



**Whanganui  
District Council  
Long-Term Plan  
2021-2031**

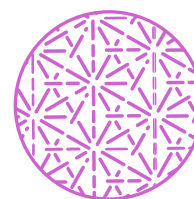
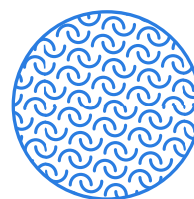
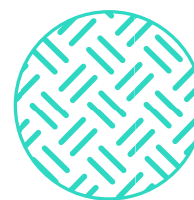
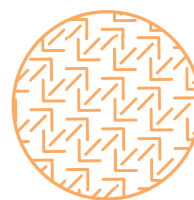
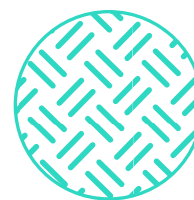
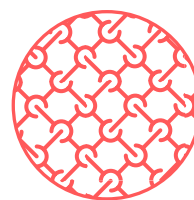
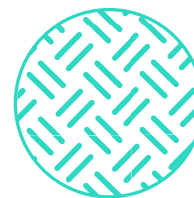
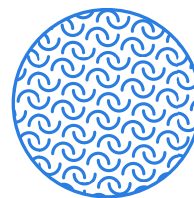


# Let's Connect

## Consultation Document



**WHANGANUI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui





LET'S CONNECT  
WHANGANUI



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## Supporting documents

**You can find the following documents at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan)  
or call (06) 349 0001 to request a copy:**

- Financial Strategy
- 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy
- Forecasting assumptions
- Full financial statements
- Full list of capital expenditure projects by area
- Groups of activity section including performance measures
- Draft Revenue and Financing Policy and supporting Funding Needs Analyses
- Draft Development Contributions Policy
- Liability Management Policy
- Investment Policy
- Funding Impact Statement – rates information
- Proposed fees and charges for 2021/22
- Draft Significance and Engagement Policy
- Rates Remission Policy, Rates Postponement Policy and Policy on the Remission and Postponement of Rates on Māori Freehold Land
- Supporting Information Document





# Message from the Mayor



Tēnā koutou Whanganui,

Even just a year ago Whanganui District Council may have produced a very different long-term plan consultation document to the one you hold in your hands. As the present becomes less certain, planning for the future becomes increasingly difficult. The uncertainties of the effects of climate change, and the continued COVID-19 pandemic have meant the council has, for the most part, had to concentrate on the 'must haves' rather than ambitious projects.

We are moving through globally turbulent and dynamic times. As a council we are proud of the resilience of our community and look forward to supporting recovery from these extraordinary circumstances.

Our long-term plan is the basis for our district's commitments for the next ten years. We continue to keep our eyes on the horizon for future trends, challenges and opportunities to ensure that we are able to respond nimbly and remain a thriving and resilient community.

In our previous ten-year plan we committed to several large scale significant projects, including the revitalisation of the Whanganui Port, redevelopment of the Sarjeant Gallery, and major upgrades to our stormwater infrastructure. Improvements to our stormwater capability are designed to mitigate flooding and support our wastewater facility in response to greater climate pressures. In this plan we continue with this significant work, and deliver further on each of these priority projects.

We are addressing climate change, and setting direction for Whanganui following a declaration of a climate emergency by this council in 2020. This long-term plan sees us move into a delivery phase for the draft climate change strategy – *Te Rautaki Huringa Āhuarangi* - with much positive work to come in this space. We look forward to using more solar energy for our Whanganui district assets, and working collaboratively with our partners to respond to pressures and risks due to the climate.

We are working hard on our partnerships with tangata whenua and with Treaty settlement entities to understand how we will work together into the future. We aim to set strategic pathways that support all of our Whanganui communities to thrive. This work includes complex projects such as the port redevelopment, our climate change strategy and incremental planning for future growth.

We continue to experience population growth and are ensuring that we have the ability and agility to respond to this growth by increasing specific

expenditure in our infrastructure programmes, roading and water services. Our predictions are that Whanganui will continue to grow over the next decade and we must ensure our infrastructure can accommodate further increases in population. We are increasing funding for housing initiatives, including community housing, recognising that improving housing outcomes is a critical factor to support our growing community.

We also present to the community an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on options for Whanganui's cycling velodrome, and bring this long-debated and hotly contested item to a decision point. A project of this scale will be a significant construction project and a further feather in our cap for our Whanganui sporting assets, but will come at a cost. We need to hear directly from the community on this important project.

We are looking to extend our Davis Library to future proof this much-loved Whanganui facility for the next generation, and we propose to invest in youth by providing spaces and places for young people and improving our precious coastal environments through a coastal plan.

We are very aware of the impact of rate rises on our community and intend to keep them as low as possible, by finding ways to keep costs down, whilst still continuing a work programme that will benefit people and enhance our district.

Our long-term plan for 2021-2031 has been carefully drafted. The events and challenges of 2020-2021 have shown us that preparation is important and these experiences have taught us to be even more mindful of the curveballs we may have to face in the future.

When times are challenging, communities must pool resources and work together, as we did so successfully during 2020.

Now, as we build this long-term plan for our future, I would love to see this same collective commitment harnessed to inform our decisions. We need your feedback and your ideas, so I encourage you to make a submission. That way we can make Whanganui an even better community in which to live.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Hamish McDouall'.

Hamish McDouall

**Mayor**



# Where are we going?

In conversations with us in the lead up to this Long-Term Plan, you asked us to focus on:

- Enhancing the town centre
- Attracting more businesses and people
- Addressing social issues
- Increasing transport options including active transport
- Taking care of our environment and mitigating climate change

Our plan for the next ten years responds to this conversation in many ways. We look forward to making progress against these important items and present a ten year plan that provides resourcing for increasing climate, growth and housing pressures. It also has a focus on improving our ability to service our youth communities, and making improvements in our natural environment, particularly the coastal areas.

Town centre regeneration and active transport are also prioritised with additional funding provided in the coming ten year period that will continue to produce a vibrant and more connected city.

We continue to support population growth and are ensuring that we have the ability and agility to respond to this growth by increasing growth project expenditure in our infrastructure programmes, roading and water services. We will also delve into this space further with strategic growth planning to ensure sustainability of growth. We are also planning investment in community housing in recognition of housing pressures. Our predictions are that Whanganui will continue to grow over the next ten years and we must ensure our infrastructure will match further increases in population.

This plan allows for the council to continue to progress the Port revitalisation – Te Pūwaha project. Te Pūwaha, will use a unique abundance model to co-decide and co-design all elements of the project to achieve positive outcomes for the river, the people and the community.

We are planning to continue to deliver on all critical three waters infrastructure and services for our communities related to this portfolio, and stay well abreast of the changing requirements through the three waters reform legislation that is underway. Further conversations with our community will occur as the reforms progress.



# What's on our mind - our financial and infrastructure strategies



In the past three years since our last long-term plan many things have changed. In developing this plan and our Financial and Infrastructure Strategies, these are our key challenges and items of most significance. Further information on these topics can be found in:

- What else are we planning to do over the next 10 years section of this document on page 40.
- Our Financial Strategy
- Our Infrastructure Strategy
- The supporting information to this plan at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan)

## Growth

Whanganui's population decline has been stemmed and the population has begun to grow consistently for the first time since 1996 and we now have a housing shortage to contend with. Infometrics mid-range projections suggest our population will grow by 330 people per annum for the first ten years of the plan, reducing to 220 per year from years 11 to 30. We need to invest in infrastructure to support new housing growth areas, and we will also encourage infill growth in existing areas whilst looking at other ways we can support housing availability.

### Significant capital projects

We have some significant capital projects underway. We have provided substantial investment in the port redevelopment in order to leverage government funding and maximise the economic opportunities the project presents for the community. Construction of the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment is well underway with significant assistance from external funding sources, and a new animal pound has been built. In this plan further significant capital projects are proposed, including roofing the velodrome, extending the Davis Library, creating a youth hub, creating and implementing a coastal plan and replacing the Dublin Street Bridge. Many of these projects rely on a substantial amount of external funding.

### Looking after our assets

Whanganui has spent much of the last 30 years focusing on significant improvements to its wastewater, stormwater and water networks. We now generally have good quality networks in place with average asset condition ranging from fair to very good.

Our new wastewater treatment plant is now fully operational. We are continuing to invest in improving our stormwater network to address capacity issues and assist with climate change, as consulted upon in our last long term plan 2018-2028. In the first three years of this plan, we are investing an additional \$500k per annum to replace spiral welded and riveted water pipes due to their age, low condition rating and risk.

Our roading assets are under pressure with demands increasing beyond what the assets were designed for. We have budgeted an increase in funding for pavement maintenance and bridge maintenance to address assets in need of repair. Consideration of the replacement of the Dublin Street bridge is a critical project over the next ten years.

We have a significant and ever increasing asset base to operate and maintain. Increasing standards, legislative requirements and community expectations are putting pressure on us to maintain these assets and deliver our services to increasing standards.

Over the past few years we have undertaken extensive modelling of our infrastructure networks to improve data information on the condition of our assets. This has identified some additional investment needs, particularly around our parks. For more information on our asset condition and performance, see our Infrastructure Strategy.

## Climate change

Climate change remains a critical issue for the Whanganui community moving into the future. In 2020 Whanganui District Council declared a climate emergency, and has worked collaboratively with key stakeholders and iwi partners to develop a climate change strategy for the district. The draft climate change strategy, Te Rautaki Huringa Āhuarangi plots a course for action to both mitigate and adapt to climate change and to provide a framework for collaboration. We are facing increased costs in a number of activities like stormwater, roading and parks due to the impacts of climate change.

## The economy and COVID-19

COVID-19 has affected the international economy and has resulted in substantial uncertainty and risks to some of our investment returns, but also has provided us with lower interest rates in the short term. We are mindful of the fact that COVID-19 has put financial pressure on some of our ratepayers and we need to keep rates affordability front of mind.



### **Business as usual cost increases**

We are facing increased costs just to deliver our standard suite of services due to inflation and price escalation. Costs like insurance have increased significantly. We are also getting less subsidy from NZTA from year 2 of this plan, with our subsidy rate dropping from 61% to 60%.

### **Expanding our operations**

During the course of this plan we have some changes to our services that affect our operating costs, like the opening of the redeveloped Sarjeant Gallery in 2023 (year 3) and the operation of the proposed covered velodrome from year 5.

We are also doing work in a number of areas like climate change, addressing our housing shortage, investment in our youth and investigating transport options to respond to issues that are facing our community. This work needs financial support.

Catering to changing community expectations has led to an increase in services and facilities and council involvement in new areas, for example welcoming communities, suburban library hubs, heritage, and town centre regeneration.

