

Sustainable Waikato questionnaire to Hamilton City Council candidates 2016

HCC candidate name: **Peter Bos – Hamilton West – BosPeterH@gmail.com**

1. Have you personally been involved in any group, organisations or activities that relate to sustainability? Please give details and outcomes.

Yes, I'm one of a team of contact people for Cycle Action Waikato, have regular contact with my friends Judy McDonald at living-Streets, Gerri Pomeroy at CCS Disability and Rowena Hay from Vision Zero. My role is to build relationships with partners, checking we are reinforcing each other's campaigns to make Hamilton safer, more accessible and less-car dependent.

2. Please rank, in order of (1) to (7), what you consider to be the most pressing needs for sustainability today, (1) being the most pressing and (7) the least, please also add one of your own ideas.

These can't be listed 1 to 7 as each has an effect on the other. To manage competing priorities I do need to group them (2) & (3) being where my interests are strongest.

Adapting to the impact of climate change – (4)

Reducing our contribution to climate change – (2)

This is about being efficient, which comes from good urban design & providing sustainable transport options.

Sustainable economic growth – (3)

I work in a 'Lean manufacturing' environment, where growth comes from taking a systematic approach to eliminating waste.

Sustainable transport options – (2) – One can't do this independent of urban design.

Sustainable urban design – (2)

I'm working on bring this together on Hamilton Urban Blog. The start point is to identify brighter places that are attracting new investment, new people who are younger and have income growth above average, they are the future.

Here is link showing what is attractive: <http://hamiltonurbanblog.co.nz/?s=bright>

Water quality in our rivers and lakes – (1)

Other – ground water – (1) – We cannot keep sealing over our soil and we must start reducing sealed areas, minimise the amount of storm-water entering the piped drainage system. We need to protect/grow our wet areas (lakes, swales, wetlands and gullies). Climate Change will bring increased drought. Into the future our local natural water will have greater importance. We need to keep replenishing and grow our natural groundwater reserves to protect water quality and natural habitats.

3. In your view, what is the most effective thing Council could do to improve wellbeing for those of lower socioeconomic status in our city.

We must not under supply the bottom end of the housing market. This will only lead to less choice for housing for our most vulnerable.

HCC needs to do more than just make policy on design and set minimum standards. It needs to actually prove these are affordable by building real examples for the private sector to benchmark along side.

I do expect central Government to lead as they are the biggest landlord in the city.

The below survey high-lights home ownership (long term housing security) is goal for almost all people.

Hamilton Residential Design Survey (housing on Kahikatea Dr area) – REF 711, 580 993 115 1 HAM – June 1989

'People who have been living four or more years in the same house are more satisfied'

Conclusion

Perhaps the major finding of the survey was that given a choice between rental accommodations or no home, and a cramped and poorly designed low cost home of their own; most residents were overwhelmingly glad to own their own home.

4. What do you see as future priorities for transport in Hamilton City and what benefits do you believe these changes will bring?

4a. 'Life and health can never be exchanged for other benefits within the society' – Vision Zero

4b. Important to note cycling campaigns are not about cycling versus cars, **it is about safety on roads**. Bike infrastructure is proven to be the most effective policy response, along with child friendly street designs that reduced driving speeds and improved facilities for walking.

4c. HCC to adopt '**Vision Zero**': the long-term objective of road safety is that no one is killed or seriously injured as a result of traffic accidents. But because people sometimes make mistakes, it is not possible to completely prevent road accidents.

4d. Bus services are managed by WRC. The area Hamilton needs to improve is increased safety and number of the road crossing point near bus stops. I've had many conversations with non bus users that don't seem to realise morning bus stop and evening bus stop are on opposite sides of the road. Second change HCC can make is to extend and increase length of bus priority lanes.

Note on type of cyclists;

Children 8 to mature 80 y/o – **highest priority, safer speed areas or separate from fast moving traffic**.
Fitness & fast Commuter bikers – Cycle lanes separate from pedestrians

I'm very happy with Hamilton's Bike Plan, and will be actively pushing for it to be a 3 year plan.

5. What sustainable water management strategies do you think council should implement?

I support offering incentives for 'grey water systems', and the collection of rain water.

Notes from Water study reports

The National Infrastructure Plan identifies water as the poorest performing infrastructure sector. It is understood that the **poor result** may be more reflective of the **irrigation sector**.

Status Quo

With regard Hamilton, Waikato and Waipa, there is an arrangement whereby approximately 13 staff sit inside Hamilton City providing services to the three councils ... It relies on the **goodwill** of the three separate councils.

