



Tō Waikato, kia wana
**Making your Waikato
even better**

waikatoregion.govt.nz

Waikato

REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

Tā tātou mahi

Our work

We love where we live – the mighty Waikato. It's a place of powerful possibilities.

Making the most of these opportunities relies on everyone playing their part for a healthy environment. A healthy environment enables communities to thrive. Get that right and the economy will be strong. That's what we're here to do – create a sustainable future for people today and generations to come.

The 2024/25 financial year is the first of our new 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, which we sought your views on throughout April. The plan sets out what we're going to do, the money we're going to spend to do it and the impact this will have on rates.

Councillors focused on what matters most – the resilience of our rohe (region) – striking the balance between honouring existing commitments, taking community feedback on board and ensuring one of the lowest rates rises in the country.

Their decisions resulted in a 10-year budget with a 7.4 per cent rates rise from current ratepayers in 2024/25, which was heavily influenced by a 5.7 per cent inflation-driven rise in baseline costs.

Mahere Whānui, our 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, provides details on what your rates contribute to.

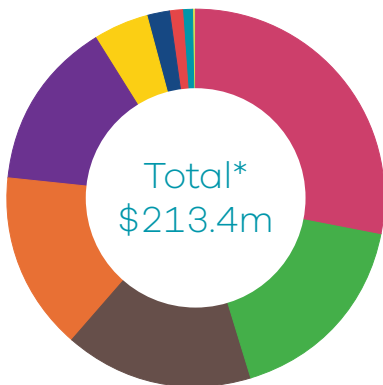
Read it in full at [waikatoregion.govt.nz/ltp](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/ltp).

Check out 'Our spending' for a quick summary of how we'll allocate our funds in year one of this long term plan and find out what our councillors decided inside.



Tukuna ana te pūtea ki whea

Our spending in 2024/25



\$60.2m	Regional transport connections
\$36.9m	Integrated catchment management
\$34.5m	Science, policy and information
\$32.2m	Flood control and protection works
\$31.2m	Resource use
\$9.8m	Customer, community and services
\$4.3m	Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management
\$2.8m	Regional hazards and emergency response
\$1.7m	Corporate and self-funding
\$0.1m	Council controlled organisations

*Due to rounding for presentation purposes, areas of spend do not sum exactly to the total.

A large portion of your household rates are targeted to match services in your area. See your rates assessment notice for the details.

Find out more about the types of work we do under each of these areas and some of the key projects we'll be working on during 2024/25.

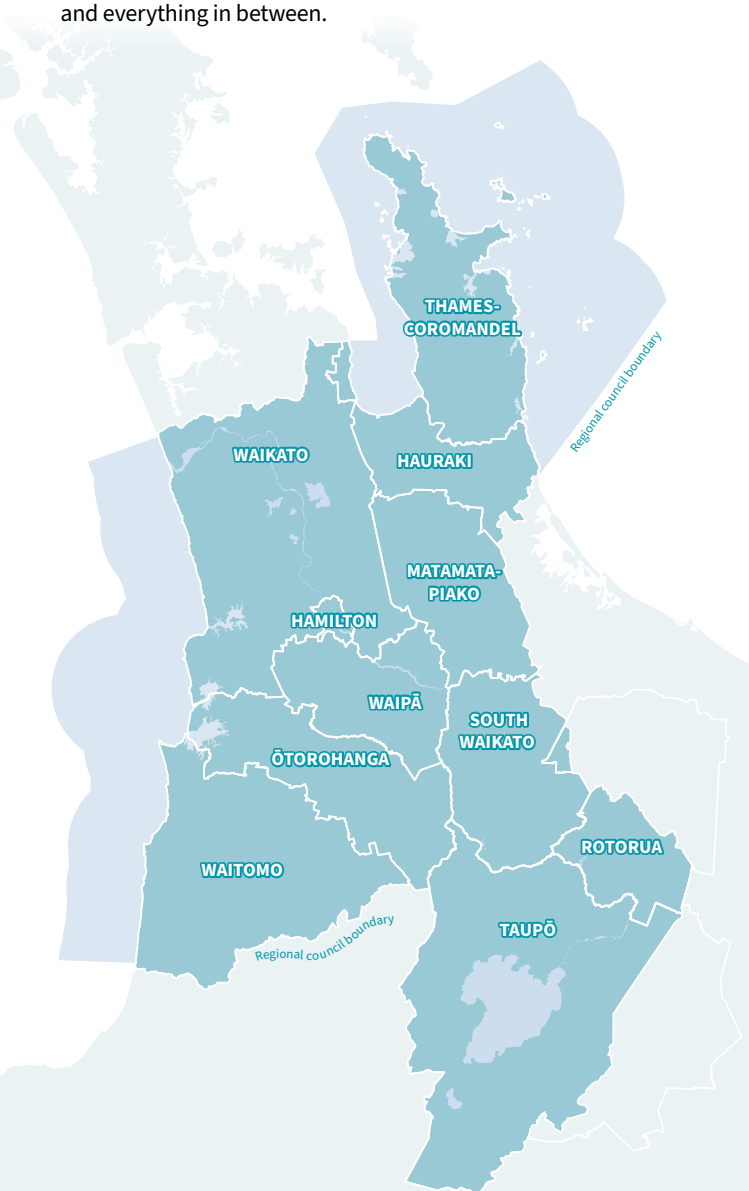
[waikatoregion.govt.nz/your-rates-at-work](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/your-rates-at-work)