### **Balancing rates affordability, our work programme and debt**

We consistently need to strike a balance between our work programme and the services we deliver, our rates increases and affordability, and our debt. Keeping rates affordable and debt sustainable while managing our assets and achieving our vision of a vibrant district requires a delicate balancing act. We have set our rates increase limit at the local government inflation rate plus 2% in this plan. We believe this is the maximum rates increase that is affordable for our community.

### **Debt**

Our debt is higher than we predicted in our long-term plan 2018-2028. While we were anticipating peak debt in 2019/20, our debt has increased beyond this time and is now forecast to continue to increase until 2024/25. This is primarily due to additional investment in the port redevelopment, the proposal to roof the velodrome, reducing our rates increase last year due to COVID-19, additional population growth requiring infrastructure investment, and increased capital investment in parks, water and roading. While we still have substantial capacity to borrow within our debt limits, we must consider the implications on current ratepayers and future generations.

### **Three waters reform**

The government is currently in the process of reforming the national framework for the management of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater (the three waters). While our assumption is that we retain the three waters, it is possible that a new entity may take over running some or all of our water networks.

We expect the government to ask local authorities to participate in the new delivery system in late 2021 and the government has signalled that councils can opt out. If these reforms occur, it is likely that the new entity will carry on with our programme. These reforms would mean that we would no longer be responsible for the delivery of these services and this would impact on our finances.

For further information, see our forecasting assumptions and our supporting information to this plan at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan). The Government's reform strategy and timeline is available at: [www.dia.govt.nz/Three-Waters-Reform-Programme](http://www.dia.govt.nz/Three-Waters-Reform-Programme).





# Conversation with our community - Leading Edge strategic direction

The Leading Edge Strategy was developed in 2014 following a period of extensive community consultation. The intention was to create a long-term, dynamic and achievable vision that would reflect our community and be identifiably 'Whanganui'. Our community told us that they want to live in a place that is energised, united and thriving – offering abundant opportunities for everyone.

The resultant strategy now drives the ways in which we deliver on our community's aspirations and provides the council's overarching strategic context. A review in 2020 of this strategy ensures it remains focused on the right things and that we continue to consider this strategy's actions as we set our work programmes.

As a result, our proposed long-term plan contains a number of projects and initiatives that we believe will continue moving us towards our Leading Edge vision, while delivering community outcomes related to a united, connected, creative, environmental and economically prosperous community.

Our pre-engagement conversations provided us with a good refresh on what the community's long-term hopes for Whanganui are. Several in-person and online engagement activities were held between the end of September and mid-November last year to seek ideas from the community about what they want to see in the district and to provide feedback on the council's strategic direction.

We spoke to iwi representatives, the rural community board, youth committee members as well as the general public during this process. The findings from the pop-up events, targeted conversations and online surveys reassured us that we are on the right track. These conversations have contributed to the development of this plan and our current process of finalising our strategic framework for the district.





## Some projects/initiatives and their relationship to our vision

<b>Community</b> <i>'A deeply united community'</i>	<p>Effective engagement with hapū and iwi</p> <p>Suburban revitalisation initiatives</p> <p>Welcoming Communities Programme</p> <p>Supporting the development of hapū/marae/community plans.</p> <p>Implementing our Housing Strategy</p> <p>Investigating a Youth Hub – places and spaces</p> <p>Delivering on our Age Friendly commitments</p>
<b>Connectivity</b> <i>'Connected'</i>	<p>Implementing our Digital Strategy</p> <p>Continuing to enhance cycle and pathway connections</p> <p>Growing education and training opportunities</p> <p>Promoting all our district has to offer</p>
<b>Creativity</b> <i>'Innovative and creative'</i>	<p>Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment</p> <p>Library hubs</p> <p>Encouraging innovation, entrepreneurialism and start-ups</p> <p>Delivering events</p> <p>Implementing the Arts and Culture Strategic Plan</p> <p>Celebrating the richness of our arts, heritage and design</p>
<b>Environment</b> <i>'Safeguarding our place'</i>	<p>Coastal plan development and implementation</p> <p>Town centre revitalisation</p> <p>Implementing our Climate Change Strategy</p> <p>Working with iwi on Te Awa Tupua aspirations, including the whole of river strategic plan</p> <p>Completing and delivering our Waste Minimisation and Management Plan</p> <p>Continuing to support and develop the rural sector</p>
<b>Economy</b> <i>'Works for everyone'</i>	<p>Rejuvenating and increasing economic activity at the port in partnership with iwi</p> <p>Implementing our Economic Development Strategy</p> <p>100% Sweet initiatives</p> <p>Cluster opportunities in our industrial precinct.</p>





# Important issues for the next ten years - help us decide



## How do we address these four important issues?

We want your feedback on four important issues for Whanganui. We've considered options for each of them and we're interested in your views on these.

We've outlined the details of each option and highlighted our preferred options for each issue. The preferred options have been included in our financial forecasts.

**1** 

**Whanganui Velodrome project**

**2** 

**Youth Places and Spaces development**

**3** 

**Davis Library extension**

**4** 

**Development and implementation of coastal plan**



# 1 ■ Whanganui Velodrome project

The velodrome facility is a significant Whanganui community sporting asset set amongst the multi-purpose Cooks Gardens stadium and sporting facility. In 1995 it was built to full international standards and features a wooden track surface and was once regarded as the fastest in the country.

The future of the Whanganui cycling velodrome needs to be decided. The current wooden cycling track is now 25 years old and has deteriorated from exposure to the weather. Failing boards have been replaced over time using the stock of matching hardwood onsite. The level of deterioration of the track has increased year on year which led to the track's closure in February 2021 due to safety concerns for users. It will remain closed until a decision is made on the long-term future of the facility.

Usage of the velodrome has been limited in its current outdoor form. The steep banking means any amount of moisture on the track is a hazard for users. It is therefore unused most of the winter and only available as weather conditions dictate throughout the rest of the year. The risk of inclement weather and therefore event cancellation means that major cycling events cannot be held in Whanganui, and the smaller events that are programmed are affected by weather predictions and uncertainty.

Two other velodromes with wooden tracks are operating in New Zealand, located in Invercargill (SIT Zero Fees Velodrome) and Cambridge (Avantidrome), and these tracks are both covered.

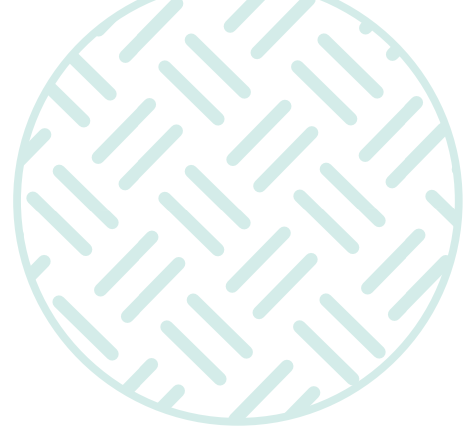
An independent review of the options for the future of the velodrome was completed throughout 2020. This review analysed upgrade opportunities for the velodrome, including the membrane roofed multi-use events centre proposal promoted by the Regional Velodrome Development Trust. As part of this process, we were interested in knowing what a minimum option for a roofed cycling track could look like. This review has produced advice on concepts and cost analysis.

The review suggests that *'cycling demand for a covered velodrome in Whanganui appears to be about 2000 track hours per year which equates to about half the level of proposed use of the Avantidrome in 2017/18'.<sup>1</sup>*

A key principle for future development of this asset is confirmation of external funding contributions to the project. We do not consider it viable or prudent to proceed with a significant upgrade of this asset without significant external contributions. We have assumed 55% external funding contribution for any upgrade project. Potential funding sources have been identified but not yet confirmed; these include lotteries, trusts and central government. There is a risk that this level of external funding may not be achieved. If this occurs we will reconsider proceeding with the project.

Following the recent review, three options are considered for the velodrome facility:





## Option 1.

### Decommission - \$200K

This option proposes to demolish the track and decommission the site. Funding of \$200,000 would be required for demolition, removal of the existing infrastructure, and site restoration. Consultation would occur with the community on the future usage of this iconic area, structures and buildings.

We have considered replacing the track only, but we do not believe this is a viable option because the ongoing weather exposure of the track will continue

to limit opportunities and utilisation. The steep banking means any amount of moisture on the track is a hazard for users which limits potential usage. The risk of inclement weather and therefore event cancellation is a major barrier to holding events. Replacing the track at a cost of around \$2M would not resolve the major issues that plague the current facility and the asset would continue to be under-utilised.

## Option 2.

### Roofed velodrome - \$20M



This option represents the minimum cost option to achieve a roof over the velodrome and is expected to cost in the order of \$20M (range \$18.7M to \$22.0M). This option will meet the aim of fully weatherproofing the track and will include a full cycling track replacement. It will cater predominantly for cycling with some fitness usage. It does not specifically provide for other sporting codes, concerts or non-sporting events.

Further design work will provide detail on the look and feel of a concept, but it will be designed to achieve Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Category 2 rating (the same as Invercargill SIT Zero Fees Velodrome) and as such will be able to attract cycling events.

It is expected that we would need to fund up to \$9M of the \$20M cost (45%). Repayment of the \$9M of the council loan funding would cost \$550,000 per year. After accounting for income, we estimate we would need to provide financial operating support to the facility of around \$470,000 per year, assuming support from the local cycling community to operate the facility. The total annual rates impact of this option is estimated at \$1.0M per year.

Detailed design work will be required in order to support applications for external funding. Construction will not commence until external funding support has been confirmed. We anticipate that construction could commence in 2023/24.



## Option 3. Multi-purpose velodrome and events centre - \$36.4M

This option provides for a roof over the velodrome as well as opportunities for broader usage including other sporting codes, concerts and non-sporting events. It is expected to cost around \$36.4M. The multi-purpose velodrome and events centre concept has been promoted by the Regional Velodrome Development Trust and has been in the public view in recent years.

This option will meet the aim of fully weatherproofing the track and will include a full cycling track replacement. It provides for a wider range of sporting and non-sporting usage and events and includes a speed skating track. It is designed to achieve Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Category 2 rating (the same as Invercargill SIT Zero Fees Velodrome) and as such would be able to attract cycling events.

It is estimated that we would need to fund up to \$16.4M of the \$36.4M cost (45%), and there is a risk our level of support could potentially be higher given the larger funding amount needed to be contributed by others for this option. Repayment of the estimated \$16.4M of the council loan funding would cost \$1M per year.

After accounting for income, we estimate we would need to provide financial operating support to the facility of around \$710,000 per year, which is consistent with operating deficits at some other similar facilities. This assumes a realistic level of income as indicated in the independent review, and additional staffing and other costs due to the more complex nature of operating a multi-purpose facility. The additional costs of operating and maintaining the multi-purpose facility are not likely to be fully offset by increased income.

The annual rates impact of this option is estimated at \$1.7M per year.

