Submission on Hamilton City Council's Plan Change 12

Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand

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To whom it may concern,

Introduction

1. Under the Pae Ora Act (Healthy Futures) Act 2022, Te Whatu Ora Waikato (previously Waikato District Health Board) has a responsibility to protect, promote and improve the health of all New Zealanders, and to achieve equity in health outcomes among New Zealand's population groups.

   Additionally, there is a responsibility to promote the reduction of adverse social and environmental effects on the health of people and communities.[i] With approximately 8,200 staff, Te Whatu Ora Waikato delivers health services to a population of more than 400,000 people across the Waikato, and tertiary-level services in the Te Manawa Taki combined Districts (Taranaki, Lakes, Bay of Plenty, Tairawhiti and Waikato) region which has a population of over 840,000. Te Whatu Ora Waikato is part of Te Whatu Ora, Health NZ.

2. Te Whatu Ora Waikato appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission repsonse on Hamilton City Council's proposed Plan Change 12.

Te Whatu Ora Waikato's position on urban environments

3. Te Whatu Ora Waikato has a strong position on urban environments recognising the role urban environments within Hamilton City play in determining both positive and negative health outcomes. There is a strong link between poor quality urban design and planning, and negative

health outcomes that place disproportionate burden on our communities and health services. Cities and towns can be designed in ways that will protect and improve health, and reduce demand for health service costs.

4. As an example, positive impacts on health and overall wellbeing or mental wellbeing can come from provision of and access to greenspace, and improved social connectedness. Land use mix can result in issues related to general access to public amenities. Proximity between home, work and community services can also impact on health outcomes.[ii]

5. Recognised principles for building healthy neighbourhoods which have a link to urban intensification include[iii]:

   - Enhance neighbourhood walkability, as evidence suggests that investing in infrastructure to support walking can increase levels of physical activity among all age groups. Improving neighbourhood walkability, and access to recreational and non-recreational destination (such as grocery stores, schools and other amenities) can also impact positively upon social interaction e.g. among older adults.

   - Build complete and compact neighbourhoods, as provision of local amenities can improve mobility and social engagement among older adults.

   - Enhance street connectivity with safe and efficient infrastructure for all, as enhancing street connectivity via provision of walking and cycling infrastructure and improving access to public transportation, can help reduce perceptions of long distance trips and provide alternative routes for active travel. Anecdotally, accessible walking and cycling infrastructure can also enable inclusion for those with limited mobility or those living with a disability.

6. Te Whatu Ora Waikato notes for council, neighbourhood characteristics and design that are most consistently associated with decreased non-communicable disease (e.g. cancer and chronic heart disease) risk factors include to:

   - increase residential density and provide multiple transport choices for improved liveability
   - provide greater green space to enable improved physical and mental health outcomes
   - improve access to essential social services such as schools and supermarkets
   - optimise land-use mix e.g. mixed land use planning which can reduce vehicle kilometres travelled
   - enable social capital and create places for social interaction
   - improve walking and cycling and public transport infrastructure and services and transport accessibility to enable access to essential services for all, and
   - improve urban environment design, quality, amenity and safety[iv] [v].

7. Te Whatu Ora Waikato **supports** the following specific content in Section 25 Urban Design (in particular s25.15.1 narrative and s25.15.2), and Appendix 1.4 Design Guide (in particular, s1.4.1.3 narrative):

- Retain narrative and identified changes under s1.4.1.3 a), b) c), d), e), f), and g).
- Retain narrative under s24.15.1 in regard to identified objectives and associated policies to support quality urban design
- Retain reference to CPTED design principles, and the specified design elements (1-5) (in s1.4.1.3)

Te Whatu Ora Waikato's position on land transport

8. Te Whatu Ora Waikato has a strong position on land transport recognising the role land transport policy plays in ensuring people have equal opportunity to fully participate in life through access to the goods, services, and social services they need through transport. Transport is linked directly and indirectly to impacts on health outcomes including but not limited to: road safety risk, and enabling access and accessibility, and for active travel modes - enabling physical activity, and reducing carbon emissions. [vi]

   Furthermore, Te Whatu Ora Waikato advocates for and supports equity in transport planning to ensure those living in urban and rural communities who are more at risk of poor health outcomes have a range of travel options available to them so they can access a full range of health services appointments, including specialist appointments.