Option CCO

Run on a business-like basis. ... It will come down to **trust** and respect between key parties.

Debt

Status Quo

Debt capacity of councils **limits** water investment or encourages higher water prices to raise revenues as an alternative funding source for investment.

Option CCO

The CCO is also able to fund capital expenditure using **more** optimal levels of **debt** than is typically available to councils.

Cost

Status Quo

HCC - average household is expected to pay \$566 per annum for water and waste water in 2015/16.

WDC - On average in 2015/16, metered customers are expected to pay \$1,268 per annum for water and waste water ... Non-metered customers are expected to pay \$1,308

WPDC - The current water and wastewater for a connection more than 100m from a supply pipe are \$872 and \$837 for a metered connection (assuming volume usage of 214 m3 per annum).

Option CCO

Volumetric charges would still be used for those who are metered but the **aim** would be to standardise domestic charges **across the sub-region**.

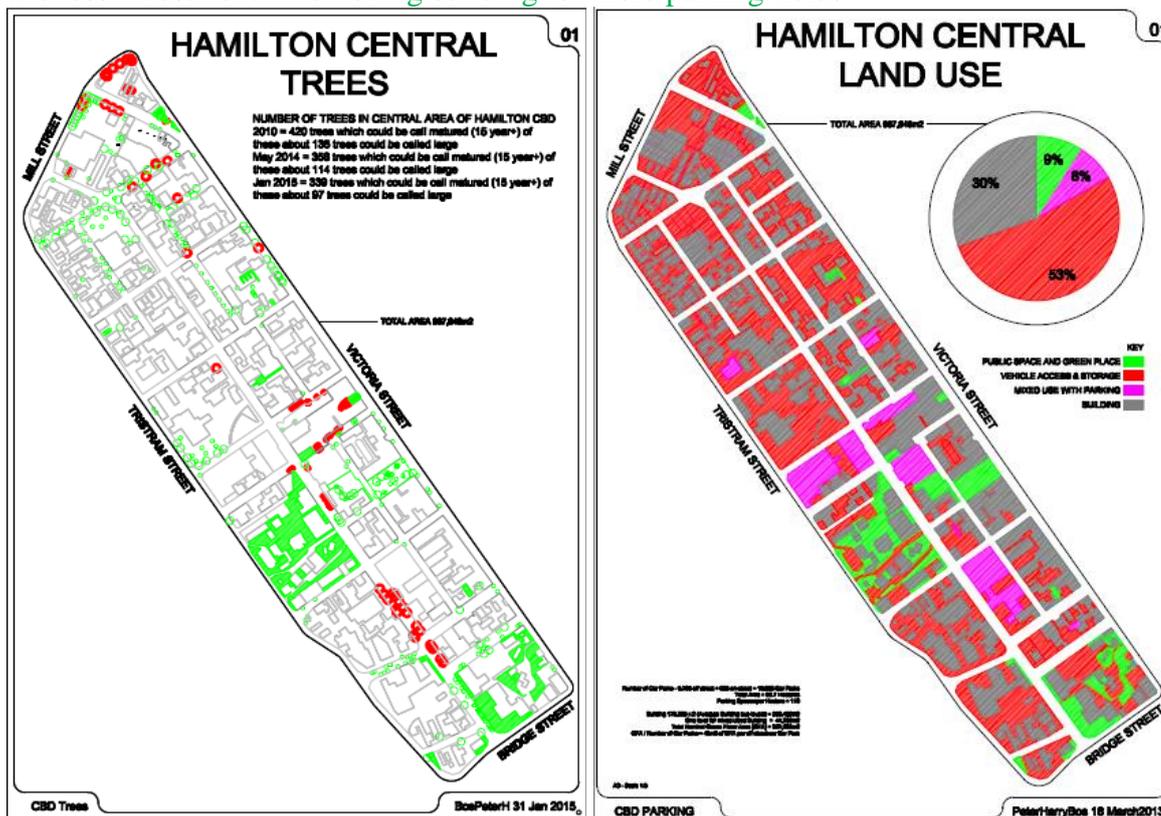
6. Do you see the council as having responsibility towards managing native biodiversity within the city? If yes, what policies would you like to see in place to support this? If No, please explain.

Yes – Hamilton City Council is working with community groups and residents to improve our natural habitats and increase the city's biodiversity for future generations to enjoy.

It is important that the Community Planting Coordinator[s] is well resourced.

