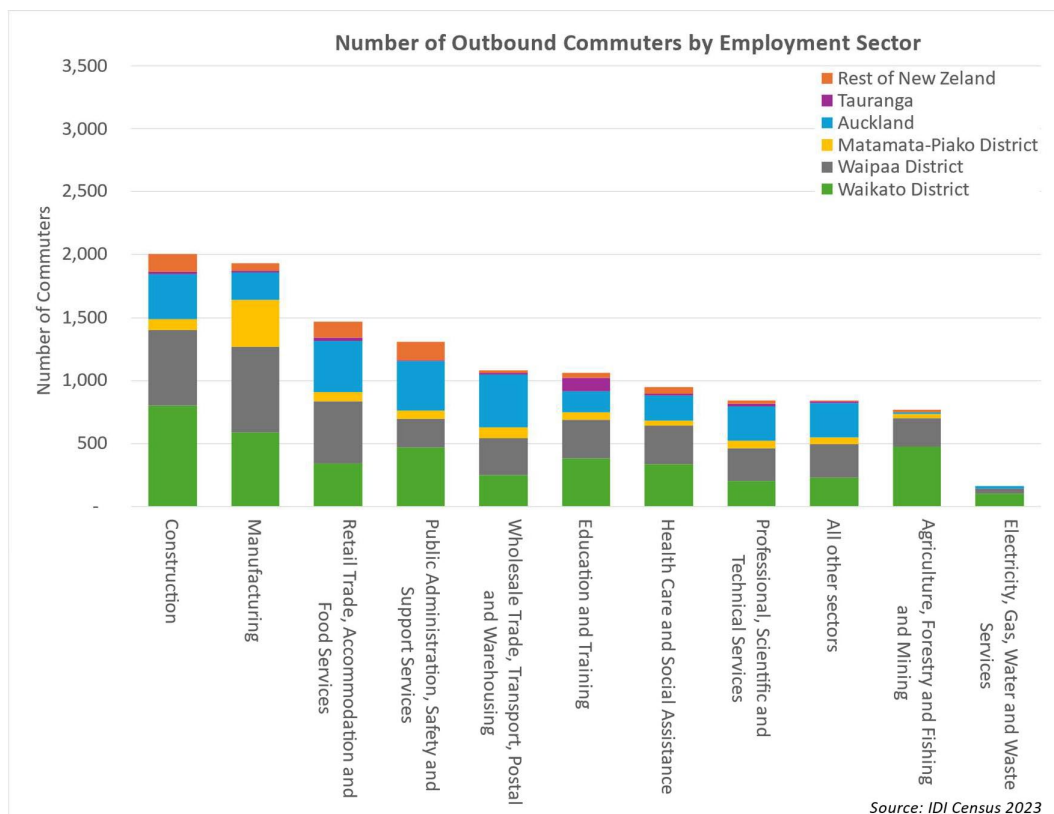
7. When adjusting for population growth between the two census years, the net increase in commuting remains notable, while inbound commuters rose by 3% and outbound by 4%. This underscores a significant shift in regional mobility and employment patterns, reflecting changing dynamics in where people live and work.

Employment Sector

8. The figure below illustrates the number of inbound commuters by employment sector. Of the 22,000 inbound commuters, approximately 3,100 (15%) work in the healthcare and social assistance sector, making it the largest sector for inbound commuting. This is followed by the manufacturing (2,500) and construction sectors (2,400). These three sectors also represent the top employment sectors in Hamilton.