In 2020 we commissioned an independent review of this concept which raised a number of concerns, including:

- That there is no current valid case to proceed with this design proposal.
- The lack of clearly demonstrated demand for speed skating and the wider event use being proposed.
- The fact that the proposed facility would be an expensive facility to build and operate.
- The low potential to host concerts on a viable basis due to:
  - » Fire egress issues limiting the crowd numbers that can be hosted in the infield.
  - » Logistical challenges getting large equipment into the infield.
  - » The low population base to draw from relative to large centres.
- The significant costs involved in staffing to run and optimise the usage of a multi-purpose facility.

Further information on the independent review's findings is contained in our supporting information to this plan and can be found at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan).

On the basis of the advice provided by the independent review and due to the significant cost which we believe is unaffordable to our community, this is not our preferred option



# Assumptions:

Our key assumption is:

- Options 2 and 3 will only progress to construction stage when external fundraising to the share of at least 55% has been confirmed. We consider there to be a medium level of risk that this external contribution is unable to be achieved, the risk is higher for option 3 given the higher amount required.
- Loans for options 2 and 3 will be repaid over 25 years, and for option 1 over 5 years.

## Summary of costs:

### Option 1: Decommission

#### Cost:

**\$200K**  
to decommission

#### Impact on rates:

Total rates would increase by **\$42,000** per year in years 1 to 5 only.

#### Per property on average:



Residential  
**+\$2.20**



Farming  
**+\$2.40**



Commercial  
**+\$3.30**

#### Impact on debt:

Debt would increase by **\$200k** in year 1 but be fully repaid by year 5 (5 years).

#### Impact of levels of service:

Reduction in level of service - no provision for track cycling in Whanganui.

### Option 2: Roofed velodrome

✓ Our preferred option

**Cost: \$20M**  
to build

of which the council is expecting to fund up to **\$9M**

#### Impact on rates:

Rates increase of **\$1,020,000** on average per year from year 5 onwards.

#### Per property on average:



Residential  
**+\$54**



Farming  
**+\$58**



Commercial  
**+\$81**

#### Impact on debt:

Debt would increase by **\$9M** and be repaid over 25 years

#### Impact of levels of service:

Increased level of service - covered cycling track provided.

### Option 3: Multi-purpose velodrome and events centre

**Cost: \$36.4M**  
to build

of which the council is expecting to fund up to **\$16.4M**

#### Impact on rates

Rates increase of **\$1,740,000** on average per year from year 5 onwards.

#### Per property on average:



Residential  
**+\$93**



Farming  
**+\$99**



Commercial  
**+\$139**

#### Impact on debt

Debt would increase by **\$16.4M** and be repaid over 25 years.

#### Impact of levels of service

Increased level of service - covered cycling track provided and an indoor venue for other sporting codes and non-sporting events.

## Preferred option:

Our preferred option is Option 2 'Roofed velodrome'; this proposal is a mid-range financial outlay and achieves the desired outcome of a functional and weather proof cycling track. It will also provide the opportunity for greater usability of the asset and will continue to contribute to Whanganui's sporting history.



## 2 Youth Places and Spaces development

Ensuring that young people have a voice and are supported to enhance their wellbeing, belonging and empowerment forms a key component of the Leading Edge Strategy and has been championed by the council's Youth Committee since its establishment in 2006.

This group has worked actively to understand the needs of Whanganui rangatahi and has advocated strongly over a number of years for improvements to Whanganui's youth offerings, particularly in terms of events and facilities. This mirrors feedback received through pre-engagement conversations with our community. People of all ages have told us that there should be more for our young people to do and that support for mental health

and personal development, specifically connected to employment, should be a focus. During the development of He Irere, a plan for the wellbeing of Māori rangatahi, we learnt that there is a need for a coordinated response to improve outcomes for youth.

This aligns with the Youth Committee's vision for the establishment of a 'youth hub'. As a result, a collaborative group of local stakeholders (including representatives from the youth sector, Ngā Tai o te Awa, Sport Whanganui, Ministry of Social Development, Youth Committee and the council) has been established to assess the needs for youth 'places and spaces' in our district.

### Option 1. Develop Youth Places and Spaces

A scoping needs assessment will be completed in year one which will interrogate the current state of youth space and place provision. \$10k in year one and \$46k per annum thereafter have been budgeted for this work and for the ongoing delivery of the service. Implementation associated with the needs assessment 'youth spaces and places' work has been



budgeted for \$386k in year 2 of this plan. Options such as physical provision of a youth hub will be scoped and considered. However, other options such as shared spaces and outdoor opportunities will also form part of the review. Additional programmes to increase wellbeing may be identified and implemented as the highest priority.

### Option 2. Do nothing – no additional youth provision

Community continues with existing level of youth provisions, and does not pursue this project further. The council will continue with the Youth Committee and look for opportunities to work in partnership with other providers or youth based events.





## Summary of costs:

### Option 1: Develop Youth Places and Spaces

✓ Our preferred option

#### Operating costs of:

**\$10,000**

in year 1 and then \$46,000 per year on average thereafter.

#### Capital cost of:

**\$386,000**

in year 2.

#### Impact on rates:

Rates increase of **\$79,000** on average per year from year 2 onwards.

#### Per property on average:



Residential  
**+\$4.20**



Farming  
**+\$4.50**



Commercial  
**+\$6.20**

#### Impact on debt:

Debt would increase by **\$386,000** in year 2 and be repaid over 15 years.

#### Impact of levels of service:

Potential to make a significant impact on the level of service provided for the youth within the community. This would shift from an event based activity to ongoing support, facilitation and advocacy.

### Option 2: Do nothing - no additional youth provision

#### Cost:

**No change**

#### Impact on rates:

No change.



Residential  
**NC**



Farming  
**NC**



Commercial  
**NC**

#### Impact on debt:

No change.

#### Impact of levels of service:

No change in current service delivery.

## Preferred option:

Our preferred option is Option 1. We know from the discussions and the development of He Irere – a plan for the wellbeing of Māori rangatahi that there is a need for a coordinated response to improve outcomes for youth.

# 3 ■ Davis Library extension

Whanganui district libraries are one of the council's most used facilities. The Davis Library has approximately 250,000 people through its doors every year, with a further 100,000 using the other venues and the mobile library; and still others accessing library materials online. The Davis Library is a well-used public space; a place to meet, to relax, to chill without the pressure to buy or consume; to attend or join in events and activities for children, families and adults, a place to learn, to do research, or to plan a business. A non-commercial space for the whole community, open to all.

Whanganui's population is growing, and the library provision for our community is well below national standards in terms of space and collections. Improving the provision of space and collection would ensure we are able to meet future community needs and ensure the collections are easily accessible to all. Extension of the Davis Library would address part of the existing provision shortfall and future requirements. It would take total provision in the district to 80% of the New Zealand standard for public libraries.

## Option 1.

### Extend the Davis Library - \$2.84M



**Our preferred option**

The option currently considered the simplest and most cost-effective is constructing an extension to the existing library building in its current location. This will build on the other work the council has undertaken in the Pukenui Queens Park area: the refurbishment of the Alexander Library, the War Memorial Centre, the Whanganui Regional Museum and the redevelopment of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui.

The Davis Library extension is budgeted to cost \$2.84M across years 2 - 4, with construction occurring in year 4. \$920k of grant funding is anticipated as part of the funding of this project, leaving the council to fund up to \$1.9M. The extension is unlikely to require additional operating expenditure.

The Davis Library would be extended, with additional space to the east matching that on the west side of the building and further building partially enclosing the courtyard to the north, leaving a formal entry to the courtyard and opening up views to the river and mountain. An extra 550m<sup>2</sup> of space would be added, of which 500m<sup>2</sup> is public space. The remaining 50m<sup>2</sup> provides much needed space for behind-the-scenes activity and storage. This will ensure that collections are accessible to

all – not stacked up too high or too low, too close together or too packed to easily browse.

There would be sufficient space for customer seating, public access internet and online services, activity space for children's and family events, and a dedicated teenager space.

Services throughout the existing library and extension would be upgraded to meet current and anticipated future needs, reducing power needs through better lighting and heating and where possible sourced through solar panels.





## Option 2. Do nothing

If we continue with current provision the level of provision against nationally set standards will continue to decline relative to population growth.

The library shelves will remain overcrowded and inaccessible, especially for older customers and people with physical challenges. There are limited options to remedy this scenario within current working constraints.








The collection will remain at status quo, and will be unable to grow to meet needs of the current or the future larger population. This will impact most on the least well-off who cannot afford to purchase themselves what the library provides as a shared community resource.

## Assumptions:

Our key assumption is:

- Option 1 will be supported by externally sourced grant funding of \$920,000 (e.g. lotteries, local trusts). We consider there to be a low level of risk that this external contribution is unable to be achieved. If this occurs we will reconsider proceeding with the project.

## Summary of costs:

Option 1: Extend the Davis Library  Our preferred option		
<b>Cost:</b>  <b>\$2.84M</b> to build  of which the council is expecting to fund up to <b>\$1.9M</b>  No additional operating costs are expected.	<b>Impact on rates:</b>  Rates increase of <b>\$114,000</b> on average to repay the debt.  <b>Per property on average:</b>   Residential <b>+\$6.00</b>   Farming <b>+\$6.50</b>   Commercial <b>+\$9.00</b>	<b>Impact on debt:</b>  Debt would increase by <b>\$1.9M</b> by year 4 and be repaid over 25 years.  <b>Impact of levels of service:</b>  Increased level of service with more library space, better accessibility and higher service provision.
Option 2: Do nothing – no Davis Library extension		
<b>Cost:</b>  <b>No change</b>	<b>Impact on rates:</b>  No change.   Residential <b>NC</b>   Farming <b>NC</b>   Commercial <b>NC</b>	<b>Impact on debt:</b>  No change.  <b>Impact of levels of service:</b>  Existing level of service at Davis Library, reducing as the population grows.

## Preferred option:

Our preferred option is option 1. Extending the Davis Library in its current location is considered to be the simplest and most cost-effective option to improve our library provision with an additional 500m<sup>2</sup> of public space, increased accessibility to collections, the ability to provide greater public collection and 50m<sup>2</sup> additional work space for operations.

# 4. Development and implementation of a coastal plan

Key challenges we are facing in the coastal area include erosion, significant natural sand movement and ecological degradation. The impact of climate change will cause additional erosion particularly at Mowhanau Beach. The dynamic sand movement is adding maintenance pressure when providing public access to beach areas particularly when there is a windy season. There is also ecological and natural values (native plants and species) that are degrading and require protection and restoration support. We anticipate each of these coastal challenges to become greater over time.

We have sought technical advice regarding our options for coastal management and the coastal planning work will allow us to understand these options and help us to prioritise our response.

This work will ultimately improve the coastal enjoyment and experience for our community and provide for longer term and more sustainable solutions to some of the key challenges in this dynamic and valued coastal environment. Implementation work will primarily focus on the council managed lands.

