

Submission by: Creative Waikato

This submission is made in response to Matamata-Piako District Council's Draft Long Term Plan 2024-34.

1. Council's activities

- Creative Waikato would firstly like to thank Matamata-Piako District Council for the work it does. We appreciate that it is complicated and challenging having to balance so many competing priorities. We acknowledge the time and energy that goes into these processes.
- Creative Waikato supports Matamata-Piako District Council's Strategic Direction 'Matamata-Piako District is vibrant, passionate, progressive, where opportunity abounds. ***'The heart of our community is our people, and the people are the heart of the community'***
- Creative Waikato also supports Council's key priority areas and has aligned these with focus areas in the Waikato Arts Navigator - our regional arts strategy - see point 7.
- In addition to this submission, Creative Waikato has also provided an LTP Councillor briefing and updated high-level infrastructure plan for your consideration. We outline these briefly in this submission.
- Creative Waikato is keen to ensure Council consults and engages with Creative Waikato as a key strategic partner that focuses on capability building in the arts, culture and creative ecosystem of Waikato.

2. Summary of Feedback in connection to Art, Culture and Creativity

Creative Waikato has identified the following opportunities for Council to consider when finalising the 2024/2034 LTP:

Te Aroha Spa

- Creative Waikato supports continuing the investigation phase as there is an opportunity to engage local artists and creatives to enhance storytelling around rich spa history and potential as a tourist destination.

Stage for Matamata-Piako Civic Centre

- Creative spaces such as the proposed stage provide opportunities for development, community connection and the opportunities to develop creative careers. We support development of this community infrastructure. This can contribute to positive outcomes for the district.

Town Centre Infrastructure

- Building on the 'Pride of Place' project, it is essential to invest in the partnerships and people that work to create a sense of vibrancy and create chances for people to connect.
- It is also important to invest in soft infrastructure - that is, the people, groups and programmes that activate bricks and mortar assets.
- Recommend an increase in investment in this activity over the Long-term Plan scope.

Additional playgrounds

- As our towns grow and families move to our district, they need free, accessible spaces to play and connect with others in their communities.
- There is an opportunity to engage local artists in the development of public play spaces, and to consider how creative activation can contribute to thriving neighbourhoods.
- Public art and creative events can enliven spaces where hard infrastructure may be delayed.

Te Aroha Library

- Libraries are an essential service. They contain resources, spaces and which support community wellbeing. Creative Waikato supports the provision of continued and future access to libraries.
- The provision of community libraries are named components in local government legislation, they contribute positively to cultural wellbeing through access to knowledge and resources, but also provide spaces for social connections.
- Investment in libraries, in conjunction with investment in soft infrastructure can support community groups and local artists to work in partnership with the Council to deliver creative activities, community activation, and (depending on the design) potential space for shared creative and cultural activities.
- Libraries are community spaces, where people connect and can access education, digital spaces, things like Wi-Fi, computers, printers and scanners, which are necessary in this digital age. It is important that people can access these, even if they do not have them in their own homes.

3. Matamata-Piako District Council service provision

- Community facilities such as pools, parks and libraries are key to community wellbeing. They provide educational, recreational and social cohesion benefits.
- Community grants ensure that communities have access to vibrant events and opportunities, and help to retain the people who bring vitality and joy to our towns. It is important that we prioritise investment in this soft infrastructure.
- Expand granting provision to support the sustainability of key creative community infrastructure, like Morrinsville Gallery and Te Aroha Little Theatre.
- There is potential to include provision for creative spaces as part of the Matamata-Piako Stadium development. This could include: Sprung floor spaces for dance (important for the health and safety of performers); soundproofed rehearsal rooms for kapahaka, theatre, and music.
- Engagement in dance, creative movement and music has similar benefits to physical health as other forms of active recreation, so it would be effective to incorporate provision of these activities into this multi-use space.