   Te Whatu Ora Waikato supports active travel modes as these have a positive protective impact on health outcomes, particularly for those living with long term health conditions such as diabetes and chronic heart disease. Uptake of these active modes and greater travel options is more likely in areas of quality urban intensification.

9. The links between improved physical activity as a positive risk factor for chronic conditions such as heart disease and public transport, along with associated physical and mental health benefits linked to this physical activity, are well recognised. Research identifies that on average a public transport service user walks 10 minutes to and from a bus service as part of their journey.

10. Evidence also shows that public transport (as a form of active transport) in addition to reducing CO2 emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change, can reduce air pollution and road traffic injuries. Public transport is also used proportionately more by people with lower household incomes. Thus improved public transport services have the potential to benefit health, climate and equity.

11. Te Whatu Ora Waikato has a strategic imperative to achieve radical improvement in Māori health outcomes by eliminating health inequities for Māori. [vii] The organisations also has a strategic goal to improve access to services, which includes an associated activity to improve transport choices for people of highest need. [viii]

12. The current transport system in NZ, like many other car-dominated transport systems, has substantial negative impacts on health, at a similar level to the effects of tobacco and obesity.

Transport contributes to health inequity, as Māori bear greater shares of the negative health impacts. Creating a healthier and more sustainable transport system would bring substantial benefits for health, society, the environment and the economy.[ix]

13. It is also important to note the link between socioeconomic deprivation and access to transport and recognise the impact for both Māori and Pacific peoples and for households experiencing barriers such as having no access to a vehicle (see Key Information section 19.). Again, access to low or no cost travel modes contribute to improved health and wellbeing outcomes for such households.

14. As a health organisation, Te Whatu Ora Waikato also advocates for and supports transport policy, services and infrastructure that reduce barriers to participation for people living with a disability. An inclusive transport system is critical to enabling participation for all in society which is a basic human right.

15. Te Whatu Ora Waikato **supports** the following specific changes to 18. Transport Corridor Zone (in particular, 18.1 narrative):

- Reference to 'Place-based function, and plans and strategies' and these reflecting where people are located and associated travel.

- Reference to 'Including creating public spaces for access and interaction, including providing for human interaction, exercise and enjoyment, facilitating commerce and business, enabling access to buildings, lots and public spaces, and parking.'

16. Te Whatu Ora Waikato **recommends** the following specific changes to 18. Transport Corridor Zone (in particular, 18.1 narrative):

- Inclusive access be provided for in this narrative i.e. 'accessible travel' which, as one example can be associated with accessible curb cuts, ramp angles and crossings for those travelling with an physical impairment or disability.

- Amend to read "Including creating <u>accessible</u> public spaces for access and interaction….and parking <u>(including accessible parking)</u>."

17. Te Whatu Ora Waikato **supports** the following specific changes to 25.14 Transportation (in particular, 25.14.1 and 25.14.2 narratives):

- Reference to the "Transport network includes all transport corridors and infrastructure for all transport modes", which is supported. In particular, the inclusion of walking, passenger cycling, micro mobility, and public transport is supported. Clarification is sought as to whether or not micro mobility includes 'mobility modes' such as those travelling in a wheelchair - if not, it should as there are human rights obligations on council to provide for those living with a disability (one in four Hamilton residents live with a disability and 40% are contribute to the local economy via being in employment.[x]

- The Transport Objective (25.14.2.1) and associated policies that link to the "Accessible to all" component of this objective. As an example, the Urban Design policy (25.14.2.1f) which reads "Provide high quality, safe, efficient, convenient, multi-modal connections for everyone moving from place to place."

18. Te Whatu Ora Waikato's advocacy position is to raise awareness of the connections between health and inclusive quality urban design and transport which is centred on place making to ensure access to health and other essential services and good health outcomes for all.

