

Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan

arts
Waikato Arts Navigator



**Creative
Waikato
Toi Waikato**

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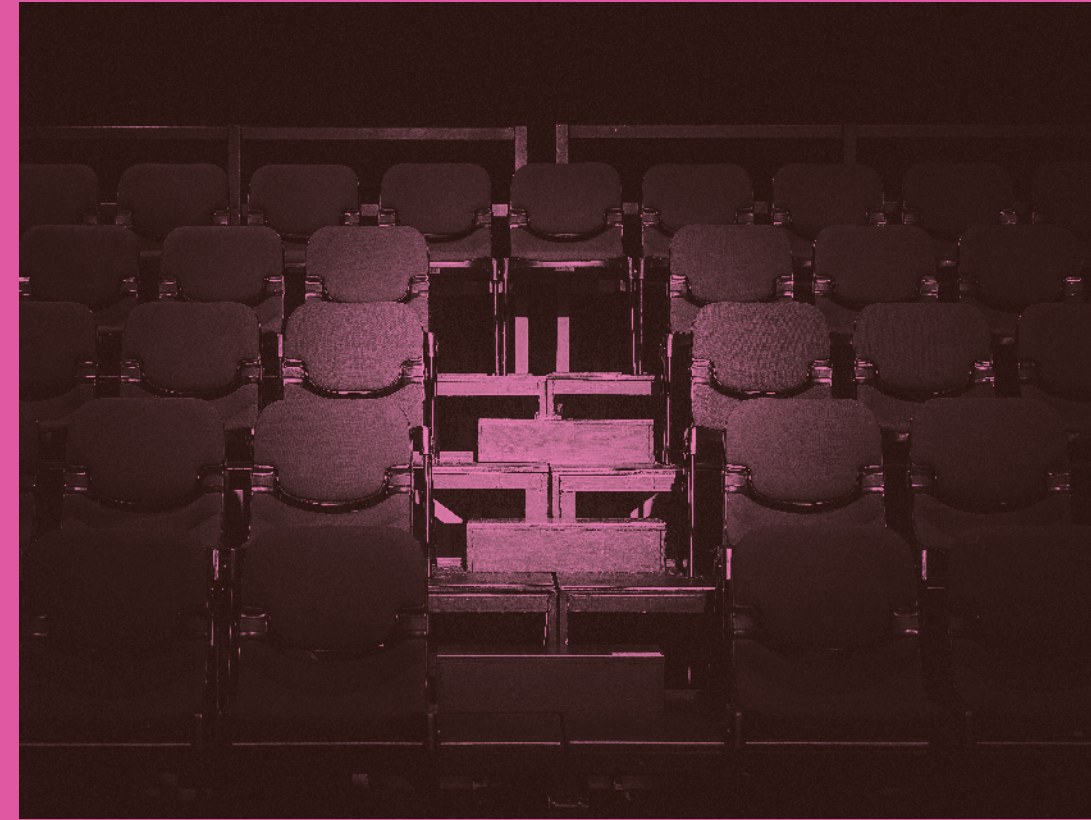
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Background

This plan presents a 2024 strategic overview of Creative Infrastructure in Waikato. It builds upon the foundation of the previous Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan prepared for Creative Waikato by The Stafford Group, in August 2014.

The purpose of this plan was to identify the current facilities available throughout the Waikato, to ascertain any gaps in the facility offering and to determine how to best fill those gaps over the next 30 years. It was the first opportunity for the Waikato region to review current and future creative sector facility needs.



This plan recognised the important role of the creative sector in helping to grow the liveability¹ of the Waikato region and its communities, and provide financial and economic benefit for the region, through driving increased tourism and local resident demand.²

¹ Broad concept which includes a combination of the social, cultural, economic and environmental attributes of a place.

² 'Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan: Summary Document — Prepared for Creative Waikato, August 2014' The Stafford Group & Creative Waikato, p, 1.

The 2014 report included research and analysis which highlighted the most strategic pathway forward — a funding and infrastructure model for the creative sector which offers:

Shared regional facilities (and costs)

Rationalisation of the number of facilities to focus on a fewer number of affordable facilities and venues; and

Ensuring facilities for the next 30 years are more flexible in their design to cater to changing uses and changing market demand needs

This would also include options for non-permanent facilities (pop-ups) which are able to offer far lower capital cost options which avoid the ongoing high annual maintenance and repair cost which existing bricks and mortar facilities create

In addition to recommendations, this report identified some strategic issues and gaps, including:

A lack of asset data management for creative facilities in Waikato

Minimal need for new creative facilities (bricks and mortar) as well as limited interest from funding bodies and Councils willing to fund new development

A lack of rehearsal spaces being the major infrastructure gap identified by creative sector stakeholders which needs to be addressed

The lack of administrative facilities (meeting rooms, back of house supporting facilities) is a further infrastructure gap which also affects the organisational ability of the sector³



Since this report was completed, there has been some progress in areas, but little in others. These will be briefly discussed in this report.

³ 'Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan: Summary Document — Prepared for Creative Waikato, August 2014' The Stafford Group & Creative Waikato, p. 6.

Purpose

The rate of change over the past 10 years has been unprecedented with a global pandemic, climate crises, civil unrest and technological advances.

There is a need for Aotearoa to have “co-ordinated, connected and cross-sector approaches and policies that align with cohesive objectives which will be essential for our social and economic systems” if we are to thrive.⁴

Innovative and cohesive approaches to issues require a long-term approach beyond our current moment and population. The Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan, prepared in 2014, provided useful data and an understanding of the infrastructure needs

at that time. The purpose of this revised plan is to provide current thinking on the future of creative infrastructure within the Waikato region, and outline potential pathways to get there.

⁴ New Zealand Productivity Commission, ‘Looking to the future’ <https://www.productivity.govt.nz/publications/looking-to-the-future/read-online-html/>.

⁵ UCLG, Culture 21: Actions, <https://www.agenda21culture.net/documents/culture-21-actions>

Definitions

Arts

Activities in which individuals and groups engage in the process of making, developing, shaping and sharing objects, images, words, performances, music, or other forms of aesthetic expression to convey emotion, story, ideas or concepts. Artists make art often through the conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in the production of aesthetic objects.

