

Bike Waikato Submission to Hamilton City Council Long Term Plan 2024–2034

Kia ora Hamilton City Council

We are thankful to once again have the opportunity to contribute to the formation of the Long Term Plan.

We support cycling and transportation as a priority.

[Priority 1](#) of the Long Term Plan document states: “We’ll prioritise building connected and safe walkways and cycleways that allow us to move around our city quickly and easily and bring neighbourhoods together.”

We know that Hamiltonians want to be able to bike for everyday purposes. The [Access Hamilton Strategy](#) outlines how 78% of Hamiltonians would consider biking if improved facilities were provided¹. This aligns with national data from [Waka Kotahi](#) and international evidence that the largest barriers to cycling are a lack of safe and comfortable facilities².

Transportation is currently the largest contributor to carbon emissions in the city³. Additionally, without intervention, congestion in Kirikiriroa Hamilton is expected to increase by 50% by 2040⁴. This is not ideal for people riding people or people driving cars.

Continuing investment in cycling infrastructure is critical to not only address transportational and environmental needs but to guarantee the future efficiency of cars as a transport mode, too.

We do not support the reduction in funding for cycling infrastructure.

Many territorial and regional authorities are facing economic challenges due in part to inflation and historic underrating. You have asked submitters to indicate that if additional funding is desired for particular projects or initiatives from where that funding should come.

Bike Waikato as an organisation does not have a position on how much rates should increase. Instead, in our submission, we intend to highlight the value for money that investing in cycling provides.

- Dedicated bicycle infrastructure is cheaper to build than dedicated car infrastructure. There is a lower cost barrier to encourage people to cycle than other transport modes.
- Bicycles exert significantly less wear and tear on the road than motor vehicles⁵. If bicycle trips replace more car trips, maintenance costs for the road will decrease.

¹ Hamilton City Council (2022). [Access Hamilton](#). Page 23 (Biking facilities: they are available, but the quality needs to be better): “Hamiltonians are the greatest supporters of biking out of the five largest New Zealand cities, with 78% most likely to consider improved facilities as a reason to bike.”

² Waka Kotahi (2018). [Understanding attitudes and perceptions of Cycling & Walking](#).

³ Hamilton City Council (2022). [Our Climate Future: Te Pae Tawhiti o Kirikiriroa](#). Page 5 (Our city’s emissions).

⁴ Hamilton City Council (2022). [Access Hamilton](#). Page 60: “With population growth, congestion is expected to increase by 50% by 2040 during peak periods, particularly in the city centre, Hamilton East, Pukete Bridge and towards Waikato Hospital.”

⁵ By the fourth power law, assuming a bicycle has a weight of 0.1T and a standard car has a weight of 2T.

- People who regularly ride bikes tend to spend more money at local businesses⁶.

In saying this, a lot of the benefits of increased cycling mode share cannot be quantified in dollar amounts. Cycling invariably provides health benefits, emotional benefits, physical benefits, social benefits, and environmental benefits⁷. What is the value of a human life? What is the value of independence for our tamariki? What is the value of having freedom to travel around the city? It is difficult to say, and expert opinions will vary, but the benefit nonetheless remains.

There is a persistent but incorrect belief that cycling infrastructure is an area where Council is spending too much money. Bike Waikato requested data under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 to test the validity of this claim. Our reference number is LGOIMA 375543.

From the period of July 2023 to December 2023, the Council spent \$11.6M on the construction and maintenance of cycleways. The local share spend was \$4.6M. Meanwhile, the cost of roadway construction and maintenance was \$112.5M with a local share of \$58.1M. *Even in a period of time where Hamilton City Council was spending an increased amount on cycling infrastructure (due in part to the CERF funding), the total spend was less than 10% of the equivalent spend for roadways.* It is clear from this data which part of the transportation system is consuming most of the budget. It is time for Council to rebalance the budget in favour of sustainable and cost-effective modes of transportation.

By continuing to invest in cycling infrastructure to encourage additional cycling uptake, *as the majority of Hamiltonians support and as outlined in Hamilton City Council's own strategy documents*, you will save money in the long term.

We support the cycling bridge in principle.

You have also asked for submitters to share our views on the cycling bridge.

