



Submission of Civic Trust Auckland

Annual Plan 2025/2026

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Introduction

Civic Trust Auckland (CTA) is a non-profit public interest group, formed in 1968, with activities and interests throughout the greater Auckland region. We are on Auckland Council's list of regional stakeholders and were identified by Council for the annual budget consultation as a group with region-wide impact. We have submitted on Auckland Council's previous annual budgets, as well as numerous council plans. Our submissions are available on our website [here](#).

The aims of the Trust include:

- Protection of natural landforms
- Preservation of heritage, in all its aspects
- Encouragement of good planning for the city and region.

We have read the entire consultation document for the 2025/26 annual budget, as well as studying much of the Supporting Information document. Page references, are to the consultation document. We have set out our submission according to the questions on the feedback form.

Question 1: What is your opinion on our proposed annual plan?

Support most

(a) CTA supports most of what is proposed in the plan, with particular regard to the following aspects.

(b) Reading on page 11 that Council plans to "Progress urgent community asset renewals to safeguard our facilities from asset failure and support high-priority growth projects," CTA notes with concern that some Council buildings have not been looked after, e.g., Tadmor House and Hall in Manurewa, to the point where demolition is considered as the only option, so we trust that this plan will make adequate budgetary provision for such matters.

(c) With the significant level of intensification anticipated by Government, Council could fruitfully consider the feasibility of betterment charges to factor some of the increase in land value resulting from zoning changes rather than any investment skill.

Such a fund could be distributed to useful causes such as infrastructure, heritage protection and affordable housing.

(d) CTA supports “Revitalising underused council land to improve social, environmental, economic and cultural outcomes” (page 14) and recommends that such plans are in full consultation with the community where that land is situated. We have seen developments take place where community voices are absent, and outcomes have therefore not taken various needs and/or viewpoints into consideration.

(e) CTA fully supports “Acquiring land for parks and open spaces to contribute to Aucklanders’ quality of life, as well as make better use of the parks we already have” (page 14).

(f) CTA is not convinced that this work is necessary: “Central Library Comprehensive interior building refurbishment including the renewal of mechanical services, lighting, furniture, fixtures and equipment” (page 15) A refurbishment of the central library has been carried out recently. Perhaps particular items in this valuable and well-used facility are needed to be replaced (e.g., aging computers) but we suggest some of this expenditure is not necessary at this time.

(g) We strongly support the following works: “Undertake the restoration, modernisation and seismic upgrading of the Leys Institute buildings, which includes the library and community centre” (page 15).

(h) CTA questions whether the contribution of CCMP outcomes are significant enough to the ‘Auckland region’ to warrant the expenditure. The CCMP is a document full of visionary urban design schemes compiled at the time of the amalgamation of Auckland’s legacy councils fifteen years ago. It is a non-statutory document and CTA supports a cost-benefit review of existing projects along with other eligible projects not considered but requiring attention.

(i) CTA strongly approves the fairer funding approach for local boards, having supported this in our submission on the Long-term Plan 2024-2034.

(j) We congratulate Council on its programmes and projects (outlined on page 7) underway to reduce its corporate emissions (replacing gas boilers, increasing the use of solar energy, decarbonising stadium, monitoring energy use). We would support the installation of ‘walls’ and solar capture devices.

(k) We also congratulate Council on its cumulative operating savings and cost reductions (as described on page 107 of the Supplementary Information Document. We expect Council will maintain an ongoing review of existing projects to explore if and how further savings might be made.

Question 2: Do you support a bed night visitor levy paid by those in short-stay commercial accommodation, to fund destination management, marketing and major events activities?

Other

CTA is of the view that a bed night visitor levy for the 2025/2026 financial year is the easiest to implement option to fund the events that are important to many Aucklanders. This levy appears not to be supported by the accommodation sector,

and therefore we consider it is important that Council collaborates closely with the tourism and accommodation sector on funding options. We also think that other funding options are available, such as the ones we suggested in our Long-term Plan 2024-2034 submission, namely, contributions from tertiary educational institutions that make a sizeable profit, whose students benefit from events (and also from Council services and amenities), as well as from churches, golf courses and offshore banks.

Question 3A. What do you think of the waste management proposal? Apply the Refuse Targeted Rate to residential and lifestyle properties in Franklin and Rodney to pay for the council's rubbish collection service, replacing the current system of purchasing rubbish bags.