Art, or “The Arts” may include specific conventions of practice and presentation which are guided by structures, expectations and formalised infrastructure. For the purposes of this plan it can include, but is not limited to: visual art, painting, music, theatre, dance, poetry, circus, craft, media, ngā toi Māori, Pasifika arts, cultural arts and practices, fashion, film, design, puppetry, and sculpture.

This plan is connected to arts infrastructure like: galleries, museums, theatres, venues, concert halls, libraries, studios, rehearsal rooms, workshops, but can include schools, community halls, pop-up spaces, outdoor amphitheatres, parks, and civic spaces — along with groups, organisations and collectives — to provide the frameworks for artistic expression and development.

Culture

Culture is made up of the values, beliefs, languages, knowledge, art and wisdom, with which a person or people, individually or collectively, expresses both their humanity and the meaning they give to their life and its course.⁵

Access to culture is a human right and common good. Culture helps us to understand, interpret, and transform reality and can include a rich array of different things, including our shared stories, traditions, identities, beliefs and ideas. It includes our ability to access and understand the stories we inherit — we sit, watch and listen.

For this plan, cultural infrastructure includes: hapū and iwi, cultural organisations, marae, fale, culturally-specific and culturally-aware spaces, and other cultural or religiously significant spaces.

Creativity

The ability to turn imagination into action. Creativity is connected to art and culture but also expands beyond those frameworks and can operate with flexibility and freedom. Creativity is a process for innovation, curiosity and play. Engagement with creativity is intrinsically motivated, it has no expected or specified outcome. It is spontaneous, joyful, fun, accessible, challenging, social, repeatable, and doesn't require specific space or equipment.

This Plan defines creativity spaces and places as those aligning to arts and culture infrastructure — but creativity is also able to exist in any private, public and organisational space. It ultimately can occur anywhere and the key requirements are time, space, and encouragement.

Soft Infrastructure

Components of core service delivery related to people. This can include organisations, groups, collectives, and encompasses both the seen and unrecognised contributions made towards measurable growth in our cities and civic spaces.

Soft infrastructure is the services required to maintain the economic, environmental, cultural and social standards of a society. It includes non-physical assets, such as communication, policies, strategies and regulations, the financing of these systems and services, and the future development of training, capability and resources.

Hard Infrastructure

Hard infrastructure, also known as built infrastructure, is the physical infrastructure of space and place that should provide safe and accessible opportunities to engage in societal activities.

For the purposes of this plan this includes: galleries, museums, theatres, venues, concert halls, libraries, studios, rehearsal rooms, workshops, schools, community halls, pop-up spaces, outdoor amphitheatres, parks, civic spaces, marae, fale, and other buildings or created environments that serve to provide opportunity for arts, culture and creativity as per the definitions above.



Arts and Culture Organisations

A group, entity, organisation, trust or society who work with a core purpose in the arts, culture and creative ecosystem. This may be for-purpose or for-profit.

Liveability

Liveability is the articulation of provisions that ensure a place is good for living. Liveability is connected to the long-term wellbeing of individuals and communities. It includes the things that make our cities and towns great places to work and live and play. This includes hard infrastructure like buildings and parks, retail, hospitals and schools, as well as the activation of these spaces.

Other important considerations for liveability are environmental quality, safety, cost of living, happiness, social cohesion, friendliness, and community connection.

Benefits

The Plan is the result of a research-based development process. It combines desktop research and multi-faceted community engagement with the support of our strategic partner network.

The plan is presented in order to prioritise and guide investment in both hard and soft infrastructure, enhancing access and participation in arts, culture and creativity in the Waikato region.

Benefits in working with Creative Waikato on this plan include:

An informed planning and decision-making process	Insights and knowledge into the essential delivery of both hard and soft infrastructure to support civic development and impact
Sector-informed insights into ecosystem needs and strategic growth	Support and guidance to facilitate collaborative partnerships
Advocacy with funders, investors and enablers for planned infrastructure developments that align with the Plan	Capability building with communities to encourage collaboration and activate community hubs
Sector-specific reviews of facility development concepts, including scope for the development of feasibility and business cases	Facilitation of information sharing, training and community engagement
Insights, knowledge and resource sharing specific to arts, culture and creativity	Increasing insights into regional infrastructure utilisation data to understand demand and inform future development

How to use

This plan is an evolving advisory document redeveloped in 2024 to address future growth and need in consideration of Waikato infrastructure.

This reference document has been developed to assist our strategic partners and community in both hard and soft infrastructure development, planning, provision and optimisation. Like all high-level plans, this is an initial guide for framing more detailed planning to build from. The Plan is not a replacement for this detailed research and analysis which will be required for future developments (at regional and local levels).

It is recommended that the Creative Infrastructure Plan is considered in alignment with the Waikato Arts Navigator and the Waikato Performing Arts Strategy.

Limitations

The 2024 Plan presents an initial high-level scan of hard and soft infrastructure in the Waikato. This Plan is based on available data at the time of writing, using secondary data and primary data from third parties.

A high-level plan presents scope and proposed future developments that address community needs. The plan is presented as a regularly-evolving summary and as new information is collated, it will be considered for the next iteration.

The Plan does not replace the need for project-specific planning, analysis and community consultation. Each project needs to consider artform, scope, and community needs. As additional providers and partners undertake or update their existing plans and insights, it is envisaged that this Plan will require updating to remain relevant.

The Plan examines issues at a strategic level for the broadest consideration of the arts, culture and creative ecosystem. It recognises that there may be artform-specific needs in different communities and contexts that may require additional insight.

