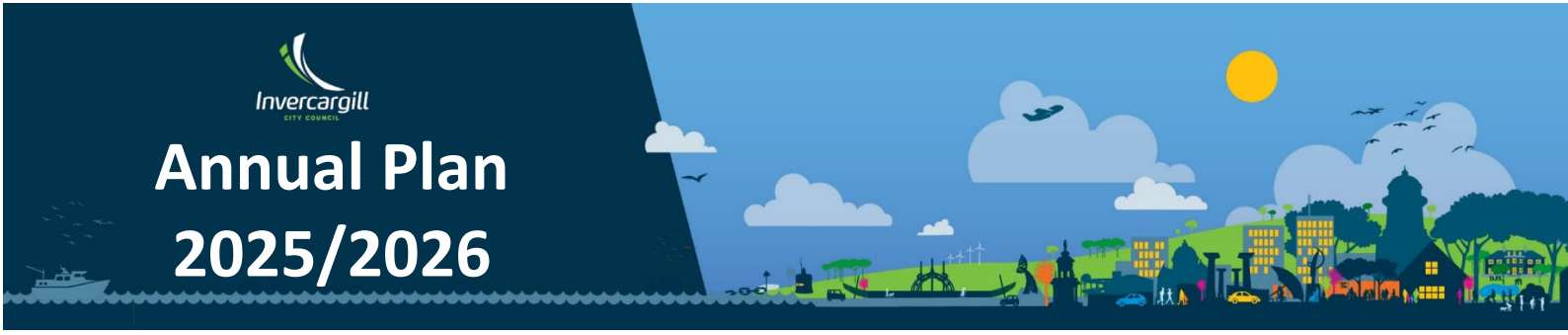


Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What is the Annual Plan?

A: The Annual Plan sets out Council's budget for one financial year in comparison to the Long-term plan. It explains how Council will finance the activities and services it provides, and any adjustments needed compared to the previous year based on updated financial information, financial performance, inflation and cost increases.

Q: Why do we need an Annual Plan when we have just completed the LTP?

A: The Long-term Plan is a strategic document which sets out the activities, services, capital development and finances for a ten year period, and is reviewed every three years. In between Long-term Plans, Councils are required by law to produce an annual plan. The annual plan supports the Long-term Plan, providing detail on what has changed and why for 2025/2026.

Q: What does the consultation include?

A: This year, the Annual Plan is focussing on the following areas:

- The financial changes for 2025/2026 including the forecast rates increases
- Proposed fees and charges
- Options for water service delivery
- Buses and public transport
- Urban play options and the play strategy

Q: What documents support the plan?

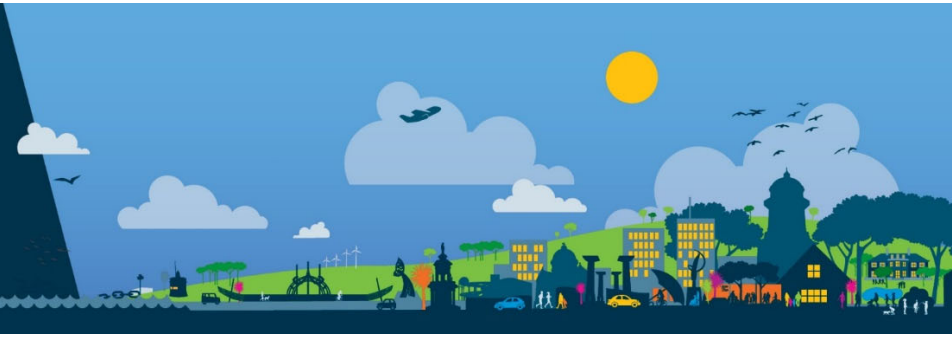
A: Accessible copies of the consultation document and all supporting documents are available on request

The consultation document is at the right of the page at the top of the menu.

Also available under key documents are the draft fees and charges schedule, draft regional public transport plan, detailed report on the water service delivery options, draft play strategy and draft rating policy with stormwater boundary map. Also available are all the background Council papers.

