

Council Hearing and Deliberations

PUBLIC BUSINESS AGENDA

A Council Hearing and Deliberations
will be held in the Council Chamber,
Torphin Crescent, Tokoroa
on Friday 16 June 2023
Commencing at 9.00am

OUR VISION

“Healthy people thriving in a safe, vibrant and sustainable community.”

Attendees

Members	Mayor (Chairperson)	G Petley
	Deputy Mayor (Deputy Chairperson)	B Machen
	Councillors	H Daine
		M Farrell
		R Garner
		T Lee
		H Nelis
		K Purdy
		M Te Kanawa
		J Teokotai
		S Wallace
Staff	Interim Executive Manager (IEM) Corporate	M Booth
	Interim Executive Manager (IEM) Transformation	D Lascelles
	Interim Executive Manager (IEM) Operations	J Hassall
	Corporate Strategy Manager	C Litchfield
	Chief Finance Officer	W Cortesi
	Principal Engagement Advisor	M Tahapehi
	Communication Advisor	L Chander
	Executive Officer	J Anderson

Agenda Confirmed by:

S Law
Chief Executive

*RECOMMENDATIONS contained in reports are NOT to be construed as COUNCIL DECISIONS.
Refer to Council minutes for RESOLUTIONS.*

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- 1. Welcome / Blessing**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Confirmation of Agenda**
- 4. Conflicts of Interest**

5. Speakers on Annual Plan

Time	Speaker
9.00am	Colin Campbell
9.15am	Roger Drower
9.30am	Colin and Clare Bridle
9.45am	Herman van Rooijen
10.00am	Jade Fielding
10.15 - 10.30am	Tea Break
10.30am	Adrian McKinstry
10.45am	John Ghent
11.00am	Bruce Simpson
11.15am	Mary-Ann Mathis Federated Farmers
11.30am	Alan Blair
11.45am	Tina Lopdell

6. Reports

6.1 Annual Plan 2023-24 Hearings and Deliberations Summary Report

Document Information

Report To:	Council
Meeting Date:	Friday, 16 June 2023
Author:	Colleen Litchfield
Author Title:	Corporate Strategy Manager
Interim Executive Manager:	Debbie Lascelles
Report Date:	Saturday, 10 June 2023

Purpose

1. To present the submissions received from the 2023-24 Annual Plan consultation for consideration at a hearing.

Recommendation

2. That the Council:
 - a) Receives the Annual Plan 2023 Hearings and Deliberations Summary Report Docset 631397.
 - b) Receives the submissions made to the 2023-24 Annual Plan consultation as: Attachment A – Annual Plan Submission Pack 2023 ECM 631396.

Executive Summary

3. On 5 May 2023 an extraordinary meeting was held where Council approved the 2023-24 Annual plan consultation document and supporting financial information to proceed to consultation.
4. Consultation was held from Friday 12 May 2023 to Friday 9 June 2023 and included township based public sessions as well as four targeted sessions for Iwi, Pasifika, Seniors and the business community. A total of 270 people attended these sessions across the four week period.
5. 88 written submissions were received with seven responding on behalf of businesses. 15 submitters wish to speak at the Hearing with 11 confirming attendance at the date of writing this report.
6. Common themes included affordability given other financial challenges currently faced by ratepayers and a preference for no reduction to current services.

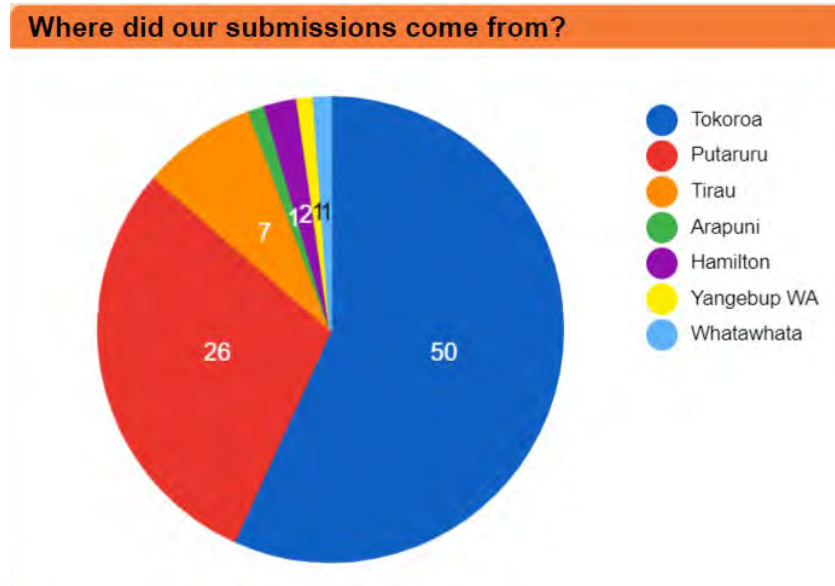
Context

7. Council is legislatively required to prepare and adopt an Annual Plan for each financial year as per the requirements of *Section 95 of the Local Government Act 2002* and an Annual Plan must be adopted before the commencement of the year to which it relates.
8. The Council also has a statutory requirement to consult with the public on proposed changes to the Annual Plan and consultation was held from Friday 12 May 2023 to Friday 9 June 2023 and

occurred under *Section 82 of the Local Government Act 2002*. In 2022-23, no consultation on the Annual Plan took place as it was considered that there were no significant changes from the Long Term Plan.

Discussion

9. 88 written submissions were received with 15 submitters wishing to speak to their submissions at hearings. The pie graph below shows where our submissions came from.



10. The community have told us:
- There will be pain in the community, so many are not in support of an 18.5% increase.
 - There will be pain in the community, but some will reluctantly accept the increase to avoid a reduction in services.
 - That Council needs to critically examine its priorities.
 - That Council should focus on core services and avoid vanity projects.

Consultation included

11. One full page advert and two half page adverts were run in the media during the consultation period, as well as a public notice at the beginning of the consultation.
12. A pre-interview with Matthew Martin, a reporter from Stuff, produced a balanced story that appeared two days prior to consultation starting. The article resulted in significant conversation and engagement within the community that was helpful in getting the community talking about rates, services and engaging with Council.
13. Several posts on community pages resulted in extensive engagement. Analysis over six posts topped a reach of over 8,000, including over 600 comments. Council addressed comments/questions/concerns in one bulk comment on several of the posts.
14. Comments on Council's own page posts were considerably lower, but shares were high.
15. Multiple Antenna messages were issued as we targeted each session to township/area.

16. Traction on our community engagement webpage during the consultation period was coupled with the Speed Management Plan, and the consultation ran from the same page – 1,739 page views with an average time of three minutes and three seconds spent on the page.
17. Engagement had 270 people attending meetings over the four-week consultation period.
18. Three open public sessions held in each town resulted in:

Tokoroa	Attendees 66
Putaruru	Attendees 89
Tirau	Attendees 15
Arapuni	Attendees 19
19. Targeted engagement sessions were held with the below groups and resulted in:

Rangiura Village (Putaruru)	Attendees 16
Te Wharekura o Te Kaokaoroa o Patetere (Putaruru)	Attendees 6
District business groups (Tokoroa)	Attendees 8
SWPIC – Pacifika (Tokoroa)	Attendees 51
20. A range of questions were asked during the consultation period with similar themes coming through each town and these also reflected in the written submissions.
21. Overall, submitters have told us there is an understanding of the need for increases based on the current inflationary environment facing all business and people. They have also told us that affordability is an issue for most.
22. Common themes:
 - *Affordability especially for elderly, renters and solo parents.*
 - *Prefer not to see a reduction in Council services.*
 - *Would like to see cost cutting at Council.*
 - *Council should focus on must dos rather than nice to haves.*
 - *South Waikato Investment Fund Trust: they would like to know where the money is/has been used.*
 - *Confusion on how rates are calculated.*
 - *Implications for long term sustainability.*
23. The Council thanks the submitters for commenting as part of the consultation and acknowledge the concerns given.
24. The proposed 18.5% increase will provide breathing space for more fundamental financial challenges to be addressed as part of the 2024-34 Long Term Plan development starting now and to be completed by 30 June 2024.
25. The economic circumstances have changed since the 2021-31 Long Term Plan was established resulting in changed circumstances that have affected the 2023-24 Annual Plan.
26. The Councils Long Term Plans and Annual Reports are currently audited independently.
27. Taking all the circumstances into account, particularly in the current national economic environment and the Council's financial position, there are limited options available to the Council.

28. While we acknowledge that there will be hardship, if actions are not taken to start addressing the financial issues, future annual and resourcing plans may require significantly more painful actions.
29. At the time of writing 11 speakers have confirmed their attendance to speak at the hearing on Friday 16 June 2023.

Time	Speaker
9.00am	Colin Campbell
9.15am	Roger Drower
9.30am	Colin and Clare Bridle
9.45am	Herman van Rooijen
10.00am	Jade Fielding
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Attachments

Attachment A: Annual Plan Submission Pack 2023 ECM 631396



**SOUTH WAIKATO
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Annual Plan 2023-24 Submission Pack

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Name	Clare Dickinson
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	It is too high given the limited service we receive. Having worked at Council I know that too much is spent on Consultants and their work was often day to day work that could be done by staff but Group Manager had his friends working for him. Quality of full time staff may have been an issue but they weren't prepared to pay market rates. This is why I could only afford to stay for a year.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	A lot of community money only benefits a few. If not sustainable then needs to close eg Timber museum. Also aware that Council helping out with lower income families but this should come from Central Government and not ratepayers. An awful lot being spent on a skate park that only a few people will use. Also one in each village makes this even more excessive. Given I live on a State Highway, have no mains water or sewerage, no rubbish collection or streetlights I wonder what I am paying for. Also last time I made a submission I received a response. This would have cost time and money so please don't waste more ratepayers money on getting someone to do this again!

Name	Karlana Whitehead
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Although a cost many may struggle to afford, I believe the proposed increase is the best one. We need to strike a considered balance between affordability for the community that is already struggling significantly and the level of services provided. Community members are already unimpressed with level of services - what would it be like when roads are not fixed, Putaruru residents lose even more as the "forgotten middle child" and services are cut completely.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Council needs to consult better with ratepayers and SWDC staff as to HOW to cut services. There may be other ideas on how to trim the fat without losing important services, local staff losing their jobs and unnecessary costs continuing. Has Council considered removing catering costs from meetings instead of closing the transfer stations one day a week? Has Council considered a staff wage freeze/reduction or halt on Contractors instead of restructuring staff and reducing services? Has Council thought about reducing the vehicle fleet and staff use of vehicles instead of cutting opening hours at the Putaruru service center? Has Council considered selling assets such as the retail spaces in Leith Place instead of closing the summer pools? It is disappointing that the dire financial situation has come somewhat out of the blue with little communication and care for the community.

Name	Hannah Strange
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Disgusted. With the cost of living you are now adding this as well? You say you are not getting enough money yet spend thousands and thousands on idiotic signs and design that look cheap. Don't spend money on unnecessary things!!!! This town has nothing yet we are paying crazy rates for what?! You all seem so out of touch with these small towns and what the community wants. You need to take a step back and figure out what is the priorities for now and put things on the back burner. Would love to see how much those cars and wages are as we have no money.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Michaela Rackley
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Not happy at all, wages are not going up, food prices are increasing , cost of living has increased so much, & people are really struggling as it is. The last thing anyone needs is a rate hike!! 18.5% is extreme!
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	No

Name	Rachel Ives
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Absolutely shocking. With the vast increases in costs of living that we are facing, it is not acceptable for us to be expected to fund this level of increase. When we are all having to cut costs for our households and businesses, the council also needs to do the same. Stating that one of the reasons is the deficit, is not a valid reason; the deficit can only be due to mismanagement by the council in previous years and money being wasted. 26% of spending is on water supply and waste water, yet I do not receive this service. I have to collect rainwater and dispose of my waste water at no cost to the council. Households in this position should receive a 20% discount on their rates bill as we are paying for a service that we do not receive. My road also has no verge cutting, residents themselves have to do this, which is risky due to the volumes and speed of the traffic on the road and dangerous driving.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	You need to look at re-structuring the council to make it more efficient. Processes and systems need be simplified, waste in current processes removed and costs reduced. I have had experience of doing this in large organisations. It is not easy but does need to be done. Done properly, this would improve the working environment for staff and deliver better outcomes for the SWDC residents that the council serves. I know that a cost increase is inevitable, I am not unrealistic but it needs to be reduced to a manageable level for residents.

Name	Isaac Bougher
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	The proposed rates increase by the SWDC just shows how disconnected our council is from the people and the struggles everyone faces right now. The increase should be no more than the rate of inflation and even that is high! SWDC should be selling any assets that historically are a liability and cost rate payers to run and maintain. Any unused land the council owns should be sold, any surplus vehicles need to be sold, (you cant tell me all those vehicles parked outside the council get used efficiently. All community grants should be halted immediately. From what i gather the council has not looked within its own organization to find the cost savings required, just come to its rate payers with its hands out. I don't know exact figures but i would be willing to bet there is a high proportion of renting households in tokoroa, These extra rates costs will just be added to rent prices, (I am a tokoroa landlord and i will have to pass some of these costs on) Renters are typically the poorest in the community and least able to absorb this unreasonable proposed rate rise. Find the savings yourself SWDC, cut any non critical services, lower council staff numbers, sell inefficient/unsued assets.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Diane Baker
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I think that the constant rates increases are hurting our community and seeing as it is due to councils flippant spending, for example how much was spent on tirau domain, tokoroas revamp and putaruru fountain area as well as the skate park instead of being conservative with funds and only spending money on those sort of projects when the funds had been saved. I think council need to start layoffs of anyone and anything that is not necessary. I shouldn't have to even say this, it's common sense. Stop unnecessary spending. All of it. Remember this is money from the community you are throwing around like there is no tomorrow and learn to budget with what you have. How dare council try to pass on debt it has incurred with it's poor spending habits. Looks to me like council needs everyone to take a bit of a pay cut to pay back the debt it borrowed in my opinion. We are all dealing with interest increases on our own. We don't need to take council responsibility when at the end of the day I've been opposed to council borrowing any money every single time! It's not your money! We do not give it as an investment, it is land tax. Which by the way, my land and property value each had over a \$100,000 hike when you guys wanted an excuse to fleece us of more money, so do not come to us when you make bad choices with what you had and find you chose wrong.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Stop all unnecessary spending. Stop robbing your communities to pay for your mistakes. Do the honorable thing, take a knee and admit your misjudgement and offer a blanket pay cut until council saves enough money to pay off the debt. I refuse to take responsibility for something the community didn't get to decide.

