

Long-Term Plan 2024-2025

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Rates increases

There are 3 scenarios proposed: one is called the “Central Proposal”; one is called “Get More” and the third is called “Get Less”.

The Central Proposal, which is what Auckland Council proposes, has a 7.5% increase in rates in yr 1; 3.5 % in yr 2; 8 % in yr 3 and no more than 3.5% for the 7 years after that.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Years 4-10
Central proposal	7.5%	3.5%	8%	No more than 3.5%
Get More	14%	10%	10%	5% thereafter
Get Less	5.%	3.5%	3.5%	No more than 1% above CPI inflation

Part of the reason the Auckland Council (AC) is strapped for cash is that successive mayors have campaigned on a promise they would not increase the rates by more than 2.5%. This has led to a shortfall of funds, and the need to defer expenditure, including renewals of assets, and cut projects and staff.

AC should not bind itself – and future mayors and councillors – to an unrealistic maximum 3.5% rates increase, carefully located beyond the term of this mayor and council. It should provide for costs that will provide the services and infrastructure the city needs at a realistic level.

- **Oppose restricting overall rates increase to “no more than 3.5 per cent a year after that” in Yrs 4-10 of the Central Proposal. (Page 22). This will constrain future councils.**
- **In general, support the “Get More” proposal (pp 24-25), although at a lesser rate than that proposed. In particular, support greater spending on the environment, urban regeneration for towns in the west – Avondale, Glen Eden and Henderson, increased public transport, more grade separation of rail especially in the west, acquisition of more parks, a halt on sale of parks and community assets, increased spending on historic heritage.**

Greater spending on the environment is needed because for one or more years the Natural Environment Targetted Rate or NETR was reduced (once again, to keep down overall rates) and reserves used, which has resulted in a deficit for the environment.

Transport (page 32-34)

- **Call for funding for shuttle bus service to outer villages in the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area and to open track entry points in the regional park.**
- **Support grade separation of rail crossings, in particular, Glen Eden.**
- **Call for construction of cycleway from New Lynn to Henderson along rail line.**
- **Call for expanded park and ride at Glen Eden on the site in Waikumete Road.**

Making Space for Water (page 38)

- **Generally support this, but note that no projects in the Waitakere Ranges are listed in the current proposed projects. In particular, the work to deal with erosion of the Piha Stream and improve the hydrology in the Piha Wetland (already scoped in Morphum Reports) should be included in the list.**

Parks and Community (page 23, page 24, pp 39-41)

This section of the plan is vague and it is not at all clear what is proposed, however, this area, which includes parks and libraries, arts, Maori and Pacifica programmes and grants programmes, is one of the most important to the public. The Central Proposal involves “working only on highest priorities” and states there will be unspecified cuts to services in “planning, monitoring, education, communication and public engagement”. It also says it plans cuts to “experience centres” in regional parks (page 39). What exactly this means is not clear and consequently it will be opposed.

The city is intensifying at a rapid pace as required by the Unitary Plan and central government. Much of the new townhouse and apartment development has no or minimal outdoor space for recreation, vegetable gardens or simply being outdoors. People need to be able to spend time outdoors for their health and wellbeing. Space for these such activities needs to be provided in public open space and will require bigger budgets than AC has previously provided.

- **Support the Get More proposal for Parks and Community to respond to the need of the public for these services which are critical for people’s wellbeing, including well maintained and developed parks, libraries and community centres.**
- **Support the continuation of Arataki Visitor Centre and Education Centre and Botanic Gardens at the current level.**
- **Oppose limiting capital spending on parks to \$4.2 billion as proposed in the Central Proposal. Greater spending could support greater parks acquisition – needed in a growing city – and development of regional parks such as Te Muri, Pakiri, Te Rau**

Puriri, as well as the many local parks in the west that do not even have a park sign or seat.

