



**WHANGANUI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

# **Long-Term Plan 2024-2034**

**Late Submissions**



**Submission by the**  
**Royal New Zealand Society for the**  
**Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Inc.**

**on**

**Whanganui District Council**

**Long-Term Plan**

02 May 2024



## **Executive Summary**

- SPCA is concerned with a recent decrease in the number of companion cats that are desexed, only half of companion cats are microchipped, and very few are kept at home and prevented from roaming.
- Desexing and microchipping companion cats helps protect cat and kitten welfare and are some of the few tools we have for addressing stray cat problems in our communities.
- The cost of the procedures is the most common barrier for companion cat owners to desex and microchip their cats.
- Our Snip 'n' Chip programme offers subsidised desexing and microchipping for people who need help with overcoming the cost of the procedures.
- We have included our Snip 'n' Chip Council Package with more detailed information about how we work with local councils to promote more responsible cat ownership.
- Through this submission, we invite the Whanganui District Council to help us achieve more responsible cat ownership by supporting our Snip 'n' Chip programme.



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## Introduction

The following submission is made on behalf of The Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (trading as SPCA).

SPCA is the preeminent animal welfare and advocacy organisation in New Zealand. The Society has been in existence for over 150 years with a supporter base representing more than 100,000 New Zealanders across the nation.

The organisation includes 29 Animal Welfare Centres across New Zealand and approximately 60 inspectors appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

SPCA welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Whanganui District Council Long-Term Plan 2024-2034.

## Submission

SPCA thanks the Whanganui District Council for the opportunity to contribute to the Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 consultation. Through this submission, we invite the Whanganui District Council to help us achieve more responsible cat ownership by supporting our subsidised desexing and microchipping programme, Snip 'n' Chip.

### ***New Zealand needs more responsible cat owners***

Cats are one of New Zealand's most popular companion animals. SPCA supports responsible ownership of companion cats to promote cat welfare and reduce problems with cat overpopulation. SPCA is concerned with a recent decrease in the number of companion cats that are desexed, only half of cats are microchipped, and very few are kept at home (Companion Animals New Zealand, 2020).

Each year, on average 20,000 cats and kittens come into our Centres. Many of these animals are directly or indirectly (through stray cat populations) a result of an owner failing to desex their



companion cat. Our SPCA Centres regularly see the welfare problems related to irresponsible companion cat ownership, including:

- the predictable cycle of unplanned litters of kittens born each year because there are too many undesexed companion cats allowed to breed; and
- the number of cats and kittens who are lost or have strayed, and we cannot find their owner because they are not microchipped, or their microchip details are not registered on a national database.

We also know that irresponsible cat ownership can lead to nuisance in communities (e.g., spraying, toileting, fighting), predation on wildlife, and the spread of toxoplasmosis to people and animals including farmed animals and vulnerable native marine mammals (e.g., Hector's and Māui dolphins).

Desexing and microchipping companion cats are some of the few tools we have to address problems with stray cats in our communities. Desexing a companion cat helps prevent unplanned litters of kittens which can end up as stray cats. Having a microchip registered on the New Zealand Companion Animal Register can help us identify an owner to reunite with a lost companion cat that may be living as a stray.

The cost of the procedure is the most common barrier for companion cat owners to desex and microchip their cats (Companion Animals New Zealand, 2020).

### ***Support more responsible cat ownership***

Our work in New Zealand communities to increase the number of cats and kittens that are desexed and microchipped is fundamental to our mandate to prevent cruelty and advance animal welfare. We provide more details on the welfare benefits of desexing and microchipping cats in the Background section of this submission.

Our Snip 'n' Chip programme offers subsidised desexing and microchipping for people who need help with overcoming the cost of the procedures. SPCA works closely with local veterinarians to



provide this service. The vouchers 'sell out' quickly once they are available, indicating this is a much sought-after service in communities.

SPCA has worked closely with Whangārei District Council, Auckland Council, Waitaki District Council, Dunedin City Council, and four Auckland Local Boards to address the barriers to desexing and microchipping cats.

We invite the Whanganui District Council to join us in our efforts to prevent problems before people end up dealing with difficult decisions about unwanted cats and cat behaviour in their communities.

We have included our Snip 'n' Chip Council Package with more detailed information about how we work with local councils to promote more responsible cat ownership.

## Background

SPCA advocates for more responsible ownership of companion cats to improve the welfare of cats and to help address the problems with community nuisance, predation, and the overpopulation of stray cats.

### ***Welfare-related benefits of desexing cats***

Desexing can reduce the risk of certain diseases, reduce the likelihood of roaming (which can increase risks of harm such as disease and infection, injury, and becoming lost), and increase lifespan. Desexing can also prevent the mortality of unplanned kittens which is often overlooked as a welfare problem.

**Table 1: Welfare-related benefits of desexing cats**

Decreased risk of reproductive disease
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mammary gland tumours are common in cats:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 16.3% of all tumours are in the mammary gland in an Italian registry, making this the second most common tumour site (Vascellari et al., 2009).</li></ul></li></ul>



- 17% of all cancers reported were in the mammary gland in a California registry (1963-1966) making this the third most common cancer (Dorn et al., 1968).
- 8.2% of tumours in a Swiss feline cancer registry (1965-2008) were mammary gland tumours (Graf et al., 2016).
- Japanese and Siamese breeds are at increased risk of mammary tumours (Graf et al., 2016; Ito et al., 1996).

- Mammary tumours in cats have a high risk of being malignant:

- >90% of mammary gland tumours in cats are malignant (Dorn et al., 1968; Hampe & Misdorp, 1974; Hayes et al., 1981).
- A more recent study with a Swiss feline cancer registry found that 83% of mammary tumours were malignant (Graf et al., 2016).

- Desexing is protective against mammary tumours in cats:

- Sexually intact cats have seven times the risk of developing mammary gland neoplasms when they get older compared to spayed female cats (Dorn et al., 1968).
- Ovariectomy was found to protect against mammary carcinomas but not against benign mammary tumours. Intact cats are seven times overrepresented in the population of cats diagnosed with mammary tumours (Misdorp et al., 1991).
- Desexed female cats had significantly lower odds than entire female cats of developing tumour/malignant tumour in the mammary gland (Graf et al., 2016).
- Desexing before one year of age is protective against mammary carcinoma: 91% risk of reduction if desexed before 6 months, 86% reduction if before one year. Desexing after two years increased the risk (likely due to very few cats being desexed after this age) (Overley et al., 2005).

