

CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOODS

We will provide access to warm, affordable homes in welcoming neighbourhoods.



IN 2055, RESIDENTS ENJOY WARM, AFFORDABLE HOMES IN CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOODS.

Our people are the heart of our city, and neighbourhoods are the foundation of community life. From Pito One (Petone) and Wainuiomata to Taitā and Stokes Valley, each suburb has its own story, history and character.

Our vision for 2055 is that residents live in safe, welcoming neighbourhoods that foster stability, connection and a strong sense of community.

Our city is changing and faces challenges. As our population ages, more seniors are living alone. Young people are spending more time on screens and less time socialising. While housing construction has surged ahead in recent years, Lower Hutt is still rated ‘severely unaffordable.’ Too many households live in damp, cold, overcrowded homes.

We hope for a future where everyone has access to a wide choice of warm, dry and affordable homes. To achieve this, we will work to increase the supply of affordable housing and improve housing quality and warmth.

Relationships underpin resilient, supportive, collaborative and happy communities. We will foster opportunities for people of all ages and

cultures to connect, including through sport, recreation, arts and cultural activities.

We will also work to ensure that people have all they need to thrive within their own neighbourhood, including access to quality green spaces, public transport, shops and schools.

This chapter outlines key initiatives to help realise our vision for connected neighbourhoods in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt by 2055. It concludes with a “What You Can Do” section, offering practical ways you can support and contribute locally to building **Tō Tātou Tāone 2055 – Our City 2055**.

INDICATORS		
WE WILL TRACK PROGRESS OF THE FOLLOWING INDICATORS:		
INDICATOR	LATEST DATA	TARGET
SENSE OF COMMUNITY EXPERIENCED	43% Quality of Life Survey, 2024	INCREASE
RENT AFFORDABILITY (average weekly rent as % of household income)	20.8% Infometrics, March 2025	DECREASE
CRIME RATE (criminal proceedings per 10,000 residents)	206 Per 10,000 residents (Year to March 2025)	DECREASE

BACKGROUND

Our city has a wide variety of places which bring our communities together.

Marae

The eight marae within our city are the heart of our Māori community. Marae such as Waiwhetū have their own kōhanga reo, ancestral urupā, medical and cultural centres, sports association and radio station.

Community-owned assets

Across the city, there are many community-owned assets, such as Te Umiumiga a Tokelau Hutt Valley (Tokelau community centre) and St David's Multicultural Church, which were funded and built by the Pacific community or congregation.

Council facilities

Our city includes a wide range of Council buildings and spaces for communities. Lower Hutt's libraries and hubs welcomed over 2 million visitors last year, and hosted thousands of activities including creative workshops, digital literacy programmes and cultural events.

Reserves and natural environment

Lower Hutt contains 2,781 hectares of reserves, including parks, walkways, coastal edge and river margins. Our city's walking/biking trails are enjoyed by tens of thousands of people. Some trails connect with the wider region, such as the Remutaka Cycle Trail, which starts and finishes here.

Sports grounds and facilities

Lower Hutt is recognised for its quality sports grounds and facilities, including four golf clubs plus a driving range, Fraser Park and Hutt Indoor Sports. Many of our schools also have excellent grounds and sports facilities. These

venues play an important role in both recreational and competitive sports.

Arts

Our city is home to both amateur and renowned painters, carvers, writers, musicians, dancers, actors and other creators of visual and performing arts. Places like the Dowse Art Museum, Hutt Art Society, Lower Hutt Events Centre, and the Hutt Repertory Theatre, provide venues to experience arts in our city.

Religious worship

Communities also come together for religious worship, with churches, Buddhist temples and an Islamic Centre located here. Our people affiliate with Christianity (34%), Hinduism (5%), Buddhism (1%), Islam (1%) and Māori religions, beliefs and philosophies (1%).

The broader context

Our city's population is projected to reach around 149,000 by 2053. As our city grows, we need to ensure that we're planning for more people – with suitable houses, infrastructure (like pipes and roads), public transport connections, amenities, and green spaces.

To accommodate a growing population, housing construction has surged ahead across the city. Beginning in the late 2010s, Lower Hutt implemented widespread zoning changes to enable medium- and high-density housing (apartments and townhouses) in existing residential areas. Over the ten years prior to the medium density housing change, Lower Hutt accounted for only 13% of new dwelling consents across the Wellington region. Since upzoning became operational,

the city has accounted for 36% of region-wide consents.¹

Lower Hutt has attracted new residents through comparatively more affordable housing costs than Wellington city. However, average weekly rent has increased 25% in five years. Affordable housing typically requires costs below a third of average household income. In Lower Hutt, housing is rated at 5.5, which is ‘severely unaffordable’.² The number of households seeking social housing has grown steadily, which indicates that an increasing number of households cannot afford market rents.

