

# HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION

## Draft Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan 2022 - 2032

Waikato Regional Council



12 August 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 submission 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.

## Hamilton City Council Approval and Reference

This submission was approved at the Council's 9 August 2022 Infrastructure Operations Committee meeting.

Hamilton City Council Reference D-4282763 - Submission # 698.

## Key Messages and Recommendations

1. Hamilton City Council supports the Vision and objectives of the **Draft Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan 2022-2032** (the Plan).
2. We look forward to continuing to strengthen the established collaborative working partnership we have with the Waikato Regional Council (WRC) in our role as a key partner in the Public Transport (PT) space. We recognise that implementation of the Plan will result in positive change to PT in the city over the next ten years.
3. We support and recognise the strong alignment and role that the Plan has with assisting achievement of actions set out in other key city, regional, national plans and strategies e.g., Hamilton City Council's Access Hamilton Strategy 2022; Future Proof; Hamilton City Council's Climate Change Strategy; the National Policy Statement - Urban Development; and the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan Transport Programme Business Case.
4. We recognise the critical role that PT will play in achieving the reductions in emissions and vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) by the Light Vehicle fleet that are being set in national policy and encourage WRC to work with all key partners, including Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, local councils and the Ministry of Education to progress implementation of the Plan.
5. We strongly support seeking increased funding support and opportunities from Central Government to ensure the step change in PT services for the city and neighbouring districts identified within the Plan can be implemented to enable our region to achieve the reductions in emissions and vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) by the Light Vehicle Fleet that are being set in national policy.
6. We support and recognise the need for bus depots as the fleet electrifies over the next five years and the associated infrastructure and location requirements needed to continue delivering a successful and more sustainable PT service.
7. We note that Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is working on updating the national guidance on the Public Transport Operating Model and look forward to the direction it provides on how to navigate electrification of fleet and the responsibilities between regional and local territorial councils.
8. We recognise the need for consistent approaches nationally in both carbon offsetting and emissions accounting and support the exploration of all regional and national onshore offsetting initiatives before considering offshore initiatives.
9. Te Huia plays a significant role in the future of regional travel between Hamilton and Auckland. Hamilton City Council continues to support this service and looks forward to it becoming the preferred choice for commuters, particularly as improvements are made to move the service to a Ridership model.
10. We recognise our obligation to provide bus stop infrastructure and look forward to ongoing route investigations and planning for the infrastructure required to enable the services to move successfully to a ridership model where needed.
11. We recognise the importance of regular PT services operating from all parts of the city to Hamilton's visitor destinations, particularly Hamilton Gardens, which is one of the Waikato Region's major visitor attractions, and key community facilities (such as Waterworld), both to ensure equity of access for residents and to connect and support local tourism services and infrastructure.

12. We recognise the view that sharing a public bus with school children can have negative implications of PT being considered an attractive choice. We therefore strongly support the work in providing both a school assist bus service and a dedicated school's bus service in conjunction with the School Travel Plan pilot projects that Hamilton City Council is commencing this year.
13. The final Plan needs to ensure there is still a strong commuter-focused service for the larger towns outside of Hamilton i.e., Cambridge and Te Awamutu linking into the city to address the commuter demands.
14. We strongly support capping the fare system and its influence on helping to make PT a more attractive choice by making it cheaper for the user of frequent PT travel. The integrated ticketing system approach is also welcomed.
15. We look forward to future information systems being more digital and having two-way digital communication features.
16. In accordance with the submission points made in our 16 March 2022 initial feedback on the Waikato Region Public Transport Business Improvement Review, we look forward to working closely with Waikato Regional Council and key partners in progressing the opportunities identified in the Review. There is a need for co-governance and agreement by all participating parties and not solely progressing this change through the current Waikato Regional Council committee processes.
17. At this stage in the process, Hamilton City Council's view is that control and coordination of PT should remain with the Road Controlling Authority and that Councils must not be removed from decision-making processes. Future moves to establish a more coordinated PT service and system than that currently operating need to ensure that participating/stakeholder Councils have a really strong voice and commensurate say in the entity set up to undertake this.
18. We support implementation of the Plan's key recommendations noting the significant funding commitments it puts on all Future Proof partners, particularly WRC and note that work will need to commence in the 3-10-year period on the Metro Spatial Plan network to ensure its proposed completion within 16-30 years.