- Pyometra (uterine infection) risk increases significantly with age for female cats (Potter et al., 1991).

#### Increased lifespan and improved overall health

- Undesexed companion cats have significantly shorter lifespans than desexed companion cats (Hamilton et al., 1969; Kent et al., 2022; O'Neill et al., 2015).





- Being undesexed is a risk factor for cats developing degenerative joint disease (Lascelles et al., 2010; Slingerland et al., 2011), which is considered a leading cause of pain in cats (Robertson et al., 2010).
- Improved health for both male and female cats in managed colonies may be related to reduced reproduction-related aggression in males (Cafazzo et al., 2019; Finkler et al., 2011).
- Desexed male cats live a mean of 62% longer than undesexed male cats, and desexed female cats live a mean of 39% longer than undesexed female cats (Banfield Pet Hospital, 2013).
- For companion cats over five years of age in an English veterinary database, desexed female cats lived .6 months longer than undesexed female cats and desexed male cats lived 1.8 years longer than undesexed male cats (O'Neill et al., 2015).
- For companion cats over 1 year of age in a California teaching hospital database (Kent et al., 2022):
  - desexed females had a median lifespan of 10.48 years, compared to undesexed females that had a median lifespan of 4.68 years.
  - desexed males had a median lifespan of 9.84 years, compared to undesexed males who had a median lifespan of 3.67 years.
- For companion cats over the age of five years of age in a Pennsylvania database (Hamilton et al., 1969):
  - desexed male cats lived a median of 10.8 years compared to undesexed males who lived a median of 8.6 years. Deaths from trauma and infections were less common in desexed males.
  - male cats desexed before the age of five months, had a median lifespan of thirteen years compared to male cats desexed at six to seven months who had a median lifespan of eleven years.
- Cats at least six years of age and not desexed in an English database were twice as likely to have signs related to degenerative joint disease (Maniaki et al., 2021).
- Desexed stray cats were in better welfare condition compared to intact cats likely due to reduced reproduction-related aggression in males (Gunther, et al., 2018).



- Desexed male and female cats in a TNR (Trap Neuter Return) managed colony were less likely to be injured or have impaired health which may be related to decreased risk of infectious disease, nutritional deficiencies, and stress associated with reproduction (Gilhofer et al., 2019).

#### Decreased roaming risks

- Intact male cats are at higher risk of traffic accidents, injuries, bite wounds, and disease transmission compared to desexed males (Finkler et al., 2011; Gunther et al., 2015; 2018).
- Roaming (and fighting and spraying) reduced or eliminated in 80-90% of cats (Hart & Cooper, 1984).
- Desexing reduces activity related to territorial behaviour. Authors note cats are less active, which they do not specify includes roaming (Cafazzo et al., 2019).

#### Improved kitten welfare

- Unplanned kittens contribute to high numbers of animals surrendered to shelters. Kittens under the age of six months made up the largest proportion of owner-surrender cats to an animal shelter in Australia; 34% of all owner-surrendered animals were emaciated (Marston & Bennett, 2009).
- Kittens that enter the shelter system because they are from unplanned breeding can often be in a poor state of welfare. This is before shelter entry and not related to shelter stay. An average of 30% of kittens that came into SPCA Centres are categorised as not healthy at intake. Not healthy categories include Dead on Arrival; Unhealthy not treatable; Unhealthy treatable (urgent); Unhealthy treatable (non-urgent) (SPCA Intake Health Data: Jan 2021-Jul 2023)
- Free-roaming kittens had the highest prevalence of emaciation and thinness, lowest BCS (Body Condition Score) scores, and higher prevalence of severe injury or disability than adults. (Gunther et al., 2018).



- There is high variability among kitten mortality in stray cats, however, at least one study showed 75% mortality before six months, with trauma being the most common cause of death (Nutter et al., 2004).

***Welfare-related benefits of microchipping cats***

SPCA prefers microchipping as the primary form of identification for a cat because the chip cannot be removed, dislodged, or lost without surgical intervention. Once a cat is microchipped, the 15-digit microchip number and the animal and owner’s details can be registered with a microchip registration database, such as the New Zealand Companion Animal Register (Companion Animals New Zealand, 2018). Microchipping helps ensure a lost cat can be reunited with their owner, which can be especially true during emergencies.

**Table 2: Welfare-related benefits of microchipping cats**

Welfare-related benefits of microchipping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During the 2011 Christchurch earthquake, 85% of owners of microchipped animals were contacted within 3 hours by the New Zealand Companion Animal Register, compared to only 25% of non-microchipped animals reunited with their owners within seven days (Companion Animals New Zealand, 2018).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 39% of microchipped cats were returned to their owners, compared to 2% returned for un-microchipped cats (Lord et al., 2010).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 51% of microchipped cats were returned to their owners compared to only 5% of un-microchipped cats (Lancaster et al., 2015).</li></ul>

The addition of a collar and tag for companion or managed stray cats can provide a visual indication of a cat’s ownership/management status and successfully help reunite lost cats with their owners/carers (Alberthsen et al., 2013; Lord et al., 2007, 2010).



### ***Other benefits of responsible cat ownership***

More responsible cat ownership can reduce the negative impacts cats can have including nuisance, predation on native wildlife, and spread of toxoplasmosis to both native animals and pastoral animals. Desexing and microchipping are longer-term strategies that will address problems with the overpopulation of cats and keeping cats at home can provide immediate local benefits for reducing nuisance such as spraying and toileting on neighbouring properties and reducing predation. Preventing cats from defecating away from home can also contribute to a reduction in the spread of toxoplasmosis to other animals and people.

**Table 3: Other benefits of responsible cat ownership**

Benefits of responsible cat ownership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduced risk of toxoplasmosis transmission to farmed animals (Aguirre et al., 2019; Stelzer et al., 2019).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decreased risk of toxoplasmosis transmission to native wildlife (Aguirre et al., 2019).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decreased predation on native wildlife (Bell &amp; Bell, 2003; Bellingham et al., 2010; Dowding &amp; Murphy, 2001; Imber et al., 2003; Veitch et al., 2011).</li></ul>

## **Conclusion**

Supporting more responsible cat ownership by subsidising the cost of desexing and microchipping cats helps protect cat welfare, breaks the cycle of unplanned kittens born each year, and reduces the number of cats and kittens that either end up in our Centres or remain as stray cats in our communities.