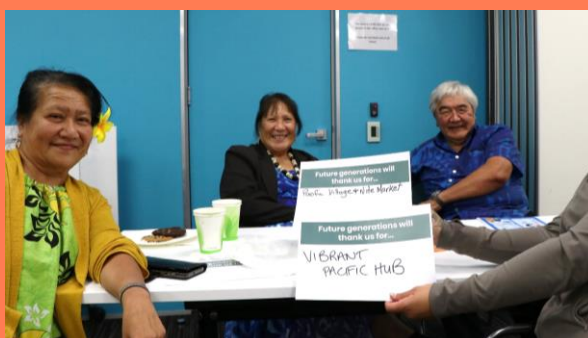
FUTURE FOCUS

We will increase the supply of affordable housing and improve housing quality and warmth. We will foster opportunities for people to connect, including through sport, recreation, arts, as well as events. Together, we will also partner for safer streets and attractive suburbs, with everyday services within easy reach.

In the following pages, you will see the initiatives that will help us achieve our goals.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE LOWER HUTT COMMUNITY

People expressed pride in their city. There is a strong desire for neighbourhoods where cultural diversity is celebrated, and residents—regardless of age, background, or ability—feel valued and connected. Concerns were raised about social divides, homelessness, isolation, and rising housing costs. Suggestions included intergenerational living, youth-friendly spaces, and accessible environments for older adults. Safe outdoor areas, mental health support, and vibrant public spaces were seen as essential to helping residents thrive locally, alongside access to green spaces, transport, digital infrastructure, and educational opportunities.



Our goal to achieve flourishing neighbourhoods supports SDGs to end poverty, ensure healthy lives and promote well-being, and reduce inequalities.



¹ Matthew Maltman and Ryan Greenaway-McGrevy, “Going it alone: The impact of upzoning on housing construction in Lower Hutt, in *Journal of Housing Economics*, March 2025

² Infometrics, 2024 (Census 2023).

INITIATIVE: 1

BRING PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND CULTURES TOGETHER TO CONNECT AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Strong neighbourhoods are built on trust, connection, and shared experiences. When people come together – whether at a local festival, community garden or library – they build networks that support belonging, resilience and wellbeing. We will create spaces and opportunities for all ages, cultures, and communities to connect.

Grow events in the city

Events bring people together, celebrate who we are, and reflect the diversity and creativity of our community. They also bring wider benefits – supporting local businesses, attracting visitors, and boosting our city's profile. We will collaboratively develop a calendar of events for our city and commit to funding regular priority events, such as Matariki Puanga. Grass-roots activities will be supported through toolkits and guidance, marketing, and opportunities for funding.

Activate local spaces

Public spaces – streets, libraries, parks and community hubs – will be activated with arts, markets, play and pop-up events that encourage people to meet and interact. Activation in the city centre will be a priority, building on events such as *Sounds by the Awa* outdoor concert. We will make use of our city's excellent outdoor and green spaces, including relocating Riverbank Market to Dowse Square and the surrounding Civic Precinct from 2026.



Increase utilisation of community facilities

Community facilities provide a vital role in bringing people together. We will increase utilisation of public spaces such as community hubs, that can be used for cultural events, workshops and other activities. We will make these facilities accessible to people with disabilities, and affordable for wide community use.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Grow events in the city.	HCC
Increase utilisation of community facilities.	HCC

INITIATIVE 2:

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Participation in sport, recreation, arts and culture brings people together, strengthens identity, and contributes to physical and mental wellbeing. Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt has produced outstanding sportspeople and artists, and offers excellent facilities. We will ensure that people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can take part in activities.

Create positive experiences for participants

By making activities inclusive and accessible, we will enable more people to participate. This includes ensuring that facilities like pools, arts venues and community hubs are welcoming, safe and affordable. We will encourage a participant-centred approach, which takes diverse needs into account. For example, ethnic community suggestions for women-only swimming times at pools, and Pacific community ideas for hosting traditional games and festivals such as the Samoa mo Samoa Rugby League Festival.

Optimise sports facilities and events

We will make the most of our city's excellent sports facilities – such as Fraser Park, Hutt Indoor Sports, and Te Ngaengae Pool and Fitness Centre, and opportunities to connect with wider Hutt Valley facilities such as the New Zealand Campus of Innovation and Sport in Upper Hutt. We will grow the number and scale of local sports tournaments, following examples like the NZ Junior Girls Rugby Festival, which brought 65 teams to Fraser Park from across Aotearoa in 2025. These events lift the visibility of our city as a sports destination.

Support art, culture and creative expression

Lower Hutt has an active arts scene - from the Dowse Art Museum to grassroots community theatre, music and dance. We will support opportunities for people to engage in arts and cultural activities, including exhibitions, performances and community-led creative initiatives. Arts and culture are central to celebrating our diversity and identity, and we will support events that tell our stories (see *Treasured History and Culture*).

