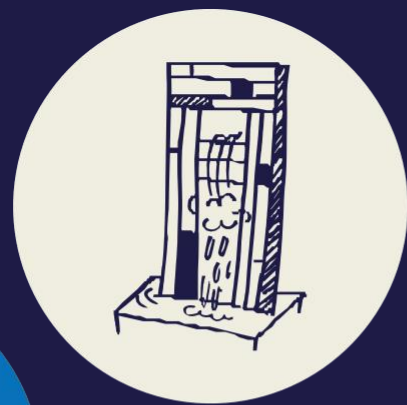


HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL – INITIAL FEEDBACK

Waikato Region Public Transport Business Improvement Review

Waikato Regional Council



16 March 2022



**Hamilton
City Council**
Te kaunihera o Kirikiriroa

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 feedback is aligned to the priority '**A city where our people thrive**'.

As a city we want to have safe routes for people to move around our city, alongside efficient transport connections to connect Hamilton to other places.

Council Approval and Reference

This feedback was approved (under delegated authority) by a Working Group of Hamilton City Councillors (as resolved at Hamilton City Council's 24 February 2022 Infrastructure Operations Committee meeting).

Hamilton City Council Reference D-4064058 - feedback # 680.

Key Messages

1. Hamilton City Council is generally supportive of the direction and content of the Waikato Region Public Transport Business Improvement Review but note that further conversations and working groups with partner councils are required.
2. We also support the Waikato Regional Council's vision for public transport in the Waikato Region i.e., *To build a public transport system that enhances the vitality of our communities, strengthens our economy, and helps create a healthier environment.*
3. Overall, we agree that there needs to be a change to public transport infrastructure and service provision - we support changes that will improve the current system, but this work needs to be undertaken in a phased approach. Hamilton City Council and its key committees and staff need to ensure work programmes are aligned to any new proposed changes.
4. The long-term goal(s) of local and regional public transport need to be clearly identified/stated to be able to then establish the critical steps required that will enable progress towards these goals.
5. Control should remain with the Road Controlling Authority and Councils should not be removed from decision-making processes. It is understood that the review proposes a number of options for changes to the model, but until those options are fully investigated, and the benefits/costs better understood in conjunction with the Local Government Reform, Hamilton City Council supports the status quo for the funding of the delivery of public transport activities in the Waikato Region.
6. Any changes need to be developed together and not solely through the current Waikato Regional Council committee processes, including the Regional Council committee structure i.e., endorsement and approval of any improvements are completed formally through council committee structures and then this approval of all councils/co-investment partners in partnership presented through the Regional Council committee structure.
7. Specific comments and recommendations are outlined in the following feedback.

Introduction and Specific Comments

8. Hamilton City Council would like to thank the Waikato Regional Council for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Waikato Region Public Transport Business Improvement Review.
9. Hamilton City (alongside Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency) is a major investor into Public Transport operations and infrastructure in the Waikato Region.
10. Of the **total services budget** Hamilton urban services make up 76% (\$18.2m), between Hamilton and neighbouring towns 18% (\$4.2m). The funding subsidy is split between Waka Kotahi (51%) and local share (49%). The local share is funded by the Waikato Regional Council [*via a regional rate of Hamilton residents*] where the service is wholly within Hamilton.
11. The **public transport infrastructure** budget funding subsidy is generally also split between Waka Kotahi (51%) and local share (49%). The local share is funded by Hamilton City Council [*via a rate of Hamilton residents*], but we do also have some public transport infrastructure work being completed with 100% local share.
12. Hamilton City Council is supportive of the review and the opportunities for improvement and change that has been identified but believes that there is currently insufficient evidence of benefits and costs in the report to provide definitive commitment to changes in the current delivery model of the public transport activity at this stage.
13. Hamilton City Council also notes that the Local Government Reform will be progressing in parallel with this work and will potentially provide additional opportunities to implement change under the umbrella of a nationally mandated (or at least recommended) change environment.
14. Hamilton City Council welcomes the opportunity to continue to work closely with the Waikato Regional Council on the next steps required to provide a clearer way forward.

15. The feedback on the Public Transport Business Improvement review is set out in two sections below:
- Responses to the questions posed in the letter from Waikato Regional Council dated 20 December 2021.
 - Comments on the content of the review document.