SPCA appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Whanganui District Council's Long-Term Plan consultation. SPCA is happy to provide further information if needed.



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## PROMOTING DESEXING AND MICROCHIPPING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Snip n Chip is a desexing and microchipping service aimed at reducing the number of unwanted and unowned cats — a humane solution for the feline population and welfare management.

Launched nationally in 2022, SPCA's Snip n Chip offers low-cost, accessible desexing and microchipping for cat owners who need it most.

SPCA values working with local councils to increase the number of desexed and microchipped animals in their area and promote responsible pet ownership.

## What is Snip n Chip?

- Available through an online system where owners can obtain a voucher to desex and microchip their cat at a heavily discounted rate.
- Designed to educate and promote responsible companion animal ownership by encouraging owners to desex and microchip their animals.
- Encourages owners to develop positive relationships with their local veterinary clinics.

## What are the benefits for Councils?

- Promote compliance with Councils cat bylaws
- Reduction in abandonment and euthanasia of cats
- Reduction of feline behaviour issues in the community – noise, fighting, breeding
- Ability to target specific suburbs within the Councils region
- Reduced complaints from residents
- Positive community relations
- Demonstration of commitment to humane reduction of stray, unowned, or unwanted cats and kittens.
- Please see our desexing website for more benefits to both Councils and members of the public <https://desexing.sPCA.nz/councils>

## What does the service cost for Councils?

- A set price for each surgery and microchip
- Run as many campaigns as your budget will allow
- Administration and marketing support included
- Regular reporting to allow for greater transparency and reporting back to constituents and councillors

## What have been the results?

Since launching in February 2022

- We have desexed 18,947 cats across numerous campaigns
- We estimate this has prevented 75,788 unwanted offspring
- Campaigns selling out in as little as one day
- Positive feedback from local communities for Councils participation
- Four councils and five local board partners have supported Snip n Chip campaigns in their communities

## What has been the feedback?

### **Dr Imogen Bassett, Principal Advisor Biosecurity, Auckland Council**

*Desexing and microchipping are an important part of our responsible cat ownership work in Tāmaki Makaurau. As the fence at the top of the cliff, snip and chip is good for cats, wildlife, and people. Working together with the SPCA, we can share responsible pet ownership messages with more Aucklanders. The SPCA's online system and helpful staff have made it really easy for us to prioritise our support towards areas with threatened species in need of protection from cats.*

### **Waitaki District Council**

**Regulatory Manager Andrew Bardsley** said “As well as the benefits for cat owners, Snip ‘n’ Chip will have an impact in the community in terms of a reduction in unwanted breeding and the number of orphaned or feral cats. Animal welfare is at the centre of this campaign, with the added benefits of a reduction in nuisance caused by cats and the ability for lost pets to be reunited with their owners through their microchips. The SPCA team’s work is extremely challenging and demanding, so it’s great that Waitaki District Council has been able to contribute towards this partnership and hopefully to reduce some of the cat welfare issues in Waitaki”

**Communications Team member Sonia Martinez** said “Our residents were really supportive of the campaign and we had lots of positive feedback saying it made a big impact on their ability to get their pet spayed and microchipped. Lots of sharing and engagement on social media not only resulted in the vouchers selling out super quickly but also helped spread the message of responsible cat ownership throughout the district”.

## Cat owner feedback:

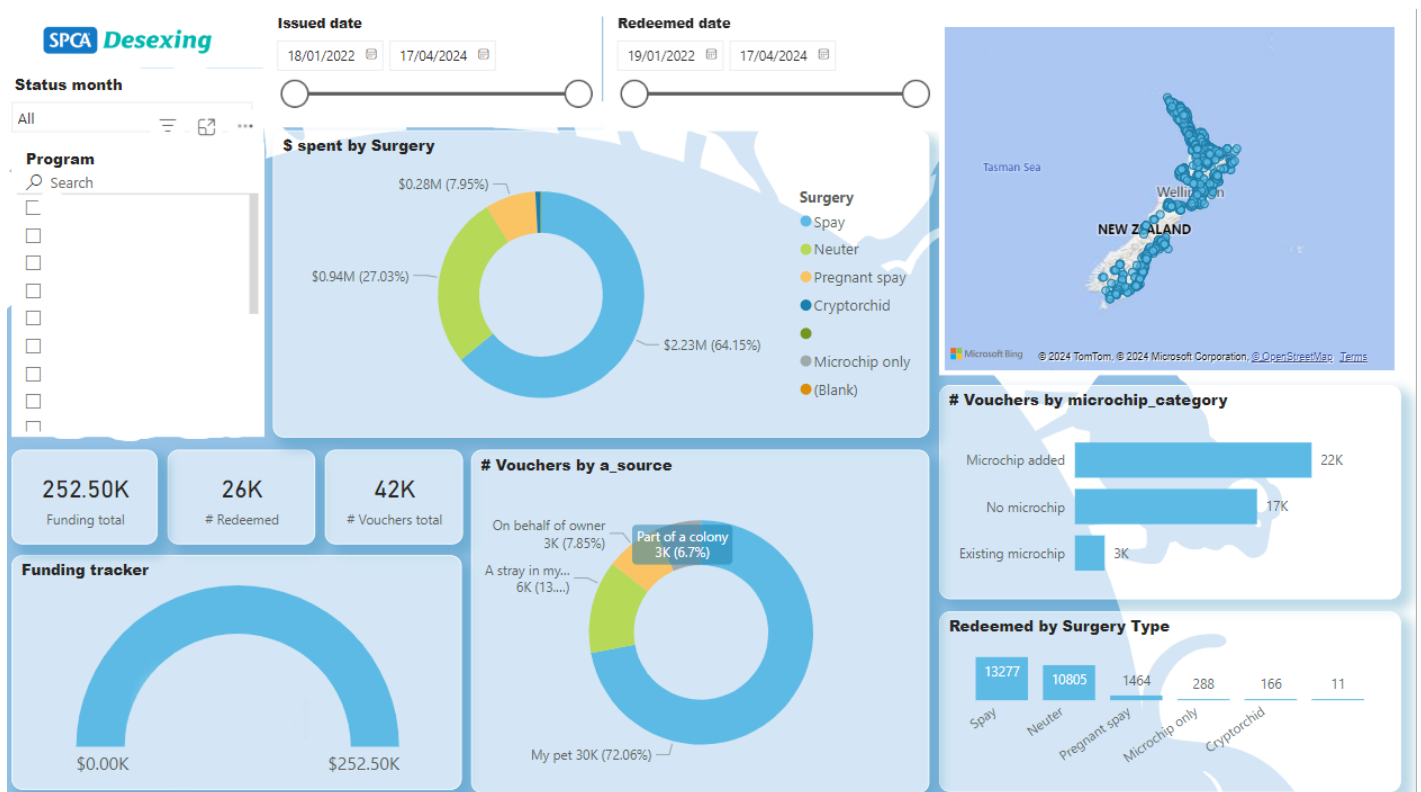
Waitaki resident, Helen, on Facebook said "Thank you so much for this wonderful initiative. I live on a rural property and got a huge surprise when a little wildie/dumped kitten wandered into my kitchen in late January. S/he (I think he's a 'he') has settled into domestic life perfectly. He's staying in the house with another former wildie until I can build an outside house/enclosure for them. The subsidised spaying/neutering is greatly appreciated."

