



# Rautaki Whakauka | 2020 Sustainability Strategy





# Contents

2	Welcome
3	Introduction
8	About this strategy
9	Our vision
10	Te Ao Māori view of sustainability
12	Issues for Upper Hutt
16	Opportunities for Upper Hutt
24	Carbon neutrality
26	Our natural environment
28	Water
30	Our community
32	Leading by example
34	Waste reduction
36	A community on board
38	Better transport solutions
40	Appendix 1: Planning
42	Appendix 2: Glossary
44	Appendix 3: Notes

# Welcome

Upper Hutt is our home and a place that belongs to all of us. As a community it's where we live and where we come together to learn and grow. It's where we play sport, swim in Te Awa Kairangi, support our local businesses and celebrate our growing diversity.

We want future generations to be able to enjoy all the great advantages that come from making Upper Hutt home. That's why we have developed our Sustainability Strategy, to map out how Council and the community can work together to create a green, sustainable and economically resilient city and environment now, and into the future.

How we achieve that ultimate goal is subject to a diverse range of opinions. Our job as a Council has been to bring all of those opinions around the table and map out with our community the best way forward. That is what we believe we have been able to do with this strategy.

In consultation with our community we have outlined the best way forward for our city, but we can't do this alone. We need the community to come together to deliver on the goals that have been set for Council and our city through this strategy.

Doing our bit towards ensuring a stable natural environment is an important part of our strategy, but

it's not the only part. Of course we need to meet the environmental needs of the community, New Zealand and indeed the world, and make sure we reduce our emissions, but we also need to make sure our community is resilient, and our social needs are met.

A key part of creating a resilient community through our strategy is empowering our community to be able to provide for itself. We know our people need a thriving Upper Hutt economy with the kinds of jobs that enable our people to live their best lives, but one that also ensures the natural characteristics that make our region so unique are maintained. The strategy outlines how we can achieve that.

I'd like to thank the Upper Hutt community and Climate Change focus groups for their participation and ideas in putting this strategy together. I am confident we can continue to find ways to grow in partnership with our environment.

There's plenty to do.



**Wayne Guppy**

KOROMATUA | MAYOR





View from Riverstone Terraces

# Introduction

Upper Hutt prides itself on its beautiful parks, birdlife, open spaces, and being a great place to live. This Sustainability Strategy is targeted towards ensuring that the legacy of Upper Hutt's liveability and environment will not only continue, but regenerate and improve for future generations.

Becoming more sustainable will mean reducing the impact we're having on the environment, while ensuring people can live decent lives with a good standard of living. As a community, we need to be resilient to events that impact us, and adaptable to the bigger changes that will permanently alter the conditions we live in.

A healthy environment is critical to the functioning of our society and economy. Globally and locally, however, the environment is under pressure from human activities: pollution of air, water and land, the depletion of finite natural resources, and the decline and loss of whole species and ecosystems. Of these recognised human-caused pressures, climate change is the most urgent.

While it may seem that Upper Hutt, and even New Zealand, does not have the same scale of sustainability and climate change problems faced by countries with larger populations, economies and industries, we are not immune to global impacts. The issues are the same, as is our responsibility as kaitiaki to take care of the Earth and its biodiversity and resources. Our actions now become our legacy for future generations.

Scientific evidence regarding climate change is clear; we need to act now, and accelerate our actions quickly. Globally, human emissions of greenhouse gases must be halved by 2030 and brought to net zero by 2050 to have a chance of avoiding the worst scenarios. In order to mitigate and adapt to climate change, we need to look ahead and analyse the long term benefits and implications of our decisions and actions.

The review of the 2012 Sustainability Strategy signifies a new beginning for this significant work; a substantial cultural and institutional change is required to meet the goals we have outlined. We may be the smallest city in the country, but that doesn't mean we don't think big or can't make a big difference.

## INTRODUCTION

As a community, we need to unite; Council must further partner with the community, local groups and businesses, and central and local government to create a positive future. This Strategy will shape the actions that will determine our future. We are aiming for progress, not perfection; the Strategy will set us on the path and be reviewed in three years' time. There is significant work needed to benchmark and better understand how sustainable Upper Hutt is now, and how far we have to go. This information will be used to improve and focus the Strategy when it is next reviewed.

The Sustainability Strategy has been developed with input from the Upper Hutt City Council Climate Change Focus Groups, and our wider community. By taking time to engage with Upper Hutt's future, you are focusing on creating a better place for us and future generations to live.

# Background

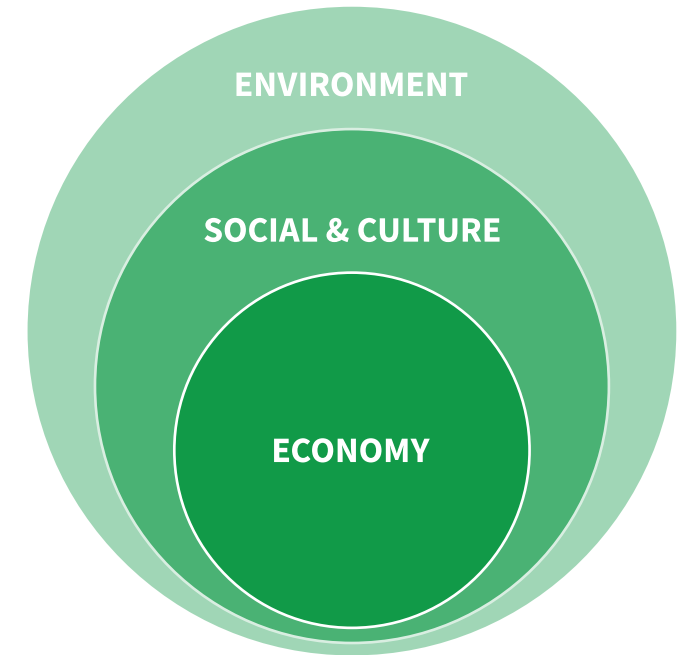
## What is *sustainability*?

For the purpose of this Strategy, the following definition of sustainability will be used:

*'To meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'*<sup>1</sup>

Sustainability is a complex subject, with wide reaching implications across the biosphere, society and communities at a range of levels. It can be viewed as humanity's target goal of human-ecosystem equilibrium. To be sustainable, is to ensure a given activity or resource can be maintained indefinitely at a certain rate or level.

The natural environment is the key to sustainability. It underpins everything, including society, culture and economy, as demonstrated by the below diagram. Society does not exist without a healthy functioning and viable environment. An economy is a sub-system of human society; it occurs when people interacting with each other and the natural environment create and exchange things that people value. An economy cannot exist without human society or the environment.



**The three nested dependencies model of sustainability, showing environment underpinning social and culture, which underpins economy.<sup>2</sup>**

Sustainability is, therefore, about ending unsustainable activities in a manner to ensure everyone's long term environmental, social, cultural and economic needs are met.

Planet Earth's natural systems and processes have limits to the amount of pollution that can be absorbed, and the number of resources that can be provided. When limits are exceeded, there are negative implications on both human and eco-system health. For example, introduced substances can be dispersed in a way that is difficult or impossible to reverse, such as micro plastics and chemicals and resources can collapse for long periods, or even permanently, such as fish stocks and fresh water.

Beyond the bio-physical definitions, unsustainable activities also include those that prevent people living with dignity and reaching their potential, such as a lack of access to clean water, nutrition, shelter, education, healthcare and employment. 'Sustainable development' is the process leading us to the point of sustainability and ensuring that all people everywhere, now and in the future are able to get what they need to live a good life.

