



18 April 2024.

Her Worship and Councilors  
Hamilton City Council  
Private Bag 3010  
Hamilton, 3204

### **NZAA Submission on the Draft Hamilton City Council Long Term Plan 2024-2034**

Dear Mayor and Councilors

The New Zealand Automobile Association Waikato District Council (AA) thanks Hamilton City Council (HCC) for the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the draft Hamilton City Council Long Term Plan 2024-2034 (LTP).

The AA has advocated for the transport interests of our members throughout our 120-year history. Today our work reflects the wide range of interests of our 1.8 million members, many of whom are public transport users, cyclists and private motorists. The AA represents approximately 70,000 AA members in the AA Waikato District and is a key transport partner for HCC.

The AA recognizes the very difficult financial environment that HCC has encountered when preparing the LTP. HCC has had to make significant tradeoffs to balance the books for this RLTP and the AA notes with concern the increase of approximately 20% in rates over the 2024/25 year with more large increases to follow.

In the transport area AA notes that significant reductions of more than \$53 million over 10 years are planned in the LTP to city-wide transport upgrades.

The AA wishes to point out the importance of ongoing maintenance and improvement of the city's transport assets including roading. Road surface quality has been the top concern of our AA members across all the transport surveys the organisation has conducted over the past five years and our members levels of dissatisfaction have continued to grow. The general public has become equally concerned about the state of our roads as the deterioration has become more visible over the past two years. As the core problem is the decline in the quality of our road surfaces, resolving this is primarily about renewals work - re-surfacing roads and replacing road foundations.

In the AA's view, providing appropriate funding for road maintenance and renewals is essential for a healthy city. Across the country there is a pressing and growing need to catch-up on the backlog of deferred work, to start to turnaround the unacceptable state of our road networks and respond to very strong public sentiment that this problem needs to be urgently fixed.

We consider it is not good practice to defer road maintenance costs to future generations. There needs to be a recognition of the value that good maintenance can deliver in terms of broader outcomes in particular environmental and social well-being and reducing the long term whole of life cost and safety.

We submit that road maintenance and renewals must continue to be undertaken in Hamilton as a clear priority in the LTP. We submit that the \$30Million road renewals programme in Hamilton to deliver on the new Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS) should be included, at least in part, in the LTP.

The AA supports a continued focus by HCC focus on road safety noting in particular the poor road safety record of the Waikato region. We support lower speed limits around schools but in other cases changes in speed limits must be based on clear supporting data and applied consistently.

The AA supports climate change initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and transform towards an environmentally sustainable low carbon transport system. AA members are motorists, cyclists, public transport users and pedestrians and we support the move toward more sustainable transport options as outlined in the Metro Spatial plan.

Whilst outside the HCC city boundary the AA strongly supports the extension of the Waikato Expressway from Cambridge to Piarere and are pleased to see funding for this project confirmed as a Road of National Significance (RON) in the GPS and the updated NZTA State Highway Investment Programme (SHIP).

Longer term we wish to see planning undertaken to extend the Expressway to Tirau. AA commissioned research has shown that on average there has been a 37% reduction in deaths and serious injuries (DSIs) in locations where new roads or bypasses have been built. We seek HCC support in advocating for this important upper North Island project which provides significant economic benefits to Hamilton City .

We also seek HCC advocacy support for the growing issue of a safe and effective improvement in our links (SH29) to our metro neighbour in Tauranga as part of the Upper North Island growth strategy.

The AA also strongly supports the early construction of Southern Links and are pleased that this is included as a RON in the GPS and the new SHIP with construction start from 2027.

## Conclusion

In conclusion we again thank the HCC for the opportunity for the AA to submit on the Draft 2024-34 Long Term Plan.

We acknowledge the difficult task HCC has in preparing the LTP in challenging financial circumstance but again reiterate the importance of continuing to maintain and renew the transport assets in Hamilton.

The AA wish to present this submission to HCC in the Hearings.

Yours sincerely

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