The council's Leading Edge Strategy sets our environmental goal to *'be a district that safeguards its natural resources and provides an environment with a sense of place, identity and vitality'*. It also seeks to capitalise on our coastal location, increase our resilience to climate change, and rejuvenate our coastal environment. There are strong strategic drivers for additional coastal planning and restoration work to occur in Whanganui.

## Option 1. Develop and implement a coastal plan - \$2.45M



Key deliverables of this option will be the development of a comprehensive coastal plan for the Whanganui district, with a strong focus on improving the coastal amenity values and protecting and restoring the nature that remains in these areas. Access to coastal areas and erosion will be considered as part of the plan.

Technical advice regarding our options for coastal management has been sought from eCoast e Takutai for the Mowhanau coastal area and advice has already been received regarding Castlecliff coastal management options. The next phase is to prioritise this advice, shape our coastal plan and begin the implementation phase, likely to be a staged programme of work.

Budgets for implementation of the final coastal plan anticipate:

- Sustainable solutions to erosion issues that will include native restoration planting investment for the dunes for stabilisation and ecological improvements.
- Wetland restoration work
- Additional weed control

Implementation of the coastal plan is budgeted at \$1.1M across years 2 to 4, and another \$1.3M across years 8 to 10. This project is set to reoccur every 6 years.

This work will improve the coastal enjoyment and experience for our community and provide for longer term and more sustainable solutions to the challenges in this dynamic coastal environment.



## Option 2. No additional coastal funding

For this option we intend to retain the existing level of coastal service, which includes maintaining the current beach access services.

Due to erosion and natural sand movement maintaining access to beach areas is dynamic and may become an increasing challenge overtime, particularly when there is a windy season. The impact of climate change may also cause further erosion, particularly at Mowhanau Beach.



## Summary of costs:

Option 1: Develop and implement a coastal plan			✓ Our preferred option
<b>Cost:</b> <b>\$50,000</b> in year 1 to develop the plan.  <b>\$1.1M</b> across years 2 to 4 to implement the plan, and another <b>\$1.3M</b> across years 8 to 10.	<b>Impact on rates:</b> Rates increase of <b>\$224,000</b> on average to repay the debt.  <b>Per property on average:</b> <div> <div>Residential \$11.80</div> <div>Farming +\$12.70</div> <div>Commercial +\$17.70</div> </div>	<b>Impact on debt:</b> We would loan fund <b>\$1.1M</b> over years 2 – 4 and repay it by year 7 before starting the next iteration of the plan in year 8.  <b>Impact of levels of service:</b> Increasing level of service for coastal and broader community through improvement to ecological services.	
Option 2: No additional coastal funding			
<b>Cost:</b> <b>No change</b>	<b>Impact on rates:</b> No change.  <div> <div>Residential NC</div> <div>Farming NC</div> <div>Commercial NC</div> </div>	<b>Impact on debt:</b> No change.  <b>Impact of levels of service:</b> At best, the existing level of service will be maintained.	

## Preferred option:

Option 1 is our preferred option. Technical advice has been received and is also pending regarding how we can improve the Whanganui coastal environment. Prioritisation of this work and the implementation phase will result in ecological and amenity improvements in our highly valued coastal areas.





# Keeping you up to date – project developments

As well as the issues we're specifically seeking your feedback on, there are several other key initiatives underway that we continue to deliver on.

## Waste management and minimisation

We are currently working through a comprehensive review of our Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP), as required by the Waste Minimisation Act 2010. This plan sets out the council's vision and objectives for the district in relation to waste management and what actions it will take to achieve them. As part of this process, the council is exploring the full suite of waste management and minimisation options for the district, including kerbside recycling, rural waste and general waste services. The intention is to deliver a robust and efficient service to the community that is also environmentally sustainable.

Whilst the council does not want to pre-empt the outcomes of the WMMP review process, it is likely that a proposal to shift the level of service will be presented to the community for consultation at the completion of this WMMP work. Waste services in the district have largely been provided by the private market since the late 1990s so that the council – and therefore ratepayers – have not had to fund costly infrastructure such as landfills, transfer stations and waste collection vehicles. However, as the long-term plan pre-engagement and other conversations have demonstrated, there is strong interest from the community to see the council take a greater lead in waste management services, especially waste minimisation initiatives.

At present, there is no rates-funded kerbside rubbish collection or recycling service in the urban area. These are currently provided by the market. In the rural parts of the district there is a partially subsidised rates-funded bag collection and drop-off facility in the peri-urban area, along with a rates funded rubbish drop off service for the outer rural areas. We are reviewing rural waste services - the ceasing of the peri-urban general waste bag collection contract to allow the market to provide the service is our preferred option early in the review. This plan removes the \$75,000 annual cost previously allowed for rates funding of this contracted service.

The council is investigating the full rating implications of any changes in service levels or existing contracts, while keeping in mind the objectives of the Waste Management and Minimisation Plan.



# Community housing

Whanganui has an aspirational housing strategy that sets out the community's vision and objectives for the district in relation to housing. This includes working in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for all.

Having a home that is safe, warm, dry and affordable (within a great community) is a basic requirement. If our residents are housed appropriately this provides an important foundation for people to live well and contribute positively - within their families, communities and wider district. As a result, improving housing outcomes is a critical factor in supporting the needs of our growing, and increasingly vibrant, district.

As a result of people choosing to move to Whanganui, we have seen the largest population growth since 1996. There is a growing need to rethink Whanganui's housing stock and availability - for example, to address the current shortage of rental properties. However, we also need a longer-term plan for housing and growth that meets the needs of everyone in our district. This is about having good quality, affordable housing across the board as well as the right systems in place to achieve this.

Whilst working through our housing strategy it was agreed that the council's role should be to lobby and facilitate - seeking partnership opportunities locally, as well as nationally, and calling on the government to tackle existing housing barriers.

Other opportunities the council is also working on include:

- Development of a Strategic Housing Investment Plan
- Freeing up of council controlled land
- Investing in more community housing

We have added \$4.2M across years 2 and 3 as a placeholder for potential work in the housing space. What this looks like will be shaped by our work over the next few years. Further consultation with the community will occur in the future.



## Town centre regeneration

In 2017 the council adopted the Making Whanganui Visible Regeneration Strategy. This strategy is operational and ongoing implementation is anticipated throughout 2021-2031. The overall strategic vision for the town centre is to make Whanganui's town centre an active and vibrant place to gather and spend time for locals and visitors. Town Centre Regeneration projects endeavour to activate the town centre in order to support local businesses and create an attractive space that reflects Whanganui's identity and provides healthy social connections.

This strategy endeavours to make both Whanganui and its assets and qualities more prominent both nationally and locally, as well as proposing to strengthen existing and create new assets. An increase of \$3.3M across the ten year period is budgeted for town centre regeneration with variable spend occurring throughout the ten years.

Priority projects include:

- Supporting community and drawcard events such as Lights on Bikes and Whanganui Walls;
- Community place making initiatives;
- Tram route stage 2 and 3 feasibility study;
- Youth outdoor space;
- Development of Taupo Quay properties;
- Guyton Streetscape;
- Oriental toilets upgrade.



# Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment project

## Revitalisation of the port

The revitalisation of Whanganui's port, located at the mouth of Whanganui River, is important for economic development locally, and to future-proof Whanganui as it continues to grow in population and attract more people who expect modern facilities and protection of unique natural surroundings, such as a historic river port.

In the Annual Plan 2019, we decided to bring funding for the port redevelopment forward to 2019/20 and to increase it further by \$6.2M – giving a total of \$12.3 million for infrastructure requirements currently needed for the port users. Additional funding of \$12.2 million from the Provincial Growth Fund was to provide combined funding of \$24.5 million for port infrastructure development at the port. This funding also took into consideration the cost to protect the health, well-being and function of the Whanganui River.

In the Annual Plan 2019 we also consulted on the establishment of new port entities for the purpose of revitalising and developing the marine port.

For further information on the progress of this project, see the supporting information provided alongside this plan.

The Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project includes earthquake strengthening and restoration of the existing 100 year old Sarjeant Gallery; and the addition of a new, modern wing which will be joined to the rear face of the Gallery. The Sarjeant Gallery - Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui, was severely earthquake-prone, rated at 5% of the New Building Standard (NBS).

The Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project is a partnership between Whanganui District Council, Whanganui iwi, central government, large and small private donors and Trusts.

The new wing will house a temperature and humidity controlled storage area for the Sarjeant's nationally significant permanent collection, further gallery spaces, an education facility, event and function areas, staff offices, a board room, reception area, a café and retail space.

It will honour the memory of Sir Archie Te Atawhai Taiaroa, for his contribution to leadership in the Manawatū-Whanganui region and will be known as te Pataka o Sir Archie John Te Atawhai Taiaroa.

The Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment project was included in the 2018-2028 Long-Term Plan. The redeveloped Sarjeant Gallery is expected to reopen to the public in mid-2023.

Capital expenditure of \$15M in year 1 and \$7.2M in year 2 has been budgeted toward the remainder of the construction of the redevelopment. This is offset by \$15M of external funding in year 1 and \$2.1M in year 2. Additional funding has been budgeted across years 2 and 3 for shelving and fittings to house the collection and salaries to transition the collection into the redeveloped building. It is assumed this will be partly funded by grants.



# What's our plan with money?

## Our financial strategy

The council's overarching vision is to be an affordable and financially sustainable organisation whilst at the same time delivering good quality services and promoting growth within the district. This can be summarised as living within our means whilst still contributing to Whanganui as a great place to live.

## What do the numbers look like?

OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS:

**\$1.1B**  We will spend \$1.1B on our district

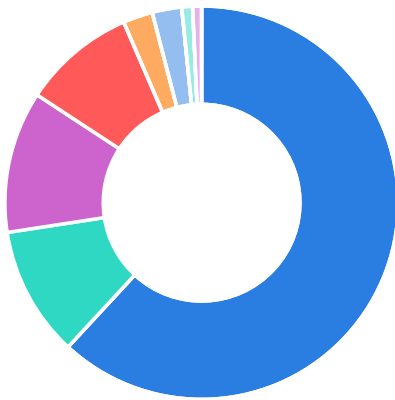
**\$146M**  Our net debt will peak at \$146M in 2024/25

**3.2%**  We're looking at average annual rates increases of 3.2%

**62%**  Rates will make up 62% of our total revenue



# Where does the money come from?



- Rates - excluding water by meter, trade waste and penalties, **62%**
- Fees and charges, **11%**
- Subsidies, **12%**
- Loans raised, **9%**
- Rates - water by meter, trade waste and penalties, **2%**
- External funding, **2%**
- Investment income, **1%**
- Development contributions, **0.7%**

Our largest funding source is rates which funds about 62% of our work. Other funding comes from:

- Fees and charges (for using some of our services)
- Subsidies (such as those for roading from NZTA)
- Investment income (from our holding company)
- Development contributions (developers contributing toward growth-related capital projects)
- External funding such as donations and grants (such as those for the Sarjeant Gallery)
- Loans (used to pay for our large capital projects)

One of our major funding sources is NZTA who provide subsidies for our roads. From year 2 of this plan our subsidy rate is decreasing from 61% to 60%. This adds an average of \$238,000 per year to rates over the ten year period.