The final key concept to sustainability is preserving cultural identity and continuity; connecting people to each other, to the past, and to the future.

Currently, global industrialised civilisation is unsustainable - billions of people do not have their basic needs met. Environmental limits are also being reached and creating irreversible effects that will impact the wellbeing and potential of future generations. At the same time, a minority of people are consuming resources far in excess of what is required to meet their needs.

Unsustainable activities must end at some point. The way and time that the activities end, and the consequences for future generations, are largely dependent on the choices we make—as individuals, as society, and as a species.

## What is resilience?

Resilience is the capacity of something being able to resist and/or recover from forces that would otherwise change it into another state. It is often thought of in terms of a community's ability to recover after a natural disaster, which requires built infrastructure that can cope with extreme conditions and resources to be available to quickly repair damage and restore 'normality'. To be resilient when the forces prompting change become stronger requires increasing levels of effort; for example,

## INTRODUCTION

increasing extreme weather events and sea level rise as a result of climate change. In this context, a strategy of resisting all change is unsustainable, and adaptation to cope with the new circumstances is needed.

In the context of Planet Earth, resilience refers to the Earth's ability to 'bounce back' from destructive human activities. Since the Industrial Age the state of the Earth has been changed drastically by humans in many areas and in many ways. Globally, the planet is struggling to cope with the excess extraction of resources and adverse impacts of human activities.

The challenge of achieving sustainability involves making deliberate choices about what to change, what to retain and strengthen and how best to adapt, rather than just reacting to events as they occur and trying to maintain an unsustainable quo at all costs.

## What is meant by *biodiversity*?

Biodiversity is the variety of life forms present in an area, including species of animals and plants and the terrestrial and aquatic habitats and ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part. It includes the environmental fabric that makes up Upper Hutt, such as the trees, plants, animals, insects, fish and their complex and interconnected habitats.

## How is the economy considered?

Our local economy is an integral part of Upper Hutt, and we need to ensure we are preparing for the approaching post-carbon economy to ensure stability. Poor environmental quality in turn affects economic growth and wellbeing by lowering the quantity and quality of resources. Future economic growth cannot be to the detriment of the environment.

Whole communities benefit from people working, shopping and socialising close to home—funds spent within the local economy have a 'multiplier benefit' as they circulate. Time saved by not commuting improves community participation, families and wellbeing. Changing workforce habits to create smaller, local hubs will not only benefit the Upper Hutt community, it will help reduce our impact on the environment with reduced transport and infrastructure requirements.





# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## How do the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals fit in?

The United Nations have defined 17 key Sustainable Development Goals,<sup>3</sup> broadly categorised as social, economic and environmental goals. As a country, New Zealand has made a commitment to take ownership and establish a framework to achieve the goals. We have taken these into account when defining our sustainability goals and principles at a community level.

## Sustainability legislation and strategies

This Strategy will be supported by a suite of legislation, policy statements, plans, strategies, and reviews developed at central and regional government levels. These are intended to provide a nationwide and regional overview of environmental concerns, issues and solutions for local Council sustainability policy development. Our Council will need to incorporate relevant aspects of these into this Strategy and related strategies, plans and policies. These tools include:

- ④ Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019
- ④ Waste Minimisation Act 2008
- ④ Resource Management Act 1991<sup>4</sup>
- ④ Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region 2013 (Greater Wellington)
- ④ National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014<sup>4</sup>
- ④ Proposed National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land<sup>5</sup>
- ④ Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2019<sup>6</sup>
- ④ Proposed Natural Resources Plan 2019 (Greater Wellington)
- ④ New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020<sup>7</sup>

# About this Strategy

Strategy is the approach to achieving long term goals and overcoming barriers, especially under conditions of uncertainty. It is knowing where to go, why, and how to get there. This Sustainability Strategy belongs to the people of Upper Hutt. While Council will implement aspects, it is key that the community get behind and adopt the principles of the Strategy to drive it forward. It will help create a secure, stable future for the next generation.

The purpose of this Strategy is to define our approach to sustainability. It will state our long term goals and identify the critical factors to overcome the barriers. It is based on our current situation, with an assessment of our strengths and weaknesses, and a clear view of how to take these into account as we progress.

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<b>Vision</b>	The overarching, aspirational description of where we want to be long term and what we want our future to look like.
<b>Goals</b>	Focused, practical, tangible aims—the end towards which our efforts are directed, including the steps that will move us towards achieving our vision.
<b>Principles</b>	Our basic starting points and approaches to decision making—the way we will conduct our actions, including the essential values on which they are based.
<b>Actions</b>	The ‘doing.’ What we are doing to make strides towards achieving our goals and Vision.
<b>Measurement</b>	How we evaluate our progress to ensure we’re on track towards achieving our goals and vision.

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# Our vision

The vision of our Sustainability Strategy is:

*‘Upper Hutt is a resilient and adaptable city that identifies, confronts,  
and finds solutions to issues impacting on our four well-beings  
to ensure future generations can live a good life here.’*

# Te Ao Māori view of sustainability

Māori have a distinct view of sustainability, with accountability to whānau, hāpu and iwi to ensure there is a reduced risk to present and future generations. There is a framework of three core Māori values for Council to adhere to when considering sustainability: Whakapapa, Kaitiakitanga and Manaakitanga. The most important of these is Whakapapa, which underlies everything.

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**Whakapapa** Genealogy; to lay one thing upon another; descent. It is the foundation of the Māori world view. This is the genealogical descent of all living things from Ranginui (sky father) and Papatūānuku (earth mother) to their children, who became the atua (deities) of the various domains (e.g. the earth, sky, sea, forests), and created the plants and animals within. They are the original kaitiaki (guardian) and their mana or authority to exercise this role is handed down through Whakapapa.

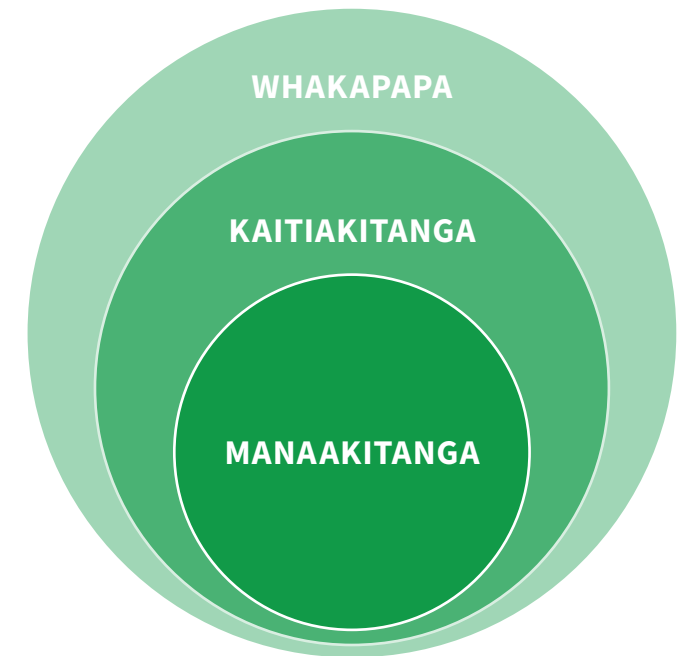
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**Kaitiakitanga** Acting to preserve and maintain taonga (treasures); ensuring safety in all activities. The exercise of guardianship by tangata whenua of an area in accordance with tikanga Māori in relation to natural and physical resources. This includes the ethic of stewardship and being mindful of the impact of behaviours and giving back to the land.