Name	Scott Turner
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I completely understand the need for an 18.5% increase. Due to the already stretched financial situation of all of New Zealand, many, including myself, will be unable to afford such an increase.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	I would prefer a lower increase over multiple years to allow the time needed for the financial situation to improve.

Name	Anne Horsfall
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I'm appalled with the current state of affairs in our country and globally that the proposed 18% rate rise can even be suggested by our council! I'd like a break down explanation on how you can justify an 18% rate rise for our district? Especially considering neighbouring districts are suggesting a 8.6 rate rise with the current inflation rate at 7% is much more reasonable rate. In the LTP 2021 you proposed an 11% increase in rates. It certainly leads to questionable management of funds with an added 8% added to the rate increase. I'm happy to pay my way but considering the \$500 I've just spent on tyres and wheel alignments because of potholes according to the mechanic or the extra time and cost of detours due to the patching of SH1 only to be detoured again and again. I'm struggling to understand. You have to do something to stop the increasing hardship to families who are already struggling.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Daniel Ramsay
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I hope this is a last resort and every other avenue to reduce debt has been looked at instead of just automatically raising rates. For me to go from 2900 to 3400 is absurd and at present times alot of people cant sustain this. Have you looked at cutting budgets or making council owned assets privatised or sell them off even. You wrote of closing the tirau and putaruru pools and reducing the hours of the transfer station in putaruru why do we have to have those changed. What does Tokoroa have to lose to not have a rates hike. You drive past the council building and its not short of vehicles why not cut the fleet down or look at how much fuel each person uses. Because with this hike ill have to adjust my bidget yet again. Yea we didnt get a increase last time but we all werent doing it as hard then as we are now. With how much you want it to increase to me it just looks poorly managed. Are you trying to recoup from the shambles on leith place or putaruru stupid water feature.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Natasha King
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Definitely not a manageable increase for most families. I believe there are multiple areas that spending can be reduced. Eg council ev station, upgrade furniture less transport for council ect. All this is unnecessary spreading
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	A small increase is acceptable if service's improve, however the increase of 18.5% is going to take medicine from the elderly and food from the tables of families. We pay a bit much already for how poor the service's are example, street lighting often not working, rubbish collection canceled in poor weather conditions, footpaths broken roading damage's ECT. Definitely do not support an increase until better service's are in place.

Name	Adrian McKinstry
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Rates increases are as essential as inflation is inevitable.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>Apologies in advance, and thank you if you managed to get through the below:</p> <p>Energy costs to both council and households can be reduced significantly if the burn off at the waste water treatment plant is converted into electricity via simple and relatively cheap turbines that already exist in abundance and can be sourced relatively cheaply from overseas.</p> <p>At the Tokoroa waste water treatment plant, we are already burning off the excess methane, 24/7, so it doesn't escape in its relatively concentrated form into the atmosphere, given methane is a very potent greenhouse gas. So, if we are already burning it off then it will cause no further harm if the heat from the burn-off can be captured and used to power turbines. Once up and running those turbines will more than pay for itself and will go a very long way to driving down energy costs thereby fostering industrial/commercial growth in the district. Obviously, if overheads for a business decrease, then the opportunity to invest and grow increases (i.e. more employment opportunities). More importantly, the savings in energy costs for each household will more than help with covering the rise in rates; and, the savings to the council will no doubt help with allowing budgets to go further.</p> <p>The project could grow on its own. We're surrounded by farming and thus copious amounts of fuel sources (i.e. methane), and the model is scalable: you could have one or a few large generator hubs, or have many decentralised throughout the district.</p> <p>Once people start seeing the savings, the trading of methane into energy will inevitably follow, thus further driving growth in the industry. Farmers will see the benefit in capturing as much solid waste and thus reducing run-off into streams and waterways. What better way to help clean up our waterways throughout the district.</p> <p>Where there's growth in industry, investments follow. We've got the college infrastructure and training centres; the council may be poised to foster training and development into the energy industry, which will go a long way towards at least retaining if not attracting talent into the community. Bearing in mind the district already generates power from Obviously, with the way things are currently, the idea seems like a potential political nightmare in the making, but if the numbers are crunched right, and if the information around the costs and benefits are provided readily to the people of South Waikato, you will find the idea of driving down electricity prices is a no brainer. Imagine people being attracted to living in the South Waikato because our electricity is that cheap, thus making cost of living and operating a business significantly cheaper than anywhere else in the country...imagine :)</p> <p>Even if it were approved by a majority of the district, where would the money come from to pay for this? Government grants will be available as this could be tied into the national plan towards carbon neutrality. The processing of the methane and its burn off, along with planting of trees, would make this carbon neutral. A carbon neutral project that is profitable will attract investors on its own, and banks would be happy to finance this opportunity even if it's just to boost their own brand recognition.</p>

Name	Lisa Martin
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	29% and 18.5% is far too expensive. Even 10% is going to be hard. People of Tokoroa cannot afford this. I didn't get a pay rise. I am on just over minimum wage and live on my own, even if I got a pay rise it is not to pay for your pay rise. Our interest rates for the mortgage has also gone up which increases the cost of repaying our debt. Sometimes I have to borrow from the bank to pay my grocery bill and car costs. My energy costs have also increased. Community groups can easily source funding elsewhere, animal rescues NZ wide get not one bit of funding and are capable of their own fundraising and do it all on their own. If you didn't waste millions on Leith place and the worst toilets ever - that always need cleaning and maintenance - maybe you wouldn't be in so much debt. You also resealed little dead end streets that don't get much traffic and had nothing wrong with them, what was the point of that, just a waste of money. Now you want to waste more money on new speed limits that is alright as it is, and then more money to change the bus timetable again.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Rose Marama-Nepe
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	My thoughts are with my tenants, this is hard for them they are paying enough for rent!!! and I don't make extra money with inflation up, everything is so expensive. A big NO from me is all I have to say.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Tania Patikura
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Please do not increase rates as this will put a struggling housing issue under more pressure. We can barely eat and pay bills now with higher rates there will be flow on if higher rents . It's hard to find a home please don't make it impossible . We have families in caravans as it is a shortage of affordable homes already . The ratepayers should not suffer for miss managed use of council money . Or the horrible over spend on the town upgrade that pushed some businesses out of business. When is enough enough?.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	I appreciate the current council are struggling with the unfortunate decisions of the last council. But that should not put the people of Tokoroa who are struggling already in a place to lose homes and the one security they have

Name	Chris Eggers
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>With Transport, Waste Water and Parks & Recreation making up almost 50% of Council spending, I am surprised to see nothing addressing cost saving efficiencies in these area's. Does Council believe there are no efficiencies to be made and it is appropriate to simply stick out its hand to ratepayers?</p> <p>It is clear to rate payers that council is entirely inept in managing the tendering, awarding and accountability of roading contracts. This is evident with small scale works dragging on for months with contractors taking a negligent approach to quality control and traffic management as it pertains to efficiency and cost management.</p> <p>With regard to Parks and Recreation I notice the majority of works are contracted to Downer, I am normally a fan of outsourcing works however with a budget blowout of this nature and questions around Councils ability to negotiate contracts, I would be very interested to see Council open the books in these areas and determine whether Council is acting in good faith to hold service providers to account and negotiate better terms when spending rate payer money or does council just roll over and have it's tummy rubbed?</p> <p>I don't mind paying a bit more provided I believe there is good stewardship of resources, but the fact the Council is in this position without any mention of a review of contract tendering, is of great concern and I don't believe Council has the required skill set to do better in this regard.</p> <p>My recommendation is that Council employs proven private sector contract negotiators who are familiar with financial accountability, rather than graduates with theoretical and public sector experience, who will run Council like a business and prove that you are worthy of investment by your ratepaying shareholders.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	No

Name	Les Jackson
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	why do we have a hole in our finances and why is our new CEO investigating our finances under the last administration
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Over the last 2 years and including this new 18.5% increase my rates would of increase by 1100 dollars please explain that

Name	Mathew Morley
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>This proposed increase is going to hurt to many people. The increase is on a previous increase. It unsustainable! People like us trying to get get ahead and make a difference for or kids future arnt going to be able to afford to do this. There will be family's in way worse positions than others and it will be crippling. I strongly recommend you revisit this and come back with a better option.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Corazon Jackson
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Why has my rates gone from 2017 dollars to the proposed increase to 3112 dollars over 3 years, 1100 dollars in 3 years is too much.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Does there appear to be missing money from the last council

Name	Sandra Harrington-Frost
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	My thoughts are ...go with option 2, 10% rate increase . we are all struggling with increased mortgages, food, fuel etc. Having an 18.5% increase will be a financial burden to a lot of people in our community.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	no not at this stage

Name	Carolyn Hemara
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I definitely do NOT support an 18% rates rise - mainly due to overspending of council! eg Leith Place area with ridiculous toilets - which are disgusting and have no parking close by for the disabled! Some councillors who are there now were there when the Leith PI decision was made so please don't blame previous councillors! No-one listened to the ratepayers then either! SWDC is not the only place facing rising costs - we all are! Unfortunately we can't charge anyone for our extra costs. I and many others don't feel we get value for money as it is - you charge me rates - and charge me to use the dump (\$90 last weekend) then again for my 2 dogs - who actually don't cost you a cent! Seriously getting "taxed" too much already by SWDC!
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Just that you all need to listen to the ratepayers for a change! Maybe we need less councillors and PA's do you think??

Name	M.F. (Mick)
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I am disappointed the new management team have recommended a large increase in rate funding for a debt that has accrued over several years. Fixing it in one financial year is not the answer - in my opinion. A rate, and charges increase for 2023/24 should reflect the basic "business as usual" and be close to 10% only - given recent proven cost increases.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	1)Most households will trim their costs before looking at revenue. There is nothing obvious in the commentary or the "books" on potential cost savings. There are a number of proven HR , service contract variations, and new capex items which could create real short term savings. 2)There is clearly work to be done preparing for the next 2024 - 2034 LTP. Does this work take into account the current debt size, and the necessary scaling down of Council operations in 2 to 3 years time? This will probably lead to another round of LA amalgamations by the end of this decade. 3)Council needs to accept that the "3 waters"programme is going to happen, and a lot of Councils were seduced with cheap grants from Government. If SWDC was funding asset renewals by debt funding, then the changes cannot come soon enough! 4) Funding for new infrastructure can be debt funded, but please look at developer partnerships to reduce the risks.

Name	Jodi Sheehan
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Personally I think that at a time of increased costs of living everywhere for people & families, a rates increase of what you are proposing is far too high. Whilst I understand that councils costs have also increased, this means that people in our community (myself included) find themselves facing another rising cost for something that a lot of us see no real benefit in. Yes, there are local district services we all access such as reading, rubbish, wastewater etc, but many of us don't get a chance to use any local amenities such as swimming pools, events centre's etc as we work full time (often outside the district) or aren't interested (e.g. don't have kids), so we feel we don't really see any benefit to such costs/investment. In my own case, I am already behind in rates from the current year due to personal injury circumstances & haven't received any help from council in paying them (simply given an amount required to pay each week) which has been impossible to meet & that also puts additional pressure on the cost of living.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	I see a number of roads in particular that aren't maintained (council roads) and no response from council when I've requested for these to be fixed. This just goes to show that we often don't see a benefit to the rates we pay. Some services are great such as the current dog control team. Also being in Putaruru instead of Tokoroa we don't get the full benefit of library services with a lot of stock, or new stock.

Name	Ruth Woodward
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>I think it is outrageous. I have attended your meetings and find no convincing argument that validated the level of increase. I believe council should get a second opinion and not expect ratepayers to rely on the fact that Council staff have come to this conclusion re the level of increase needed. I would like an independent audit of their conclusions. It appears the core reason is to minimise debt going forward ... but in an economic climate where so many of your ratepayers cannot put enough food on their family's table nor meet their rising costs if living, I believe this extra rate burden is indefensible.</p> <p>I expect your councillors to show the empathy you profess to have and bring this increase down by at least five percent. I believe your ratepayers would appreciate the fact that you have listened. Shave off ALL nice to haves; demand better levels of service from your contractors; bring more services in-house; reduce your excessive corporate costs (eg catering for Council meetings and other trimmings of office); give ratepayers reassurance that you are listening and responding.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>I would like Council to change the balance of development contributions to better reflect the millions developers are making out of their subdivisions. Council DOES subsidise development and it is ratepayer money that is doing the subsidy. Council is no longer going cap on hand begging for growth in the South Waikato. Council should be demonstrating that it is standing up for its communities by demanding a greater level of development contributions so that it can offset rate increases.</p> <p>What's the point in having an LTP if it has no validity or certainty for ratepayers.</p> <p>I would like a response to this submission.</p>