Specific limitations noted in the development of the 2024 Plan include:	
Sector-wide infrastructure plans do not currently exist on a national or regional level	Limited engagement with Waikato Tainui in this review of this plan, and recognition of the need to engage more widely with the other Iwi of the Waikato region to ensure we are capturing their aspirations, roles and needs regarding spaces, places and facilities for arts, culture, creativity and ngaa toi Maaori
The complex balance between artform-specific needs and different health and safety requirements is still to be considered	
A reliance on existing community infrastructure information from territorial authorities which is currently limited in scope	This is the first refresh of the plan since its initial development. It is also the first to consider soft infrastructure alongside hard infrastructure. In a future-focused consideration of sector development it is vital that all facets are considered
The impact of COVID-19 on infrastructure sustainability in the region	
The impact on funding inadequacies around facility maintenance and gaps in technical provision	

High-Level Considerations

As part of developing and implementing this Plan there is an expected commitment to:

Consider soft infrastructure needs alongside hard infrastructure development	Work alongside local Iwi to identify current and future needs and aspirations for Māori
Continue research and impact analysis on arts, culture, and creativity participation and activation in Waikato and how that informs future development	Recognise the guiding framework in the Local Government Act to “promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities”. ⁶ The Plan needs to reflect and inform the essential intergenerational impact of both hard and soft infrastructure for arts, culture and creativity on individual and collective wellbeing
Work with local communities and organisations to understand emerging needs and requirements for increasing access and participation in an equitable and inclusive manner	
Continue alignment to regional strategies that inform the background of this plan – Waikato Arts Navigator, Waikato Performing Arts Strategy	

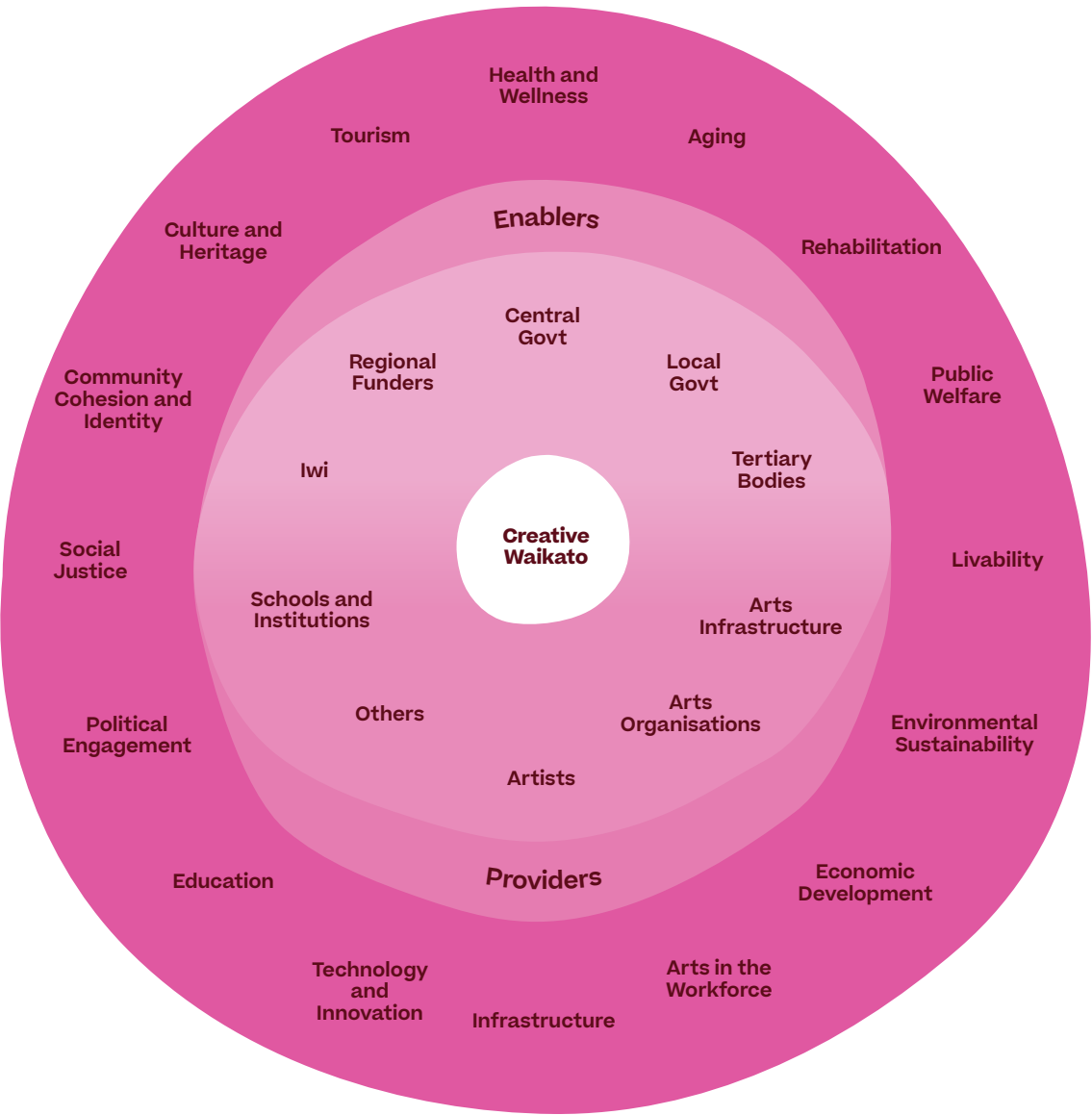
⁶ Taituarā, ‘Community Wellbeings’, <https://taituara.org.nz/community-well-beings>.

Understanding the creative ecosystem

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 our regional arts strategy.

Arts as part of our community ecosystem



Waikato Arts Navigator

The Waikato Arts Navigator Strategy (WAN) provides an aspirational vision to see the Waikato region become a place with a vibrant arts and cultural sector that thrives with diverse and transformative creative activity.⁷

This means that there is the ongoing sustainable development of a wide range of artistic and cultural activities.

The WAN is a mechanism to help achieve broader impact. It is a shared language, a way to understand and communicate the value of what we do as a sector, and to find ways to work with one another to enhance the role of arts, culture and creativity in the region.



⁷ Find the Waikato Arts Navigator and other strategies on the Creative Waikato Website: <https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/strategy-space>

Five threads

The five threads of the WAN represent key areas of focus that connect across our broader ecosystem.

The ultimate objective of the WAN is to empower key enablers, funders and community organisations to make decisions with the following outcomes in mind. This would lead to transformational systemic change for Waikato and its people.

CREATIVE WELLBEING	CREATIVE PROSPERITY	CREATIVE EXPERIENCES	CREATIVE EDUCATION	CREATIVE INNOVATION
Hauora and wellbeing	Creative economies	People experience local, national, international arts	Participatory art projects	Business partnerships
Positive collective and individual identities	Attract and retain residents	Community and cultural expression	Upskilling creative professionals	Informing local government decision making
Create, grow and strengthen communities	Tourism opportunities	Recreation and interaction	Community art classes and projects	Local problem solving
Inspired responses to challenges	Positive national perceptions	Community engagement and connection	Youth development	Distinct local expression
Strengthened connection to place	Increased investment from funders	Local pride	Audience development	Creative export opportunities

Performing Arts Strategy

The construction of the Waikato Regional Theatre provided the opportunity to build upon the Waikato Arts Navigator, in order to explore the distinct strengths of local performing arts activity.