Support

Question 3B. Would you like to comment on this or the other rates, fees and charges proposals?

CTA supports the proposed overall rates increase of 5.80 per cent for the average value residential property for 2025/2026, as it is in line with the LTP. CTA's LTP submission supported resuming the Natural Environment Targeted Rate and the Water Quality Targeted Rate. We are very supportive of food scraps services.

Question 4A. Which local board does your feedback relate to?

All local boards. (We are a regional organisation. Please note our request in this submission under **5B Other Feedback** [Submissions publicly available.](#))

4B. What do you think of our proposals for your local board area in 2025/2026?

Support most.

CTA considers that local boards best know which activities to prioritise for their area, and we generally support them in their choices. We note that some local boards are intending to embark on activities that other local boards have already carried out, and we submit that expertise and experience be shared across the local boards, e.g., Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board, in exploring a site for a recycling centre, could learn from Albert-Eden and Waitematā and their experience with the Waiōrea Community Recycling Centre. We would prefer local board members (and councillors) to be non-partisan, as we are of the view that this would make boards function better.

We particularly support the following activities, which align with the aims and objectives of CTA:

Albert-Eden:

- reducing waste and increasing the profile and impact of Waiōrea Community Recycling Centre
- delivering on concept and restoration plans we have made for local parks, and trialling a portable pump track to move around parks in our area

Aotea/Great Barrier:

- environmental work and parks upgrades
- set up of a new community-run local fish-supply

- community marine education and marine biosecurity work.

CTA also supports this local board advocating to Central Government and the Governing Body for urgent assistance in managing the threat of Exotic Caulerpa.

Devonport-Takapuna:

- support local environmental groups to work with volunteers to clean up, manage and plant our local reserves and open spaces contributing to better outcomes and more weather resilient spaces
- progress the Devonport-Takapuna Local Parks Management Plan and refresh of the local boards Greenways Plan
- support our flood impacted communities as their neighbourhoods change by offering ways and places to connect and share experiences and information
- develop a Wairau Catchment Water Quality Action Plan that will ensure future decisions take advantage of existing reports and advice

CTA also supports the work this local board has done supporting the Pupuke Birdsong Project, Restoring Takarunga Hauraki, Naughty Wasters and their community volunteers and park rangers. Birds fly between wards, and, in the absence of such ventures in more wards, CTA considers the Pupuke Birdsong Project to be of regional importance and as such considers it should warrant some form of regional funding.

Franklin:

- initiatives that improve the quality of the water in our streams and rivers and our environment through pest eradication programmes
- accelerated planting of trees in public places i.e. delivery of the Franklin Ngahere Plan

Henderson-Massey:

- work on plans to upgrade Catherine Plaza
- continue to support water quality initiatives including the Rivercare group's work in Te Atatū Peninsula, Love Your Streams (EcoMatters) and Ngā Puna Manaaki Īnanga, a project to identify, protect and enhance Īnanga spawning habitats across the Henderson-Massey local board area

CTA also supports this local board's work to contribute to initiatives that enhance community resilience such as The Making Space for Water programme.

Hibiscus and Bays:

- support and advocate for further protection of our sea, soil and fresh water from contamination and sedimentation through methods such as re-naturalisation, or daylighting
- support and fund efforts to mitigate and adapt reserves, parks and public assets from the effects of climate change through initiatives such as the Urban Ngahere (Forest) Strategy

CTA supports the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board contributing funding for the development of a vision and plan for the future of the North Harbour Stadium and Domain Precinct, as the community have said that they would like to see the stadium and precinct used more effectively and for the local community. We are pleased that this local board is working together with the Upper Harbour Local Board on this.

Howick:

- review and refresh the Howick Local Board Heritage Plan and Tourism Plan
- develop initiatives for live monitoring, capturing and documenting the levels of poison/toxicity in our local waterways to increase awareness and enable enforcement

CTA supports the high priority of this local board being tackling the challenges of environmental protection and restoration, including its support for particular ecological programmes to help protect the natural environment.

Kaipātiki:

- environmental protection and restoration, including working with our local environmental groups to increase their impact
- maintenance, including environmentally friendly open space management, building maintenance, refuse collection, bush track maintenance, and removal of aging pine trees

CTA also supports this local board implementing their Mini Shoreline Adaptation Plan for Little Shoal Bay / Te Wai Manawa.