Name	Nicola Greenwell
Organisation name	Hamilton & Waikato Tourism
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>Tēnā koutou katoa</p> <p>Hamilton & Waikato Tourism provides this submission to encourage South Waikato District Council (SWDC) to re-partner with the Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) for the 2023-24 Annual Plan and into the future.</p> <p>As background for this submission, South Waikato District Council decided to withdraw its support from Hamilton & Waikato Tourism in 2021. At that time, a submission was made (available via email) that outlined the impacts of this decision, and the importance of remaining a part of the Regional Tourism Organisation.</p> <p>HWT believes the time is now right for South Waikato District Council to re-consider this decision. Throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic, the region's domestic visitation remained strong. New Zealanders did a wonderful job of supporting the tourism sector throughout 2020-2022. Tourism contributed \$754m of domestic electronic card transactions to the Waikato economy (excluding South Waikato) for the year to March 2023. During this time domestic visitors to South Waikato contributed \$69m of electronic card transactions.</p> <p>International visitation is also showing strong return now that borders have reopened, and our international manuhiri (visitors) are able to travel again. New Zealand has welcomed 1.95m international visitors for the year ended March 2023. For the mighty Waikato, international manuhiri contributed \$107m of electronic card transactions for the year ended March 2023. International visitors contributed \$4m of electronic card transactions in South Waikato district.</p> <p>With regards to commercial accommodation, as a region, the mighty Waikato achieved an average occupancy rate of 57% for the year to March 2023, which is higher than the national average of 52%. Guests typically stay an average of 1.9 nights in the region. South Waikato achieved an occupancy rate of 41% in commercial accommodation for the year ended March 2023.</p> <p>During the past two years to assist with COVID-19 recovery, all RTOs applied for and received central government funding. This funding will be utilised by 30 June 2023. For the Waikato Tourism area, a total of \$1.7m was received and utilised on destination management projects, capability building opportunities and elevated marketing activities across all key markets.</p> <p>In addition to this, central government also created the Regional Events Fund to activate visitation through events. Hamilton & Waikato Tourism are the 'lead entity' for the fund that is allocated to Taupō, Rotorua, Ruapehu and Waikato RTO areas. A contestable fund was developed for events hosted in these four regions that attract visitation.</p> <p>As SWDC were no longer a partner of the RTO, the district was sadly not able to benefit from these projects and opportunities along with HWT's business as usual activities.</p> <p>There are clear benefits to collaboration within the tourism industry – and partnering with HWT is a model that is proven to represent the region with high efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>The South Waikato District Council Long Term plan states "We'll need to decide what services we can cut, what services we can deliver using a different more efficient model (shared service for instance with other councils)".</p> <p>HWT believes that by collaborating with neighbouring councils and partnering with the Regional Tourism Organisation for tourism development and marketing, rather than undertaking these services individually within SWDC, will greatly assist the above efficiency statement made in SWDC's Long Term Plan.</p> <p>Hamilton & Waikato Tourism's role is to improve awareness, change perceptions and build demand in target markets, attract domestic and international visitors and increase length of stay and expenditure through effective destination marketing, development, and management activity.</p> <p>cont...</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>Hamilton & Waikato Tourism promotes the Waikato, and those districts and tourism businesses within it, as a preferred destination for domestic and international business, events and leisure travellers and provides leadership in regional product and event development, investment, and sector capability. As passionate ambassadors of the region, Hamilton & Waikato Tourism aims to ensure visitors enjoy the wide variety of experiences and places throughout the mighty Waikato, in turn contributing to economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits for the community.</p> <p>Working under a private-public partnership model, the funding from partner councils enables Hamilton & Waikato Tourism to undertake core activities including regional product development, sector capability building and the promotion of the region to leisure and Business Events visitors, media and the travel trade.</p> <p>Partnership funding from industry enables amplification and enhancement of domestic marketing and the business events sector promotional activity.</p> <p>International marketing is undertaken in partnership with Tourism New Zealand and the Explore Central North Island (ECNI) regions of Bay of Plenty, Coromandel, Rotorua, Ruapehu, Taupō, Tairāwhiti Gisborne and Hawke's Bay.</p> <p>Tourism New Zealand work in partnership with all Regional Tourism Organisations around the country to deliver their international programmes in travel trade, leisure and consumer, business events, major events and special interest sectors. They do not work with individual councils or districts, only at regional level and with International Marketing Alliances (IMAs) which include Explore Central North Island (ECNI).</p> <p>We believe that greater community benefit, economically and socially, can also be achieved for South Waikato and the district's visitor sector by re-partnering with the RTO.</p>

Tourism has the ability to actively benefit the community across the four wellbeing pillars – social, environmental, cultural and economic. The Waikato Destination Management Plan captures the aspirations of the community, the strategic perspectives of community stakeholders, industry and iwi. These aspirations help identify the vision for the destination plan and articulate priorities and opportunities that exist within the region. As an industry, it is important that we welcome manuhiri to our region, towns and communities; and ensure that they enjoy their stay, stay longer and spend more while they are here. Increasing the profile of South Waikato through HWT's activities and channels is not only good for visitors – it is an important seed market for this district for people who will want to invest and live in your district.

We invite South Waikato to reconsider their 2021 decision and re-join neighbouring districts in partnering with Hamilton & Waikato Tourism as their Regional Tourism Organisation.

Other councils at the same level of funding as what SWDC were at, plus CPI, are now paying \$67,796 for the FY23 year. This will increase in July with the current CPI being applied. Therefore, to partner with HWT for the FY24 year beginning 1 July 2023, the investment would be \$72,338; with CPI to be added each financial year thereafter.

On behalf of the board and management of Hamilton & Waikato Tourism, we thank you for your consideration and are hopeful you will reconsider partnering with your Regional Tourism Organisation.

(Happy to speak to this submission at the hearings, depending on the timing/date)

Name **Zintael Bennett**

Organisation name

Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?

I am writing this letter to express my dissatisfaction with the recent rates increase imposed by the council. My family and I were shocked to see the proposed new rates which had a significant increase compared to the previous year. When we already have such high rates.

I understand that the council may need to increase the rates to meet the growing expenses, but the increase of rates seems to be excessive, and it puts a significant financial burden on the community. The high rates will result in a drastic problem with our income as we currently struggle to meet household expenses. So 20% increase is impossible for us to reach.

Furthermore, the council has failed to justify the reason for the massive rates increase adequately. A lot of this stuff sounds like it's not even for Tirau.

I would request the council to reconsider the rates increase and please don't push struggling families even further down. Paying nearly \$4000 for rates in Tirau is ridiculous. What do you even have for that? Big towns with so much stuff like Cambridge pay much less with a proposal of only 6%. Please reconsider.

Zintael

Q2 Do you have anything else to add?

Name **Carol Tereu**

Organisation name

Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?

WHY? Rates increases & costs of maintaining our homes are substantially increasing on a regular basis not to mention the cost of living on top of that, doctors visits, dentists, food, petrol, we try & do the right thing but if this keeps up, we will be priced out of this country, again WHY?

Q2 Do you have anything else to add?

Name	Eve Berry
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>It is baffling that such an increase is deemed either necessary or appropriate considering the fact that in 2013 this Council was one of a tiny few, probably ever, that had a credit balance.</p> <p>Considering the fact that other than the previous Mayor's vanity project, of the silliest toilets in the Southern Hemisphere, there has been very little to show for the rates we are already paying. In fact changes within Tokoroa seem to be of a destructive, rather than constructive, nature, with the removal of healthy trees that added a charm and beauty to our town that is now seriously bereft of redeeming features.</p> <p>Our roads are a disgrace and our drainage system shows its shortcomings every time there is any rain above a slight drizzle with roads and corners that flood regularly never being addressed.</p> <p>Please do the job you were elected to do, not what you want to do. As ratepayers we want good roads, good lighting, adequate rubbish collection and disposal, clean water and safe disposal of waste water, protecting the assets and environment we already have and please don't forget that 'Council Assets' are actually The Ratepayers' Assets.</p> <p>Please also note that any streets or cities that are known as prosperous have trees whereas slums do not. Check out suburbs in cities such as New York, London Paris, Berlin, or closer to home, towns like Cambridge, Oamaru, Wanaka, which are valued for their trees. I was told by your Acting CEO that it is Council's policy to remove trees (healthy ones) and not to replace any. This is nothing more that systemic vandalism.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>The number of Council cars in the Council carpark, in addition to the number of vehicles that will be taken home each night, appear to show that the Council has no shortage of funds currently.</p> <p>I object very strongly to such a huge, and I feel unnecessary, increase in rates, which will cripple, rather than just burden, many, specifically in our lovely town. This proposed increase will not only create more stress and poverty it will also be totally counter-productive as negative economic forces on our ratepayers will make our town much less desirable to people with options moving into South Waikato.</p> <p>If a reduction in spending is required, maybe audit Council spending for 'leakage' from things such as excessive staffing and overpayment for subcontracting services. (I was told by a Councillor that Council pays more for services than contractors charge the public. Money laundering? Kick backs to those who award contracts?) Addressing these factors instead of killing the golden goose may be a wiser position for Council to take. A higher value community will create greater revenue than an economically depressed one..</p>

Name	Jackie Simpkins
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>Terrible, I think people who work and live here are entitled to no change, the change should be made for outside investors, those who live away and dont contribute to South Waikato.</p> <p>This is a terrible move as I have seen so many people homeless, leaving the area due to sales of home, unable to afford to live here and not having stable accommodation. This will make it harder for our whanau who make South Waikato. This area has plenty of employment opportunities and lots of generational whanau.</p> <p>Please consider a smaller price increase.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>Increase the rates over several years dont make it a hard hit all at once. Life is tuff and its not getting easier.</p>

Name	Kirsty Hagger
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	It's way too much at this time prices of everything has skyrocketed like food and petrol how can you expect people to pay their rates if it's 18% higher and they live some people are finding it hard to live as is and another expense of astronomical and unacceptable
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Do you guys want more homeless people in this town at so many at the moment and you guys are doing nothing about the housing situation if you put our rates up to an extra 18% disconnect be a lot more homeless people in this town because they can't pay their rates and food and petrol and mortgage we needs to better for our town

Name	Janet Blower
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I would prefer the 18 percent one than the lower one as I would not want the other regions to lose anything! However, there should be better management with the rates money instead of spending it willy nilly on anything. I.e the toilets on leith when we clearly had a toilet block that could of been improved.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	The roads are disgusting especially along Balmoral drive with potholes due to large logging trucks using it for quick access to the main road. Browning street is being continuously repaired again to pot holes. The footpaths are being uplifted due to the roots of trees planted by the footpaths up lifting the concrete. The lake needs major improvement. Less spraying and more weeding. More lighting and security cameras around the lake. Speed bumps to slow speeding especially around schools and lake. Re opening of the ladies toilet on bonaly st down bridge st that was closed by Neil Sinclair. Look inward at reducing some costs. Make sure council and animal control cars are not being used for personal use. That council cars are not used to go to work and then home. Replace or repair street and bus signs and clean the signs so they are readable. All parks and reserves should be maintained and looked after Remove dirt under bridge at Durham Park so the stairs are more accessible so people can safely get to the other side instead of crossing main highway. Not only does this council but the public need to take more pride in this town! Basically if you are going to a job then do it right the first time..

Name	Samantha Wright
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>I think they are abhorrent. With the cost of living forever increasing it is honestly shocking that council is suggesting such a huge rates rise.</p> <p>Also with the limited facilities available in this town why should we be paying more? I have 2 severely autistic children and there is not one safe public fenced playground or other facilities that are suitable for the large autistic community here in tokoroa. Why should I or other families with autistic children want to or have to pay more when there is nothing here for our tamariki.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>Council should be focusing on how to bring more business to tokoroa, rather than increasing the cost of living for our residents, a lot of us are already struggling. There are so many empty buildings here, facilities that need updating and many streets that just need an overhaul. That money spent on Leith Place was a waste and we as rate payers are still picking up that bill. I would hope council will think logically and not go through with this rates increase. Focus on other things that desperately need fixing. We pay enough rates for the facilities we receive.</p>

Name	Gina Tudor
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>While I agree the Council may need more funds to move forward I believe there may be other ways of obtaining the extra funds rather than increase rates which will burden households at a time when budgets are already stretched. I suggest looking at council expenditure wages and catering for a start. May I suggest the council find 8.5% by reduced spending and then increase the rates by 8.5%. I find it in poor taste and poor management skills when the only strategy to balance the books is to increase prices</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Val Mosen
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>It is steep. But if that is what it takes to help maintain the present facilities then i can reluctantly agree to it</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>When everything is finalised please do not downgrade funds and services of the library. This is an essential service to the communities provided by caring people. The service they provide benefits all. The community and without it (or lessened) Putaruru would lose its heart. The library is more than just books or computers it's people.</p>

Name	Sheryl Newton
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I am disbelieving council would have such huge increase when so many people are hurting and taking their lives because they dont know how they are going to live. Stop using the people as a cows and cut back else where, like corporation cars and consultants etc etc and start remembering who pays your wages. The proposed increase offers nothing more to the people and is like having a 2nd mortgage and the biggest joke of all is there is the rip off environmental rates on top of this.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Robyne Sutton
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	The 18.5% increase that you are proposing is highly unacceptable. How is the average person going is be able to find and pay up to and over \$500 increase on their rates. I can accept maybe a 10% increase but this is ludicrous. We already pay to 2 different councils. What do we get for our money. You dont mow our front lawns. We have to pay to go to the dump.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	You need to rethink your structure. Get rid of half the vehicles you have for staff. Managerial vehicles are not a necessity. They are not needed. Sell your big offices if they are owned by you and move into something smaller. All I get is water and my rubbish collected. If the council is that much in arrears then the people that are running are not doing a very good job. Why should this be taken out on the rate payers. Because I work out of town I gave been unable to attend any meetings.

Name	Jade Fielding
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	It's going to cause more poverty and is ridiculous. What does the council do to help us. Waste money on rubbish things in our town. They already have too many vehicles that just sit at the back of the council. The increase is BS.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Jenny Shattock
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>Good day Mayor Gary and Councillors</p> <p>I have been very concerned and getting more so with the narrative that has been put out into the public arena about the previous council running operational deficits and borrowing to meet that deficit, ie: "borrowing to pay the grocery bill and keep the lights on, but not borrowing to increase or enhance our asset base" ... to justify the proposed 18.5% preferred rate increase.</p> <p>I have received some unpleasant messages from people blaming me for the proposed increase in rates plus social media is having a go as well.</p> <p>As Councillors that were re-elected onto this council (5 of you plus Kerry) you have just accepted that story. I cannot accept that story and needed proof of the allegations to protect my reputation and the reputation of SWDC staff at the time.</p> <p>So, I made contact with Ben and asked him if that was the case. His response below is in red.</p> <p>"I have little interaction with Susan and don't recall a conversation on this matter at all. This is a matter dear to my heart because I think the practice of borrowing for operations is an appalling thing to do. I remember when I first arrived at SWDC (12 odd years ago) that there was a practice of doing this for roading which I recommended (and council did) phase out over 2-3 years. I cannot think of any other times when this has occurred (other than the likes of spreading District Plan costs (which are considered operational from an accounting perspective) but have a life of many years so should be spread.)</p> <p>I would love to have more specifics on this so I / we can refute them directly."</p> <p>Can you please send me specific instances/examples of the borrowing to pay the "grocery bill"?</p> <p>Mayor Gary, as mayor, I worked with Ben on setting budgets at each annual plan process, I knew every step of the way what was happening. Ben and I would discuss, and debate proposed budget inclusions and exclusions, all the while me being mindful of the impact, including the levels of deprivation and wealth of our community, and affordability. We went line by line through the budgets and councillors had that information too. Nowhere did we borrow "to pay the grocery bill."</p> <p>You, Bill, Thomas, Sandra, Hans and Hamish and Kerry, who sat in on most meetings, were all part of the discussions and workshops we had on setting the rates. We all agreed that covid was special and the community was suffering, and they would have been destroyed if we had given them more to worry about with a rates increase. Other councils around New Zealand did the same. We all knew we would have to do something in the future to manage that decision but never in a hundred years did I think it would be done in one go and then be blamed. We also all agreed to reduce funding for depreciation for a limited amount of time to lessen the impact of rates on the community, knowing that we would slowly increase it back to 100%.</p> <p>I think it's also important to recognise, and I hope councillors do, that the costs that have been budgeted for in this budget are costs of your council's decisions. For example, the costs of redundancies. Some staff that have been made redundant have been at council for 27 years plus. The payments to those particular people plus all the others who have/will be paid out wouldn't have been cheap. They would be looking at significant pay outs considering the time they have been at council. These redundancy costs would have been budgeted for in this budget, the one that you have agreed to. Staff costs for the interim group managers were not cheap either. The interim manager from Australia had salary, travel, vehicle and accommodation costs and the interim manager from Auckland council costs would also have been significant. Nowhere in the Annual Plan are these costs identified. Changes that were made to the office spaces would have been significant as well and nowhere can I find these identified in the annual plan. All these costs would have to have been factored into this</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>year's 18.5% rate increase by my thinking and will be significant. With new salary budgets included and the cost of the significant borrowing for the three waters infrastructure that was to be bought forward before it was handed over to the new entities; all would have had to have been budgeted for in this annual plan. Plus, the rate of inflation running at about 7% would have also contributed to the significant increase. Why have these costs not been put out into the community?</p> <p>I'm not saying they weren't necessary just that they would have had a significant impact on rates as those costs were general rates and not borrowings of the previous council for the grocery bill.</p> <p>Is the 18.5% the average rate revenue increase? If so, that would mean some ratepayers would pay significantly more than 18.5% and some less. Is that correct?</p> <p>I was also dismayed when Susan was reported in the paper saying we had had no economic growth in our term. We had more growth than at any time in the past. The Fonterra expansion, Ofi dairy company, all the little factories at the old TTT site in Putaruru, Browning Street in Tokoroa, the new buildings with Hancock and SWIFT, OJI support from government, many subdivisions, the growth of the rail siding, expansion of Rangiora and the new proposed rest home, Forestry Symposiums leading to the establishment of the Central North Island Wood Council. All economic development during previous council time. In fact during my time, we saw an increase of 10% GDP, employment growth of 8%, and an improvement in mean household incomes of 32% between 2019 and 2021. To say that there</p>

was no economic development is disingenuous. Remember the days when Neil Sinclair and Gordon Blake were mayors, and they were planning for decline and people would say “who will turn the lights off.”