## Introduction

19. Hamilton City Council appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the Waikato Regional Council's **Draft Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan 2022-2032** (the Plan).
20. We support the Vision and objectives of the Plan.
21. Elected Members and staff from Hamilton City Council have appreciated the opportunities to work alongside the Waikato Regional Council (WRC) during the development of the Plan via discussions held at the Regional Connections Committee.
22. We support and recognise the strong alignment that the Plan has with/the role it plays in helping to achieve actions set out in:
  - Hamilton City Council's Access Hamilton Strategy 2022.
  - Future Proof.
  - The Hamilton - Waikato Metro Spatial Plan Transport Programme Business Case Process.
  - Hamilton City Council's Climate Change Strategy.
  - The National Policy Statement - Urban Development.
  - Hamilton City Council's District Plan Change 12 - Growing Up.

## Section 2: Vision and Objectives

23. Hamilton City Council supports the Plan's Vision and objectives and looks forward to the resultant positive change and new direction for public transport (PT).
24. Hamilton City Council recognises the role that it plays in assisting WRC to achieve objectives 2,4,5 and 7 in the Plan.

### Objective 1: Deliver public transport services in a way that results in negative emissions from 2027 onwards

25. Hamilton City Council supports Objective 1 and recognises the positive step forward in addressing emissions associated with PT.
26. Hamilton City Council recognises that transport contributes 64 percent of Hamilton City's emissions and 16 percent of the Waikato Region's emissions (in 2018/2019). We identify the invaluable role PT plays in emission reductions and mode choice and would like to see a greater emphasis on providing a stronger climate stance in the Plan.
27. Effective reliable and frequent PT services will be key to the 'Hamilton area' (Hamilton, Waipa and Waikato Districts) achieving the Light Vehicle VKT (vehicle kilometres travelled) targets that are currently being developed by the Ministry of Transport for this area. Additional funding (including increased funding support from central government) will need to be sourced to enable the delivery of services that enable the achievement of this step change in PT services for the city and neighbouring districts – especially for commuter and school travel.
28. **Section 2.2, Page 8, Paragraph 5**
29. Hamilton City Council notes an additional third point for the ways that PT can contribute to emissions reduction: by enabling *strong relationships between transport and land use*.
30. **Section 2.2.2: Zero Emission Vehicles and Infrastructure**
31. We support and recognise the need for bus depots as the fleet electrifies over the next five years. We recognise the associated infrastructure and location requirements needed to continue delivering a successful and more sustainable PT service and are committed to working with WRC to achieve these changes.
32. We recognise that Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is working on updating the national guidance on the Public Transport Operating Model. Hamilton City Council looks forward to this work providing the direction on how to navigate fleet electrification and the responsibilities for this between regional and local territorial councils.
33. **Section 2.2.3: Carbon Offsetting**
34. Hamilton City Council is supportive of working collaboratively with WRC, as we recognise the need for consistent approaches nationally in both carbon offsetting and emissions accounting.
35. We support the exploration of all regional and national onshore offsetting initiatives **before** considering offshore initiatives and would like to have this approach reflected in the wording of Policy 1, bullet point #3.

## **Objective 2: Deliver an integrated network of public transport services that enhances accessibility and wellbeing**

### **36. Section 2.3.2: Accessibility and Service Design - Coverage Versus Ridership**

37. Hamilton City Council recognises how important ridership services are and what they can help achieve. We suggest adding “provide travel choice” to the list on page 11 of the Plan. Hamilton City Council has a strong focus on providing “efficient travel choices” in our transport strategy **Access Hamilton** and anticipates that the Plan will provide strong guidance with helping to achieve real travel choice in Hamilton City.

38. We recognise and support the use of an on-demand service as a way to continue to deliver coverage services in Hamilton while moving to a ridership model.

### **39. Section 2.3.4.1: Interregional Public Transport Services**

40. Hamilton City Council acknowledges that there is a level of uncertainty to service demands of interregional travel, particularly since the disestablishment of District Health Boards, and believe that this will be an area that requires specific focus in upcoming years as the health system settles into its ‘new normal’.