## Duration:

- Studies have shown that to make effective change, desexing initiatives should be run regularly over a number of years
- A Campaign funded at \$15k per year over 3 years (\$45k total), could desex 350 cats and prevent thousands of unwanted kittens.

## Reporting:

An example of the types of reporting available



## SPCA Key Contact:

Contact Name	Title	Phone Number	Email Address
Rebecca Dobson	National Desexing Programmes Manager	027 880 2476	<a href="mailto:rebecca.dobson@spca.nz">rebecca.dobson@spca.nz</a>





13 May 2024

David Langford  
Chief Executive  
PO Box 637  
Whanganui 4541

[yourcouncil@whanganui.govt.nz](mailto:yourcouncil@whanganui.govt.nz)

Dear David

**Raised Platform Proposal Somme Parade**

At our meeting in April, AA Whanganui District Council discussed the recent newspaper article regarding the proposal for an additional raised platform on Somme Parade between Market Place and Bates Street.

We noted there was reference to the AA being unable to support the existing platform across Drews Avenue intersection, (prior to its construction, 2021). We also made a submission to the city's Urban Transportation Study (2011) as to the importance of Somme Parade as a direct route.

The purpose of this letter is to confirm that our thinking has not changed. We observe that if anything, the alternative 'arterial' routes have become even more difficult to negotiate for heavy vehicles. Realistically the status quo should remain, the logic for which is covered in our original submission attached.

Yours sincerely

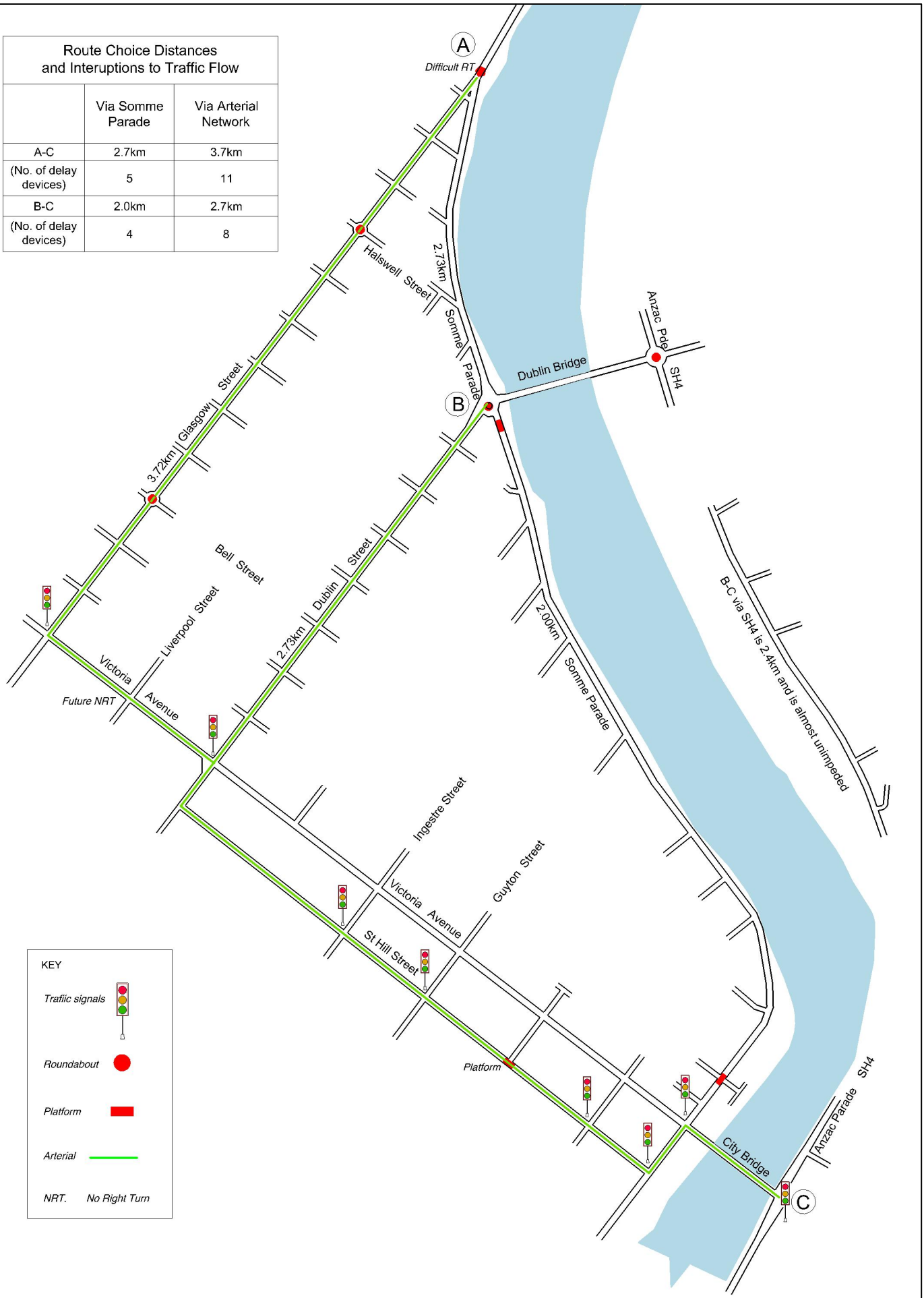
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cameron', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Russell Cameron  
Chair AA Whanganui District Council

CC: [roger.mcleay@downer.co.nz](mailto:roger.mcleay@downer.co.nz)

Route Choice Distances and Interruptions to Traffic Flow

	Via Somme Parade	Via Arterial Network
A-C	2.7km	3.7km
(No. of delay devices)	5	11
B-C	2.0km	2.7km
(No. of delay devices)	4	8



**KEY**

- Traffic signals
- Roundabout
- Platform
- Arterial
- NRT. No Right Turn





Roger McLeay  
Downers  
Whanganui

By email only to: <[Roger.McLeay@downer.co.nz](mailto:Roger.McLeay@downer.co.nz)>

Dear Roger

### **Taupo Quay - Proposed Raised Pedestrian Platform**

My apologies for not being timelier with a response from Whanganui Council of NZAA on this issue. In all honesty, I think it was lost with our communications about SH3 London St.