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**Manaakitanga** Behaving in ways that elevate others; showing respect, consideration and aroha (love and compassion) toward others; generosity and fulfilling reciprocal obligations.

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Whakapapa underlies kaitiakitanga, which underlies manaakitanga.

Māori adhere to the holistic view that innovation and learning is limitless. Having shown significant cultural and social resilience in the face of political, economic and cultural marginalisation since European settlement, Māori resilience and adaptation is an important part of the present and future.

‘Kaupapa Māori’ is a term used to explain the key concepts that explain the Māori belief system regarding the natural environment. Pivotal to the ideals of kaupapa Māori is whakapapa. Māori belief dictates people are stemmed from Māori gods Ranginui and Papatūānuku, so the relationship between people and the environment is prevalent in the everyday ways in which we connect to our natural environment.

Māori developed kaupapa (principles) and tikanga (actions) with regards to the relationship between people and the health of the environment, and to maintain a sense of identity. Whakapapa binds people and the environment together; they become united, and there is a sense of duty to look after the environment.

Whakapapa, is the basis for Kaitiakitanga. Kaitiakitanga is based on the concept that people are descended from Papatūānuku, rather than being ascendant to her (western view). Kaitiakitanga promotes a relationship of reciprocity; people do not ‘own’ the earth’s resources, rather they have ‘user rights’ and a duty of care.

For tangata whenua to be able to practice Manaakitanga, the health of the environment is imperative. For example, local foods are always included when hosting guests; the environment must be secure in order to grow local food, and ensure Māori have access to traditional mahinga kai.

Therefore, it is essential to Māori culture that we look after our environment for the good of future generations. Council will give effect to the Te Ao Māori view of Sustainability in its decision making processes.

**Te Manawa | The Heart**  
Carved by Dave Te Hira, Te Rarawa  
Expressions Whirinaki Arts and Entertainment Centre

# Issues for Upper Hutt

Upper Hutt City faces a number of issues relating to sustainability. The severity and impacts of the issues will determine how jeopardised the long term sustainability of the city will be, including our way of life and that of future generations.

## Climate change

Climate change brings direct and indirect challenges. Direct challenges include the rapid reduction of emissions and adapting to the direct impacts of a changing climate. Indirect challenges include global economic upheaval and human migration away from the worst affected areas.

Human activities are producing heat-trapping greenhouse gases that are heating the Earth, including the use of fossil fuels, the destruction of carbon sinks, such as forests, wetlands and soils, and the increased development of industrial agriculture. The consequences for the living world are already extremely serious, and are predicted to worsen until at least mid-century.

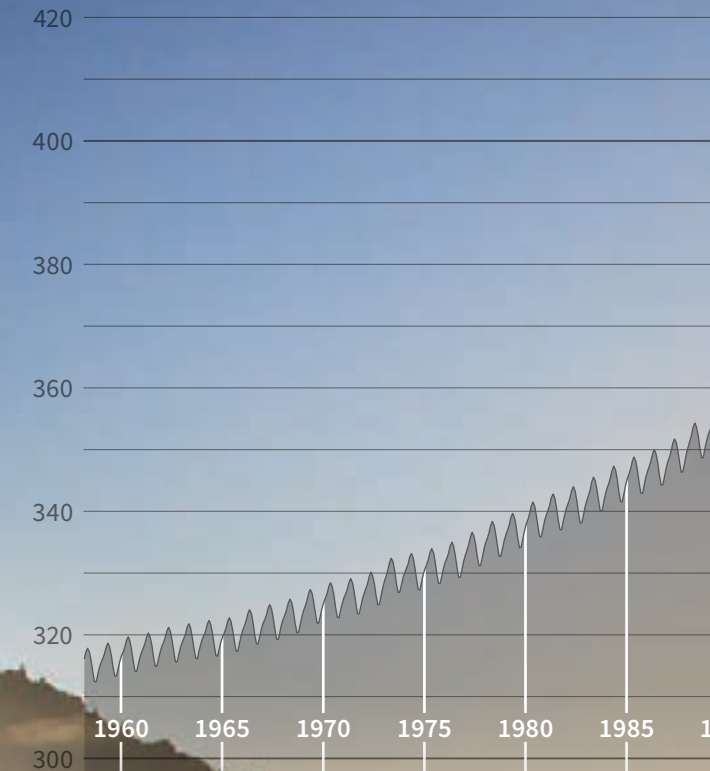
Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are still growing at a faster rate each year (see figure below). If action is taken to cut global emissions of human-caused greenhouse gases by 50% by 2030 and to net zero by 2050, further heating, and even more extreme changes, may be avoided in the latter part of the century.

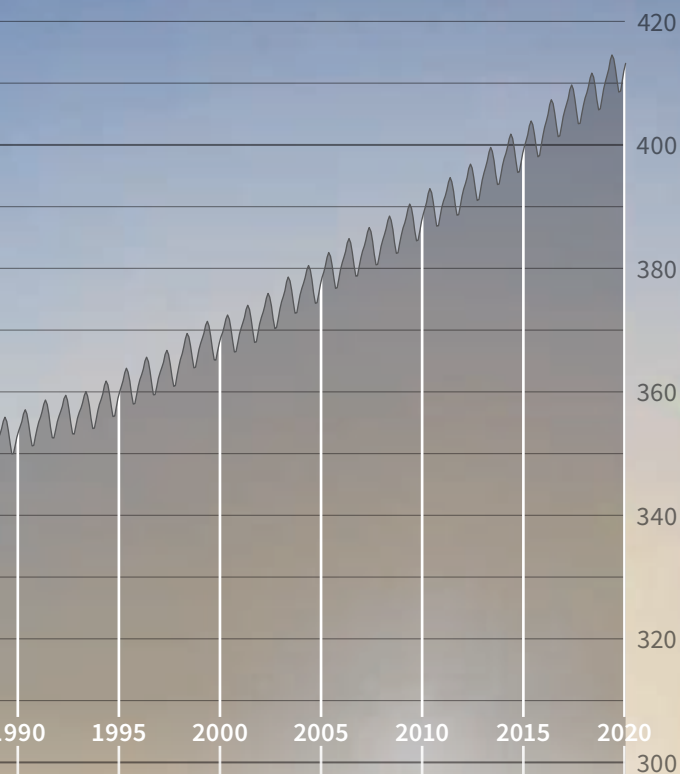
Locally, climate change challenges for Upper Hutt include

- Increased likelihood of flood events (Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River) affecting economy, lifestyle and transport.
- Population increase as people move away from coastal areas subject to rising sea levels.
- Increased costs relating to how we manage the effects on our indigenous biodiversity.

The Keeling Curve is one of the most compelling pieces of scientific evidence; it shows the accumulation of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in our atmosphere over 50 years, as monitored at Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii since 1958.<sup>8</sup>

Carbon dioxide concentration (parts per million)





Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt River

## Water quality and quantity

Water quality is declining globally and supplies are becoming depleted. This is caused by over-extraction and the reduction of snow and glaciers due to global warming which, in turn, reduces river flows in summer when water is needed the most. Human activities can drastically affect water quality, including de-forestation (leading to soil erosion and sedimentation), rural land use (e.g. intensively farming), agro-chemical use, urban development, industrial use, sewage and storm water discharges and irrigation (leading to increased leaching of contaminants to ground waters and aquifers).