The development of the Performing Arts Strategy was an opportunity to meaningfully engage with our diverse communities, and to hear from the people who are already having a great impact on our region, and who also want to see the sector continue to thrive, and help shape the future for this vital ecosystem.



Despite being deeply affected by the covid pandemic, with cancellation of shows, and venues being closed for long periods, the sector showed resilience with its ability to adapt, pivot, and come together to look at pathways forward.

Having a strategy that considers the bigger picture of the sector and provides a shared vision or focus for future development is an important way to move forward in a positive direction.

The performing arts in Waikato has the potential in the next 30 years to build upon its rich and varied history to support sustainable growth in the sector, to engage new audiences, and to tell local stories and create opportunities for new practitioners to share their voice.

The Vision is that:

The Waikato
Performing Arts
ecosystem thrives
through inspiring
communities and
enabling diverse
creative activity.

Drawing from the insights shared by the diverse Waikato community, the pathway for supporting this vision emerged in four strands of focus:



These focus areas provide useful understanding for the future development of this infrastructure plan.

Hard and Soft Infrastructure

A strategic framework with a long-term view point, recognises that transformational change takes time. There are many elements that must coincide to enable such transformation.

This includes the provision of and support for hard infrastructure (physical assets) and soft infrastructure (people and services), arts activity, regeneration, supporting artists and arts organisations, valuing creativity and creative thinking.

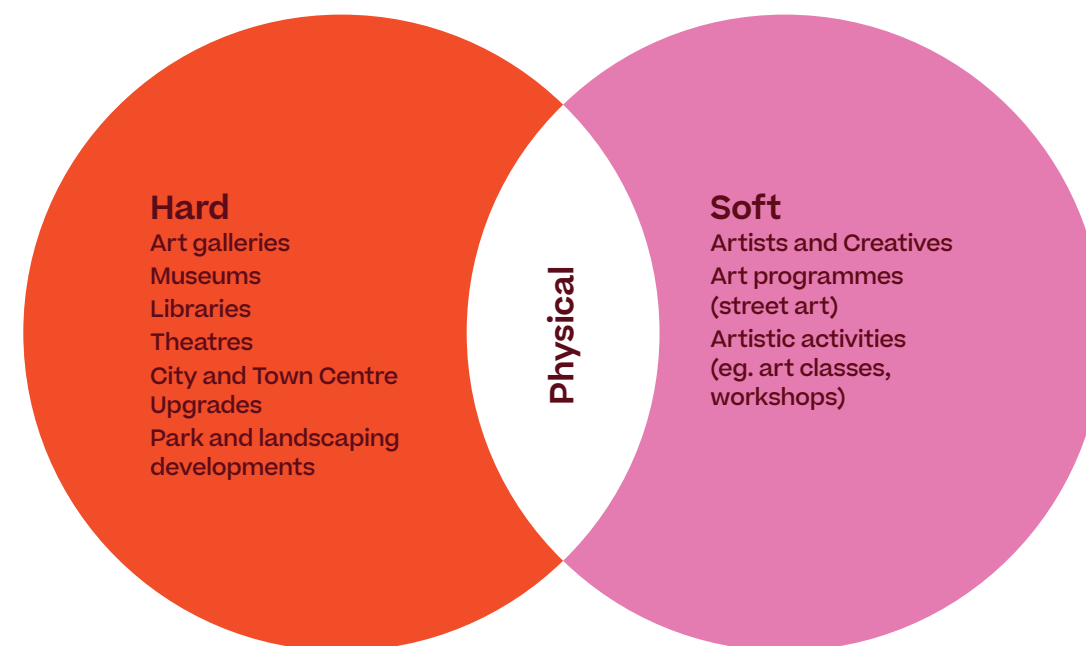
Proactive collaboration and strong advocacy from Councils and other leadership organisations will inevitably empower the broader community to work together towards a common vision.⁸

While hard infrastructure is an important consideration (and formed the basis of earlier iterations of this plan), the 2024 update includes an emphasis on soft infrastructure. A previous lack of data, insight, and sustainable investment have shaped potential issues for the ongoing sustainability of our essential soft infrastructure.

The concept and discussion around soft infrastructure is relatively new.⁹ It is regarded as a fundamental component which forms the basis for a functioning economic, political and/or social system. Most specifically, the function of soft infrastructure has been described as:

“[A] facilitator for the implementation and utilisation of hard infrastructure”

It is important to recognise that our cities and towns have both hard and soft infrastructure. Whilst physical buildings and utilities are critical components of urban development, it is the soft infrastructure that enables the smooth integration of technology and provision of services.¹⁰



⁸ 'Waikato Arts Navigator Strategy' p.43 https://creativewaikato.co.nz/site/uploads/Waikato-Arts-Navigator_Regional-Strategy_ONLINE.pdf

⁹ Turner, C. (2020) 'The infrastructured state: Territoriality and the national infrastructure system'. Edward Elgar Publishing in Sutriadi, R 'Soft infrastructure in Smart Sustainable Cities' p, 200 <http://journal.pusbindiklatren.bappenas.go.id/lib/jisdep/article/view/428/172>

¹⁰ Sutriadi, R 'Soft infrastructure in Smart Sustainable Cities' p, 200. <http://journal.pusbindiklatren.bappenas.go.id/lib/jisdep/article/view/428/172>

Core components of soft infrastructure

Soft infrastructure is associated with the development of human and social capital integral to community-building and the promotion of “high quality” living.¹¹

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.

Soft infrastructure encompasses both the seen and unrecognised contributions made towards measurable growth in our cities and civic spaces. Soft infrastructure in the arts, culture and creative sector is a core part of sustainable growth, civic development and placemaking. This directly connects to vibrant communities and this understanding is supported by a wealth of peer-reviewed local and international evidence that demonstrates this impact.