Key information

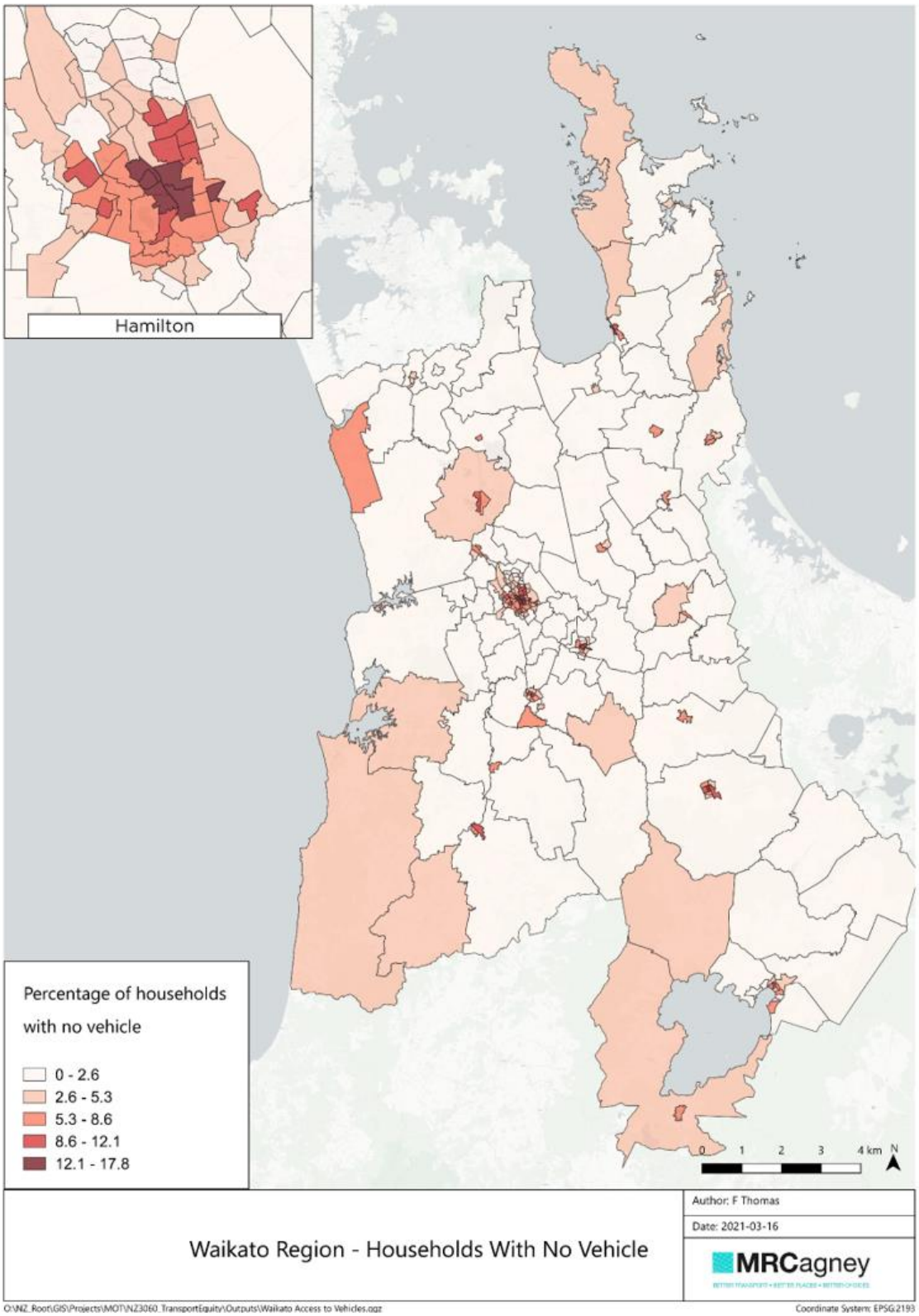
19. Te Whatu Ora Waikato is a Future Proof growth management partner and support a collaborative approach to realising the agreed aspirations of the partnership, as outlined in the Future Proof Strategy. The Waikato Hospital site is a key employment node for the city, and its activities are a significant travel generator. We note that the Hospital has been identified in the Waikato/Hamilton Metro Spatial Plan and in recent joint work on the Waikato/Hamilton Transport Business Case as a key employment node and transport interchange on one of two rapid transport corridors within greater Hamilton.

