

LOCAL ELECTIONS



Ripoata i mua pōti 2025

Pre-election report 2025

Key issues and performance
information for voters and candidates

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke



Ihirangi

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LOCAL ELECTIONS
25



01

Kupu Whakataki Introduction



Kei tēnei wāhanga In this section

This section includes an introduction from the Chief Executive and sets the context of the city we live in.

Nā te Tumu Whakarae

Kātahi au ka tae ki Pōneke, ā, kua tere mau i a au he tāone ngangahau tēnei, he tāngata ngangahau ōna. He wāhi hirahira tēnei.



Kei ngā tāone katoa ōna anō wero: mai i ngā hau pūkeri o te ohaoha, ki ngā take pāpori, ki ngā take huringa āhuarangi. Ngā pēhitanga o te tareka ā-utu kore, e rite ana huri noa, heoi he nui ake te pānga ki a tātou, ki ō tātou tāngata, ki ō tātou pakihī, ki a Te Kaunihera anō hoki., he nui nō ngā utu haumi. He kohinga haumi whakakore kanorau tā mātou - he tūraru nui tēnei ne i ka ākina tātou e te aituā māori - me utu e mātou ngā nama tūāhanga, me whai kia rite rū whenua mai tātou, me āta whai e tātou kia pai te tareka ā-utu o te inamata, me te anamata o te tāone

Kei waenga mātou i tētehi hōtaka tōhaunui e hāngai ana ki te tipu me te whakahou. Inā te nui o ngā pūtea haumi ā Te Kaunihera o Pōneke i whakapaua ki ngā whakatika wai, ki te tūāhanga, ki ngā aka tūnuku, ki ngā pūnaha para, ki te whakarauora anō i te tapawhā o Te Ngākau.

Kei te mārāma pū ahau, he whakahōhā nui tēnei wāhanga mō ngā kainoho me ngā pakihī, ā, he utu nui tō tēnā. Inā te hira o te pikīngā o ō mātou nama, ā, nā ngā tūāhanga nui me ngā haumi manawaroa i piki anō ai ngā rēti ā ngā kainoho me ngā pakihī.

Heoi anō, e āta kitea ana ngā hua o te haumi o nāianeī - kua heke te kohinga wai papī, e whanake ana ngā tikanga rū, e whakatūtūria ana te whare whakamōkito kene o Te Taumata Mōa, kua nui ake ngā kōwhiringa tūnuku toitū, kua piki haere te kanorau koiora me te kitea o te ao Māori, puta noa i te tāone - katoa katoa he mea mahi nō mātou e tuku tonu ana i ngā ratonga ki ō tātou kainoho, rā mai rā atu. Ā tērā tau tere ake ai te kitea o huringa pai, me ō mātou whatu maero matua me whakanui i te tau 2026, ko Te Matapihi tērā, ko te whare pukapuka pokapū, ko Te Ngākau. Whai muri ā te tau 2027 ko te Tāone Hōro.

Ahakoia ia te nui o ngā mahi, me mātau anō tātou ki ngā hua pai o te noho, o te mahi rānei ki Pōneke. Kei reira ngā mātanga kaimahi, kei reira ngā utu paku nui ake i te utu toharite me tētehi o ngā tauira papai katoa o te mapua i Aotearoa whānui. Ki te tika te whakamahi, he momoho whakataetae nui tēnā ki te āki i te tipu o te ohaoha anamata, otirā te tipu whānui tonu.

Ko te wero motu kore ko te whakataurite i te tareka ā-utu me ngā nama o te haumi tūāhanga, me te tuku tonu i ngā ratonga wāriu o Pōneke. Ko te whāinga matua kia pai te tuku i ngā mahi ā Te Kaunihera, waihoki rā ko te kimi i te kauhanga tika i waenga i te nui o te haumi, me ngā utu o te tāone. Koinā ētehi mahi matua mā ngā mema ka tohua. Māmā ake te whakaae ki te haumi i kore whakaae ki te haumi - ka kitea i a ngā hapori e kaikā ana ki ētehi haumi motuhake mō ētehi kaupapa matua.

Kei tēnei ripoata pōti-mua ngā pārongo me ngā raraunga hei whakaarotanga mā ngā kaitono e tū ana ki ngā pōti, me ngā kaipōti mā rātou te kōwhiringa. E takoto ana ko ngā wero taupuhipuhi e whā:

- Te whakataurite i te tareka ā-utu o ngā rēti me ngā pēhitanga ahumoni, me te hāpai tonu i ngā ratonga me ngā haumi mō te tūāhanga o te anamata.
- Te tiaki i ō tatou tūāhanga tawhito, he tūraru pūmate māori, nui te utu.
- Te whakatipu i te whakapono o te hapori ki ngā whakataunga ā Te Kaunihera.
- Te rīwaru i ngā tai huri nui o ngā whakahoutanga ā te kāwanatanga e whai pānga ana ki ngā kāwanatanga ā-rohe me te tāone.

Hei āpiti atu ki ngā wero e whā nei, e tika ana me āta whai e te pakihi kia papai, kia tika anō te tuku i ngā ratonga, kia hāngai ai ngā whai hua mō ngā kaiutu rēti o te tāone ki te nui o te utu.

Me auaha Te Kaunihera hou, me rite ki te tauhoko i ngā mea me uaua ka tuku. Me mātanga ngā kaitono, me whai wāhi ngā kaipōti me ngā kainoho, me tautoko te tāone pokapū ora - mahi mai, ako mai, hararei mai, whakatū pakihi mai, whakatipu whānau mai, whakangahau mai.

He mahi whakaahua i a Pōneke te mahi ā ngā mema ka whakatūria. Kei reira ōna wero - me ngā kōwhirihanga nui i te horopaki o marea tautohetohe, ā, ko tō rātou takeo i ōna wā ka whakahāngai atu ki ngā māngai o te marea. Heoi kei konā ōna pai, ko te koange o te tūhono atu ki ngā tāngata maha huri noa i te tāone, o te āheinga anō ki te whakapai ake tūturu nei.

Kei tā mātou pae ipurangi me te puka kaitono ētehi atu anō pārongo hei āwhina i ngā kaitono mō te taha ki ngā whakahaere ā Te Kaunihera. Ko te kupu whakatenatena ki ngā kaipōti kia haere katoa koutou ki te pōti i te hunga e hāngai ana ō rātou whakaaro ki te momo Pōneke e pīrangitia ana hei kāinga. Ko te manako ia i pai tēnei ripoata i mua pōti hei whakautu i ētehi o ngā pātai kei ā koutou ki ngā kaitono, hei āwhina anō i tō whakataunga ka haere ana koe ki te pōti. E hikaka ana ahau ki te mahi tahi ki tētehi Kaunihera me ngā Poari Hapori hou ki te hāpai i te tāone me ōna kainoho, ngā rōpū hapori, me ngā pakihi i ora ai te tāone o Pōneke.



Matt Prosser
Te Tumu-Whakarae

From the Chief Executive

As a recent arrival to Pōneke, I have quickly learnt how much our vibrant city and people have to offer. This is a special place.

Like all cities, we face challenges: from economic headwinds to social issues to climate change. Our cost-of-living pressures are similar to the rest of the country, but alongside our residents and businesses, Wellington City Council itself faces additional financial pressures due to high insurance costs. As a council, we have an undiversified investment portfolio - a risk if we get hit by a major disaster - and we need to carefully manage an infrastructure deficit and build earthquake resilience while managing the affordability of the city now and in the future.

We are in the midst of an intensive programme of transformation and renewal. In recent years, the Council has made large capital investments to update our water infrastructure, transport networks, and waste systems, and to revitalise Te Ngākau Civic Square.

I recognise that this transitional period is disruptive for residents and businesses and comes at considerable cost. Our debt levels have increased significantly, as a result of the large infrastructure and resilience investment and so too have the rates we ask of our businesses and residents.

We are, however, beginning to see the benefits of the current investment - a reduced backlog of water leaks, earthquake strengthening progress, construction of Te Whare Wai Para Nuku, the Moa Point sludge minimisation facility, more sustainable transport options, increasing biodiversity and more visibility of te ao Māori right across the city - alongside the continued provision of hundreds of services to our residents every day. The pace of positive change will ramp up next year, with major milestones to celebrate in 2026 including the reopening of Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library and Te Ngākau Civic Square. The Town Hall will follow in 2027.

While there is much work to be done, we should also recognise the benefits we have living and working in Pōneke. From a highly skilled workforce, with higher-than-average incomes and some of the best productivity levels in New Zealand. Used correctly these give the City a competitive advantage to drive future economic growth and improving overall wealth.

Our ongoing challenge is to balance rating affordability and debt with the right infrastructure investment and providing the services Wellingtonians value. Ensuring the work of the city council is delivered efficiently is paramount, as is getting the balance between the amount invested versus the costs incurred by the city. This is a key role for elected members. It often seems easier to agree to investment than it is to not invest - especially when communities are keen for specific investment in key projects.

This pre-election report offers information and data to inform candidates looking to stand in the election and for voters when deciding who to elect. It sets out four key, interdependent challenges:

- Balancing current rates affordability and financial constraints while maintaining services and investment in infrastructure for the future.
- Caring for our aging infrastructure, which faces costly natural hazard risks.
- Building community satisfaction and trust in the Council's decision making.
- Navigating the major central government reforms impacting local government and the city.

In addition to these four challenges it is incumbent on the organisation to ensure that it delivers services efficiently and effectively obtaining value for money for all ratepayers.

The new Council will need to think creatively and be prepared to make difficult trade-offs. We need informed candidates, and engaged voters and residents, to support a thriving capital city where people want to be - whether it's to work, study, have a holiday, start a business, raise a family or be entertained.

Being an elected member is a chance to shape Wellington. It is not without challenges - including tough decisions in a context of heightened public debate and frustration directed, at times, towards public representatives. But it offers rich experiences, the joy of connecting with people across the city, and the chance to make a real difference.

Candidates can find further information to support their candidacy and understanding of how the Council works on our website, including our candidate handbook.

I encourage all eligible voters to get out and vote for the candidates whose campaign speaks to you and the Wellington you want to live in. I hope this pre-election report is helpful in guiding the questions you may have for candidates and in your overall decision making when it comes to your vote. I look forward to working together with the new Council and Community Boards to serve Wellington residents, community groups and businesses that make this a thriving city.



Matt Prosser
Chief Executive

Ngā wāri o Pōneke tāone Wellington City wards

 Te Whanganui-a-Tara
Māori Ward



Ngā rā pōti matua mō te tau 2025

Key dates for the 2025 elections

**Fri
4 July**

Candidate nominations **open**

**Fri
1 Aug**

Candidate nominations
close at 12 noon

**Tue
9 Sept**

Voting documents begin to
be posted out, voting opens

**Sat
11 Oct**

Voting closes at 12 noon
Preliminary results available

**Thu
16 Oct**

Declaration of final results



Pōneke takiwā, Pōneke tangata

Wellington: Location and people

Wellington is nestled at the southern tip of New Zealand's North Island, Te Upoko-o-te Ika (the head of the fish).

According to Māori tradition, Whatonga, a chief of the Kurahaupō waka, was the first person to settle the lands at the tip of the North Island. Tara, the son of Whatonga, is said to have been enamoured with the deep and beautiful harbour “at the very nostrils of the island,” so Whatonga named the harbour Whanganui-a-Tara, after his son. Mana whenua and kaitiaki (guardians) of our rohe (area) are Taranaki Whānui, Te Āti Awa and Ngāti Toa Rangatira.

Pōneke is Aotearoa New Zealand's capital city. Its population of around 210,000 is characterised by higher education levels, higher incomes and a larger proportion of young adults than the rest of the country. Around 30 percent of Wellington's workforce are employed in the public sector.



The city is known as an arts and cultural hub, and takes pride in its startups and creative industries such as screen and technology. It hosts major events year-round, from arts, food, and street festivals to international sports events.

Situated on three fault lines, Wellington is prone to seismic activity. Earthquake resilience is a key focus for the city. Other challenges include the cost of housing and living, with Wellingtonians expressing concern about affordability. Like other New Zealand cities, perceptions of quality of life in Wellington have fallen in recent years. Perceptions of liveability and pride in the city, previously very high compared to other cities, have also fallen.

Wellington is a compact city, surrounded by natural beauty, with rugged hills and a wild south coast. Parks, beaches and reserves are enhanced by long-term efforts to restore native flora and fauna, particularly birdlife. It is one of the only cities in the world where biodiversity is increasing.



Pōneke: ngā whika Wellington: the numbers

209,900 Wellingtonians

estimated population of Wellington City as of June 2024¹

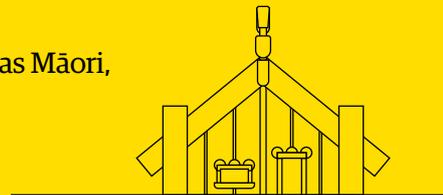


27.2%

of Wellington's population is aged between 15-29, vs 19.4% nationally.²

9.8%

of Wellingtonians identify as Māori, up from 8.6% in 2018.³



11.3%

of Wellingtonians aged 15 and over identify as rainbow, vs 4.9% nationally - the highest in NZ.⁴

16%

of people in the Wellington region are disabled, in line with the national rate (17%).⁵

81%

of Wellingtonians rated their overall quality of life positively, down from 89% in 2022. Other NZ cities have also seen a decrease (average 77%).⁶

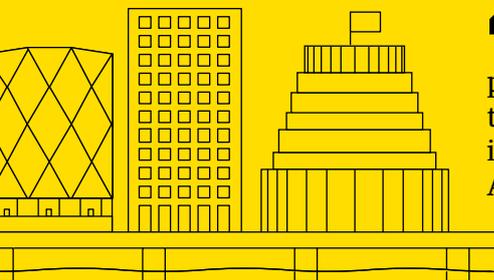
51%

of Wellingtonians felt that Wellington has become a worse place to live in the past 12 months. This is higher than the 34% average for other NZ cities.⁵



20th

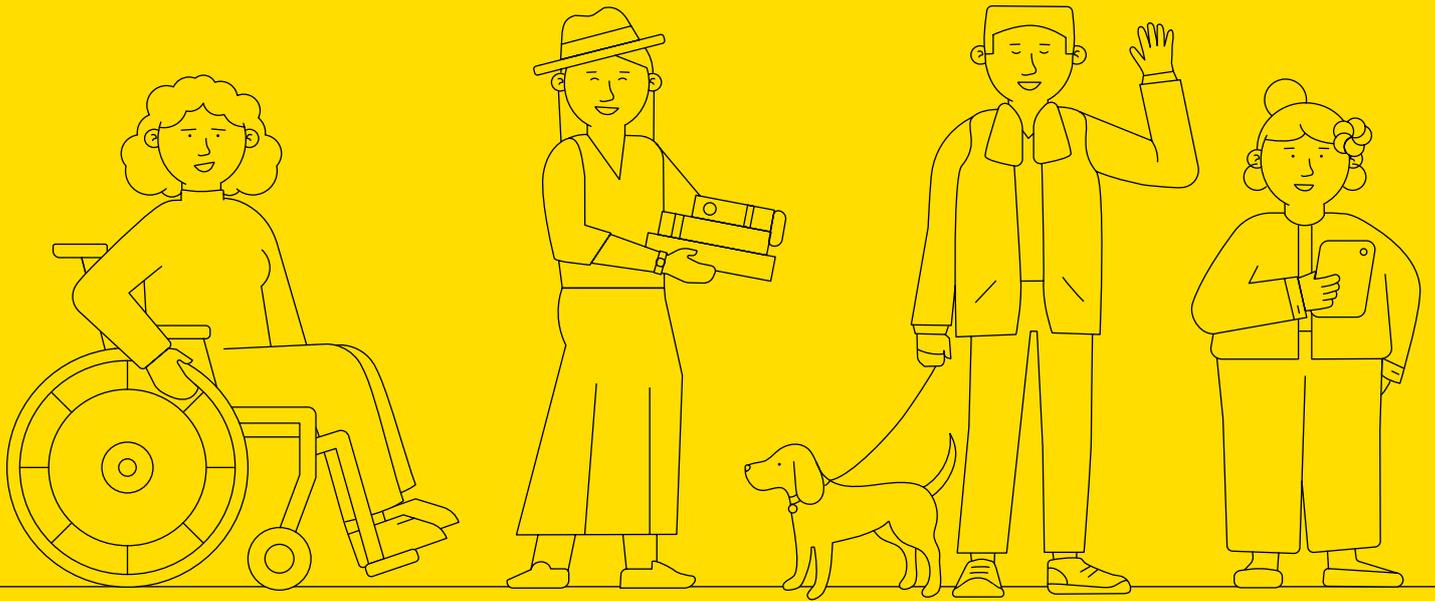
place in the international liveability ranking in the EIU Global Liveability Index in 2025.⁷ This is in line with Wellington's pre-COVID position. Auckland's 2025 ranking is joint 7th place.



N.B: All StatsNZ pages (eg Census 2023) accessed May 2025.