South Waikato is a great district with great opportunities but Mayor Gary, make haste slowly. The Chief Executive is new to the district and doesn't know our community. You do, but don't destroy it. Why would any business come to a place with the highest rates in the country? If the developer of the retirement village in Putaruru walks away because of the cost of rates, think of the outcome for the district.

What will the impact of 18.5 % be on major industry that is the backbone of the South Waikato and what will the impact be on the ratepayer trying to make ends meet with the increased costs of living cost? I was involved in discussions last term about the future viability of some businesses. Please don't be the mayor that saw them close?

Name Sanjeena Chandra

Organisation name

Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?

I believe that it is a very very unfair call for the council to make such a huge increase on rates at this time when people are struggling with the basics, due to massive hype in overall cost of living. The increase in rates will be another kick in the gut, especially for tenants because the landlords are already struggling to cope with the increasing interest rates, so they will have no choice but to push the cost on tenants. For a small town, what does this mean?? Simply, more poverty, lower living standards and house conditions, which will eventually lead to increase in crime and other social problems.

Q2 Do you have anything else to add?

This is a ridiculous increase. Perhaps, they can look into other possibilities by cutting some costs on their current spending and stagger or delay the increase until the inflation rate starts to show a decline.

Name Tyler Metu

Organisation name

Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?

Ridiculous.

Sell council vehicles, why is such a big fleet of cars needed.

Stop spending rate payers money on unnecessary things, the toilets for example could have been renovated instead of creating a whole new lay out.

Find new contractors if you continue to have the same issues over and over like road works, our drainage system.

Q2 Do you have anything else to add?

Help the people you already have in your community.

Name	Shadna Nand
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>This proposal to increase the rates will create massive financial pressures on the landlords, which then will result in higher rental prices and more expensive emergency housing.</p> <p>The current inflation rate is already putting pressure on many homeowners who are struggling and at the verge of losing their homes. This increase will be just that "icing on the cake".</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>I strongly object to the increase in rates, request that the council to explore ALL the avenues where the reduction can be implemented on outgoings. I appreciate that the council has done some work on the cost cutting.</p> <p>With an eye to reducing expense and adding value system in place.</p>

Name	Ali Rhodes
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>I'm "struck" dumb by the amount of the proposed increase in rates. How is it that Council has allowed the deficit to become so great? That question, asked several times at the meeting in Putaruru, and I'm sure other meetings too, Was never satisfactorily answered. When the rate of inflation in NZ is 7% asking for an 18.5% rate increase is preposterous. Why has it got to this?</p> <p>My major concerns are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. for the elderly in this town who are living solely on their super. There is a lot of anxiety out there, mainly the response I've heard is "will I have to sell my house"! There is a definite feeling of possible loss for these people, who have worked their entire lives, paid rates and taxes and now are quietly but disturbingly anxious. With prices of power, food, petrol etc rising everyone is feeling it. I acknowledge Council as well. There may be options available if people contact council as stated at the meeting, but the elderly are proud and if they say they can't afford it they simply can't afford it. 2. If the proposed increase goes ahead will services in our town improve? E.g. street lighting, roads etc. I don't mean stay the same, I mean improve. 3. I'm fairly sure that many counsellors are equally disturbed by this proposal. Is there an "authority" above Council who can be contacted re the appalling deficit? Surely there must be some higher authority who keeps an eye on council spending? Several "projects" were a complete disaster, Leith Place toilets being one of them, at enormous cost to the ratepayers. <p>Thank you for your time.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Christine Miller
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Council needs to find a way to retrieve the 20 million plus that has been tied up indefinitely. Make an effort to retrieve some if not all of the outstanding rates. 2 million is a lot of money and could help reduce the debt. Shop around for better power prices.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	House holders do this to reduce costs. Can't the Council? Do the Council vehicles get updated? If yes, do they need to drive around in new cars etc. The householder doesn't. The amount of vehicles is also a concern.

Name	Hazel Brown
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	The annual rate increase is absolutely ridiculous, I understand inflation etc but it is beyond unrealistic and people are already living absolutely skimp. Why such a massive increase yet there are so many council cars parked out the back locked up all the time. As a home owner it is a massive struggle to afford to live now.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Brian Hewson
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	The proposed rate increase is too high. It should be no higher than the current rate of inflation. Not double the rate of inflation! Having the rate increase ear-tagged so council can pay down dept, to stop itself from reaching its debt limit, is an indication of incompetence of the financial team and they all need to be sacked. How can they allow council to get so deep in debt? I bet that the financial team members do not run their own personal finances the same as they run council finances, and if they do, they should not oversee rate payer's money. Having the 18.5% rate increase ear-tagged to pay down debt so that council can carry on borrowing only means that a few years down the track, council will be faced with another debt limit and will want to increase rates again. If council is having to borrow money to carry out ordinary normal operations, then council is obviously spending beyond its means and needs to cut back. Cuts need to be made! User pay philosophy must be implemented! Big dollar projects in the plan need to be cancelled! Most rate payers are already struggling. Raising the rates double the rate of inflation is just way to over the top. DONT DO IT!
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Regarding the millions needed to upgrade infrastructure on the premise that the new owners of the water and waste water systems will take over that debt, is pie in the sky. The government will change that to ensure councils will keep that debt for the rate payers to pay for. So do not spend money on the water/wastewater upgrade, let the new owners wear that cost.

Name	Arthur Bullot
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I object to the Rate rise of 18.5%. I suggest you cut back on your projects and wasting rate payers money.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	I suggest you all take a pay cut as we all are suffering out here. I do know you have a strategy were we the public will think we are getting a good deal. I suggest 5%.

Name	Heenie & Hans Majoor
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Totally anti rate increase of amount proposed in budget. We need to 10% increase is our limit to accept.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Roger Drower
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Please see attachment
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Please see attachment below

SWDC Rates Submission 2023

Rates 2020-2021 rating year when due to COVID-19 there were no increase to our rates? see below

In July last year we included the attached flyer with the rates invoices sent out in early August. This was the first invoice sent with the new rates amounts for 2021-22. The flyer advised ratepayers to check their automatic payment amounts and also that a one off payment may be necessary to ensure rates are paid in full by the due dates

South Waikato District Council

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Council adopted the Annual Plan (AP) 2020-21 today, following public consultation. This AP was an unusual one, given the world pandemic events.

Knowing the pressures that ratepayers and our community would be under in coming months, Council did all it could to achieve a zero percent average rate revenue increase.

Final figures show that the majority of ratepayers will see a small decrease in rates (more than 7,800 properties).

Please visit our website and read the media statement for the full detail. Too long to include in a post.

<https://www.southwaikato.govt.nz/our-council/news?item=id:2ahc95r1r1cxby8waypw>

To fix the deficit, cope with the bow wave caused by the zero per cent rate increase we adopted during COVID and meet the current financial challenges, we need approximately 27% more income than we're currently receiving. Obviously a 27% average rate increase is too high.

Our Council has kept rates increases as low as possible for years. Most of our neighbouring councils have been increasing rates to cover cost challenges over the past years. We've tried to remain low, but it's not sustainable. The proposed average rate increase of 18.5% strikes a balance between financial sustainability and rates affordability. The proposed 18.5% rate increase in dollar terms is \$13.77 per week. Please see the rates examples earlier in this document (on page 4) for more detail

Between 6.8% to 8.2% is too high coming out of Covid where some people finding money is too hard.

CBD Carpark finely New lighting since 2017 and Trees covering Lights. Needs CCTV in that end of Dreghorn Carpark (Church end). Good to see that the tree people trimmed the trees in the carpark.

CBD No Pet/family Dogs

Dog exercise area in the park Not the CBD. Taking pet/family dog/s in the CBD the fine is \$, But Certify Disability/Service Dog/s are allowed at all public place/s under GOVT Dog Control Act 1996 section 2 certified Dog/s for public our protection under work safe 2015 our safety is first.

Library Microfilm Reader needed.

The old countdown was given to SWDC for the library why is this not on the plane? Old Countdown was given to SWDC by the Est of W Pellinkan. Has this been sold?

Landfill transfer station Free for green waste so this is not been dumped on the road, bush, on other property. SWDC can turn it into compost and then sell the compost. Waste per tonne \$250.00

per tonne 2021-2022 it is bad to see rubbish left on the side of the road, been put on empty property, in the bush and in business area within SWD.

Consultant Fee reduce this

Option A

Pensioner Housing

Same people are finding it hard I hope they can get Accommodation Supplement (AS)

I would go for Option B

Some of the tenants are not happy they are scared if (AS) if WINZ MSD don't help out that they maybe been put on the road if they cannot pay the rent.

SWDC sport events centre, The Plaza, Arapuni and Tirau.

I agree with the fees. People damage the buildings in and outside they pay for it.

Parks and Reserves Leith Place upgrade Toilet's is a big stuff up as wheelchair's with cares

People with service dogs cannot get into the toilets SWDC want to spend other \$1,000,000

I can see this is will be the same on the pools and library.

Pools

No Charge sweet. what's the catch? On page26

Option B for ventilation air-conditioning, upgrade fire alarms, building cladding, acoustic ceiling, lighting, power review, painting, skylights and roofing. 2,300,000 **I understand this was been done.**

Last financial year?

Activity What we could potentially look to change Possible impacts Roading Reduce roadside mowing, second road marking, maintenance/issue response times, cleaning cycles, information collected. Safety, land instability, network availability, unkempt, knowledge

Do this once and do this right \$4,717,000 this is high

Parks and Reserves Increasing grass height, removal of flower beds, reduced maintenance of play equipment and other park structures Scruffy looking, litter accumulation, visual appeal, safety, reduced reserve use, negative perception

Playgrounds got this two times one @ \$8,000 second @ \$110,000 Why so much? (reduced maintenance of play equipment and other park structures)

Solid Waste Close or reduced hours of transfer stations Increased travel for residents, reduced access, increase in illegal dumping, negative perception of district

Council Online Web Services Development Programme 40,000

Information Systems Desktop PC Hardware 90,500

Information Systems IS Core Infrastructure - Firewall Replacement 27,000

Physical Network Redesign 50,000

Information Systems Online Resource Consents 20,000

Information Systems Online Dog Registrations 20,000

Information Systems Website Development 20,000

Information Systems HRIS Managed HR Software 75,000

Magiq ERP Development 100,000 Meeting Room Upgrades 80,000

This is to high

Vehicle Replacement 300,000 how many ?

Economic - Tokoroa Maraetai Road Intermodal Business Park 3,324,000

WW - Tokoroa Maraetai Road Intermodal Business Park 294,000

Stormwater - Tokoroa Maraetai Road Intermodal Business Park 1,175,000

Water - Tokoroa Maraetai Road Intermodal Business Park 489,000

Museum to look after our history within the SWD.

Town footpaths needs to be look at when it is wet. This is under work safe.

Top Bossies within SWDC getting to much pay. Need to be reduces

New Zealand Inflation Rate Still at 1.4%

The annual inflation rate in New Zealand remained unchanged at 1.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2020, well above market expectations of a 1 percent increase. It was the lowest inflation rate since the first quarter of 2018, amid the coronavirus pandemic. Non-tradable inflation jumped 2.8 percent after increasing 2.6 percent in the year to September. Prices of housing and household utilities increased 2.6 percent, with rentals up 2.9 percent. Meanwhile, food prices rose 2.5 percent, with prices of fruit and vegetables surging 8.6 percent. Also, liquor & tobacco inflation was recorded at 6 percent, with prices of cigarettes up 11 percent. On the flip side, transport

prices decreased 3.7 percent, dragged by lockdowns and an 8.1 percent drop in private transport supplies and services. On a quarterly basis, consumer prices went up 0.5 percent following a 0.7 percent increase in the previous period. less

2021-01-21

Annual Plan 2020-21 adopted

Date:

25 Jun 2020, 12:00 am

Categories: <https://www.southwaikato.govt.nz/our-council/news?item=id:2ahc95r1r1cxby8waypw>

News

Released: 25 June 2020

Council adopted the Annual Plan 2020-21 today following public consultation. Council had been preparing the Annual Plan as normal in the months leading up to March events when the world changed as New Zealand went into an Alert Level 4 lockdown to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Knowing the pressures that ratepayers and our community would be under in coming months, Council went back to the drawing board and amended the proposed plan to achieve a zero percent average rate revenue increase.

Our rates revenue increase identified in the Long Term Plan had been 7%. Council reduced this to 0% by delaying the implementation of the wheelie bins until July 2021, not funding some of the three waters asset replacement reserves for a period of one year, tightening our belt where possible without impacting levels of service too much, postponing a few projects, staging other programmes over several years and deciding against doing several initiatives all together.

“A zero percent rate revenue increase means Council is not collecting any more total rates than we did in the 2019-20 year,” said Ben Smit, Council’s Chief Executive. “This does not mean that every ratepayer won’t have an increase in rates as individual properties have a different mix of services and situations.”

The vast majority of ratepayers will see a small decrease in rates (more than 7,800 properties), while 2,100 properties will see an increase, most moderate.