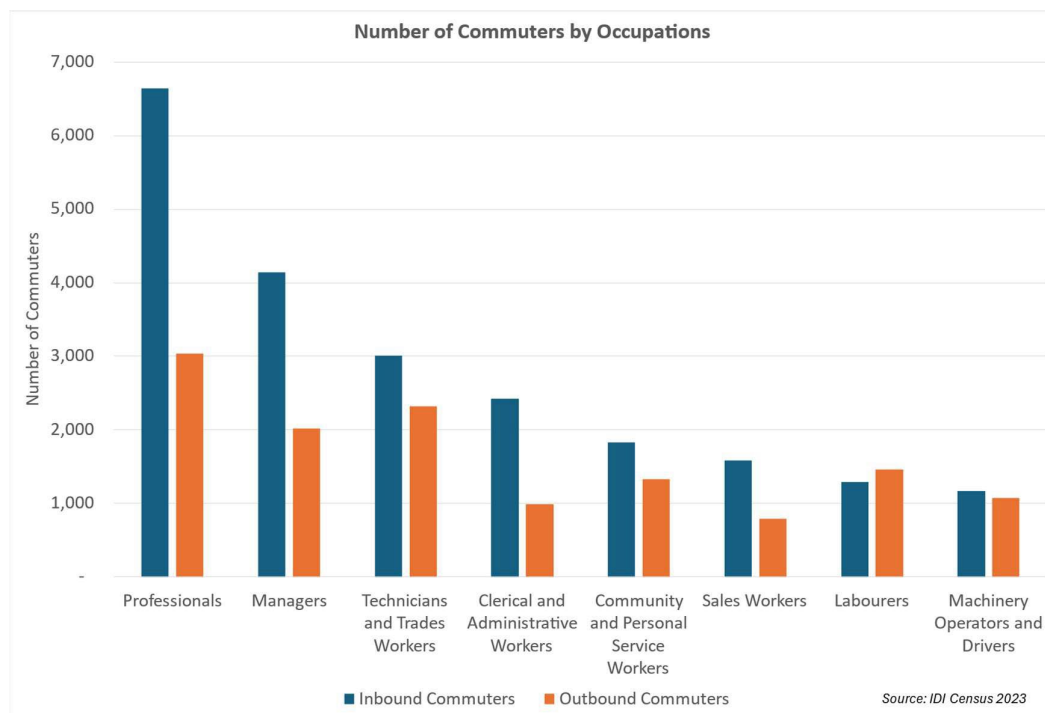
9. Inbound commuters account for approximately 20% of Hamilton's employment across key sectors. Notably, 83% of these commuters travel from Waikato and Waipaa Districts, underscoring Hamilton's role as a central employment hub, particularly for health professionals and manufacturing workers from the wider region.
10. For outbound commuters (13,100), the figure below shows that the leading sectors are construction (2,000), manufacturing (1,930), and Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services (1,470).



11. In rural sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fishing, and mining, around 770 Hamilton residents commute out of the city for work, compared to just 160 commuting in. While the total demand for jobs in these sectors is about 1,600 people within Hamilton, only 1,000 jobs are available in these sectors locally. This gap highlights limited employment opportunities in these industries within the city, prompting many residents to seek jobs elsewhere.
12. In the Future Proof area, the wholesale trade, transport, postal, and warehousing sector accounts for the highest proportion (24%) of Hamilton's outbound commuters. Many of these individuals may be employed in industries located near the Airport precinct, highlighting Hamilton's critical role in meeting regional labour demands.
13. Sector-based commuter data further highlights the diversity of Hamilton's labour market and the broad geographic sources of its workforce.

Occupation

14. The figure below presents a detailed breakdown of the occupations of both inbound and outbound commuters. It reveals that the most common occupation among both inbound and outbound commuters is professional roles.
15. In particular, there is also a notably high number of managers, technicians and trades workers among both inbound and outbound commuters. These roles include individuals working in health and business-related fields.