<http://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-city/parks/communityplanting/Pages/default.aspx>

We need to start at the centre of Hamilton; first stop removing mature trees, second invest in eco building and less investment in removing building for more parking fields



7. What strategies do you think Council should employ to minimise the City's waste

The goal is to identify, analyze and **eliminate all sources of waste**.

Education is best means of encouraging change.

Pre-paid rubbish bags or shift to paid stickers, would encourage less household waste.

Expect people and media to be oppose eliminating waste.

Effective enforcement is crucial to waste management. Given there are real cost savings of eliminating waste, enforcement costs should not be a deterrent to this proposal, but rather seen as an opportunity to generate further savings in future years.

Recycling is important, but it is still waste, we do need to think hard about outcome when people promote increasing recycling.

8. How can Hamilton celebrate cultural diversity while helping to strengthen cross cultural ties?

Keep strengthen partnership/relationship with local Iwi

Support the migrant Centre

Council acknowledge Independent/national Days of different countries on

9. Do you think Council has a role supporting business, school, families and individuals to make more sustainable choices? If no, why not and if yes what ideas do you have to support this?

Business

B1. To quote a Paris official: “Allow the maximum flexibility in land use so that building[s] get renovated and economic activities take place to pay the taxes to maintain a high level of services.”

B2. To quote a Germany planning rule: “permit the citizens to build and site their [...] store [...] on the street where they want and decide and where it suits and is convenient for them”

B3. To quote a Stockholm official: “Make it very easy for shop-owners to open business everywhere”

Here is example of what the pre-district plan looks like: <http://hamiltonurbanblog.co.nz/2015/11/swarbrick-frankton-local-dairies/>

School

All schools to be involved with HCC Enviro-school’s programme

All schools must have a road safety program supported by HCC.

S1. Pre-school: road crossing skills.

S2. Primary school: scooter training

S3. Intermediate school: Bike training

S4. High school: on road bike training

We adults are responsible for setting an example; we are responsible for quality and quantity of training of our children.

ANWB – Netherlands equivalent to the AA

<http://www.anwb.nl/rechtshulp/aanrijding-en-dan/aansprakelijkheid/voetganger-of-fietser>

In a collision between a motor vehicle and a cyclist or pedestrian under the age of 14, the driver of the motor vehicle is almost always held accountable for any damages to the child.

The legislature and the Supreme Court have chosen this to protect weaker road users, particularly because motor vehicles create an additional danger by their weight and speed.

Families

Community houses

Individuals

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead

10. Do you think Council has a responsibility to have policies to mitigate climate change and manage its impacts? Could you please give some examples?

Yes, examples are Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park, HCC Enviro-school’s programme ...

11. Suppose that your council is considering a proposal for economic development. The development would increase regional GDP and create a significant number of jobs. It would also add significant pollution to waterways and further degrade their ecosystems. Would you support the proposal or not? What is your reasoning?

Would not support, the ideas immoral and I Love my children's children.
'Life and health can never be exchanged for other benefits within the society'

End

Appendix - NOTE FROM WATER REPORTS

Water

<https://safe2speakhamilton.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/waikatowaterreport.pdf>

page 9. Note: CCO services would be provided on a 'user-pays' basis but it is intended that it would compete in the professional services market.)

This sub-regional proposed is not about privatisation or commercialisation of Water activity of the Three councils.

Page 11. The National Infrastructure Plan identifies Water as the poorest performing infrastructure sector. (Note: Water includes municipal water and productive water. It is understood that the poor result may be more reflective of the irrigation sector.)

Page 14

To some extent this can be achieved through Statement of Intent, accountability policies and regular reporting ultimately it will come down to trust and respect between key parties.

The CCO has ownership of all Water assets and is responsible for all Water liabilities relating to the three councils.

It is **run on a business-like basis** with a view to providing water and wastewater services.

No dividends or surplus paid to shareholders.

Separate physical location from the three councils for the CCO

It should probably be a 3 waters operation than just water/wastewater.

Page 32. A rough rule-of-thumb in local government is that a quarter to a third of personnel expenditure is in the functions that make up the corporate overhead costs.