Q: I have a question about one of the topics, who should I contact?

A: Any queries about any aspect of the Annual Plan can be directed to policy@icc.govt.nz in the first instance. Alternatively you can call us on 03 211 1777.



Q: How can I speak to a Councillor or Mana Whenua Representative?

A: Public Hearings for the Annual Plan will be held on 29 April 2025. If you wish to be heard, please note this in your submission.

During March and April we will be out and about in our community, if you do not get a chance to speak to us at one of these events, you can do so at a hearing

In the events section, you will see the list of opportunities to speak to us.

Q: How can I submit?

A: Submissions can be made online via letstalk.icc.govt.nz

Other options include:

- By email on policy@icc.govt.nz
- By phone on 03 211 1777
- By dropping off your submission to Te Hīnaki – Civic Building, 101 Esk Street, or Bluff Service Centre, 98 Gore Street, or Invercargill Public Library, 50 Dee Street, or Murihiku Marae, 408 Tramway Road
- By post to "Annual Plan 2025/26 Submission, Private Bag 90104, Invercargill"

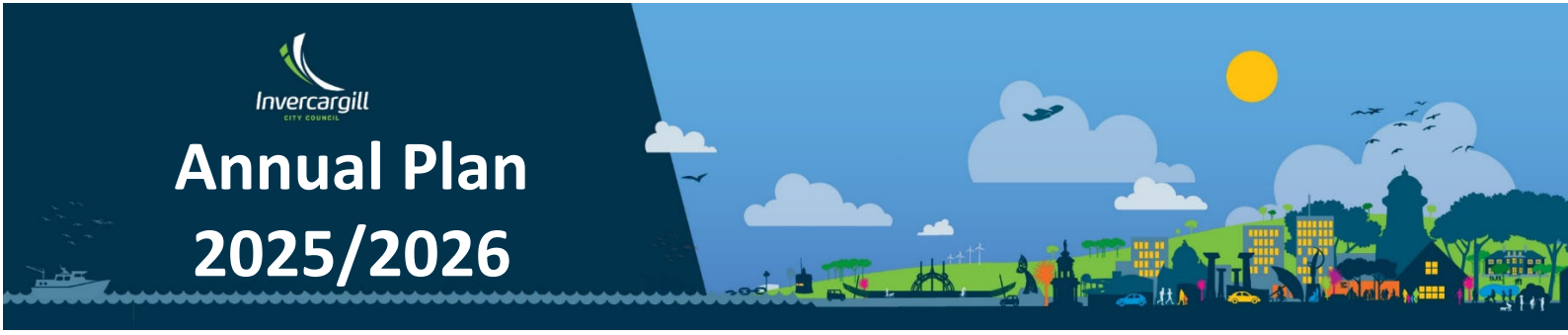
Q: When are submissions due?

A: Submissions will close at 5pm on 13 April 2025.

More about the Annual Plan

Q: How is the budget set for the Annual Plan?

A: The 2025/26 Annual Plan is based on Year 2 of the 2024 – 2034 Long-term Plan. Updated economic information like inflation is used, alongside updated project and service information and to produce a draft budget and forecast rates increase. Councillors consider this budget and make decisions on items they require to be added or removed, including options for savings. Following consultation, the budget is finalised incorporating the Councillors decisions and any further changes needed as a result of updated information.



Q: What economic and regulatory changes have contributed to the increase in rates?

A: Central Government reforms mean that we are having to change various parts of our three waters delivery and funding. The forecast rates increase for three waters will be 20.46%

Another significant factor this year is insurance costs. Events such as Cyclone Gabriel and leaky buildings mean New Zealand is considered a higher insurance risk, which means our insurance costs are going up significantly. We are also facing higher than forecast inflation rates and interest costs, which mean rates need to increase if we don't cut services. After savings made by Council the forecast rates increase for non-waters will be 3.67%.

Q: What is Council doing to reduce costs?