- 1 Population: Stats NZ
- 2 Population breakdowns: Census 2023
- 3 Ethnicity indicator: Census 2023
- 4 LGBTIQ+ indicator: Census 2023
- 5 Quality of Life Survey 2024
- 6 Quality of Life Survey 2024
- 7 The 20 Best Cities To Live In The World, According To A 2025 Report





48%

of Wellingtonians use public transport at least weekly - the highest in NZ (compared to 25% on average in similar cities).⁸

1.4%

decrease in the city's carbon emissions between 2020 and 2024 to 1,010 ktCO₂-e.¹⁰ The lowest carbon emissions per capita in Australasia.¹¹

67%

of Wellingtonians agreed that overall Wellington is a great place to live, work and play, down from 95% in 2019.¹²

30.6%

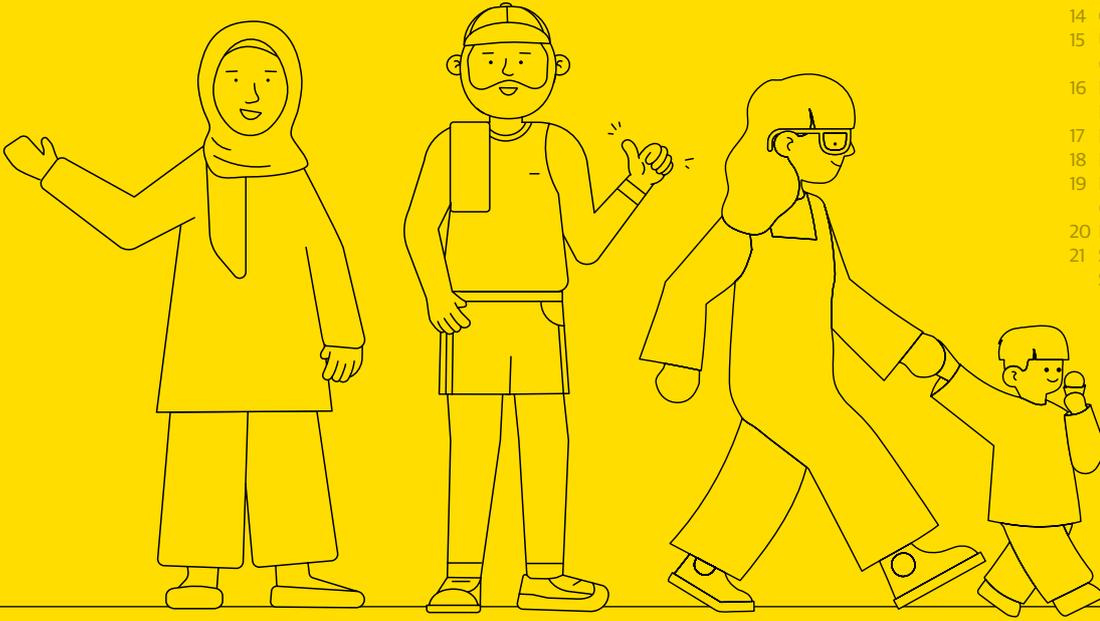
city-wide tree canopy cover - the highest in NZ, and higher than other comparable cities, but lacking in the central city.⁹

55%

more native bird encounters since 2011. Wellington is one of the only cities in the world where biodiversity is increasing.¹³

8 Quality of Life survey 2024
 9 University of Canterbury, 2021 (Tree Canopy Cover in Wellington City and Suburbs)

10 Te Atakura Update 2024
 11 Te Atakura Update 2024
 12 Residents Monitoring Survey 2025
 13 Bird Monitoring Report 2024



- 14 Quality of Life survey 2024
- 15 Unemployment rate: Infometrics (accessed 27/05/2025)
- 16 Industry structure of employment: Infometrics (accessed 27/05/2025)
- 17 Infometrics Creativity Index 2023
- 18 Income: Census 2023
- 19 Economic growth: Infometrics (accessed 27/05/2025)
- 20 Highest qualification: Census 2023
- 21 StatsNZ; Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission

16%

of Wellingtonians say they do not have enough money to meet everyday needs, with 37% stating they have just enough. While Wellington performs significantly better than other cities, this is a large increase from 2022 (12% do not have enough & 26% have just enough).¹⁴

4.8%

unemployment rate in Wellington (avg. annual rate to March 25). This has increased by two percentage points since March 2023, as compared to 1.6% increase nationally.¹⁵ The national unemployment rate is 4.9%.

56.3%

of Wellingtonians are employed in high-value (knowledge intensive) services in the year to March 2024, compared to 32.2% nationally.¹⁶

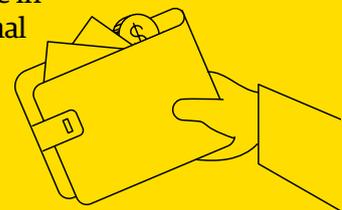


6.77%

of Wellingtonians work in the creative sector in 2023, the highest of any territorial authority.¹⁷

\$55,000

is the median personal total income in Wellington - higher than the national median (\$41,500).¹⁸



-1.6%

change in GDP in Wellington compared to a year earlier (year to March 2025). Higher than the national decline than national decline (-1.1%).¹⁹



48.6%

of Wellingtonians aged 15 and over have a bachelor's level degree or higher - compared to 27.1% nationally.²⁰

31%

of Wellington's workforce work in the public sector compared to 16% nationally.²¹





ELECTIONS 2023

02

Ngā wero matua - te whai māramatanga ki ngā ara kei te aroaro Key challenges - understanding the choices ahead

Kei tēnei wāhanga In this section

This section gives an overview of the Council's most significant challenges and opportunities, to inform candidates and voters for the 2025 election. There are four key, interdependent areas:

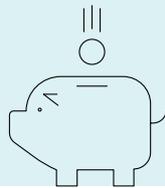
1. Rates affordability and financial constraints
2. Caring for infrastructure
3. Involving the community
4. Central government reform impacting local government

Wero 1: Tareka ā-utu rēti me ngā pēhi ahumoni

Challenge 1: Rates affordability and financial constraints

Te take The issue

The rising cost of living and limited financial resources makes it difficult to maintain services and infrastructure while preparing for the future.



28%

of Wellingtonians said they would be unable to pay an unexpected bill of \$2000 within a week without going into debt.²²

-1.3%

is Wellington's annual average change in consumer spending, year to March 2025. (National rate: -1.4%).²³

Wellingtonians are grappling with increasing living costs, global market uncertainties, and an unstable job market.

Businesses and developers are facing rising construction and insurance costs, stretching financial resources. This is impacting homeowners as well. Many residents and businesses have expressed that they cannot afford further significant rates rises.

Financial and insurance challenges

Councils across Aotearoa New Zealand have limited revenue streams and must rely primarily on rates and borrowing to fund infrastructure and services. This restricts the Council's ability to invest in the city, which in turn affects the ability to keep rates low while meeting community demands.

Over the last six years the Council has made unprecedented investment into our assets to ensure the city is resilient and prepared for the future. Much of this investment has been funded through borrowing, to share the significant cost among the people who will use the assets over time. The Council's increased debt needs to be serviced, primarily through rates.

Additionally, the Council cannot insure all of its assets: it has a \$1.8 billion to \$2.6 billion underinsurance gap. If there is a natural disaster, the city is exposed - it will not have sufficient funding to repair damage and rebuild. To manage this risk, the Council is reducing its capital programme over the next 10 years to increase debt headroom (the difference between what it chooses to borrow, and the maximum it is able to borrow) so it has space to borrow more should a disaster occur.

²² Quality of Life survey 2024

²³ Consumer spending: Infometrics (accessed 28/05/2025)

The Challenge
To balance
affordability
with community
expectations

Rising costs affecting Council infrastructure and services

Rising costs for construction and the delivery of new or replacement infrastructure has made maintaining or upgrading our assets, including roads and community facilities, more expensive. Operational costs for the delivery of existing services are also rising.

Community expectations and future planning needs

Cities need continuous investment and are never finished. There is strong, ongoing community demand for investment in improving our city and looking after our buildings and places. An ageing population, as well as changing community needs and expectations, requires the Council to adapt its services and facilities.

Meeting community demand comes with trade-offs on where the Council invests. While doing things smarter can present opportunities for cost savings, it is not possible to maintain and upgrade assets, continue to deliver all current services, and prepare the city for the future without increasing rates.

Te utu **The consequences**

Not getting the balance right between affordability and investment could have significant consequences:

- Cutting back on services, which could make Wellington a less attractive place to live.
- Increased financial hardship for residents, which may lead to people leaving Wellington or increased defaults on rates.
- Diminishing our financial resilience may limit choices for future communities.
- Increased financial hardship for businesses, which may lead to less development and investment in Wellington.

Te wero mō te Kaunihera e whai mai ana **The challenge for the next Council**

The new Council will need to make tough decisions to balance affordability with city-wide investment and community expectations.

Prioritisation and trade-offs

Elected members will need to make hard decisions about what to invest in, when, and where, to help manage rising costs.

The Council needs to be careful about its investment choices, balancing affordability and available resources with differing community priorities. This will require making evidence-based decisions through understanding community needs, ensuring decision-making aligns with strategies and policies, and considering all available options - such as delivering services differently, or better utilising existing assets to maximise the use of what we have.

Maintaining affordability

Elected members have various options:

- **Phasing work** - considering when the best time is to undertake work and the most efficient timing to achieve projects or desired outcomes, including delaying things or slowing them down.
- **Changing levels of service** - increasing or decreasing the quality, quantity or type of service we provide and/or delivering services in different ways.
- **Working regionally** - forming partnerships locally, nationally, and regionally to deliver efficiencies with infrastructure and service delivery.
- **Network approach** - taking a city-wide, data-driven approach to analysing infrastructure, transport and facility operations and maximising the benefits of facilities.
- **Diversifying income** - exploring alternative ways to generate new and varied sources of revenue (noting that many of the options here require decisions from central government).
- **Smarter climate measures** - minimising energy costs through the replacement of fossil fuels in buildings and vehicles, and minimising disaster response costs through adaptation works.
- **Digitalisation and automation** - harnessing the impact of more automation and the appropriate use of AI to deliver services efficiently and effectively.

Te kokenga ā-mohoa nei Progress so far

Balancing financial constraints with community expectations is a complex challenge.

Trade-offs in the 2024-34 Long-term Plan

To improve the Council's financial position, the maintaining affordability options outlined were considered when developing the 2024-2034 Long-term Plan and subsequent amendment.

The 10-year plan includes a reduced capital investment programme to increase our debt headroom (the gap between maximum borrowing limits and self-imposed borrowing limits) and give us the ability to borrow more to respond to a significant event. It also includes the creation of a small, diversified investment fund for disaster relief (funded by selling some ground leases), funding most asset renewals at 75 percent, and deferring some renewals over the next 10 years.

While this approach strengthens the financial position in the short term, and there is additional money set aside in the later years of the Long-term Plan for renewals, it could cause potential challenges with ageing assets in the future.

Taking a network approach

Te Awe Māpara, the Community Facilities Plan, is a key initiative aimed at enhancing quality, use, coordination, and value-for-money across Wellington's network of community facilities. By guiding the Council's provision and decision-making, the plan ensures facilities are working together to provide a diverse range of activities and experiences, with minimal duplication. It emphasises making evidence-based decisions to maximise the use and benefits of community facilities now and into the future. This approach aims to ensure that community facilities are thriving, accessible, and well-utilised.



Ngā patai hei whakaaro mō ngā pitomata kaitono

Key questions for potential candidates to consider

Efficient delivery

The Council has developed an underground asset register, a technology project designed to boost efficiency and effectiveness in managing our buried services such as water, power, gas, and telecommunications. This has been internationally recognised. Featuring an interactive digital map, this online register enhances underground asset management by improving safety, streamlining operations, and optimising infrastructure planning. This approach supports the effective use of resources, reducing redundancy and facilitating better coordination across various services.

E haere ake nei: whaitua o rēhia

Upcoming: Venues

The Council is conducting an options analysis of Wellington's venues to assess community needs, the condition of venues, and their resilience to earthquakes.

Some venues, including the Michael Fowler Centre and Opera House, are earthquake-prone, with a significant cost to strengthen. The analysis aims to ensure informed decision-making with comprehensive information and options.

Although the analysis is still being worked on, it will help the Council to understand which venues need improvement and which ones may be at the end of their useful life. We anticipate the need for smarter investment options. This decision-making process will need to balance trade-offs between Wellington's financial constraints and the diverse needs of different users of our venues.

How will you actively involve Wellingtonians in decisions that require trade-offs, ensuring their voices are heard and considered?

How will you ensure affordability measures are sustainable and equitable for all residents?

If you aim to reduce rates, what specific services or projects would you consider cutting or divesting to balance the budget?

How will you ensure good levels of service for the community while maintaining affordable rates?

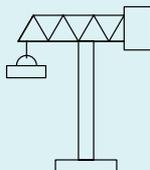
Wero 2: Te tiaki i ō tatou tūāhanga

Challenge 2: Caring for infrastructure

Te take The issue

Infrastructure is ageing and faces costly natural hazard risks.

Wellington City Council has around \$11.4 billion worth of assets, including pipes, roads, parks, pools, and buildings. Residents rely on this infrastructure as part of their everyday lives.



8 in 10

respondents stated they were either not at all confident (51%) or a little bit confident (29%) enough action was being taken to prepare Wellington for the effects of climate change.²⁵

169

public water leaks in Wellington City's backlog in May 2025, this has reduced from a backlog of 936 in January 2024.²⁴

45

Council-owned buildings have been identified as earthquake prone, as of March 2024.³⁰

Many of these assets are ageing, and may not meet changing community needs

Built decades ago, and much of it at a similar time, Wellington's infrastructure has suffered wear and tear over time and much of it is due for replacement or upgrade. Population growth, urban expansion, and seismic activity have further strained these ageing systems.

Infrastructure is intergenerational. Over time, older infrastructure may not deliver the same quality and access to services expected by the community. Conversely, service use patterns change over time, resulting in some assets now being underutilised.

Wellington City sustained on average 1.18 percent population growth per year.²⁶ Recent changes in planning rules have allowed for more medium-density housing, leading to population growth in the region, but the population in Wellington City has remained similar since 2018.

New population projections for the region are due to be released in July/August 2025 which will provide more information on how Wellington City is expected to grow into the future. Previous forecasts have indicated a steadily ageing population and smaller households as family sizes continue to decline, which is still expected.²⁷

The 2023 Household Disability Survey found that disability tends to be more common among older adults, with 35 percent of those over 60 experiencing disability, compared to 10 percent of children, 12 percent of adults aged 15-44, and 18 percent of those aged 45-59.²⁸

²⁴ Wellington Water monthly update, May 2025

²⁵ Climate Action Monitor 2024

²⁶ Stats NZ

²⁷ GWRC Demographic Forecasts

²⁸ Household Disability Survey 2023

As Wellington’s population continues to age, we can expect disability rates to increase. These shifting demographics highlight the importance of designing infrastructure and services that are inclusive, resilient, and responsive to the changing needs of our communities.

While continuous infrastructure maintenance and upgrades are crucial, budget constraints and competing priorities can result in deferred maintenance, exacerbating the deterioration of these vital assets.

Significant investment needed for earthquake-prone buildings

Wellington’s location on multiple fault lines and reclaimed land increases earthquake risks. Resilience to earthquakes poses a challenge for the Council and the community. Whānau and businesses face significant costs to ensure their apartments and buildings are safe in earthquakes. Additionally, earthquake risks drive up insurance premiums, affecting home affordability as well as business and developer confidence.

Older infrastructure often lacks modern seismic resilience, making it vulnerable, and does not meet modern construction standards. Recent assessments against National Building Standards (NBS) have found new at-risk buildings owned by the Council, bringing the number of buildings we own that are earthquake-prone up to 45.²⁹ Significant investment is needed to bring these facilities up to code should we continue to use them.

Changing climate is increasing flooding, slips and coastal erosion

The city’s proximity to the ocean presents challenges like the effects of sea level rise, storm surges, and potential tsunamis, straining community facilities and infrastructure, particularly in coastal areas. The hilly terrain, combined with extreme weather, leads to slips and flooding.

In winter 2022, there were more than 1000 slips in Wellington. In total, resilience projects such as slip remediation, traffic management, and necessary retaining wall and footpath renewals cost more than \$17 million in the 2022 to 2025 triennium. A further \$32 million is budgeted for resilience projects in the 2025-28 triennium.

Residents also face increasing costs to manage slips, flooding, retaining walls, and impacts from extreme weather. These issues also affect affordability, safety, and insurance for residents, homeowners, businesses, developers, and the Council.

Construction disruption impacts Wellington’s economic environment

Maintaining or repairing our buildings, pipes, and transport infrastructure often leads to construction disruptions. These disruptions can affect businesses, residents, and the overall vibrancy of the city. Construction disruption, changing streets and navigation, and the reduction of disability parking while works are underway can create additional barriers to accessing services for people with disabilities or those with specific access requirements.

Some businesses state they have closed due to inflated business costs and tough economic times, with some attributing the construction disruption as a key reason.

29 Wellington City Council internal source

Te utu The consequences

There could be significant consequences if we do not address our infrastructure challenges:

- Breakdowns in water supply, transport, and waste management, disrupting daily life and economic activities.
- Severe deterioration of, and higher future repair costs for, infrastructure assets. Emergency repairs are typically more expensive than planned maintenance.
- Significant safety risks in earthquake-prone buildings that lack modern resilience.
- More severe natural hazard event impacts, leading to environmental and health risks.
- Reduced overall quality of life for residents.
- Inability to invest in initiatives to make our city accessible to all our community.
- Eroded public trust in local government and its ability to manage and protect community assets. This can lead to decreased civic engagement and support for future initiatives.
- Inability to invest in transitioning our infrastructure to create less emissions could result in increased climate emissions.

