

Maungaraki Views

OUR NEWS & VIEWS | MAUNGARAKI.CO.NZ | APR & MAY 2024

Council axing Free Parking in Petone



Free parking in Petone could soon be a thing of the past if proposals in Hutt City Council's Long Term Plan are approved. The council is considering introducing parking fees on Jackson Street a popular hospitality and retail hub as well as at the Peel Street car park.

Additionally, hourly parking rates in other paid zones across Lower Hutt could increase from \$2 to \$3, while daily rates may rise from \$7 to \$10. Under the proposal, parking fees would apply seven days a week. The changes come as councils...

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Wellington leaders talking Super City, again

Wellington civic leaders have secured a meeting with ministers to explore a potential regional deal, with council amalgamation emerging as a key discussion point.

The Wellington Regional Leadership Committee agenda outlines possible restructuring options, including merging Wairarapa's three councils, combining Kāpiti and Horowhenua, and consolidating Hutt City, Upper Hutt, Porirua, and Wellington City. A single regional council would remain.

Deputy committee chair Daran Ponter emphasized that no decisions have been made, and discussions are still at the mayoral level. He ruled out a super city model due to past public opposition but acknowledged a growing interest in a staged approach to amalgamation. The issue resurfaced

after the Future of Local Government report urged council reorganisation, warning that change is inevitable either led by councils or imposed on them.

The committee identified shared regional challenges, including fragmented ownership models, financial constraints, and major infrastructure investment needs. Water infrastructure is also under consideration as a focal point for the regional deal, potentially involving a new water management entity, water meters, workforce training, and Wairarapa water resilience.

Wellington Mayor Tory Whanau is open to discussing amalgamation but prioritises pressing regional issues like water and transport. Hutt City Mayor Campbell Barry supports considering all options but cautioned against rushing into amalgamation without thorough evaluation.

Ministers have expressed interest in a regional deal, though details and timelines remain uncertain. A meeting is scheduled for April,

aligning with the government's broader strategy to integrate transport, housing, and environmental resilience into long-

Te Āti Awa & Weltec launch Try-a-Trade

Lower Hutt iwi-based organisation Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa has partnered with WelTec in Petone to launch Try-a-Trade, a seven-week workshop series designed to give participants a hands-on introduction to various trades, including mechanical engineering, plastering, plumbing, carpentry, tiling, painting, and electrical work.



The initiative is open to those over 18 who are not currently employed or studying.

Chief executive Wirangi Luke sees Try-a-Trade as an innovative way to support whānau in exploring trade careers without requiring a major commitment upfront.

"We've never taken this approach before, but partnering with WelTec allows us to introduce people to trades training in a low-pressure environment," he said.

"This initiative aligns with our goal of supporting the social, cultural, economic, and environmental wellbeing of Te Āti Awa and the wider Lower Hutt community."

Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa is working with the Ministry of Social Development and Te Puni Kōkiri to promote the program and encourage participation. Visit www.whitireiaweltec.ac.nz



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nationwide face rising costs including surging insurance premiums and pressure to address longstanding infrastructure challenges. According to the council, the proposed parking fees could generate an additional \$18.4 million in revenue over the next decade. Its official consultation document notes that operational transport costs are expected to be \$93 million higher over the same period compared to the most recent annual plan.

Petone Community Board Chair Mike Fisher remains unconvinced that the benefits of paid parking in Petone would outweigh the drawbacks for residents and local businesses.

Fisher called the proposal a “very big move” for the suburb. While the idea had been considered in previous years, it had never progressed to a formal council consultation plan.

He emphasised that free parking is a key point of difference for Petone, attracting shoppers and visitors from across the region. “[Free parking is]

good for hospitality on Jackson Street, and it’s something that makes Petone special and attractive for all those reasons,” he said.

Fisher acknowledged concerns that paid parking could have a “detrimental effect” on local businesses.

Hutt City Council’s economy and development director, Jon Kingsbury, acknowledged Petone’s significance as the Wellington region’s “premier culinary and retail destination” and recognised the current challenges facing the hospitality and retail sectors.

“With a growing population, we need future-fit infrastructure that serves the community’s needs, and the areas that benefit most from that investment should contribute appropriately,” Kingsbury said, urging residents to provide feedback before any decisions are made.

Consultation is open until May 3. *Ed.*



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