We have forecast a substantial level of external funding for some of the community asset projects in our plan, like the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment, the proposed velodrome roof, and the Davis Library

extension. We are reliant on external funding to deliver these community projects in order to keep rates affordable for our community, to meet our limits on rates increases set out in our Financial Strategy, and to manage our debt levels.

We have forecast reduced investment income in year 1 and 2 of our plan due to the impacts on COVID-19 on our holding company's investments. There is substantial uncertainty around the impacts of COVID-19 into the future.

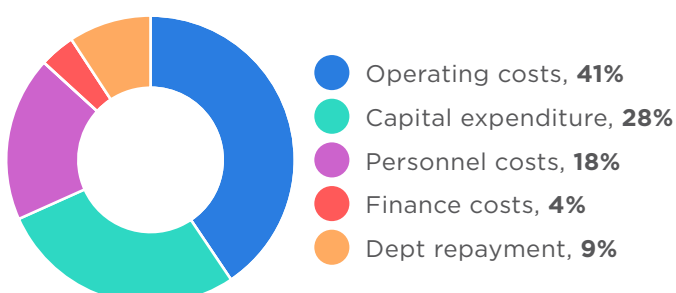
Demand for land means developers are opening up new land developments which we need to provide infrastructure for. We have forecast \$9M of development contribution income over the ten year period of this plan. We have considered who benefits from the infrastructure and have revised our Development Contributions Policy to ensure that developers and new ratepayers pay an appropriate share of the cost. Around half of our infrastructure investment for growth is anticipated to be repaid by development contribution income over the period 2021-2031.

# Where is the money spent?

## OPERATING OUR SERVICES:

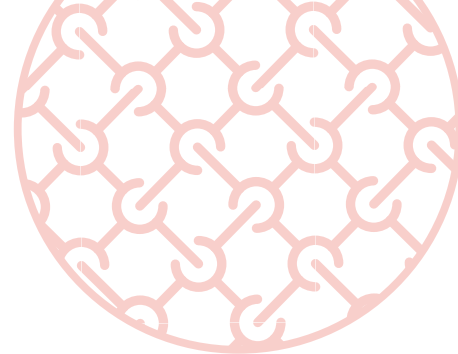
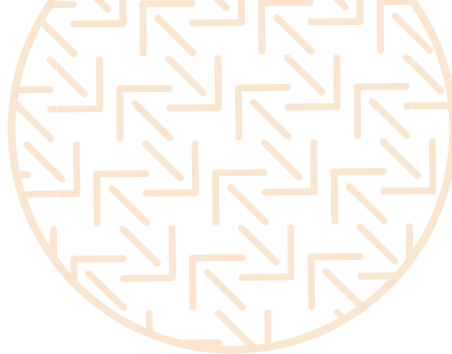
**We plan to spend \$77M per year on average on operating our services.**

During the course of this plan we have some changes to our services that affect our operating costs, like the opening of the redeveloped Sarjeant



Gallery in 2023 (year 3) and the proposed covered velodrome from year 5. We are facing increased costs to maintain our parks and reserves and look after our roads. We are also doing work in a number of areas like climate change, addressing our housing shortage, and investigating transport options to respond to issues that are facing our community. This work needs financial support. Even those parts of our operation that are continuing with business as usual find that costs grow each year because prices for items such as labour and materials increase. Insurance costs in particular have increased significantly. These cost increases have partly been offset by lower interest costs due to interest rates reducing.





## Our capital expenditure programme

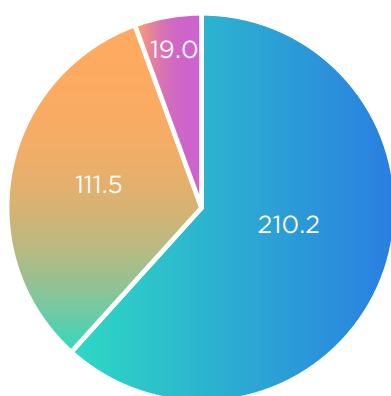
We have made significant improvements to our wastewater, stormwater and water networks in the past 30 years to reduce our impact on the environment and improve the health of our people.

We plan to spend \$341M over the ten years of this plan on capital expenditure. Capital expenditure is primarily funded by loans, NZTA subsidies for our roads, rates, external funding sources like grants and donations, and development contributions.

Years 1 to 4 of the plan have higher capital expenditure due to the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment, the proposed velodrome roof, and the proposed library extension. These community asset capital projects assume a significant level of external funding support. Years 9 and 10 also have an increase in capital expenditure due to the replacement of the Dublin Street Bridge. This project is assumed to be co-funded 60% by NZTA.

We plan to spend \$19M on infrastructure related to growth in the next ten years to address growing demand. This spending is for the growth areas identified in the Springvale West and North West Structure Plans. The cost will initially be funded by debt, to be repaid in part by development contributions from developers who benefit when the land is developed. For further information, see our Development Contributions Policy which is being consulted upon alongside this long- term plan 2021-2031.

**Our capital expenditure over the ten year period is summarised as follows:**



### Capital expenditure

- Replacing existing assets **\$210.2M**
- Level of service increases **\$111.5M**
- Growth **\$19.0M**

**TOTAL \$341M**

# Managing our debt

The council uses debt to help pay for long-term assets. Borrowing smooths the impact on rates for one-off capital projects. It also spreads the cost of the asset over time so that the generations that have use of the asset also contribute to paying for it. Debt is repaid by other funding sources such as rates, fees and charges and development contributions.

Major infrastructure work over the past 30 years, including the separation of the stormwater and wastewater systems, improved water supply and the wastewater treatment plant, has provided our community with assets that will serve for many decades into the future.

Our plan in our last Financial Strategy was to focus on reducing our debt balance once the wastewater treatment plant was built. However a number of things have changed in the intervening three years, for example additional investment in the port redevelopment, additional population growth requiring infrastructure investment, and the proposals to roof the velodrome, extend the Davis Library, and implement the coastal plan. We also now have the replacement of the Dublin Street Bridge coming into the tail end of this plan period in years 9 and 10. With these large projects in our sights, our plan is to keep debt at sustainable levels over the period of the plan so as not to burden future generations. A substantial part of achieving this is our loan repayment programme, along with the support of external funding to deliver many of our large capital projects.

To ensure we are sustainable we will ensure we meet the following self-imposed debt limit:

- Net debt is less than 200% of total revenue

This is the same as the limit in our last Financial Strategy and is well within the requirements of our credit rating agency Standard and Poor's and the Local Government Funding Agency.

**Our district's net debt level is about 113% of our total revenue in 2021/22.**

**That's the equivalent of a household earning \$50,000 per year and having a mortgage of around \$56,500.**

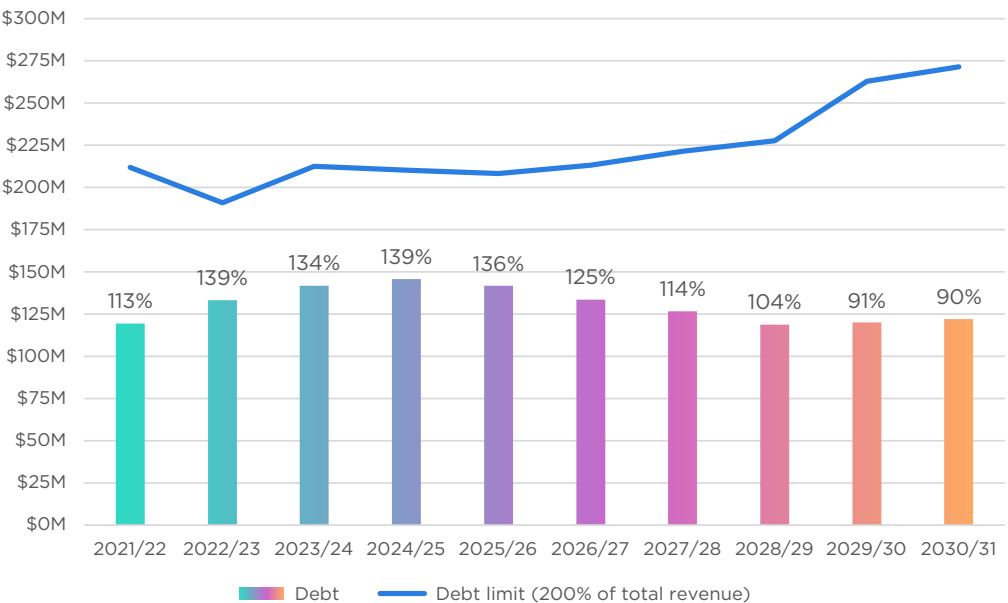
Our debt will continue to move higher than we had previously expected and is now expected to peak at \$146M in 2024/25 (139% of our debt limit). We still have substantial available capacity to borrow within our limits should an unexpected event like a natural disaster occur.

We will loan fund \$114M of capital projects over the ten year period, but we have planned to repay \$114M of debt over the same period. With these mechanisms in place we expect debt to be \$122M by 30 June 2031.

# Debt compared to debt limit (200% of total revenue)

**By 2030/31 we expect our net debt to be 90% of our total revenue.**

**That's the equivalent of a household earning \$50,000 per year and having a mortgage of \$45,000.**









# Keeping rates affordable

Total rates (excluding water by meter, trade waste targeted rates and penalties) will increase to \$89M by 2031.

**Rates are forecast to increase by an average of 3.2% annually (including inflation).**

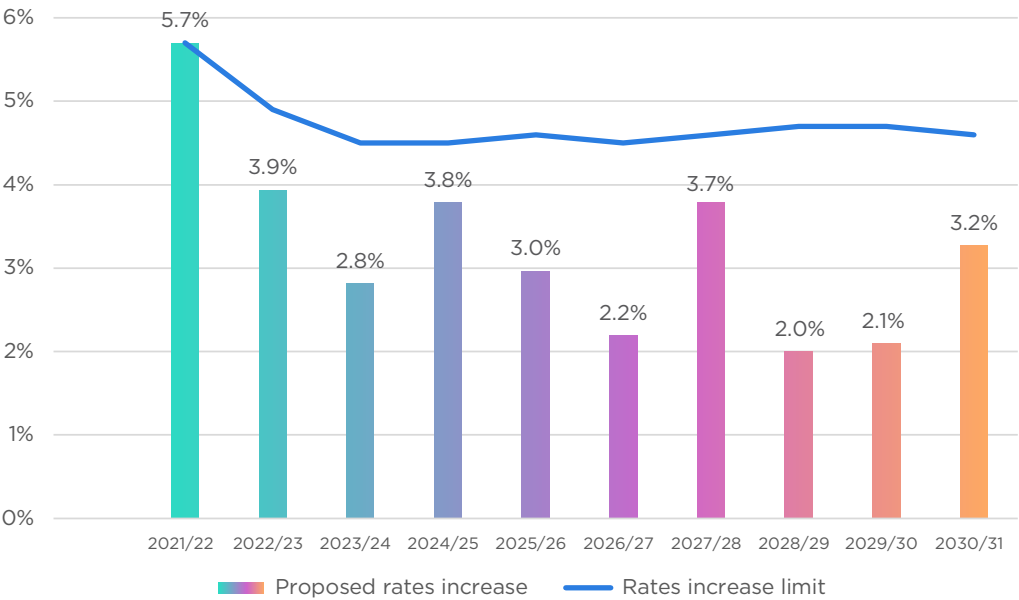
Our self-imposed financial limit for rates increases is:

- Rates increases (excluding water by meter and trade waste targeted rates and penalties) no more than the local government inflation rate plus 2% (after accounting for growth).