4. **Strategic initiatives**

Creative Waikato has led key strategic initiatives which have contributed to long-term impact in the areas of arts, culture and creativity in the Waikato Region. These initiatives include:

- **Waikato Arts Navigator 2023** - A shared framework, including a vision and strategy, for supporting and strengthening our arts and culture in the region. It guides planning and decision making.
- **Performing Arts Strategy 2023** - A strategy informed by the performing arts sector which builds on the strengths of local performing arts activity and connects with the new Waikato Regional Theatre.
- **Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan 2024** - A high-level update on the Waikato Creative Infrastructure report originally prepared in 2014.
- **Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato 2022** - Social impact reports that assess the impact of arts, culture and creativity on the people of the Waikato region.

Additional Strategic Outcomes: Maintaining relationships with Creative New Zealand, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, NZ Music Commission, Regional Arts Network Aotearoa, and Te Ora Auaha to support positive outcomes through funding and support for Waikato artists.

5. **Creative Waikato mahi in the Matamata-Piako District**

In addition to the above strategic initiatives, Creative Waikato has provided significant capability building support in the Matamata-Piako district, which has included a range of targeted offerings. Examples of the programmes we provide are:

- **Elevate** - A funded e-learning programme to provide creatives with resources and tools to build sustainable creative careers
- **Creativity Every Day** - A first-of-its-kind innovative programme designed to bring creativity into daily routine at work or at home. Delivered to many businesses and organisations.
- **ArtReach** - A community-focused creative development workshop series. Presented in an e-learning video format to ensure accessibility, used as an example of good practice nationally. Workshops include: Governance, Strategic Planning, Evaluation, Impact and Insights and more.
- **Things to do** - A community guide to creative events in the Waikato region.
- **Kotahitanga** - A movement and campaign to combat racism and bring the community together through the accessible power of creativity.
- **Creative Acts of Kindness** - A project which commissioned local artists to celebrate kindness using their arts practice.

Creative Waikato has also undertaken significant work with Matamata-Piako District Council and their communities. Some examples are below:

Engagement with Council

- Developed a **Matamata-Piako District profile of arts activity** in the District.
- **Prepared briefings and reports on post-recovery efforts** including potential opportunities, possible mural sites (Te Aroha, Morrinsville and Matamata), shop and space activations.
- Hosted Matamata-Piako District councillors on a tour of public art around Hamilton.
- Support for initial ‘Pride of Place’ artistic connections and concepts with council staff.

Community engagement

- **Workshops** with local communities relating to post-recovery solutions.
- **Local government election roadshow** for Matamata-Piako communities.
- **Wallace Gallery** - Toi Māori connection and engagement, audience development, delivery of ArtReach capability building workshops in gallery space, strategic advice regarding gallery accessibility i.e., balancing fine art work with community connection in order to foster a strong sense of belonging, connection and pride, research and links relating to digital engagement and community impact.
- **Ngāti Hauā** - strategic advice regarding ngaa toi Māori initiatives.

6. Embedding Arts, Culture and Creativity

Matamata-Piako District Council plays a pivotal role in the wider ecosystem¹ in supporting arts, culture and creativity to thrive. To achieve the broadest possible impact, it is essential to view the contribution of arts, culture and creativity as part of a system which affects all facets of society. This system-based approach acknowledges cross-sector opportunities to enable effective outcomes and deliver better public services. This ecosystem approach is fundamental to the Waikato Arts Navigator - our regional arts strategy.

7. Matamata-Piako District Council’s Priority Areas and alignment with the Waikato Arts Navigator

- The Waikato Arts Navigator is a shared framework that helps community enablers achieve broader impact and focus on community benefit, with a vision and strategy to support and strengthen arts, culture and creativity in the region.
- Matamata-Piako District Council’s strategic direction ‘Matamata-Piako District is vibrant, passionate, progressive, where opportunity abounds.’ ***‘The heart of our community is our people, and the people are the heart of the community’***

Alignment of Matamata-Piako District Council priority areas (community outcomes) and the Waikato Arts Navigator threads are outlined in pages 5-8 below.

