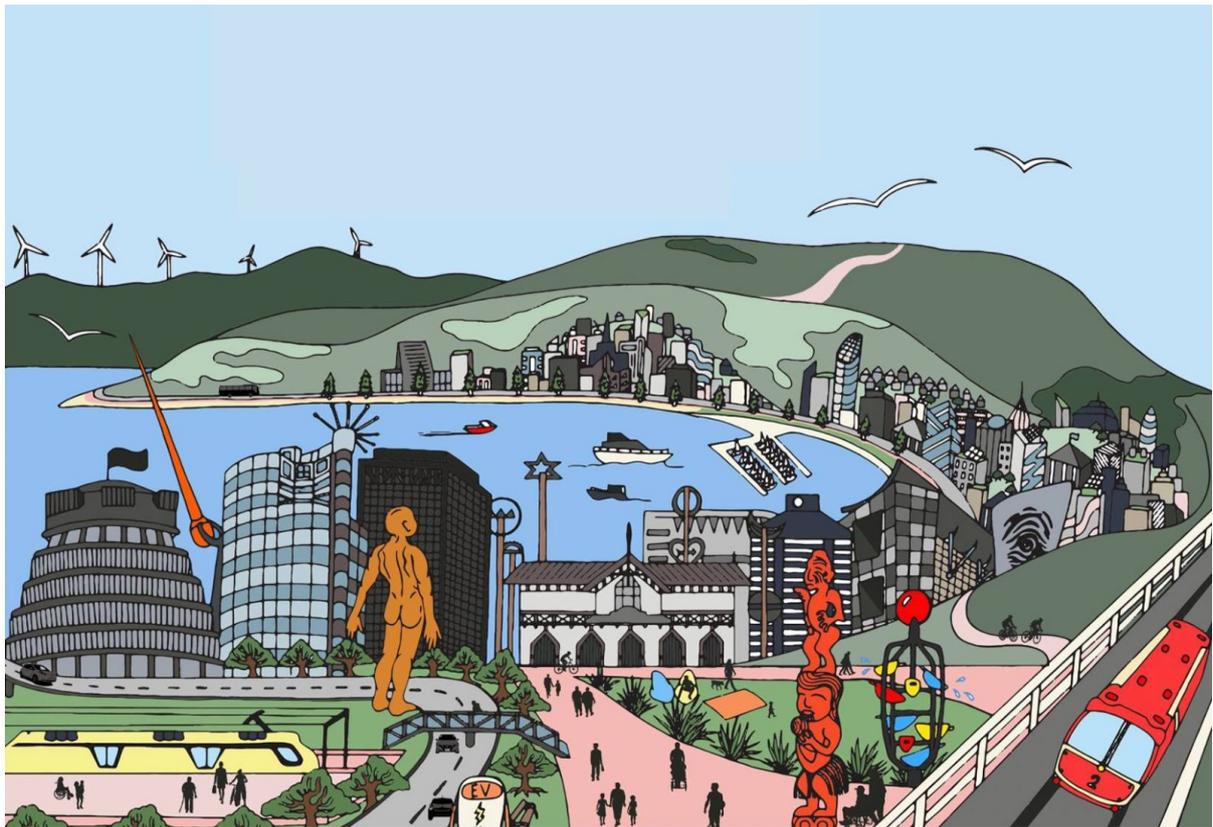




Generation Zero



Generation Zero's Submission to Wellington City Council Annual Plan 2020

**More ambition is required to ensure the Annual Plan can
implement Council's commitments under Te Atakura - First to Zero**

Wellington City Council has made a commitment to a zero-carbon future under Te Atakura - First to Zero. This requires Council to take urgent action to reduce the city's emissions and improve its resilience. We appreciate the unprecedented circumstances and significant loss of council revenue in the past few months, but this plan is not ambitious enough if the council is to meet its zero carbon commitments, and reflects a history of underfunding and lack of planning.

Generation Zero supports Tipu Toa and supports maintaining funding for Lets Get Wellington Moving and other council services, however projects supporting active transport must be fast tracked.

There are many aspects of this plan that we do support including:

- Commitment to continuing to maintain service levels to the best of their ability and not cutting services in response to COVID-19.
- The preferred option of a 5.1% rates increase in order for council to adequately respond to the many challenges it faces at the moment.
- Holding the majority of fees and charges at current levels for 2020/2021 while increasing Southern Landfill fees to reduce waste going to landfill.
- Significant investment in repairing and upgrading our water infrastructure which is a long time coming.

Generation Zero recognises the extreme circumstances of COVID-19. This pandemic represents a large shock to council revenue and household income. However, we advise against a 'slash-and-burn' approach and instead support the 5.1% rates increase. Wellington is privileged to have a diversified and largely stable rate base. Government and the creative sector both are resilient to this shock and put the council in a better position to other local authorities in New Zealand.

A rates increase now avoids a far more painful increase in the next few years. It also avoids gutting council's workstreams and passing more costs onto future generations. To defund council services now puts Wellington into an immediate social debt, medium-term financial debt with higher costs to restart services, and a longer-term environmental debt. We support Council leveraging its balance sheet (within its constraints) and taking a longer term view.

We also strongly support the intent of the items under Section 4 Tipu Toa: Build Back Better, however none of these projects are ambitious enough and frankly, ought to have been included in the budget in the first place. The fact that Councillors had to fight to include this amendment reflects the lack of urgency we've seen from WCC on climate action.

A commitment to a business case for a resource recovery centre is not the same as actually committing to building a resource recovery centre (something Wellington needs desperately) and an additional \$100k in funding for the Built Heritage Incentive Fund is a drop in a bucket compared to the cost of the restoring even one building. These projects are not enough.

We are happy to see the council is not planning to delay investment in LGWM as part of the COVID-19 response; *"The capital expenditure funding has been allocated to the early delivery and city streets areas to enable LGWM to begin programmes this year, subject to the outcomes of the business case investigations. This work will relate to walking, cycling and public transport improvement."*

However, COVID-19 has highlighted how desperately Wellington needs better walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure to improve mobility options and the resilience of our city. These projects need to be fast tracked. If we are to halve our emissions by 2030, we cannot wait until 2028 for the Cycling Master Plan to be completed.

Generation Zero is concerned at the level of detail provided in the plan

This draft plan is severely lacking in the detail interest groups need to be able to provide informed, useful feedback. Many of the items in the plan lack appropriate context and are often poorly justified. For instance, the plan refers to a 9.5% increase in operational expenditure in the past year, with the following explainer, *“which primarily relates to increased depreciation due to new assets, a property revaluation and inflation on contracts and personnel costs.”* 9.5% is a massive increase for a single year and needs far more explanation. What exactly are we paying for now that we weren't paying for before and how is it broken down?

The proposal also covers the specific projects the council intends to fund this year, which is useful to see, but without the context of knowing what the council has decided *not* to fund it is difficult for anyone to take a position on whether these are in fact the right projects to be funding. In addition, other potential investments in the next year are glossed over.

For instance, in regards to the Wellington Airport bail-out loan, the plan refers to the council's commitment to the *“underwriting of a convertible equity type arrangement that will ensure that funding is able to be quickly accessed by Wellington Airport”* but does not tell us how much money will be made available to the airport. Considering the controversy surrounding this decision, we are alarmed by the lack of transparency and it is unacceptable.

Thank you for the opportunity to feedback on this proposal. As it is, the Annual Plan does not support the urgent implementation of Te Atakura. This Plan should be an important part of Wellington's transition to a zero-carbon future, and we look forward to seeing it strengthened.

Ngā mihi nui,

Generation Zero Wellington