A: We have worked hard to find ways to keep costs down. These include delaying infrastructure renewal works, taking on more insurance risk where we can, delaying various building renewals and maintenance work, pausing or reducing funding programmes including the Community Wellbeing Fund, Stadium Southland, Heritage Buildings, the sister city programme, and reducing funding for regional development and climate change activities. One saving proposal we have is to close the Wachner Place toilets, and we would like to hear your views on this.

Q: How can I work out what my rates increase would be?

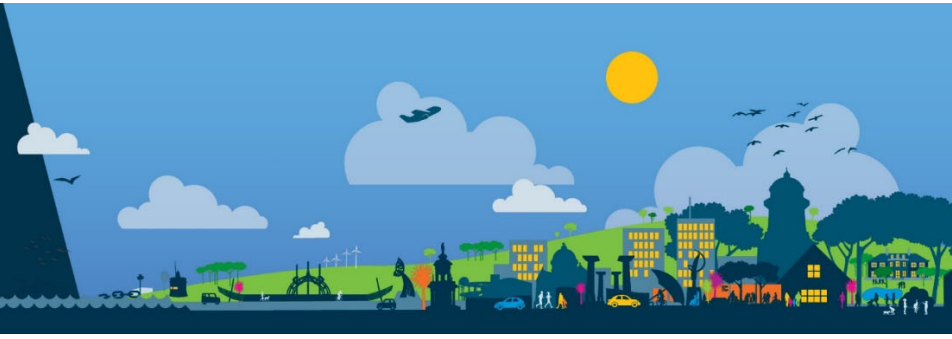
A: The average non-waters rates increase will be 3.67%. If you receive all three waters services (water, stormwater and sewerage) the rates increase for those items will be 20.46%.

Q: How does this compare to what was planned?

A: Council planned for an 8.5% increase for 2025/2026 and the combined water and non-water increases mean the average increase is now proposed to be 9.47%.

Q: What are the assumptions which underpin the budget and why are they important?

A: The financial assumptions describe what Council forecasts will happen to key factors which influence the budget, including inflation, interest rates, population growth and delivery of the capital works programme. Council uses these forecasts to estimate its revenue from rates as well as its expenditure on key activities. If one or more of these factors changes in a way we don't expect this can have a big impact on the budget. For example if lots of people move to Invercargill, the income from rates will rise and at the same time we can expect the costs of installing new infrastructure like pipes and roads for new subdivisions to rise. If inflation rises higher than expected then the cost to deliver services and capital works will increase. As a result Council continually monitors these factors and adjusts as necessary at each Annual Plan.



Q: What is depreciation and why is how we fund it important?

A: Depreciation describes the costs to replace assets like pipes and roads as they age (replacement cost spread over the life of the asset). Most infrastructure assets have an estimated lifecycle and Council plans to make sure they can be replaced when they reach the end of their useful life. Council does this by rating for depreciation.

Q: Will changes be made to the budget following consultation?

A: Following consultation, the Councillors will consider what they have heard and make their final decisions about the projects included in the Annual Plan and the Fees and Charges. Council will use this information, as well as any further new information about the economy to finalise the budget. The Annual Plan will then be adopted before the end of June.

Q: When will the rates be set?

A: The rates will be set before the end of June when the Annual Plan is adopted. The new rates will come into effect on 1 July 2025.

Q: How can I pay my rates?

