

Hamilton City Council – Staff Feedback

Consultation on the Ministry of Transport's Draft Long-Term Insights Briefing 2025: Moving People in 2055

Ministry of Transport

8 August 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 staff feedback is aligned with all of Hamilton City Council's five priorities.

Council Approval and Reference

This staff feedback was approved by Hamilton City Council's Chief Executive on 8 August 2025.

Feedback # 811

It should be noted that the following feedback is from staff at Hamilton City Council and does not, therefore, necessarily represent the views of the Council itself.

Introduction

1. Hamilton City Council staff welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the **Ministry of Transport's Draft Long-term Insights Briefing for 2025 – Moving people in 2055**.
2. As you will be aware, on 24 September 2024, Hamilton City Council staff also provided feedback to the Ministry of Transport's **Travel Demand in New Zealand 2050 – Consultation on a Topic for a Long-Term Insights Briefing** – [refer here](#)

General Comments

3. The Ministry of Transport's draft vision on what the future of transport might look like in New Zealand in 2055 does feel overly focused and likely very difficult to achieve future transport interventions such as driverless cars and robo taxis in our urban areas, and not on the more logically transport planning solutions our future needs, like quality mass transit options and supportive micromobility networks.
4. It is a concern that public transport, including future rail, is barely mentioned. This seems strange in the context of evidence-based significant investments in rail and other forms of mass transit globally, noting that rail is for both passenger and freight solutions. Both globally and within New Zealand, a rapid urban expansion is occurring. Our country's focus should be on moving people around urban areas with tried and tested technologies we are investing heavily in now, not promoting car trips, albeit by advanced technologies in electric cars.
5. It does seem a considerable oversight to not include these modes in any future vision and calls into question the usefulness and applicability of this work if future growth patterns are being seen as being served by anything other than mass transit and reinforcing a car-dependent type ethos. Whilst there will always be some that will always use cars, most people prefer a choice and embrace urban living to access healthcare, education, and to be close to friends and relatives and other services. Public transport and micromobility enable that choice and are one of the reasons why transport choice features so heavily in Hamilton City Council's Transport Strategy **Access Hamilton** ([refer here](#)).
6. There is a real danger that the Ministry of Transport's promotion of a futuristic but car-dependent system could leave a long-term, difficult-to-solve problem in New Zealand, a country already so aligned to private single-occupancy car use. It would be useful for the Long-Term Insights Briefing to consider the impact of land use decisions on future travel. Central government is currently directing councils to open up greenfield land for housing, while also encouraging greater density in existing urban areas. These two policy directions are likely to have much greater impact on future travel than robo taxis, but are not given sufficient attention in the briefing.
7. In summary, the vision presented by the Ministry of Transport seems to fall short of reality as experienced by local authorities both in our day-to-day operations and our vision for how our future integrated transport networks will operate. To add to this, the vision does not seem to be truly reflective of global thinking, thinking from international best practice that helps shape our city and regional planning. Whilst thinking about and embracing logical future transport technologies, the

vision will always fail to garner respect if aspirational policy is not considered hand in hand with the day-to-day realities of planning and operating and funding our transport networks.

8. Our focus as a country should be to keep switching from petrol to electric for all modes, use smart pricing to keep bus and rail patronage on the increase, make walking and cycling much safer and more accessible, and reduce overall car dependence.
9. The most efficient and cost-effective transport system gives people real choices. Not just different types of cars. Car dependency can contribute to an elitist transport system by disproportionately impacting lower-income individuals and creating a system where car ownership is a necessity, not a choice, for many. This can lead to situations where those who cannot afford a car face significant barriers to accessing essential services and opportunities.

Specific Comments on Modelling

10. In our 18 September 2024 feedback to the Ministry of Transport, we expressed an interest in exploring the use of local councils' datasets to enhance the model. This is something we would still wish to pursue. Hamilton City Council staff continue to have concerns about the input data that the Ministry of Transport is using to model people movements, and the lack of material to show how the Ministry is validating the model. The heatmap of traffic volume in Hamilton highlighted a number of concerning areas versus the known volumes we measure, and as a Council, staff are not convinced that the Ministry of Transport is using any local traffic volume or travel time data besides state highway data within the city boundary.
11. The staff concern is that if the base model is not accurate within a certain range, it makes it hard for us or anyone else to trust the scenario modelling and policy decisions that come out of it. We would be happy with the Ministry of Transport to explore how our data can enhance the model. This is an offer we have previously made.
12. Whilst we appreciate the goal of the model is to use individual level modelling and focus more on the social dynamics at play in transport choice, it would be helpful to see cases involving dynamic congestion pricing, land use changes (e.g. if Hamilton's central city had dense housing and employment zones changed), or fuel cost changes alongside EV uptake, amongst other scenarios. On social dynamics and our previous comments on reality, we would suggest assuming every household in Hamilton has access to a car and that school attendance is 100 percent across the board as being inaccurate, and these are just two examples.
13. Resilience testing would also be helpful, such as extreme events involving the closure of one or more bridges (a scenario unique to Hamilton), and how the population adjusts. Again, we have existing data showing the effects of bridge closures, if that is helpful for validation.
14. We feel that the comments from our previous 24 September 2024 feedback are still valid and request that the previous inputs by Hamilton City Council staff be considered as part of this new response.
15. Are we able to see the Monty model and use it, test with it or at the very least understand its abilities to then provide input on how best to use it?

16. Of note, the Waikato Regional Transport Model rebuild did look at agent-based models, including considering using Monty and its outputs. For a range of reasons, the team chose not to implement this approach, and the WRTM rebuild would continue with a traditional 4-step transport model.

Further Information and Opportunity to Discuss our Feedback

17. Should the Ministry of Transport require clarification of the feedback from Hamilton City Council staff, or additional information, please contact **Phil Haizelden** (Transport Strategy Principal – Planning, Strategy and programming) on **027 305 8941**, or email Phil.Haizelden@hcc.govt.nz in the first instance.
18. Hamilton City Council representatives would welcome the opportunity to discuss the content of this feedback in more detail with the Ministry of Transport.

Yours faithfully



Lance Vervoort
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

FURTHER INFORMATION

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