Anyway, it was discussed at our Council meeting on Monday 16 November 2020.

Our Council has had real concerns about the short section of Taupo Quay from Drews Avenue to Victoria Ave, ever since it was reconstructed and made so narrow. Those concerns were shared with Rui Leitao, WDC's then Roading Manager. He assured us to have faith as the narrowing and speed bumps would deter heavy traffic. The evidence by observation would suggest otherwise. Heavy trucks regularly use this route, in particular to cross the river over the City Bridge to SH4, due to the weight and dimension restricted Dublin Bridge. In fact, there is a heavy component of left turn vehicles at this intersection indicating there is still a fairly high demand.

We note from the Whanganui District Plan's associated maps that, Somme Parade has had its status as a traffic route removed which we assume is to give alignment to the future heritage / pedestrianisation of the area as per WDC's vision documents for the area.

We would acknowledge that any speed reduction of the traffic, gives assistance to pedestrians, especially on Saturday's market day. However, by adding more platforms along the road, there are negative impacts (factually) on vehicle running costs, and emissions.

We believe therefore, until there is the reality of a new bridge, we cannot in the meantime agree that Somme Parade should be reduced to an obstacle course for vehicles. We are further concerned that if WDC has in mind that motorists should use the designated arterial network to avoid Somme Parade, we need to be made aware of how Council proposes to avoid or remedy the consequential, and considerable environmental / vehicle operating impacts.

We make the point that whilst traffic-calming measures act as the instruments to reduce the speed of vehicles (and can make a major contribution to road safety); there is a down side. Traffic devices constructed in roadways to manage speeds create additional vehicle emissions and vehicle wear and tear. This is because motorists have to use brakes and accelerate more frequently to negotiate them. Such devices are commonly only used for Local (residential) Area Traffic Management (LATM), not on arterial or principal routes.

Authoritative studies have shown that their effects on motor vehicles more than double carbon emissions, (along with nitrogen, as NO or NO2) and increasing air pollution by two-five times with particulate matter. It is timely therefore that WDC officials be looking at all avenues for reducing emissions, because cars (and HCV's) operate most efficiently when they drive at consistent speeds.

JU-238827-10-167-V1  
JU-238827-10-163-V1

**GUIDING LIFE'S JOURNEYS  
FOR OVER 110 YEARS.**

New Zealand Automobile Association



It is important we raise this because WDC declared a 'climate emergency' 11 February 2020, which is in complete contrast to the proposed actions to put obstacles in our local roads, with the principal objective to force motorists to take longer and more inefficient routes. Surely, this is inappropriate. There are 9,000 v.p.d. using Somme Parade and 50% of them travel inbound and beyond Moutoa Gardens. The additional distances and time taken to use alternative routes are diametrically at odds with WDC's environmental position.

We are told every little bit helps and to this end, our official position is *"The (NZ) AA recognises that motorists can contribute to combating climate change. AA Members are keen to minimise their emissions. However, AA research has found that Members do not generally support initiatives that significantly restrict their freedom of mobility or dramatically increase the cost of motoring."*

We assume over time additional platforms are proposed on Somme Parade and it would be helpful to disclose any such strategy when seeking feedback otherwise we are dealing with discrete issues not part of the 'big picture'.

There are two platforms already in place, one near Dublin Bridge and the other Drews Avenue and have anecdotally made no difference to the vehicle counts.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that logging / curtain-siders et al continue to trundle through Somme Parade, for the reason it is where they want to go, via the path of least resistance, because the alternatives are unrealistic for many.

While it may feel good to advocate that all heavy traffic and eventually the majority of users have to re-route through Dublin/Glasgow etc, (depending on destination), the arterial road hierarchy as described in the District Plan not only needs to be made clearer to motorists, it also has to be made more route-friendly.

The attached plan was prepared to show a comparison between using Somme Parade and designated WDC arterial routes for the SH4 bound trips. There are some alarming results. A vehicle travelling south from the (awkward) divide on Somme Parade into Glasgow Street to cross the City bridge via St Hill Street, has to negotiate 8 sets of traffic signals plus two roundabouts and a recently constructed (and inappropriate) raised platform in St Hill Street. It is not any better for a motorist coming off the Dublin Bridge either with the same destination. Very clearly, the arterial roads do not function as their hierarchy suggests.

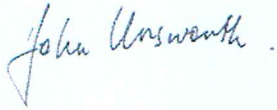
The additional distance (time) travelled as well as the interruptions en-route/s (when compared with using Somme Parade are) are about as environmentally unfriendly as can be imagined. Eventually a new bridge with sufficient capacity may solve these problems.

It is for these reasons that we see the logic of the proposal being ahead of time to complement WDC's longer-term vision for the lower end of Taupo Quay / Somme Parade, and most definitely if proceeded with, is completely and blatantly out of step with its environmental policies.

Until the matters outlined above are taken more seriously, we regret we are in no position to give the support for the continuing downgrading of the Somme Parade route. We would suggest making use of your current Traffic and Speed Limits Bylaw 2017 to regulate certain classes of vehicles at certain times / certain days if you think there should immediate restrictions. This was the view of AA when we submitted on the WUTS many years ago.

Should you require support for the new bridge proposal AA Whanganui will be very willing to oblige in addressing the significant and compromising concerns the existing bridge creates.

Yours

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Unsworth".