The Challenge
Ensuring infrastructure is fit-for-purpose while ensuring efficient use of resources

Te wero mō te Kaunihera e whai mai ana The challenge for the next Council

Addressing these challenges while building resilience and ensuring efficient use of resources will require careful planning, investment, and community engagement. Wellington's infrastructure needs to be resilient and safe, to meet residents' needs, and to enable growth and prosperity. The new Council will make key infrastructure decisions through the development of the 2027-37 Long-term Plan Infrastructure Strategy.

Balancing current and future transport needs

Wellington's transport network upgrades are a complex challenge. The upgrades and direction set by elected members for our road, bus priority, cycleway, and pedestrian networks aims to improve mobility, accessibility, and resilience to extreme weather, to reduce emissions, and to accommodate city growth. However, they also spark significant debate among Wellingtonians.

Some advocate for reducing car parks to prioritise public transport and cycle lanes, promoting a more sustainable and efficient urban environment. Others are concerned about the change to our transport networks, including loss of parking spaces, and the impact on accessibility by car.

Individuals and organisations who engage with the Council during consultation often represent only a small proportion of the community. This means that decision-making and implementation must balance those views with the wider needs of the city. Additionally, transport upgrades often cause disruption during construction and require time for people to adapt to the new infrastructure. This period of change and adjustment can be frustrating for residents and businesses alike.

Responding to earthquake-prone buildings

As National Building Standards (NBS) evolve, new assessments are made, assets continue to age, the Council must make informed decisions that balance community needs, values, risk to life, and up-to-date costs. These actions reflect the substantial financial and logistical efforts needed to address seismic vulnerabilities.

Rising cost pressures further complicate these decisions, requiring ongoing discussions about acceptable risk levels for Wellingtonians. Decision-makers must weigh the immediate and long-term impacts of their choices, ensuring the safety and resilience of the community while managing limited resources.

Preparing for climate change

Having community conversations about climate change adaptation will inevitably lead to tough decisions about investment priorities and funding responsibilities.

The lack of clear national policy positions from successive governments further complicates these efforts, leaving the Council to navigate this with little guidance. Major projects, while necessary for adaptation and future needs, often carry significant carbon emissions and climate risks. High-quality information is needed to illustrate the wider costs and benefits of doing such work to ensure decisions are well informed.

49%

of Council-owned earthquake-prone buildings were resolved by strengthening (at a cost of \$325 million since 2010).

30%

of Council-owned earthquake-prone buildings were resolved by demolition or partial demolition (at a cost of \$40.6 million since 2010).³⁰

Te kokenga ā-mohoa nei Progress so far

Seismic strengthening

The Council has invested heavily in seismic strengthening to meet current NBS and to protect life in earthquakes. For example, the St James Theatre was strengthened and reopened in 2022. The Town Hall, City Gallery and Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library are being strengthened and upgraded. They will reopen within the next two years, revitalising Te Ngākau Civic Square and supporting increased vibrancy in the central city.

Future-focused operative District Plan

The District Plan enables more intensive use of limited land, such as in the central city, Johnsonville town centre, and within 10 minute walk of train stations and has detailed hazard mapping, including coastal sea-level rise and inundation flooding. This supports individuals, businesses, and developers to make informed decisions about where to buy, build, and rent. The new rules also restrict development in high-hazard areas.

³⁰ Internal Wellington City Council figures



Ngā patai hei whakaaro mō ngā pitomata kaitono

Key questions for potential candidates to consider

Slip management

The Council has done significant resilience work across the city in the 2022-2025 triennium, including new retaining walls, footpath renewals and upgrades, post-slip traffic management and maintenance, and emergency route retaining wall upgrades.

E haere ake nei: ngā kōrerorero āhuarangi

Upcoming: Climate adaptation conversations

Following engagement with key stakeholders in April 2025 as part of the Community Climate Adaptation Programme,³¹ the Council is launching a Local Climate Adaptation Pilot in 2025 to discuss options with neighbourhoods vulnerable to climate disruption.

Although central government has not set up a national approach to climate adaptation or clarified who will cover the costs, the rapidly changing insurance market and increasing extreme weather require us to start conversations with impacted communities now.

The pilot will result in a local climate adaptation options report, outlining suitable place-based options for increasing resilience in the short, medium, and long-term. The Council will be able to incorporate the insights from the report and future iterations into long-term planning and the Infrastructure Strategy.

Alongside these conversations, the Council has developed the Coastal Reserves Management Plan to guide the short-term adaptation response for Council coastal reserves and assets.

How would you ensure resilience planning and preparedness is integrated into all decision-making?

How would you prioritise infrastructure investments?

How would you ensure decisions are timely, transparent, and inclusive?

What steps would you take to ensure transport upgrades help all residents?

How would you partner with mana whenua and incorporate a Māori worldview in managing climate change?

³¹ Community Climate Adaptation Programme

Wero 3: Me whai wāhi mai te hapori

Challenge 3: Involving the community

Te take The issue

Satisfaction and trust in the Council's decision making is poor.



48%

of Wellingtonians disagree with the statement "I have confidence in Council decision making", while 32% agree. Average national disagreement is 38%.³⁸

32%

of Wellingtonians aged 18-29 agree the Council's decisions are in the best interest of the city, vs 7% aged 60+.³⁶

48%

of Wellingtonians expressed low trust in central and local government.³⁷

43%

of Wellingtonians say they do not trust the media, compared with 48% on average from other NZ cities.³⁹

Global and national polarisation

Over the past decade, many parts of the world have become increasingly polarised, with increasing numbers agreeing that division in their country has increased since the pandemic.³²

While Aotearoa New Zealand has been relatively sheltered from polarisation from a global perspective,³³ local politics have still been influenced by global trends.³⁴ For example, the rise of social media as a primary news source often amplifies conflict and misinformation.

The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified these dynamics, as seen in events such as the 2022 Parliamentary protest and occupation. People's trust in institutions such as the courts, media, and the Government has been declining across New Zealand, and Wellington is no exception.³⁵

Balancing differing views across Wellington

In Wellington, the Council has been making decisions to renew infrastructure, make buildings more resilient, and prepare the city for the future. These upgrades have sparked tension between communities advocating for these projects and change more broadly, and communities concerned about costs and issues such as the pace of change being made.

While the Council provides opportunities for people to provide feedback, and consult as part of its decision-making, many Wellingtonians are not engaged with Council decisions.

For those who do engage, if the Council does not make the change that is expected, it can result in some communities having a sense of being unheard and undervalued or the loud, and often minority, voices having greater weight in feedback received. Often, it's not that communities haven't been listened to, but rather they don't see their view reflected in decision-making or they missed the opportunity to provide feedback due to a lack of awareness of Council engagement.

32 Pew Research Center: Diversity and Division in Advanced Economies (2021); State of the nation – trends in New Zealand voters' polarisation from 2009–2018

33 Pew Research Center: Diversity and Division in Advanced Economies (2021); State of the nation – trends in New Zealand voters' polarisation from 2009–2018

34 LGNZ 2025 Remit 01

35 Quality of Life survey 2024; General Social Survey 2023 (StatsNZ)

36 Residents Monitoring Survey 2025

37 Quality of Life survey 2024

38 Quality of Life survey 2024

39 Quality of Life survey 2024

Low community satisfaction with decision-making

Along with other institutions and councils, our communities have low trust and satisfaction with the Council’s decision-making.

In the 2025 Residents Monitoring Survey, 36 percent of residents were satisfied with the overall performance of the Council in the past year, while 52 percent were dissatisfied.

Among those dissatisfied, the key drivers were:

- excessive spending/non-essential spending
- concern about Council priorities/essential infrastructure and services (ie not focused on the right things)
- concerns about elected officials (ie Councillor behaviour, infighting etc)
- dissatisfaction with cycle lane implementation
- concern about rates rises.

Low trust from central government

A Crown Observer was appointed by the Minister of Local Government to oversee the City Council’s 2024-2034 Long-term Plan amendment process. The Crown Observer has provided the organisation and elected members with written advice and observations on the functioning of the Council. He outlined in his March report that there were issues with perception, governance, and delegations, noting:

“The perceived performance and the underlying performance of the Council are likely to be different. But perceptions, shaped mostly by elected members performance in committee room/Council chamber, become reality.”⁴⁰



40 Crown Observer’s Monthly Report, Dec 2024

Low voter turnout

There is low voter turnout across local government in Aotearoa New Zealand. Low trust levels complicate decision-making, as councillors must navigate community scepticism and resistance.

45%

of enrolled voters in Wellington cast their ballots⁴¹ in the 2022 local election – higher than the national average (42%).⁴²

35%

of enrolled Māori roll voters cast their vote in the 2022 local election.⁴³

Engaging with all Wellingtonians

The Council invests significant time and resources into engaging with communities. Even with dedicated advisory groups, certain groups, including disabled people, hapori Māori (Māori living in Wellington not connected to the local iwi), ethnic communities, and young people, are less engaged with the Council.

Their voices are important for the Council to hear to understand how to shape the city to be inclusive. While there has been noteworthy progress in the relationship with mana whenua, effective engagement with hapori Māori is still low.

Te utu The consequences

While not always in the Council's control, not considering these challenges could have significant consequences for Wellington:

- When residents feel unheard, they may disengage, leading to reduced participation in civic activities and consultations. This means councillors would make decisions with less community input, with poorer information and insight likely leading to less effective decisions.
- Without efforts to bridge divides, polarisation could deepen, leading to more conflict and less cooperation among communities.
- Continued distrust in the Council and other institutions could result in even lower civic engagement, making it harder to implement policies and initiatives that benefit Wellingtonians.
- Low trust and engagement could lead to even lower voter turnout weakening the democratic process.

⁴¹ Voter turnout in the 2022 Wellington local election

⁴² Department of Internal Affairs: Local Authority Election Statistics 2022

⁴³ Voter turnout in the 2022 Wellington local election

The Challenge
Communication and engagement that supports better decision-making

Te wero mō te Kaunihera e whai mai ana The challenge for the next Council

Communication and engagement that supports better decision-making

Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering a more inclusive, engaged, and resilient community that supports social cohesion. There are many opportunities to achieve this.

Community feedback incorporated in decisions

A significant challenge for the Council and elected members is to communicate clearly why a particular decision has been made, including how community views have been considered alongside data and evidence.

Candidates will need to consider how they will engage the community in ways that encourage trust and involvement in decision-making, ensuring these processes are transparent and focused on achieving the best outcomes for current and future generations.

Transparent information

Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort to improve transparency and accessibility of information and data that informs decision-making.

Sharing success

The Crown Observer notes an issue for the Council is there is too much focus on negative outcomes or challenging projects, rather than the many great things the Council does: “The issue with both utility services and governance performance is that success is unseen, yet failure is manifest.”⁴⁴ This challenges the Council to consider how we can communicate honestly about the challenges we face, while also celebrating successes and the positive impacts of Council activities more effectively.

Focus long-term

The Council has a huge breadth of influence on Wellingtonians and their daily lives. It is challenging to engage with the community on every decision, and to ensure people understand which are the most significant decisions. The Crown Observer recommends that the Council takes a longer-term view, manages work volume, and collaborates productively.⁴⁵ There is an opportunity for the Council to prioritise key long-term issues and to focus on engaging with Wellingtonians on those key things.

Elected member relationships

Elected members do not get to choose who else sits with them around the Council table. There will always be disagreements and differing views held by elected members. This encourages debate and brings different perspectives.

However, how elected members choose to collaborate with each other, work with the wider region, talk about the Council in the media, and work with Council staff, has a substantial impact on community trust and confidence. The most effective political behaviour is to take a collaborative approach, both for seeing progress in Wellington, and for building trust and confidence with Wellingtonians,⁴⁶ and with those who chose to move or invest in our city.

⁴⁴ Crown Observer Further Observations on Wellington City Council, Mar. 25

⁴⁵ Crown Observer’s Interim Report, Feb 2025

⁴⁶ McKay, Alicia 2024 Local Legends: How to make a difference in local government, pg 92

Te kokenga ā-mohoa nei Progress so far

Transparent information

The Council is committed to being extremely open with decision-making.

- Briefings and committee meetings are open to the public and streamed online. The public can only be excluded when there is a good reason that meets legal requirements and is supported by a majority of elected members.
- The Council has introduced new website functionality that makes it easier to access and understand Council decisions. This includes detailed voting records and meeting data, and a user-friendly search function that directs users to specific reports and decisions, removing the need to navigate lengthy documents.
- The *Council Meeting Decision Register* is a table of all decisions made by the Council and its committees, including progress on implementation.

We will continuously seek to improve these approaches overtime.

The Council has introduced new website functionality that makes it easier to access and understand Council decisions.

Developing the 2024-34 Long-term Plan

To ensure the needs and aspirations of the community were understood and reflected, the Council took an inclusive engagement approach for the 2024-34 LTP, which included:

- Various engagement events to gather input from different community groups over two years.
- Clear information about the LTP through various channels, including social media, newsletters, and the Council website.
- Online surveys to share views on specific aspects of the LTP.
- Workshops where community members could discuss their concerns and ideas directly with Council representatives.
- Special efforts to involve youth, hapori Māori and diverse communities in the engagement process.
- The piloting of a deliberative democracy method for community discussion called a Citizens' Assembly. This brought a representative sample of Wellingtonians together, tasked with balancing what the Wellington City Council could deliver based on available resources, in a way that was fair to everyone.



Ngā patai hei whakaaro mō ngā pitomata kaitono

Key questions for potential candidates to consider

Advisory groups review

The Council reviewed the Council's five advisory groups in 2024. The aim was to find a model that would lift and integrate diverse community voices into strategic decision-making in a transparent, joined-up way. The agreed new model includes five identity-based advisory groups: disability community, youth, takatāpui and rainbow, ethnic communities and Pacific. The groups will meet as a combined strategic advisory panel to better incorporate their differing views, to provide clear, strategic advice to the Council on upcoming decisions.

E haere ake nei: Whakarauora tāone

Upcoming: City revitalisation

There are many revitalisation projects underway in the central city, including transport upgrades, safety and wellbeing improvements, and seismic upgrades of buildings such as the Town Hall and Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library. The upcoming triennium is an opportunity for the Council to bring these different strands together as part of a clear story of city revitalisation.

While the Council already consults on any changes, part of this approach is increased early engagement with residents and businesses when designing street and suburban upgrades. The Council will focus on effectively communicating upcoming work, including construction disruptions, milestones, and successes. Elected members will have the opportunity to support communication and engagement with businesses and residents about upcoming changes and opportunities to contribute to projects in the city.

How would you ensure that your decision-making is transparent and involves community input?

What specific actions would you take to improve communication between the Council and residents?

How would you ensure you are listening to diverse community groups in planning and decision-making processes?

What would you do to foster a sense of belonging and trust among residents?

Wero 4: Te panga o ngā whakahounga kāwanatanga matua ki ngā kāwanatanga ā-rohe

Challenge 4: Central government reform impacting local government

Te take The issue

Uncertainty and high resource requirements to respond well to central government reforms

Uncertain direction due to reform

Recent reforms include changes to the Resource Management Act, introduction of the Local Water Done Well legislation, and the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill.

There are also signals about upcoming reforms to the Local Government Act to remove the four well-beings (social, cultural, environmental and economic) from the legislation, with focus on core services. The Government has also indicated it plans to reform the Waste Levy Act, and has made changes in the transport sector, including new Roads of National Significance and reduced funding for footpaths, cycle lanes, and public transport.

Each new government introduces changes that may conflict with those of previous governments, affecting local government operations, which has a direct impact on the lives of New Zealanders. This can create inefficiencies and be resource intensive.

While reform creates uncertainty for residents and the Council, it can make it difficult to set priorities and budgets without knowing whether they will be possible under new or altered legislation, or when decisions will be made. However, these changes can have positive impacts and provide opportunities to consider new ways of delivering better for residents. This requires elected members to engage with upcoming reform and understand their roles and possible influence.



Changing role of local government

The role of local government is evolving due to external conditions and shifting priorities from central government. While these changes often require more resources to respond, they also offer opportunities for growth and improvement. As a sector, local government faces challenges, and the reforms provide pathways to discuss these with central government and find a better way forward.

Affordability challenges for councils

Over the past 20 years, numerous reports⁴⁷ have highlighted the affordability challenges facing councils across New Zealand. Discussions to address this problem would be welcome, including reorganisation, amalgamation for efficiency, and financial measures such as central government paying rates on Crown property and reducing unfunded mandates. It is likely regional conversations about collaboration will take place in the 2025-2028 triennium.

⁴⁷ Treasury New Zealand: Local government funding and financing – Productivity Commission inquiry material 2018 – 2019 Department of Internal Affairs: Future for Local Government Review

Te utu The consequences

While not always under the Council’s control, these factors can disrupt local government operations and make it difficult to plan and execute long-term strategies effectively:

- The changing role of local government becomes harder to manage with shifting central government priorities.
- Low community engagement and trust can lead to ineffective responses to legislative changes and distract from solving core problems.
- Without addressing affordability challenges, local government may struggle to manage resources efficiently. This could result in financial constraints that hinder the ability to continue providing services at existing levels.
- Regional collaboration discussions in the 2025–2028 triennium may be necessary but could be delayed or ineffective without proactive measures such as those outlined in the next section.
- Constant reforms from central government often require more resources and can create conflicting priorities.