The average rate increase to existing ratepayers for 2021/22 is proposed to be set at 5.7%, the maximum allowed within our Financial Strategy limit. This rates increase recognises increasing support for a number of important strategies and programmes we are committed to such as climate change, the preservation of heritage buildings, and town centre regeneration. It also recognises a significant increase in business as usual costs like insurance, increased requirements due to legislation, increased demands on our assets, and a reduction in investment income.

On average, we are proposing rates increases of 3.2% over the course of this plan. This level of rate funding will allow us to maintain the levels of service set out in this plan, provide for expected growth, and deliver the projects outlined when combined with our other sources of income like development contributions, fees and charges, subsidies and grants.

## Rates increases compared to rates increase limit



\* The graph shows the rates increase to existing ratepayers. We have assumed rates growth of \$300,000 per year

We are mindful that we need to offer value for money - our community has limited ability to pay for services and COVID-19 has added further financial pressure for some. More information on what this means for your rates is contained on page 34.

# What does this mean for my rates?

**Rates will increase by 5.7% on average in 2021/22**

The 5.7% increase is made up as follows:

Business as usual	3.1%
Impact of 2020/21 rates increase reduction due to COVID-19	1.0%
Heritage & town centre regeneration	0.7%
Increase in services	0.6%
Climate change strategy	0.3%
<b>Average 2021/22 increase</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

The following table shows the average rates increases for 2021/22 for average residential, lifestyle, farming and commercial properties:

	Average land value	Average capital value	Average 2021/22 rates	\$ increase	% increase
Residential	\$130,000	\$339,000	\$3,018	\$184	6.1%
Lifestyle	\$275,000	\$527,000	\$2,402	\$132	5.8%
Farming	\$1,480,000	\$1,801,000	\$5,505	\$216	4.1%
Commercial	\$325,000	\$1,236,000	\$11,875	\$458	4.0%

The actual changes in the rates you will pay depends on the type of property you own, its value, land size, and what council services your property has (for example, whether you are connected to our wastewater system).

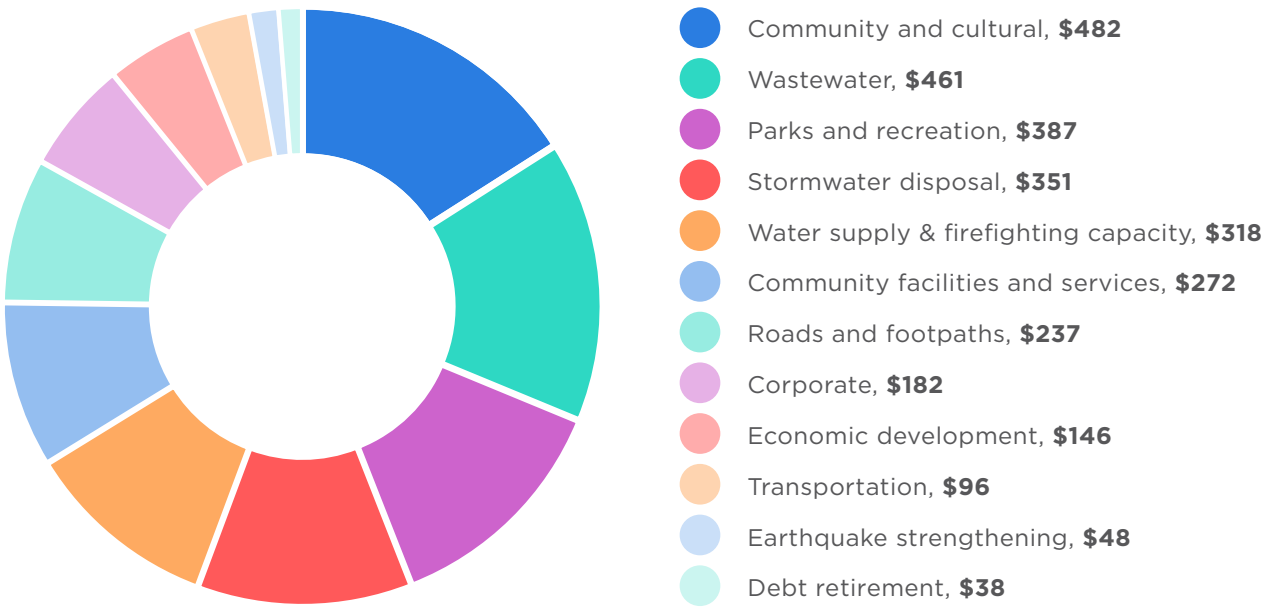
The following table shows indicative rates increases for the some typical residential, lifestyle, farming and commercial properties:

	Average land value	Average capital value	Average 2021/22 rates	\$ increase	% increase
Residential (Stormwater serviceable)	\$105,000	\$185,000	\$2,609	\$185	7.6%
Residential (Stormwater connected)	\$65,000	\$245,000	\$2,497	\$78	3.2%
Residential (Stormwater connected)	\$123,000	\$295,000	\$3,044	\$160	5.5%
Residential (Stormwater connected)	\$160,000	\$340,000	\$3,418	\$210	6.6%
Residential (Stormwater connected)	\$160,000	\$435,000	\$3,606	\$201	5.9%
Residential (Stormwater connected)	\$210,000	\$610,000	\$4,339	\$258	6.3%
Lifestyle	\$335,000	\$730,000	\$3,183	\$234	7.9%
Farming	\$920,000	\$1,240,000	\$3,804	\$153	4.2%
Farming	\$2,250,000	\$2,750,000	\$7,740	\$381	5.2%
Farming	\$3,320,000	\$4,090,000	\$11,075	\$561	5.3%
Exotic forestry	\$335,000	\$370,000	\$2,462	\$57	2.4%
Exotic forestry	\$1,370,000	\$1,502,000	\$7,508	\$233	3.2%
Commercial	\$140,000	\$380,000	\$4,668	\$202	4.5%
Commercial	\$385,000	\$950,000	\$11,375	\$564	5.2%
Commercial	\$470,000	\$2,190,000	\$15,976	\$555	3.6%

**The average residential rate for 2021/22 is \$3,018 per year.**



This supports the extensive range of services and activities the council provides. This graphic shows the services we provide with your rates and how much of the average residential rate of \$3,018 goes toward each of these services:



**The average residential rate amounts to \$58 per week.**

To put this in context, the average weekly household expenditure on other household services is:

Communications (mobile, internet and phone)	\$38/week
Electricity	\$40/week
Whanganui District Council rates	\$58/week
Transport	\$201/week

Source: [www.newzealandnow.govt.nz](http://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz) and [www.figure.nz](http://www.figure.nz)

Our full suite of rates can be found in our Funding Impact Statement – Rates Information provided as supporting information to this Consultation Document.

# Who pays – and how do we make the system fairer?

We are continually reviewing our funding structure to ensure it works for our community.

We are consulting on our Draft Revenue and Financing Policy, our Proposed Fees and Charges for 2021/22 and our Development Contributions Policy separately from this long-term plan. You can view these documents and provide feedback on our website at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan)

In addition we are proposing some changes to our rating structure which are outlined below. You can provide feedback via our website [www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan)

## 1. Definition of Separately Used or Inhabited Part (SUIP) of a rating unit

We are proposing to amend our definition of a Separately Used or Inhabited Part of a rating unit (SUIP). The definition change will not change the way that SUIPs are currently identified, but aims to provide further clarity and transparency to ratepayers. We'll clarify what a separate SUIP looks like, that every rating unit has a minimum of one SUIP, and that a SUIP is defined by its capability of being separately used rather than its actual usage.

## 2. Stormwater rating changes

We are proposing to increase the rates differential for properties that are in the stormwater serviceable area that are able to connect to the network but are not currently connected. These are the properties with soak pits onsite. These properties currently pay 50% of the rate charged to connected properties. We propose to move this to 65% in year 1 of the plan and 75% from year 2 onward.

The proposed change reflects the fact that soak pits are not able to buffer all stormwater as they have limited capacity. As climate change increases the severity of weather events, the overflow from soak pits is increasingly finding its way via overland flow paths, watercourses and roads into the council's stormwater network. There is a nuisance factor in these overland flows. In addition, stormwater on driveways, paths and other surfaced areas ends up in the stormwater system, whether there is a soak pit on the property or not.

### How this proposal will impact your rates:

Stormwater serviceable property valued at:	Rates impact Year 1	Rates impact Year 2 onward
\$350,000	+\$48	+\$30
\$450,000	+\$62	+\$38
\$600,000	+\$82	+\$51

Stormwater connected property valued at:	Rates impact Year 1	Rates impact Year 2 onward
\$350,000	-\$18	-\$11
\$450,000	-\$23	-\$14
\$600,000	-\$30	-\$19

We also propose to amend the definition of a serviceable property to ensure that properties in Magnolia Crescent, Simon Street and Morrell Street area contribute toward the stormwater system. These properties were previously zoned Rural Lifestyle and as such had to have soak pits in place as they were just outside the urban boundary and therefore outside the serviced stormwater network area. Because they were unable to be connected to the stormwater network directly, these properties do not currently meet the definition of a serviceable property for stormwater purposes and therefore currently do not pay any stormwater rates. Since this time the zoning for the area has changed and the area now falls within the urban boundary. We believe these properties should now be treated in the same way as other properties within the urban serviced stormwater area and pay the serviceable rate, as the properties still utilise the urban stormwater network via overland paths, watercourses, swales and roads with the stormwater ending up in council's stormwater network despite the fact that there is no direct connection. There is a nuisance factor in these overland flows. In addition, stormwater on driveways, paths and other surfaced areas also ends up in Council's stormwater system.

