

Long Term Plan 2024-34

FAQs

Ngā Putuputu Pātai



What is a Long Term Plan (LTP)?

He aha te Mahere Pae Tawhiti?

The Long Term Plan (LTP) is a key strategic plan that New Zealand councils are required to develop under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA).

A council's LTP outlines its activities and how they are managed, delivered and funded (including proposed rate increases).

Why is an LTP important?

He aha te take o te Mahere Pae Tawhiti?

It guides how money is allocated across various projects and services and therefore, what the proposed rates and forecasted debt will be for the next 10 years.

Do we get a say on it?

Ka taea e au te whakahoki kōrero?

Yes, we encourage everyone to have their say. This impacts, you, your whānau, friends, neighbours and even your dogs!

A LTP can't be adopted by Council until it has been consulted on with you. Consultation for the LTP will take place between 12 March and 12 April 2024.

Why should I have my say about the LTP?

He aha au e whakahoki kōrero ai mō te Mahere Pae Tawhiti?

Important decisions like these need to be a collaboration between Council and the community to make sure we all get the best outcomes. The LTP affects you and your whānau, so it's important you have your say.

Do I have to own a house or pay rates to have a say?

Me whiwhi whare, me utu tāke kaunihera rānei au kia whakahoki kōrero atu?

No! Anyone who is interested in the future of the district can submit their feedback. We want to hear from as much of the community as possible.

What kind of information does the LTP include?

He aha te ngako o te Mahere Pae Tawhiti?

The LTP covers a wide range of information, including infrastructure strategies, financial forecasts, community outcomes, key projects and how Council intends to fund these initiatives (through rates, loans or grants). It sets out Council's strategic vision, priorities, work plan and budgets for the next 10 years. It provides the basis for Council decision-making and guides the planning and implementation of programmes, activities, and services.

How often is the LTP reviewed?

Hei āhea te Mahere Pae Tawhiti e arotaketia?

The LTP is reviewed comprehensively every three years, with annual plans and reports providing opportunities in between LTPs for tweaks (based on changing/unforeseen circumstances, community needs etc.).



E ao ki tūāpae The journey ahead

The Long Term Plan sets Council's priorities and direction, now and for the next 10 years. This acknowledges we have a long journey ahead that requires stamina, steady guidance and eyes ahead to the horizon.

When does Council decide what goes into the LTP?

Hei āhea te Kaunihera e whakataua i te kiko o te Mahere Pae Tawhiti?

Your Mayor and Councillors will consider your feedback from 8 to 10 May, before making a final decision and adopting the Long Term Plan 2024-34 in June 2024.

What are the key priorities for Council? *He aha ngā take matua o te Kaunihera?*

Our five strategic priorities are:

- Facilitating economic regeneration and responding to development pressures
- Shaping a green district
- Embracing the safety wellbeing, and vibrancy of communities
- Strengthening relationships with iwi, hapū and whānau
- Building climate change natural hazard resilience, including our infrastructure.

Who can I talk to if I want to find out more?

Ka kōrero au ki a wai mō te Mahere Pae Tawhiti?

From 12 March to 12 April, staff and Elected Members will be out talking about the LTP across the district. We'd love you to come and kōrero to find out more about what's planned. You can find out where and when to find us on our social media and at [whakatane.govt.nz/ltf](https://www.whakatane.govt.nz/ltf)

How does the decision-making process on the LTP work?

He aha te wātaka whakataunga o te Mahere Pae Tawhiti?

12 MARCH – 12 APRIL 2024 - Consultation

You can submit feedback and tell us what you think about the LTP. You can also indicate if you would like to present your submission to Council.

18 – 19 APRIL 2024 - Hearings

You can present your submission to us. This is optional. (The Council meets to listen to your submission if you want to present it in person).

8 - 10 MAY 2024 - We consider your feedback

Your Mayor and Councillors meet to consider all of the submissions received and make decisions about changes to the proposed budgets and projects.

20 JUNE 2024 - We make final decisions and adopt the final Long Term Plan.

Your Mayor and Councillors meet to formally approve the Long Term Plan 2024-34 – including any changes made as a result of the submissions received. Once adopted, the document will be available on our website, at libraries and Council offices.



Rates - Ngā Tāke Kaunihera

Will my rates go up this year? *Ka piki ake aku tāke kaunihera i tēnei tau?*

Yes, there is a proposed rate increase. The financial landscape is now vastly different from what we were facing three years ago, and in fact, anything we've seen in recent history. Councils around New Zealand, and across the ditch in Australia, are experiencing similar issues.

This has put us into a deficit that we now need to balance, and it's important that we do this in a way that is financially prudent while recognising that rates affordability is also a crucial factor for many members of our community.

Why have my rates gone up? *He aha aku tāke kaunihera i whakapiki ake ai?*

We need to address the funding gap left by a number of factors, including record-high cost escalations on multiple fronts, high interest rates and rising compliance and insurance costs. Alongside these, we have 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 put us in a deficit that needs to be balanced.

What do my rates go towards? *Ka whakaea aku tāke kaunihera i te aha?*

The projects and initiatives outlined in the Long Term Plan directly impact rates, as rates help with funding. The Long Term Plan 2024-34 includes projects such as the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub redevelopment and stormwater upgrades to Apanui Linear Park and the Ōhope network. To fund these projects for our community, an increase in rates is required.

Individual rate increases will vary depending on your property type, property value and location, as well as what services are available to you. You can check your rates whakatane.govt.nz/rates

What different types of rates are there? *He aha ngā momo tāke kaunihera?*

Your rates are made up of two types: general rates and targeted rates.

