



# Thriving Communities Collaboration

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## For Purpose Sector Joint Submission

### A Collective Voice

**A Collective Voice:** This submission represents a collaboration between Community Waikato, Creative Waikato, Go Eco, The Waikato Wellbeing Project, Seed Waikato, and HMS Trust, reflecting the shared vision and aspirations of those working to enhance the capacity, capability, and well-being of the local landscape. It embraces a holistic approach to building thriving regional communities.

Nature and biodiversity are fundamental components of regional resilience, supporting human well-being and mitigating the impacts of environmental stressors. Preserving and restoring natural habitats not only safeguards critical biodiversity but also enhances the capacity of ecosystems to buffer against disasters such as floods, storms, and droughts. Additionally, green spaces provide recreation, relaxation, and cultural enrichment opportunities, fostering a sense of connection to the natural world crucial for building resilient communities. By prioritising the protection and enhancement of nature, regions can build resilience in the face of ecological, social, and economic challenges.

Investment in efficient and accessible public transport infrastructure is essential for regional resilience. A robust public transportation system reduces dependency on private vehicles, alleviating traffic congestion, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, it broadens mobility options for all members of society, particularly those lacking access to personal vehicles, thus promoting social equity and inclusion. Public transport networks also play pivotal roles in disaster response and recovery efforts, facilitating the evacuation of vulnerable populations and ensuring the continuity of essential services during crises. By prioritising the development of sustainable and equitable public transportation systems, the region enhances our resilience to a wide range of challenges while achieving greater social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

Regional spatial planning for resilience presents an opportunity to convene a diverse array of community stakeholders to collectively envision the future of a region. This collaborative effort encompasses various aspects such as housing, transportation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, economic development, environmental conservation, cultural preservation, health initiatives, and infrastructure development. By integrating perspectives from multiple sectors, the goal is to create a comprehensive and sustainable plan that addresses the region's current challenges while preparing it for future uncertainties. This approach ensures that resilience is woven into the fabric of the region's development, supporting adaptability and long-term viability.

We support the Regional Council's ongoing commitment to the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Goals and recommend that the Regional Development Funds be committed to the Environmental, Community, Creative and Economic Regional Capacity and Capability Organisations invested in growing regional resilience and shared between these pillars equally.

We encourage the activation of leadership in our region's food security and request Regional Council to implement a food strategy that lays out a path to food security and sovereignty for Waikato. Ultimately, creating a prosperous, climate-resilient region with thriving communities entails more than just mitigating the impacts of climate change through net zero emissions reductions. It is about a future where people and nature coexist harmoniously. By prioritising people in our budgetary decisions, collaborating for community partnerships, and nurturing imagination and creativity, we can pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient future starting now.





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## Recommendations and Opportunities:

- Commit to maintaining and increasing community funding to support organisations delivering positive outcomes for Community, Environment, Creative and Economic wellbeings, especially during times of increased need.
- Collaborate with councils and communities to lead and implement a joint food strategy for Waikato.
- Engage and fund services from Regional Capacity and Capability organisations committed to growing regional resilience and well-being, enabling meaningful and reciprocal access and support for vulnerable communities.

The joint signatures to this submission are well-placed and able to work with the Regional Council on these initiatives which will help our regional ecosystems thrive.