### How this proposal will impact your rates:

Magnolia Crescent/Simon Street/Morrell Street stormwater serviceable property valued at:	Rates impact Year 1	Rates impact Year 2 onward
\$550,000	+\$387	+\$47
\$650,000	+\$457	+\$55
\$750,000	+\$527	+\$64



### 3. Fordell water supply rates

The Fordell water supply will be connected to the Whanganui city water supply from early 2021. As a result, we propose to no longer separately rate for the Fordell water supply from 2021/22. We propose to amend the definition of the city water supply rate to include Fordell, and transfer the Fordell water ratepayers to become ratepayers of the city water supply.

#### How this proposal will impact your rates:

	New rate	Rates impact
Connected properties	\$256.60 per SUIP	+\$61.20 per SUIP
Metered supply	82.77 cents per m <sup>3</sup>	+4.62 cents per m <sup>3</sup> . Applies to every metre consumed or supplied in excess of the first 310m <sup>3</sup>

### 4. Marybank wastewater rates

The Marybank wastewater system will be connected to the city wastewater system from early 2021. As a result, we propose to no longer separately rate for the Marybank wastewater system from 2021/22. We propose to amend the definition of the city wastewater rate to include Marybank, and transfer the Marybank wastewater ratepayers to become ratepayers of city wastewater.

#### How this proposal will impact your rates:

	New rate	Rates impact
Residential	\$460.60 per SUIP	+\$82.38 per SUIP

### 5. Stormwater separation loans

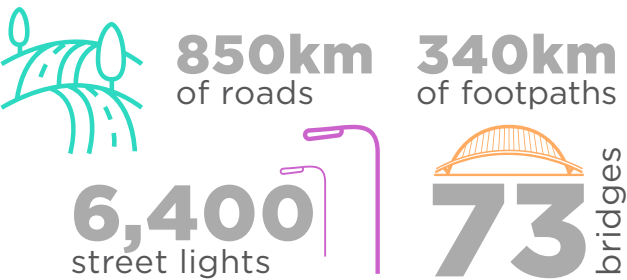
We propose to remove stormwater separation loans from our Funding Impact Statement as all of these loans will be repaid by 30 June 2021.

You can see the effect of these changes on your property by looking at the Rates Calculator on our website at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan).

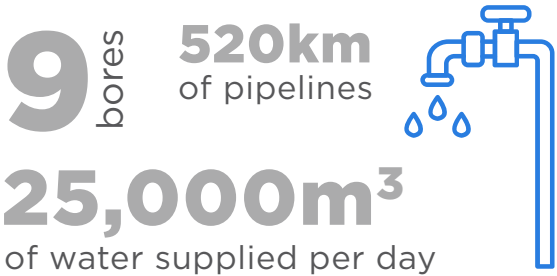
For further information, see our Funding Impact Statement provided as supporting information to this plan.

# Our assets - at a glance:

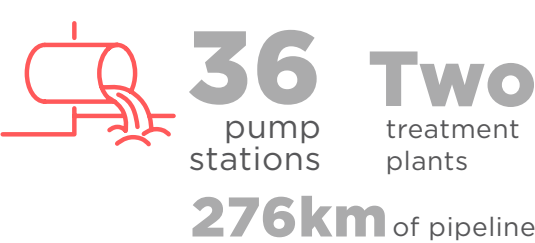
## Roading:



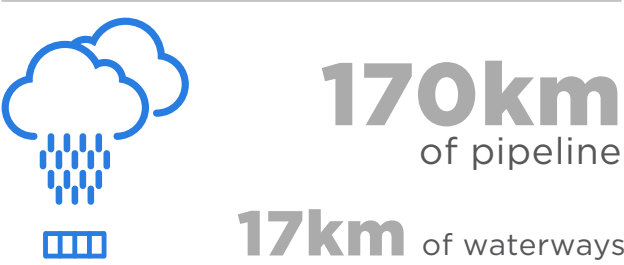
## Water Supply:



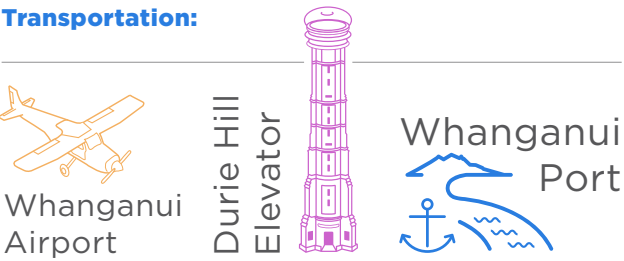
## Wastewater:



## Stormwater:

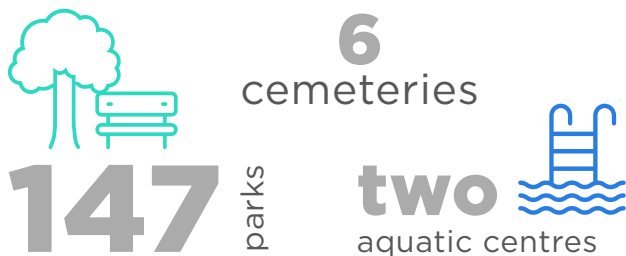


## Transportation:

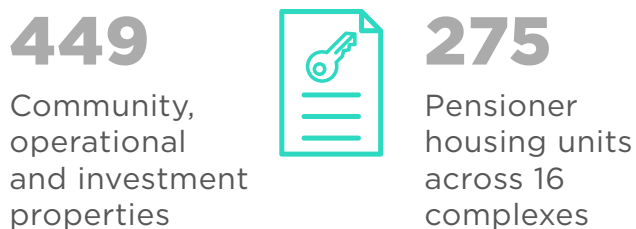




#### Parks and reserves:



#### Property:



#### Investments:



#### Community, cultural & events facilities:





# What are we planning to do over the next ten years?

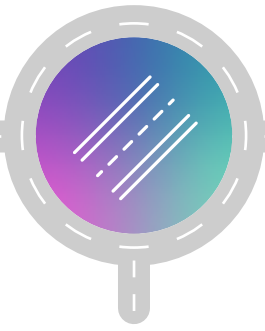
For more detailed information, refer to our Infrastructure Strategy and capital schedules which can be found in the supporting information to this plan.



## Water supply, stormwater and wastewater

### What are the highlights?

- **Water:** We will replace spiral welded and riveted water pipes due to their age, low condition rating and risk. This will cost of \$500k per year for the first three years.
- **Water:** Compliance costs for water supply are increasing due to the new regulator 'Taumata Arowai' and global consenting for our water supply system.
- **Water:** The Fordell water scheme will be connected to the city water scheme by year 1 of the plan. This will provide increased certainty and continuity of supply and ensure ever increasing drinking water standards can be met efficiently.
- **Stormwater:** We will continue to improve our stormwater system to address capacity issues and assist with climate change, as consulted upon in our last long-term plan. This will cost \$530k per year, increasing to \$1.2M per year from year 7.
- **Wastewater:** The resource consent for the city Wastewater Treatment Plant ocean outfall will expire in 2026. Funding has been provided for in years 4 and 5 for the resource consent renewal process.
- **Wastewater:** A cogeneration plant to create electricity from the biogas created at the Wastewater Treatment Plant will be investigated for feasibility in year 2.
- **Wastewater:** In approximately 3 years the onsite capacity for biosolids storage onsite at the WWTP will be fully utilised. \$1.5M has been provided in years 2 to 4 for investigating, consenting and setting up an alternative biosolids disposal route.
- **Wastewater:** The settling pond where the biosolids are currently being stored will need to be capped when it is full. \$560k has been provided in year 5 to do this.
- **Wastewater:** The Marybank wastewater treatment plant will be decommissioned, and the Marybank wastewater network will be connected to the city in early 2021.
- **All:** The plan includes \$12.9M of growth related capital projects for this group of activities, primarily in the Springvale, North West and Mill Road growth areas. These projects will be partly funded by development contributions.
- **All:** The government is looking into reforming three waters services (water, wastewater and stormwater) across the country into a small number of multi-regional entities. At this stage the council has agreed to work with the government to share information. Further information on the three waters reform can be found on page 9.



## Road and footpaths and transportation

### What are the highlights?

- **Roading:** Our NZTA subsidy rate will drop from 61% to 60% from year 2. This means we need to increase rates by \$238k per year on average to maintain our roading programme.
- **Roading:** We will spend an extra \$200k per year on pavement rehabilitations to address a bow wave of work that is needed to maintain service levels.
- **Roading:** More money has been budgeted for pavement maintenance and bridge maintenance to address assets in need of repair. Funding for drainage has also been increased to address climate change.
- **Roading:** We need to start thinking about what we do with Dublin Street Bridge as it ages. We have provided \$310k across years 1 to 3 to begin discussions with stakeholders and to start this planning process, with a provision of \$50M in the budget for construction in years 9 and 10. We are assuming this cost would be 60% subsidised by NZTA, leaving us to fund \$20M.
- **Roading:** A larger capital programme has been included in years 1 to 3 because NZTA requested the council submit its full programme. Due to oversubscription of funding at NZTA, the full programme is unlikely to be approved, but we won't find out in time for this long-term plan. We have loan funded the amount of additional capital, and we will only undertake the extra works if they are co-funded by NZTA.
- **Footpaths:** The footpaths capital replacement programme has been increased by \$80k per year to maximise NZTA's subsidy.
- **Port and river:** Operation and maintenance of the port has been transferred to the new port entities.
- **Port and river:** We have provided \$3.6M across years 7 to 9 for Whanganui River control initiatives.
- **Airport:** We will reseal the airport runway in year 2.



## Parks and recreation

### What are the highlights?

- **Parks and recreation:** We are proposing to work on the development of a comprehensive coastal plan for the Whanganui district, with a strong focus on environmental outcomes and ecological restoration. Implementation is budgeted to cost \$1.1M across years 2 to 4 and \$1.3M across years 8 to 10. The project is set to recur every 6 years. For further information, see page 22.
- **Parks and recreation:** We have included \$1M across years 2 to 4 to build accessible playgrounds, with half of this cost assumed to be funded by grants.
- **Parks and recreation:** We will build a carpark and amenities at North Mole in years 3 and 4. We will fund half of the cost from grants.
- **Parks and recreation:** It is costing us more to maintain our parks and to maintain our existing parks equipment to the required standard. We are also gaining better information on our assets and as standards increase, we are finding more things that need to be repaired or replaced.
- **Cooks Gardens:** We will repair some issues on the main Cooks Gardens grandstand in year 1. A pole vault track will be added in year 2, and the athletics track and lighting will be replaced in year 5.
- **Cooks Gardens:** We are consulting in this plan on whether we should roof the cycling velodrome. For further information, see page 14.
- **Swimming Pools:** We will replace the Splash Centre filtration plant and replace the air handling unit in the old part of the facility in year 2, and upgrade the HVAC system and replace the hydroslide stairs in year ten.