It is vital to consider issues around growth in the context of living and working in a changing city. Growth of certain kinds

(residential) is interwoven with the function of a city which connects both hard and soft infrastructure (events, concerts, activities). The value and impact of this creative soft infrastructure strengthens the economic potential of the city, thriving and active communities, and attractiveness for inward investment. This framing of soft infrastructure supports the understanding that sustainable growth is not just about physical buildings. It must also be about people. People who provide services, activations and community development that deliver core civic outcomes.



¹¹ 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
¹² Ibid.

Sustainable civic growth, community cohesion, social wellbeing and economic development are all served through strategic investment in both hard and soft creative infrastructure.

This connection is specifically articulated in the Waikato Arts Navigator as a regional arts strategy. It is also supported by recent local evidence through the Creative Waikato and Huber Social Wellbeing impact study, as well as recent reports by Creative New Zealand on local government and placemaking, and the Review for the Future of Local Government on the focus for community wellbeing.

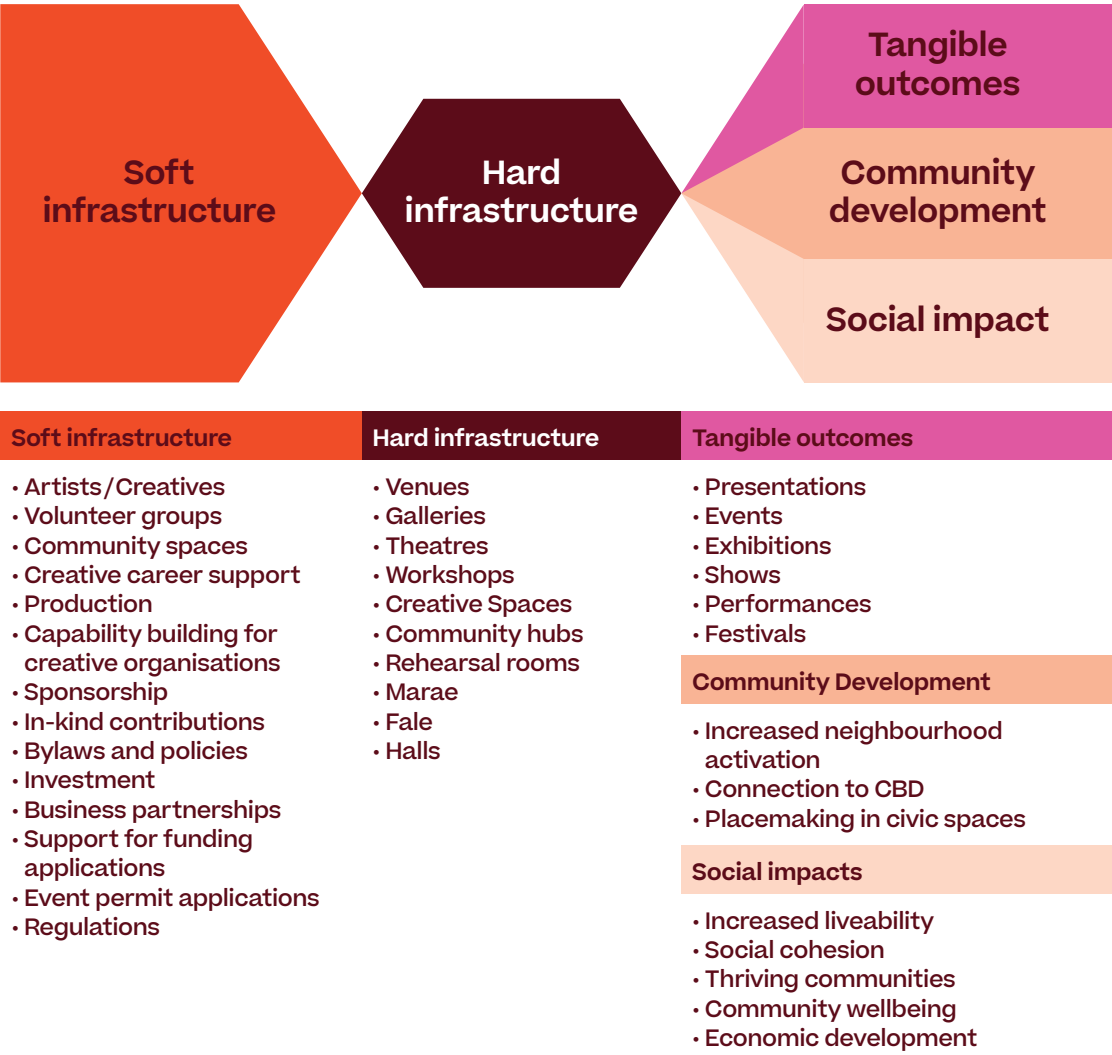
Investing in hard infrastructure means creating safe, accessible and sustainable community spaces. Investing in soft infrastructure means supporting the people who breathe life and vitality into spaces and capital assets. It is essential to have both these things. The community benefits of this activation provides the rationale and social licence for ongoing

future investment and development that enables continued civic, economic and community growth. It is key that the activation, operational and maintenance requirements of all capital projects is proactively included in long term budgeting and project planning.

A place’s social and cultural norms, meanings and values are present within their forms of soft infrastructure.¹² Supporting those people who activate hard infrastructure contributes to distinct local expression and social cohesion.

The design and delivery of “good quality” places therefore requires the adequate provision of hard and soft forms of infrastructure in order to support the prospect of “high quality” living within them.

It is through the soft infrastructure utilising the space and support of the hard infrastructure that the wider impact occurs.



The creative sector is enabled by the passion, expertise and care of volunteers, as well as paid employees. This is the case too in sport, community, and cultural spaces. Ultimately, our community mobilises and connects with or without hard infrastructure, and while investments in hard infrastructure are key to enabling safer, more accessible,

sustainable and engaging experiences, it is important to centre people in these developments. It is key then, to not only measure impact in terms of financial return or asset utilisation, but to consider wellbeing measures, and the ways in which these experiences contribute to things like community cohesion, connection to place and land and self.

Waikato Infrastructure Plan

The Waikato Infrastructure Plan prepared in 2014, provided a benchmark in the identification of current and future sector facility needs. However, some of these projects were not realised.



Priority Projects

The table that follows outlines the “Priority Projects” that were recommended. An update on these projects is provided in addition to new projects which were either not considered or realised at the time the initial plan was prepared.