Generally, the rivers and tributaries in Upper Hutt have good water quality. As a valued resource, however, the water available for use is fully allocated when river flows are low.<sup>9</sup> Low flows in summer lead to the growth of toxic algae, and puts pressure on aquatic life. Pollution of Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River in Upper Hutt has a cumulative effect when combined with other sources downstream, causing more acute problems in Lower Hutt, and Wellington Harbour. This results in some areas being unswimmable during periods in the summer months; toxic algae poses health risks to dogs.

In addition, we cannot ignore the water impacts from products imported to Upper Hutt, such as food and clothing. These have a significant 'water footprint' with regards to the quantity of water it took to make them, plus the water pollution that can result from production practices.

## Biodiversity and land use

Humans utilise land and water for their own purposes, including building places to live, cultivation for food production, food harvest (e.g. fishing, aquaculture), construction material production (e.g. forestry, mining) and building roads and railways for transport. These purposes result in replacing natural landscapes and species with their own, and disrupting, destroying and displacing species and original ecosystems and habitats.

The advent of agriculture, including deliberate land use change by humans around 10,000 years ago, triggered an ongoing period of mass extinctions that has intensified in the last 50 years. There has been a massive reduction in wild animals, as the number of humans and domesticated animals more than doubled.

Invasive introduced pest species also pose a particular threat to biodiversity, and have been devastating to New Zealand's native flora and fauna. The integrity of natural ecosystems is essential for the overall health of the environment and resilience

to extreme events. For example, wetlands provide protection from flooding, remove pollutants from water and absorb carbon from the atmosphere. In Upper Hutt, nearly all of the original native forest cover and wetlands have been removed, and native forests have been replaced with exotic plantations, buildings, roads and grazing land. Our indigenous biodiversity is under continuous threat from introduced predators and this has impacts on our economy, society and culture, including the controversial use of toxic poisons.

Restoring ecosystems and preserving and enhancing biodiversity is crucial to achieving sustainability.

## Population and growth

The impact of human activities increases in scale with population, the average affluence, and the efficiency of technologies. There are feedback effects, including improved efficiency leading to greater affluence and improved technology spurring population growth in certain circumstances.

Globally, affluence (measured by gross domestic product), population and environmental impacts are all growing, even as technologies become increasingly efficient. This means that focusing solely on improving technology, as a means to achieve sustainability, is not a viable solution. Constraining the physical scale of human activities is vital to reducing impacts.

Upper Hutt will be under increasing population pressure as people migrate from abroad and within New Zealand as a result of climate impacts, such as sea level rise. Adopting more compact urban form, and adapting lifestyles that result in less consumption, will be essential to accommodate new residents while restoring, preserving and enhancing the environment and quality of life.



Maternity sculpture, Upper Hutt Station



## Waste

Waste is polluting our air, our land, our lakes, rivers, coasts and oceans, and contributes 5% to New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>10</sup> Despite increased awareness of the negative impacts of waste on our environment, our disposal to municipal landfills increased by 48% in the last decade.<sup>11</sup>

Upper Hutt aligns with this national trend and joins the nation in growing concern over waste issues. The 2019 Colmar Brunton survey found that the build-up of plastic in our environment is the biggest concern for New Zealanders (72%).

Locally, this concern is manifested in the increasing popularity and consequent stress put on the rates-funded community recycling station, which has struggled to cope with the increasing demand for recycling infrastructure.

In order to lessen the impact waste is having on our environment, Upper Hutt needs to transition from a linear economy—the current 'take-use-waste' model—to a circular model that values resources by reusing, reducing, and recycling.

Understanding the social landscape is as important as understanding the physical landscape when it comes to waste management.



Kaitoke Regional Park | Photo courtesy: Jennifer Curtis

# Opportunities for Upper Hutt

Scientific developments and the natural systems that support human activities present an opportunity to become more sustainable and avoid worst outcomes. There are many practical options and resources available to us right now and we need to pursue these and explore further initiatives and opportunities.

## Zero Carbon Act (Climate Change Response Amendment Act 2019)

The Zero Carbon Act established a target for emissions reduction in New Zealand, a framework for managing our progress via a series of five-yearly carbon budgets, and the new, independent Climate Commission. The Act provides increased certainty to individuals and organisations regarding where the country is going with carbon reduction, and introduces the crucial concept of a fixed environmental limit that we all must work within. It requires Government to set out emission reduction plans for the country in response to the Climate Commission's recommendations.

## 'Billion trees' funding

Provided they represent a permanent change of land use, new forests remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and provide a host of other sustainability benefits. As part of its carbon reduction plans, Government has adopted a target of planting one billion trees by 2028. Half of this will be achieved by commercial foresters, and Government is providing funding to spur projects to plant the other half. The aim is for approximately one third of the billion trees to be native species. Projects for environmental restoration on any land, public or private, are potentially eligible.



Moonshine Bridge



Fraser Crescent School



Centrewalk, Main Street



Maoribank Park



Upper Hutt Station underpass



Rimutaka Street, Trentham



Timberlea



Tawai Street, Trentham

## Carbon storage

Growing trees and lessening development footprints provides permanent carbon storage. The growth rate of exotic trees, such as pine and gum trees, is faster than native trees but, in the long term native trees outperform exotics. There are good opportunities in Upper Hutt for increasing tree cover, including planting native trees to preserve, restore and enhance ecologically-damaged habitats.

Wetlands are carbon sinks, and there are good opportunities to protect and restore them.

## Active and public transport and better urban design

Greater use of transport modes such as walking, cycling, various forms of e-mobility and public transport, can improve health, ease congestion, lower emissions and free space in urban areas for people and nature. These modes need to be prioritised in transport planning and urban design decisions so they are more convenient, safer, affordable and easier than travelling by private vehicle.

Better consideration of different transport modes into transport design will increase their attractiveness and encourage people to use them more.

Denser development in the right places will mean more people can access the amenities they need without requiring a vehicle. Car-share schemes can supplement active and public transport and make the option of not owning a car more viable and attractive.

If done well, people will use sustainable transport modes more, without it being seen as any kind of sacrifice. It will also create a more interesting, vibrant and attractive urban environment, particularly having fewer vehicles on roads.



## Sustainable and water sensitive urban design (WSUD)

WSUD is a land planning and engineering design approach which integrates the urban water cycle, including storm water, groundwater and wastewater management and water supply, into urban design to minimise environmental degradation and improve aesthetic and recreational appeal.

In addition, other sustainability approaches could be applied to improved urban design and housing.

## Electric vehicles (EVs)

While private car travel can be reduced through a shift to active and public transport modes, this does not offer a complete solution. Road transport of all kinds would have to be completely decarbonised to stop its contribution to the climate crisis.

Battery-electric drive systems, especially when combined with a greater use of renewable electricity, offer alternatives to light passenger vehicles and many commercial vehicles. The technology, particularly battery size, efficiency, capacity and pricing, is rapidly improving. However, it needs to be adopted more quickly to fulfil its potential in achieving climate goals, and avoiding wasted investment and resources in conventional fossil-fuelled vehicles.

## Renewable energy and electrification

Although around 85% of New Zealand's electricity supply is renewable, only about 40% of its total energy use is, as transport and many forms of heating rely heavily on fossil fuels. Emissions can be dramatically lowered by converting more energy uses to electricity (for



example, by using EVs and heat pumps), but renewable electricity generation must also be increased at the same time. This combined approach is essential to achieving carbon reduction goals.