John Unsworth

Chair

NZAA Whanganui

Jason Kaye



Whanganui

06 May 2024

The Chief Executive  
Whanganui District Council  
PO Box 637  
Whanganui 4541

Dear Sir,

Late Submission to Long Term Plan 2024-2034

Apologies for the presentation of this submission to Council's LTP consultation after the closing date. This was an unfortunate consequence of work commitments and a desire to provide a full response to the matters in accordance with the directions of the consultation document. Given that the submission is a matter of days late, I do hope that it can still be considered by Council.

In general, in my opinion across the issues is that significant long term decisions should not be made based on our current need for rationalisation of services to address immediate cost of living concerns. Austerity measures should not be used to remove reasonable services provided by the Council. However, at the same time, the Council should not be picking up perceived central government shortfalls to provide funding for activities that fall more reasonable with government funding.

Part 1 Asset Sales

I am unable to comment on asset sales without greater understanding of value and suitability for sale in relation to the relevant market conditions.

Part 2 Reducing Services

Davis Library

This is obviously a significant community resource that is accessible by everyone, without cost of entry impediments to use and enjoyment. Generations of families have made use of this facility for learning and enjoyment. In my view, as our central library, this is critical social infrastructure and the minimum expectation of seven day operation (albeit with the current reduced weekend hours) should not be compromised by the funding of other physical infrastructure.

My preference is therefore for the continuation of the existing Davis Library service hours (Option 3).

Whanganui East Pool

While the annual operating costs are significant, it seems premature to close the facility ahead of the proposed Whanganui outdoor swimming feasibility study. I would therefore support at least a deferment of decision making on the future of the pool to enable the long term strategic

approach to be defined by the Council, including consideration of the ability to charge an increased entrance fee and how this could better contribute to the operational cost.

In my view, until the strategic position is better understood, the pool should remain open but no significant investment should be committed. In the absence of better information that would be provided by the proposed Whanganui outdoor swimming feasibility study, I therefore do not support either of the offered Option 1 and Option 2 scenarios.

#### Repertory Theatre

I am opposed to the demolition of the building and to the loss of the community use without further presentation of the overall community space resource. There does not seem to be a pressing demand for the site to be released for redevelopment, and taking an immediate decision to demolish the building or push for sale of the site in the current negative economic climate seems premature.

On the basis of the case presented, it is apparent that the bank to the rear of the building needs to be stabilised regardless of the final site use. It therefore seems logical that Council commits to that stabilisation with the associated financial burden, and I support that aspect of the Option 2 and Option 3 scenarios.

With the benefit of the bank stabilised, there may be greater potential for commercial reuse of the building, even if based on retention of just the façade. However, any conversion to a commercial use or decision on sale should be supported by strategic assessment of the overall provision, availability and demand for community space. In other words, understanding of the wider community space resource is required to confirm that the existing community resources of Whanganui will accommodate the existing uses of the Repertory Theatre, with provision for increased demand given the projected population increase. The building seems to provide a very different sized space to the other Council offerings and would appear to support a very different community use than could be replicated in other spaces.

In general, making a bold decision for demolition and sale of the site in the current climate lacks strategic sense. If strategic assessment concludes that loss of the space would not be adequately offset by capacity of other local community facilities, I would encourage a review of the retention case.

#### Avery at Rotokawau Virginia Lake

While the loss of this facility would be disappointing, this seems somewhat inevitable in the context of the previous study that identified the facility deficiencies against contemporary design and care expectations.

I therefore reluctantly support the Option 1 closure of the facility.

#### Mainstreet Hanging Baskets

While the flower baskets make a significant contribution to the vibrant appearance of the town centre, reduction or total loss is consistent with acceptance of cost saving measures needed and I support the Option 1 removal and associated saving.

However, as the Council has a significant landscape staff resource, it would be interesting to hear commentary from them as to whether they could propose alternative landscape measures that could provide similar character contribution at reduced cost.

## Glassworks

It is noted that the LTP consultation document reports a required annual rate funded operation contribution of \$192,000 while the accompanying Full Financial Statements document states a significantly higher proposed 2024/25 rate funded contribution of \$423,000. I don't know how to read financial statements, and there is likely an explanation for the difference between the two reported rate funded contributions.

The option to seek a buyer for the Glassworks is appealing, but this requires confirmation that it is a realistic scenario and that there is a likelihood of finding a viable purchaser given the current operational reliance on external (ratepayer) funding.

Previous reporting has stated that the lease on the Glassworks property will expire in 2025 and indicated that this property is not well suited to contemporary expectations. A resolution to continue to seek to find a purchaser really needs to be accompanied by a deadline, and the lease expiry seems to be a logical end date.

Subject to confirmation that the annual required ratepayer funding is around \$192,000, I support the continued operation of the Glassworks by the Council through to the 2025 lease expiry.

I do not support Option 2 being the continued Council ownership and ratepayer obligation of the Glassworks.

## Drop Off Points for Rural Rubbish

As urban households pay for private waste collection services it is not reasonable for them to face an additional burden of paying for rural collection services. If Council is to continue this service, it should be funded through a catchment based rate on those that directly benefit from the service.

I therefore do not support Option 1. If Council cannot develop a catchment based rate to relate the service costs to the users, then I support Option 2.

## Gonville Library

While I am defensive of the role of The Davis Library as the City's central library, I am less supportive of the satellite library facilities.

I am therefore supportive of Option 2, being the closure of Gonville Library for (at least) a day during the week.

## Winter Gardens

The \$140,000 annual rate burden for the winter gardens is somewhat surprising in the context of other operating costs across Council's services.

I do not have a strong opinion on either Option 1 or Option 2.

## Community Grant Funding

In the context of the current cost of living increases and the significant proposed rate increase, I am supportive of the reduction to community funding proposed by Option 3.

This feels like a soft target for focus, but is consistent with all other services being rationalised.



### Part 3 Projects Not Being Funded

I am generally supportive of the positions expressed by Council on the specific matters.

I would however, like to add my opinion that the provision of social rent housing for the community is not a role of local government in New Zealand. Facilitating development through a supportive consenting process is where council plays a part in the process. Beyond that, Council's role should be advocating our position to Kainga Ora and the Ministry of Housing and Development.

### Part 4 Long Term Investments

#### Funding of Core infrastructure

I am generally supportive of the proposed Option 1 increase to asset investment funding. However, where asset improvements materially improve the level of service to a clearly defined catchment, and can be expected to clearly improve value to property within that catchment, consideration should be given to specifically rating that benefitting catchment. For example, if stormwater network improvements remove a previously mapped inundation risk to properties, there is a direct improvement for the circumstances and value of the benefitting properties. Given the overall cost of living increases, the subsidy of such benefits to specific properties through cost to all ratepayers should be considered further.