### **41. Section 2.3.5: Network Aspirations - Interregional Passenger Rail**

42. Te Huia plays a significant role in the future of regional travel between Hamilton and Auckland, and Hamilton City Council continues to support this service. We look forward to seeing it expand to provide a stronger ridership service.

43. Te Huia continues to provide on-par travel times during peak times from downtown Hamilton to downtown Auckland. We look forward to having it become the preferred choice for commuters, particularly as improvements are made to the service ridership.

44. We acknowledge the trade-offs that will be made with the balance of ridership and coverage of services to key satellite towns but anticipate that there will continue to be adequate levels of coverage for commuters in satellite towns (such as Te Kauwhata and Pokeno) to Hamilton City.

45. We recognise that the Te Huia service also helps to provide choice and equity alongside the noted emission reductions with inter-regional travel (page 12).

46. We recognise that the key priorities for Te Huia are very important and would request that they be elevated to become actions, so their progress is monitored and reported upon (page 14).

### **47. Priority 2**

48. We suggest a slight rewording of this priority to read “advocate and support rail improvements”, noting that there is more than “rail track improvements” that will be needed e.g., upgrading/renewal of electrification and stations.

### **49. Section 2.3.6: Network Aspirations - Regional Accessibility**

50. We request that policy 6 be strengthened by an additional bullet point to reflect the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan’s concept of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

### **51. Section 2.3.7: Our Network Aspirations - Metro Accessibility**

52. This section discusses the metro area and the predicted population future growth for the next 100 years. Again, this would be a good place to reference the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan as we recognise the significant amount of work that has been undertaken and the value it plays in helping to shape the region’s PT aspirations and tools to achieve them.

53. We recommend reviewing the Plan to see where further sections can be strengthened by adding relevant links to the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan.

54. **Section 2.3.7.2: Key Metro Area Priorities Over the Next 10 Years**
55. Hamilton City Council would support these priorities and requests that they be included as specific actions within the Plan to ensure that their process is monitored and reported upon.
56. **Section 2.3.8: Hamilton Ridership Network Plan**
57. The scope of this section (Hamilton) and the map (Network Diagram 1) have some inconsistencies with the network diagram illustrating key network components beyond the Hamilton boundary e.g., the Airport, Horotiu and Ngaruawahia. We support this wider scope/coverage as it better reflects the Future Proof area and recognises the large impact that residents from these areas have on the daily traffic flows in the city, and therefore the large opportunities for change via an improved ridership model.
58. We suggest a review of the bullet points in the list of core elements so that it better reflects the subsequent headings of section 2.3.8.1 - 2.3.8.5.
59. **Section 2.3.8.6**
60. We recognise our obligation to provide bus stop infrastructure. Hamilton City Council staff look forward to continuing discussions with WRC staff to ensure strong alignment between the Plan and the Hamilton Public Transport Design Guidelines currently being developed by Hamilton City Council.
61. **Section 2.3.9. Regionwide Service Level Guide**
62. 'Hamilton Frequent' service: Hamilton City Council looks forward to working with WRC to provide greater public bus connectivity and frequency to key community facilities and destinations e.g., Hamilton Zoo, Waterworld and Hamilton Gardens.
63. Two of five priorities in Hamilton and Waikato Tourism's Draft Destination Management Plan 2022 rely on further investment in PT and infrastructure - Visitor Infrastructure and Investment and Sustainable Tourism. The Region has visitor hot spots where local infrastructure struggles to meet local and visitor demand. Annual visitation to Hamilton Gardens, Hamilton Zoo-Waiwhakareke, Waikato Museum, and Waterworld alone currently exceeds 1.4 million visitors and is growing, with the majority of visitors self-driving.
64. Improving PT services to visitor destinations and key community facilities supports a desirable modal shift as well as emissions reductions. Understanding patterns of visitor use at individual destinations and travel routes informs planning for infrastructure and mitigates impacts for both residents and visitors.
65. The 'Hamilton Rapid' service type has strong influences with intensification planning and the National Policy Statement - Urban Development (NPS-UD). We recommend this is amended to read "in close proximity to rapid corridors", rather than "along rapid corridors" to enable flexibility in the delivery of District Plan Change 12 - Growing Up and clustering of high-density development around the rapid corridor facilities rather than linear development along them.
66. We note that for 'Metro frequent links', the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan has a more aggressive target of 20-minute services during peak hours, instead of 30 minutes in the Plan's aspirational table. It is important that the minimum frequencies outlined in this table will be sufficient to cover and deliver on the ridership and coverage outcomes, with special mention to ensure there is a strong commuter-focused service for those larger towns outside of Hamilton i.e., Cambridge and Te Awamutu.
67. Hamilton City Council recognises the view that sharing a public bus with school children can have negative implications on PT being considered an attractive travel choice. We therefore strongly support policy 9 and the work in providing both a school assist bus service and a dedicated school's bus service.