Te wero mō te Kaunihera e whai mai ana The challenge for the next Council

Responding to reform

The Council must balance the changing priorities of central government with regional and local issues and opportunities. Deciding where to prioritise and how to respond to the changing legislative environment is often based on political ideology and not always clear-cut.

The Council needs to tailor its responses to central government to be about the needs of Wellington’s communities and the impacts of reform, but often there is insufficient time to fully engage Wellingtonians and other regional councils, before needing to respond.

Regional collaboration

The Council’s staff and elected members, work collaboratively across the wider Wellington region, with mana whenua, district councils, city councils, and Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC). The Mayor engages with other mayors, such as through the Mayoral Forum, and sits on regional governance groups, including the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee.

The Challenge
Working smarter
across the region
for residents

Stronger regional collaboration, and taking a collective response to reform, presents opportunities to work smarter and do better for residents, but also creates ongoing uncertainty for the Council. While there are many examples of the region working together effectively, such as in waste minimisation, at times, councils across the region have different priorities.

In the upcoming triennium, there will be opportunities for all the region's councils to consider how we work better together and create efficiencies. Elected members need to balance having these strategic regional conversations with the pressing needs and concerns of Wellington City residents.

Stronger regional collaboration, and taking a collective response to reform, presents opportunities to work smarter and do better for residents, but also creates ongoing uncertainty for the Council.

Te kokenga ā-mohoa nei Progress so far

Engagement with ministers

It is important that the Mayor and Councillors continue to advocate and engage with local Members of Parliament in Wellington and ministers in Cabinet. Wellington City Council is a member of Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), who “champion, connect and support local government as councils and communities who work together”. LGNZ advocates and connects with central government and ministers on behalf of local government, meaning that councils can provide a united view on local government issues.

Submissions

The Council will continue to regularly make submissions on central government legislation. Our aim in doing so is to ensure the needs and perspectives of Wellingtonians are considered before legislation is adopted.

E haere ake nei: Whakahoutanga wai Upcoming: Water reform

Water services are a huge challenge for the Council, with ageing infrastructure and management challenges alongside changing legislation.

Wellingtonians and the Council have been focused on water in recent years, with investment increased in the 2021–31 LTP and then increased again to \$1.8 billion in the 2024–34 LTP. The city is starting to see the positive impact of the increased investment, with a reduction in the number of leaks across the city and no water shortages during the 2024/25 summer.

Central government’s Local Water Done Well reforms require significant changes to how water services are delivered, and public consultation on the changes. The Council consulted on three options for the delivery of our three waters network (drinking, waste and stormwater) in April 2025. Following consultation, the Council agreed to jointly establish and co-own a new multi-Council-owned water organisation that will own and run drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater assets/networks. In anticipation of this transition, all water-related costs and assets have been removed from Council finances as part of the Long-Term Plan Amendment from 1 July 2026. The exception to this is Te Whare Wai Para Nuku, the Moa Point sludge minimisation facility due to be completed in 2026/27, currently being built by the Council.





Ngā patai hei whakaaro mō ngā pitomata kaitono

Key questions for potential candidates to consider

The other co-owning councils of the water organisation will be Upper Hutt, Hutt City, Porirua City, and Greater Wellington Regional Council and together the five councils will develop a joint Water Services Delivery Plan that will be submitted to the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) by 3 September 2025 (as is statutorily required). Councils will then give effect to the plan, with the new organisation operational by 1 July 2026.

In December 2025, the Council will be asked to ratify the company constitution and shareholders' agreement for 'Metro Water.' Following the transfer of ownership of water assets to the new water organisation:

- The 2025-2028 Council will have less ongoing direct influence over water services.
- Over time water services will be paid for directly by the user. These charges will be via a separate bill, rather than through Wellington City Council rates invoices.
- The new Council will need to consider how rates will change, given the Council will no longer fund water services.

While legislation provides protection to ensure water infrastructure stays in public ownership, the Local Water Done Well legislation is still before the House - meaning there is uncertainty in relation to the enduring legislative requirements. The Council's role in three waters management will significantly reduce. Elected members will have a role to help communicate these changes, risks, and opportunities to Wellingtonians.

How would you collaborate with central government to ensure that the needs and wishes of Wellingtonians are prioritised in legislation?

How would you ensure that Wellington's voice is effectively represented in regional collaborations?

How would you ensure that the new water entity runs efficiently with the other councils, and meets the needs of Wellington residents?



LOCAL ELECTIONS

03

E pā ana ki a Pōneke More about Wellington City Council



Kei tēnei wāhanga In this section

This section outlines the Council organisation in more detail: our role and governance structure, our partnership with mana whenua, and our current strategic direction.

Tā te Kaunihera

The Council's role

The Council's role is set out in the Local Government Act 2002:

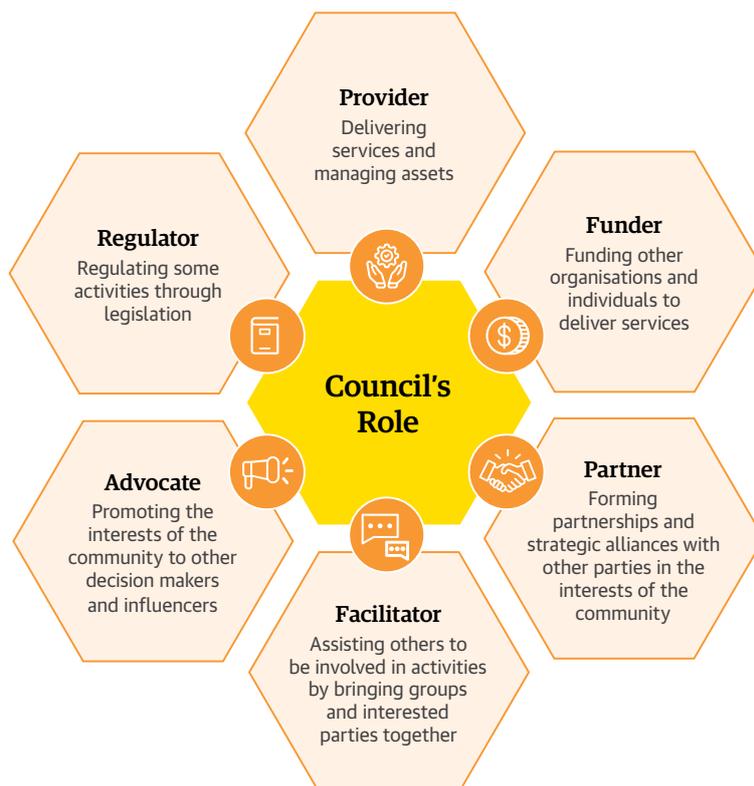
- To enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities.
- To promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future.

The work of the Council includes:

- Planning land use and managing resources.
- Maintaining and developing local infrastructure, like roads, water supply, wastewater, stormwater, and waste management.
- Managing public amenities, such as parks, libraries, swimming pools, and community centres.
- Developing and enforcing bylaws for public health and safety.

The Council can have different roles in delivering services:

- The Council can be a direct provider, partner, funder, or facilitator, or advocate.
- It also functions as a regulator, ensuring local laws and regulations are followed to maintain order and safety within the community.
- Sometimes, the Council acts as an advocate or facilitator when it's not best placed to address an issue directly.



Te mahi tahi ki ngā mana whenua

Partnering with mana whenua

In April 2022, Wellington City Council signed the Tākai Here partnership with:

- Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira,
- Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa o Te Ūpoko o te Ika, and
- Taranaki Whānui ki Te Ūpoko o te Ika.

This agreement commits to an ongoing partnership through open conversations that respect both te ao Māori and western world views.

Each year, we set priorities for collaboration to improve Māori outcomes across the Council's activities.

The Council included a new commitment in the 2024-34 Long-term Plan:⁴⁸

"We're committed to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and strong partnerships with mana whenua. Tākai Here and Te Tiriti o Waitangi lay the foundation for everything the Council does."

Te whakatinanatanga o Tākai Here

Tākai Here in practice

The Council has been embedding the Tākai Here partnership throughout the organisation, improving understanding of how and when to work with Tākai Here partners, and ensuring that input and collaboration are prioritised in the most important, relevant, and impactful areas.



⁴⁸ Long-term Plan 2024-34 - Plans, policies and bylaws - Wellington City Council

The outcomes and priorities outlined in the **Tūpiki Ora Māori Strategy** provide a foundation to understand the priorities for Tākai Here partners. Tūpiki Ora has four ngā pae hekenka (priority waypoints) that the Council is progressing.

Examples of recent outputs to support Tūpiki Ora include:

- Events that celebrate te ao Māori, including Te Hui Ahurei Reo Māori - a public event celebrating Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori, Te Rā o Waitangi and Matariki Puanga.
- Correction of street names, such as Hōniana Te Puni St.
- Bilingual information, such as the new bilingual parking meters.
- Establishing a kai sovereignty rōpū (network) to enable the aspirations of Māori to guide, grow and share localised food systems.

More information is available in Tūpiki Ora reports.⁴⁹

65%

of Wellingtonians agree the Council is taking an active role in revitalising te reo Māori in the city (up from 51%).

71%

of Wellingtonians agree Māori culture and te reo is recognised in the city (up from 58% in 2022).

75%

of Wellingtonians agree Māori culture and te reo is visible at the Council's community facilities.⁵⁰

Ngā wero me ngā huarahi hei whai Challenges and opportunities

Working in partnership with Tākai Here partners

While relationships with mana whenua partners have strengthened since Tākai Here was signed, there are opportunities for the Council to better hold itself to account on its commitment and responsibility to the partnership, and in its decisions and processes. This accountability requires elected members and the organisation to be a valued partner with integrity, to be honest and open, and respectful and inclusive in matters that are important to iwi partners.

Monitoring and reporting

Engagement with Tākai Here has been strengthened through enhanced monitoring and reporting, enabling us to track progress and effectively communicate the strategy's impact with our partners and the public. A focus on continuous improvement opens opportunities to explore better ways to partner and jointly solve problems with our partners and others.

⁴⁹ Tūpiki Ora Māori Strategy - Plans, policies and bylaws - Wellington City Council

⁵⁰ All from Wellington City Council's Residents Monitoring Survey

Connecting with hapori Māori (Māori communities)

Many Māori whānau living in Wellington are not from local iwi and hapū, which means the Council needs to also connect with hapori Māori in collaboration with Tākai Here partners. Perspectives on the Council's efforts to revitalise Māori cultural heritage and te reo Māori may differ between Māori and non-Māori.

Small sub-samples from existing surveys suggest that Māori respondents may have a more critical view of the Council's contributions. This presents an opportunity for the Council and elected members to reflect on and improve their engagement with hapori Māori.

Elected members are supported to be effective Tākai Here partners through:

- Engaging in cultural practices to be welcomed as new elected members.
- Ongoing support and opportunities for relationship building with Tākai Here partners.
- Attending induction sessions on Tākai Here and Tūpiki Ora.
- Access to Local Government New Zealand's Ākonga resources and learning platform with modules on Council Māori relations.
- Professional development opportunities.



Anga mana urungi

Governance structure

We aim to ensure that decision-making processes involve the community and mana whenua.

Decisions should be evidence-based, transparent, and focused on achieving the best outcomes for current and future generations with the best information available.

Elected members

Those chosen to be on the Council listen to community views and use information from advice, research, and monitoring data to make decisions for current and future generations.

A Councillor, although elected to represent a specific ward, must act in the best interest of Wellington City as a whole.

Elected member roles include:

- Representing the community and ensuring their needs and aspirations are reflected in decisions.
- Employing the Chief Executive, who has the responsibility to hire managers and staff.
- Setting strategic direction, policies, and plans.
- Building strong relationships with mana whenua.
- Approving the overall budgets and making funding decisions for city services and facilities.
- Listening to the community, considering staff advice, and weighing trade-offs. This often involves a large amount of reading and debate.

In 2024, Wellington City Council agreed to retain our Māori ward, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Ward. Due to legislation, there will be a Māori Ward poll as part of voting for the 2025 local election. The poll will decide if the Māori ward continues in Pōneke from the 2028 election onwards. Alongside the poll vote, voters on the Māori roll will also elect the Te Whanganui-a-Tara Māori ward Councillor for the 2025-2028 triennium.

Mana whenua

Two mana whenua representatives, known as Pouwiwi, from our mana whenua partners Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o te Ika and Ngāti Toa Rangatira, are appointed to all Council committees and subcommittees with full voting rights, except for the CEO Performance Review Committee. They participate in decision-making and underpin the partnership-based approach that reflects our Tākai Here agreement.

Pouwiwi can attend full Council meetings, ask questions, and debate but cannot vote or move amendments as they are not elected members.

Committees

The Council does not have statutory committees. Each new Council decides the committee structure and delegations for the upcoming triennium.

There are standing regional committees such as the Regional Land Transport Committee, Regional Leadership Committee, and Regional Waste Management and Minimisation Committee where the Mayor or Mayor's delegate represents the Council.

Council-controlled organisations

The Council has eight Council-controlled organisations (CCOs) that manage some facilities and deliver services for residents and visitors. They are each governed by a Board appointed by the Council. The Council monitors the performance of CCOs.

The organisation

The Mayor and Councillors delegate the management and delivery of the Council's services to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is the sole employee of the elected Council and is the employer of all other staff.

Council staff provide support and advice to the Council. Together with partners, staff implement Council decisions and policies and manage day-to-day operations to deliver community infrastructure and services.

Governance

Strategic direction and oversight, ensuring accountability to community

Wellington City Council Governing Body

Elected. City-wide decisions

- Mayor elected by all the city's voters
- 15 councillors representing six wards

Not elected:

- two Pouwiwi, iwi representatives on committees

Community Boards

Elected. Local decisions

- Tawa
- Mākara-Ōhāriu

Council-controlled organisations boards

Appointed by the Council



Management

Execute plans and manage day to day activities

Wellington City Council – Organisation

The Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team cover the following functions:

- Strategy and Finance
- People and Culture
- Māori
- Economic and Engagement
- Planning
- Infrastructure
- Customer and Community

1900+ staff deliver many services and facilities, from libraries and museums to street maintenance and the landfill.

Council-controlled organisations

- Wheako Pōneke Experience Wellington
- Wellington Water
- Wellington Cable Car
- WellingtonNZ
- Te Nukua Wellington Zoo
- Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne
- Basin Reserve
- Sky Stadium*

*note, the Stadium is a Trust, not a CCO

Te ahunga ā-rautaki

Strategic direction

Strategic direction is set by the Council through the Long-term Plan (LTP)

Each new Council, in partnership with the community, reviews and sets the strategic direction for Wellington City. This includes the financial and infrastructure strategies, which are mandated in the Local Government Act.

The strategic direction supports the Council's decision-making on the overarching budget and levels of service. Together, the strategic direction, levels of service, and budget form the LTP. The plan drives the Council's work programme and the decisions that relate to it.

A new LTP must be developed every three years and cover a period of 10 years.

Following substantial public consultation and engagement, the 2022-2025 Council agreed the current strategic direction as part of the **2024-34 LTP**, outlined in the graphic here.

Our vision

Pōneke, te wāhi auaha e whitawhita ai ōna tāngata me tōna taiao. Pōneke, the creative capital where people and nature thrive.

Our commitment

We're committed to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and strong partnerships with mana whenua. Tākai Here and Te Tiriti o Waitangi lay the foundation for everything the Council does.





04

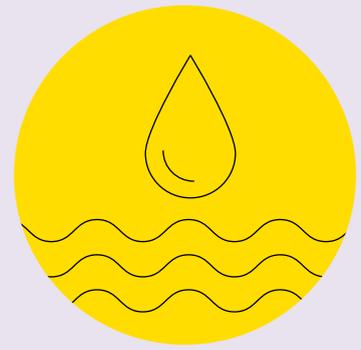
Nga mahi me ngā Kaupapa matua ā Te Kaunihera Council activities and major projects

Kei tēnei wāhanga In this section

This section includes an overview of the Council's activities, including what we do, and the opportunities and challenges upcoming in the next triennium. Each activity also outlines the major projects in that area.

TE PŌTITANGA Ā-ROHE
25

Wai Water



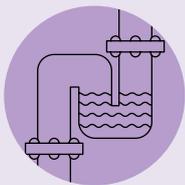
Water is about the health and safety, storage and transport of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater.

It is also about how these services interact with and influence the health of the city’s streams, awa (rivers) and moana (ocean).



The drinking water network includes

65 reservoirs **34** pumping stations **156** fixtures



1200km
of pipes

80 million cubic-metres of run-off is carried through our 670 kilometre stormwater pipe network each year, and through gutters and drains to the harbour, coastal waters, and piped streams.

30 million cubic-metres of wastewater is carried through 1000 kilometres of pipes a year via 64 pump stations and three treatment plants.

Ā mātou mahi What we do

The way water services are delivered is changing in response to the Government’s Local Water Done Well legislation. Wellington City Council has agreed to set up a new multi-council-owned organisation to deliver water services. The proposed co-owning councils are Upper Hutt, Hutt City, Porirua City and Greater Wellington Regional Council. The five councils along with our two mana whenua partners will form a partnership to jointly direct and govern the new entity.