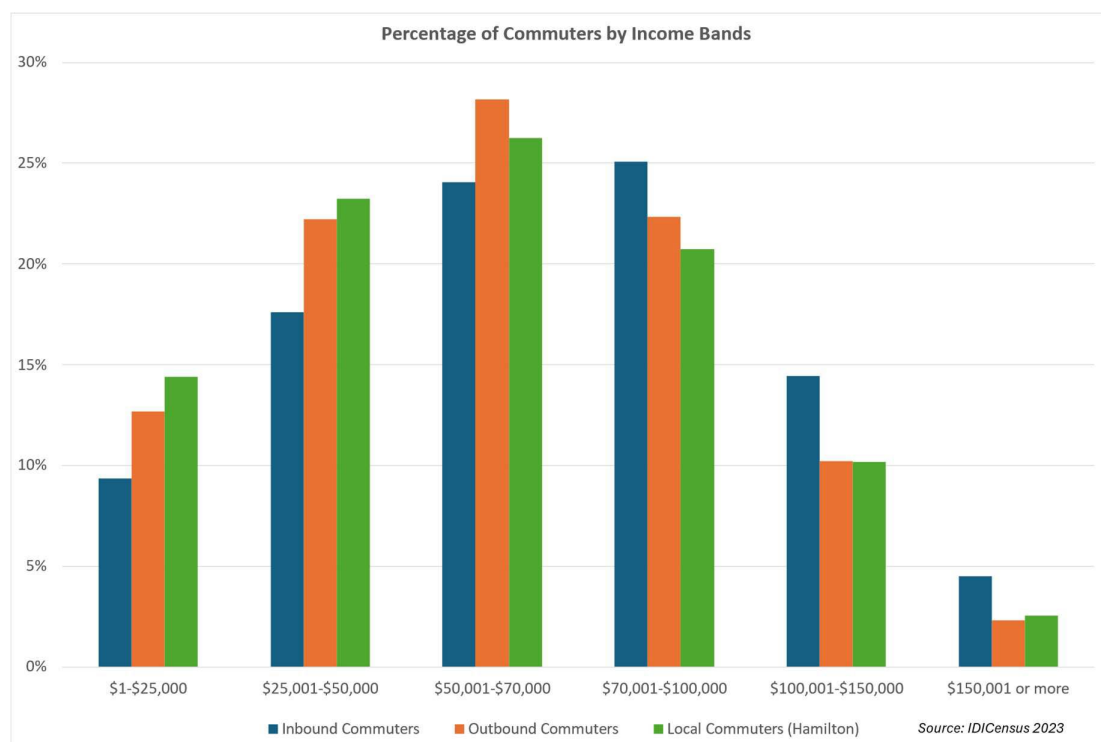


16. Approximately 50% of inbound commuters are employed in managerial and professional roles, compared to 40% of outbound commuters. This indicates that individuals in professional occupations are more inclined to commute, potentially due to limited local employment opportunities, competitive salaries, or lifestyle preference.
17. Hamilton attracts a higher number of skilled workers, with inbound commuters in professional roles nearly double those commuting out. Conversely, the city sends out more labourers than it receives, indicating a net inflow of talent in higher-skilled occupations.
18. These insights highlight Hamilton's occupational structure, reinforcing its position as a key provider of skilled employment and showcasing the diversity of its labour market. They can inform targeted strategies to attract and retain professionals, strengthen the local talent pool, and promote Hamilton as a hub for high-value employment. In turn, this can support sustained business investment and drive regional growth.