“Essentially 95% of properties have changes between -3% to +4.7%, with 98% of properties having changes between -12.5% to +7.4%,” continued Mr Smit. “Of these the largest decreases are non-profit organisations with rates remissions. The largest increases are some of the properties with rubbish collection added.”

Around 2% of properties will have larger rate increases generally relate to property changes such as new subdivisions, new buildings and signing up to a clean heat programme.

Several other smaller decisions were also made, including:

- Introducing CCTV and Wifi into the Tīrau CBD for improved community safety.
- Making funding for recycling more equitable across all ratepayers, depending on the level of service.
- Including the Pellikan Place area into our urban household waste collection service, following requests from some residents.

- Tidying up two waste collection anomaly areas in Amisfield and Baird Road, where residents historically got a recycling collection but not a rubbish collection. Council will now be delivering both services to this area.

“Council is also working on a COVID-19 recovery plan. This involves applying for government funding for infrastructure projects to create construction jobs to bring forward much needed work, looking at how we can support our community through welfare and community teams, and support local business to stimulate our economy,” said Mayor Jenny Shattock. “This plan enables Council to be responsive in order to support our community as required during the coming times.”

I know some people are living on \$10 per week or less after their bill been paid for that \$10 to buy food this is low income people. Some do not have power and phone.

I know an older person has sold their car so they can pay their RATES for the next 3 years

I know a family has just turned off their power

I know a person is selling up

Yes I would like to speak on this.

Many thanks be safe.

Roger.

Name	Lisa Whittingham
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Recently moved to Tokoroa and purchased our first home as it is an affordable place to buy. Very worried to see how much our rates are going to increase by. Will have to cut expenses in other (already tight) areas to account for this
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Teri Veitch
Organisation name	Waimarino Farm Ltd
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Concerned at the high rate, that the amount announced reflects poor management and forecasting. On page 7 reference is made states that it is a massive amount of work that we need to do to properly. That analysis is incomplete. It does not fill a rate payer with any confidence that Council actually do understand the financial position.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	I believe the proposal played inaccurate weightings on the cost pressure - minimising the harm that has been caused by the huge investment in three waters. That yes other councils were raising rates over time to avoid such a rate hike at a time when households could least afford it. As other councils just like many businesses and families forecasted these pressures at this time. What is the justification or the formula for assessing increases from urban, lifestyle and rural when rural have less service provision from council?

Name	Natasha Edwards
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	It's hard on those who are already struggling, Putaruru pays more for rates than the average property in Tokoroa yet Tokoroa has more rates money spent in it and more resources. The roads are already terrible in town so if you are going to hike the rates up by that amount then a lot of ratepayers will expect services to be of a high standard. The transfer station needs to be reviewed as I do believe the costs are not accurate when paying for things to be dumped. I paid a lot of money dumping items, felt like I was charged excessively and I do believe it's partly why there is a litter issue that will increase if transfer station is open for less hours. Maybe review what vehicles staff in the council are using as some seem to be flashier than necessary for the job. Don't just focus money on Tokoroa as the previous mayors have as a lot have money has been wasted on projects that didn't end up adding much value into that town as intended.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	If you do increase it by the proposed amount then I hope the money is well spent as a lot of people in our community are already struggling will paying their rent/mortgage

Name	Mark Brawn
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>Once more the rate payers are expected to bear the consequences of poor decisions made by council. Here in Arapuni we are consistently overlooked and actually ignored in consultations. I draw your attention specifically to the Concept Plan, where we submitted a document exactly per the council's instructions, and it was completely ignored.</p> <p>Services are very sparse here and we will see no change for the rates increase. There's actually been a marked decrease recently even though rates continue to sky rocket. It's understandable that to maintain core services, everyone should help fund services that not everyone will use, but here in Arapuni we have almost no services, and the only plan for us seemingly is to provide an \$80k barbecue - that no one asked for or wanted (see note above about the concept plan). It surprises me that such an important part of the local heritage is so low on the Council's priority list.</p> <p>At the recent rates "consultation" meeting here, council representatives were highly aloof when asked what was to stop the council from continuing to make poor budgetary decisions and subsequently to demand another 18.5% (or more) increase next year... Where will it end? And do the rate payers really have any say whatsoever? These "consultations" feel like little more than a box-ticking exercise. Indeed, it felt to me like the councilors were just there to prime us for even greater increases next year. All these increases are really doing is to further disenfranchise the rate payers and spread apathy and frustration about Council.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>On a practical note: I don't understand why the council does not properly plan for lean economic times ahead? It seems to me that the current rot could have been avoided if, during the period of low interest rates, the council had tried to create a financial buffer, rather than blowing cash on frivolous pet projects in Tokoroa and Putaruru. The elected members come and go - and are all too easy to blame for endemic problems in council. I wonder however if any consultants or permanent staff members are ever held accountable for their part in bad decision making..?</p>

Name	Christine Bedford
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>I object to this increase, the average family, elderly, and just about everyone I know are struggling now, so think about what you are planning. The council needs to have a good hard look at themselves and how they operate. I'm sure they can reduce or postpone work for 12 months to try pay off loans. How about selling some assets,? Sont just keep putting rates up. Every one needs to tighten belts at the moment so why not council, better than people losing their homes. I also believe we should put on hold for 1 to 2 years the community grants. They aren't as important as our homes and being able to eat thanks. The rates rebates are not enough now for low income ratepayers and I see the rate increase adding pressure while the council just seems to ignore it's people. Higher rates also means higher rent again people suffer a lot of us dont have secondary support we just struggle.. have a heart please think again, look at what can be sold to reduce debt first ,, thankyou</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>The council could have a pay cut maybe, they obviously dont need it if they are so free about making us ratepayers poorer .. maybe also sell your expensive pictures hanging in council office ?? I'd rather have a home than a pretty picture thanks</p>

Name	Barrie and Jan Goodwin
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	This submission is for speed management on Tapapa Road. For years we have put up with cars speeding down our road to beat vehicles travelling through Fitzgerald Glade. We would welcome a speed reduction.

Name	Lionel Phillips
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I do not support any of the councils recommendations at all.My thoughts are that it is over the top and un affordable for myself.Way too expensive.This is the South Waikato and not Auckland I am a single income earner of 62 yrs of age and have been in Tirau since 2016. My house has no insulation at all and I cannot afford to pay for heating or do any alterations as I dont earn much and have other bills to pay and cannot save any money as there is none left. I have walls without paint and wallpaper since moving in and have no way setting money aside for any alterations. My 1950 's house valuations are completely over the top too as nothing has been done like improvements etc.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Yes, I could not challenge the 2 previous valuations as on both occassions I was in hospital for a period of time and only saw the letters from council after it has been closed. Inflation is at a record high,morgage rates has increased majorly, food prices are sky rocketing. How do you expect me to live. li suggest that you cut some of your services and your salaries, you are supposed to help us not rip us off. Less use of property value rates and not more.The rates increase is way above the inflation rate. How can you justify me paying \$3700 per year in rates for a 2 bedroom 1950 house with no floor,ceiling and wall insulation? People in other areas and with more modern houses pay less than myself??? This shack I live in is not worth paying all that rates.NOT AT ALL

Name	Linda Cole
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on the annual rate increase. I would prefer a lower increase as I have a mortgage and am living alone. I understand that with world events at play, costs do rise but would appreciate a more gentle approach to the rates hike. There are many women like myself still servicing a mortgage in this town and a high increase will cause hardship for many. Thank you for your time..
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Charles Williams
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Rates for us at Horahora Road is too high. More than 30% of what we pay for we don't even get. Things like sewage, water and rubbish collection etc.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Whatever the rates increase is, we should only be paying minimum of 30% of that.

Name	Hilary Stephen
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	the South Waikato communities cannot afford any rates increases, especially NOT the 18.5 % proposed. We have not had salary increases over the last 3 years, and in fact there are many that are still doing "catch-up" due to being mandated off jobs. many of us are only just surviving financially. You need to join us in battening down the hatches, we are all in for a very bumpy ride. Stop all community projects, stop all consultants, stop all interim consultants, reduce spend on parks. If you put the squeeze on this community, rents will soar and the family spend will be affected, you run a severe risk of MAJOR domestic issues, eg. long term health problems due to food unaffordability, and subsequent mental and physical deterioration, social issues are very likely to escalate not decline.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	cut your cloth according to what the community can afford. Cut your top salaries if you have to. Does the council really need a highly paid CEO? Is it time to do a cost benefit analysis?

Name	Mike Cherry
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I propose 11% increase and no spending. Only on our main services, no new projects for two years (cut regulatory 7%) That takes you down to 12%
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	I would like to see an independent audit on all council financials.

Name	Herman van Rooijen
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>Introduction Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa I have resided in the South Waikato district (SWD) for close to 60 years and served on the SWD Council from 1998 to 2019. I attended 3 recent consultation meetings to gain understanding regarding this annual plan. I understand the need for a rates rise, therefore I support the proposed 18.5% median scenario, with the understanding that downward adjustments will be made if at all possible. I agree with the very many ratepayers that voiced during consultation, and to myself personally, that an 18.5% rise is difficult to accept.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>Please accept my submission to the South Waikato District's Annual Plan 2023. As I have stated, I wish to speak to my submission. I have put a lot of time and effort into this ,so if needed to answer questions, I may apply for an extension of time, if warranted. Kind regards, Herman Van Rooijen</p>

Name	Anthony McCormack
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>Can a rates discount be offered to non-profit entities housing residents on fixed incomes. e.eg Rangiuira</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Lorraine and Trevor Brewer
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>It will be tough for Retiree homeowners with a 18.5% rate increase, after all we are on a fixed income. It is higher than the 6.5 GDP. Also, there's a living crisis so we are against this high increase.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Edwin Moorthy
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I disagree with the 18.5% increase totally. The rates does not have to go up.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Who audits all the Drivers.? you have??

Name	Regina Manders
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Far to high for most peoples budget, see attached letter
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Please take a hard look at Council expenditure - how many things can be deferred. Swimming pool necessary as NZ has a lot of water and children need to learn to swim. Many schools no longer have swimming pools. See attached Letter below

My view, I feel that by increasing rates by 18.5% there are many pensioners and families who will no longer have enough to make ends meet.

A single person on NZ super only gets \$477 a week, depending on the value of their home SWDC rates will be \$70.00 per week, add to that regional rates and insurance, both which are also bound to increase a good proportion of their money is already gone. They also need a phone and electricity. I do know that those in the Rangiora units who only have NZ super are finding it hard since the fees increased to over \$500.00 a month.

If these can no longer afford to stay what happens to them?, There is not enough affordable pensioner housing in the area.

Families, especially solo parent families will also find it impossible to find that extra money. They are already under pressure with interest rates or rent rising. I know you will say its only \$10-12 a week but for them it is a dozen eggs or a kilo of cheese or 2 bottles of milk and 2 loaves of bread. What are these people having to go without to make ends meet?

I don't fully understand the financial report but I see that the Maraetai rd Intermodal Business park is going to cost in excess of \$6Million, I did see that council is getting a \$3Million grant towards it, but it does let us paying in excess of \$3Million. How much interest is there in this development and how long before there is a return on this investment.

The other major project seems to be Stanley park which I believe is a subdivision for housing.

The new Putaruru subdivisions are not full, so maybe that can wait till things start to move in an upward direction.

I wonder why \$1Million needs to be spent on the Leith pl toilets so soon after constructions.

I do think that Council really needs to look at their expenditure and put some projects on hold until they have re-evaluated all their costs.

Is the Council Portico and seating in the Plaza necessary this coming year or can it be deferred for 2-3 years? Are there other projects that can go on hold?

The 3 Waters, when that happens I don't see our rates going down by 30%, yet we will the have a cost to central government and our total cost will rise again.

The Rate payers of the district are facing as many difficulties with their budget as Council and they don't have a bottomless pit of money. Tokoroa has a higher than average unemployment rate and Putaruru has a greater number of pensioners.

I would like Council to take a good hard look at the expenses and make cuts to keep the increase to 7.1% as proposed in the LTP or below without adding extra debit.

Looking at the Long term plan on the Council Website it states that the increase in rates will not be more than 9% in any given year, the highest will be 2024-24 at 8.6%.

Name	Sharon Tanner
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>My thoughts on the 18.5% rates increase are:</p> <p>While I agree with paying off debt as fast as possible I would like to think that we are not in debt due to poor councillor decisions/ideas. For example the Maraetai Rd Business Park, are there business's already to go into the business park with estimated revenue to warrant investing \$20mil and \$5,282,000 expenditure in the annual plan? The rates revenue for eg: at \$6000 x 13 facilities would take 256 years to pay back the investment. The concept of this in Putaruru has not taken off? I would like to know the list of business's that are promising to utilise the area and account for 150-200 new jobs in the area as it would be ideal to create those jobs but is it a reality?</p> <p>Also why has council committed over \$50mil to several capital projects in the three water space? We are not even certain this will happen and as a council you should be advocating a big "no" to the government not putting aside money/taking loans out for something your community doesn't want. Also you have said the government along with our assets takes our debt, is the government instigating debt repayment from councils in the governments future favour? There is no way we should be getting a loan for \$50mil, why don't we address the three waters when/if it is actually required.</p> <p>I propose considering we are in a recession and business and home owners are financially struggling that the council sticks with the inflation rate of 7.2% or in close proximity, cuts expenditure on the non essential items and takes no more loans and works within the revenue gathered.</p> <p>Maybe look at not spending money on leith place toilets \$1,000,000, netball park resurfacing \$430,000, additional walkways \$28,000, additional play equipment \$4500, rural bike racks \$11,500, digital games \$8,000, play equipment renewals \$100,000 (Park and reserves possible savings \$1,582,000)</p> <p>replacement of carpet tiles \$80,000, swimming pool upgrade \$2,300,000, pool equipment and refurbishment \$100,000 (Community Facilities possible savings \$2,480,000) Does pavement rehab need to be done this time around? And is there a more economical option \$1,077,000, and the widening \$216,000 (transport and roading possible savings \$1,293,000), waste water telemetry \$1,152,000 (not sure what this does), maraetai business park (wastewater possible savings \$1,446,000), maraetai business park stormwater \$1,175,000 savings, water supply health and safety improvements? \$15,000, maraetai business park \$489,000 (water supply possible savings \$504,000), seat replacement \$60,000, EV charging hub \$50,000, front portacom replacement \$135,000, office building renewal \$20,000 (possible property savings \$265,000) desktop pc hardware \$90,500, business improvement \$36,000, meeting room upgrades \$80,000, vehicle replacment \$300,000, furniture renewals \$10,000 (possible governance savings \$516,500)</p> <p>Total possible savings \$9,261,500, if we could be hard on ourselves council and rate payers, by only spending on things that are essential, roading, waste/storm water, water, libraries, one nice park per town, cemeteries, toilets, until we are out of debt and then re-look at refurbishments once money is physically available the South Waikato could become profitable again like it was under Gordon Blake's error. I would like to know who the financial advisor is that was mentioned at the annual meeting and is there a person in place that is viewing all of the items needing expenditure and assessing what is desperately needing to be done versus can wait for 1 to 2 years or so?</p> <p>Sorry about the list, I certainly do not know all the ins and outs that the councillors do, they were just items that stood out to me that could be cut/reduced. Debt repayment needs to be added in. I presume the Capex project payments comes out of payments of staff and suppliers? If so if we did manage to save the Total possible savings \$9,261,500 our funding balance would be \$11,682,077 as an example.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>If rates impact families along with mortgage interest rates they stop spending at business's and then there is a whole ripple affect, we need to keep any impact as balanced and economical as possible, I have two of my staff who have partners working, one with young children and when I mentioned the 18.5% rate increase the response was "Oh no" and the extra cost was instantly calculated with a serious look on their face. I have farming customers who are not taking a wage due to the increase in bank interest rates.</p> <p>Ps: the footpath outside of our building at 6 commerce street we have graciously not demanded (although mentioned) that it be repaired, we can not do our concrete drive entrance as once we do the footpath it is unusable to people in wheelchairs, so we have put up with customer complaints of not liking to drive into our premises because of the concrete edge.</p>

Name	Lisa Teokotai
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	\$14 per week increase. I would hope that with the rental nice landlords will not put this cost to the rental tenants as the rent at present is as we know high.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Great idea to let people know how to pay the increase. Direct debit payments - to ensure our people pacific/maori are well aware of the increase and keeping up with it. What else goes up? Great to keep other charges/fees the same. Regional Council ater-charges.