Under legislation, elected members or Council staff are not allowed to be Board members of water council-controlled organisations. Legislation also provides protection to ensure water infrastructure stays in public ownership.

The changes mean the Council will transfer all water revenue, expenses, debt, and assets to the new water organisation. Therefore, from July 2026, Council rates will no longer fund water services. Over time the new organisation will bill a separate water charge to water customers. This has been reflected in Council budgets and forecast financial information.

Wellington City Council will continue to have roles and responsibilities relating to how activities on land impact the health of streams, rivers, and the ocean. These include:

- regulating land infrastructure and development through the District Plan.
- supporting Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne to improve the water quality of the Kaiwharawhara Stream and dam.
- managing water run-off to prevent flooding and minimise environmental impacts.

Ngā wero me ngā huarahi hei whai Challenges and opportunities

Transition to new water entity

The new water organisation is intended to be operational by 1 July 2026. Before then, a transition plan, outlined in the Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) will be agreed by Council in August 2025, prior to the election. The agreed WSDP must be submitted to the Government by the statutory deadline of 3 September 2025.

Minimise impact on freshwater

The Council will continue to work with Tākai Here partners to consider and make decisions around how our activities and the activities we regulate on land impact the health of streams, rivers, and the ocean. Opportunities include:

- community education and awareness raising alongside Greater Wellington Regional Council.
- enabling community groups to support stream, river, and ocean health with planting and education projects.

Mahere pūtea Budget

Budgeted gross expenditure⁵¹ per person per week for this activity



\$10.89⁵²

per person per week for drinking water. Total of \$119 million opex per year.



\$10.95⁵³

per person per week for wastewater. Total of \$120 million opex per year.



\$5.16⁵⁴

per person per week for stormwater. Total of \$56 million opex per year.

51 This is the indicative gross operating expenditure per person for the activity. It does not include any fees or other income that might offset the costs.

52 The cost of drinking water will no longer come from council rates from July 2026.

53 This cost of wastewater will no longer come from council rates from July 2026.

54 This cost of stormwater will no longer come from council rates from July 2026.

Ngā kaupapa matua Major projects⁵⁵

Major Project	Description	Why it's needed	Time	Cost
Te Whare Wai Para Nuku Sludge Minimisation Facility	<p>Te Whare Wai Para Nuku is being built at Moa Point. This plant will turn sludge (a by-product of wastewater treatment) into a treated biosolid that can be reused.</p> <p>The facility is funded by a specific levy and will continue to be billed through Wellington City Council rates. Once construction is complete, the asset will be transferred to the new water services entity.</p>	The sludge minimisation facility will significantly improve the treatment and disposal of sludge, hugely reducing the volume of waste and the Council's emissions, and separating sludge disposal from the landfill. It is a significant step in moving Wellington to a circular economy.	2023–2027	\$442m ⁵⁶
Setting up new water entity	The details of this will be outlined in the WSDP agreed by the Council in August 2025 and will be submitted to the Government by 3 September 2025.	The Council will fund a proportionate share of establishment costs following the May 2025 decision to move to a new multi-council-owned three waters organisation.	2025–2026	\$8m opex

⁵⁵ Unless otherwise stated, this table includes the capital expenditure for the period of the 2024–34 Amended LTP

⁵⁶ This amount includes expenditure since the 2022/23 financial year

Tūnuku Transport



A well-functioning transport network is critical to the city's economy and people's quality of life.

An efficient, safe, and connected transport network provides people with choices on how to get where they need to go.

The Council currently has a strategic priority to transform our transport system to move more people with fewer vehicles. This includes making walking and riding a bike a safe and attractive option for those able to make the change, giving people choices for travelling without cars, and at the same time reducing transport emissions and congestion.

Ā mātou mahi What we do

This activity is responsible for:

- Building and maintaining roads and other transport services, such as parking, bus stops, and cycle lanes, which provide different ways for people and goods to move around.
- Maintaining transport infrastructure such as retaining walls, bridges, and tunnels.
- Clearing slips and debris to ensure the transport network can continue to function in emergencies and following adverse weather events. State highways in the city are managed by New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA).
- Managing bus lanes and public bus stops.

It is important to note that Wellington City Council does not provide public transport services. Public transport is provided by Greater Wellington Regional Council under the Metlink brand.

The Council maintains and upgrades:



4

Tunnels



59

Bridges



8km

Bus lanes



64km

Bike lanes

699km

Road pavements

1311

Public bus stops

984km

Footpaths and accessways

3553

Retaining walls

Ngā wero me ngā huarahi hei whai Challenges and opportunities

Delivering a transport network that is accessible and fit for the future while managing existing demands is challenging. Given Wellington's topography and narrow, hilly streets, transport decisions require trade-offs between different uses and users. This leads to difficult and often contentious decisions with strong, conflicting views across communities.

Our transport planning and delivery is closely tied to central government decision-making. This includes legislative changes and shifts in New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) funding priorities. This presents both challenges and opportunities for transport planning.

Roads of National Significance

Following the discontinuation of Let's Get Wellington Moving, the Government has identified two Roads of National Significance in Wellington City:

- State Highway 1 Second Mt Victoria Tunnel and Basin Reserve upgrade (including a parallel Terrace Tunnel), and
- the Petone to Grenada Link Road.

As the Government makes decisions, the Council will look to collaborate with the Government and GWRC to consider how these roads will integrate with the rest of the city's transport network, including bus priority lanes and urban development opportunities.

Transport funding gaps

Due to national funding constraints, the 2024-27 National Land Transport Plan (NLTP) allocation was \$68.2 million less than expected. The shortfall includes \$25.5 million in low-cost low-risk projects, and \$37.1 million for improvement projects.

The 2024-34 LTP Amendment included changes to the capital programme. The transport changes included adjusting the budgets for the projects that did not receive NLTP funding to account for the lost revenue.

Minimising construction disruption

Communities and businesses often complain about the disruption caused by construction projects on our transport network.

The Council will need to be mindful of the short and long-term impacts of transport work and continue to undertake regular communication with affected businesses and residents.

It will also need to implement measures to help lessen disruptions and continue to explore ways to minimise the loss of foot traffic, and the noise and dust occurring during construction. This is discussed further in the Economic and cultural wellbeing section.

Improving accessibility and road safety

Being able to get around Pōneke safely is essential for all residents. The disabled community consistently tells us that accessible transport networks are a priority. Accessibility and safety of transport networks are interconnected.

When making transport network decisions, the Council needs to consider the diverse needs of residents, including ensuring footpaths are free from clutter, pedestrian crossings are set up for people who are blind or have low vision, and bus stops are accessible for wheelchair users.

Over the past decade, road crashes on Wellington streets resulted in 34 deaths and nearly 4000 injuries (including 644 serious injuries) with a social cost of \$2.26 billion.⁵⁷

Our 2024 transport survey about road safety found that residents who frequently walk, bike, or use public transport prioritise road safety over travel time. They support lower speed limits and perceive greater safety concerns compared to those who frequently travel by private vehicle.

Opportunities to improve road accessibility and safety outcomes include improved mobility parking, speed limit changes, accessible wayfinding and signage, and investment in safe and accessible footpaths and cycling facilities.



⁵⁷ <https://wellington.govt.nz/parking-roads-and-transport/transport/transport-insights/transport-data-and-reports/injuries-from-road-crashes-in-wellington-city>

Reducing traffic congestion

The estimated annual cost of congestion is \$10 million for travel within the city, and \$20 million for travel to and from Wellington city via State Highway 1 and 2.⁵⁸ Signalled time of use (congestion) charging legislation will provide a tool for reducing traffic congestion during weekday morning and afternoon rush hours in the upcoming years in support of this government legislation change.

Reducing transport emissions

On-road transport is the largest contributor to the city’s total gross carbon emissions at 33 percent.⁵⁹ Transport is also the largest contributor to air pollution-related health impacts in the city, and exposure to air pollution was estimated to cause 60 premature deaths and \$280 million in social costs in 2019.⁶⁰ Transport offers the biggest opportunity for the city to reduce emissions and improve air quality.

Wellington boasts significantly higher rates of walking, cycling, and public transport usage as the main mode of transport to get to work compared to other New Zealand cities.

While public transport usage has been high for decades due to the compact nature of the city, the growth in active modes is testament to our commitment to reducing emissions, alleviating congestion, and making these modes safer.

Mahere pūtea Budget

Budgeted gross expenditure⁶² per person per week for this activity



\$12.25

per person per week for transport. Total of \$134 million opex per year.



\$2.07

per person per week for parking. Total of \$23 million opex per year (note the actual cost is less, as income received from parking charges is variable and has not been removed from the figure).



20%

of people use public transport to go to work as their main mode of transport, more than double Auckland. (8.6%)

4.1%

of people cycle to work as their main mode of transport, higher than 1% in Auckland.

18.7%

of people said they work at home when asked about their main mode of transport, similar to 17.2% in Auckland.⁶¹

58 Estimated congestion cost has been updated based on the Ministry of Transport’s working paper “Domestic Transport Costs and Charges Study, Working Paper D2, Road Congestion Costs” (2023), in collaboration with Wellington Transport Analytics Unit.

59 Greater Wellington Region GHG Emissions Inventory 2024

60 Health and Air Pollution in New Zealand (HAPINZ) 3.0 Study (2016)

61 2023 Census

62 This is the indicative gross operating expenditure per person for the activity. It does not include any fees or other income that might offset the costs.

Ngā kaupapa matua Major projects⁶³

Major Project	Description	Why it's needed	Time	Cost
Golden Mile	The Golden Mile project started construction at the Kent Cambridge Terrace intersection in April 2025. This work is expected to continue until the beginning of 2026, which is when construction will start to transition across the rest of Courtenay Place.	Essential infrastructure upgrades, like installing new pipes, were needed on Courtenay Place. The Golden Mile transport project works alongside essential infrastructure upgrades, to connect people across the central city with a reliable transport system that is in balance with an attractive pedestrian environment. Creating a safe and beautiful heart of the city with spaces for people to shop, work and play by shifting the focus to public transport, walking and cycling.	2025-2029	\$113.4m includes NZTA funding
Thorndon Quay upgrades	Improvements to transport corridor from Thorndon Quay to Hutt Road. This project is expected to be complete on 15 July 2025 and to be delivered on time and within budget.	To ensure a safe and efficient transport network for different modes of travel including pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.	2025	\$29.5m includes NZTA funding
Central city upgrades	Priority projects include secondary bus corridor on the Harbour Quays, cross-city cycle connections, Cuba Street improvements and an upgrade to Dixon Street.	To ensure people can move around Wellington safely on a variety of different modes of transport.	Ongoing - 2034	\$134.9m includes NZTA funding
Resilience projects	The LTP indicated increased investment in the resilience of the network through building new retaining walls and strengthening of existing structures. There are more than 32 individual slip remediation projects in the works.	To ensure our transport network is resilient to extreme weather to enable Wellingtonians and emergency vehicles to move around the city in an emergency.	2025-2028	\$22.6m includes NZTA funding

63 Unless otherwise stated, this table includes the capital expenditure for the period of the 2024-34 Amended LTP

Whanaketanga tāone

Urban development



How the urban environment functions as people move, live, and play has a significant impact on quality of life in Pōneke.

With a changing population, there are demands placed on urban planning, heritage, and public spaces development. Our work aims to ensure the city develops in ways that make efficient use of land and transport without compromising the qualities that make Pōneke special.

The District Plan provides the regulatory framework for growth and urban development delivery by the Council and the private sector. Urban regeneration is achieved through upgrades to suburban centres, central city parks, and laneways.



Ā mātou mahi

What we do

This activity is responsible for:

- Setting rules for development and areas for growth or change. This ensures we are providing the infrastructure needed for housing and economic activity.
- Issuing resource and building consents following the District Plan and relevant building and resource management legislation. This function may change in the next two years due to proposed legislative changes.
- Partnering with mana whenua to realise the Spatial Plan, a high-level strategy for urban development that envisions the city as greener, compact, resilient, vibrant and prosperous, accessible, inclusive, and connected.
- Upgrading suburban centres and road corridors, including pedestrian areas, central city parks, and laneways.
- Facilitating urban improvement projects, such as Te Ngākau Civic Precinct and delivery of the Green Network Plan.
- Leasing or partnering with developers for developments on Council land and facilitate development opportunities with central government and the private sector on their land.
- Creating urban development frameworks and strategies to enable housing density and private development to ensure continued investment in the city.

Ngā wero me ngā huarahi hei whai Challenges and opportunities

Urban density to support access and sustainable costs

Increasing urban density around economic centres, enabled through the Council's new operative District Plan, can support housing affordability by making facilities and services more accessible, reducing infrastructure requirements, and shortening travel distances.

New planning rules and residential zones for developments in greenfield areas near public transport routes, such as Churton Park and Woodridge, aim to help encourage urban development. However, further measures may be needed to encourage high-density residential development.

Following post-pandemic increases to interest rates and high inflation in 2023/24, Wellington experienced the largest drop-off in new residential building consents since the 2007/8 Global Financial Crisis. There have been some early signs of recovery for 2025,⁶⁴ but the central city has not yet been a part of that. Seismic risk, contributing to central city insurance costs, continues to pose an ongoing challenge.

There may be opportunities to use existing buildings and infrastructure, reducing carbon emissions and increasing housing density. An example is the Council's Te Kāinga programme, where we have partnered with developers to convert empty commercial buildings in the central city into much-needed housing with 290 apartments operating at the moment, including 78 that are in partnership with Victoria University. An additional 182 new apartments will be completed by the end of 2025. Our target is to have a total of 1500 new units delivered or under contract by 2033.

Earthquake-prone buildings, climate resilience, and insurance costs

Ensuring urban spaces, buildings, and infrastructure are resilient and fit for the future is a costly challenge. There are hundreds of earthquake-prone buildings in the city, including many owned by the Council.

There are varying deadlines for remedying these buildings, with a sizeable portion not until 2034. This will affect the look and feel of the city for some time. Elected members will need to make carefully considered decisions about the Council owned buildings, as significant future costs are inevitable.

**We have partnered
with developers
to convert empty
commercial buildings
in the central city into
much needed housing.**

64 StatsNZ Infoshare: New residential building consents by territorial authority (monthly) - annualised (as of May 2025)

Responding to central government reform

Following the decision to adopt the new District Plan in 2024, the Council will update the Spatial Plan in the upcoming triennium.

At the same time, the Government is releasing new national direction this year that the District Plan must give effect to, along with regional direction from Greater Wellington Regional Council. Signalled plans for a new Planning Act and Natural Environmental Act will reshape the land use planning system. The District Plan is likely to become part of a larger combined regional plan.

Improving health and environmental outcomes

- There are opportunities to improve public health and environmental outcomes through many of our activities, such as:
 - supporting biodiversity by including natural elements that support plant and animal life.
 - promoting health and wellness of people by providing green spaces and designs that improve the physical and mental health of residents.
 - enhancing resilience to extreme weather by incorporating features that can help the city withstand and recover from extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall.

Mahere pūtea Budget

Budgeted gross expenditure⁶⁹ per person per week for this activity



\$4.55

per person per week for urban planning. Total of \$50 million opex per year.



\$3.58

per person per week for building and development control. Total of \$39 million opex per year.

\$966k

median house price - higher than the national average (\$881k nationally as of March 2025).⁶⁸

30k

additional dwellings required by 2054 under current population projections.⁶⁶

50-80k

more people in Wellington over the next 30 years. This range is informed by our population projection partner for the region, Sense Partners.⁶⁵

24.4%

average decrease in Wellington house prices over the past three years, after peaking in 2021 (valuations at September 2024 vs September 2021).⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Sense Partners population projection 2023

⁶⁶ Wellington City Housing and Business Needs Assessment, 2023

⁶⁷ Quotable Value (QV) 2025

⁶⁸ House values: Infometrics (accessed 28/05/2025)

⁶⁹ This is the indicative gross operating expenditure per person for the activity. It does not include any fees or other income that might offset the costs.

Ngā kaupapa matua Major projects⁷⁰

Major Project	Description	Why it's needed	Time	Cost
Frank Kitts Park (proposed to be scaled back from original development)	The 2024–34 LTP Amendment is proposing to demolish the Frank Kitts carpark building and landscape the southern end of the park to support the Fale Malae project.	The Council has been collaborating with the Fale Malae Trust to utilise the space on the waterfront for inclusive community use.	2025–2027	\$8.4m, and \$15m moved to Years 10+
Green Network Plan	The Green Network Plan has set four 10-year targets to improve the greening of the central city. These are: two new urban parks; improvement of greening in 20 public spaces; 2000 new trees and no net loss.	Wellington ranks relatively well in green indexes for cities, but this is largely due to our green belt. The central city is well below international benchmarks for greening, both access to spaces near jobs and homes, as well as canopy cover. Many trees and green spaces in the central city are found on private property, and as the city densifies, these will diminish. The Green Network Plan aims to proactively start mitigation now.	2022–2032	\$11m for urban parks \$8m for new trees and streetscape ⁷¹
Te Kāinga	Multi-year partnership between the Council and private building owners to repurpose underutilised commercial buildings and provide quality, long-term affordable rental accommodation. The Council has committed to a target of 1,500 units by 2033.	Identified as a priority project in the Long-term Plan and Housing Strategy (2018–2028). Aimed at providing rental housing for people who may otherwise find it difficult to access appropriate housing in the city, including those in job creation industries. Supports revitalisation and growth of the central city through increased resident population, increased retail spends and provides wider economic benefits such as transport cost savings, infrastructure and cost savings as well as reduced construction emissions.	2021–2033	Designed to be cost-neutral as the Council balances the rent it charges tenants with the cost to lease the building. Cost neutrality is subject to assumptions and market risk.

