



# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU *Whakapā mai*

**Kōrero mai  
Let's talk**  
Tell us what you think  
by Friday, 12 April

## It's easy

**Online:** [whakatane.govt.nz/ltp](http://whakatane.govt.nz/ltp)

**Email:** [submissions@whakatane.govt.nz](mailto:submissions@whakatane.govt.nz)

**Post:** Whakatāne District Council,  
Private Bag 1002, Whakatāne 3158

**Drop off:** To our Council offices in Whakatāne and Murupara

**Contact your elected members:**  
[whakatane.govt.nz/elected-members](http://whakatane.govt.nz/elected-members)

Submission forms are available on our website  
[whakatane.govt.nz/ltp](http://whakatane.govt.nz/ltp) or from libraries and Council offices.

## Community conversations

**Consultation runs from Tuesday, 12 March until Friday, 12 April 2024.** During this time, we'll be out and about in our communities, so you can have a chat to elected members and staff about everything Long Term Plan-related.

Our calendar of community conversation events is advertised on our website [whakatane.govt.nz/ltp](http://whakatane.govt.nz/ltp), Facebook [@WhakataneDistrictCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/WhakataneDistrictCouncil) or you can phone us on **07 306 0500**.

# The journey ahead *E ao ki tūāpae*

**LONG TERM PLAN 2024-34 CONSULTATION  
Te Mahere Pae Tawhiti 2024-34 He Uiuinga**  
*Tell us what you think by Friday, 12 April*

In developing a long-term plan, trade-offs always need to be made between desires and affordability. At the same time, we have a unique opportunity to chart a course that ensures the sustainability and prosperity of the Whakatāne District for generations to come. It's a chance to prioritise essential services, invest in necessary infrastructure and foster economic resilience.

As your Mayor, I envision a future where we live within our means, doing more with less, and ensuring that basic services remain efficient and accessible to all. We must be prudent stewards of our resources and mindful of the challenges that may arise.

I've been heartened by the engagement of our community members and Councillors in the Long Term Plan development process to date. It's a testament to our collective commitment to building a better future for the Whakatāne District; however, I sincerely hope to hear from many more of you through this consultation process. The voices of our communities are vital in crafting a Long Term Plan that meets community needs and aspirations.

*Nāku noa nā*  
Mayor Dr Victor Luca



# WHERE WE'RE AT RIGHT NOW *Te tūnga ināia tonu nei*

We know that councils are continually being asked to cut costs but keep delivering the same services. We're facing the same impacts of inflation and cost increases as other councils throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, meaning we're looking at higher rates increases than ever before. Alongside this, we have some critical infrastructure projects that we need to fund. As we've developed the plan, it's been important we keep our focus on our communities and work to understand what matters to you most. It's important that the Mayor and Councillors hear from you before they make their final decision about what's in this Long Term Plan.

## Things are really tough

The world has shifted significantly since our last Long Term Plan. Economic conditions have changed dramatically causing record-high cost escalations on multiple fronts, high interest rates and rising compliance and insurance costs. We've worked in previous years to keep rates at an affordable level and annual rates increases to a minimum in response to the rising cost of living. This has created a funding gap that we now need to close.

## A broken funding system

Funding demands on councils are exceeding what they're capable of achieving, and we're not exempt. Council's funding model is complex and rigid. It's not comparable to a household or business budgeting process. We rely almost entirely on ratepayers to finance us, so we keep tapping into the same pool of people and businesses for funding. This view is supported by a recent review of local government that has identified that councils' funding system is not sustainable in its current format.

## Three Waters is back

Under the previous government, work was underway to remove the Three Waters (drinking water, storm water and waste water) from Council's core business and place them into a new entity with its own funding structure. The new government's recent decision to scrap the Three Waters Services Reforms has put the responsibility back on councils. We can only factor minimal maintenance and compliance costs into the budget for the next 10 years due to funding limitations. This means that important upgrades will not be able to happen unless something significant changes with how our Three Waters infrastructure is funded and managed.

## Timing is important

The things that have led to this point have been happening over a long period and will not be resolved easily. We know that we need to focus on keeping costs down by choosing projects wisely. We understand that delaying some projects might seem sensible now, but abandoning them would cost more in the long run. In our Long Term Plan, we're proposing to adjust the timing and scale of our investments to ensure our communities stay as strong and vibrant as possible.

**Flip over to see the key questions we need your feedback on.**



# What do you think? He aha ō whakaaro?

This is a snapshot of our Consultation Document. Councils are required to ask specific questions through their Long Term Plans if they meet certain criteria. Each question below has options that we want your feedback on. You can find more detail about these on our website [whakatane.govt.nz/ltp](http://whakatane.govt.nz/ltp) and at libraries and Council offices.