#### Hotel and carpark

Financial investment in a hotel (with related carpark) is not a core function of Council and in my view it is not a role that Council should be intervening in the local market. Beyond that fundamental position, my opinion is that it is the wrong economic climate to embark on this type of aspirational activity.

Covid-19 demonstrated the vulnerability of such businesses that are reliant on open borders and open internal movement to disruption. Council already has the New Zealand International Commercial Pilot Academy exposed to the risk of border closure. Council should not commit funding to commercial activity with this risk.

In terms of the specific case, it is concerning that Council is proposing this in the context of being unsuccessful in previous attempts to entice hotel operators to town. It is difficult to understand and support the addition of the financial commitment and risk to ratepayers of a hotel when hotel operators are themselves not willing to invest.

Part of the case is that a hotel is needed to support hosting of more large-scale events. There seems to be significant competition for event hosting across the country, with other Council's moving to paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to host premier sporting events. In that context, I am concerned that the presence of a new hotel will not be a deciding factor in the locating of events.

I am also conscious of the message that this approach sends to current accommodation providers within the City, essentially telling them that they are not good enough, and how this would influence investment decisions in private accommodation improvements or establishment.

If there is an existing financial case in support of a hotel, then that can be publicised for the interrogation of hotel operators. That should be the end of Council's involvement in development of a hotel.

On the basis of my fundamental objection to Council involvement in a hotel, I object to money and staff resources being allocated to a business case.

#### Opera House

While I am supportive of continued investment in the Opera House, I do not support committing to a \$17.8m improvement in the current climate of cost savings and do not see this is consistent with the current use of the Opera House.

The LTP consultation document presents the case that the Opera House compares poorly to facilities in other locations due to the absence of a fly system, suggesting that certain productions will not come to Whanganui. I am accepting of that as a consequence arising from not committing to the upgrade. Whanganui needs to think more regionally, and if facilities are offered in Palmerston North or New Plymouth to host productions that we miss out on, that is an acceptable compromise.

I am also concerned that the investment required for a new fly system would result in the Opera House being priced beyond the accessibility of local productions, such as the various local dance performances hosted throughout the year.

Accordingly, I support the Option 1 scenario of purchase of the current scaffolding gear system.

#### Marae Development

I support Option 2 on the basis that the proposed funding is a central government function.

#### Replacement WSLS Building

While WSLS provide an incredibly valuable service, the funding request is significant and the stated rebuild cost range of \$5m to \$7m suggests that plans are not resolved. The inclusion of community facilities within the rebuild could be helpful, but further commentary is necessary from Council to explain whether this accords with their strategy for community space provision and how this would relate to the future of the adjacent Duncan Pavilion community space.

Further clarity is necessary regarding building design and whether all proposed aspects are necessary along with understanding of the other anticipated funding sources before Council should commit money to the project.

#### Pakaitore Reserve Paving and Crossing

I support the Option 1 scenario for the construction of a raised pavement crossing.

#### Rapanui Road Trail

I support the Option 2 do nothing scenario. I do not believe that the pathway would be sufficiently used to justify the expense and the expenditure would be excessive in a time of cost cutting focus.

#### Other Matters

##### Montgomery Road Crossing at Intersection with SH3/Great North Road

Within the Council's road improvement program, I would support consideration of a raised table or similar purpose designed and constructed traffic calming device to the already formed pedestrian crossing point over Montgomery Road adjacent to the intersection with Great North Road/State Highway 3.

The crossing presents as one of the more hazardous pedestrian obstacles within the area, noting that school children attending St Johns Hill School and commuters encouraged by the recent installed bus stop nearby use the crossing.

In my experience, it appears that a lot of south/east bound vehicles from Great North Road turning into Montgomery Road will do so at a higher speed than would be expected when the opportunity presents to turn in without waiting for other traffic. This is perhaps due to the appearance of a wide available turn geometry.

Montgomery Road traffic approaching the intersection are doing so under power, having just climbed the steep incline and this speed combined with a short visibility splay (due to the vertical alignment of the road) results in little time between cars coming into view of pedestrians and reaching the pedestrian crossing point. Such vehicles are often also focussed on the northbound Great North Road lane to see if they will need to stop.

A raised table would be expected to influence the behaviour of users familiar with this road environment, curtailing speeds through the intersection. This would be of direct benefit to pedestrian users of this route.

As the road carries a significant volume of heavy traffic, it would not seem suited to the addition of one of the rubber structures recently installed along Guyton Street, noting also that nearby homes would suffer from the noise of vehicles crashing over such a structure.

Kerbside Recycling

I support the long overdue introduction of a kerbside recycling service but I am strongly opposed to a further \$100.00 per year rate burden per household for food scrap collection.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above matters.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JKaye', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Jason Kaye

From: Judith Robinson [REDACTED] >  
Sent: Monday, 20 May 2024 2:08 pm  
To: Contacts WDC <[yourcouncil@wanganui.govt.nz](mailto:yourcouncil@wanganui.govt.nz)>  
Subject: WDCouncil Long Term Plan 2924 to 2934

To Administrator

Please would you forward the following letter to all councillors

Thank you very much

Judith robinson

[REDACTED]

20<sup>th</sup> May  
2024

Dear District Councillors,  
Re Public Libraries section of the 2024 Long Term Plan

I missed sending in a submission but would like to express my support in the hope that all of you are committed to maintaining the wonderful library services Whanganui D. Council has provided and continues to provide to the citizens of Whanganui.

There are many, many reasons why libraries should be easily accessible (both physically and by opening days and times) to everyone in a community.

The quotes, given in your Library site, by Malorie Blackman ( UK Children's Laureate 2015) and Sir Terry Pratchett, (author ) succinctly sing the praises and the importance of libraries in a community.

The libraries (including the Alexander and the Mobile libraries) in Whanganui centre and suburbs provide peaceful, relaxing, friendly environments for free access to and advice about over 100,000 physical and digital items.

Outreach activities like Tea and Tales introduces attendees to fiction and poetry they would not otherwise read. The digital workshops for seniors were well attended last year. Furthermore all WDC libraries are involved in an amazing array of events and activities for Techweek, the nationwide Festival of Technology on now.(20<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> May).