## Ecological footprinting

Ecological foot printing is defining the area of productive land and water required to support an individual's lifestyle, activities and assimilation of generated wastes; in other words, measuring the human demand on nature.<sup>12</sup> It is estimated using simple questions about their home, daily habits, travel choices, diet, spending habits and income. The overall sustainability of an individual's lifestyle can be assessed by multiplying their footprint in hectares by the global population, and dividing by the total productive land available on planet Earth. The result is the number of 'Earths' needed if everyone lived like the person in question.

Ecological foot printing is a useful means of communicating a complex topic to the general public as it encompasses many environmental issues, such as resource depletion, carbon emissions, waste and other pollution. It also shows the user the importance and impact of different lifestyle changes, and vividly demonstrates issues of sustainability and equity.

## Empowering communities

Communities contain a diverse range of knowledge, resources and skills that can be brought to bear on the challenges facing them. Communities often do this spontaneously, strengthening social bonds to work together, and thereby becoming more sustainable and resilient.

The National 'Neighbours Day Aotearoa'<sup>13</sup> initiative is a good example of this.



Hayley—Take Me Back



March Madness: Kaushal—Mayfair Café

# Principles

The principles are what the strategy is based on to ensure success.

- A. Full integration across Council:** It is imperative that this Strategy does not exist in silo. The sustainability goals and principles must be woven into all council policies, plans, decisions, grants and papers. Every facet of Council has a role to play in a united approach.
- B. Council will partner with the community:** On its own, Council cannot achieve the scale and goals that this Strategy demands. While Council will lead the work, partnering with the community, experts, and businesses will be critical in moving forward to achieve results.
- C. Education, information and understanding:** Council will strive to ensure the community have the resources to be educated on what the issues are, and what they can do to address them.
- D. Change.** Change will be embraced as we move forward with the Strategy.
- E. Long term, big picture thinking:** Council will make decisions by considering the long-term impacts as we move towards achieving our Vision.
- F. Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** Under the Treaty of Waitangi, the Crown pledged stewardship for the whenua. This must be respected by making good and sustainable land and water use decisions that ensure the ongoing care and health of land, sea and air.



Photo courtesy: Woodland Trails Dog walking

# Sustainability Goals

The goals of this Sustainability Strategy are:

**1. Council will be a carbon neutral organisation by 2035.**

Upper Hutt City Council will commit to ensuring it is a carbon neutral organisation by 2035. We will lead the way, share what we learn and encourage locals to reduce their personal carbon footprints along the way.

**2. We will prioritise protecting and enhancing our natural environment.**

The natural environment is involved in everything you eat, touch, breathe, drink, and use. We will ensure that we protect and regenerate our natural environment.

**3. We will have a good quality and sufficient water supply.**

Quality water is essential. In terms of quantity and quality, we will make sure we have a sufficient water supply.

**4. Our community will be resilient, adaptable and inclusive.**

As a community, we will work to build a stronger society, to ensure everyone is included and no one is left behind. Our people and systems will be able to manage in difficult times and be able to recover and thrive in changing circumstances.

**5. Upper Hutt City Council will be a leader in the community on sustainability issues.**

Council will actively and openly seek opportunities to take a leading role in the community on sustainability and be a strong advocate for positive change at the regional and national level.

**6. We will reduce waste.**

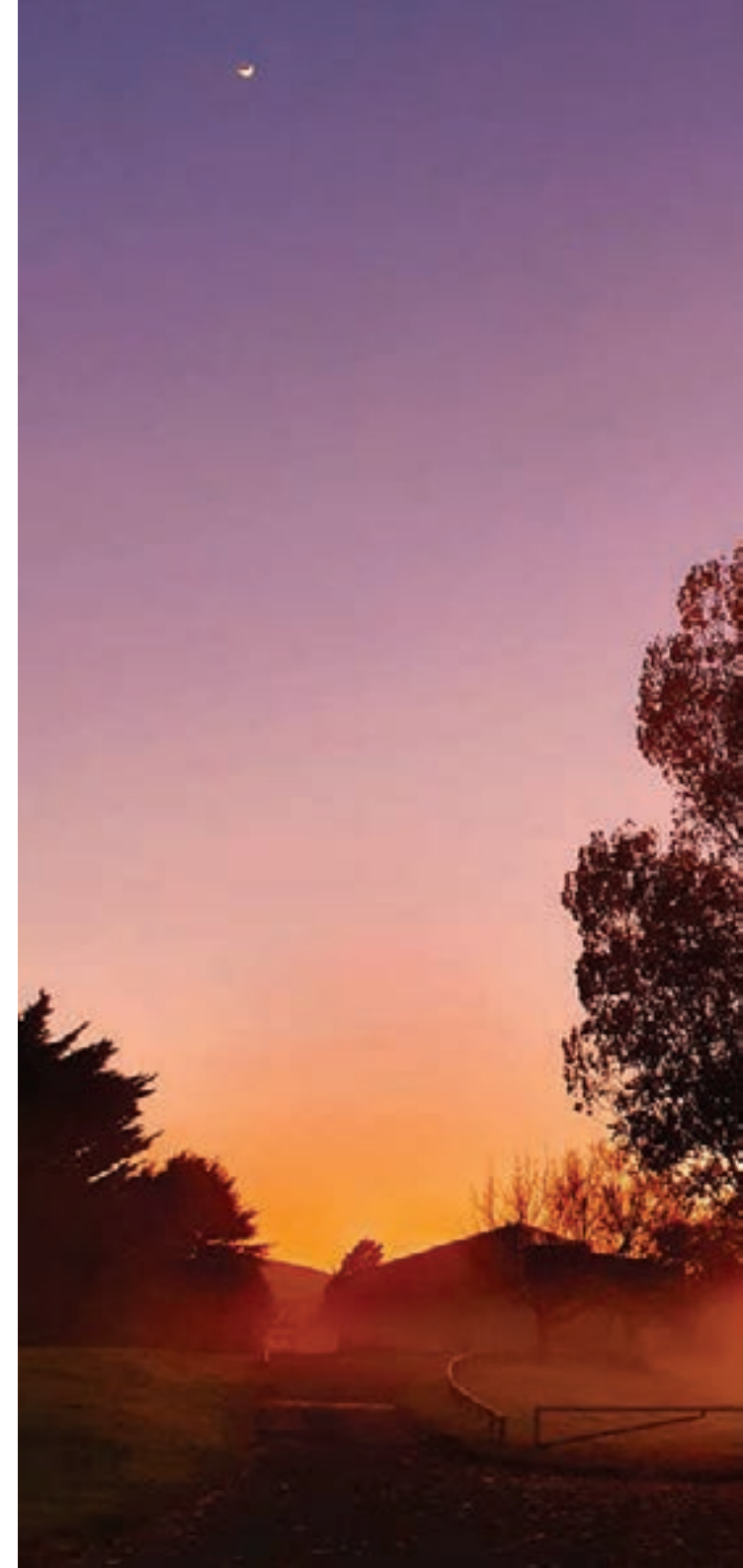
By cultivating a waste minimisation culture, Council will work to improve the quality of Upper Hutt's waste data, set targets, actively work to reduce the amount of waste that gets sent to landfill, and enable more recycling of used resources. Council will also ensure our recycling systems are robust enough to cope with demand.