## Community and cultural

### What are the highlights?

- **Community:** We have increased funding for climate change to carry out some of the projects identified by the Climate Change Strategy. These will include work within the four focus areas: Transportation, building energy and form, agriculture and leadership/collaboration. Action examples include: developing organisation carbon footprint, completing and implementing regional climate change risk assessment; scoping large scale carbon sink tree planting projects and rolling out solar initiatives.
- **Community:** We are increasing funding for housing initiatives, including \$4.2M for community housing, recognising that improving housing outcomes is a critical factor to support our growing community.
- **Community:** A small amount of funding each year has been provided for suburban revitalisation projects.
- **Community:** It is important to us that we effectively engage and consult with tangata whenua and our community. In this plan we have provided for increased cultural and community engagement.
- **Community:** We have provided \$180k per annum from year 2 to match fund with Horizons Regional Council an increase in transport solutions for the city. We will consult on this further as plans shape up.
- **Libraries:** The Davis library is well utilised with 250,000 visits per annum and needs more space. We are consulting on whether to extend the Davis Library by creating an east wing, similar to the existing west wing. For further information, see page 20.
- **Libraries:** The amount of funds the library has to buy books and magazines has not increased for many years. We plan to add \$30k per year to provide additional reading materials.
- **Libraries:** We will set up a fourth community library hub from year 1, subject to securing community partnership.
- **Sarjeant Gallery:** Construction is underway on the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment. The building is scheduled to reopen to the public around June 2023. Increased operating costs for the extended building have been included from year 3 onward. The vast majority of funding for this project has come from external funders.
- **Opera House:** Lighting at the Opera House will be replaced with energy efficient LEDs in year 1 and 2. The rigging system will be replaced in years 4 and 5.
- **Whanganui Regional Museum:** Funding for the Museum is proposed to be increased by \$75k per year. Redecoration of the building is planned for year 2.
- **Earthquake strengthening:** A number of earthquake strengthening projects are planned over the term of the plan, with Upokongaro Hall, the Women's Resource Centre, 71 Victoria Ave and the Durie Hill Memorial Tower works planned in the early years.

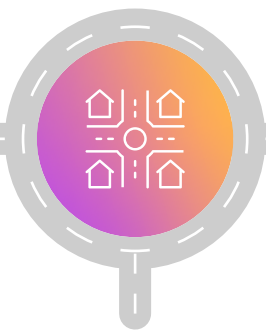


## Economic development

### What are the highlights?

- We will focus on our business eco system across all sectors with emphasis on innovation and collaboration.
- We have increased funding to grow our creative industries. We will focus on developing creative industry businesses and building our reputation as a leading destination for creative industry, including film.
- We'll develop our i-Site Visitor Information Centre to maximise this business as our first point of contact for visitors to Whanganui and as a place to visit to learn about Whanganui and Te Awa Tupua.
- We have provided funding for development opportunities for Whanganui's agribusiness industry, with a focus on value add product, value chain innovation and digital infrastructure.
- Increased funding is budgeted for promotion to grow the Whanganui market share of visitors, new business and talent as well as marketing our events.
- We will invest into the business area focused on retaining and growing our local businesses, attracting new targeted businesses and investment into Whanganui. This includes accommodation/hotel attraction.
- We will invest in our visitor industries focusing on product development & development of the Eco Tourism Hub project.
- We are developing opportunities for Whanganui people to be upskilled, maintain sustainable employment and fulfil the skill needs within our key sectors, with a focus on youth pathways.





## Community facilities and services

### What are the highlights?

- **CBD Maintenance:** The town centre regeneration project is creating a vibrancy in our CBD that we want to further build on. We have included \$3.3M over the ten year period for a variety of projects to enhance the town centre.
- **Waste Minimisation:** We will consult on our proposed Waste Management and Minimisation Plan in early 2021. We await the outcomes of this plan before proposing any changes to our waste services, like providing a recycling service. Further consultation with the community will occur if changes to our current waste services are proposed. Further information is contained on page 25.
- **Waste Minimisation:** We are facing increased costs to collect non-compliant waste at rural bag and bin sites, at a cost of \$100k per year.
- **Waste Minimisation:** From 2021/22 we will no longer rates fund the peri-urban general waste bag collection contract, saving \$75,000 per annum. The peri-urban area will be serviced in the same way as the urban area, with the market providing the service to ratepayers directly.
- **Community buildings:** We have provided funding to retain the bank behind the Repertory Theatre and to refurbish the building. We have also provided for works to upgrade the Upokongaro Hall.
- **Emergency management:** We'll replace our tsunami sirens and add a ninth siren in years 1 to 3.
- **Building control:** Our building consent fees have not been increased for some years. We are proposing an increase in these fees from 2021/22. Further information is contained in our Draft Fees and Charges for 2021/22 which is being consulted on alongside this plan.
- **Environmental Health:** Freedom camping is increasing in our district. We have provided for a Freedom Camping Compliance Officer from year 2 onward.
- **Environmental Policy:** Heritage preservation grant funding has been increased from \$100k per year to \$250k per year to support earthquake strengthening of our valued heritage buildings.
- **Environmental Policy:** The government's Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity requires us to identify all Significant Natural Areas in our district within five years. We have provided for \$210k to undertake this significant piece of work.



## Investments and corporate

### What are the highlights?

- **Investments:** Income from our investments has been affected by COVID-19. We have budgeted for reduced investment income in years 1 and 2, before returning to normal levels.
- **Governance:** We are consulting on whether to provide a youth hub in year 2 of the plan to improve youth wellbeing. For further information, see page 18.
- **Community and operational property:** Reducing our carbon footprint is a key part of our commitment to mitigating climate change. We have provided \$1M per year in years 2 to 4, and again in years 8 to 10 to implement significant solar power initiatives across suitable council facilities. \$80k has been provided in year 1 for initial design work, which will seek to establish energy savings to offset the cost of this infrastructure.



## To the reader:

### **Independent auditor's report on Whanganui District Council's consultation document for its proposed 2021-31 long-term plan**

I am the Auditor General's appointed auditor for Whanganui District Council (the Council). The Local Government Act 2002 (the Act) requires the Council to prepare a consultation document when developing its Long-term Plan. Section 93C of the Act sets out the content requirements of the consultation document and requires an audit report on the consultation document. I have done the work for this report using the staff and resources of Audit New Zealand. We completed our report on 23 March 2021.

## **Opinion**

In our opinion:

- the consultation document provides an effective basis for public participation in the Council's decisions about the proposed content of its 2021-31 Long-term Plan, because it:
  - fairly represents the matters proposed for inclusion in the Long-term Plan; and
  - identifies and explains the main issues and choices facing the Council and district, and the consequences of those choices; and
- the information and assumptions underlying the information in the consultation document are reasonable.

## **Emphasis of matters**

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to the following disclosures.

### ***Uncertainty over external funding of capital projects***

Pages 14 and 20 outline Council's assumption that external funding contributions will be obtained for upgrading the velodrome and extending the Davis library. The external funding contributions are currently uncertain because funding has not yet been sought. If the level of external funding is not achieved the Council will reconsider proceeding with these projects.

### ***Uncertainty over three waters reforms***

Page 9 outlines the Government's intention to make three waters reform decisions during 2021. The effect that the reforms may have on three waters services provided is currently uncertain because no decisions have been made. The consultation document was prepared as if these services will continue to be provided by the Council, but future decisions may result in significant changes, which would affect the information on which the consultation document has been based.

### ***Basis of opinion***

We carried out our work in accordance with the International Standard on Assurance Engagements (New Zealand) 3000 (Revised): Assurance Engagements Other Than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information. In meeting the requirements of this standard, we took into account particular elements of the Auditor General's Auditing Standards and the International Standard on Assurance Engagements 3400: The Examination of Prospective Financial Information that were consistent with those requirements.

We assessed the evidence the Council has to support the information and disclosures in the consultation document. To select appropriate procedures, we assessed the risk of material misstatement and the Council's systems and processes applying to the preparation of the consultation document.

We did not evaluate the security and controls over the publication of the consultation document.

### **Responsibilities of the Council and auditor**

The Council is responsible for:

- meeting all legal requirements relating to its procedures, decisions, consultation, disclosures, and other actions associated with preparing and publishing the consultation document and Long-term Plan, whether in printed or electronic form;
- having systems and processes in place to provide the supporting information and analysis the Council needs to be able to prepare a consultation document and Long-term Plan that meet the purposes set out in the Act; and
- ensuring that any forecast financial information being presented has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.

We are responsible for reporting on the consultation document, as required by section 93C of the Act. We do not express an opinion on the merits of any policy content of the consultation document.

### **Independence and quality control**

We have complied with the Auditor General's:

- independence and other ethical requirements, which incorporate the independence and ethical requirements of Professional and Ethical Standard 1 issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board; and
- quality control requirements, which incorporate the quality control requirements of Professional and Ethical Standard 3 (Amended) issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

In addition to this audit and our report on the Council's 2019/20 annual report, we have carried out engagements in the areas of a limited assurance engagement related to the District Council's debenture trust deed, and assurance engagements for a subsidiary pursuant to the Gas Distribution Information Disclosure Determination 2012 (consolidated in 2018), and the Gas Distribution Services Default Price-Quality Path Determination 2017, which are compatible with those independence requirements. Other than these engagements we have no relationship with or interests in the Council or any of its subsidiaries.



Debbie Perera  
Audit New Zealand

On behalf of the Auditor General, Palmerston North, New Zealand







# How to make a submission

## We want to hear from our community and invite you to make a submission to our proposed Long-Term Plan 2021-2031.

To make a submission, complete the submission form or fill in an online form at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan) or you can email your thoughts to [polycysubmissions@whanganui.govt.nz](mailto:polycysubmissions@whanganui.govt.nz).

Please indicate whether you would like to speak to the council about your submission at the hearings on 12 and 13 May 2021. If you wish to speak make sure you have completed your contact details as you will be contacted after the close of submissions regarding a time for you to attend a hearing.

Your written submission will be made available to councillors, council staff and the public as part of the consultation process. Your submission will be considered by the council, but may not necessarily result in any changes you request being made.

Supporting information for our proposed Long-Term Plan 2021-2031 is available on our website [www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan) or contact us on phone (06) 349 0001 or email [polycysubmissions@whanganui.govt.nz](mailto:polycysubmissions@whanganui.govt.nz)

### Supporting information includes:

- Financial Strategy
- 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy
- Forecasting assumptions
- Full financial statements
- Full list of capital expenditure projects by area
- Groups of activity section including performance measures
- Draft Revenue and Financing Policy and supporting Funding Needs Analyses
- Draft Development Contributions Policy
- Liability Management Policy
- Investment Policy
- Funding Impact Statement – rates information
- Proposed fees and charges for 2021/22
- Draft Significance and Engagement Policy
- Rates Remission Policy, Rates Postponement Policy and Policy on the Remission and Postponement of Rates on Māori Freehold Land
- Supporting Information Document

## Submissions close at 5.00pm on 30 April 2021.





**Whanganui  
District Council  
Long-Term Plan  
2021-2031**