¹ Details on the ecosystem and council’s involvement can be found in the Waikato Arts Navigator Regional Arts Strategy, the Creative Waikato Briefing for Councillors, and the Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan, available on the Creative Waikato Website: <https://creativewaikato.co.nz/>

Alignment of Matamata-Piako strategic priority areas and the Waikato Arts Navigator threads

Priority Area	This means	Waikato Arts Navigator thread	
He wāhi kaingākau ki te manawa A place with people at its heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritising community grants that enhance placemaking - Be the connector between our community, iwi, NGOs and government agencies - Create vibrant welcoming town centres - Strive for liveable, accessible, connected neighbourhoods 	Creative wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hauora and wellbeing - Positive collective and individual identities - Create, grow and strengthen communities - Inspired responses to challenges - Strengthened connection to place
		Creative prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative economies - Attract and retain residents - Tourism opportunities - Positive national perceptions - Increased investment from funders
		Creative experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People experience local, national, international arts - Community and cultural expression - Recreation and interaction - Community engagement and connection - Local pride
		Creative education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participatory art projects - Upskilling creative professionals - Community art classes and projects - Youth development - Audience development
		Creative innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business partnerships - Informing local government decision making - Local problem solving

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distinct local expression - Creative export opportunities
He wāhi puawaitanga A place to thrive and prosper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek opportunities to realise Matamata-Piako's economic potential - Support and encourage quality, sustainable, varied development - Invest in the right infrastructure at the right time 	Creative wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create, grown and strengthen communities - Inspired responses to challenges - Strengthened connection to place
		Creative prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative economies - Attract and retain residents - Tourism opportunities - Positive national perceptions - Increased investment from funders
		Creative experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People experience local, national, international arts - Community and cultural expression - Recreation and interaction - Community engagement and connection - Local pride
		Creative education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upskilling creative professionals - Youth development - Audience development
		Creative innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business partnerships - Informing local government decision-making - Local problem solving - Distinct local expression - Creative export expression
He wāhi e poipoi ai tō tātau taiao	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educate and exemplify continuous 	Creative wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hauora and wellbeing - Positive collective and individual identities - Create, grow and strengthen communities

A place that embraces our environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improvement in waste minimisation Create and maintain green and natural and open spaces Demonstrate and advocate for climate friendly and community resilient initiatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspired responses to challenges Strengthened connection to place
		Creative prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative economies Attract and retain residents Positive national perceptions Increased investment from funders
		Creative experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community cultural expression Recreation and interaction Community engagement and connection Local pride
		Creative education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory arts projects Community art classes and projects Youth development
		Creative innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business partnerships Informing local government decision making Local problem solving Distinct local expression Creative export opportunities
He Wāhi Whakapapa, he wāhi hangahanga A place to belong and create	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop open community spaces Celebrate and promote a city where residents have the opportunity to have fun with their friends and family 	Creative wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hauora and wellbeing Positive collective and individual identities Create, grow and strengthen communities Inspired responses to challenges Strengthened connection to place
		Creative prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative economies Attract and retain residents

		Creative experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People experience local, national and international arts - Community and cultural expression - Recreation and interaction - Community engagement and connection - Local pride
		Creative education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participatory art projects - Upskilling creative professionals - Community art classes and projects - Youth development - Audience development
		Creative innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informing local government decision making - Local problem solving - Distinct local expression

8. Arts, culture and creativity connect across Council department areas

An LTP Councillor briefing document has been provided as part of this submission.

- While this document is cognisant of the current financial situation and social environment, the aim is to present a range of possibilities that may extend current thinking, and explore cross department/sector/locale opportunities for collaborative outcomes.
- The attached briefing document outlines concrete examples of the many and diverse ways that arts, culture and creativity connect across departments within Council.