Several people are employed in libraries on a part time basis. This may suit their circumstances so, from a social viewpoint, this gives appropriate flexibility for the working hours of full time library staff while providing citizens with a work opportunity that may not otherwise be available.

The quiet, comfortable environments provided in all the libraries for individuals to study, community groups to meet, work or relax as well as the friendly delivery of real coffee are assets to Whanganui.

With Regards  
Judith Robinson



TRAMWAYS WHANGANUI TRUST

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1 May 2024

David Langford  
Chief Executive  
Whanganui District Council  
101 Guyton Street  
Whanganui 4500

Dear David

Please accept this letter as a submission from our Trust regarding the future, both short and longterm for the Whanganui Tram, noting the amount of \$3.24 m currently allowed for in Year 4 of the LTP.

It is our view that funding a track extension alone, will not provide sufficient economic, social or cultural benefit to justify the current estimated cost. We do note however, that there was considerable and positive feedback provided by the public as a result of informal options provided by the Tram volunteer group. This feedback generally supported a track extension, albeit in the absence of any projected cost or a business plan

It has been suggested to us that creating a “heritage transport experience” which includes the Tram, the PS Waimarie, Whanganui Regional Museum, the Durie Hill elevator and a vintage bus or vintage vehicles, could be a more viable offering for an additional Whanganui visitor experience.

We caution against planning and potentially funding an expanded Vintage Transport visitor experience without considering other visitor options which may provide more community benefit, or undertaking the background research needed to identify the gaps in our existing visitor offering. As we recall, previous research undertaken by Whanganui District Council identified the Whanganui River as the best known attraction.

We note also that any Whanganui visitor experience would be enhanced considerably by including local Māori heritage in a form acceptable to our Whanganui iwi partners. This acknowledges current national visitor research which rates highly the opportunity for a cultural experience.

We ask you to consider whether the \$3.24 m proposed for a Tram track extension included in Year 4 of this LTP, could be spent more wisely if increased visitor attraction and awareness is the driver behind including this.

In the meantime, we do encourage the early consideration of a joint management function overseeing our existing heritage transport experiences and would be willing to assist in any such transition.

Our preference would be a joint management of both the PS Waimarie and The Tram operations.

For transparency, we have had no formal discussion with the Waimarie Trust regarding this.

But we do see some immediate advantages such as;

- Financial management
- Ensuring Health and Safety requirements are met.
- Management of staff and volunteers
- Joint marketing expanding on existing initiatives
- Associated economies of scale

We also suggest a closedown period for the tram over the winter months in 2024, in order to transition effectively to a new management structure by the time the summer season begins.

We assume that the rationale for extending the current route must have come from the feasibility study undertaken by council, however we understand that the \$3.24M estimate in the Long Term Plan only includes extending the track route.

We understand that this costing does not take into account the other costs we expand on below such as;

- the electrics (overhead wiring)
- road safety compliance issues,
- consultation with affected residents and businesses,
- tram maintenance,
- the cost of the restoration and licencing of a second tram restored for inclusion in an expanded operation,
- increased operating costs related to increased services, staffing and administration.

### **Relevant Existing Concerns**

- The current Tram operation has a significant lack of local and readily accessible technical and mechanical infrastructure support.

- We are dependent on a single resource, namely, Allan Neilson, a Wellington based Electrical Engineer and WTM Life Member, on whom we rely for technical (electrical) advice, Safety Case Documentation, and his access to the wider vintage tram transport community e.g. COTMA, Wellington Tramway Museum Inc, and MOTAT for resources such as spare parts, compliance, audit advice etc.
- We do not have a pool of people that can provide the technical advice at the level that Allan has been able to provide.
- There is also a significant lack of local and readily accessible mechanical infrastructure support. Major mechanical work on the Tram cannot be carried out locally. This was clearly apparent when we had to remove the motors from the tram after the 2015 flood event. We had to go cap in hand to a few local workshop facilities and get temporary workshop access for the heavy mechanical work required to remove and refit the motors.
- The tram body that was gifted to WDC by Dave Harre was originally fitted out at the old Powerco workshop in Taupo Quay prior to the property being sold to Mitre 10. Basic mechanical work on the underside of the Tram in the existing “workshop” is hampered by insufficient clearance provided by a smaller shallower pit installed as a cost cutting method when the shed was constructed.
- The Tram operation also has a significant lack of local and readily accessible infrastructure support for the overhead electrical catenary system. The catenary wire system requires specialist equipment and technical support to maintain. Local overhead line mechanics e.g. Downer, are very limited in the level of support they can provide. In a road corridor this will be a major risk. The Direct Current (DC) supply for the Tram is well past its operational and supportable lifespan and the risk of failure is high. Capital cost for a new modern supportable power supply is currently estimated at \$200,000.
- Compared to other Vintage Transport operators e.g. Wellington Tramway Museum Inc and MOTAT, we suffer from a lack of sufficiently experienced technical and mechanical resources to support the operation. Wellington Tramway Museum has, compared to us, a huge pool of people with DC traction experience with experience from the Wellington Tram and Trolley Bus operation and have existing railway workshops nearby. They also have a huge pool of “bits” salvaged from the old Tram and Trolley bus system to keep the trams operating. Importantly they have wider area from which they can draw visitors and tourists.. The same could be said for MOTAT. Both



organisations operate within the boundaries of a dedicated area which is not primarily public roading space e.g. QE2 park for WTM. **We are trying to fit a vintage transport vehicle into a somewhat congested modern-day roading system.**

- It may also be useful to work with Steam Rail Whanganui Inc as there may be advantages in having them included under a Whanganui Vintage Transport operation. Steam Rail attracts a lot of visitors to Whanganui as part of their support of train excursions. Steam Rail also have volunteers experienced in heavy track and traction systems who are ex NZR.

We trust you find this submission and additional information helpful going forward. As current Trustees, while we retain our enthusiasm and support for the Tram, and have done our best to fulfil the role we have been asked to do, we are also realistic about the costs of expanding the current operation, and as we have described, do have concerns about whether this is the best use of the funding currently proposed for year 4 of the LTP.

All four current Trustees have offered their resignations as at the end of this financial year, which will assist in making new appointments for a changed structure, if our advice is seen as a practical solution to what is currently an unsustainable operation.

We would like to speak to this submission please.

Kia ora

Kritzo Venter, Robert Gaskin, Annette Main, Val Bartrum  
Trustees  
Tramways Whanganui Trust