Name	Peter Schulte
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Greetings to Our Mayor, Councillors, CEO and Staff. I could write an essay on why we are in this situation but I won't because no one can change the past. Let's all look together to the future and deal with this in a sensible manner. We have NOW in our Council, staff who are experts in financial management. I urge all Elected Members to listen to the expert staff and make decisions accordingly for the good of our community. Forget about what happened in the past but learn from it and look to the future. I can afford the rate increases no problem but I am worried about our ratepayers who are on a fixed income as we don't want to rate them out of there houses. I would like to suggest that Ratepayers who are getting the Rate Subsidy from the government are given extra time to pay for the INCREASED amount interest free only. I don't think that anything can be done for people who rent. Last but not least I would like to mention the SWIFT Fund. They should be paying dividends to the ratepayers as they got 20 Million Dollars gifted to them in 2013. Again I like to wish everyone in our Council all the best. Peter Schulte
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Nope

Name	Tim Down
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I have been told by Council Dave Building John and Anish department and rates department to take my fireplace out in 2016 to 2017. As I am not using my fireplace take of the clean air then i will pay my rates after Council had a go at me. 18.5% I cannot afford this amount. I am on a benefit, and I am left less than \$10 a week to live on after all the bills been paid. My review is in June 2024 and WINZ will look at this next review date. I found out that i could apply for a rate rebate and put one with help form a person who is helping me. This left me no heating my home, so I have stopped paying the rates. I have talked to the rates and the Mayor about this. Council told me I have to remove my cars of my property, why should I do that when my cars have wof and license to be on the road. I have taken their word as gobble and found out later on council should put this in writing to me.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	No to the 18.5%

Name	Mindi King
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>We do not support the increase.</p> <p>Like most rate payers we have concerns, and after reading the proposal have more questions than answers.</p> <p>In the proposal page 5 it states that 'energy costs have increased by 83% with a further 29% since 2021'. What time frame is this referring to?</p> <p>What cost comparison has been done in regards to our of town contractors vs hiring local?for example the guy from Hamilton who comes to lock the gates at Colsons hill every night?</p> <p>What contingency do you have in place when people can't pay anymore?we are going to come to a point where a large proportion of people won't be able to afford to pay rates or rent increases. How much of your forecasted expenditure includes the purchase of residential property?</p> <p>With central government providing the \$3million for the business park development will this change the increase amount to rates?</p> <p>How much of revenue is used to pay for membership or consultation with non governmental and non profit organizations involved with sustainable development goals and /or 15 minute cities?</p> <p>More evidence of practical cost cutting measures and disclosure of payments outside of services to ratepayers need to be provided before any increase.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>Like every business and household costs are increasing so we need to make sensible decisions and re evaluate spending where possible. We need to get bang for our buck and not be duped into paying exorbitant amounts for things that don't serve our community or the people that visit. The Leith place toilets are an example of bad decisions that we are stuck with and an opportunity missed to provide good usable services for our people.</p> <p>The three waters reform is a trogon horse for full centralization and the stripping of local assets and we all need to support our local council to push back against a central government take over, but we need to see that our elected officials are making the right decisions with our money and protecting the assets that our community have worked and paid for over many years.</p>

Name	Colin Campbell
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>The rates rise is a necessary evil that we ratepayers have to endure. During the consultation process I was concerned by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's not acceptable for the CFO to blithely reply to ratepayers questions with comments such as "Before my time", and "I am not responsible". This was borderline insulting as the figures concerned were reported in documents produced under his watch and responsibility. I asked the question twice, he used the same reply each time, so he is consistent in his lack of knowledge it appears. It was amusing to see at a council meeting that the exact same question was asked by a councillor and he did finally attempt to answer. • The CEO made presentations that the current situation is the result of historical actions, which is probably correct. Yet when I tried to drill down into this I was silenced by comments from her that there is no need to go into the past. Another example of trying to shut down legitimate concerns. • In addition she made a statement to the effect that Waipa was not in the same situation as SWDC due in part to the fact that they had a large rate increase "three years ago". I went back (5 years) and looked at the "Gross" rates collected of both districts and found that no such event took place. A ten percent rise occurred one year, but SWDC raised by nearly the exact same percentage amount (10.01). <p>Conclusions: The main two presenters of the "Facts" thus had significant failures in their knowledge and presentation. This gave me no confidence in them or the council, it was disappointing to realize this and made me feel like we the ratepayers are being treated with disrespect. Essentially I am left feeling that with the current approach our council is prone to stumble again into major financial issues if this does not improve. Comments on "the plan": Suffice to say I would like the council to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close (or sell/lease) the airport to limit the financial drain on ratepayers as soon as possible. • Develop significant operational plans around "Three Waters" such that changes in Wellington are properly prepared for. • Close all operations in Tirua or limit them to volunteer activities only; as SWDC doe not have the resources to operate at three locations. Tirau is only 9.2 kms from Putaruru some 7 minutes. • Limit expenses ALL around as much as is practical. • Review contracts with suppliers who are claiming higher costs such as Downer who have workers doing non-essential roadside maintenance on non work days (Bridge St 3rd June flower beds etc). • Stop all non-essential travel by council staff for three years.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>I hope the council does not put its ratepayers in such a situation again. (btw, why do I have to type in my email address twice on this form? this is redundant)</p>

Name	Amanda Hema
Organisation name	South Waikato Investment Fund Trust (SWIFT)
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>The South Waikato Investment Fund Trust (SWIFT) has reviewed the Draft Annual Plan 2023-2024 Consultation Document and acknowledges the drivers behind the proposed 18.5% rates increase and the role of the South Waikato District Council to deliver core services to its communities.</p> <p>SWIFT considers the proposed rate increase will put a high level of strain on both households and businesses in South Waikato at a time when there is already significant financial pressures on the community.</p> <p>It with this view that the submission from SWIFT to the Draft Annual Plan 2023-2024 is to promote a lower average rate increase of 9-10% (whilst still a challenge for many) and encourage the South Waikato District Council to look to its upcoming LTP to spread the remaining 9.5-8.5% across 2024-2026 (and further to 2034) to allow a more graduated approach to recovery for the Council.</p> <p>Our encouragement and promotion of a gradual approach is in recognition that there are a number of existing and upcoming positive initiatives in the South Waikato that, in time, will grow a productive and resilient local economy, and reciprocally will support the Council's (and our communities) pursuit and delivery on the community outcomes "relationships ngā hononga", "growth te tupunga ohanga" and "resilience kia eke panuku".</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	Sheree Putt
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>i find it very hard because im on the benefit i live by by myself i pay rent to my parents food has also gone up as well some people cant afford food themselves i would love if the rates could be decreased so people can pay for things as its very hard for others.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	no

Name	Bruce Simpson
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>It is far to high for many of the lower-income members of our community to handle and there are many better ways to generate the revenues needed by this district than to simply dip further into the pockets of what previous mayors have called "an economically deprived district".</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>We have far too many under-used assets that seem to be tying up valuable capital in the interests of a very, very small (and already well-to-do) segment of our society.</p> <p>This council has a history of ignoring opportunities to reduce its costs by embracing the offers made by independent third parties. This needs to change.</p>

Name	John Ghent
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	See attachment
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	See attachment Below

In March Council launched a re-organisation and created new middle management positions with salaries of \$100,000 to \$150,000. This will cost ratepayers about one million dollars a year.

Then two months later in May we learn that council wants to increase rates by 18.5%. And council employees on minimal wages have had their hours reduced. Surely it would make more sense to reduce management hours. One executive gets as much per annum as six of the lower paid – and guess who does the work!

So are these upper executives worth the money? Not on the evidence of the previous long term plan, nor of this current proposal. On page four they set out in chart form the rating proposals for South Waikato districts according to urban, lifestyle and rural properties.

Nowhere do they show the rates for commercial properties. In other communities, commercial properties are rated at two to three times the residential rate. In South Waikato, the ratio is one to one (1:1) even though businesses get more services than residents. Of course we all feel sympathy for local businessmen who may struggle to get by, but the same benefits go to booze outlets, vape shops, supermarkets and the big banks which suck money out of the community.

Local business will suffer if the general rates go up excessively. Every \$100 paid to council is \$100 that can't be spent on school uniforms, appliances or lawn mowers. Commercial property owners should begin to pay a fair share of the total rates and reduce the burden on residential rate-payers.

On page 5, Council tells us that the current inflation rate of 7.2% must be added to another 7% for the Covid year 2020-21. But the inflation rate was less that year - and still 7 + 7 only makes 14 so where does 18.5% come from?

Also on page 5 they tell us that energy costs have gone up by 83% with a further 30% since 2021. That comes to 113% but since when? These figures do not add up. Some-one in management produced them and someone else at executive level approved them.

Then it comes out on page five – salary increases are part of the problem. Of course as long as Council continues to recruit shining cuckoos from outside the district the problem will continue. The answer would be to recruit and develop staff within the community. The present policy of keeping people down only prolongs the agony. *(An exception may be the Event Centre and Pool where staff now get opportunities for training, development and recognition.)*

On page 8 we see a couple of pie charts. These make it clear that Three Waters adds up to almost one third of costs on rates (wastewater 17%, water supply 9%, storm-water 3%). And on page 9 we see that Council plans to borrow \$50 million for Three Waters works. Council say this is an example of "good borrowing". Yet central government is begging council to hand over Three Waters. Council says this is an asset. But an asset that gives no return, costs 30% of rates and needs to borrow \$50 million at today's rates is surely not an asset but a massive debit.

On balance it appears that Council have not made a case for any increase other than for executive salaries - and that case doesn't add up.

John Ghent



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Ghent'.

Name	Linda Galbraith
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>I understand why, and that many other councils are also facing the same predicament, but as a ratepayer on limited income, 18.5% is going to be tough.</p> <p>Just a thought on the 10% option: maybe I'm reading it wrong, but if the major sticking point is the \$7m deficit, could Council apply to SWIFT for a \$7m grant to wipe this deficit? SWIFT does state that it 'is a community-owned economic development fund dedicated to the prosperity of the South Waikato.' As it is former Council money that SWIFT is managing, using a portion to give Council the ability to reduce the proposed rate increase to maybe 12 or 13% would have less impact on our rate payers prosperity, and benefit the whole district.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>I am aware that Council has made some fairly austere internal restructuring and this may be addressed already, but PLEASE stop using expensive consultants from outside the area.</p> <p>South Waikato has an extremely talented pool of people who are passionate about their towns and should be the first point of contact. Yes, it may require time to conduct public meetings, and to collate information, but it will produce a solid base to work on. It may need to be tweaked by consultants at the final stages, but locals will feel included and heard, and not feel they're being ignored by Council while large amounts of money is spent on 'outsiders' telling us what we want or should have.</p>

Name	Marama Tahapehi
Organisation name	Rugby League Clubs - Midlands, Pacific Sharks, Forestland Falcons, Raukawa ki Waikato, Te Whanau o Noa
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	<p>Nil. Each club will pay a fee for the use of the fields during the season.</p>
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>A sustainable and long-term view on how to house sporting organisations - hubbing concept. Sharing of costs for future use of facilities. Expansion of Events Centre to house sporting organisations - meeting rooms and access to changing sheds that conform to the requirements of our code and for the growth of young girls and women in rugby and rugby league and basketball. Cultural aspects of those landscapes in pasifika and maori are important as well.</p>

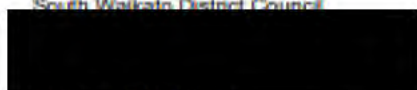
Name	Mary-Ann Mathis
Organisation name	Tokoroa Federated Farmers
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	See attachment
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	See Attachment below



SUBMISSION

TELEPHONE 0800 327 646 | WEBSITE WWW.FERFARM.ORG.NZ

To: South Waikato District Council



Submission on: Annual Plan 2023/2024

Submission by: Federated Farmers of New Zealand

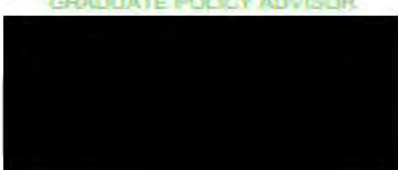
Contact: Mary-Ann Mathis

TOKOROA FEDERATED FARMERS BRANCH CHAIR



Address for service: Frances Casey

GRADUATE POLICY ADVISOR



and ratepayers; Inflation is rising, the long-term impacts of recent weather events and the COVID-19 pandemic are unknown. Additionally, the future regulatory environment Councils will operate in has some unknowns.

- 2.3. Further, a culmination of factors is putting families under significant pressure at the moment. Our members, as farmers, also face additional substantial challenges, including recovery efforts, labour shortages, increasing compliance costs, supply chain problems and increases in farm input costs.
- 2.4. We encourage Council to focus on 'must do' projects, keep spending under firm control, and strive for value for money to reduce pressure on our members who are significant ratepayers.