Feedback on Questions - Waikato Regional Council

16. The following outlines Hamilton City Council's feedback on the nine key questions that Waikato Regional Council have asked for feedback on to help inform improvements around public transport.

17. **PRELIMINARY**

18. ***QUESTION 1: Do you agree with the review that there is a need to change how public transport is funded and delivered?***

19. **FEEDBACK:**

20. Yes. Hamilton City Council is always supportive of seeking opportunities that will result in improvements to the public transport offering provided to its residents and the public who are travelling in and around the city or in and out of the city.

21. ***QUESTION 2: Are there other problems or opportunities with the way that public transport is funded and delivered in the Waikato that you think are not adequately covered by the review?***

22. **FEEDBACK:**

23. Methods of funding PT across various councils should be able to be varied i.e., not every council should have to use a solely based rating system for funding PT.
24. In addition, levels of service need to be aligned early on in the piece.
25. There is a need for co-governance and agreement by all participating parties. This could potentially be called a 'Public Transport Governance Board'.
26. The Waters CCO model operating in Wellington seems to be one that appears to work well, whereby LTP budgets have to be approved by each participating council. The Board of the Regional Council approaches each council to identify what is required to achieve various levels of service. This is a model that should be investigated further in regard to PT in the Waikato.
27. We also request that Waikato Regional Council staff approach Auckland Transport to ascertain how their structure works regarding PT.

28. **RATING FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

29. ***QUESTION 3: Would you support the Regional Council rating for public transport region-wide (not just within Hamilton City)?***

30. **FEEDBACK:**

31. While Hamilton City Council would support having a wider rating base for public transport services, the amount should be proportional to the services that are being or proposed to be provided and therefore reflective of the benefit to that community.
32. Therefore, initially the focus should be on the Future Proof partners with the aim of delivering the Mode Shift Plan opportunities identified, particularly for the districts who have a high percentage of commuters coming into Hamilton City daily for work.
33. Methods of funding PT across various councils should be able to be varied i.e., not every council should have to use a solely based rating system.
34. Strategic infrastructure needs to be capable of crossing geographic boundaries. Local infrastructure can and should be funded locally.

35. **QUESTION 4: If the regional council was to decide to rate regionally for public transport, do you agree that this should be for public transport services, and public transport infrastructure, or just services?**

36. **FEEDBACK:**

37. It is understood that the review proposes a number of options for changes to the model, but until those options are fully investigated, and the benefits/costs better understood in conjunction with the Local Government Reform, Hamilton City Council supports the status quo for the funding of the delivery of public transport activities in the Waikato Region.

38. **QUESTION 5: If the Regional Council was to decide to rate for and invest in public transport infrastructure, there are a range of ways this could be done:**

- *As the sole investor instead of territorial authorities – or as a co-investor alongside territorial authorities.*
- *As an investor (in part or full) in all public transport infrastructure or just major infrastructure (such as park and ride facilities).*
- *If the regional council was to start investing in public transport infrastructure, how do you think it should be done and why?*

39. **FEEDBACK:**

40. It is understood that the review proposes a number of options for changes to the model, but until those options are fully investigated, and the benefits/ costs better understood in conjunction with Local Government Reform, Hamilton City Council supports the status quo for the funding of the delivery of public transport activities in the Waikato Region.

41. Major infrastructure that should also be included into this investigation would be:

- Public transport interchanges e.g., Hamilton Central and Rotokauri.
- Public transport hubs e.g., Waikato Hospital, Glenview, Waikato University and Chartwell.
- Public transport depots from which services are managed by an external provider, but the assets of land, buildings and facilities such as electric bus charging facilities are publicly owned to ensure a competitor supplier market in public transport services.

42. It is also noted that Waka Kotahi is also a key investor in public transport infrastructure via the subsidy it provides through to the Road Controlling Authorities.

43. Any future investigation should also seek determine all funding opportunities provided by not only changes to the rating for delivery of public transport activities, but also opportunities potentially provided by Local Government Reform and the emerging Emissions and Climate Change requirements e.g., taxes on fossil fueled vehicles, regional fuel taxes.