Tō tātou rohe

Our region

Our rohe (region) spans one city, Kirikiriroa Hamilton, seven districts, and parts of three districts which straddle regional boundaries (Waitomo, Taupō and Rotorua). It sits at the heart of the upper North Island, and includes the Bombay Hills, Coromandel Peninsula, Mōkau, the slopes of Mount Ruapheu, and everything in between.



Ō mātou haepapa

Our role

We're working together – partnering with iwi and involving many others in our communities – for a Waikato region that has a healthy environment, vibrant communities and strong economy.

Regional councils, like us, cover a large geographic area and are responsible for functions that are best delivered at a regional scale.

City and district councils cover smaller geographic areas and are responsible for different functions.

Regional council services

Managing the use of natural resources (water, soil, air, geothermal areas and coasts).

Regional transport planning and passenger transport services.

Protecting and restoring natural biodiversity.

Controlling harmful plant and animal pests.

Providing flood protection and drainage schemes.

Keeping water users safe.

Responding to pollution incidents.

Preparing communities for civil defence emergencies and coordinating regional responses when a disaster strikes.

City or district council services

Core services (like local roads, water supply, wastewater, rubbish collection, parking and public toilets).

Community facilities (libraries, parks, sports fields, pools and playgrounds).

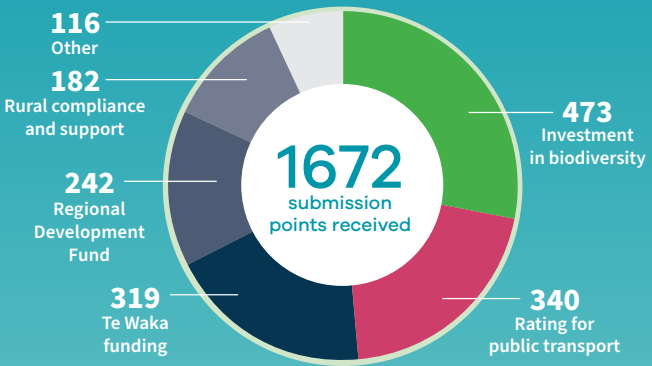
Developing and monitoring the district plan (land use and subdivisions).

Community health and safety (animal control, building control and liquor licensing).

Mahere Whānui

2024-2034 Long Term Plan

Following public consultation on our 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, councillors reviewed all submissions – and heard directly from those that wanted to present in person – before arriving at their final decisions in late May.



Here's what our councillors decided.

Collecting a region-wide public transport rate

> What we heard

Option 1

We pick up rating from all districts

Our preferred option

OR

Option 2

Districts continue to rate

57%

40%

3% did not indicate

Our public transport services provide access to education, employment, recreation, healthcare and more, while also helping to cut congestion and reduce carbon emissions. But the legacy funding arrangements that evolved over time were more complex than they needed to be, creating barriers to the comprehensive strategic planning we need to do to deliver consistent public transport region-wide, as well as administrative burdens resulting in unnecessary costs and delays to much-needed service improvements.

So, we proposed regional rating for public transport.

Submitters agreed, with 57 per cent supporting our proposal to collect a region-wide rate. Based on this feedback, councillors decided to proceed with regional rating from 2025/26.

We also sought feedback on two possible rating models. While submitters indicated a preference for option 1, councillors decided against both. Instead, our staff will spend the coming months developing rating options in partnership with local councils. We'll then consult with our communities on these options early in 2025, ahead of moving to regional rating.