⁷⁰ Unless otherwise stated, this table includes the capital expenditure for the period of the 2024–34 Amended LTP

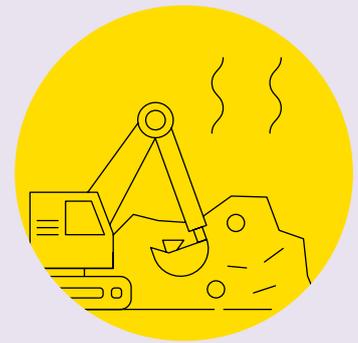
⁷¹ These amounts include capital expenditure since the 2021/22 financial year.

Ngā kaupapa matua Major projects (continued)

Major Project	Description	Why it's needed	Time	Cost
Wellington Underground Asset Register	The Underground Asset Register is a project to create a living digital replica of the infrastructure and spaces beneath Wellington. It is federated data infrastructure-meaning it creates an interface across the utilities and agencies working on and beneath our streets that keeps data correct, up to date and traceable.	The Underground Asset Register creates better information about what is underground to enable more cost-effective, joined up decisions, safer operations and a more certain investment environment for utilities.	2023-2026	\$2.5m capex \$2.2m opex \$4m funded through central government funding ⁷²
Te Ngākau Civic Square redevelopment	This includes the overarching management and governance of all project activities taking place in the Te Ngākau precinct, including City to Sea Bridge, civic basement strengthening, City Gallery upgrades, Municipal Office Building demolition projects.	To ensure the projects in Te Ngākau Civic Square are coordinated to return Te Ngākau to a vibrant civic and arts centre to Pōneke.	2022-2026	\$77.8m capex \$44.8m opex
Suburban centres upgrade	Upgrading one centre every two years, including safety and public space improvements.	Many of the city's suburban centres have not been upgraded for more than 25 years and are near the end of their useful life (eg poor lighting and amenities).	2024-2033	\$11m

⁷² These amounts include revenue and expenditure since the 2022/23 financial year

Para Waste



Providing waste services and infrastructure is a key statutory role of councils.

Our goal, as defined in the Zero Waste Strategy 2023, is to achieve intergenerational sustainability by moving to a circular economy where products and materials are kept in use for as long as possible and waste that can't be reused or recycled is safely managed.



Ā mātou mahi What we do

This activity is responsible for:

- Providing waste services and infrastructure, including collection, diversion, disposal, and treatment of waste. This includes kerbside collection of rubbish and recycling, and disposal and composting facilities at the Southern Landfill.
- Operating the Tip Shop and the Recycle Centre, which diverts waste from the landfill by re-selling reusable goods.
- Overseeing management of closed landfills, including gas monitoring and management.
- Working with regional partners, mana whenua and the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) on significant projects.
- Working with community organisations to undertake community education, fund community waste minimisation projects, and support local composting hubs and events to transition away from single-use products.

Ngā wero me ngā huarahi hei whai Challenges and opportunities

Implementation of kerbside collections

The focus for the upcoming triennium will be the implementation of the Zero Waste Strategy and Wellington Regional Waste Management and Minimisation Plan. We are falling behind other cities in waste infrastructure and services.

However, significant investment decisions have already been made to improve this and are being implemented in collaboration with communities and the wider region. Changes to kerbside collections include introducing an organics collection service and moving from a user pays to a rates-funded collections service.

Organics processing solution

To provide a kerbside organics collection service, we need access to a suitable organics processing solution. We are collaborating with Hutt City Council to explore a regional organics facility, as well as considering other local options.

Completion of Te Whare Wai Para Nuku, the Moa Point sludge minimisation facility

The completion of the sludge minimisation facility at Moa Point in 2026 will reduce the amount of sludge being sent to the southern landfill by up to 80 percent, and the Council's carbon emissions from sludge by about 60 percent, compared to the current sludge management process. Alongside this, the new system will no longer require four-parts solid waste to balance out one-part sludge in the landfill. With this restriction removed, we can do more to support Wellingtonians to reduce their waste going to landfill.

Mahere pūtea Budget

Budgeted gross expenditure⁷³ per person per week for this activity



\$3.43

per person per week for waste. Total of \$37 million opex per year (noting this doesn't include income received from user pays).

11%

reduction in total waste to Southern Landfill between 2023 and 2024.

418kg

of general waste per person in 2020/21, which is a reduction from 466kg in 2016/17.

Waste contributes to

4.4%

of Wellington City's emissions and.

32.4%

of the Council's emissions.⁷⁴

⁷³ This is the indicative gross operating expenditure per person for the activity. It does not include any fees or other income that might offset the costs.

⁷⁴ He anamata para kore mō Pōneke A zero waste future for Wellington

Ngā kaupapa matua Major projects⁷⁵

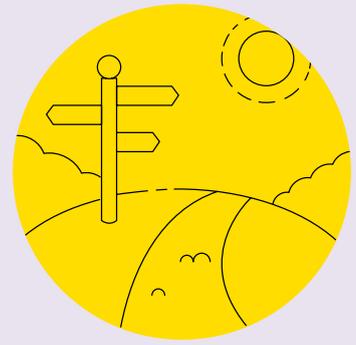
Major Project	Description	Why it's needed	Time	Cost
Kerbside collections	From year three of the LTP we are changing our services to a new organics collection service in wheelie bins, a wheelie bin collection for rubbish, larger 240L recycling wheelie bins and no change to the 45L glass crate. There will be a new targeted rate to fund the rubbish and organics changes.	This move is implementing the Zero Waste Strategy and supporting the Council's move to a circular economy.	2025–2027	\$13.8m
Organics processing solution	To deliver an organics processing solution for food scraps and garden waste.	To enable a kerbside organics collection service to reduce organic waste going to landfill, which supports a circular waste system and reduces carbon emissions.	2025–2028	\$21.6m
Southern Landfill extension	Landfill extension to enable disposal of Wellington City's residual waste.	This is needed to ensure that Wellington has a landfill to dispose of waste that cannot be reused or recycled.	2025–2028	\$33.4m



⁷⁵ Unless otherwise stated, this table includes the capital expenditure for the period of the 2024–34 Amended LTP

Tiaki taiao

Nature and conservation



Wellington’s natural spaces support significant biodiversity to thrive, have nature-based solutions to minimise impacts from hazards, and provide health and wellbeing benefits.

Wellingtonians frequently report our parks, beaches and open spaces as one of their favourite parts of living and working here.

The Council looks after, maintains and upgrades:



110,000

trees planted per year



387km

of walking and mountain bike tracks

1.3million

visitors per year to the Wellington Gardens

100km

of coastline

over

4,300ha

of parks, reserves and beaches

over

17ha

of amenity bedding and horticultural areas

Ā mātou mahi

What we do

This activity is responsible for:

- Providing access to diverse open spaces and recreation facilities across the city that support both active and passive recreation, integrating nature and ecology into urban environments.
- Managing a wide range of spaces, including the waterfront, botanical gardens, reserves, coastal reserves and trails, with programmes such as pest control, planting, managing pest plants and coastal management.
- Providing funding for Te Kukao Wellington Zoo and Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne as conservation attractions to promote biodiversity, conservation, sustainability and excellent animal welfare with high-quality education and visitor experiences.
- Partner with and help fund:
 - Predator Free Wellington, which is working towards the world’s first predator free capital city where native species and communities thrive.
 - Capital Kiwi, which is restoring a large-scale wild kiwi population to Wellington’s backyard.

Ngā wero me ngā huarahi hei whai Challenges and opportunities

Increasing costs and maintenance

An ongoing challenge is improving and maintaining our services and facilities with increasing cost pressures and high community expectations. Members of the community want the Council to ensure our parks, beaches, and open spaces support nature to thrive, are inclusive to diverse residents and visitors, embed te ao Māori and consider climate change mitigation and adaptation.

As community expectations increase, we are facing pressure on maintaining our existing services and maintenance budgets for our existing assets. Decisions regarding service levels will become increasingly challenging and complex in the coming years. Increased consenting requirements and costs for open space development will exacerbate these challenges.

Further opportunities include:

- continuing to encourage and support the efforts of volunteer groups to maintain and enhance open spaces.
- exploring different approaches such as planting green areas to reduce maintenance costs.

90%

of Wellingtonians agree Wellington's connection to nature improved their quality of life.⁷⁶

Over 120

community environment groups are active in the city.

Management of coastal reserves

In September 2025 the current Council will adopt a Coastal Reserves Management Plan that has been developed with Tākai Here partners. Implementing the plan will provide opportunities for improvements and efficiencies in how we manage coastal reserves.

Waterfront safety

The Council is continuing to progress waterfront safety improvements as part of a larger programme of work.

Mahere pūtea Budget

Budgeted gross expenditure⁷⁷ per person per week for this activity



\$5.47

per person per week for gardens, beaches and coast. Total cost of \$60 million opex per year.



\$0.92

per person per week for conservation organisations (Zealandia and the Zoo). Total cost of \$10 million opex per year.

⁷⁶ Resident's Monitoring Survey 2025

⁷⁷ This is the gross operating expenditure for the activity. It does not include any fees or other income that might offset the costs.

Ngā kaupapa matua Major projects⁷⁸

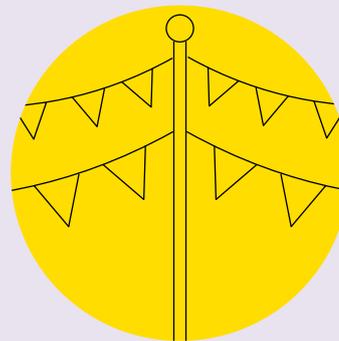
Major Project	Description	Why it's needed	Time	Cost
Begonia House	The Begonia House will be refurbished at a minimal standard as agreed in the 2024-34 LTP amendment.	Much of the Begonia House and supporting buildings' components are at the end of their serviceable life. This presents an increased risk to public and staff safety, particularly from the building's glazing system, which has had several failures with glass panes dislodging during high winds. Renewals are also needed to the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC), public toilets, cafe and staff facilities.	2025-2033	\$11m



78 Unless otherwise stated, this table includes the capital expenditure for the period of the 2024-34 Amended LTP

Ohaoha me te Hauora ahurea

Economic and cultural wellbeing



Art and cultural activities, alongside economic development, are crucial to Wellington's vibrancy and attractiveness as a city.

Economic development activities such as street upgrades, business relationships, and support programmes are crucial for residents, as they attract new businesses, support the growth of existing ones, and create jobs. This development enhances amenities, services, and infrastructure, improving residents' quality of life. By diversifying the local economy, we can make the city more resilient during economic downturns.

The Council's involvement in arts and culture aims to create a vibrant, inclusive, and economically thriving community by nurturing Wellington's status as the creative capital of Aotearoa New Zealand. This support for local talent fosters an arts community that tells the stories of local people, preserves the city's culture and heritage, contributes to the local economy, and supports community mental health and wellbeing.

Ā mātou mahi

What we do

This activity is responsible for:

- Playing an enabling role for business, events, sports, and arts in Wellington through regulation (such as alcohol and food licenses), funding, partnerships, facilitating connections, and promoting the city.
- Funding and working with Council-controlled organisations, such as the Cable Car, WellingtonNZ, Wheako Pōneke Experience Wellington, Sky Stadium and the Basin Reserve, to tell our stories, promote the city, support businesses, and attract visitors and events.
- Owning, operating, and maintaining major civic performing arts venues, museums, galleries, and arts centres, many of which require refurbishment and earthquake strengthening in the coming years.
- Delivering free public events throughout the year, including Te Rā o Waitangi, Diwali, Gardens Magic and Matariki Āhi Ka, and develop initiatives to support the creative sector.
- Supporting businesses through development programmes, transitioning to a low-carbon economy, and developing responses relating to large infrastructure works.
- Building national and international relationships and networks, including with 14 sister and friendly cities.
- Investing in revitalisation projects such as the Courtenay Precinct.

Ngā wero me ngā huarahi hei whai Challenges and opportunities

City vibrancy

Over the past seven years Wellingtonians' sense of pride for Wellington, and perceptions of our central city's liveliness and attractiveness have declined significantly. This decline has been more significant than in other major New Zealand cities.⁷⁹ Wellington's vibrancy is affected by a range of factors, with the major challenges and opportunities outlined below.

Economic challenges post-COVID, and public-sector layoffs

Like many cities, Wellington is still grappling with post-COVID economic impacts. These include increasing costs of goods and services, flexible working changes, different foot traffic patterns, and changing shopping habits.

These have been contributing factors to recent retail and hospitality spending declines, attendance and engagement in city-based cultural activities, and the stability of the creative sector.

While the Council cannot address all these issues, it is working to improve the situation where possible. The Council works with businesses, including our Business Improvement Districts, to create a supportive environment through incentives, streamlined processes, and regular feedback loops.

City safety

The central city's vibrancy is affected by crime and anti-social behaviour, with increasing numbers of Wellingtonians stating that they feel unsafe after dark.⁸⁰ Reasons for the perceived lack of safety often relate to three interlinked areas - homelessness and rough sleepers, aggressive and intimidating behaviour, and alcohol and drug issues.⁸¹ To address these issues and support city vibrancy, the Council is implementing the 2025 City Safety and Wellbeing Plan, including funding a local homelessness coordination service, improving lighting, increasing CCTV coverage, and community patrols to make the city safer and more inviting, while working closely with out police and wider partners.

Construction disruption

Businesses have told us that recent transport projects and construction has impacted on their customer numbers and sales. The Council is changing how it develops placemaking by co-designing with businesses and the community to gather diverse perspectives and help build consensus. This will help enhance community spaces and encourage more visitors in time.

Venues

The city is in a period of transition, facing temporary closures of some venues due to earthquake risk, and high-cost maintenance and strengthening. As discussed in the challenges section on page 23, an options analysis is underway on key venues, with crucial decisions to be made in the upcoming triennium.

A key focus of our current investment is restoring Te Ngākau Civic Square, aiming to re-establish this precinct as the heart of our creative and cultural city.

79 Quality of Life Survey 2024

80 Residents Monitoring Survey 2025

81 Residents Monitoring Survey 2025

Economic diversification

Being the capital city means central government contributes significantly to our GDP. Government decision-making, such as public sector cuts, has a significant impact on Wellington. There are opportunities to support further economic diversification beyond tech and film, including leveraging Wellington as a science hub for climate innovation. The new Council, along with WellingtonNZ, could leverage Wellington’s potential in new diversified areas outside tech and film, which might mean developing strategic partnerships within New Zealand and internationally over time.

Social inclusion and connectivity

Experiences of mental health issues and loneliness are increasing. The accessibility of art and free/ low-cost spaces fosters inclusivity and broader cultural engagement, enabling people from diverse backgrounds to gather, share experiences, and connect. This helps to build social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Local events and street festivals enable local artists to showcase their work, and help nurture local talents and a sustainable, vibrant arts community. Not only can this help the local economy, but engaging in artistic activities has been shown to reduce stress, improve mental health, and provide a sense of purpose.

Mahere pūtea Budget



-42%

decline between 2018 and 2024 in agreement that Wellington has a positive look and feel.⁸²

600+

works in the city’s art collection.

\$3million

towards art and culture projects each year.

44%

of the Council’s total rates come from commercial rate payers.

30,000

people from outside of Wellington City commute to the city for work.⁸³

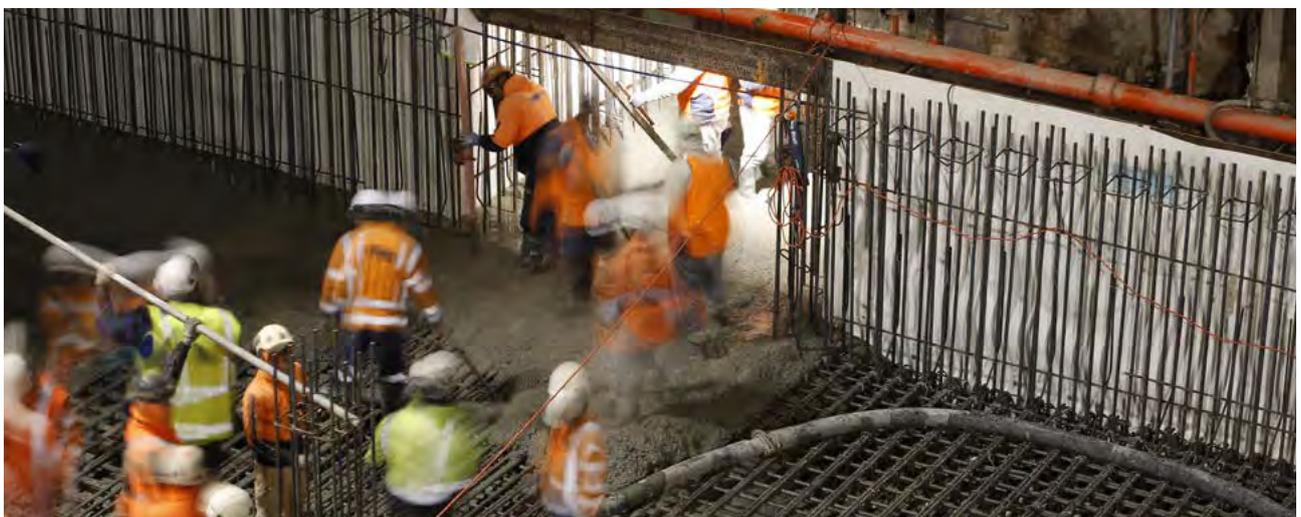
82 Quality of Life Survey 2024

83 2023 Census

84 This is the indicative gross operating expenditure per person for the activity. It does not include any fees or other income that might offset the costs.

