

Te Hononga a Hapori Community Link



Whanganui District Council

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LTP decisions guided by community

Whanganui District Council's elected representatives have been guided by community feedback while making decisions on the council's Long-Term Plan 2024-34.

Mayor Andrew Tripe says the draft Long-Term Plan consultation document was developed in a tough economic environment.

"This Long-Term Plan period has been difficult not only for us but for councils all around the country.

"The rising costs of inflation, insurance and interest have put pressure on councils to deliver the same or more services with less money. We've worked hard to balance this with the reality that we need to keep rates rises as affordable as possible because our community is also facing increasing costs."

Mayor Andrew says councillors are hugely appreciative of the many people who gave feedback on the draft Long-Term Plan.

"An unprecedented 1608 submissions were made, a 163 percent increase compared to the previous Long-Term Plan's 608 submissions. As part of the public hearings process, 111 submitters also spoke directly to me and my fellow councillors."

Mayor Andrew says it will be evident that community feedback was well-considered by elected representatives.

"Throughout our decision-making you will see instances where we adjusted our positions or found new options to match the community's needs in response to submissions.

"In many cases, feedback from submitters was relatively evenly split, suggesting differing views among the community. Where submitters wanted a decision in favour, another group had an opposite view. This means we could not please everyone, so for some people, it may not feel like they were heard because the outcome was not what they wanted – the aviary decision is one example of this.

"When making decisions there are often a range of factors to take into account as well as community feedback and you'll see the influence of this in our decision-making as well.

"I believe Whanganui's the greatest place to live on earth and has a great future and I'm confident we followed a robust process through several days of often gruelling deliberations."

Decisions on cuts

- Informed by community feedback, the council has decided that the Repertory Theatre will be put up for sale to a community group.
- Primarily due to animal welfare concerns, elected representatives voted to close the aviary at Rotokawau Virginia Lake and rehome the birds.
- The council will continue to fund the Winter Gardens.
- Drop-off points for rural rubbish will be retained.
- The council will retain ownership of New Zealand Glassworks and work on ways to reduce the amount of ratepayer funding it needs.
- Gonville Library will keep the same hours of operation, and the Davis Library will close slightly earlier each weekday and Saturday, rather than closing for a full day each week as proposed in the draft Long-Term Plan.
- Whanganui East Pool will remain open for the next summer season and \$2 million of capital funding has been provisioned in the Long-Term Plan while the council explores an options report for outdoor swimming in Whanganui.
- The Mainstreet hanging flower baskets will shift to a summer-only display, with more of their funding coming from CBD-targeted rates (funded by businesses in the CBD).



- Youth Initiatives will have a budget of \$40,000 approved from 1 July 2024 alongside the creation of a working party to make recommendations on the appropriate structure for a Youth Council or advisory group going forward.
- The potential \$16 million of asset sales has been removed from the budget to allow further research and community engagement. Instead, the council has set a target of increasing revenue from its property portfolio by \$450,000 – with the recent purchase of properties in the CBD already securing \$200,000 towards this target.

Decisions on long-term investments

Mayor Andrew says, "It's important that in our Long-Term Plan we are aspirational and invest to make Whanganui a more liveable and attractive place for residents and visitors in future years."

Elected representatives have voted to include funding for the Whanganui Surf Lifeguard Service patrol building, marae development, and building a new Royal Whanganui Opera House stage house (following a business case and provided external funding is confirmed).

"The council will also be increasing the level of community grant funding by \$100,000 a year, given the benefit of these grants during tough economic times and ensuring community cohesion is a focus."

In response to community feedback, a council-developed Whanganui hotel and Pākaitore Reserve crossing will not go ahead.

Mayor Andrew says, "The council has made a decision not to develop or operate a hotel. However, the majority of people agreed that Whanganui needed a hotel. Our focus will be in attracting a hotel to Whanganui so we have retained money in year-one of the budget for a feasibility study to show developers that a hotel in Whanganui is a viable proposition.

"Due to the tough economic environment, the Rapanui Road trail will not go ahead at this time but some provisional capital funding is allocated in the year 2032, to enable community stakeholders to commence fundraising for the Rapanui Road trail," Mayor Andrew says.

Funding for core infrastructure like roading, footpaths and water services will be increased to keep up with rising costs and for additional projects identified.

The details of all of these decisions, including how they compare to the preferred option during the consultation period, and the provisional average rates rise for 2024/25, are expected to be available later this week. All submitters to the Long-Term Plan will receive a letter outlining the final decisions made after the Long-Term Plan has been adopted on Tuesday, 16 July 2024.

Give Antenna a go!

The Antenna app is a great way to get short alerts from Whanganui District Council on everything from road closures to community events. Once you download the app, there's no need to sign-in – alerts will be sent straight to your phone. Download the app at: www.whanganui.govt.nz/antenna



Rates rebate reminder

Apply for rebate by Sunday, 30 June

Ratepayers who may qualify for a rates rebate must apply by **Sunday, 30 June 2024** for the 2023-24 rating year (the rating year runs from 1 July to 30 June). If your income is low to moderate (maximum \$30,100) you may be eligible for a rates rebate of up to \$750.

To determine whether you are eligible, Whanganui District Council requires your gross income earnings (before tax) for the tax period ending 31 March 2023. The rates rebate will be calculated on your income earnings and your 2023-24 Whanganui District Council rates and Horizons Regional Council rates. For more information, please contact the council on 06 349 0001 and ask for the rates team.

Dog registrations

Pay by 31 July to get your discount!

It's dog rego time at Whanganui District Council! Pay your dog registration **on or before Wednesday, 31 July 2024** to receive a prompt-payment discount – and you'll also go into the draw to win a doggie gift bag! Pay your dog registration online at: www.whanganui.govt.nz/pay-dog-rego

Council meetings

Upcoming June meetings

Operations and Performance Committee	9.30am Thursday 13 June	Council Chamber, 101 Guyton Street
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Council meeting	9.30am Tuesday 25 June	Council Chamber, 101 Guyton Street
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Meetings in July

Tamaupoko Hui	1.00pm Wednesday 10 July	Ngā Tangata Tiaki o Whanganui
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Council meeting	9.30am Tuesday 16 July	Council Chamber, 101 Guyton Street
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• Long-Term Plan 2024-34 adoption and rates resolution

Council meeting	9.30am Wednesday 17 July	Council Chamber, 101 Guyton Street
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• Long-Term Plan 2024-34 adoption and rates resolution – reserve day

Agendas: www.whanganui.govt.nz/agendas
Livestreamed council meetings:
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www.whanganui.govt.nz/live-council-meetings