**7. Our community will be engaged and informed on sustainability issues.**

It is important to ensure that the community have the tools, resources, and information available to make good choices and understand the consequences of their decisions. Council and the community will make changes and move forward together.

**8. We will encourage low carbon transport.**

We will actively promote walking, biking, use of public transport and the reduction of high-carbon vehicle use.





## Baseline, measurement, and targets

Sustainability is a journey—we know the direction which will likely make us more sustainable, but we don't necessarily know the final destination. While there is a wealth of environmental data already available, we need to establish a set of baseline indicators specifically relevant to Upper Hutt, including measures of the impacts of our residents activities in terms of the carbon and ecological 'footprints' that include imported goods and services. Only then will we have a better understanding of how much improvement is needed to get our levels of environmental impact down to acceptable levels, and what changes we need to make to address societal and economic issues that impact the environment.

This is not a justification for inaction. While we will be seeking immediate improvement across key areas, such as carbon emissions, we will refine our action plans once our understanding has improved through the collection and analysis of data.

# Carbon neutrality

## **GOAL 1** Council will be a carbon neutral organisation by 2035.

Becoming carbon neutral is fundamental for any future focused organisation and the community it serves.

Carbon emissions are a key indicator of unsustainable practice. Not only is reducing carbon the right thing to do as a leader in the community and good global citizen, it also makes good business sense.

The first step in becoming a carbon neutral Council by 2035 will be to understand Council's emissions profile, while at the same time working on reducing emissions. Once we have identified and benchmarked our key emissions sources we can make plans to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and our overall impact.

Council will work to reduce our emissions internally within the organisation and externally within the community. As we learn more, we will keep the community informed of ways to reduce their personal carbon footprints which, in turn, will reduce the carbon footprint of Upper Hutt and the Wellington region.

We will ensure decarbonisation is promoted in all Council contracts, such as waste collection and transport.





Civic Centre



H2O Xtream

## ACTIONS

- 1.1 Measure and understand the emissions profile of Council.
- 1.2 Measure and understand the emissions profile of Upper Hutt and the wider Wellington region community.
- 1.3 Develop and implement an energy and carbon reduction plan for Council to ensure it is a carbon neutral organisation by 2035.
- 1.4 Develop an energy and carbon reduction plan to inform, support and promote to the Upper Hutt community to reduce their carbon footprint.
- 1.5 Incorporate sustainability considerations in new asset investment decision-making to ensure carbon impacts are taken into account.

## MONITOR

- Annual updates through the Annual Plan.

# Our natural environment

## **GOAL 2** We will prioritise protecting and enhancing our natural environment.

Our natural environment and biodiversity play a critical role in maintaining our healthy, well-functioning society.

Upper Hutt is growing, which brings a unique set of challenges. Population growth, economic and social development, and urban sprawl can all cause significant degradation to the environment. Healthy ecosystems combat climate change and provide security, food, shelter, and a home to wildlife. There is also a significant link between spending time in nature, and positive mental health of people. Unfortunately, our environment and biodiversity are currently declining at an accelerated rate due to increased population and human interference.

Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River and its tributaries is a significant ecosystem and habitat for the many species of fish, animals and plants. The water quality is managed by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and while Upper Hutt is not the only community that feeds into the River, we must do our part to ensure the River is healthy. Council will continue to partner with GWRC and the community to work towards better health of Te Awa Kairangi and its tributaries.

We are fortunate to have wonderful birdlife and biodiversity in and around the city. We will look for opportunities to integrate, regenerate and enhance biodiversity within our community to enhance overall wellbeing.



## ACTIONS

- 2.1 Evaluate opportunities to protect and enhance existing biodiversity, and focus on regeneration, reforestation and enhancement of soil health, native flora and fauna.
- 2.2 Invest in current and new opportunities to integrate biodiversity within the community and encourage it to be a prominent part of the social landscape.
- 2.3 Council building projects to consider opportunities that add value to our natural environment from the outset and have enduring positive effects. A Sustainability design review will be presented to decision-makers prior to final approvals for projects.
- 2.4 Advocate for the preservation, restoration and enhancement of waterways, wetlands and aquifers.
- 2.5 Work with Greater Wellington Regional Council and other partners to maintain, protect and restore biodiversity and ecological habitats of Upper Hutt waterways.

## MONITOR

- Monitor awareness through the Annual Survey.
- Annual updates through the Annual Plan.

# Water

## **GOAL 3** We will have a good quality and sufficient water supply.

A continuous supply of quality water is essential for all life forms. We will make sure we maintain security of supply and ensure we have enough quality water to meet the needs of the Upper Hutt community.

Water is the key to healthy living, productive land and economic growth for Upper Hutt. Acknowledging that Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River and its tributaries are Upper Hutt's lifeblood, our growing population is putting more pressure on our current water supply and systems. At times, some waterways are subject to significant environmental pressure due to sediment, pollution, over-abstraction of water and insufficient water flow.

Consideration of good soil health will be taken into account in managing quality water supply. Rebuilding soil carbon and organic matter are also key elements to maintaining clean water, reducing runoff, erosion, maintaining quality water sources and improving water storage.

Water supply is a multi-faceted and complex issue, involving many considerations and challenges. We need to ensure safe drinking water, manage demand, manage waste water and its emissions, maintain the integrity of the infrastructure network and minimise water leakage whilst at the same time ensuring the environmental integrity of water sources.



Twin Lakes, Te Marua



## ACTIONS

- 3.1 Council will manage water demand and use, ensuring that this is monitored, measured and communicated to the community.
- 3.2 Council will consider initiatives to take pressure off reticulated water supplies.
- 3.3 Develop a water campaign to inform the community about the individual and collective responsibility around the pollution of waterways and conservation of fresh water resources.
- 3.4 Continue to review and address overflow and integrity issues to the infrastructure and pipe network as they are identified.

## MONITOR

- 🕒 Annual updates through the Annual Plan.



# Our community

## **GOAL 4** Our community will be resilient, adaptable and inclusive.

Being resilient, adaptable and inclusive are key foundations of a stable society.

As a community, our wellbeing is intrinsically connected to, and dependent on, individuals, societal connections and support systems within the matrix of our lives and lifestyles. Consequently, it is logical that we put measures in place to encourage opportunities to connect with each other and grow together. Resilient communities are safe, stable, interconnected, and able to react and recover innovatively and quickly from volatile economic, social, political, and environmental changes. Inclusive communities empower society and ensure no one is left behind. By working towards meeting basic needs, individuals live with dignity and actively engage and contribute; this leads to a prospering society.

We need to work together to build a stronger community. We will empower our youth, work to eliminate poverty, increase civic participation, and endeavour to ensure our residents have access to fulfilling jobs that stimulate the economy without unnecessarily compromising the environment.



Tina's Dumplings





March Madness: Upper Hutt Community Rescue



March Madness: Māoribank School

## ACTIONS

- 4.1 Evaluate how resilient Upper Hutt households are to withstand extreme events and circumstances.
- 4.2 Evaluate where the social, cultural and economic needs are within the community.
- 4.3 Work towards new developments being more resilient.
- 4.4 Council to support local businesses to become more resilient and adaptable.
- 4.5 Boost civic participation and advocate for approaches that are reflective of diversity.
- 4.6 Investigate opportunities to develop critical thinking, communication and leadership skills of youth / rangitahi through a Youth Strategy.
- 4.7 Promote safe, healthy resilient communities equipped and engaged to be self-supporting in times of need.
- 4.8 Promote inter-generational connections and projects and communities working together.
- 4.9 Encourage and support the development of food security initiatives.
- 4.10 Inform the community about being prepared for extreme circumstances.