44. **QUESTION 6: Do you have any views on how the costs of public transport services and infrastructure should be spread having regard to the Local Government Act that requires councils to consider – among other things:**

- *The distribution of the benefits between the community as a whole, any identifiable part of the community, and individuals.*
- *The period in or over which those benefits are expected to occur.*
- *The extent to which the actions or inaction of particular individuals or a group contribute to the need to undertake the activity.*
- *The costs and benefits, including consequences for transparency and accountability, of funding the activity distinctly from other activities.*

45. **FEEDBACK:**

46. As noted earlier, the costs to a community should be reflective of the benefit that is being provided. Further investigation into alternative/additional funding streams should be included in the next steps of this process which should be completed in parallel with the current Local Government Reform - this may result in changes to these current requirements.
47. Investment by the Waikato Regional Council in public transport services has been lacking over the years and has only seen improvements in the recent triennium.
48. Bus related projects in the Long Term Plans of participating councils (Hamilton City Council/Waikato Regional Council/other councils) need to be ascertained to clearly establish 'who does what' – this could be driven/underpinned through use of a Memorandum of Understanding.
49. Once a programme of works is established and agreed on, organisations then need to lock in the required LTP funding. This will ensure transparency and can then be reviewed every three years.
50. For a system to work properly it need to operate in a 'boundaryless' manner.
51. The proposed changes agreed to need a strong emphasis on integration with other transport modes. How does all this differ from how the Auckland Transport model operates? Their Statement of Intent doesn't appear to be a strong enough lever.
52. A statement of Intent and Funding Agreement for the period of the NLTP should be approved by each partner Council as commitment to PT services and infrastructure delivery to enable the regions PT outcomes as approved through the RLTP and RPTP.

53. **INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

54. ***QUESTION 7: Do you think that these options and their potential benefits should be investigated further?***

55. **FEEDBACK:**

56. Yes. Hamilton City Council is supportive of additional investigation being completed into the options for public transport services and infrastructure **only** and believe that there are some good opportunities for improvement in the short-term.
57. We note that options that would encompass **all transport functions** (including roads, footpaths etc.) have also been included in the review and the review suggests that the maximum benefits would be from a whole of region and all of transport authority. It is felt that it is premature to embark on any work towards this extent of change pending better understanding of the Local Government Reform and the emerging Emissions and Climate Change requirements.

58. ***QUESTION 8: Do you have any views on when and how this process should be undertaken?***

59. **FEEDBACK:**

60. Hamilton City Council supports the additional investigation proceeding utilising the 'road map' in the report which aims to assist transport partners to have constructive conversations about these types of changes and the degree of appetite there is for change.
61. Hamilton City Council is very mindful of the large workloads currently being experienced in local government relating to:
- 3 Waters Reform.
 - Local Government Reform.
 - Resource Management Reform.
 - Implementation of National Policy Statements on Urban Design, Freshwater.
 - Climate Change and Emission Reductions.

62. These workloads, combined with the upcoming local authority elections at the end of 2022, mean that the timelines for being able to make any **major changes** and have meaningful engagement by local authorities (Elected Members and staff) and the community will not be possible in this calendar year. As a result, it is not likely that the timeframes would be able to be met for incorporation into the 2024 Long Term Plan and National Land Transport Plan development timeframes.
63. Hamilton City Council is supportive of working through enhancements to Business as Usual (which have already commenced in Hamilton City) or a delegated partnership model in the shorter term while the larger national policy, legislation and reform processes are worked through.
64. We also note that key routes studies recently completed by Hamilton City Council in conjunction with the Waikato Regional Council for the Comet and Meteor Routes, along with studies underway for the Rototuna (Rocket) service and future improvements for the Waikato Hospital hub, are illustrative of the 'enhanced' business as usual relationship that has already commenced. We also believe that these studies will be instrumental in improving the likelihood of additional funding opportunities into public transport infrastructure moving forward.
65. It may be preferable to commence with a Statement of Intent that doesn't go 'too far'. Perhaps a phased approach aligned with the reform programme.
66. Essentially infrastructure provision including funding and decision should remain with Councils. Feedback on the Waikato Regional Council's nine key questions should be available for all participating councils to see, discuss and agree to prior to proposed changes being developed.