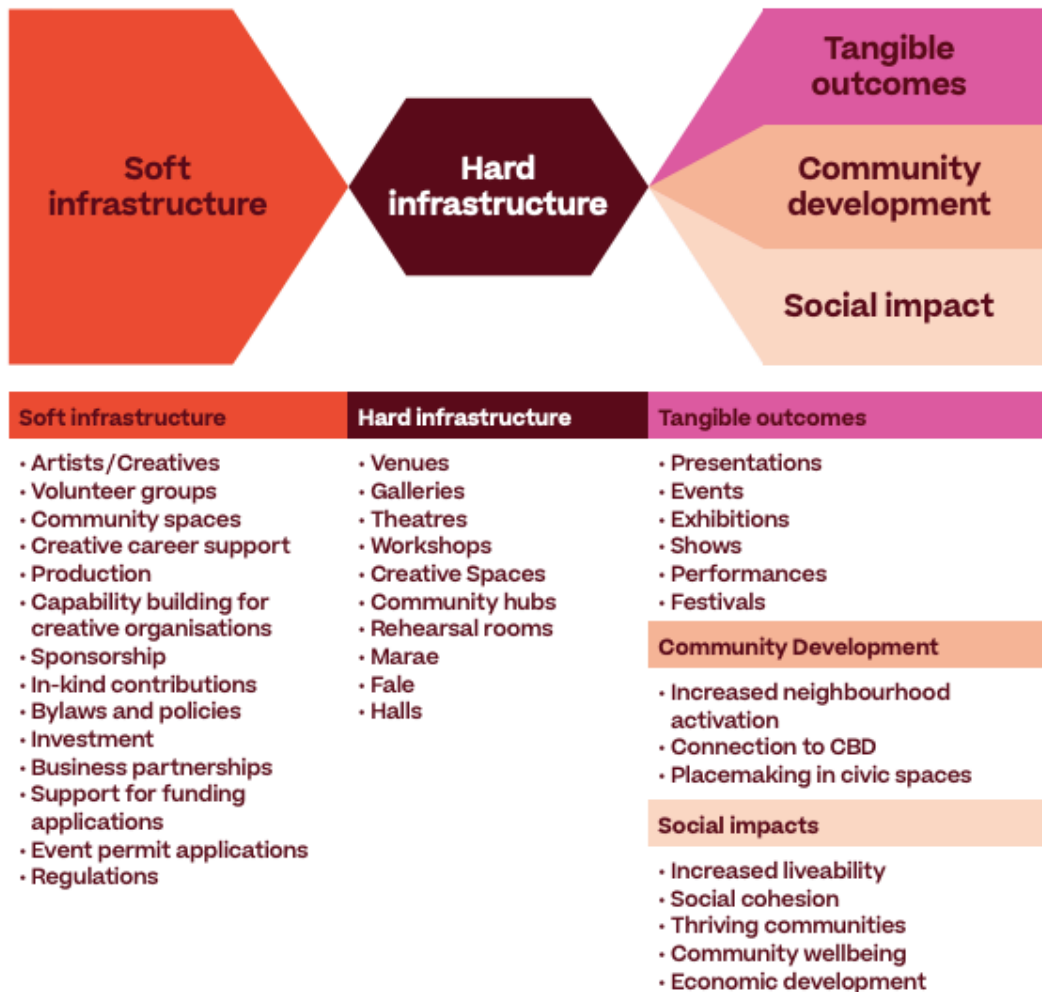
9. Importance of soft infrastructure - people and services

In addition to the LTP Councillor Briefing document, Creative Waikato has also provided an updated Infrastructure Plan which is an initial high-level scan of hard and soft infrastructure in the Waikato. This plan builds on an initial report that was developed in 2014.

A previous lack of data, insight, and sustainable investment have shaped potential issues for the ongoing sustainability of our essential soft infrastructure.

- Soft infrastructure is associated with the development of human and social capital integral to community-building and the promotion of 'high quality' living². It is the mahi and expertise required to activate hard infrastructure. Forms of soft infrastructure include programmes and facilitators in libraries, museums and other community resources.
- Whilst hard infrastructure (facilities, venues etc) is important, it is the people (soft infrastructure) that are most important. Supporting those people and services which activate hard infrastructure contributes to thriving communities.