What are general rates? *He aha ngā tāke kaunihera whānui?*

General rates primarily pay for Council services that are available to all properties in the district (like roading, parks and reserves, libraries).



What are targeted rates?

He aha ngā tāke kaunihera whāiti?

Targeted rates are a user-pays rate, which covers services such as water, wastewater, rubbish and recycling collections, and these are charged according to the location of your property and the services available.

You only pay targeted rates for localised services like wastewater and rubbish collections if you own a property with access to these services.

What about Three Waters?

Mō Ngā Wai e Toru

In late 2023, the New Zealand Government agreed to repeal Three Waters legislation, restoring ownership and control of water assets back to local councils.

This means that your rates will continue to pay for drinking water, stormwater and wastewater throughout the district and will be included in the Long Term Plan 2024-34.

How do property values impact rates?

Me pēhea e whakaaweawetia ai ngā tāke kaunihera e te wāriu rawa?

Rates are based on a valuation of the property. The Council contracts Quotable Value to perform three-yearly property revaluations to reflect changing market values. The valuations are a snapshot of the market as at 1 September the year of revaluation.

To provide fair, transparent and independent property ratings, the Council uses standard rating valuations which are governed by legislation- the Rating Valuation Act 1998 - and audited by the Office of the Valuer General.

Where can I get help to pay my rates if I'm experiencing financial hardship?

Ka haere au ki hea ki te kimi āwhina whakaea tāke kaunihera?

Our rating team is happy to work through options with you if you are experiencing ongoing financial hardship and having difficulty meeting your payments.

There are options available, including the rates rebate scheme that offers up to \$750 off your rates for those on low incomes.

Please call our rates team 07 306 0500 or email info@whakatane.govt.nz or ask via our online form [whakatane.govt.nz/contact-us](https://www.whakatane.govt.nz/contact-us).

Project specific Kōrero ā-kaupapa

What's happening with the Boat Harbour project?

E aha ana te aha ki te Herenga Waka?

In January 2022, a partnership was formalised between Te Rāhui Lands Trust, Whakatāne District Council, Ngāti Awa Group Holdings, and the Crown via Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit to create Te Rāhui Herenga Waka. Council is funding its share of the development by borrowing from the Harbour Endowment Fund. The Harbour Endowment Fund benefits the district because it allows Council to undertake some projects at little or no cost to ratepayers.

The project is currently underway and Te Rāhui Herenga Waka is working through its last Resource Consent Management Plan which involves identifying contaminants in the soil and formulating a soil remediation plan.

Visit terahui.nz for more information.

Why are you consulting on Fees and Charges again?

He aha koutou e uiui ai anō i ngā Utu?

Adjustments to fees and charges need to be made due to recent cost pressures like high rates of inflation, rising interest rates and other national and global factors. Over time, fees and charges had fallen behind where they need to be.



Why are Development Contributions increasing so much?

He aha ngā Tāpaetanga Whanake Hangaroto e whakanui ake ai?

Enabling the Whakatāne District to grow means we need new or upgraded infrastructure (roads, recreational areas and more water and wastewater pipes). To determine that share, Council considers how allowing growth benefits the developer, but also the wider benefit to the people of the district. To find the right balance, Council has a Development Contributions Policy. This is reviewed alongside the Long Term Plan and sets out the costs to enable development in different areas of the district.

Visit whakatane.govt.nz/LTP for more information.



Why are you consulting on the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub?

He aha koutou e uiui ai anō mō te Papa Rēhia a Rex Morpeth?

The redevelopment of the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub is not a new project. Over the past decade, our communities have voiced their support for a financial commitment to upgrade Whakatāne War Memorial Hall. In addition, improvements to the broader recreation precinct (Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub) were included in the most recent (2021-2031) Long Term Plan budget. We are now at a stage where these commitments must be delivered on to meet health and safety standards, meet existing and growing demands for indoor court and events space, and to further economic opportunities.

Are you increasing fees and charges for the Murupara Transfer Station?

Ka whakapiki ake ngā utu o te Taupuni Whakawhiti Para o Murupara?

Currently, general rates waste contributions from Murupara/Galatea ratepayers go towards funding the facility, but they do not cover the full costs.

The costs are being subsidised by ratepayers throughout the Whakatāne District. Meaning, people and businesses producing the waste are not paying the costs of dealing with it, and those who do not produce the waste are – that includes ratepayers outside of the Murupara/Galatea area.

The proposed charges will align with the current Whakatāne Refuse Transfer Station charges.

The cost of dealing with waste is continuing to rise, and so is the need to reduce the amount of waste we produce due to global warming. Continuing to provide a 'free' facility is not financially viable. We simply cannot afford it. By adding a gate charge, users may feel inclined to reduce their waste, and it makes it fairer for ratepayers across the district.

What is Council doing about Climate Change as part of the Long Term Plan?

Ka aha te Kaunihera mō te Huringa Āhuarangi i tēnei Mahere Pae Tawhiti?

Despite feeling the impact of increasing costs, now is not the time to decrease our climate effort. The impacts of climate change will be felt across our communities and reach into homes, neighbourhoods and businesses. We aim to strengthen our ability to bounce back from challenges and adapt to change, but collaboration is essential for success. We've had a Climate Change project underway since 2017. In 2019, the Council adopted a set of Climate Principles and in 2020, Council adopted the first Climate Change Strategy and Action Plans. During the past year, we've been reviewing what's worked, what's changed and where we're heading, while still making sure we're responding as best we can to our changing climate and its impacts. Alongside our Long Term Plan, we're asking people to have their say at whakatane.govt.nz/ltp for feedback on our draft Climate Change Strategy.