Māngere-Ōtāhuhu:

- explore a site for a recycling centre

CTA also supports this local board's work on Pest Free Ihumātao and Sustainability in Schools educational sessions on pest control. As mentioned above at the start of our 4B answer, the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board could learn from the experience of Albert-Eden and Waitemātā with the Waiōrea Community Recycling Centre.

Manurewa:

- increasing the levels of service for maintenance and repair of all assets across buildings, parks, open spaces and sports fields, town centre cleaning, street litter bin emptying, vegetation clearance, and berm mowing works
- scaling up the work being delivered to achieve environmental outcomes

CTA also supports this local board's work to manage illegal dumping, protect their waterways, anticipate future temperature rises, and prevent the loss of biodiversity.

Maungakiekie-Tāmaki:

- continuing to support initiatives that deliver outcomes with and for youth, such as our Youth Empowerment programme, and Tiakina te taiao and Ope programmes (biodiversity and climate action education programme in schools)
- collaborate with mana whenua and neighbouring local boards to protect and restore our waterways, particularly the Tāmaki Estuary and Manukau Harbour

Ōrākei:

- increase our funding for local ecological restoration, and animal and plant pest control, and continue to work with our many community volunteers to enhance our natural environment
- maintain efforts to monitor and improve water quality in our local waterways
- develop an action plan to improve access and the environment at Dingle Dell
- work to enhance the Ellerslie Town Square by improving access, activation ability, safety and public amenity through improved tree management, landscaping and seating

CTA also supports this local board's work to renew walking paths and tracks at Tahuna Torea nature reserve, create an Emergency Readiness and Response Plan, create hard surfacing on the Stonefields Heritage Trail, and seismic work on the Remuera Library – and we support an event to celebrate the re-opening of the library.

We also support introducing a targeted rate (\$10 per year per household) in the Ōrākei Local Board area to maintain and repair seawalls, replenish sand, and extend stormwater outflows further offshore on our beaches from Tāmaki Yacht Club to Achilles Point, St Heliers.

Ōtara-Papatoetoe:

- supporting small businesses to act on environmental sustainability
- supporting local environment groups to work collaboratively with community volunteers in efforts to clean, manage and plant our local reserves and open spaces

CTA also supports this local board's focus on increasing the ngāhere in their area and their funding of volunteer groups to preserve natural habitats.

Papakura:

- requesting strategic assessments to understand needs relating to: Ōpaheke sports and passive parks; Awakeri Wetlands; Kuhanui Reserve, Karaka; Park Estate Reserve, Park Green; new play facilities at Bruce Pulman Park; and the Greenways/Local Paths Plan

CTA supports development contribution funding in particular for Ōpaheke passive parks, Awakeri Wetlands, and the Greenways/Local Paths Plan.

Puketāpapa:

- planning for the development of Monte Cecilia Park so that this becomes a destination park and an icon for Puketāpapa
- investigating projects from the Wairaki Awa Catchment Plan that can be implemented, such as naturalising the awa at Lynfield Cove
- investing in more climate action and environmental projects

CTA also supports this local board in its collaboration with local groups to enhance disaster preparedness through development of their Emergency Readiness and Response Plan, funding projects to protect and enhance the local ecosystems, and delivering the Climate Action Activator, EcoNeighbourhoods, and Low Carbon Lifestyles projects. We are pleased that environmental sustainability remains central to this local board's vision, and that environmental restoration is also a core priority.

Rodney:

- support community groups, volunteers, and mana whenua to enhance environmental protection and restoration efforts, particularly for waterways and wetlands, while promoting waste reduction
- increase maintenance service levels, such as more frequent mowing of high-profile reserves, pest control, and repair of tracks and car parks
- support Rodney Greenways Plans to facilitate walking, cycling and horse riding
- prepare and review plans for reserves to identify gaps to meet community needs

CTA also supports this local board's work to establish local emergency leadership groups and develop action plans to tackle challenges like droughts and floods, to deliver improvements to open spaces, streetscapes, and townships; to fund initiatives such as planting, pest control, stream and water quality enhancements and waste minimisation projects; and to advocate for increased funding in the 10-year budget for sensitive planning to protect high-biodiversity landscapes and effective environmental compliance for public and private entities.