Status

Working well and/or complete	
In progress or needing some future development	
Stalled, cancelled or postponed	
Potential future priority	
Project not listed in 2014 report	*

Project	Location	Types of Uses	Primary Partners	Update 2024	Status
Waikato Regional Theatre (upgrade to Founders Theatre)	Hamilton	Performing Arts	Hamilton City Council and Others	<p>Investigation into remedial and development work for Founders Theatre was undertaken in the 2015-2016 financial year. Founders Theatre closed in 2016 for safety reasons.</p> <p>In 2017, Momentum Waikato worked with support from Creative Waikato to engage in community consultation to develop a new Waikato Regional Theatre (WRT). In 2018 Hamilton City Council funded \$25million and the Hamilton Hotel site on the South end of Victoria Street was identified as the preferred site.</p> <p>Waikato Regional Property Trust (WRPT), which owns the theatre, formed via the appointment of its first trustees in October 2018. Work on the new site began in 2021. Demolition of Founders began in 2023</p>	
Upgrade of The Meteor Theatre	Hamilton	Performing Arts	Community	<p>Ownership transferred from Hamilton City Council to The One Victoria Trust in February 2014. By 2017, the Trust had successfully raised the \$1.1 million necessary to complete required upgrades and earthquake proofing. Meeting the requirement of full transfer of ownership. The Meteor successfully sourced crowdfunding for the refurbishment and installation of new bathrooms in 2021.</p> <p>*** Challenges exist around operational funding where sustainable investment and support will be ongoing. Increased civic investment is required to support future accessibility for communities</p>	
New major performing arts auditorium —NZ Conservatorium of Music	University of Waikato — Hamilton	Performing Arts	University of Waikato Foundation and Others	<p>This was stalled due to covid.</p> <p>The University is adding a much-needed extension to its performance arts building — the Gallagher Academy of Performing Arts.</p> <p>Originally opened in 2001, the Academy is a purpose-built arts building and is regarded as a top facility for teaching and performance. This space is available to local, national and international groups and artists to use for practices, concerts and performances.</p> <p>A proposed extension will include a new art gallery space allowing for larger installations, and additional music practice rooms with the appropriate acoustics, lighting, outlook and arrangements necessary for students to learn and practice in. No timeframe as yet.</p>	
Upgrade for Waitomo Cultural Centre	Te Kuiti	All creative expression but particularly for growing Kapa Haka	Waitomo District Council and Others	<p>Now called the “Les Munro Centre”, there have been some Council funded upgrades since 2014 including the main hall, floor coverings, foyer, stage, bathrooms, gardens and kitchen.</p>	
Upgrade for Clarence St Theatre	Hamilton	Performing Arts and storage	Community Trust and Others	<p>Hamilton City Council gifted Clarence Street Theatre to the Clarence Street Theatre Trust in 2015. Building upgrades including roof refurbishment is still required.</p> <p>Covid was a major hurdle for the theatre as extended lockdowns, limited capacity, and lower audience engagement added complication.</p> <p>Clarence St Theatre has a new manager and is looking at opportunities for future development and activation.</p> <p>*** Challenges exist around operational funding where sustainable investment and support will be ongoing. Increased civic investment is required to support future accessibility for communities</p>	

Project	Location	Types of Uses	Primary Partners	Update 2024	Status
Development of multiple rehearsal spaces	Multiple locations	All forms of rehearsal and production facilities	Councils and Others	This is an ongoing need and has not been fully investigated or realised.	
Creation of cultural, sculptural and art trails linking towns and creative sector venues	Throughout the Waikato to help tell the sub regional and regional history	Visual art form display, event and communication information, Māori creative expression and welcome	Councils and Others	<p>The Sculpture Park – Waitakaruru Arboretum The art-in-nature experience invites families and friends to share a walk, and children to be outdoors on a creative adventure. www.sculpturepark.co.nz</p> <p>Boon Sculpture Trail – Kirikiriroa/Hamilton Boon Sculpture Trail brings together artists from across Aotearoa, to create and install temporary outdoor sculptures in Kirikiriroa Hamilton. www.boonarts.co.nz/bst</p> <p>Te Ara Wai journeys – Wāipa District Self-guided tour of culturally significant sites tearawai.nz</p> <p>Te Ahurei Māori Tourism – Māori Art Walking Tours of Hamilton CBD Celebrating Māori art and storytelling in Kirikiriroa/Hamilton. www.facebook.com/teahureimaoritourism</p> <p>Tainui Waka Tourism – Regional Māori Tourism Organisation (RMTO) for the Tainui Waka region. Vision is: “Sharing our stories with the World”. www.facebook.com/tainuiwakatourism</p> <p>Te Awa River Ride The 65km Te Awa River Ride is one of the most scenic cycling and walking trails in New Zealand. Art component still in development www.te-awa.org.nz</p> <p>Five Waikato River trails – Karapiro, Arapuni, Waipapa, Maraetai, Whakamaru Strategically placed art along trails. www.waikatorivertrails.co.nz</p> <p>Waka Kotahi Waikato expressway Concrete pou and waka erected on historic sites throughout State Highway 1 Huntly bypass route www.monarc.co.nz/latest-work/case-studies/waikato-expressway-huntly-bypass/</p> <p>The Adventure Trail Highway Ruapehu The Adventure Highway Arts Trail is a celebration of creativity. A trail which includes galleries, studios, cafes, restaurants, and art stay accommodations, each telling a story of the region’s cultural heritage and contemporary artistic flair. www.visitruapehu.com/maps/the-adventure-highway-art-trail</p> <p>Hamilton Airport Cultural Transformation Rejuvenation of brand – pekapeka (long-tailed bat). Natural attributes aligned to Ranginui (skyfather), Papatuanuku (earthmother) and everything in-between connection to place, purpose and planet. Meaning interwoven into building. All artists whakapapa back to Waikato www.hamiltonairport.co.nz/our-cultural-journey</p>	

