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To Hamilton City Council

Please find attached DPA’s submission on the Draft Urban Growth Strategy

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

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# **Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly**

**We work on systemic change for the equity of disabled people**

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ (DPA) is a not-for-profit pan-impairment Disabled People’s Organisation run by and for disabled people.

Since our formation in 1983, DPA has brought disabled people together and shaped our collective input in a way that drives system level change.

**We recognise:**

* Māori as Tangata Whenua and [Te Tiriti o Waitangi](https://www.archives.govt.nz/discover-our-stories/the-treaty-of-waitangi) as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand;
* disabled people as experts on their own lives;
* the [Social Model of Disability](https://www.odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/guidance-for-policy-makes/) as the guiding principle for interpreting disability and impairment;
* the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html) as the basis for disabled people’s relationship with the State;
* the [New Zealand Disability Strategy](https://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/) as Government agencies’ guide on disability issues; and
* the [Enabling Good Lives Principles](https://www.enablinggoodlives.co.nz/about-egl/egl-approach/principles/) and [Whāia Te Ao Mārama: Māori Disability Action Plan](https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/whaia-te-ao-marama-2018-2022-maori-disability-action-plan) as avenues to disabled people gaining greater choice and control over their lives and supports.

**We drive systemic change through:**

**Leadership:** reflecting the collective voice of disabled people, locally, nationally and internationally.

**Information and advice:** informing and advising on policies impacting on the lives of disabled people.

**Advocacy:** supporting disabled people to have a voice, including a collective voice, in society.

**Monitoring:** monitoring and giving feedback on existing laws, policies and practices about and relevant to disabled people.

**The submission**

DPA is providing this submission for the benefit of the Hamilton City Council in its deliberations on the Draft Urban Growth Strategy. We acknowledge the many issues that have prompted this growth plan, including the adoption of new strategies by both central and local government, population growth, and the need to protect both the Waikato River and its environs.

DPA Waikato members are disappointed about the absence of any specific mentions of disability or older people or other significantly impacted population groups in this document. It seems that the voices of disabled people and other marginalised communities have been largely forgotten or ignored when our voices are important to this discussion.

In this submission DPA will comment on the following aspects of the plan: vision and purpose, improved travel choices, climate change, and working together with our neighbours. Finally, we will also make recommendations around the areas of growing up and out from the central city, growing along transport corridors, and supporting the development of quality greenfield neighbourhoods.

**Vision and purpose**

DPA supports the general vision and purpose outlined at the start of the draft plan. However, we recommend that the vision statement ‘Hamilton Kirikiriroa is the best place to live and work with connected, vibrant and prosperous communities’ be amended to read ‘*Hamilton Kirikiriroa is the best place to live and work with connected,* ***inclusive, accessible****, vibrant and prosperous communities*,’ so that the Strategy to incorporate a vision whereby the city will be accessible to everyone, including for disabled people, older people and tamariki/children.

Aligned with this, an additional point should be added under the ‘key considerations as we grow’ section around the need for accessibility to be built in to accommodate the increasing number of disabled and older people.

Another shortcoming within the ‘How we got here’ section is that the City Council’s Disability Action Plan is not referred to as a supporting document underpinning the Growth Strategy.

DPA strongly recommends that the Disability Action Plan is referenced here as are any other population group related strategies/plans which have been developed by Council within the Growth Strategy.

**Improved travel choices**

DPA supports the need for improved travel choices to enable people to travel how they choose. However, this section needs to recognise the need for inclusive and accessible transport options including, for example, for disabled and older people who mobilise using wheelchairs, mobility aids or are supported by guide/assistance dogs.

DPA recognises that with the envisaged outward growth of the city that Hamilton’s aspiration to be a 20-minute city is a good point to start from. However, we seek to remind Council that many disabled people tend to already live in communities where we have relatively easy access (i.e., five to ten minutes travelling distance) to community amenities and services including, for example, shops, schools, health care, education/training facilities, libraries and recreational areas/facilities.

DPA recommends that improved travel choices must include access to inclusive, accessible modes of public transport for everyone, including disabled people, and that this be specifically referenced in this section of the document. Moreover, this must be underpinned by having transport infrastructure, for example, bus stops, footpaths and train stations, designed and built according to Universal Design (UD) standards and that this also be referenced in the Growth Plan.

**Climate change**

DPA welcomes the fact that climate change is mentioned in this strategy as disabled people are among the groups being most impacted by climate change globally. Further, we recognise that any type of growth, including urban growth, has the potential to adversely impact on the environment given the finite ecology we have as a planet. Therefore, if not managed carefully, future urban growth will also adversely impact upon climate change and other environmental factors.

DPA recommends in this section the inclusion of a further point which states that ‘balancing growth with the impact of climate change is important and we should, as a community aim to transition towards an economy and society which focuses on sustainability and liveability rather than having growth as a sole goal.’

**Working together with our neighbours**

DPA supports the Hamilton City Council’s commitment to continue collaborating with neighbouring local authorities, given the high numbers of people who pass through Kirikiriroa every day from outlying Waikato communities and who rely on the city as a key service and distribution hub.