Income

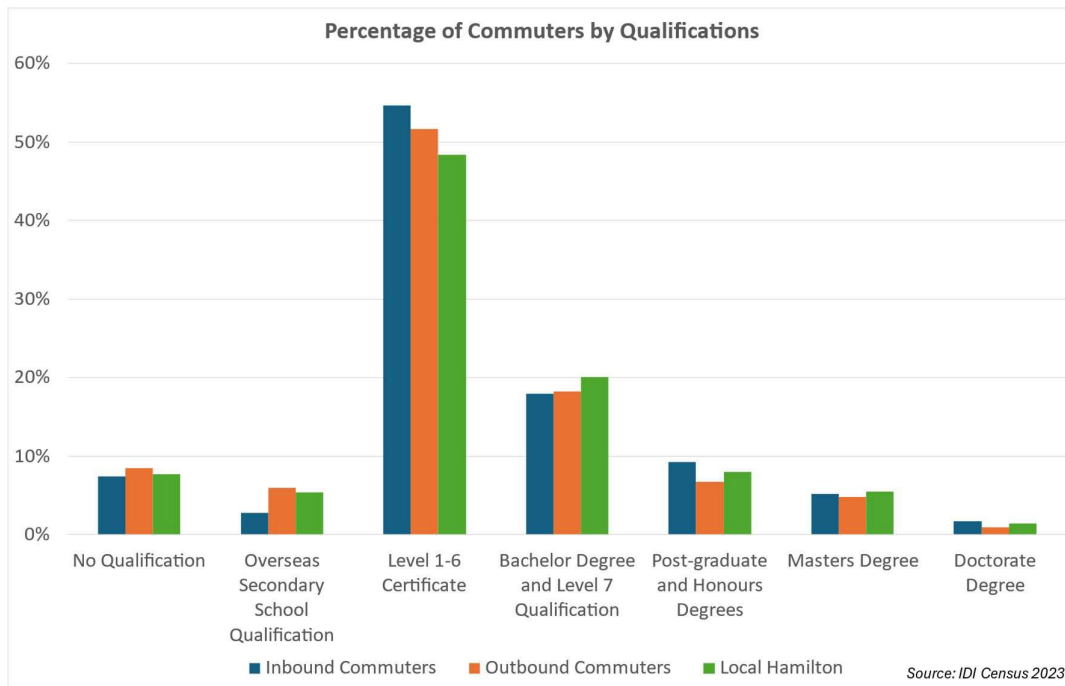
19. The figure below provides a comparison of income bands as a percentage of the total by commuter types. Income data reveals that most commuters earn from \$50,000 to \$100,000, with similar distributions across inbound, outbound, and local commuters (Hamiltonians working locally).
20. However, Hamilton appears to attract a higher proportion of high-income earners: around 45% of inbound commuters earn above the national median wage (\$70,000), compared to 35% of outbound commuters. There is also a notable proportion of commuters earning less than \$25,000 annually, which may be attributed to part-time employment.

21. Inbound commuters tend to have slightly higher incomes compared to outbound commuters and local commuters. This suggests that Hamilton is a magnet for high-income professionals and managers willing to commute longer distances, possibly due to specialised job opportunities or competitive salaries in Hamilton.
22. Income data can also imply commuter skill levels, spending power, housing preferences, and affordability, which are crucial for informed urban planning and policy development.



Qualification

23. The data shows that the distribution of qualifications among inbound and outbound commuters is quite similar. Approximately 34% of inbound commuters and 31% of outbound commuters hold higher degrees, while over 50% have Level 1–6 Certificates as their highest qualification.
24. Despite holding Level 1–6 Certificates, many individuals could be employed in managerial or professional roles, as indicated by occupational data. This is largely attributed to substantial industry experience, which can compensate for formal academic qualifications in career advancement.
25. Compared to local commuters, inbound commuters tend to have a higher proportion of individuals with postgraduate qualifications, whereas outbound commuters show a greater share of lower-level qualifications. This suggests that Hamilton attracts more highly qualified individuals than it sends out.
26. Overall, Hamilton demonstrates demand for workers across all qualification levels, reflecting a diverse labour market that offers opportunities for individuals with a wide range of educational backgrounds.



Conclusion

27. Commuting data offers valuable insights into the structure and diversity of Hamilton's labour market. The city serves as both a magnet for talent from surrounding areas and a source of skilled workers for other regions, reflecting a flexible, mobile, and interdependent regional workforce.
28. These insights help guide land use, zoning, and infrastructure investment decisions to attract the right business and talent, while addressing rising population growth and development capacity constraints. This supports Hamilton's goal of building a resilient and competitive workforce.
29. The data also highlights strong economic interdependence across the region, reinforcing the importance of policy development that fosters deeper regional collaboration and coordinated workforce strategies.
30. Further demographic data on commuters, including age, gender, ethnicity, and relationship status, housing data, and internal migration movement data with demographic and economic information are also available from the Commercial and Analytics Unit.