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Create positive experiences for participants.	All
Optimise sports facilities and events.	

INITIATIVE 3:

ENSURE EVERY SUBURB IN LOWER HUTT IS AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE, WITH EASY ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL AMENITIES AND SERVICES

Every suburb should be a place where residents feel proud to live, with safe streets, green spaces, and everyday services within easy reach. Attractive and well-serviced neighbourhoods help strengthen community identity, reduce travel costs, and ensures that everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy quality local amenities.

Partner for safer streets

Police, Council, iwi, schools, community organisations and residents all have a role in creating environments where people feel secure. From improving lighting and pedestrian crossings, to supporting neighbourhood groups and youth engagement programmes, these partnerships help build trust. Police will continue to work closely with local communities to prevent crime, and help create an environment where people can move safely around their suburbs.

Improve access to essential services

We will ensure that residents can reach schools, health services, shops and public transport easily. Investment will focus on better local public transport connections and safe walking and cycling routes (see *Smart Infrastructure*).

Enhance parks and outdoor spaces

Well-designed outdoor spaces encourage people to be active, social and connected. We will continue to upgrade neighbourhood parks, play areas and open spaces to make them more inclusive and enjoyable for families, young people, older residents and

people with disabilities (see *Healthy Communities* and *Restored Taiao*).

Support vibrant local centres

From Petone (Pito One) and Wainuiomata to Taitā and Stokes Valley, each suburban centre has its own history, character and mix of amenities. We will prioritise projects that make these centres more inviting – by improving streetscapes and reflecting its unique character.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Partner for safer streets.	Police, HCC, Schools
Support vibrant local centres.	HCC, Community

INITIATIVE 4:

ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WARM, AFFORDABLE HOMES.

Having a warm and affordable home is fundamental to wellbeing. Yet high housing costs are putting pressure on families and locking many out of home ownership. By investing in quality housing development and renewal, we will ensure that all residents have access to warm, dry and affordable housing.

Increase affordable housing supply

Kāinga Ora, Urban Plus, iwi and the private sector will be encouraged to deliver new affordable homes in areas planned for future residential growth (central and northern valley floor). Higher density housing near transport hubs, town centres and employment centres will reduce commuting and make use of existing infrastructure. Renewal of older social housing stock will also provide more modern, energy-efficient homes.

Support Māori and Pacific housing aspirations

We will support iwi and Pacific-led housing initiatives, including enabling multi-generational living. This will build on initiatives such as Takai Here Tāngata, an innovative partnership between Kahungunu Whānau Services, Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa, Hutt City Council and Urban Plus. In 2022, the partnership delivered 19 new, fully furnished homes at Te Ara o Takapū, Taitā.

Improve housing quality and warmth

Quality housing must be warm, dry, and energy efficient. We will encourage upgrades to insulation, heating, and ventilation – especially in older homes. Programmes that support retrofitting, solar installation and sustainable design will help reduce energy bills and improve health outcomes for residents.

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER
Increase affordable housing supply, including for Māori and Pacific communities.	HCC, Urban Plus, Developers, Iwi
Improve housing quality and warmth, - supporting retrofits and upgrades.	

"This is significant for our people and we want to do more."

Chair of Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa,
Kura Moeahu.

INITIATIVE 1: BRING PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND CULTURES TOGETHER TO CONNECT AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Grow events in the city.	HCC	
Increase utilisation of community facilities.	HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Sense of Community experienced	43% Quality of Life, 2024	Increase

INITIATIVE 2: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Create positive experiences for participants.	All	
Optimise sports facilities and events.		
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET

INITIATIVE 3: ENSURE EVERY SUBURB IS AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE, WITH EASY ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL AMENITIES AND SERVICES

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Partner for safer streets.	Police, HCC, Schools	
Support vibrant local centres.	HCC, Community	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Crime rate (criminal proceedings per 10,000 residents)	206 Per 10,000 residents (Year to March 2025)	Decrease

INITIATIVE 4: ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WARM, AFFORDABLE HOMES

STEPS TO GET THERE	OWNER	STATUS
Increase affordable housing supply, including for Māori and Pacific communities.	HCC, Urban Plus, Developers, Iwi	Ongoing
Improve housing quality and warmth, - supporting retrofits and upgrades.	HCC	
INDICATORS	LATEST DATA	TARGET
Rent affordability (average weekly rent as % of household income)	20.8% Infometrics, March 2025	Decrease

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

ORGANISE A NEIGHBOURHOOD GATHERING. Bring neighbours together for a street BBQ or shared kai.

2

CREATE A WARMER, DRYER HOME. Stop draughts, close curtains in the evening, insulate, and air your home regularly.

3

VOLUNTEER YOUR SKILLS. Coach a sports team or help organise a community event.

4

CHECK ON OLDER NEIGHBOURS. A simple visit, or offering to help with groceries can make a big difference.