- **Oppose any future sales of land zoned open space or reserves including those held under the Reserves Act or the Local Government Act**
- **Support buying more parks and additions to parks, both regional and local. In particular, support the purchase of land previously identified by ARC at Ihumatao and Crater Hill.**
- **Transfer ownership of Puketutu Island from Watercare to Auckland Council to be a regional park.**
- **Call for the plan to include budget for a swimming pool in the New Lynn/Avondale/Glen Eden area. This had been long planned and people in this part of Auckland lack access to a swimming pool compared to other parts of the city.**
- **Support development of planned park and iconic building at Wynyard Point on land purchased for this purpose by the former Auckland City Council and Auckland Regional Council. Oppose sale or use of this land for a stadium.**

AC is preparing to undertake a new 10-year contract for maintaining local parks. Project 17 – the first out-sourced 10-year maintenance budget – was heralded as an “outcomes” focused contract and promised to improve on previous service levels. While I have not seen any audits of the contract, the perception is that standards have fallen.

- **A review/audit of P17 is needed before AC undertakes another 10-year parks maintenance contract and this should be shared with local boards and the public. AC is now preparing for the next 10-year contract, P27 – Te Arahura, but there should be an opportunity for local boards and communities to have input.**

City and Local Development (pp 42-43)

Of the West towns and villages, only Avondale and Henderson are amongst those specified for regeneration projects under the Central Proposal.

- **Call for Glen Eden to be included as a regeneration location.**

Environmental Management and Regulation (page 44-46)

- **In the Pay More proposal (page 46), support the NETR being restored to the planned level and increase it by 3.5 % annually in line with inflation to raise \$412 over 10 years. This is \$62 million more than the Central Proposal.**

NETR Option	10-year revenue and expenditure	Rates impact 2024/2025	Additional increase 25/26 onwards
1. Retain at 2023/24 level	\$176 m	\$23.69m	n/a
2. Resume at \$30 in 24/25 for av value property and increase at 2% per year	\$245m	\$30m	0.02%
3. Proposed, resume at previously planned level	\$350m	\$47.02m	n/a
4. Resume at previously planned level and increase at 3.5% per year	\$412m	\$47.02m	0.04%

- Support Option 4 (page 99). This would allow increased implementation of the Regional Pest Management Plan. There would be greater support for community initiatives including increasing the Regional Environment and Natural Heritage grant funding.
- In the “Ak Have Your Say” section of the Consultation Document (page 135-145 and specifically 144) there is no way you can say you support Option 4. Suggest you use 6b on page 145, or, even better, email your own submission.

The other options would involve scaling back. Option 3, the Council’s preferred option would provide “limited capacity for community-led initiatives or to deal with emerging threats.” (page 99)

In the Central Proposal it is proposed to reduce environmental/sustainability education in schools.

- **Oppose reduction in environmental education for schools**

Attachment D in the Supporting Information document (pages 444-451) provides additional information about the NETR, though still not very much detail. It is difficult to tell how much of this expenditure will come out to the Waitakere Ranges.

This chart is a summary of what is provided.

NETR expenditure	Over 10yrs	Over 10yrs	Over 10yrs	Over 10 yrs	
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	
Mainland plant and pest	\$85m	\$115m	\$173m	\$198m	Option 1 & 2 have much reduced

					possum control, reduced pest plant control in buffer areas around parks, less control pigs, deer & goat around Waitaks. Only Option 4 deliver planned level or control. Option 3 has some reductions. Option 4 provides mammal pest control in 18 regional parks
Plant pathogens, kauri dieback, myrtle rust	\$48m	\$63m	\$80m	\$91 m	Options 1 & 2 reduced kauri dieback control, track maintenance. No new kauri research or monitoring. Option 4 provides for kauri tracks meeting standards and remain open to public
Island pests	\$19m	\$22m	\$24m	\$28m	
Marine pests	\$10m	\$13m	\$13m	\$25m	Option 4 would allow management of Caulerpa
Marine ecology	\$3m	\$3m	\$4m	\$6m	Options 1 & 2 reprioritise seabird protect and habitat monitoring, Options 3&4 increase

					mapping and monitoring
Enabling tools	\$3m	\$3m	\$4m	\$4m	
Community-led action	\$4m	\$18m	\$40m	\$46m	Options 1 & 2 reduced support for community groups, supply of traps etc, reduced reveg. Option 4 adds funding for community-led landscape scale pest control
Biodiversity priority ecosystems	\$4m	\$8m	\$12m	\$14m	Options 1&2, reduced level of management of priority eco-systems
	\$176m	\$245m	\$350m	\$412m	

Council Support (page 50-52)

I note the absence of information about historic heritage. The central proposal says “identify, advise and protect heritage places for town centres and local areas”. The Pay Less proposal states: “delivery or focus on meeting minimum requirement for heritage programmes”. It is unacceptable to reduce spending on heritage places which is already much reduced from what was available in the first term of AC.