Ngā kaupapa matua Major projects⁸⁵

Major Project	Description	Why it's needed	Time	Cost
Town Hall Strengthening (in progress)	The Town Hall will be a top-tier music venue with world-class acoustics for performances and as the home of the National Music Centre, resulting from tenancies by Victoria University New Zealand School of Music and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.	Due to the Town Hall being identified as earthquake-prone, it needed to be strengthened or demolished. Councillors agreed to strengthening.	2016–2027	\$288.6m ⁸⁶ Town Hall strengthening \$28m Town Hall annex
Sky Stadium	Maintenance and seismic resilience project providing safety and additional resilience. The project will not impact on the stadium's ability to host events during this time.	To ensure the stadium is resilient and fit for public use.	Need to ensure alignment with GWRC funding programme. 2024–2027	\$16.8m paid as an operating grant to Sky Stadium



⁸⁵ Unless otherwise stated, this table includes the capital expenditure for the period of the 2024–34 Amended LTP

⁸⁶ This amount includes capital expenditure since the 2016/17 financial year

Ā-pāpori me te ā-rēhia

Social and recreation



Social and recreation activities help create safe, thriving communities.

The Council’s role is to ensure Wellingtonians have opportunities to be active and healthy, with places and activities to learn and connect with each other.

Ā mātou mahi

What we do

- Allocates \$5 million annually to social initiatives.
- Funds Te Toi Mahana, our community housing provider, to supply 1900 homes to more than 3000 tenants.
- Provides welfare response and social recovery and co-ordination of the multi-agency response to a major emergency that affects the city.
- Has a public health regulatory role:
 - Balancing community expectations with legislation and standards, managing bylaws related to alcohol fees, and parklets.
 - Ensuring public health through safe food, animal control, and building safety.

The Council provides access to services and facilities across Wellington including:

79

public toilets
(179 individual cubicles)

7

pools

44

grass sports fields

4

fully fenced dog parks.

108

play areas

1.2million

pool visits annually

8

artificial sports fields

25

community centres

7

skate parks

5

recreation centres

16,000+

sports field
bookings annually

21

community gardens

12

libraries with over 1 million
digital library issues annually

1million

recreation centre
visits annually

72

dog off-leash areas

2

operational cemeteries at
Karori and Mākara and a
crematorium at Karori

Ngā wero me ngā huarahi hei whai Challenges and opportunities

As mentioned in the challenges section, the Council needs to address our ageing infrastructure assets while balancing community needs with affordability.

Community facilities planning

Many facilities are not adequately sized or in good condition to meet current and future needs. There is a low awareness of some facilities and calls for better quality and more inclusive activities. The location and design of some facilities are not suitable for the range of intended activities or accessible to all people.

In response, the Council has developed ‘Te Awe Māpara - Community Facilities Plan’, a comprehensive framework for investing in community facilities over the next 30 years. The plan focuses on maximising benefits and creating a connected network of community facilities that meets current and future community needs. It sets out how we will identify and prioritise our investments to achieve this.

From July 2025, we will conduct community facility investigations and feasibility studies in four areas: Johnsonville, Western suburbs, Newtown, and central pools. This analysis will inform funding decisions in the 2027 LTP. Additionally, we will advance work to support the wider community facilities network, including investigating a centralised booking system and community centre delivery and funding models.

Operational costs and sustainability

The future provision of utilities, including the cost of water and natural gas, presents a challenge for the Council in maintaining and operating our swimming pools and sportsfield networks.

The Council has committed to transitioning away from gas to electrification in our pools. This not only lowers carbon emissions, but long-term will also reduce the cost of running our pools.

Cemeteries sustainability

Karori Cemetery is nearing capacity for new burials, and Mākara Cemetery is projected to reach overall capacity for several types of interments by 2038. The Council is looking into options, including investigating sustainable practices for our cemeteries, such as considering non-perpetual rights to burial plots. There are likely to be decisions needed in the upcoming triennium.

The Council has committed to transitioning away from gas to electrification in our pools. This not only lowers carbon emissions, but long-term will also reduce the cost of running our pools.

Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library opening

The opening of Te Matapihi, the largest public library in New Zealand, presents a significant opportunity to revitalise the central city. Opening in 2026, it will offer several services in one location. It is expected to attract significant numbers of visitors, benefiting surrounding businesses and enhancing community cohesion, learning, and vibrancy in Te Ngākau Civic Square and the central city.

Social housing maintenance

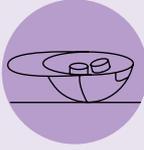
The Council owns a significant number of social housing units that are run by our community housing provider, Te Toi Mahana. Social housing supports a considerable number of Wellington whānau into long-term homes.

Longer-term tenants are facing equity issues as new tenants receive a rent subsidy from central government, while tenants who were in Council housing prior to the recent shift to Te Toi Mahana are not eligible. There are also challenges with the maintenance of the housing stock, with more than \$450 million allocated in the 2024-34 LTP to ensure our houses are well-maintained, efficient, and fit for the various needs of our tenants. The second tranche of upgrade work is a legal requirement of a deed with the Crown.

Mahere pūtea Budget

Budgeted gross expenditure⁸⁸ per person per week for this activity

- 

\$5.86
per person per day for recreation promotion. Total cost of \$64 million opex per year.
- 

\$12.20
per person per day for community support. Total cost of \$133 million opex per year.
- 

\$0.92
per person per day for public health and safety. Total cost of \$10 million opex per year.

41%
of Wellingtonians feel safe in Wellington's central city after dark, in contrast to 76% who felt safe in 2019.

59–86%
satisfaction rate across the Council's seven pools.

80–85%
satisfaction rate for libraries and community centres.

78–91%
satisfaction rate for sports fields and recreation facilities.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ All from Wellington City Council's Residents Monitoring Survey 2025

⁸⁸ This is the indicative gross operating expenditure per person for the activity. It does not include any fees or other income that might offset the costs

Ngā kaupapa matua Major projects⁸⁹

Major Project	Description	Why it's needed	Time	Cost
Te Matapihi Central Library	The library redevelopment is set to be completed in 2026.	To ensure Wellington has a safe, functioning Central Library that is resilient against earthquakes.	Completed 2026	\$217.6m
Housing Upgrade Programme (HUP2)	Upgrade of social housing to meet commitments made to central government.	Providing modern, safe and secure housing for tenants within Council's social housing portfolio.	2024-2036	\$397m capex \$49.8m opex ⁹⁰
Grenada North Park	Park upgrade.	Redevelopment to improve the utilisation of the sportsfields and other facilities.	2025-2027	\$12.6m
Kilbirnie Park upgrade	Upgrade the park's open spaces.	Informed by the Kilbirnie Park Masterplan, upgrade the open spaces to create a cohesive, vibrant and accessible community and recreation park including a destination skate park and refreshed community play space.	2024-2025	\$8.1m, including \$2m Charles Plimmer Bequest funding
Degasify the pool network	Complete degasification of four Wellington Pools, Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre, and Tawa, Johnsonville and Freyberg pools.	Currently, our pools are heated using gas. This project will transfer pools to run on electricity, significantly reducing carbon emissions and operating costs.	2028-2038	\$15m

89 Unless otherwise stated, this table includes the capital expenditure for the period of the 2024-34 Amended LTP

90 These amounts include expenditure since the 2019/20 financial year





STAND

 **STAND FOR
ELECTION**

05

Tauākī ahumoni **Financial Statements**

Kei tēnei wāhanga **In this section**

This section includes an overview of the Council's financial performance including financial position, investment in infrastructure, financial statements and performance against financial strategy.

Tā Te Kaunihera ahumoni

The Council's finances

Te whakamahinga ahumoni

Financial performance

The Council's financial performance is sound.

The Local Government Act 2002 requires the Council to have a balanced budget. The balanced budget requirement is closely linked to the principle of intergenerational equity the idea that each generation of ratepayers pays their fair share for the goods and services they use. It means the Council aims to budget its revenue to equal its operating expenses.

The Council forecasts a net surplus of \$79.8 million for the 2024/25 financial year, primarily due to the inclusion of \$118 million of grants for the Te Whare Wai Para Nuku Moa Point sludge minimisation facility. Without this capital revenue, a deficit would have resulted for the 24/25 year.

The net surplus or deficit is the difference between the expenses the Council incurred during the year and the revenue the Council received. It is represented by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Net surplus / (deficit)}}{\text{Total revenue - Total expenses}} =$$

Projected rates rises

Rates are the primary source of the Council's income and make up about 60 percent of our annual income. The Council's projected rate increases including the sludge levy, are summarised in the graph (right).

The graph shows the forecasted rates increases for the current amended 2024-34 Long-term Plan. The challenges and factors outlined in the earlier sections of this report will mean there will be additional pressure on our ability to restrict increases to these levels. Therefore, the Council will need to make decisions about prioritisation, delivery timescales, levels of service provided, and new funding tools.

Limits on rates increases

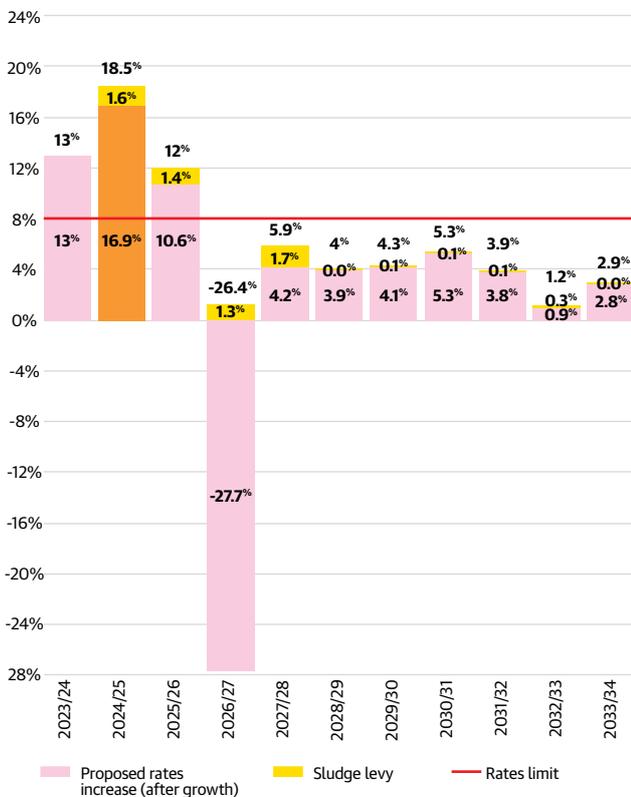
When we adopted our 2024-34 Long-term Plan, we also agreed limits to rates increases through our financial strategy.

The Council has set a rates increase limit of between 5-8 percent (excluding the sludge levy) on average over the 10 years of the Long-term Plan, however higher rates increases in the early years of the Long-term Plan are necessary to continue to fund the current levels of service. The average rates increase for the 2024-34 Long-term Plan is 3 percent as per the amended LTP and taking into account Local Water Done Well reform.

Proposed year-on-year rates increase

The year-on-year rates increase shows a negative rate increase of -26.4 percent for 2026/27, which is due to the transfer of water activities to the new water entity. Excluding the impact from the transfer of three waters activities, our rates increase (including sludge levy) in 2026/27 would be 12.8 percent. The other rates increase remain the same. Note: the graph below shows the proposed rates increase under the Amended 2024-34 Long-term Plan.

Forecast rates increases (after growth) - Average 3%



Taunga ahumoni Financial position

Our assets and liabilities

The Council’s forecast net worth on 30 June 2025 is \$10.5 billion. This is calculated as the difference between the total assets and the total liabilities of the Council. Net worth is represented in the financial statements by the balance of equity or net assets.

Assets

Assets are items of economic value owned or controlled by the Council. The Council’s total assets are forecast to be \$12.6 billion on 30 June 2025, and include major assets such as:

- property, plant, and equipment, including land, buildings, and infrastructure assets
- other assets, including investment properties and the cost of investments in controlled entities and associates.

Further capital investment is spent each year on constructing and developing assets around Wellington, which contribute to the balance of property, plant, and equipment (refer to “What our capital investment programme looks like” below).

Liabilities

Liabilities are amounts owed to lenders and suppliers. At 30 June 2025 the Council’s total liabilities are \$2.1 billion. The major liabilities of the Council include:

- gross borrowings (refer to “Our current debt position” below)
- other liabilities, which include trade and other payables.

Our current debt position

In order to ensure we can continue to invest in the city, and be resilient to financial and environmental shocks, the Council decreased the debt limit (the debt-to-revenue ratio) in the 2024-34 LTP amendment from 225 percent to 200 percent. We are forecast to exceed that limit in the coming years before coming back within the limit by 2030. Our forecasted net-borrowing position at 30 June 2025 is \$1.6 billion (equivalent to \$7,654 per person in Wellington). The LTP shows this borrowing position will increase to \$1.7 billion by 30 June 2034 and (excluding any population changes) will equate to \$8,174 per person in Wellington. Due to Local Water Done Well, the Council will transfer the three waters related revenue, expenditure, assets, and debt to a new regional Council-controlled organisation from 1 July 2026. The transfer of the Council's debt related to three waters reduces the Council's borrowing position over the 10-year period.

Overall, many other local authorities are being challenged by a need for increased borrowings, however our current debt to revenue ratio is less than many local authorities.

The Council's financial strategy in the 2024-34 amended Long-term Plan looks to address two financial risks: an underinsurance gap of between \$1.8 billion to \$2.6 billion, and an undiversified investment portfolio. To address this the Council has significantly reduced the capital programme by \$385 million over 10 years to create borrowing capacity to be able to response to a major event.

Along with the reduced capital programme, the Council intends to use the proceeds from periodic sales of selected ground leases to capitalise a disaster resilience fund. In the event of a natural disaster the fund, together with debt headroom, would be used for the long-term benefit of the city by providing critical, accessible funding. Outside of emergencies, the fund is intended to supplement rates revenue through a conservative annual dividend stream.

The Council could also divest some of its investments and reduce its debt position in the future. While the current debt position is financially prudent, the Council needs to ensure that it's in a position to be able to respond to any significant cost pressures in the future.

\$7654 per peson

Our net-borrowing position of \$1.6 billion at 30 June 2025 equates to \$7654 per person in Wellington.

Haumi ki ngā tūāhanga me te tauākī poto ki ngā ratonga ahumoni

Investment in infrastructure and services

As part of the amended 2024–34 Long-term Plan, the Council agreed to a 10-year \$3.45 billion capital programme.

Of the total capex spend, about 54 percent (\$1.9 billion) is targeted toward the renewal of existing city assets, and a further 39 percent (\$1.4 billion) relates to building new or upgrading existing Council assets.

Significant programmes of capital expenditure in the 10-year plan include:



Water

- Te Whare Wai Para Nuku Sludge Minimisation Facility
- Establishing the new water entity



Waste

- Changes to kerbside collections
- Developing organics processing facility
- Southern Landfill extension



Transport

- Golden Mile
- Upgrades - Thorndon Quay and central city
- Resilience projects



Nature and conservation

- Begonia House



Urban development

- Te Ngākau Civic Square and Frank Kitts Park redevelopments
- Suburban centre upgrades
- Rollout of Green Network plan
- Underground Asset Register



Economic and cultural

- Town Hall strengthening
- Maintenance and resilience of Sky Stadium



Social and recreation

- Te Matapihi Central Library
- Housing Upgrade Programme
- Grenada North Park
- Kilbirnie Park upgrade
- Degasification of the pool network (heating)
- Remediate Khandallah Pool

Te whakamahinga o rautaki ahumoni, o rēti, me te mino

Performance against Financial Strategy, rates and borrowings

Ngā paerewa Benchmarks

The Council continues to score well against the Local Government benchmarks under the Financial Reporting and Prudence Regulations. The three main elements for financial prudence under the regulations are affordability, sustainability and predictability.

The purpose of these benchmarks is to assess whether the Council is prudently managing its revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities, and general financial dealings.

Affordability benchmarks

These benchmarks help assess the affordability of each local authority’s expenditure and financing activities for present and future ratepayers. These cover the Council’s compliance against targets in our financial strategy for rates increases and debt levels.

Sustainability benchmarks

These provide an indicator of how prepared the Council is for long-term uncertainties and to maintain itself indefinitely.

Predictability benchmarks

These are an indicator of the level of flexibility that the Council has to respond to unexpected events, as well as it’s ability to pay for capital expenditure using internally generated funds rather than relying on external sources.