Page 33. With regard Hamilton, Waikato and Waipa, there is an arrangement whereby approximately 13 staff sit inside Hamilton City providing services to the three councils relating to sampling and analysis of water, trade waste and 'smart water' (conservation initiatives). ... **It was a difficult arrangement to set up, it relies on the goodwill of the three separate councils.**

Page 58. That a plan for network pricing across the three councils be examined and if feasible, introduced as soon as possible. **Volumetric charges would still be used for those who are metered but the aim would be to standardise domestic charges across the sub-region.**

<https://safe2speakhamilton.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/reportwatersharedservices.pdf>

page 35. **These savings presented opposite would be partially off-set by the following costs a number of which are one-off costs:**

- Enhanced business unit / CCO establishment costs
- Redundancy payments
- Legal fees
- Redrafting of employee contracts
- Advisory board fees
- Additional support resources (may be required by HCC in stages 1 and 2 while operating under shared services model).

Stranded costs

- Each council allocates a significant amount of council overhead to the 3 waters budget. The changes recommend above would have the impact of reducing the staff numbers in either two or all of the councils (depending on the delivery model adopted) .Overheads which are allocated on a per head basis would therefore be impacted.
- Given there are real cost savings to be had from the consolidation of the teams, stranded costs should not be a deterrent to the project but rather seen as an opportunity to generate further savings in future years.

- Councils could make allocation changes or fix the overhead charge assigned to the 3 waters budget during the initial years to ensure this does not become a factor in moving forward with these changes

<http://www.waterstudywaikato.org.nz/uploads/files/Part%20B%20-%20Final.pdf>

Option 1: Status Quo

page 15. Debt capacity of councils limits water investment or encourages higher water prices to raise revenues as an alternative funding source for investment

Option 3: CCO

Page 22. **The CCO will manage its own balance sheet and debt**

Page 25. **The Councils currently employ 217 FTE staff in water activities it has been determined that during a transition period of three years staff numbers can be reduced to 181 due to efficiencies**

Page 28. **The CCO is also able to fund capital expenditure using more optimal levels of debt than is typically available to councils.**

Page 46. However, debt within a water utility is of a different nature. It is raised to fund assets with a life of three or four generations and comes with a secure source of revenue in the form of water and wastewater charges. These factors mean that it is entirely prudent for a water utility to raise proportionally more debt than a council and repay it over a longer period. It also facilitates the smoothing of revenue increases to customers.

Page 47. HCC

HCC does not specifically identify water and wastewater charges. **Council analysis shows that the average household is expected to pay \$566 per annum for water and waste water in 2015/16.** Under a CCO, HCC customers would expect to see an average reduction of 6.7% in the water component of their rates bills forecast in the draft LTP. This equates to approximately \$38 per annum savings on the current charges.

WDC

The cost to residential water customers varies across the Waikato district. **On average in 2015/16, metered customers are expected to pay \$1,268 per annum for water and waste water.** This includes a volume charge of \$1.70 per m³ and assumes annual average volumes of 214m³. **Non-metered customers are expected to pay \$1,308.** Under a CCO WDC customers would expect to see an average reduction of 8.7% over the next ten years, which would reduce the m³ rate from \$1.70 to \$1.55 in today's prices. The expected annual savings for water and waste water customers is expected in the vicinity of \$106 per annum.

WPDC

The cost to residential water customers varies across the Waipa district depending on the type of connection. **The current water and wastewater for a connection more than 100m from a supply pipe are \$872 and \$837 for a metered connection (assuming volume usage of 214 m³ per annum).** Under a CCO, WPDC customers would expect to see an average reduction of 8.1% over the next ten years, which would reduce the m³ rate from \$0.85 (\$0.98 GST inclusive) to \$0.78 (\$0.90 GST inclusive) in today's prices. The expected annual savings for water and waste water customers is expected to be approximately \$68 per annum.

Page 52. HCC

Hamilton's key debt / revenue ratio increases at a Group level under the CCO model at the end of the first financial year from 196% to 222%. Interest cover reduces from 3.7 to 3.1 and gearing increases slightly from 13% to 14%. At a parent level the key ratios with the exception of interest cover improve. At the end of the LTP period in 2024/25 Hamilton's Group Debt / Revenue ratio under the Status Quo is planned to be 167% and at a group level under the CCO option would increase to 205%. Interest cover is 3.8 under a CCO compared to 4.6 under the Status Quo and gearing increases slightly from 11% under the Status quo to 14% under the CCO. At a parent level all key ratios improve under the CCO option. The debt / revenue ratio exceeds council policy of 200%, but is within local government guidelines of 250%. It should be noted that the additional consolidated CCO debt is not a direct charge on HCC, but really represents a contingent liability shared with other councils. If additional councils were to join the CCO and reduce HCC ownership to below 50% they would no longer need to consolidate the CCO into the Group accounts. The following table shows the forecast movement of the debt / revenue ratio from the start of the CCO to the end of the LTP period.

End

END