A: You can pay your rates by:

- Direct debit
- Automatic Payment
- Bank Transfer
- Eftpos/Cash at our offices at 101 Esk Street or the Bluff Service Centre, 98 Gore Street.
- Online via our website

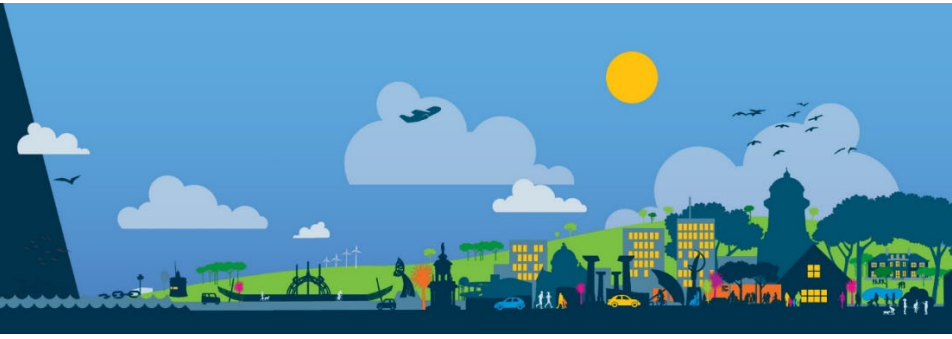
More detail on how to pay your rates is available on our website at Paying your rates (External link).

Q: I have a direct debit for rates – how do I change it to reflect the increase?

A: You don't need to do anything. Council will recalculate what your new direct debit will be and send you a letter to advise you of the change.

Q: I am struggling to pay my rates – what are my options?

A: Please call us on 03 211 1777 and ask to speak to the Rates Team who can work with you. We also work closely with various agencies who can provide support and budget advice.



Q: Reminder to apply annually for a rates rebate if you are eligible

A: If you believe you are eligible for the government's rates rebate, please remember that you need to apply annually for the rebate.

Q: I want to report an issue with Council services, who do I contact?

A: You can raise a concern about any Council activity by logging a request for service. You can do this:

- In person at Te Hīnaki – Civic Building, or the Bluff Service Centre
- By phone on 03 211 1777
- Online at My Invercargill (icconline.icc.govt.nz)

Wachner Place toilets

Q: Why is Council proposing to close the toilets at Wachner Place?

A: Now that we have multiple toilet facilities in the city centre, we could save a significant amount by closing the Wachner Place toilets. It is more expensive to run the Wachner Place toilets than others within the district because they are staffed during opening hours. They generate some revenue from the showers, soap and towels but this does not cover the costs of the service. By closing these facilities, Council could save $200,000 annually.

Q: Where are there other nearby toilets?

A: Both the Invercargill Public Library and Invercargill Central have public toilets available, including accessible toilets, and these are within a block of Wachner Place.

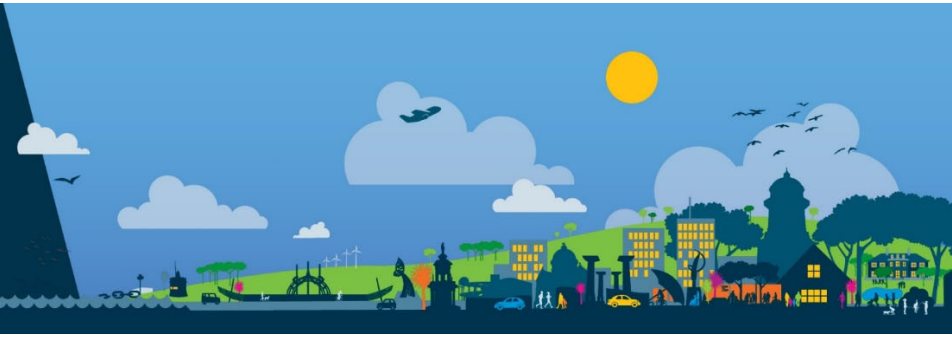
Q: Are there alternative shower facilities available?

A: Whilst outside of the city centre, Splash Palace offers a shower-only service for $4.50.

Q: How do I submit on the Wachner Place toilets?

A: Submissions can be made online via letstalk.icc.govt.nz

Other options include:



- By email on policy@icc.govt.nz
- By phone on 03 211 1777
- By dropping off your submission to Te Hīnaki – Civic Building, 101 Esk Street, or Bluff Service Centre, 98 Gore Street, or Invercargill Public Library, 50 Dee Street, or Murihiku Marae, 408 Tramway Road
- By post to "Annual Plan 2025/26 Submission, Private Bag 90104, Invercargill"

Regional Public Transport Plan

Q: What is the Regional Public Transport Plan?