² Brail, S., Mizrokhi, E. and Ralston, S. (2017) 'Examining the transformation of Regent Park, Toronto', in: N. Wise and J. Clark (eds). *Urban Transformations: Geographies of Renewal and Creative Change* pp. 177-194; London: Routledge in Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research 'Infrastructure, placemaking and sustainability' A Report for Places for People (May 2020)
https://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/files/documents/DownloadTemplate_49.pdf



10. Investing in communities and arts, culture and creativity

The collective toll of Covid-19, climate change and the cost of living crisis on our communities has been immense. We encourage the council to prioritise investment in community and to proactively include arts, culture and creativity to support thriving people and places. From a creative ecosystem perspective it is important to consider:

11.a - The Role of Council

- It is Council's role to enable and support creative infrastructure.
- Cultural wellbeing, alongside social wellbeing, are legislated delivery outcomes for local government, and are worthy of prioritised value and sustained investment.
- Arts, culture, creativity and ngaa toi Maaori can make significant contributions to a 'vibrant, passionate and progressive' district if they are supported. The community already makes a significant contribution to these areas through investment, in-kind support, volunteer time, and creative passion, it is essential that the council maintains and increases investment into this sector otherwise they risk losing it.

11.b - Economic considerations

- The creative sector is one of the fastest growing sectors for economic development in Aotearoa, with the potential for international export alongside local activation. Community activity creates essential learning and development pathways for creative professionals.
- Artistic activity is a contributor to positive tourism outcomes.
- Engagement in creative activity in and around the workplace makes measurable contributions to productivity, innovation, and mental health.
- Toi Maaori is a significant asset in Aotearoa, and is a contributor to international interest in tourism, and connection to place. Matamata-Piako has the potential to increase support to ngaa toi Maaori, and to enhance the skilled practitioners based in this district to highlight this opportunity for growth and development.

11.c - Wellbeing and Impact

- Impact is not only measured in terms of financial return and asset utilisation, but also wellbeing, and the ways in which these experiences contribute to things like community cohesion, connection to place and land and self.
- Arts activity, like public art, events, concerts and theatrical performances contribute to civic, amenity and cultural value, which has implications for changing perceptions about the city, and supporting future growth.
- Beyond economic measures, the impacts of the creative community on social and cultural wellbeing are also significant. In-depth Waikato-focussed research from 2022 showed that regular access and perceived access to arts, culture and creativity is a significant driver of individual wellbeing. This can contribute to better mental health outcomes, but also shows measurable connection to social cohesion, community connection, civic pride, and sense of identity.

At a time of increased need, now is the time to invest in people. Support the people who provide positive outcomes for diverse communities. Art, culture, and creativity sits alongside social services, kai, health, education, environment, and community connection as interwoven components of thriving communities. These things require civic investment as a part of ensuring community access. This forms part of the public good component of local government.

11. Creative Capability Development

- Creative Waikato wishes to build on its support and service delivery in the Matamata-Piako District. However, it requires adequate partnership investment to enable us to do this.
- Services include capability building, strategic advice, research, insights, stakeholder engagement, community support and development.
- Creative Waikato would like a strategic relationship with Matamata-Piako District Council in the same way as it has a relationship with Sport Waikato.

12. Specific Recommendations:

We request investment of \$30K per annum, with contribution to:

- a. Development of an 'Arts Action Plan' linked to the Waikato Arts Navigator Strategy, to provide a high-level strategy for how Council can integrate arts, culture and creativity into what they do
- b. Investment to deliver
 - i. Cultural wellbeing outcomes
 - ii. Regional arts strategic activation
 - iii. Creative capability building in local communities
 - iv. Contribution to local and regional research and insights (including the Creative Infrastructure Plan).
- c. A high-level proposal and scope can be provided if required.

Creative Waikato formally thank Matamata-Piako District Council for the opportunity to make this submission.

Creative Waikato wish to be heard in support of this submission at a hearing.

Submitted by:

Sam Cunnane
Board Chair

Dr. Jeremy Mayall
CEO

On behalf of Creative Waikato
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Additional attachments:
Creative Waikato Briefing to Councillors 2024
Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan 2024