## MONITOR

- Annual updates through the Annual Plan.

# Leading by example

## **GOAL 5** Upper Hutt City Council will be a leader in the community on sustainability issues.

Upper Hutt City Council is in a unique position for leadership in sustainability. Not only is Upper Hutt the smallest city in New Zealand, the Council is one of the few City Councils that will not encounter direct risks from sea level rise or coastal erosion.

On behalf of our community, Council will actively look for opportunities to further strengthen our sustainable position and act on these. Council will also lobby central and regional government on sustainability issues that will affect us in the long and short term.

We will ensure sustainability is considered throughout all Council decisions, policies, plans, projects, grants and papers. Sustainability will be proactively and inherently embedded in Council culture.



Volunteer tree planting with Upper Hutt Forest and Bird



## **ACTIONS**

- 5.1 Apply a sustainability decision framework to Council considerations, decision processes and long term outcomes.
- 5.2 Create, explore and pursue opportunities to be a sustainability leader and advocate on sustainability issues.
- 5.3 Support local and national environmental initiatives where appropriate.
- 5.4 Plan for future sustainable growth of Upper Hutt and the wider Wellington region.
- 5.5 Council to advocate for cost-effective, efficient and sustainable solutions.

## **MONITOR**

- 🕒 Annual updates through the Annual Plan.

# Waste reduction

## **GOAL 6** We will reduce waste.

Waste disposal has detrimental environmental repercussions and is currently ineffective at reducing waste generation, reuse and alternative use. Disposal services are primarily focused on enabling disposal rather than reducing need. As a community, we need to get better at reducing our consumption, minimising our waste generation and recycling what we can.

As part of the Wellington Region Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP), we have agreed to improve our contribution to the regional waste targets. By reducing our waste, we reduce the amount of methane, air and water pollution, and also reduce space requirements for landfill.





## ACTIONS

- 6.1 Improve the quality of Upper Hutt's waste data.
- 6.2 Evaluate how we are tracking alongside the WMMP action plan.
- 6.3 Develop and implement a diversified and robust recycling system to cope with current and future demand.
- 6.4 Implement methods to encourage behaviour change and reduce the waste output of the Upper Hutt community.
- 6.5 Evaluate initiatives to reduce waste disposal to landfill, including provision of green waste and food waste recycling.
- 6.6 Encourage and support a circular economy.

## MONITOR

- Monitor awareness through the annual survey.
- Annual updates through the Annual Plan.

# A community on board

## **GOAL 7** Our community will be engaged and informed on sustainability issues.

Community engagement is crucial to ensure progression on sustainability issues. The science is clear - we must act now and do better.

In order to make progress it is imperative we partner with the community. Sustainability issues are not something that can be solved by local government or legislation alone – everyone has a role to play. There is a significant amount of misinformation, confusion, and lack of clarity around sustainability issues, and what will help make a difference. We will do our best to ensure the community is educated on both Upper Hutt, regional and global sustainability issues and climate change.



Upper Hutt Forest and Bird volunteers



## ACTION

- 7.1 Evaluate and implement means by which Council can help inform the community about sustainability issues and climate change.
- 7.2 Identify sustainability projects and opportunities which the community and Council can work together on, partner with, and foster engagement and progress.
- 7.3 Develop and implement a community campaign to encourage resource conservation, including water, energy and waste reduction.
- 7.4 Consider how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) apply to Upper Hutt and this Strategy.
- 7.5 Communicate our progress to the community.

## MONITOR

- 🕒 Annual updates through the Annual Plan.

# Better transport solutions

## **GOAL 8** We will encourage low carbon transport.

Upper Hutt is increasingly becoming a satellite commuter city, many residents choosing to live distant to their workplace and commute. The Upper Hutt lifestyle, open spaces and environmental benefits provide a welcome and attractive landscape to live, recreate and raise families.

Increasing use of private vehicles is a consequence of this and road congestion and delays are increasing at peak commute times. Providing better transport options, especially low carbon options, and encouraging initiatives to travel less will improve health and wellbeing, reduce emissions and improve lifestyle.

As a sustainability leader we will actively promote walking, biking, and use of public transport.



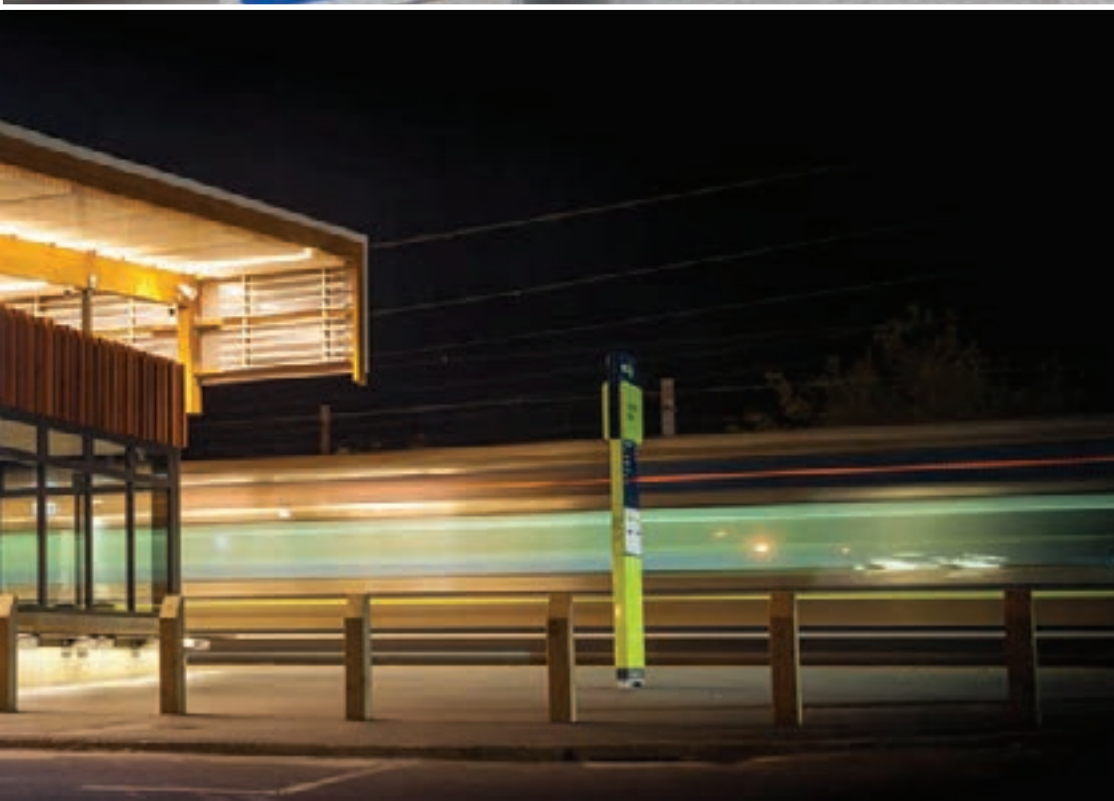
Fergusson Drive, Silverstream







EV charging station, Lion Court



## ACTION

- 8.1 Expand and maintain safe walking, cycling and other low carbon transport mode networks.
- 8.2 Explore options for reducing vehicle use in the city centre and promotion of foot traffic.
- 8.3 Advocate for low carbon transport secure storage at train and bus hubs.
- 8.4 Ensure adequate EV chargers are available throughout the city.
- 8.5 Commit to lowering the carbon footprint of the transport used in Council work.
- 8.6 Continue to advocate for cost-effective, reliable and efficient public transport systems.