A: This plan is a strategic document which identifies the key public transport services for the Southland region, the policies that apply to them, and our objectives for the network.

Q: What priorities have been identified in the plan?

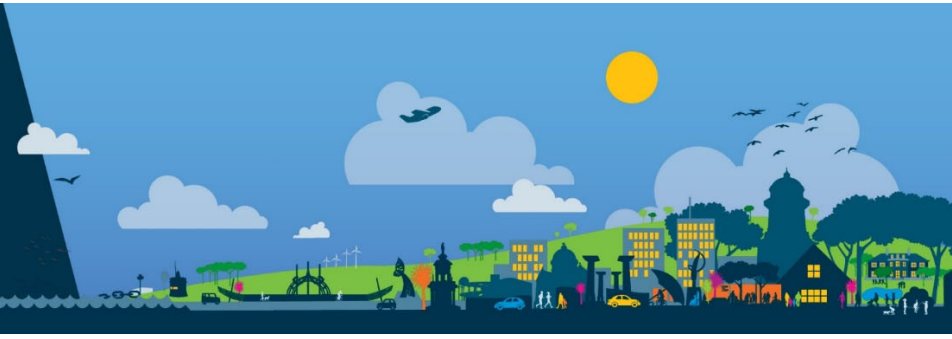
A: The plan sets out three priorities for public transport in Southland:

1. Ensuring equitable access for essential goods and services – the plan recognises that Southland has higher than the national average numbers of people aged over 65, aged 15 or younger, and living with a disability, all of whom are considered transport disadvantaged, and therefore in need of reliable and affordable public transport options.
2. Achieving value for money – central government targets have recently significantly increased regarding farebox recovery, so patronage of the bus service needs to increase. Patronage has been trending upwards due to service improvements, but the targets are so high that alternative funding sources will likely be needed. Council will need to continue to balance delivery with value for money.
3. Responding to environmental priorities – this will include improving the bus fleet to reduce emissions, as well as improving the public transport system in general to reduce reliance on private vehicles.

Q: When is the next public hui on public transport?

A: A hui is planned for 2 April 2025, and members of the public will be able to share their thoughts on the plan and ask any questions about the bus service, including the new proposed fares.

Q: How do I submit on the Regional Public Transport Plan?



A: Submissions can be made online via letstalk.icc.govt.nz

Other options include:

- By email on policy@icc.govt.nz
- By phone on 03 211 1777
- By dropping off your submission to Te Hīnaki – Civic Building, 101 Esk Street, or Bluff Service Centre, 98 Gore Street, or Invercargill Public Library, 50 Dee Street, or Murihiku Marae, 408 Tramway Road
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Water Services Delivery Options

Q: What is a Water Services Delivery Plan?

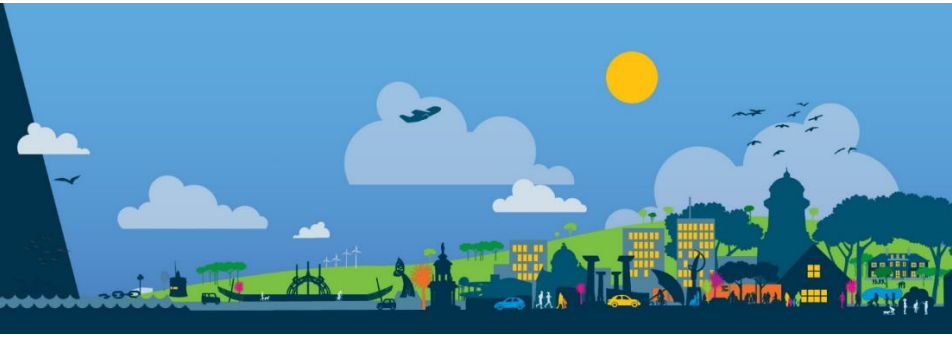
A: As a country we are facing significant challenges with water infrastructure. As part of its reforms to address this, central government is requiring all Councils to develop a one-off Plan which will provide an assessment of the current water infrastructure, how much investment is needed, how this will be financed, and how it will be delivered through a water service delivery model. The Plan will need to be submitted in September.