DPA recognises the Future Proof partnership between local authorities, iwi, and central Government agencies as providing the key means for mapping out the future of the city and its surrounding sub-region, especially when it comes to economic development, environmental sustainability, urban development and other strategic matters.

DPA asks though as to where are the community-based voices in this? Where are the voices of disability, ethnic community, Pasifika, non-governmental, environmental, youth, older people and other population/community groups within Future Proof? These underserved communities need to be at the table as, for example, the voices of disabled people are pivotal when discussing issues of inclusion and accessibility. Representatives of key population groups need to be part of the Future Proof process when it comes to determining the future of the city and sub-region around transport and other issues.

DPA recommends that the Future Proof process be extended to include the voices of key underserved community population groups including, for example, Pasifika, disabled people, youth, ethnic communities, older people, environmental and non-government organisations so that the voices of everyone within the Hamilton/Waikato region are heard when it comes to future planning.

**Grow up and out from the central city – growing along transport corridors – supporting the development of greenfield neighbourhoods**

DPA understands the need to grow up and out from the central city, but we urge the Council to ensure that they manage this in an ecologically and socially responsible way.

DPA recommends that when addressing housing supply issues on new sites and in conjunction with existing partners, including Kainga Ora, there must be a guarantee that all new housing builds (irrespective of size or typology) will be designed and constructed according to Universal Design (UD) standards.

DPA recommends that infrastructure upgrades must also account for the needs of everyone, including disabled people through creating, for example, sufficient mobility parking spaces and community amenities including parks and recreational centres to support accessible community living.

DPA recommends that the Hamilton City Council consider the extension of development contributions from just applying to the CBD into the new greenfields neighbourhoods as well to encourage the design and construction of universal design housing within them.

DPA supports the idea of having communities growing along existing and new transport corridors. We recommend that in order to ensure that everyone can access transport networks easily and inclusively that transport infrastructure including train stations, bus stops/shelters and transport terminals are designed and constructed according to universal design standards. Also, we recommend that significant transport facilities be sited at least an average of ten minutes (or less) from where people live for ease of access.

DPA supports the concept of developing greenfield communities, if this is undertaken in an environmentally and socially responsible way. We support the ideas espoused around developing communities which reflect the unique aspects of living in Kirikiriroa but we wish to reiterate here again that any housing and supporting infrastructure developments must be fully accessible to everyone, including disabled people.

DPA also recommends that one of the most important contributions that Council can make to emissions reduction is through constructing pedestrian infrastructure, including footpaths, to ensure that everyone, including disabled people, can mobilise easily within their communities.

**DPA’s recommendations**

The Disabled Person’s Assembly recommends:

**Recommendation 1:** That the vision statement ‘Hamilton Kirikiriroa is the best place to live and work with connected, vibrant and prosperous communities’ be amended to read ‘*Hamilton Kirikiriroa is the best place to live and work with connected,* ***inclusive, accessible,*** *vibrant and prosperous communities*,’ therefore enabling the Strategy to incorporate a vision whereby all communities will be accessible to everyone, including for disabled people, older people and tamariki/children.

**Recommendation 2:** An additional point should be added under the ‘key considerations as we grow’ section around the need for accessibility to be built in to accommodate the increasing number of disabled and older people.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Disability Action Plan is referenced as are any other population group related strategies/plans which have been developed by Council within the strategy.

**Recommendation 4:** That improved travel choices must include access to inclusive, accessible modes of public transport for everyone, including disabled people, and that this be specifically referenced. Moreover, this must be underpinned by having transport infrastructure, for example, bus stops, footpaths and train stations, designed and built according to Universal Design (UD) standards and that this also be referenced.

**Recommendation 5:** That a statement be added to the effect of ‘balancing growth with the impact of climate change is important and we should, as a community aim to transition towards an economy and society which focuses on sustainability and liveability rather than growth as a goal.’

**Recommendation 6:** That the Future Proof process be extended to include the voices of key community population groups including Pasifika, disabled people, youth, ethnic communities, older people, environmental and non-government organisations so that the voices of everyone within the Hamilton/Waikato region are heard when it comes to future planning.

**Recommendation 7:** That when addressing housing supply issues on new sites and in conjunction with existing partners, including Kainga Ora, there must be a guarantee that all new housing builds (irrespective of size or typology) will be designed and constructed according to Universal Design (UD) standards.

**Recommendation 8:** That the Hamilton City Council consider the extension of development contributions from just applying to the CBD into the new greenfields neighbourhoods as well to encourage the design and construction of universal design housing within them.

**Recommendation 9:** That infrastructure upgrades must also account for the needs of everyone, including disabled people through creating, for example, sufficient mobility parking spaces and community amenities including parks and recreational centres to support accessible community living.

**Recommendation 10:** That significant transport facilities be sited at least an average of ten minutes (or less) from where people live for ease of access.

**Recommendation 11:** That in order to ensure that everyone can access transport networks easily and inclusively that transport infrastructure including train stations, bus stops/shelters and transport terminals are designed and constructed according to universal design standards.

**Recommendation 12:** That one of the most important contributions that Council can make to emissions reduction is through constructing pedestrian infrastructure, including footpaths, to ensure that everyone, including disabled people, can mobilise easily within their communities.