## MONITOR

- Annual updates through the Annual Plan.
- Monitor through the annual survey.

# Appendix 1: Planning

Timeframes of actions and measures will be confirmed as part of the Long Term Plan development.

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## 4 | Our community will be resilient, adaptable and inclusive.

- 4.1 Evaluate how resilient Upper Hutt households are to withstand extreme events and circumstances.
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## 5 | Upper Hutt City Council will be a leader in the community on sustainability issues

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## 7 | Our community will be engaged and informed on sustainability issues.

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  - 7.5 Communicate our progress to the community.
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## 8 | We will encourage low carbon transport

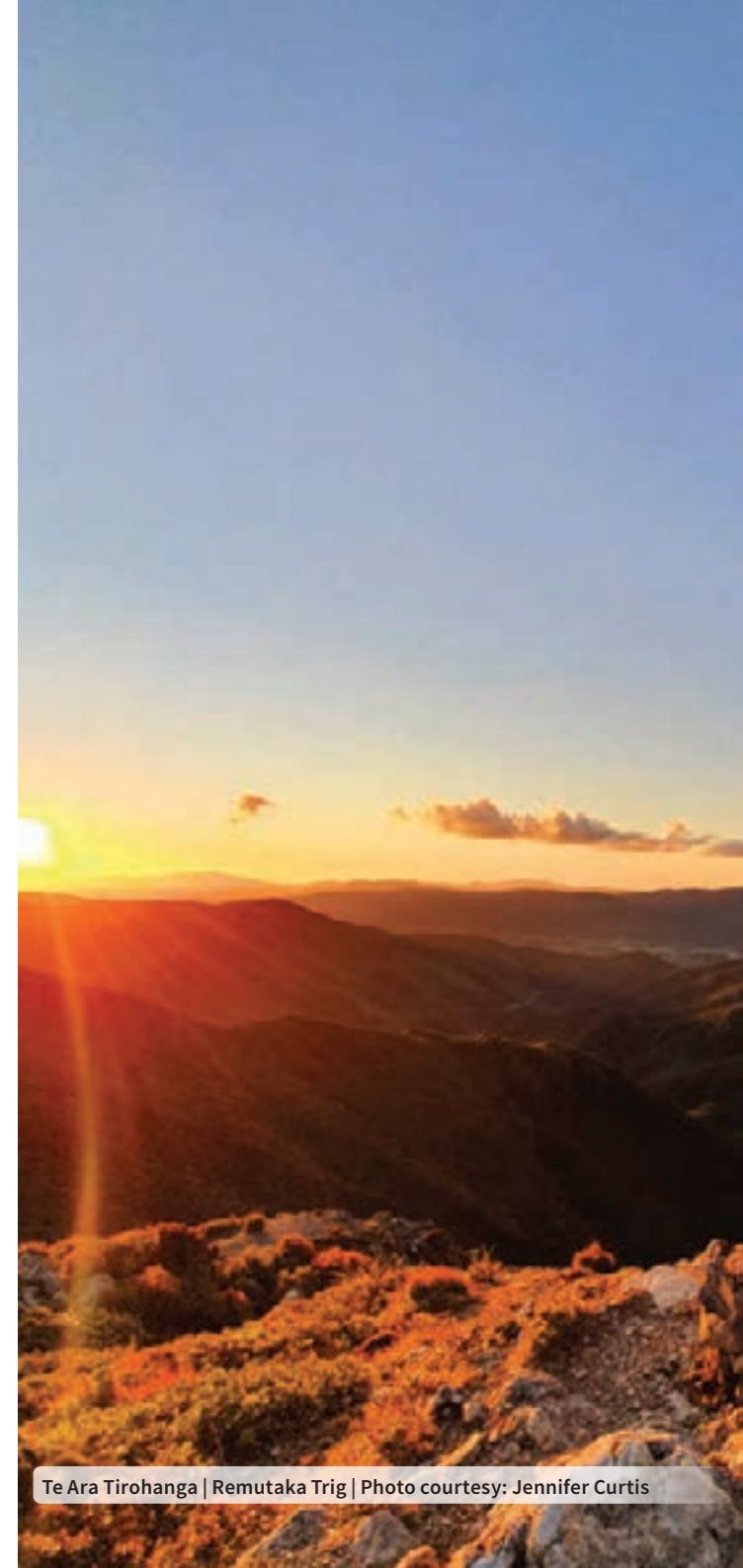
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# Appendix 2: Glossary

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<b>Adaptation</b>	Adaptation to climate change involves using new, practical methods to adapt to the challenges, impacts and consequences of climate change, such as drought, heat waves, sea level rise.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The variety of life forms present in an area, including species of animals and plants and the terrestrial and aquatic habitats and ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part.
<b>Carbon neutral</b>	No carbon emissions are being produced from a product/service e.g. zero-carbon electricity could be provided by a 100% renewable energy supplier.
<b>Carbon zero</b>	Some emissions are still being generated by a building/process these emissions are being offset somewhere else making the overall net emissions zero.
<b>Climate change</b>	The 'catch-all' term for the shift in worldwide weather phenomena associated with an increase in global average temperatures.
<b>Fossil fuel</b>	A natural energy source formed hundreds of millions of years ago from the remains of dead plants and animals, such as coal, gas and petroleum. When they are burned, they create greenhouse gas emissions.
<b>Greenhouse gas emissions</b>	The gasses that are released by our daily activities that cause global warming. Activities include travel, food and heating.
<b>Mitigation</b>	Reducing impacts on climate change and global warming by reducing the greenhouse gasses in the first place.

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**Resilience**

The capacity of something being able to resist and/or recover from forces that would otherwise change it into another state.

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**Sustainability**

To meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

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**Sustainable development**

The process leading us to the point of sustainability and ensuring that all people everywhere, now and in the future are able to get what they need to live a good life.

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**Water abstraction**

The process of taking or extracting water from a natural source (rivers, lakes, groundwater aquifers, etc.) for various uses, from drinking to irrigation, treatment, and industrial applications.

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# Appendix 3: Notes

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- Page 4
1. Brundtland Report, 1987.
  2. [www.dartmouth.edu/~cushman/courses/engs41/Mark%20Borsuk's%20version%20of%20course/Lectures/Lecture13\\_ENGS41\\_post.pdf](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~cushman/courses/engs41/Mark%20Borsuk's%20version%20of%20course/Lectures/Lecture13_ENGS41_post.pdf)
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- Page 7
3. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>
  4. Currently under review.
  5. Consultation closed; likely to take effect mid-2020
  6. Currently under consultation.
  7. Currently being developed following consultation on design proposals in 2019.
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- Page 12
8. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/keeling-curve/>
- 

- Page 13
9. <http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Plans--Publications/Regional-Plan-Review/Proposed-Plan/Waterallocation.pdf>
- 

- Page 15
10. MFE, 2019.
  11. MFE Waste Levy consultation document, 2019.
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- Page 20
12. <https://www.footprintnetwork.org/>
  13. <https://www.neighboursday.org.nz/>
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