67. ***QUESTION 9: If the Regional Council started a dialogue with transport partners in the Waikato region about what roles and responsibilities could look like – how would you like to see that initiated?***

68. **FEEDBACK:**

69. Hamilton City Council would like to have these discussions commence in the Regional Connections Committee forum initially, with reporting from this committee back up through the Regional Land Transport Committee and each of the Local Authorities relevant committees.
70. The long-term goal(s) of local and regional public transport need to be clearly identified/stated to be able to then establish the critical steps required that will enable progress towards these goals.

Comments on the Review Report's Content

71. In addition to the above comments in response to the questions posed by Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton City Council wish to also provide comments on the review report content.

Section 1.1 The Commission (page 6)

72. The report states:
73. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) has an ambitious vision for the transformation of public transport in the region, as stated in the current (2021-2051) Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP), namely it "is on a mission to improve the delivery and performance of the public transport network and services across the Waikato region".
74. Hamilton City Council submits that the RLTP is a regional document that has been developed for the region by the [Waikato Regional Transport Committee](#), and sets out how we (both local and central government agencies) intend to develop the region's land transport system over the next 30 years.
75. The vision for public transport set out in the RLTP (and the Regional Public Transport Plan) is not the vision of Waikato Regional Council – but the vision of the Waikato Region.

Section 2.5 Current Public Transport Delivery (pages 12 & 14)

76. There appears to be an error in *Table 2-1 Public Transport Infrastructure Services delivered by local authorities but claimed via WRC 2018-21* (replicated below), which has Waikato District listed twice, but Hamilton City Council not included.

Table 2-1 Public Transport Infrastructure Services delivered by local authorities but claimed via WRC 2018-21

				2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	3-year LTP
South Waikato District Council	Regional Public Transport Plan	PUBLIC TRANSPORT Infrastructure e.g., bus shelters	Construction / relocation / upgrade / removal of bus stop(s) / shelter(s)			\$ 23,404	\$ 23,404
Waikato District Council	Regional Public Transport Plan	PUBLIC TRANSPORT Infrastructure e.g., bus shelters	Construction / relocation / upgrade / removal of bus stop(s) / shelter(s)	\$ 13,019			\$ 13,019
Waikato District Council	Regional Public Transport Plan	PUBLIC TRANSPORT Infrastructure e.g., bus shelters	Construction / relocation / upgrade / removal of bus stop(s) / shelter(s)	\$ 157,390	\$ 172,801	\$ 208,264	\$ 538,455

77. Since the completion of this report, there have been several changes to funding of activities relevant to this report and the following tables in the report:

- Table 2-2 NLTP 2021–24 Funding in Waikato Approved.
- Table 2-3 NLTP 2021–24 Funding in Waikato Possible.
- Table 2-4 NLTP 2021–24 Funding in Waikato Probable.
- Table 2-5 NLTP 2021–24 Funding in Waikato Total.

78. These changes include:

- Resolution at the 7 December 2021 Infrastructure Operations Committee meeting to make further investment into Public Transport Infrastructure which is 100% locally funded and not subsidised by Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.
- Approval of the Eastern Pathways – Schools Link and Connections Business Case by the Waka Kotahi Board for pre-implementation and then subsequently implementation which unlocks funding from the ‘possible’ category of the NLTP 2021-2024 and includes a significant investment into public transport infrastructure in addition to active modes.

79. Hamilton City Council therefore requests that the funding information in the report be updated to reflect these changes and an additional table be included to capture activities which are fully funded via local share and therefore are not captured in the NLTP documentation.

Section Future Vision and Objectives (page 19)

80. Hamilton City Council is supportive of the discussion on opportunities for improve the RPTP of the vision and outcomes and objectives and look forward to working closely with the Waikato Regional Council in the review and update of the RPTP document.

Further Information and Opportunity to Discuss Our Feedback

81. Should the Waikato Regional Council require clarification of the feedback from Hamilton City Council, or additional information, please contact **Eeva-Liisa Wright** (General Manager Infrastructure Operations) on 07 958 5874 or 021 836 410, email eeva-liisa.wright@hcc.govt.nz in the first instance.

82. Hamilton City Council would welcome the opportunity to discuss the content of our feedback with the Waikato Regional Council in more detail.

Yours faithfully



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