- **Oppose any reduction in spending on historic heritage.**

PART 5 Major Investment (Page 55-71)

- **Oppose sale of any more airport shares as the airport is the gateway to Auckland and AC should maintain its interest.**
- **Oppose leasing port area. Port should stay in AC ownership through Port of Auckland. ARC brought the port back into public ownership so ratepayers would have control of the port company and port land. Support Option 1 (page 70)**

- **Support the notion of an Auckland Futures Fund which is really a reinstatement of Infrastructure Auckland, but the fund should not be developed by selling Council/public assets such as the airport shares or Port leases.**

Both the airport shares and the Port have provided good dividends to Council and will continue to do so. It makes no sense to sell the airport shares and then make other investments to provide income. Retaining the airport shares both provides an income and a direct say in the future of the airport company.

With the Port, leasing the port land to another company will diminish the Council's influence over the port land and how the port company develops the site. The port is critical to the economic success of Auckland and provides employment for Aucklanders through manufacturing industries that rely on what comes over the wharves.

- **Oppose taking Captain Cook Wharf, Marsden Wharf and Bledisloe Terminal out of Port of Auckland, in case they are not needed by the Port now, or in the future.**

Queens Wharf and Princes Wharf and much of Wynyard Quarter are already in public ownership and there are opportunities there for developing public uses. It is proposed to shift these wharves to AC "to be used for something else" (page 143). That "something else" could be a stadium or high-rise apartments or offices which would lock the public out of the harbour as has occurred with development on Princes Wharf. AC should focus on the areas it can already develop public access.

Recovery (page 91)

The Council's recovery efforts are very focused on existing funding from Central Government and itself. There isn't any proposal to fund work that needs to happen beyond that to increase the resilience of the Auckland region as a result of climate change and more severe weather events. Some of the challenges are outlined on page 86 but there doesn't seem to be any funding.

The Pay More proposal proposes additional climate funding up to \$100 million a year from year 3 for reduction of carbon emissions (page 46), but there doesn't seem to be ongoing funding to prepare for or address weather events, except for the Making Space for Water – which is a one-off govt/AC fund.

Other changes to rates (page 100)

Waitakere Rural Sewerage Targetted Rate

AC is proposing a 13% increase in the Septic Tank Pump-Out Rate which provides for a three-yearly pump-out of septic tanks. The annual rate is proposed to go up from \$296.75 to \$336.80 which is an increase per tank of \$129.15 over three-years to a cost of \$1010.40. Of this \$559.41 goes to a contractor to do the actual job, and \$450.99 to the Council for admin and communication.

- **Oppose the increase in the septic tank out rate and call for a review of the unacceptable Council admin costs for this rate.**

Fairer Funding for Local Boards (page 110)

Since amalgamation in 2010, Local Boards have been funded as 90% population, 5% deprivation and 5% land area.

The Council now proposes to change this to population 80%, deprivation 15% and land area 5%.

While reducing the impact of population will benefit Waitakere Ranges Local Board which is a very large forested area with major areas of unpopulated parkland, it does not recognize the burden, cost and responsibility of caring for an area which contains much of the region's natural eco-systems, natural habitats and wildlife.

- **Support fairer funding of local boards to achieve equity, but argue there should be greater recognition of, and provision for, boards which contain the region's priority eco-systems and natural areas.**
- **Call for greater financial support from council for the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area, which is almost entirely contained within the area of the Waitakere Ranges Local Board. This would enable Council to meet its obligations under the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008.**