3. RATES

- 3.1. Rates are one of the most notable overhead expenses for our members. On account of the property value rating system required of councils by law, any percentage rate increase can substantially increase the cash required of farmers who may well not experience any increase in benefit from Council services.
- 3.2. Rural ratepayers are facing an increase of approximately 14%. Although this is lower than the average, rural rates do not include the cost of utilities such as water and wastewater and in cash terms the average rural properties shown in the consultation document face an increase of \$1500 to \$2000.
- 3.3. Council included in its consultation document other rate increase options that Council considered. While Federated Farmers understands that Council is not proposing these options, we encourage Council to consider implementing some of the saving measures listed on page 7 of the consultation document - such as reducing the use of consultants, reducing roadside mowing frequency and maintenance of council owned buildings and facilities. Reducing these services are good examples of ways to save money to ease the rate increase.
- 3.4. We note that Council mentions that changes to these services require community engagement through the LTP process as this is a matter of service levels. However, in our view, Council could consider reducing service levels in more marginal areas such as those outlined above in submission point 3.3.

- 3.5. While council might want to postpone reducing activities for consultation reasons, we think there are lots that the council can do now to reduce the rural rate increase by reducing the level of council services.

Recommendation:

- Council makes some of the reductions outlined on page 7 of the consultation document to reduce rural rate increases.

4. UNIFORM ANNUAL GENERAL CHARGE (UAGC)

- 4.1. Federated Farmers has long held frustrations with the inequities created by the current property-based rating system legislated under the Local Government Act 2002. The use of the UAGC can in part, help to address that inequity by being a fairer way to rate for services that provide an equal or indistinguishable level of benefit across rate payer groups.
- 4.2. Federated Farmers pays particular attention to a council's UAGC funding policy and will always seek maximum allowable use of this rating tool under the rule in section 21 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002. We thank Council for publishing the UAGC as a percentage of total rate revenue for 2023/2024, as this is unfortunately not common practice.
- 4.3. Council has indicated in its supporting financial information that the UAGC for 2023/2024 is 16% of total rate revenue. We note that in the past UAGC has been as high as 28.4%. Lowering the UAGC as an affordability measure for urban rate payers for example can increase rates by hundreds of dollars for farmers.
- 4.4. Federated Farmers is concerned that the UAGC is trending downwards. In future years there may not be a great deal of UAGC left to work with.
- 4.5. While Council is not formally consulting on this, we would like to remind Council of its importance to our members ahead of LTP deliberations.

Recommendation:

- That Council continue its transparent practice of publishing the UAGC as a percentage of total rate revenue and consider for the LTP restoring it to its formally higher level.

5. ROADING

- 5.1. The condition of local roads in a district is a perennial concern for Federated Farmers. Local roads are essential socially and economically to our members, and as a network, the whole district. Local roads are one of the main benefits that our members derive from District Councils, hence our interest.
- 5.2. We encourage Council to recognise the social wellbeing and economic benefit of rural roads and prioritise repairs and maintenance for these roads.
- 5.3. Federated Farmers would like to see maintenance and repairs of rural roads conducted correctly and efficiently using appropriate methods that will have a lasting rather than short term effect.

Recommendations:

- Council prioritise maintenance of rural roads.
- Council repair and maintain rural roads with efficient methods that have lasting effects.

6. LONG TERM PLAN

- 6.1. Federated Farmers understands that consultation with regards to developing Long Term Plan 2024-2034 is an ongoing process. Given the importance of this plan, Federated Farmers will take up opportunities to engage with this as and when appropriate over the course of the year. Council's focus on economic development and district promotion as well as involvement in community development and support along with the related Revenue and Financing Policies are of particular interest to us.

7. GENERAL

- 7.1. Recent housing and business assessments undertaken for Tirau and Tokoroa will require rezoning for residential properties. Federated Farmers are concerned at potential rating repercussions of rezoning rural land. Rezoning needs to be managed carefully to avoid the unnecessary loss of productive food producing land.
- 7.2. Our members are concerned about the increase in roadside dumping in rural areas. Roadside dumping costs Council thousands of dollars each year. Federated Farmers encourage Council to find solutions to this issue.
- 7.3.

Federated Farmers thanks South Waikato District Council for considering our submission.

About Federated Farmers

Federated Farmers of New Zealand is a not-for-profit primary sector policy and advocacy organisation that represents the majority of farming businesses in New Zealand. Federated Farmers has a long and proud history of representing the interests of New Zealand's farmers.

The Federation aims to add value to its members' farming businesses. Our key strategic outcomes include the need for New Zealand to provide an economic and social environment within which:

- Our members may operate their business in a fair and flexible commercial environment;
- Our members' families and their staff have access to services essential to the needs of the rural community; and
- Our members adopt responsible management and environmental practices.

This submission is representative of member views and reflect the fact that local government rating and spending policies impact on our member's daily lives as farmers and members of local communities.



Name	Mary-Alice Richards
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	It will cause economic hardship. Rents will rise, rural areas don't get much bang for their bucks. Most community halls are under used, if the community wants them open, they can fund raise. In town we need to look at the viability of the Timber Museum, if it is not a profitable place it is a white elephant. Use the empty space by Q store as a parking area.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Consider concreting the roundabouts and the Princess Street Garden strip. Would save plant and maintenance costs. The roundabout by the Hotel on Arapuni Street, Princess Street needs to be identified as a roundabout, it is confusing to new people. The I-site (information center) can be at the library. Consider an annual charge to library users.

Name	Dr Amy Marfell
Organisation name	Sport Waikato
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	See attachment
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	See Attachment below



**SPORT WAIKATO'S SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO THE
SOUTH WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Annual Plan 2023/24

09 June 2023

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1. ABOUT SPORT WAIKATO

Sport Waikato is one of 14 Regional Sports Trusts in Aotearoa/New Zealand, responsible for supporting Central Government and Sport New Zealand’s focus on getting more New Zealanders physically active. There is widespread and global evidence that physical activity enhances people’s physical, social, emotional, and mental health, education outcomes and general wellbeing - and makes for a more cohesive society.

Founded in 1986, Sport Waikato’s vision is to have “everyone active” so as to achieve a healthy, vibrant, physically active region through play, active recreation and sport.

OUR APPROACH

Sport Waikato is guided by Moving Waikato – the region’s unified strategy for physical activity through play, active recreation and sport. The strategy seeks to prioritise partnerships with other key agencies to influence key outcomes, including to increase the provision of opportunities for both participation and quality experiences for the people of the region. We believe that by working together we can achieve the ultimate goal of 75% of all Waikato adults and young people meeting the physical activity guidelines by 2030.

MOVING WAIKATO
A STRATEGY TO GROW PARTICIPATION IN PLAY, ACTIVE RECREATION AND SPORT IN THE WAIKATO REGION

ONE VISION
EVERYONE OUT THERE AND ACTIVE

OUR PEOPLE
A focus on providing a range of opportunities for people to be active in their communities and to enjoy the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES
A focus on providing a range of opportunities for people to be active in their communities and to enjoy the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle.

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP
A focus on providing a range of opportunities for people to be active in their communities and to enjoy the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle.

ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH WORKING TOGETHER

2. OUR SUBMISSION ON YOUR PROPOSED ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24

In our submission, we wish to comment on the following:

1. **Thank you:** On behalf of the people of the South Waikato District, Sport Waikato thank you for your ongoing contribution to play, active recreation and sport. Councils are key enablers of physical activity, and your effort and investment are noted and sincerely appreciated.
2. **Long Term Plan:** Sport Waikato has reviewed our previous submission on the Long Term Plan (26th April 2021) and continues to endorse Council's approach and reiterate our feedback at that time. This submission is primarily focussed on investment in community play, active recreation and sport infrastructure.
3. **This Annual Plan Submission:** Sport Waikato's role is to advocate for projects and activities that promote physical activity opportunities in support of attaining the ambitions of Moving Waikato, are compatible with our strategies and guiding documents, and are underpinned through insights.

Existing Projects

Sport Waikato strongly advocates for the development of facilities, spaces and places that are affordable, efficient, effective (e.g. meeting the needs of people and communities) and sustainable. Changing participation trends and preferences require investment that supports how people play, actively recreate and participate in sport.

From insights gathered at local, regional and national levels it is clear that active recreation is a major contributor to the way that our communities in the South Waikato are being physically active, and therefore supporting their health and wellbeing. Walking, running, swimming and cycling are consistently ranked among the top activities for people in the district. Key themes emerging from recent surveying indicate that access, connectivity, and cost can be both enablers and barriers to people being physically active.

With the above in mind, **Sport Waikato supports the continued investment by Council** in the following projects, will dedicate resource to supporting project outcomes, and maintains an active interest in their ability to reduce barriers to physical activity:

- Upgrade to Leith Place Toilets
- Walkway renewals
- Walkway additions
- Play equipment renewals
- Play equipment additions
- Rural bike racks
- Playground investment
- Signage, furniture, bins and fences

Sport Waikato are happy to work with Council on these key projects to ensure they meet the needs of the communities they serve. In fact, the local Play, Active Recreation and Sport Plan (currently in review) can play a key part in the planning and execution of these projects, as can the valuable and

robust datasets Sport Waikato holds regarding the physical activity barriers, preferences and needs of the communities of the South Waikato.

Sport Waikato understands the challenges Councils in our region face when it comes to rising operational costs and delivering capital projects. With this in mind, **we encourage Council to reconsider their investment in** the following projects:

- **Glenshea Park Netball Courts Resurfacing** - consideration for the resurfacing of Glenshea Park should be further investigated to ensure the courts can be well utilised among a number of codes to ensure maximal optimisation of this community asset (e.g., by netball but also the likes of basketball, tennis, pater tennis etc). Multi-purpose facilities versus assets for use by a single code, represent the largest return on investment for Councils. Sport Waikato would be happy to work alongside Council to understand how they can maximise their investment via this project.
- **Playground Digital Games Elizabeth Park** - during the trial of the digital games at Elizabeth Park by Magical Park there was inconsistency in the GPS, and therefore, the ability for games to be able to be accessed by the community. We recommend that an alternative to activating parks be considered, which may or may not include a digital component.

It is our opinion that these important projects have the ability to contribute significantly to the health and wellbeing of the South Waikato communities and in light of barriers such as access, it is important to carefully consider the implications of delaying provision.

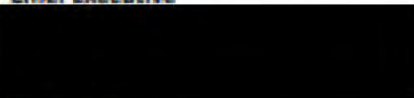
4. Key Documents to refer to in Reference to this Submission

- Moving Waikato
- The Waikato Regional Active Spaces Plan (WRASP)
- South Waikato Play, Active Recreation and Sport Plan

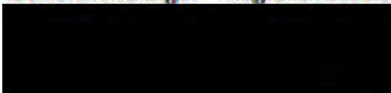
3. SPORT WAIKATO CONTACTS

Should the Council wish to seek further information or clarification on this submission, please contact:

Matthew Cooper
Chief Executive



Amy Marfell
General Manager – Regional Leadership



Name	Mike Whiteman
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	See attachment
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	See Attachment Below

Submission to Draft Annual Plan 2023-24: Mike Whiteman

This response does not focus on the potential rates as such but rather did the process ask the right questions or consider if present approaches are appropriate?

It is acknowledged that actions of SWDC in the past are not being used to apportion blame of any sort but accept the fact, (as stated by the council), that there is a deficit of up to 7 million dollars.

3 scenarios were posited by the SWDC, (rate increases of 0%, 18.5%, 28%).

SWDC then indicated their preference for the 18.5% rate increase.

However, this method lacks impartiality as the SWDC has been the proposer and selector. The three scenarios are philosophically a 'strawman argument' where the candidate 'solutions' are easily 'knocked over' steering people towards the middle ground, the council preference.

Because an infinite number of scenarios could have been described the selection of those 3 was interesting. Some fleshing out was provided but not at a considered decision-making level.

The large graphic on page 2 of the kōrero mai document gave a strong impression that an 18.5% increase is a fact by its size and phrasing.



If the SWDC seeks "Healthy people thriving..." perhaps the approach could be different. By moving towards decision-making that is open, where important determinations acknowledge that a community has a healthy interest in the reasoning behind such matters generates trust

An open approach leads towards the stated outcomes of a safer sustainable community because "behind closed doors" is a concept from the past which has not worked. Closed workshops too may produce decisions we cannot verify because they are not open and visible, therefore undermining our local rights.

The Local Councils have as one of their consultation principles: "Councils must provide anyone who will or may be affected by the decision, or anyone who has an interest in the decision, with reasonable access to relevant information."

What a great SWDC vision it would be if it chose to raise the bar for sustainable community reasons rather than any minimum requirements - lead the change to openness.

Behind numbers and decisions are people and as Jacob Bronowski, (mathematician and philosopher) implored, "we have to touch people."

I believe that a council healthily building a plan towards 'opensure' will find that the 'big reveal' such as that of the present SWDC financial situation to the community would not have been necessary because we would have been with you all the way.

Thank you for considering this submission, sincerely

Mike Whiteman

Footnote: I assume there are SWDC policies about these matters but an open discussion starter might be this...

Open meetings: best practices guide for local governments.

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1. Public meetings — British Columbia. 2. Local government — British Columbia.

3. Executive departments — Public meetings — British Columbia.

I. British Columbia. Office of the Ombudsperson.

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Name	Tina Lopdell
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Reluctantly I agree its necessary
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Regardless of inflation and increasing interest rates, council have made a number of decisions that are now affecting the ability to pay back these loans. And ratepayers ae paying the price!

Name	Colin & Clare Bridle
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	Clearly you are looking to rate people out of their homes. We are on a fixed income and super. We own our own home. We can't sell it because we need a house to live in(theres accommodation crises!) We can't afford to sell the house and move to another town. According to the Rating and Property search our rates will go from \$2,738.86 to Proposed rate of \$3,296.37 that's another \$557.51 a year. I would not object if the Government had given us an 18.5% increase but they haven't; every household has live within a budget. You need to cut council spending accordingly. Where is the 20-million-dollar power shares gone that belong to the community that money is needed now to fill the deficit of the overspending previous mayor, Council, CEO.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	I believe that the previous mayor, CEO and some councillors failed to keep the SWIFT fund monies available and within the council's control. It should not belong to a group of business persons; its residents and ratepayers' money where is our return? We need to ask the SWIFT directors publicly to give the money back, name and shame if needs be. Or if you won't do it; shall I talk to the media and ask questions to the Auditor General's Office as a case of public interest. We are a high deprivation community and loose leadership needs to be held accountable.

Name	Nina Russell
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	The annual plan rate increase is irresponsible and will cause undue hardship to the families of this community. There are increases necessary to maintain critical services and to service the current debt, that is expected but to expect the community to pay \$300k for replacement vehicles, \$50k for an ev charging station, \$80k for meeting room improvements, replacement computers and most disgraceful of all another million dollars for that vanity project toilets at the expense of families is disgraceful.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Think of the families and ask yourselves during budgets if that expense is more important to the communities than putting food on the table.