Upper Harbour:

- appropriate planning and investment for infrastructure and quality open space in areas impacted by growth and intensification e.g. Whenuapai
- continue to prioritise investment in outcomes that ensure our communities have access to high-quality amenities that provide for a range of opportunities including play, pathways and connections, active sports and recreation and connecting with nature

CTA also supports this local board continuing to support its local organisations and volunteers to foster community belonging, strengthen resilience and protect and enhance the environment, and to continue to prioritise support for initiatives that deliver outcomes for its environment including community-led ecological initiatives, construction waste education, industrial pollution prevention and the restoration of Waiarohia Stream.

CTA supports the Upper Harbour Local Board contributing funding for the development of a vision and plan for the future of the North Harbour Stadium and Domain Precinct, as the community have said that they would like to see the stadium and precinct used more effectively [and] for the local community. We are pleased that this local board is working together with the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board on this.

Waiheke:

- programmes which protect, restore, and enhance the island's natural environment, and initiatives that provide opportunities for community connectedness, capability and resilience

CTA also supports this local board continuing to prioritise actions from its Climate Action Plan, on-going ecological restoration, and pest management; implementing the grow stage of the Waiheke Ngahere (Forest) Strategy; supporting stream restoration projects, citizen science programmes to support the health of the aquatic environment, local volunteer programmes which improve biodiversity within the reserves, and programmes to reduce the waste stream.

Waitākere Ranges:

- environmental programmes to help protect and restore the Waitākere Ranges
- trialling phosphite treatment of kauri infected with kauri dieback on selected local parks
- improving neighbourhood parks: George Herring Common, Koroī/ Clayburn Reserve, Tautoru/Maywood Park, and Sandys Parade

CTA also supports this local board in advocating to raise the prominence of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area to be a key focus in the Annual Budget and for an increase in dedicated funding to help implement the aims of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008. We support their work in resilience planning, preparing a Waitākere Ranges Climate Action Plan, the species spotlight campaign by Waitākere

Ranges Pest Free Alliance, and initiating the community-led Waitākere Ranges Dark Sky Project.

Waitematā:

- prioritising and investigating flood resilience actions for our parks such as Western Park and Grey Lynn Park
- delivering footpath improvements for Auckland Domain
- starting construction for Leys Institute

CTA is particularly supportive of the work to restore the Leys Institute (as mentioned above in 1(f)).

Whau:

- continue to support volunteering, community and business participation, through environmental and ecological initiatives around the Manukau Harbour foreshore, the Whau River and its tributaries, and our urban ngahere
- foster climate/emergency preparedness and resilience in our community

CTA also supports this local board in its development of emergency management plans and programmes; support for a range of existing environmental initiatives and a new group of environmental volunteers, including enabling community access to eco hub workshops and supporting the West Eco festival and bike hub.

Question 5: Do you have any other feedback, including the Tūpuna Maunga Authority Operational Plan 2025/2026 (page 33 of the Consultation Document)?

5A. Tūpuna Maunga Authority Operational Plan 2025/2026

(a) We have been unable to access the Tūpuna Maunga Authority Integrated Management Plan, as the link on the TMA website at <https://maunga.nz/plans-policies-and-procedures> results in a “Page not found 404” message.

(b) We are in principle supportive of the TMA’s desire to “Preserve the visual and physical integrity of the Maunga as landmarks of Tāmaki,” including the removal of redundant infrastructure and returning areas to open space. We acknowledge the desire to make the forms of the maunga stand out without trees on them but we see this as a vision that may be realised some decades in the future when the trees currently living on the maunga have died a natural death.

(c) We support restoration of indigenous native ecosystems, reintroducing native plants, and attracting native animal species. We support “Native trees to be protected and retained where appropriately located in relationship to other features” (page 21 of the Integrated Management Plan Strategies).

(d) We do not support removing inappropriate exotic trees and weeds, in that “inappropriate” in this context is not defined. We read on page 21 of the IMPS that: “Exotic trees will be assessed for their contribution to the value of the Maunga.” We further read that: “Removal of exotic trees will occur when there is a health and safety risk, they are identified as a weed species, there is risk to Archaeological Features, or they impact on the cultural landscape and viewshafts. Any other tree removals will be assessed on a case by case basis.” This, in our view, places every exotic tree on any maunga under threat of removal. We note that a number of communities have been devastated by the felling of large numbers of exotic trees on

their local maunga. We think most, if not all the exotic trees on the maunga should be allowed to live out their natural life.