**68. Section 2.3.10 Targeted Services - School Transport**

69. Hamilton City Council is very supportive of the role of school transport and access to education and believe that having more school journeys undertaken by people walking, biking and using PT will be key to achieving the Light Vehicle VKT (vehicle kilometres travelled) targets that are currently being developed by the Ministry of Transport for the Hamilton/Waipā/Waikato District areas.

70. Hamilton City Council has recently approved a 2-year trial for the development and implementation of School Travel Plans in two school clusters. We look forward to working closely with WRC and the Ministry of Education in support of the provisions of policy # 9 to enable improved PT use and potentially dedicated school bus services. Either way, they should be involved in this work.

**71. Section 2.3.10.4 Special Events**

72. Hamilton City Council supports the proposed policies (P26, 27 and 28) included within the Plan and looks forward to working with WRC to promote the opportunities to event organisers for integrated ticketing between event attendance and public transport.

**Objective 3: Provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable, and attracts and retains customers**

73. Policy 30 - Hamilton City Council suggests further clarification on which years are being referenced in the “the three year” period included in this policy.

**74. Section 2.4.3: Ticketing System and Fare Products**

75. **Policy 37:** Hamilton City Council strongly supports capping the fare system and its influence on helping to make PT a more attractive choice by making it cheaper for the user of frequent public transport travel.

76. **Policy 40:** Hamilton City Council supports the work towards a national integrated ticketing system approach.

**Objective 4: Provide high-quality and intuitive public information**

**77. Section 2.5.2: Communication - Policy 46**

78. Hamilton City Council looks forward to future information systems being digital but also believes that it needs to facilitate two-way digital communication features to enable ‘push messaging’ to users as an option e.g., via Antenna when there are impacts on the services that potential users would benefit from knowing about to help plan their travel.

**Objective 5: Provide the infrastructure necessary for an accessible, effective and efficient public transport network**

79. Hamilton City Council recognises the role it plays as a partner in helping to deliver and achieve policies 51-53. We look forward to continuing the collaborative conversations with WRC to ensure that together, we can meet our obligations in building an accessible, effective, and efficient PT network. We note that the Hamilton - Waikato Metro Spatial Plan Transport Programme Business Case recommended programme over an investment profile of 30 years includes significant investment from all Future Proof partners. We trust WRC will continue to support the Transport Programme Business Case recommendations, including providing sufficient funding from the Regional Council to support the early years of the programme and the increases proposed in bus service provision.

80. Hamilton City Council will continue to work with WRC staff in the development of the Hamilton Public Transport Design Guidelines (noting that the infrastructure provisions are strongly interlinked in the Plan).



## Objective 6: Provide public transport services that are affordable for passengers and funders

81. **Section 2.7:** Hamilton City Council suggests clarifying “operating expenditure” to ensure transparency between the funding provided via the regional council for operating expenditure associated with the provision of PT services versus the operational expenditure by local territorial authorities for the provision of public transport infrastructure.
82. **Section 2.7.2:** Hamilton City Council would like to reiterate the following key points made in its 16 March 2022 initial feedback ([refer here](#)) to the Waikato Region Public Transport Business Improvement Review:
83. *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.*
84. *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.*
85. *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.*
86. At this stage in the process, Hamilton City Council’s view is that control and coordination of PT should remain with the Road Controlling Authority and that Councils must not be removed from decision-making processes. Future moves to establish a more coordinated PT service and system than that currently operating need to ensure that participating/stakeholder Councils have a really strong voice and commensurate say in the entity set up to undertake this.
87. Hamilton City Council notes that the current **Review into the Future for Local Government** will have a key bearing on how PT in cities, districts and regions may operate in the future. The Minister of Local Government has recently confirmed that the Panel for the Future of Local Government Review’s final report is now due by 19 June 2023.
88. We would also support work being undertaken around ensuring that Government funding streams for PT are more definitive and more transparent, particularly around alignment with other key government goals and objectives for key related areas such as climate change.
89. Hamilton City Council is supportive of the intent of delivering coordinated PT and infrastructure funding expectations for greater day-to-day alignment. We look forward to keeping conversations flowing and open as we continue to collaboratively explore the details of this alongside the work currently being completed by Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.
90. Hamilton City Council believes there is a need for co-governance and agreement by all participating parties. This could be a public transport governance board. As an example, the Hamilton Airport CCO model currently operating seems to be one that appears to work well.
91. Hamilton City Council is keen to have more work undertaken by Waikato Regional Council in partnership with participating parties to understand the examples of operating models (both governance and funding) in other areas of New Zealand which have been successful in delivering the outcomes set out in the Waikato Region Public Transport Business Improvement Review.

**92. Section 2.7.3: Integrated Land Use Planning and Public Transport**

- 93.** Hamilton City Council supports the intent of policies 54 and 55 and associated reference to Appendix B. We recognise there is a dependency between urban form characteristics and the viability of providing frequent PT services.
- 94.** Hamilton City Council requests that policies 54 and 55 be amended to more explicitly reference the urban form characteristics under which frequent PT services are considered viable, and by implication the circumstances under which the Regional Council will not provide frequent services. Having more explicit reference to these factors can help inform land use and transport planning initiatives.
- 95.** Hamilton City Council also requests that the transport and urban form factors included in Appendix B be amended to serve as assessment criteria for policies 54 and 55.
- 96.** Hamilton City Council notes that the supporting information relating to “connectivity” in Appendix B appears to have been omitted from the Plan in error.
- 97.** Hamilton City Council requests the supporting information relating to “connectivity” is included in the Plan and that the information contains reference to the safety and viability of walking and micro mobility. We note that every PT passenger is also a pedestrian, and that micro mobility will become an increasingly important means of accessing PT.

**Objective 7: Develop and maintain partnerships that obtain best value for money in the delivery of transport solutions**

- 98.** Hamilton City Council understands its role as a transport partner and looks forward to continuing to foster and grow our relationship with WRC in the PT sector to ensure each council is acting as a trusted partner.

**Section 3: Implementation and Review**

**99. Implementation and Monitoring Table**

- 100.** Hamilton City Council supports the implementation of the key priorities but notes that for the Metro focus area work will need to commence on the Hamilton rapid network (potentially via the implementation of transition steps) in the 3-15-year period to enable its proposed completion in 16-30 years (page 51).

**101. Section 3.2 Service Performance Monitoring**

- 102.** We request that WRC reconsider using the 2019 level as the target for user experience and accessibility and recommend that the target customer survey measure to be more ambitious to reflect the increased investment in the measures suggested throughout the Plan.

**Other Notes for the Plan**

- 103.** Hamilton City Council has identified some inconsistencies in terminology/language and mapping issues in the Plan and is happy to work directly with WRC staff to work through these so that they can be addressed in the final Plan.
- 104.** Hamilton City Council recommends that the Plan should provide links to other key documents where appropriate and strengthen the recognition of the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan work.

## Further Information and Hearings

105. Should the Waikato Regional Council require clarification of the submission from Hamilton City Council, or additional information, please contact **Robyn Denton** (Operations Team Leader, City Transportation) on 07 838 6910 or 021 971 127, email [robyn.denton@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:robyn.denton@hcc.govt.nz) in the first instance.
106. Hamilton City Council representatives **do wish to speak** at the 16 August 2022 hearings in support of this submission.

Yours faithfully



**Lance Vervoort**  
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