20. Te Whatu Ora Waikato has been an active participant on the development of the joint Metro Spatial Plan, Transport detailed business case, and local improvements to physical transport infrastructure and services surrounding the Waikato Hospital site. The organisation was also supported by Hamilton City Council, Waikato Regional Council and Waka Kotahi in the development of its Travel Plan i.e. Waikato DHB Travel and Access Plan 2021/22-2023/24 (the Plan).

21. One in four people living in the Hamilton are estimated to be living with a disability, with 42% of people lining with a disability across the Waikato in employment. Mobility impairments area the most common form of disability in the Waikato. Seventeen percent of people living with a physical disability have a need for modifications to their home to improve accessibility.[xi]

22. Te Whatu Ora Waikato and Community Waikato have identified that many households in Hamilton City and the wider region have no access to a private motor vehicle, and in many cases this is not by choice. According to census data 2018, about 8.6-12.1% of people living in key Hamilton urban centres identified in the Plan Change 12 do not have access to a private motor vehicle e.g. Fairfield/Enderley and Dinsdale. For many in these communities, a lack of access to transport undermines their quality of life and access to health services. A quality urban form with multi-modal transport access options will protect and enable access, including to broader essential services. With this in mind, provisions for transport modes and inclusive access need to be part of the Plan Change12 amendments. Figure 1 below shows the number of households across the Waikato region, and in Hamilton City, with no access to a private vehicle.

Figure 1: Households with no vehicles in the Waikato region



23. Finally, Te Whatu Ora Ora Waikato is working alongside a range of other community organisations and groups, iwi, councils (including Waikato Regional Council) and agencies on Waikato Wellbeing and to implement the Waikato Plan. As you have identified in your consultation document, this Long Term Plan amendment will enable community wellbeing outcomes linked to SDG11 sustainable cities and communities (Waikato Wellbeing Project, Sustainable Development Goal 11) which includes increasing opportunities for communities in these districts (Thames Coromandel, Hauraki and Matamata-Piako) to access health and other essential services. Similarly, the work programme for the Waikato Plan includes a key theme to improve community connections. Connections can be both physical and virtual in nature. Inclusive and sustainable transport improves physical connections to essential services for communities, including health.

Summary

24. Te Whatu Ora Waikato thanks you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Hamilton City Council's proposed Plan Change 12. The benefit generated from quality and inclusive urban design and transport that is centred on place-making is real, even when these benefits are difficult to quantify.

25. In its decision-making, Te Whatu Ora Waikato asks council to consider the range of complex health and social issues affecting the quality of life of those impacted directly and indirectly by poor quality urban forum and limited or inaccessible transport options. This includes broader impacts on particular communities and population groups (positive or negative) in terms of access to essential services, and enabling contributions to the Hamilton City's economy and vitality.

26. Please note that Te Whatu Ora Waikato does not wish to speak to this submission.

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[i] Waikato District Health Board, "Healthy People Excellent Care. Waikato District Health Board Strategy." 2016.
[ii] Waikato District Board, "Position Statement on Urban Environments." 2017.
[iii] Public Health England, " Spatial Planning for Health: An evidence based resource for planning and designing healthier places," Wellington House, London2017.
[iv] Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2022, 19(4), 2032; https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19042032.
[v] Public Health England, " Spatial Planning for Health: An evidence based resource for planning and designing healthier places," Wellington House, London2017.
[vi] Waikato District Health Board. "Position Statement on Land Transport." 2018.
[vii] Waikato District Health Board, "Healthy People Excellent Care. Waikato District Health Board Strategy." 2016.
[viii] Te Korowai Waiora, 2019-2029; chrome-Waikato-Health-System-Plan-Te-Korowai-Waiora.pdf (waikatodhb.health.nz)
[ix] Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2022, 19(4), 2032; https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19042032.
[x] Waikato District Health Board, "Whānau Hauā Disables People Health and Wellbeing Profile". 2021
[xi] Waikato District Health Board, "Whānau Hauā Disabled Peoples Health and Wellbeing Profile". 2021