Project	Location	Types of Uses	Primary Partners	Update 2024	Status
Development of multi-purpose facility (all art forms)	Ngāruawahia (possibly as part of Tūrangawaewae Marae)	All creative expression but particularly for growing kapa haka	Tūrangawaewae Trust Board and Others	<p>Globox Claudelands has become a regular venue for kapa haka. Less restrictions around food vendors and minimal entry fee has made this a popular event.</p> <p>Te Matatini has established 12 new Pou Takawenga positions which will be conduits between regions (incl Tainui) and Te Matatini.</p> <p>Possible plans for a Toi Māori Hub for the purpose of housing taonga from the Kingitanga, which have been gifted through generations.</p>	On Track
Upgrade of The Plaza	Putaruru	All creative expression but particularly for performing arts	South Waikato District Council Local/regional Trusts, Foundations and Others	LTP 2020-21—Putaruru Town Concept Plan included creation of “The Plaza Creative Arts Hub” precinct.	
Outdoor amphitheatre development	Hamilton	All creative expression	Hamilton City Council and Others	Two current proposals—Hamilton Gardens and Founders Theatre site—neither currently confirmed—but Creative Waikato was part of initial community consultation.	
Development of Riverlea Theatre	Hamilton	Performing Arts + storage	Hamilton City Council and Others	Purchased land from Council in 2016 and have been working to fundraise for a new building.	
*Creative Space Development in Otorohanga	Ōtorohanga	To be determined	Ōtorohanga District Council and Others	*Creative Waikato has been engaging in community consultation around this project.	
Development of public art space/gallery	Hamilton (possibly as part of current Museum)	All forms of fine art, craft	Hamilton City Council and others	Initial plans for the Waikato Regional Theatre included provision for a Public Art Gallery. A brief feasibility study was completed for this in 2023 by Creative Waikato, however, it appears that no current provision has been made for this.	On Track
Rehearsal space and artists studios	Hamilton	All forms of rehearsal and studio facilities	Councils and others	Potential for mixed-use artist studios, gallery, venue hire spaces. Examples are Toi Poneke (Wellington), The Incubator (Tauranga), Te Atamira (Queenstown), The Piano (Christchurch).	On Track
Ngaa toi Maaori creator space	Hamilton or location in region	Inclusion of space for carving along with other artforms	Hamilton City Council (and/or other District Councils) and others	Collaborative artist studio space.	
Increased investment in community organisations	Multiple locations	All creative expression	Local trust, foundations, Council and Others	<p>These should be strength-based community led initiatives for arts, culture and creativity outcomes.</p> <p>*** Creative community organisations balance accessibility and sustainability through civic and philanthropic investment. Future growth and long-term activation require long-term investment.</p>	
Development of Storage facility	Hamilton	Costume storage, stage props, lighting equipment, instruments etc	Local trusts, foundations and Others	Potential for storage facilities specifically for performance. Example “Green Green Room” in Wellington.	

Current Landscape

Current Hard Infrastructure Landscape

There is no currently available data that frames the full region. A complete map of the scale and scope of this is still to be developed. Key components include:

Theatres (includes: Waikato Regional Theatre, Clarence Street Theatre, The Meteor Theatre, and a number of local and regional community theatres)	Galleries
Community halls	Marae
Venues (concert halls, bars, alternative venues)	Cultural centres
Schools (halls, performing arts facilities)	Creative hubs and workshops
Museums	Dance schools
	Libraries
	Community houses
	Parks and Gardens

Current Soft Infrastructure Ecosystem

The scope and activation of soft infrastructure in the Waikato is hard to specifically articulate. This work is in continued development. Focused areas of delivery include (but are not limited to):

Toi Maaori organisations (kapahaka, cultural groups, marae, hapu/iwi)	Visual Arts groups
Theatre groups and organisations	Music groups and organisations
Musical theatre groups and organisations	Literature groups and organisations
Dance groups and organisations	Event organisers
Societies of arts	Festival organisations
Creative community organisations	Craft and object organisations

Key Strategic Considerations

The current societal context provides important considerations for future development, including:

Cost of living crisis and impacts on access and engagement

Economic recession and potential reduction in funding for creative community service providers

Negative trends in social cohesion and mental health. Need for additional investment to support positive outcomes

Increased engagement in community creative activities, and increased costs for delivery, with reduced funding opportunities

Changing demand for spaces, places and mixed-use facilities in diverse communities

Multi-agency response required to identify and address needs

Lack of backbone mechanisms to facilitate increased utilisation of available civic spaces (council, school, community spaces)

Collaboration between groups to increase feasibility, optimisation and where appropriate, rationalisation of facilities

Communication, collaboration and advocacy across social sectors, to increase the perspective and understanding of the value and contributions of arts, culture and creativity to community

Exploring shared-use facilities with sports, community and other partners across boundaries, communities, education, and other stakeholders

Increased sector investment and support to navigate funding challenges and the decline in revenue and increased costs due to recent years

Climate change and environmental sustainability and how this can be acknowledged and mitigated by communities, enablers and existing infrastructure

Strengths Analysis

Challenges

Artists, arts groups and venues receive modest amounts of investment which is disproportionate to the value and effort that is provided. The impact of the pandemic and competition for the leisure dollar makes it increasingly difficult for the arts, culture and creative sector to become self-sustaining.

There is an access, participation and equity balance that creates increasing complexities for community infrastructure. Providers of community infrastructure often need to balance the costs of delivering services against the prices that community members can reasonably expect to pay to use and/or engage in the services. If the core service measure is around access, participation and wellbeing for all people in our communities, then it is essential that civic, philanthropic, government and other investment is increased to support.

Aotearoa’s arts and cultural sector remains on an emergency footing following the past three years of pandemic disruption.¹³ In 2020, The Ministry of Culture and Heritage provided some respite through various Arts and Culture COVID Recovery Programmes and these did result in some successful outcomes.¹⁴ However, due to these programmes being short-term the potential of these initiatives will not be fully realised, nor their long-term effects measured.

The cost of living is also having an adverse impact on artists and audiences, with inflation continually rising. This directly impacts provision of service, and impacts the communities, artists, creative and organisations who utilise and engage with local hard infrastructure.