Tell us what  
you think by  
Friday, 12 April

## How should we scale, stage and fund necessary upgrades to the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub?

*Me pēhea mātau e mahi, e whakapau moni anō hoki kia whakamohoa ai te Papa Rēhia a Rex Morpeth?*

Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub, which includes Whakatāne War Memorial Hall, Rex Morpeth Park, Rugby Park, Whakatāne Aquatic and Fitness Centre, Whakatāne Arts and Craft Centre, and a number of sports clubs, is one of the Whakatāne District's most loved and used community assets. While these facilities have served us well, significant maintenance and upgrades are now required to meet health and safety standards, meet existing and growing demands for indoor court and events space and to further economic opportunities.

Any upgrades to the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub will need to be delivered in stages over 10 years to allow time to carry out detailed design and planning, seek feedback, obtain external funding and carry out construction works.

We're proposing a redevelopment of the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub which includes:

- A multi-purpose facility with significant upgrades to Whakatāne War Memorial Hall, including the Little Theatre
- A sports pavilion to replace the existing Rugby Park grandstand
- An accessibility-friendly playground
- Increased carparking space
- Other required improvements over the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub area

## How quickly should we close our funding gap?

*Ka hia ngā tau me whakaiti mātau i te āputa tahua?*

The starting position of this Long Term Plan means current rates are not covering our cost increases. When we talk about the funding gap, we're referring to the costs of delivering our day-to-day services, renewing existing assets and covering debt and interest payments. We have been using borrowings to fund our asset renewals, which has been acceptable in the short-term. However, this is not a sustainable option for the medium-to-long term.

The combination of extraordinary cost escalations and increased insurance and compliance costs has created a funding gap of approximately \$14 million. This is simply the reality of unforeseen and unprecedented increases, and not from financial mismanagement.

We need to close the gap, and the question we're asking is, how quickly? If we recover the gap quickly, then we need to pay more in rates increases in the early years of this Long Term Plan. The catch is, the longer we take to repay, the greater the amount of interest we're paying on our debt borrowing, and the more people will need to pay in the future.

Having debt isn't a bad thing – it means we can spread the cost of assets intergenerationally, meaning that people who will benefit from it in the future will also pay their share. We need to find a balance between paying now and paying later.

We're proposing to recover the funding gap over a medium-term of about six years. This would see an additional cost to ratepayers of \$2.4 million added in year one, with a total average rates increase per property of 17.1 percent. There would be \$36 million additional borrowing costs at the end of 10 years under this option.

## How should we distribute rates increases across the properties in our district?

*Me pēhea mātau e tuari i ngā tāke kaunihera puta noa i te rohe?*

Your rates are divided into two main groups: targeted rates and general rates. Targeted rates are paid by a specific group of ratepayers who receive a specific service e.g. urban kerbside rubbish collection. General rates are split into two portions – one portion is based on your property's capital value, how you use the property (residential, business, farm, short-term accommodation) and whether your property's location is urban or rural. The other portion is a fixed charge known as the Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC) which is a flat rate that every property pays regardless of its capital value or location.

The fixed charge UAGC helps to equally spread the cost of providing Council services that have benefit across the district, while the general rate helps to spread the cost of providing services in a more equitable manner. The capital value is broadly used as an indicator of ability to pay i.e. the higher the capital value, the greater the ability to pay. Charging a higher UAGC increases the overall rates on lower value properties and decreases the overall rates on higher value properties. Moving the UAGC number down means that those in lower-value properties are likely to pay a lesser amount in total.

We're proposing to lower the UAGC to 20 percent for year one of the Long Term Plan (2024/2025) in response to cost of living increases and to better reflect the ability for people who own lower-value properties to pay.

## How should we manage foodwaste collection?

*Me pēhea mātau e whakahaere i te kohikohinga para kai?*

The government has indicated that Council will need to introduce kerbside foodwaste collections to urban properties by 1 January 2027. We want to get a head-start and aim to start these services on 1 July 2026. Foodwaste makes up about 20-30 percent of what we put in our kerbside general waste bin. The cost of sending waste to landfill continues to rise. It makes sense to keep our foodwaste out of landfill and turn it into a reusable resource i.e. compost. Removing the foodwaste from your general waste will both reduce the volume and the bulk of the 'stinky' stuff.

We're proposing to introduce a new 140 litre bin for fortnightly general waste collection for urban properties currently receiving kerbside collections. Foodwaste will be combined with your existing greenwaste bin and collected weekly. Free worm farms or compost bins will be supplied to rural property owners who want them to help manage foodwaste.

Have your  
say now



Find out more [whakatane.govt.nz/ltp](http://whakatane.govt.nz/ltp)

