



## Submission on Upper Hutt City Council Long Term Plan 2015-2025

Prepared by Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce & Industry Incorporated

### ***Introduction***

The Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce & Industry Incorporated welcomes this opportunity to submit on the Upper Hutt City Council Long Term Plan 2015 – 2025.

Established in 1943, the Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce & Industry Incorporated (HVCC) has long been an important part of the business community in the Hutt Valley region. Our organisation works with the other chambers across the Wellington region, and we are also accredited through the New Zealand Chamber of Commerce network with links to a 20,000 strong worldwide Chamber of Commerce network. Through advocacy work, the HVCC aims to create a positive, dynamic environment in which business can flourish. The HVCC also provides expert business advice, guidance and training, as well as operating an active, business-generating, network-building programme in the Hutt region.

The HVCC membership consists of the following membership demographic Wellington City 14%, Wairarapa/Kapiti/Porirua 6%, Lower Hutt 68%, Upper Hutt 11%, and National 1%. Our membership is more than 90% made up of small and medium sized businesses, who employ less than 20 people. We are the predominant voice for the small to medium enterprise (SME) sector across the region and the regions fastest growing Chamber.

### ***Overview***

Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce wishes to congratulate the Upper Hutt City Council on a Long Term Plan that captures the heart and essence of the upper valley. The Council has laid down a pragmatic programme balanced against strategic projects with funding spread over ten years encompassing an average 3.2% PA increase in rating income that will advance the vision for a vibrant and prosperous community.

Our Chamber members are your ratepayers within the business community which ranges from service industries and manufacturing to retail and hospitality. It is our role to encourage strong business relationships and make connections that encourage business growth.

We believe that can be achieved through a close working relationship between our Chamber and Council as partner organisations seeking to encourage economic development, resilience and sustainability for the Upper Hutt community and the Hutt Valley as a whole.

There is strong support for investing in creating greater awareness of Upper Hutt's assets in terms of facilities, retail, the hospitality sector, sports grounds, and the beauty of the surrounding natural environment.

We believe the combination of lifting awareness of what is on offer in Upper Hutt and upgrading areas like the walkway/cycleway network, Harcourt Park, community space and facilities enhancements, will build the city's profile as a destination city for the Greater Wellington Region.

Our submission looks at a number of areas that will be considered by council for inclusion in the Long Term Plan.

### ***Setting of Rates***

The proposed average ten year rate of 3.2 % per annum increase is in line with previous years and takes into account the planned increase spending by council including special projects over the period. We believe this is a prudent move by a council intent on keeping a tight hold on rates. Business interests share this concern and cite their own cost of investing in developing and growing their own businesses and in turn creating employment.

### ***Spending on Economic Development***

Encouraging new business investment will contribute to ongoing growth of Upper Hutt.

The ongoing commitment to the economic development stimulus package is welcomed particularly as the policy includes earth quake strengthening options and incentives that will attract key tenants in the CBD. A focus on 'transformative' retail businesses, high density residential apartments and large scale office type developments are to be welcomed.

Bringing people into the city centre is vital for sustaining growth in the area.

Marketing Upper Hutt is of vital importance and we would like to see the allocated ten year funding as Marketing and communication of the City are the most vital aspects to making any economic investment package work. It also serves to help boost the profile of the City and build pride among the local community while raising awareness across the Wellington Region that Upper Hutt is alive and is the place to visit.

Support for events that also attract people to the City is a vital component of developing the "Upper Hutt Package" and, while the investment is being seen to go into the amenity value a modest sum of the total spend needs to be ring fenced as an enabler to encourage use, support and promotion of facilities and key infrastructure (Marketing & Communication) combined this will provide an important platform for promoting Upper Hutt to release effect from its assets and attractions.

### ***Supporting Future Development***

We congratulate the Upper Hutt City Council for taking a powerful step forward in encouraging future development a clear indicator of its commitment to making things happen in Upper Hutt. When taken together with the economic development incentives and other projects in the Long Term Plan it will be of significant benefit to the City and will have a major impact on perceptions of Upper Hutt City for residents in addition to a positive impact on visitors to the City.

Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce is very strong on encouraging new skills, networking and providing learning & development opportunities for the owners of existing and emerging enterprises. We believe our programmes lead New Zealand in the variety and relevance of the knowledge and skills being encouraged in not only the work place but in communities as a whole. We will encourage business owners in Upper Hutt to support the council initiatives while working alongside the council to offer suitable courses that meet the needs of Upper Hutt business people ensuring the creation of resilience and sustainability.



### ***Improving Community Services and facilities***

The Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce is very aware of the need for City services that enhance the community and provide a pleasant environment in which to live, work and play.

We believe Upper Hutt City Council has acknowledged its commitment to the community through a diverse range of projects included in the Long Term Plan.

Council's focus on Environment, Community, City Centre, Economy and Infrastructure are seen as important by the Chamber and the initiatives (New Projects) included in the plan covering walkways/cycleways, river trail, Harcourt Park paddling pool, community space, roading, LED lighting, urban and rural growth strategies, economic development and facilities enhancements are applauded. Our support of these is as summarised.

- **Rates** – Cover existing activities and all new projects
- **Debt** – We are comfortable with the proposed level of debt
- **LED streetlight upgrade** – Yes
- **Develop the walkway and cycleway network around the city** – Yes
- **Hutt river trail upgrades** – Do the upgrades even if it is fully funded by council
- **Cruickshank rail tunnel walkway/cycleway** – Yes
- **Harcourt park paddling pool upgrade** – Yes
- **Community space** – Rehouse groups together in an all-purpose community facility
- **Rural roading network and safety improvements** – Yes
- **Boosting economic growth** – Yes
- **Planning for our future growth** - Yes
- **Expressions Extension** – All of the above and the conference extension, However we would like to see the conference kitchen and curtaining for the Rec hall happen immediately. The region has a function venue issue that will be present for a few years yet due to earthquake prone buildings. Expressions and the Rec hall have the capacity to hold 500 people and could be used to fill the void across the region, unfortunately its facilities to cater and dress up are not up to what is required to capture this business. Waiting till 2022 -2023 as indicated in the LTP is not acceptable for a City that wishes to attract more events and people to a venue that could be one of the jewels in the crown for the Greater Wellington Region with some sensible immediate investment. Expressions as a centre needs to be seen as an active community and regional hub alive and contributing as an essential offering for both, but above all fit for purpose..... We would like to see Upper Hutt City Council consider this with urgency even if it means Council fully funding the cost rather than the proposed ¼ contribution.



### ***Summary***

The Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce believes its members will support councils Long Term Plan 2015 - 2025 because of its boldness in seeking to make a difference to the community over the next ten years and providing incentives for investment. In the end, business needs people to survive and prosper.

Our Chamber supports initiatives that will assist in promoting growth and supporting families of business owners and their staff. We believe Upper Hutt City Council has hit the right button in deciding to grow Upper Hutt into a destination city. We think it will happen.

But there is also still much to be achieved in encouraging residents and rate payers to believe in the City that they live in once more instead of the perception they have to go outside the area to find something better. We believe Upper Hutt City Council's Long Term Plan 2015 -2025 plan is a blueprint for building community confidence and igniting business growth and development for the city and look forward to playing our part supporting this plan.

The Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce & Industry Incorporated also seeks the opportunity to present its submission to the Council at its scheduled hearings on The Long Term Plan.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mark Futter", is written over the "Yours Sincerely" text. The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "M" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Futter  
Chief Executive