

Tauranga City Council Long Term Plan submission

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Submitter details:

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Submission:

Introduction

1. The New Zealand Recreation t/a Recreation Aotearoa is a registered charity and the organisation responsible for providing leadership, advocacy and professional development opportunities for those involved in the broader recreation sector. We work at an agency, industry and professional level to build capability, develop partnerships, and equip individuals and organisations with the skills they need to deliver high quality recreation experiences that engage participants.
2. Recreation Aotearoa's membership includes recreation policy makers, territorial local authorities, voluntary organisations, regional sports trusts, outdoor recreation businesses, and others involved in the delivery of recreation throughout New Zealand.
3. Our mission is enhancing wellbeing through recreation.
4. Recreation Aotearoa believes recreation is vital to New Zealand society. Recreation is not just about enjoyment, it is about being healthy, engaged, stimulated, and interacting with others, and this occurs via outdoor recreation, community recreation, parks, and aquatic and facility-based recreation centres.
5. Recreation is a major contributor to the physical and mental health of individuals, and to the resilience of our communities. 90 per cent of New Zealanders believe that by being active they are in turn maintaining a good level of health and fitness, and this helps to relieve stress.
6. A thriving recreation industry can also help our nation prosper socially and economically. Sport and active recreation contributes \$4.9 billion or 2.3% to our annual GDP, and the sector employs more than 53,000 New Zealanders. The nation's recreation values and opportunities are fundamental to the nation's tourism industry. Approximately 50% of international visitors to New Zealand participate in one form of outdoor recreation or another.
7. Recreation is part of what it is to be a New Zealander. Many of us are members of clubs and groups that enjoy recreation for fun, health and

social reasons. 84% of New Zealanders believe sport and physical activity bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

8. For individuals, recreation contributes to physical and mental wellbeing and provides an opportunity to meet new people. People define themselves and their communities through their recreation opportunities. Recreation fosters community cohesion and resilience and supports the integration of social groups such as diverse ethnic groups. 74% of New Zealanders agree that sport and physical activity help build vibrant and stimulating communities.
9. Investment in recreation generates tourism opportunities and supports regional development by encouraging skilled professionals and migrants to consider business options in and beyond the main centres.
10. Research shows that recreation makes a significant contribution to social resilience. It allows individuals to thrive, and to connect with each other. This, in turn, makes communities stronger. A society in which people are active and healthy is also more economically sound.
11. Physical inactivity is associated with loss of productivity, health costs, as well as associated costs such as pain and suffering. Healthier, happier individuals are more likely to do well in other areas of their lives, whether it is in social or professional situations. This has a positive flow-on effect for communities and society as a whole.
12. Greater understanding of these benefits and their downstream impacts, along with awareness of how laws and regulations can influence recreation delivery, are key to ensuring that New Zealand's recreation opportunities remain among the world's best.

Recreation in Tauranga

13. We acknowledge and thank Tauranga City Council as the major provider of our city's sport and recreation facilities. By investing in recreation, Tauranga City Council is helping to instil a lasting culture where active living matters. The work of Tauranga City Council makes a real difference.
14. The Tauranga City Council has a critical part to play in ensuring people continue to enjoy quality recreation opportunities. These need to be

available to everyone, regardless of age, fitness level or socio-economic background.

15. Council planning needs to adopt a long-term approach that considers factors such as urbanisation, population growth and an ageing population, to ensure recreation can continue to thrive amid change.
16. Research has found that in areas of activity decline, government and community-led interventions helped reverse the trend. When the infrastructure is in place, such as aquatic facilities, people are more likely to be active.
17. Population growth and increased demographic diversity has and will continue to place pressure on recreational infrastructure in Hamilton.
18. We support the prioritisation of investment in walking and cycling routes in Tauranga. Investment in Active Transport infrastructure achieves the dual symbiotic benefit of easing traffic congestion and making it easier for residents to integrate healthy recreational activities into their day-to-day lives. We note that 43% of Tamariki/Rangitahi in the Bay of Plenty use active transport to and from school.
19. The data provided by the Sport NZ Active New Zealand survey reveals that only 22% of adults and 6% of tamariki/rangitahi in the Bay of Plenty currently do enough physical activity to meet Ministry of Health physical activity recommendations.
20. The same survey revealed that there is significant levels of unmet demand in the Bay of Plenty region – 75% of adults have a desire to do more physical activity. The new activities that adults want to try are recreational in nature: tramping, cycling, yoga/Pilates and group fitness
21. Additionally, the data shows that 96% of adults are active in outdoor locations or facilities. 82% of Bay of Plenty adults agree that being active in the outdoors is an important part of life.
Participation largely non-competitive:

22. We note that 37% of adults in the Bay of Plenty only participate in physical activity that is free and that more than half of adults typically participate in non-competitive activities.
23. Recreation Aotearoa would also like to acknowledge the Tauranga City Council for their support and contribution towards the Bay of Plenty Spaces & Places plan, in partnership with Sport Bay of Plenty and adjacent Local Territorial Authorities. Committing to and adhering to such a plan avoids duplication, enhances recreational opportunities and ensures efficiency of expenditure at a regional level.

Specific Comments:

24. Recreation Aotearoa submits its support for the ambitious improvements signalled for accessibility to recreational space and places, by way of the Community Facilities Investment Plan (CFIP).
25. Recreation Aotearoa notes that these projects support increased participation in walking, cycling, scooting, and skating – forms of physical activity that the Active NZ survey identified as leading preferences for residents of the Bay of Plenty region.
26. Recreation Aotearoa submits its support for the Memorial Park CBD Recreation and Leisure Hub, specifically the proposed increase in recreational aquatic facilities. This project is essential to increase all-season casual swimming opportunities in Tauranga.
27. Recreation Aotearoa submits its support for the investment in Play by Tauranga City Council. It is essential that investment in Play infrastructure is applied to the growing population in new urban developments and under-active demographics in high deprivation communities. Recreation Aotearoa notes that co-design kaupapa for Play infrastructure often results in a desirable bias towards less structured and informal modes of play.
28. Recreation Aotearoa cautions Tauranga City Council of a predictable lag-effect of participant uptake in the utilisation of new recreational facilities. Many forms of recreation have suffered a loss of participant numbers and organisational capability after many years of under-

investment. Recreation Aotearoa urges Tauranga City Council to be patient with regard to how quickly and fully new facilities are utilised by different recreational groups.

29. Additionally, we submit that rapid changes in demographics, participation trends and technology mean that a 'build it and they will come' approach doesn't always work. Simply building infrastructure is not enough. Recreational assets need to be activated and programmed to make them more appealing and to break down barriers for the hard to reach areas of the community.