Bike Waikato is supportive of the development of a dedicated cycling and walking bridge in the City Centre in principle. However, we expect that the bridge will not be a part of our cycling network that is built in isolation but is delivered alongside improved connections to and through Victoria Street and the City Centre in Hamilton City and Grey Street in Hamilton East. We also expect that improvements to the existing bridges across the City Centre – particularly Claudelands Bridge and Victoria Street – are continued.

We are looking forward to collaborating with the Council as detailed proposals become available for the bridge.

We expect the Council to continue to deliver for Hamiltonians in spite of the proposed new Government Policy Statement on Land Transport.

At the time of preparing our submission to the Hamilton City Council Long Term Plan, the draft Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Land Transport has been released but is not yet finalised. Even so, the GPS significantly limits and decreases available funding for cycling infrastructure projects across the

⁶ Volker, J. M. B., & Handy, S. (2021). Economic impacts on local businesses of investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure: a review of the evidence. *Transport Reviews* 41 (4), 401-431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01441647.2021.1912849>

⁷ Waka Kotahi (2019). *Keeping Cities Moving: Increasing the wellbeing of New Zealand's cities by growing the share of travel by public transport, walking and cycling.* <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/keeping-cities-moving/Keeping-cities-moving.pdf>

country. Many of Hamilton City Council's cycling initiatives have been delivered with co-funding from Waka Kotahi.

The draft GPS states the following: *"We have assumed that operating and capital expenditure programmes, which have in the past received NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi subsidies and/or satisfy the criteria required for subsidy, will continue to receive subsidy funding over the course of this Long-Term Plan."*

Given that funding is likely to decrease if the GPS is adopted in its current form, there is significant risk that funding for cycling projects in Hamilton will be lower than proposed.

As we have discussed in detail in the previous sections of our submission, investment in cycling infrastructure is something that the overwhelming of Hamiltonians support and will achieve the Council's stated goal of reducing spending in the long term. Therefore, we are highlighting our expectation that Hamilton City Council will take into account the likely reduction of funding due to the GPS and take the courageous decision to continue to fund this vital infrastructure for Hamiltonians of today and tomorrow.

We need to see alignment between Council strategy and Council spending.

*"We want everyone to be able to move safely from their homes to work, and to all those special places in our city that we love to visit."*⁸

*"We want to be a thriving, low-carbon city that responds and adapts to climate change."*⁹

*"We want to promote a fair transport system that allows all residents and visitors to safely and reliably access their preferred destination based on their individual needs."*¹⁰

*"We want to provide a more forgiving road system that considers human mistakes and vulnerability."*¹¹

*"We want to be a sustainable city, and this means challenging the way we grow and live within the city."*¹²

*"We want to make Hamiltonians feel like they want to use a bike, scooter, skateboard or a bus pass instead of a car, as it's more convenient and efficient."*¹³

These are not the words of Bike Waikato. These are the aspirations of [Access Hamilton](#), the City Council's own transport strategy document. This strategy was adopted in August 2022 with the support of Bike Waikato and many in the community. It was and still is an aspiration document that outlines how Hamilton can be transformed into a liveable, accessible, and safe city for everyone.

However, since its adoption, we have seen that the Council has not always delivered on its aspirations – whether it is attempting to [revoke public transportation projects](#) or [cancelling very much wanted cycling and public transportation projects](#) or proposing to [reduce funding for sustainable transport initiatives](#) (Item 9 of the attached minutes). While Council has delivered many incredible projects, we also need Council to "put its money where its mouth is" and invest what is needed to bring the aspirations of Access Hamilton to fruition.

⁸ Page 3.

⁹ Page 12.

¹⁰ Page 21.

¹¹ Page 22.

¹² Page 36.

¹³ Page 41.

To conclude our submission, we wish to highlight the following:

- We support cycling and transportation as a priority in Kirikiriroa Hamilton.
- We do not support the reduction in funding for cycling infrastructure – especially given that continuing to invest in cycling infrastructure will *save the Council money in the long term*.
- We support the cycling bridge with the understanding that it will form part of a larger network.
- We are concerned about the potential conflict between the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport and this Long Term Plan, but we expect the Council to continue to deliver for Hamiltonians in spite of it.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Kind regards

Bike Waikato Committee