¹³ The Conversation ‘We need to break the cycle of crisis in Aotearoa New Zealand’s arts and culture. It starts with proper funding’ February 2023 <https://theconversation.com/we-need-to-break-the-cycle-of-crisis-in-aotearoa-new-zealands-arts-and-culture-it-starts-with-proper-funding-199772>

¹⁴ Beehive.govt.nz ‘Govt investment in arts delivers strong economic results’ (May 2023) <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/govt-investment-arts-delivers-strong-economic-results>

Insights into the situation for our sector include:

The median total income for Creative Professionals is \$37,000. This is comparable to what self-employed New Zealanders earn (\$39,900), but considerably lower than the median income for those earning a wage or salary (\$61,800)

The median income for creative work is \$19,500. This is lower than total income as nearly half of creative professionals also hold down a job outside of the sector to supplement their income

Overall, only 18% of creative professionals agree they are fairly compensated for their time, with two thirds indicating that they do not feel fairly compensated

Almost all (94%) creative professionals participating in the gig economy find it difficult to secure loans for things like mortgages, and four in five find it difficult to predict how much money they are going to make, and struggle with the lack of holiday and sick pay¹⁵

¹⁵ Kantar Public, Creative New Zealand and New Zealand On Air, 'Profile of Creative Professionals', <https://creativenz.govt.nz/-/media/project/creative-nz/creativenz/publicationsfiles/2023-profile-of-creative-professionals/profile-of-creative-professionals---main-report---pdf.pdf>

Other strategic considerations

Core creative civic infrastructure is often managed and maintained by community trusts; This contributes to increased risks to sustainability. Because these trusts do not have the scale of operational support that might exist if spaces were council managed, capital expenditure and upgrades require extensive and intensive fundraising campaigns, contributing to burnout and the closing of key community spaces. There is a need for sustainable long-term investment from council into the future, in recognition of the public good and community wellbeing that community groups facilitate from these spaces. It is important that this is maintained.

There is a lack of safe and reliable rehearsal space. For the health and safety of performers it is important that there are spaces with appropriate flooring, heating, lighting and accessibility. There is a lack of consistent space in Waikato communities for these purposes. It is worth noting that these design features can be of benefit to other users of these spaces too, including whaanau, disabled communities, our elders, and participants in sport and recreation activities.

Social inequity and deprivation is a strategic reality. There are large components of the Waikato region which include deprived and isolated communities. People in those communities often have lower levels of access to and participation in creative activity. They also have limited access

to hard infrastructure. For isolated communities there is often a lack of available infrastructure to provide any opportunity for positive impact.

Post-COVID fiscal cliff. The period of 2020-2023 saw an unprecedented investment in the arts, culture and creative ecosystem from central government. This increase in funding was the largest update in the national arts funding levels in more than a generation. As a result there was increased activation, access and activity. But this funding was fixed until June 2024. Which means many organisations have increased their operation and impact — but there is no ongoing support available. For Waikato, the arts sector Covid Recovery Funding that came into the region via Manatū Taonga was \$10,519,180.

This figure encompasses Recovery funding only (Creative Spaces, Cultural Installations and Events, Cultural Activators, Innovation Fund, Regeneration Fund and Capability Fund). It excludes emergency relief funding (CSERF, Arts and Culture Event Support Scheme)

Some of this funding is also allocated to other regions as there are multi region projects. The approved amount for projects focused solely on the Waikato region is \$5,106,890.¹⁶

This will create a challenge for our communities who have grown used to an increase in available support and the positive impacts that has enabled.

¹⁶ Figure from Manatū Taonga reporting, see: <https://www.mch.govt.nz/>

Opportunities

Artists, creatives and associated organisations are resourceful groups. They regularly stretch any investment received into creating positive outcomes and serving the liveability of our communities.

The creative ecosystem is currently one of the largest funders and enablers of creative activity when we acknowledge volunteer hours, in-kind support, and provision of service above and beyond market rates.

While this is a positive contribution, it is vital that enablers, civic partners, and investors acknowledge and value that contribution to ensure that sector burnout is reduced and that artists and creatives can have access to sustainable careers and quality of life. If we want to be an innovative and resourceful region we need to embrace imaginative opportunities to work differently and explore creative opportunities to prioritise

investment and support into both hard and soft creative infrastructure, and acknowledge the essential balance between those areas of activity.

The Waikato Arts Navigator provides a useful strategic framework to inform future opportunities that encourage collaborative investment, strategic partnerships, and to explore avenues for embedding creatives into activities beyond the obvious delivery areas.

Other opportunities to strengthen the creative infrastructure of the Waikato can include:

Utilising and repurposing council owned spaces to support community activities

Exploring development of creative spaces as part of civic revitalisation

Working with Sport Waikato to embed creative spaces in Sporting infrastructure

Encouraging the provision of empty commercial space for accessible art activity

Investing in public art as a contributor to civic safety

Investing in public creative programming and events to encourage the development and sharing of local stories

Work with creative organisations to limit red tape and regulation when providing creative services and events

Embed provisions that contribute to the protection of arts, culture and creative activity in city centres and civic environments

Recommendations

This 2024 revision of the Creative Infrastructure plan builds upon earlier insights, but presents new high-level opportunities for shaping a Waikato Region that thrives with diverse and transformative creative activity.

Whilst this plan acknowledges that each different territorial authority will have different requirements, expectations and levels of investment, it is essential for future planning to be established and a prioritisation of the types of infrastructure and service provision that will be required for thriving future communities.

Key recommendations of the 2024 plan are:

Develop an arts action plan in alignment with the Waikato Arts Navigator for each territorial authority (in partnership with Creative Waikato)	1 year
Embed sector-informed policies and guidelines to enhance creative activity in local communities (events, performance, public art, etc)	1-3 years
Contribute to the next stage of development of this plan to provide further insights, scope and location specific data points for further analysis. (This should highlight data around the use of spaces, and prioritise supporting community access and use of these spaces)	1-2 years
Proactively explore the inclusion of creative spaces in all future civic, sport and community infrastructure projects	2-5 years
Encourage the development of multi-use space — but acknowledge the artform specific safety requirements and expectations in the development process	1-5 years
Increase investment into soft infrastructure in the arts, culture and creative sector	1-3 years
Engage with strategic sector advisors to explore opportunities for creative outcomes in connection with placemaking, civic story-telling, parks, CBD developments, and public communications	1-3 years

Disclaimer:

Information, data and general assumptions used in the compilation of this report have been obtained from sources believed to be reliable. Creative Waikato have used this information in good faith and make no warranties or representations, express or implied, concerning the accuracy or completeness of this information.

Interested parties should perform their own investigations, analysis and projections on all issues prior to acting in any way with regard to this project. All proposed infrastructure approaches made within this document are high level concepts and should be further developed in consultation with any contributing parties. Proposed approaches represent recommendations based on the findings of the research that informed the report.

All final decisions remain the responsibility of the respective property owners.