(e) CTA supports this principle: “Restore areas of the Tūpuna Maunga with indigenous ecosystems, reintroduce and attract indigenous species and culturally appropriate species, recognise that restoration objectives may be a range of outcomes including different periods of occupation as well as pre-European and pre-human states.”

(f) We support this principle: “Restoration will incorporate traditional indigenous flora and fauna, with the intention of providing for increased biodiversity, cultivation and cultural harvesting of kai, medicinal, textile materials, and other cultural requirements. Propagation and captive management of flora and fauna may be a component of the strategy for some Maunga. Vegetation restoration should be tailored to achieve the specific outcomes and purposes proposed for each individual Maunga.”

(g) We support the removal of exotic pest animal species, with campaigns to encourage people to keep their domestic cats off the maunga, and the use of efficient, effective, humane and ERMA approved animal and pest control methods, including live capture traps and a phased reduction in the use of herbicides and pesticides.

(h) CTA joined the campaign to make maunga car free, and we support banning motorised vehicles from maunga, while allowing some vehicles access to cater for those with mobility issues.

(i) The installation of boardwalks and the opening of the café on Maungawhau we see as very positive, and we support appropriate commercial uses on other maunga as well.

(j) CTA strongly supports the maunga being smoke-free and alcohol-free.

(k) We have submitted in support of the recognition of the maunga as significant heritage items and we support a UNESCO World Heritage bid for the Tūpuna Maunga.

5B Other Feedback

Submissions publicly available

CTA thanks Council for placing all public submissions for the previous annual plan on the Council website (a request we had submitted on), and assumes that this will be done again. This time, we would ask that our submission be included with the regional submissions, instead of, last time, in volume 17 of the Albert-Eden Local Board submissions.

Auckland Transport

(a) We are concerned that when Auckland Transport plants trees on the footpath, they are then concreted in. We understand that this harms trees, as it disrupts natural processes, such as the absorption of water, and restricts root growth. We have seen tree containers broken by the growth of trees, and footpaths broken similarly.

(b) Noting that AT is facing potentially reduced parking and enforcement revenue due to high compliance levels, our view is that high compliance levels are a positive for

the behaviour of Aucklanders who drive vehicles. We still feel that parking fees in AT controlled parking buildings could be increased, to encourage more use of public transport and the reduction of emissions. We are very opposed to the publicly available e-scooters, as the scooters take up space on footpaths, are often irresponsibly used, making the footpaths unsafe and threatening places for all pedestrians, especially those with vision, mobility, and hearing issues. Nationally, between 2021 and 2023, there were over 7,000 ACC claims for e-scooter related injuries, with a 37% increase in 2023. There have been several deaths from e-scooters in Auckland and many serious head injuries.

(c) We repeat our suggestion in earlier submissions that AT investigate adding some smaller buses into routes when/where the demand is less. We also repeat our suggestion of bike racks on buses, particularly on those buses that go over the harbour bridge.

Pets

With regard to animal management costs, perhaps Council could consider funding education about keeping pets, including how pets are generally not climate friendly or biodiversity friendly.

Conclusion

CTA is pleased to see so much focus on the environment, both in Council's region-wide plans and in the local board plans. We note, however, that there are many more local board projects focused on the natural environment and not so many that address problems and opportunities of built heritage.

We are very pleased that Council has confirmed its commitment to funding \$15 million for the restoration of the St James Theatre. Built heritage is an element of the environment currently under considerable threat from legislative changes and if Council does not act with urgency to develop a suite of incentives to conserve heritage, in partnership with private owners and developers (as initially identified in the Auckland Plan), then this city faces the irreversible loss of much of its valued built heritage.

The climate change emergency requires Council to focus on tree planting, not tree removal, and we request that Council cease funding the TMA's environmentally irresponsible mass tree-felling.

We feel strongly that local board projects should be informed by robust and transparent consultation with their local community. We have seen that local boards value their local volunteers and acknowledge their work, many of whom are involved in environmental projects.

Date of submission: 28 March, 2025

Signature:



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Audrey van Ryn".

Audrey van Ryn, Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland