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Enquiries to: Jane Apperley



Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240
New Zealand

waikatoregion.govt.nz
0800 800 401

24 April 2024

Don McLoed
Matamata-Piako District Council
PO Box 266
Te Aroha
3342

Dear Don,

Waikato Regional Council Submission to Matamata-Piako District Council's 2024-2034 draft Long Term Plan (LTP)

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Matamata-Piako District Council's 2024-2034 draft Long Term Plan (LTP). Please find attached the Waikato Regional Council's submission regarding the proposed plan. The submission was formally endorsed by the Council on 24 April 2024.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of the submission, please contact Jane Apperley, Acting Manager – Corporate Planning directly on (07) 949 7128 or by email jane.apperley@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Regards,

Pamela Storey
Chair

Chris McLay
Chief Executive

He taiao mauriora  **Healthy environment**

He hāpori hihiri  **Vibrant communities**

He ōhanga pakari  **Strong economy**

Submission from Waikato Regional Council on Matamata-Piako District Council's 2024-2034 draft Long Term Plan (LTP)

Introduction

1. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) appreciates the opportunity to make a submission on Matamata-Piako District Council's 2024-2034 draft Long Term Plan (LTP).

Regional connections and opportunities for synergies

2. WRC would like to acknowledge the close and collegial working relationship shared between our two councils. Significant growth pressures in the Future Proof subregion, and a changing climate, are necessitating greater collaboration in how we allocate our resources to optimise the wellbeing of our communities. As we respond to these challenges and changes, we look forward to exploring further opportunities for synergies to improve outcomes for our region.
3. Through our 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, WRC has made a commitment to investing in the future of spatial planning for the region. We encourage Matamata-Piako District Council to consider making resources available to collaborate on this important work, which will lead us to a strategic approach to planning and ensure that development is sustainable, balanced and meets the needs of our communities.

Roadway renewals

4. With the uncertainty of government funding and the current financial constraints we acknowledge the conundrum that while extending the time period of renewals does provide some temporary relief from rating pressure in the short term, it might need to be balanced against the safety issues of a deteriorated road surface and more expensive reparation at a later point in time. We are supportive of whichever option is affordable once NZTA contribution level is known.

Walking and cycling improvements

5. We support the alternative option for walking and cycling connections – to continue to steadily improve walking and cycling connections, but over a longer timeframe. It is important to prioritise alternative transport modes particularly in areas of growth.
6. Given the financial constraints that exist and the uncertainty of government funding we support the proposal that should investment funds become available, prioritising safety investment for the benefit of users should be the first priority of future investment to ensure that this provides protection for vulnerable road users.

Resource recovery centres

7. We support increased funding to expand the scope of the resource recovery centres project. As noted, there is both need and community support for this. There is a need to establish centres to allow for reuse, repair, and diversion rather than disposal. A resource recovery centre can also be a hub for zero waste education. We encourage Matamata-Piako to do this as part of a collaborative partnership model through the connections with the Central North Island Waste Liaison Group, where Matamata-Piako is an active member. Consideration for this approach can be included in the business case for resource recovery options.

Storm water upgrades

8. We support the emphasis on needing to prioritise infrastructure alongside growth and the investments in three waters upgrades, acknowledging the uncertainties in this area.
9. We recommend setting budget aside for informing decisions on placing buildings in hazard areas, especially for flood modelling.

10. We note no budget set aside for the review of the district plan that would help to implement the Waikato Regional Policy Statement, particularly in relation to natural hazards.

Waikato Biodiversity Accord

11. Waikato Regional Council is progressing a Waikato Biodiversity Accord and regional biodiversity strategy to respond to the need to address biodiversity loss in the region. These are goals in the council's Strategic Direction. The regional biodiversity strategy is also a statutory requirement under the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.
12. The Waikato Biodiversity Accord is the first step in developing the strategy. It is intended to be a high-level agreement between regional council, iwi, territorial authorities, Department of Conservation, Ministry for Primary Industries, and QEII National Trust.
13. Signing the Waikato Biodiversity Accord signals a commitment to work together to develop and implement a regional biodiversity strategy. The strategy will set out a vision for landscape-scale restoration of biodiversity and it will contain actions to enhance and restore biodiversity in the region but at this stage we don't yet know what those actions will be. Developing a strategy together includes having discussions about the costs and constraints surrounding those actions.
14. WRC would like a commitment from territorial authorities and other partners to devote some staff time over the next couple of years to help develop the regional biodiversity strategy. It may involve attendance at workshops/hui, providing ideas and options and/or reviewing draft content for the strategy. However, this will be tailored to the stakeholder and their capacity to engage.
15. Agreed actions can then be costed as part of the engagement process and brought into the next long term/annual plan rounds beginning in 2027. This will be an important step to implement the strategy.
16. Once the strategy is finalised, the Accord will be the basis for facilitating regular communications and meetings between the signatory parties to monitor and demonstrate progress with the strategy actions.
17. To date, the council has held two workshops to develop the content of the Accord. Senior planning staff from Matamata-Piako District Council have participated in these workshops. A draft Accord has been prepared and this will be finalised by June 2024 following further feedback. The accord will then be ready for signing by the Accord parties.