What we decided

We pick up the rating from all districts



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OPTION 1

80 per cent funding from properties within 5km of a bus route, 20 per cent from all other properties in the area.

58%

OPTION 2

80 per cent funding from properties within 800m of a bus stop, 20 per cent from properties between 800m and 5km of a bus stop.

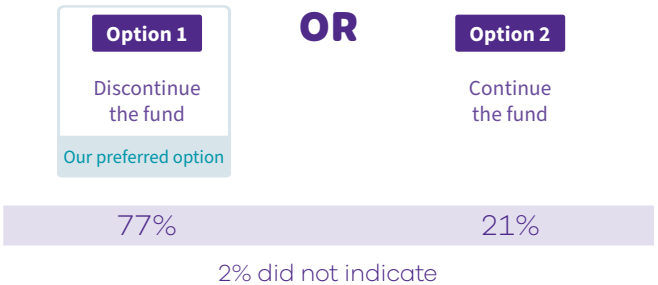
25%

17% did not indicate



Discontinuing the Regional Development Fund

> What we heard



The Regional Development Fund (RDF) was set up to enable investment in regionally significant projects with economic outcomes achieved in a way that also enhance the environment. It was undersubscribed, took staff time to administer and there was an opportunity cost to holding the fund in its current form. So, we proposed discontinuing the fund.

The majority of submitters supported our preferred option, saying the council should prioritise its funding to where it's needed. Others felt the fund's benefit to the community was unclear and that regional councils should not provide money for significant projects.

Those who supported the fund continuing said it was important for the council to support significant economic development opportunities, but that it could be used more effectively.

Councillors agreed, saying this would allow previously accumulated and unallocated funds totalling \$3.979 million to be redirected to strategic priorities that could have a greater impact as economic enablers.

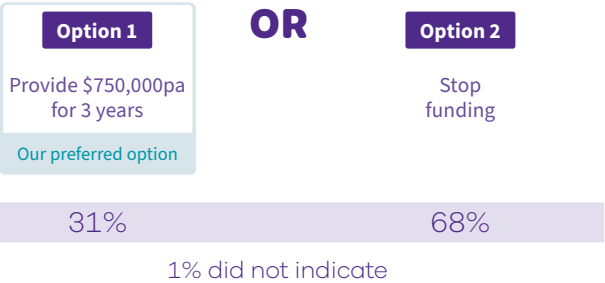
What we decided

Discontinue the Regional Development Fund



Funding for regional economic development agency Te Waka

> What we heard



We sought views on funding for the region’s economic development agency, Te Waka, proposing to use the unallocated money from the Regional Development Fund to pay for it.

A majority of submitters preferred we stop funding Te Waka, with a strong view that careful consideration needed to be given to where funds are spent in the current economic environment, and that the agency had not delivered tangible value for money. Those who supported continued funding felt there is a potentially valuable regional economic development function to be fulfilled, and often Te Waka is a good starting point to deliver this.

But, before we could make a decision, Te Waka announced it would cease operating as an independent entity on 30 June 2024. During deliberations, councillors agreed the Waikato needs a strong, collective voice on regional economic development.

They gave staff until September to report back on work with key stakeholders to develop the appropriate structure to support regional economic development. Residual RDF funds are available for regional economic development, subject to council approval.

No decision required



Changes to the funding of primary industry compliance

> What we heard

A new rate assessed against properties 20ha or more



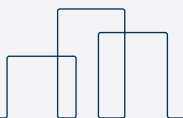
We proposed a change to the way we fund our primary industry compliance activities that involved the removal of the existing permitted activity monitoring rate. In its place, we proposed a new primary industry compliance rate, with a new mix of general and targeted rates to be assessed against all properties 20 hectares or greater.

Submitters were split. Views were also varied, with some believing the cost should be spread across all ratepayers, and others telling us the targeted rate should only be applied to non-complying landowners. Some submitters felt current rates should be enough to cover costs.

Councillors decided to proceed with the new rate. In response to feedback, a remission of the new rate will be considered for the proportion of a property that is covered in bush. An application for remission will need to be made to the council.

What we decided

Introduce a new primary industry compliance rate







Koinei tō Waikato **It's your Waikato**


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 0800 800 401

 info@waikatoregion.govt.nz

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 ourwaikato

Ā mātou mahi **What we're doing**



Find out more about the mahi we're doing in collaboration with communities, landowners, iwi and other agencies.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/story-hub