

Hamilton City Council Submission

Waikato Regional Council 2025/26 Annual Plan Consultation

Waikato Regional Council

2 May 2025

Improving the Wellbeing of Hamiltonians

Hamilton City Council is focused on improving the wellbeing of Hamiltonians through delivering to our five priorities of shaping:

- **A city that's easy to live in**
- **A city where our people thrive**
- **A central city where our people love to be**
- **A fun city with lots to do**
- **A green city**

The topic of this Council submission is aligned with all of Hamilton City Council's five priorities.

Council Approval and Reference

This submission was approved by Hamilton City Council at its meeting held on 30 April 2025.

Submission # 798

Key Messages and Recommendations

- 1. Proposed Change to the Public Transport Rate**
2. We acknowledge the Government's directive to increase public transport farebox recovery, but are cognisant that there is a fine balance required to ensure any future price increases don't subsequently result in people changing their current use of public transport to using private transport options.
3. We support **Option 2** outlined on pages 6-9 of the Waikato Regional Council's consultation document, which notes that:
 - *Option two is for the rate in Hamilton to be based on the capital value of a property. This recognises that currently Hamilton's public transport rating is based on a property's capital value, so option two is less likely to be a significant change to the current rates that you pay.*
 - *In central and regional Waikato, within the described rating categories, every property pays the same. Within Hamilton, the rate is based on property capital value.*
4. Option 2 maintains the approach currently used to rate Hamilton properties for public transport services and provides a more equitable means of charging Hamilton ratepayers than Option 1.
5. We are concerned that Option 1 would increase rates considerably for 'below median value' ratepayers.
- 6. Business and Community Liaison**
7. We encourage resourcing a business and community liaison lead role that would work directly with organisations, businesses, schools, community groups, and retirement villages to facilitate greater use of existing public transport services.

Introduction

8. Hamilton City Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the **Waikato Regional Council 2025/26 Annual Plan Consultation**.
9. This submission primarily focuses on the issue of the Waikato Regional Council's proposed changes to the public transport rate.
10. We note that Waikato Regional Council representatives will be supporting Hamilton City Council staff to present information around public transport at the Council's 13 May 2025 Infrastructure and Transport Committee meeting.
11. We would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the collaborative work being undertaken between Hamilton City Council and Waikato Regional Council on public transport planning. This partnership approach is bringing the following benefits to the city:
 - **Integrated Planning:** Working together is ensuring that public transport strategies align with broader regional growth plans, such as the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan. This is helping create a cohesive transport network that will support urban development and connectivity.
 - **Efficient Resource Use:** By pooling the expertise in the public transport field, both councils are optimising funding and infrastructure opportunities, reducing duplication of work, and delivering cost-effective solutions that are helping make public transport a more realistic transport choice for many more Hamiltonians.
 - **Improved Accessibility:** Joint efforts are enhancing access to jobs, education, healthcare, and recreational activities.

- **Sustainability Goals:** Collaborative planning is helping to make public transport more accessible to more Hamiltonians, enabling them to make environmentally friendly transport choices, thereby contributing to reduced carbon emissions.
- **Community-Centric Solutions:** Engaging with a cross-section of stakeholder groups in Hamilton is ensuring public transport services reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of the city.
- **Enhanced Connectivity:** Coordinated efforts are improving interregional connections, such as the Te Huia rail service linking Waikato and Auckland.

12. This partnership approach is helping foster a more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable transport system for Hamilton and the wider Waikato Region.

13. In line with our 7 May 2024 submission to the Waikato Regional Council's 2024–2034 Draft Long Term Plan ([refer here](#)), we encourage consideration of resourcing a business and community liaison lead role that would work directly with organisations, businesses, schools, community groups, and retirement villages to facilitate greater use of existing public transport services.

Proposed Changes to the Public Transport Rate

14. We acknowledge the Government's directive to increase public transport farebox recovery, but are cognisant that there is a fine balance required to ensure any future price increases don't subsequently result in people changing their current use of public transport to using private transport options.

15. We support **Option 2** outlined on pages 6-9 of the Waikato Regional Council's consultation document, which notes that:

- *Option two is for the rate in Hamilton to be based on the capital value of a property. This recognises that currently Hamilton's public transport rating is based on a property's capital value, so option two is less likely to be a significant change to the current rates that you pay.*
- *In central and regional Waikato, within the described rating categories, every property pays the same. Within Hamilton, the rate is based on property capital value.*

16. Option 2 in the consultation document also notes the following:

- **Impact on levels of services:** No impact.
- **Total cost to ratepayers:** 2025/26: \$23.2 million. No change to the current total costs, but the way we collect funds will change, and the cost may change for individual households.
- **Impact on rates:** \$26.81 per \$100,000 of capital value. The examples shown are that a \$500,000 property will pay \$134.05, a \$1 million property will pay \$268.10, and a \$1,500,000 property will pay \$402.15.
- **Impact on debt:** Nil.

17. Option 2 maintains the approach currently used to rate Hamilton properties for public transport services and provides a more equitable means of charging Hamilton ratepayers than Option 1.

18. We are concerned that Option 1 would increase rates considerably for 'below median value' ratepayers.

Further Information and Hearings

19. Should the Waikato Regional Council require clarification of the submission from Hamilton City Council, or additional information, please contact **Glenn Bunting** (Urban Integration Principal, Transport – Plan, Strategy and Programming) on **021 962 829**, or email Glenn.Bunting@hcc.govt.nz in the first instance.
20. Hamilton City Council representatives **do wish to speak at the hearings** scheduled for 19-22 May 2025 in support of Council's submission to the **Waikato Regional Council 2025/26 Annual Plan Consultation**.
21. We also welcome the opportunity to have ongoing discussions around the key areas of this submission with the Waikato Regional Council.

Yours faithfully



Lance Vervoort

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

FURTHER INFORMATION

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