Ngā tohu o te whakamahinga o te pūtea

Indicators of financial performance

REF	CATEGORY	MEASURE	2024/25* MET
1	Rates affordability benchmark	The Council’s planned rates increases are within the quantified limit on rates increases included in the LTP Financial Strategy of 5–8%	No – 16.9%
		Net borrowings as a percentage of revenue <225%	Yes – 190%
2	Debt affordability benchmark	Net interest as a percentage of revenue <15%	Yes – 7.8%
		Net interest as a percentage of annual rates income <20%	Yes – 11.5%
		Liquidity (term borrowing + committed loan facilities to existing external debt) >115%	Yes – 121%
3	Balanced budget benchmark	Operating revenue is greater than operating expenditure as a proportion >100%	Yes – 107%
4	Essential services benchmark	Capital expenditure on network is greater than operating expenditure as a proportion >100%	Yes – 172%
5	Debt servicing benchmark	Borrowing costs as a proportion of operating revenue <10%	Yes – 7.9%
6	Debt control benchmark	Net debt as a proportion of planned debt <100%	Yes – 88%
7	Operations control benchmark	Net cash flow from operations as a proportion of its planned net cash flow from operations >100%	Yes – 128.5%

* The financial information is based on the latest forecasts for 2024/25.

Tauāki ahumoni poto

Summary financial statements

Tauāki poto ki ngā moniwhiwhi me ngā whakapaunga

Summary Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expense (\$'000)

	Actual 2022/23	Actual 2023/24	Forecast ¹ 2024/25	Annual Plan ² 2025/26	Prospective ³ 2026/27	Prospective 2027/28	Prospective 2028/29
REVENUE							
Rates revenue	424,990	483,252	570,183	628,974	458,928	480,703	502,431
Operating activities revenue	211,621	322,380	359,817	430,024	289,298	269,832	277,154
Investment revenue	33,040	24,408	21,969	25,392	30,077	33,412	36,240
Vested assets and other revenue	21,360	36,750	6,785	2,247	1,604	107	109
Fair value movements	68	1,530	8,967	4,758	4,647	4,647	4,357
Finance revenue	8,041	17,447	10,774	36	104	69	71
TOTAL REVENUE	699,120	885,767	978,495	1,091,431	784,658	788,770	820,362
EXPENSE							
Fair value movements	(13,607)	(20,438)	-	-	-	-	-
Finance expense	(52,085)	(77,970)	(76,484)	(68,333)	(69,593)	(59,407)	(67,346)
Expenditure on operating activities	(511,336)	(567,634)	(590,285)	(692,954)	(536,834)	(538,855)	(542,520)
Depreciation and amortisation	(196,318)	(211,024)	(231,885)	(254,956)	(168,093)	(185,582)	(206,050)
Loss on derecognition of assets ⁴	-	-	-	-	(3,030,609)	-	-
TOTAL EXPENSE	(773,346)	(877,066)	(898,654)	(1,016,243)	(3,805,129)	(783,844)	(815,916)
Operating surplus / (deficit) before insurance proceeds	(74,226)	8,701	79,841	75,188	(3,020,471)	4,926	4,446
Insurance proceeds	20	-	-	-	-	-	-
NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) for the year	(74,206)	8,701	79,841	75,188	(3,020,471)	4,926	4,446
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE and EXPENSE							
Fair value movements - cash flow hedges	15,556	(7,854)	-	-	-	-	-
Fair value movements - other financial assets	34	440	-	-	-	-	-
Fair value movements - revaluations of property, plant and equipment	(59,615)	713,751	85,771	208,804	-	286,408	340,437
TOTAL OTHER COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE and EXPENSE	(44,025)	706,337	85,771	208,804	-	286,408	340,437
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE and EXPENSE	(118,231)	715,038	165,612	283,992	(3,020,471)	291,334	344,883

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2 The financial information for 2025/26 is taken from the Annual Plan and may be affected by decisions of the Council. The amounts are forecast and unaudited.

3 The prospective information for 2027-29 is taken from the 2024-34 Long-term Plan amendment and may be affected by further Council decisions. The amounts are forecast and unaudited.

4 Relates to the expected transfer of water assets to the new water entity.

Tauāki poto o te taunga ahumoni

Summary statement of Financial Position (\$'000)

	Actual 2022/23	Actual 2023/24	Forecast ¹ 2024/25	Annual Plan ² 2025/26	Prospective ³ 2026/27	Prospective 2027/28	Prospective 2028/29
ASSETS							
Current assets							
Financial assets	153,921	211,205	442,668	530,439	499,914	454,691	486,006
Non-financial assets	44,453	169,067	129,070	1,355	1,355	1,355	1,355
Total current assets	198,374	380,272	571,738	531,794	501,269	456,046	487,361
Non-current assets							
Financial assets	106,818	109,698	122,697	131,788	226,699	228,297	230,367
Non-financial assets ⁴	10,760,304	11,719,935	11,904,816	12,669,249	9,022,975	9,412,604	9,800,670
Total non-current assets	10,867,122	11,829,633	12,027,513	12,801,037	9,249,674	9,640,901	10,031,037
TOTAL ASSETS	11,065,496	12,209,905	12,599,251	13,332,831	9,750,943	10,096,947	10,518,398
LIABILITIES							
Current liabilities							
Borrowings	205,500	162,498	277,498	266,500	371,000	325,000	353,000
Other liabilities	157,000	164,585	180,130	225,663	139,749	132,753	128,166
Total current liabilities	362,500	327,083	457,628	492,163	510,749	457,753	481,166
Non-current liabilities							
Borrowings	1,044,986	1,508,794	1,639,211	2,057,367	1,480,284	1,589,759	1,644,051
Other liabilities	36,265	37,245	32,891	29,788	27,225	25,416	24,279
Total non-current liabilities	1,081,251	1,546,039	1,672,102	2,087,155	1,507,509	1,615,175	1,668,330
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,443,751	1,873,122	2,129,730	2,579,318	2,018,258	2,072,928	2,149,496
TOTAL EQUITY / NET ASSETS	9,621,745	10,336,783	10,469,521	10,753,513	7,732,685	8,024,019	8,368,902

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3 The prospective information for 2027-29 is taken from the 2024-34 Long-term Plan amendment.

4 Movement in FY2027 affected by the expected transfer of water assets to the new water entity.

Tauāki poto o te nekehanga pūtea

Summary Statement of Cash Flows

	Actual 2022/23	Actual 2023/24	Forecast ¹ 2024/25	Annual Plan ² 2025/26	Prospective ³ 2026/27	Prospective 2027/28	Prospective 2028/29
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES							
Receipts from rates	427,236	463,048	572,933	626,355	478,254	479,792	501,522
Receipts from activities and other revenue	184,431	170,392	183,446	199,288	199,173	200,241	205,146
Other receipts	157,054	281,483	323,489	414,148	288,036	278,107	286,486
Cash paid to suppliers and employees	(427,896)	(529,380)	(540,439)	(575,975)	(554,374)	(486,476)	(494,528)
Other payments	(153,300)	(172,170)	(170,162)	(235,163)	(246,016)	(256,863)	(257,752)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	187,525	213,373	369,267	428,653	165,073	214,801	240,874
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES							
Purchase of intangibles	(8,856)	(6,830)	(8,303)	(15,836)	(7,227)	(6,149)	(6,272)
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(343,429)	(452,760)	(482,667)	(830,998)	(286,058)	(282,854)	(248,369)
Other	74,558	(98,859)	(80,474)	56,636	670,204	70,069	(1,329)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(277,727)	(558,449)	(571,444)	(790,198)	376,919	(218,934)	(255,970)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES							
Increase in borrowings	179,328	420,806	245,208	407,367	(472,583)	63,475	82,291
Interest on borrowings	(47,172)	(72,457)	(76,484)	(68,333)	(69,593)	(59,407)	(67,346)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES	132,156	348,349	168,724	339,034	(542,176)	4,068	14,945
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents							
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	41,954	3,273	(33,453)	(22,511)	(184)	(65)	(151)
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR	26,575	68,529	71,802	38,349	15,838	15,654	15,589

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3 The prospective information for 2027-29 is taken from the 2024-34 Long-term Plan amendment.

The figures factor in the transfer of our water assets as well as associated liabilities, revenue, and expenditure.

Tauāki poto o ngā panga ahumoni Summary Funding Impact Statements

	Actual 2022/23	Actual 2023/24	Forecast ¹ 2024/25	Annual Plan ² 2025/26	Prospective ³ 2026/27	Prospective 2027/28	Prospective 2028/29
SOURCES OF OPERATING FUNDING							
General rates, uniform annual general charges, rates penalties	267,087	288,454	332,817	366,392	413,511	411,931	433,925
Targeted rates	157,903	194,798	237,366	262,582	45,417	68,772	68,506
Subsidies and grants for operating purposes	9,244	16,335	17,236	14,144	13,633	14,018	13,862
Fees and charges	155,949	176,366	180,980	195,832	199,965	199,976	206,682
Interest and Dividends from investments	28,472	28,792	21,312	14,636	19,004	22,069	24,671
Local authorities fuel tax, fines, infringement fees, and other receipts	8,395	9,475	12,603	9,879	10,085	10,314	10,539
TOTAL OPERATING FUNDING (A)	627,050	714,220	802,313	863,464	701,616	727,081	758,184
APPLICATIONS OF OPERATING FUNDING							
Payments to staff and suppliers	444,871	508,516	538,176	623,557	475,547	477,740	488,046
Finance costs	51,497	75,892	76,497	68,333	69,593	59,407	67,346
Other operating funding applications	50,665	48,561	51,619	69,104	61,130	61,170	54,530
TOTAL APPLICATIONS OF OPERATING FUNDING (B)	547,033	632,969	666,292	760,994	606,270	598,318	609,922
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) OF OPERATING FUNDING (A – B)	80,017	81,251	136,021	102,470	95,346	128,763	148,262
SOURCES OF CAPITAL FUNDING							
Subsidies and grants for capital expenditure	32,273	122,264	165,103	190,217	67,354	53,435	54,212
Development and financial contributions	4,739	6,713	6,463	3,500	4,762	4,762	4,762
Increase (decrease) in debt	249,832	251,460	175,080	457,852	165,829	102,136	50,021
Gross proceeds from sales of assets	4,293	2,478	23,312	31,000	5,700	5,370	2,000
Lump sum contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL SOURCES OF CAPITAL FUNDING (C)	291,137	382,915	369,958	682,569	243,645	165,704	110,995
APPLICATIONS OF CAPITAL FUNDING							
Capital expenditure							
- to meet additional demand	54,846	51,010	8,551	13,543	26,174	33,417	12,769
- to improve the level of service	195,229	278,685	355,150	487,663	127,463	72,718	48,330
- to replace existing assets	119,264	134,471	142,279	283,543	185,201	188,394	198,223
Increase (decrease) in reserves	1,815	-	-	291	153	(61)	(65)
Increase (decrease) in investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL APPLICATIONS OF CAPITAL FUNDING (D)	371,154	464,166	505,979	785,040	338,991	294,467	259,257
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) OF CAPITAL FUNDING (C – D)	(80,017)	(81,251)	(136,021)	(102,470)	(95,346)	(128,763)	(148,262)
FUNDING BALANCE ((A – B) + (C – D))	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Expenses for this activity grouping include the following depreciation/amortisation charge	195,568	210,291	231,885	254,956	168,093	185,582	206,050

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Mō ētehi atu pārongo

Where to find more information

General information

Candidates' Handbook

wellington.govt.nz/your-council/elections/2025-elections

LGNZ Information for Candidates

akona.lgnz.co.nz/course/view.php?id=155

Annual Report

wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-and-reports/annual-report

Long-term Plan 2024-34

wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-and-reports/long-term-plan/long-term-plan-2024-34

Past council reports and decisions

meetings.wellington.govt.nz/your-council/reports

Wellington City Council Research and Evaluation

wellington.govt.nz/wellington-city/research-and-evaluation

Wellington Community Sentiment Analysis 2023

wellington.govt.nz/wellington-city/research-and-evaluation/population-and-perceptions/community-insights



Wellington City Council surveys

Pōneke / Wellington transport survey

wellington.govt.nz/parking-roads-and-transport/transport/transport-insights/wellington-transport-survey

Quality of Life Survey

www.qualityoflifeproject.govt.nz/about-the-survey/

Residents' Monitoring Survey

wellington.govt.nz/wellington-city/research-and-evaluation/population-and-perceptions/residents-monitoring-survey

Climate Action Monitor

wellington.govt.nz/wellington-city/research-and-evaluation/environment-transport-and-housing/climate-action-monitor

Key Wellington City Council strategies and plans

Te Atakura - First to Zero

wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/te-atakura

Te Awe Māpara - Community Facilities Plan

wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/community-facilities-plan

Te Whai Oranga Pōneke - Open Space and Recreation Strategy

wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/open-space-recreation-strategy

Tūpiki Ora Māori Strategy

wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/tupiki-ora-maori

Aho Tini 2030: Arts, Culture and Creativity Strategy

wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/aho-tini

Our City Tomorrow: A Spatial Plan for Wellington City

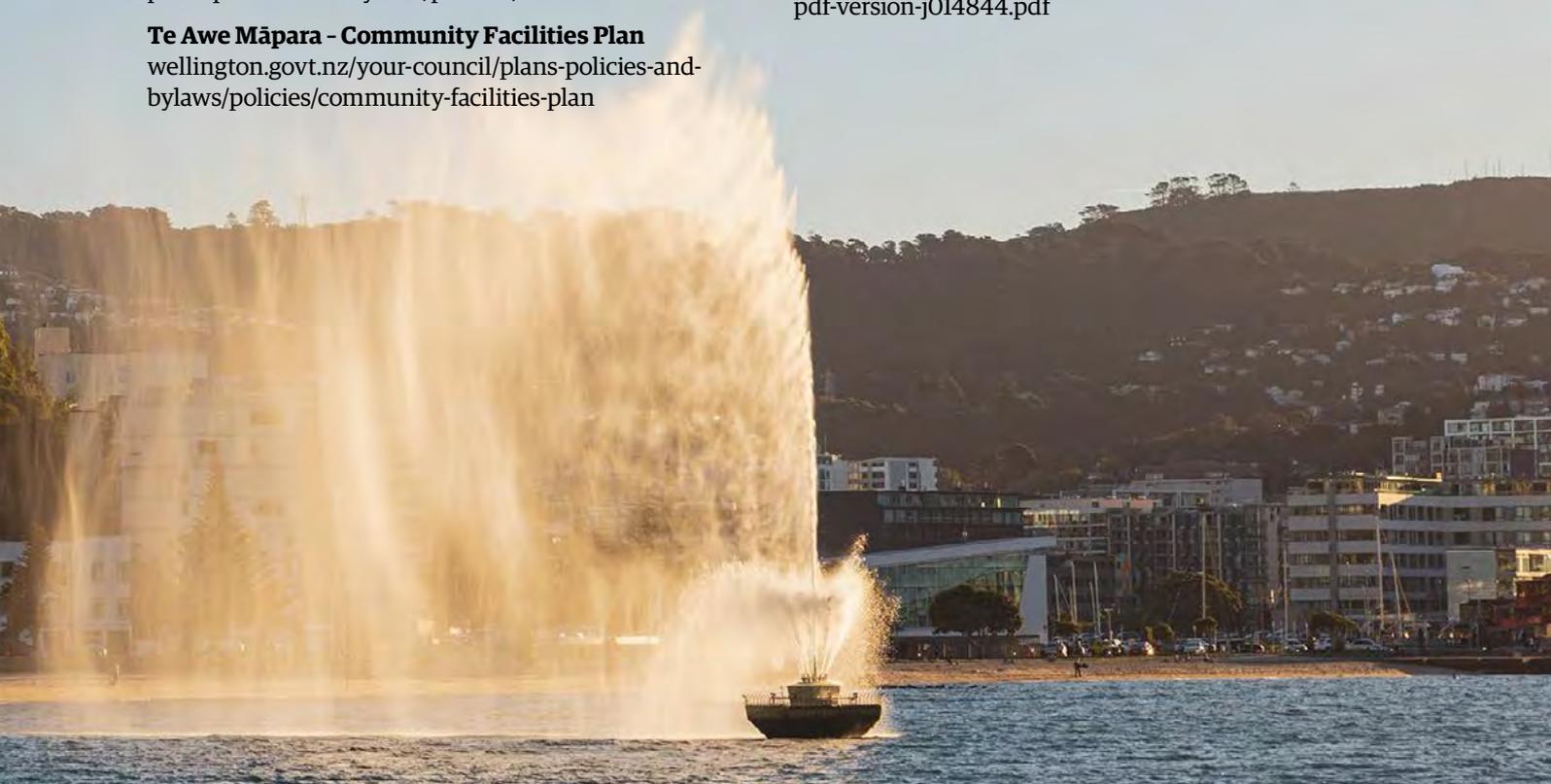
wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/spatial-plan

He anamata para kore mō Pōneke - A zero waste Economic Wellbeing Strategy

wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/policies/zero-waste-strategy future for Wellington

He Rautaki Ōhanga Oranga - Economic Wellbeing Strategy Economic Wellbeing Strategy - Plans, policies and bylaws - Wellington City Council

wellington.govt.nz/-/media/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-and-policies/a-to-z/economicwellbeing/economicwellbeingstrategy-pdf-version-j014844.pdf



wellington.govt.nz/elections

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council

Me Heke Ki Pōneke

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