Name	Bryan Sinclair
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	As i understand it, a change of Government will scrap 3 waters and a new government will help struggling councils. Inflation is starting to, come down and that will bring interest rates down, you should be thinking of using a bit of the investment fund to help out it belongs to the ratepayer anyway. 18.5% is far too much to hit people with in one hit who are already stressed out. Just my thoughts
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	

Name	C R Irons
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	See Attachment
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	See Attachment Below

5 June 2023.

SOUTH WAIKATO ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24
SUBMISSION

Firstly I am disgusted at the size of the proposed South Waikato 18% annual plan not only of the current staff, but previous staff in not letting the public aware of this increase when one considers the size of South Waikato and its population asking for this amount when one compares the size of Auckland 1.5 million having the same size of problem size of their annual plan! 18%.

1/ Its the same as the possible cutbacks possible in the South Waikato Newspapers!
2/ Putaruru and Teirau may not have the use of a swimming pool!! This could only have come from Head office!!

Also comments of cutbacks of staff at the districts Information bureaux. Does Council want visitors to South Waikato!

This should be kept for the Ratepayers to decide!

① My response to this if Putaruru + Teirau decides to assist and not have the pools open than similar pools in Tokarua should be closed for the same period as no paid staff would be needed!

② The Hot Pools in the Council Head office should be closed as well. We all belong to the same problem of having an extra 18% rates to fund.

See Page 2.

(3) Something to look at is your local bus service -

At present comprising covering about 25 streets in an hour and six trips a day on a regular circuit.

Last week I spent 7 days at Victoria Place rest home and hospital or respite care.

I was allowed out close to the building and on Monday at about 11.30 saw your bus service coming down Kent St and turn + pass Sever day adventist building the bus on its way to Tokoroa Hospital - this I saw the bus through to Friday - total 5 days, I assume there was 5 other trips on these days.

Over the 5 days I saw the bus the total passengers averaged between 2-5 passengers?

This is not a very economic service where the passenger pays I was told was 2 dollars!

I suggest reducing the ^{service} to 3 trips a day not six trips 3 days a week. If the service patronage doesn't increase suggest that the service may be cancelled. I have made enquiries and can find no other town of 14000 residents having a bus service!

I believe the service was started when the mill was started some 40 years ago to encourage people to come to Tokoroa. Now a days, most families have at least 1 car many 2!

I would request the ^{return} one service a day to Putaruru + Teeran be retained.

SKE P3

Page 3.

South Waikato Investment Fund Trust.

This company seems to be heavily involved in South Waikato Business - is the company actually a part of the South Waikato Council or a separate business? The company I was told was incorporated when the council received from the sale of Airport shares or an Electricity Company closure fund many years ago and the then South Waikato Council didn't want the money registered in their name?

This company does a lot of business in buying property & refurbishing them either selling or leasing them. Where does all the profit go.

They seem to have been involved in many million dollars projects in recent years including Power Co. South Waikato National Grid Connection, the Olan Dairy processing facility - Better Eggs forest farm, Trade Trading Centre and the property opposite the cheese factory on S.H.1. Putaruru. and the new Maraetai Intermodal Business Park on Maraetai Road.

Can one say who is the Swift Business so someone is making big dollars so why the big deficit in Council accounts partly Covid but why the big deficit in Councils accounts is it Swift or Council at fault.

Why does the ratepayer must bail them out!

Mr. C. R. Jones.

Property owner.

Name Joanne Cooks

Organisation name

Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?

See Attachment

Q2 Do you have anything else to add?

See Attachment Below

Cutting costs

- * Library - user pays & shorten hrs & days.
- * Focus more on engaging local contractors
 - * roading
 - * mowing
 - * site cleaning
- * No more community grants or council 'pet' projects
- * look for specials re Loo rolls, coffee, stationery - office Max isn't always the cheapest.
- * Stop staff using council vehicles to take home - Building inspector (?) on Barnett St.
- * Less 'fancy' booklets eg Long term plan booklet (which now looks like a waste of money)
In touch booklet
- * Sorting out your power supplier

Page 4 statement of Proposal.

		increase amount
Urban	- Arapuni	\$ 618.00
	- Tirau	\$ 685.00
	- Putaruru	\$ 597.00
	- Tokoroa	<u>\$ 547.00</u>
	Total	\$2397.00 = 4 areas is \$599.25 *

Life style	- Tirau	\$ 399.00
	- Putaruru	\$ 377.00
	- Tokoroa	<u>\$ 365.00</u>
	total	\$1141.00 = 3 areas is \$380.33 *

Rural	- Tirau	\$1643.00
	- Putaruru	\$1542.00
	- Tokoroa	<u>\$2020.00</u>
	total	\$5205.00 = 3 areas is \$1735.00 *

Roughly 9900 rate payers total. *\$2714.58
 $\$2714.58 \div 3 \text{ areas} = \text{ave increase } \904.86
 (per rate payer)

$$\$904.86 \text{ (ave)} \times 9900 \text{ (ave rate payer)} = \$8,958,114.00$$

Page 7, Statement of Proposal

Roading

- Yes reduce roadside mowing
- only when necessary - second load mowing
- the response time is already slow

Parks + reserves

- Yes increase grass height
- Yes remove flower beds.
- Under health + safety you can't reduce maintenance of play equipment

Community contracts + Community Grants

- **BOTH** need to be put on hold.

Facilities

- Reduce hours across the board
- **EVEN** the main council building in Tokoroa

Consultants

- Look at employing an aon + or use local

In your Long term Plan 2021-31 page 31 it's odd the cost of a new toilet in the upper Domain, Tiraou at \$166k - that seems extremely expensive is a 'Doc' toilet cheaper?

One other issue is Dog Control


We as dog owners pay twice for a service that we DON'T use. Infact even rate payers who don't have dogs pay for dog control.

There was a situation here in Putaruru the other day, where 2 dogs got out - dog control were called & they said when they got there, that there was nothing they could do. The owners of these 2 dogs had already had dogs removed from their property.

Dog Control costs a year a huge and savings MUST be made there \$782,000.00 a year! Council must change their Revenue & Finance Policy. Use local vets & talk with megidfor

On closing, I must say that myself & others who attended the meeting in Putaruru walked away rather shocked & disillusioned by the proposal was presented. The fact that a few worked out there was a rather large \$ amount missing, didn't give us alot of confidence.

If you are expecting us to budget - which lots of us do everyday, then my expectation is that Council start, and I'm talking more than, you taking your own cut lunch!

Name	Margaret Brownsey
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I am upset by the size of the increase in rates but from listening to presentation by Council feel certain a reduction of another 2% is possible and would be better received.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	Council Services. It is satisfying that these will be retained at the 23-24 levels of the Long-Term Plan. Fees and Charges - I would advise the Council to retain all fees and charges at the current rate. The amount of revenue for which this is responsible is almost insignificant yet affects in my opinion, the largest number of residents district wide. This is quite independent of whether they are ratepayers. They are the users of a service.
See Attachment Below	 <p>I would advise the Council to retain all fees and charges at the current rate. The amount of revenue for which this is responsible is almost insignificant yet affects , in my opinion, the largest number of residents district wide. This is quite independent of whether they are ratepayers.... They are the users of a service.</p> <p>DISABILITY PERMIT PARKING, TOKOROA.</p> <p>There are 2 SITES where Disability parking needs review promptly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge St just prior to the railway line travelling west.. With the move of the agency for N Z Post and the private boxes, it is urgent to have one Disability site among the diagonal parking. Many people with the permits are the very ones who still us postal services and also use the agency for payment of accounts on those premises. Currently, the only one is in parallel parking, a long way from N Z Post. • Leith Place Disability permit parking re-location. <p>There are 2 sites on the S H 1 side of Leith Place by the bus shelter and 1 site outside the pharmacy on the retail commercial side. With the pharmacy exceptionally busy, one site is quite insufficient. I am requesting that Council relocate at least one of the S H 1 sites, still leaving one for meeting buses. To reach the shops from the current disability parks a person has to attempt to cross the longest walk over 3 lanes of traffic with no refuge in the median strip.</p>

Name	Alan Blair
Organisation name	
Q1 What are your thoughts about the Annual Plan?	I support Councils proposal of an average rates revenue increase of 18.5%. See attachment.
Q2 Do you have anything else to add?	<p>See Attachment below</p> <p>Submission to South Waikato District Council Proposed F24 Annual Plan</p> <p>Mayor Gary, Councillors, Ms Law.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to submit to Councils proposed F24 Annual Plan</p> <p>I support Councils proposal of an average rates revenue increase of 18.5%.</p> <p>Comments on Capex Projects</p> <p>That Council proposes to spend \$1m to upgrade the Leith PI toilets would be farcical if wasn't for the fact it is needed to improve the functionality of ?? Council is treating ratepayers with disrespect by not explaining why the expenditure is required.</p> <p>WOO HOO!! The NZ Institute of Architects gave the business that designed them awards. The citation included the awards were because of their functionality. Has the designers been held accountable. I am not jesting when I write another \$1m will not 'turn the current sows ear into a silk purse'.</p> <p>Does the proposed work including modifying the pergola roof so water flows off rather than form four pools?</p> <p>Council proposes to spend \$22k on walkways renewal and \$28k on new walkways. Council has not got a walking and cycling strategy. Two questions need to be answered.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why are the renewals necessary? Have they come about through lack of maintenance? An example being the walkway on Sloss Rd. Constructed 2016 at a budgeted cost of \$10k, it is now completely overgrown and is NOT recognisable as a walkway. 2. Who is making the decision of where the proposed walkways are being constructed? Is at the whim of Councillors, Council Staff or is it in response to public submissions to the Long Term Plan? <p>At the very least the proposed new walkways construction must be cancelled. The capital and ongoing maintenance costs are unaffordable at a time of a very large proposed rates increase and most likely a large increase next year at the very least.</p> <p>In Reserves, Council proposes to install rural bike racks (\$11.5k), additional furniture, bins, renew play equipment, new playgrounds, playground digital games and construct internal roads along with the aforementioned walkways, at a total cost of > \$450k.</p> <p>I recognise it may seem curmudgeonly to not install new and renew playgrounds. It appears Council has insufficient focus on paring expenditure. Rural bike stands and furniture remind me of what Marie Antoinette said "let them eat cake." Why install rubbish bins in rural reserves?. Have you and the staff not heard of the adage "leave only footprints"? That is take your rubbish with you. As for bike stands.... the mind boggles on what planet the</p>

instigator is on. Who is going to get benefit from the expenditure of \$25k of internal roads in reserves?

It appears a section of Council operations and our elected Governance body has not fully got their around that money is tight and many people are struggling. The Parks and Reserves Department over the past 10 to 15 years has wasted hundreds of thousands of dollars in unsuccessful attempts to establish native plants in reserves. The reason I have come to this conclusion is because you are giving Parks and Reserves Management carte blanche to spend \$142k on "general".

If you have any doubts about my statement above about wasted expenditure cast your minds back to page 22 of the Open Spaces Maintenance Services Review report, 'Native Vegetation and Wetland Maintenance' which was presented to the Local Services Committee that met 15 March 2023.. This report outlines shortfalls in maintenance and poor practice that has resulted in significant plant loss. As it is a 'snapshot' the report does not describe or quantify the accumulated losses.

An example of where Council spent considerable funds (\$25k F14) is the reserve between Baird Rd and Bridge Street adjacent to the rail line. Extensive clearing of weeds etc took place and a large number of native plants were planted. The failure rate was near to 100%, rather than a success rate of 95% which is achieved by Waikato River Trails.

An identical scenario is the Matarawa Stream reserve North of SH32 a couple of years ago. Now overgrown with weeds and irrecoverable.

Excellent results from native planting can be seen by those undertaken and maintained by Forest & Bird Society members at Jim Barnett Reserve and Jones Landing and at the North end of Jim Barnett Reserve by guests of her Her Majesty when they were working under the supervision of John Shannon who at the time was employed by the Corrections Department.

If there is any areas in the District where Council native plantings have achieved the same success rate they are few and far between and I would be pleasantly surprised to have them made known to me.

I realise that by cancelling or deferring the expenditure I have outlined above will have negligible effect on Councils immediate financial position. However, if they are it will show the Public Councillors are sincere in ensuring Ratepayers are getting very best value for money, vanity projects (e.g.rural bike racks) are unacceptable and drive it home to Staff that money is tight. In the medium to long term the proposed capital expenditure has to be paid for.

Community Grants & Creative Communities Schemes

I shake my head when I read of what some grant recipients receive Council funding for, and from conversations I have with others I am not alone.

I submit that funding for the forthcoming financial year for the above be reduced to make funds available for what I believe are three essential items that will enhance the District. They are;

1. Tidy the median strip in Bridge St Tokoroa where the Oak trees were felled. For any street, let alone the main street of the Districts major urban centre, the appearance of the median strip is an disgrace. Innovative thinking could easily and inexpensively tidy and add colour to this environment.
2. Create and install signage describing the carvings in the ceiling of the pergola adjacent to the Leith Place toilets.
3. Fell a number of large wilding trees on rural road berms. Priority needs to be given to the following areas; Lawries Hill on Old Taupō Rd North of Matanuku Rd, Eucalypts on Wilstdown Rd east of Old Taupō Rd, Radiata Pine at the top end of Mossop Rd. One Radiata Pine near the Waoutu end of Lake Arapuni Rd. This tree is very close to the power lines above as are those at the top end of Mossop Rd. During the storms earlier this year a large branch fell onto Old Taupō Rd at Lawries Hill most likely blocking the road


The \$10k in the LTP for annual spending on wilding trees on rural road berms is totally inadequate. The longer these are left to grow the more expensive they will be to remove.

A courageous Council would cancel the F24 Community Grants and Creative Community Scheme Allocations and get on top of the above issue removing all wilding trees on rural road berms. A large one off cost will save large amounts of money if an adequate sum of money is then allocated in every annual plan to tackle the trees when they are seedlings.

When Councillors contemplate the suggestion in the paragraph above please take into account the overall loss to the economy and businesses due to roads temporarily closed while large trees are removed.

I wish to speak to my submission.

Ngā mihi nui
Alan Blair


9 June 2023

Council Outcomes
Growth - Activities and strategies that facilitate sustainable economic growth and lift community pride.
Resilience - A resilient district with good infrastructure, services, a sound financial position, rates affordability and a healthy environment that has the ability to anticipate, resist, respond to and recover from significant change or events.
Relationships - Strong relationships with Iwi and Māori, Pacific Peoples and community and business groups that can achieve growth and a resilient community.