

# Maungaraki Views

OUR NEWS & VIEWS | MAUNGARAKI.CO.NZ | FEB & MAR 2024

## Hutt increasing rates by 16.9% spending \$1.6 billion on water



The Macaskill Lakes located in Te Marua, Upper Hutt store emergency water for the Wellington region.

Hutt City Council has released its draft Long-Term Plan (LTP) for 2024–34, outlining proposed investments and priorities for the next decade.

Public feedback on the draft plan is open from 2 April to 3 May, with the final version scheduled in July.

**Key Highlights of the Draft LTP**

**\$1.6 Billion Investment in Water Infrastructure**

The plan emphasises is safeguarding the city's water network, with significant upgrades to stormwater and wastewater systems.

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## Addressing Water Leaks:

An immediate allocation of \$2.8 million aims to clear the backlog of water leaks in Lower Hutt.

## Rates and Budget Overview:

For every \$100 in rates, about \$60 will go toward water and transport infrastructure.

The draft includes a proposed 16.9% rates increase, equivalent to \$10.82 per week for an average property valued at \$815,000.

To manage costs, \$35 million in savings have been identified.

Mayor Campbell Barry underscored the importance of the LTP for building a resilient and thriving city, even in challenging economic conditions.

“No one likes a rates increase, but delaying essential infrastructure costs more long-term. This plan balances urgent needs with affordability,” Mayor Barry said.

## Insights from Independent Experts:

Brad Olsen, CEO of Infometrics, noted that councils across New Zealand face rising costs for infrastructure and services.

“Critical investments are unavoidable and more expensive than in the past. The alternative to higher rates and borrowing is cutting essential services, which would leave communities worse off,” Olsen stated.

## Public Consultation Topics:

The Council is seeking feedback on several key issues, including:

The proposed level of investment in water services. Whether to proceed with the food and green organics (FOGO) initiative. Additional financial support for low-income families to help pay rates.

## Prioritisation of investment in Petone:

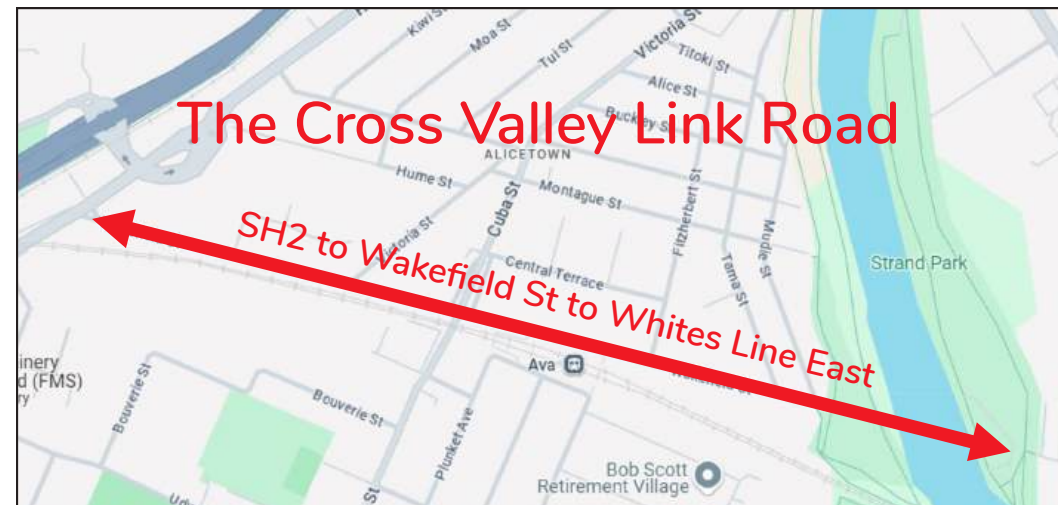
Residents are encouraged to share their views and help shape the future of Lower Hutt. Ed.

# Mayor Barry welcomes Govt support for the Cross Valley Link Road

Mayor Campbell Barry welcomes the Government’s announcement prioritising the Cross Valley Link in their transport program. This East-West connection to SH2 is critical for resilience, particularly for Seaview/Gracefield, the Wellington Region’s largest industrial hub. It will also address significant traffic congestion and the frequent gridlock caused by accidents or major works on the Valley Floor. Over the coming

months, council will work with the Government to advance this project urgently, ensuring a firm funding commitment from Waka Kotahi and clear timelines for planning and construction.

Council has unanimously supported this vital infrastructure project for years, advocating for its prioritisation during the last two elections.



The Cross Valley Link will cross Hutt River and connect to Alicetown’s Wakefield Street, but how will connect to SH2? Via Maungaraki Interchange or a new Korokoro Interchange?

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This outcome highlights the power of unity and consistency in advancing key initiatives. While there is still work to be done, this is a significant step forward for Lower Hutt and our region. *Ed.*

## Hutt house prices steadily rise 3.8%

The Wellington region continues to experience steady growth in home values, with most areas reporting increases—except Porirua.

According to the latest QV House Price Index for January 2024, the average Wellington home value rose by nearly 3% over the three months to January, reaching \$868,120. This outpaced the national quarterly growth of 2%, which brought the average home value to \$925,461.

Hutt City and Kāpiti Coast recorded the strongest gains in the region, with home values increasing by 3.8% and 3.5% respectively.

On average, the wider Wellington region saw a 2.8% rise in values over the quarter, with every local district posting growth except Porirua, which dipped slightly by 0.2%.

Nationally, the average home value is just 1% lower than this time last year, with year-on-year growth expected to turn positive soon.

QV's house price index, which tracks sales data over a rolling three-month period, offers a slightly different perspective than asking price data.

For example, realestate.co.nz reported a 1.4% decline in Wellington's average asking price from

December 2023 to January 2024, dropping to \$854,155. *Ed.*

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