Q: What are the options for the water service delivery model?

A: Council has presented three options for feedback. At this stage, Council's preferred option for water service delivery is a Council Operated Enhanced Service. This means that water services would continue to be delivered in-house by Council, although structural changes would be needed to the organisation to meet new regulatory requirements. Whilst this wouldn't initially be the cheapest option for ratepayers, over the long-term it results in the lowest average rates increases.

The next option for consideration is to create an Invercargill Council Controlled Organisation (CCO). This would be an independent, standalone organisation with its own budget which would only be focussed on providing water services. There would be higher set-up and operational costs associated with this option. Although there are some advantages with this model, Council does not believe they are enough to justify the additional costs of setting up a CCO.

The third option to consider is a Southland Wide Council Controlled Organisation, with phased introduction of a region wide price. This option is the cheapest in the short-term, with the lowest forecast rates increases between 2027 and 2034. However, after this point, the costs are projected to increase significantly, resulting in the highest eventual costs of all the options being considered. This is a hypothetical option provided for comparison. No formal negotiations have been undertaken with other Councils in Southland.



Q: Why is Council's preferred option not the cheapest one?

A: A Southland-wide entity would have lower debt servicing costs due to the different debt structure it would have, meaning the entity costs would be overall lower until 2034. However, after this point, the costs will increase significantly for Invercargill ratepayers as higher costs from outside our district are shared across the region.

A Council Operated Enhanced Service (Council's preferred option) will have relatively low set up costs due to most of the staff and structures already being in place, and while not the cheapest option initially, over time it will result in the lowest costs to ratepayers. There are also other advantages to keeping water service delivery in-house, such as retaining our ability to respond to emergency events, and supporting local decision making in areas such as investment, prices and levels of service to meet the expectations of Invercargill ratepayers.

Q: Why are the costs so high for three waters?

A: Regardless of which water service delivery model is selected, Central Government's water reforms mean there are a range of necessary cost increases to meet new legislative requirements. Whilst we are fortunate that this Council has carefully managed and maintained its three waters network, there is a large amount of essential work which will be needed over the next 20 years due to the age of the network. There are challenges recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified industry professionals. Regulation is increasing, and new technology is likely to be needed to meet future consent requirements.

Q: What is a CCO?

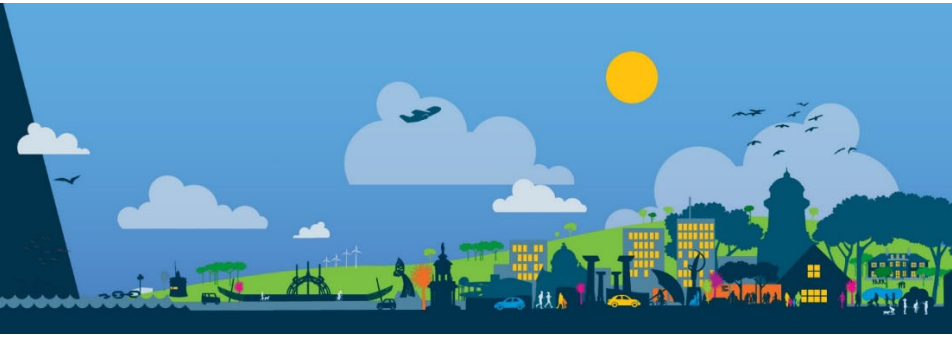
A: A Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) is an entity in which one or more councils control 50% or more of the voting rights, or appoint 50% or more of the members of the governing body.

Q: How do I submit on water service delivery?

A: Submissions can be made online via letstalk.icc.govt.nz

Other options include:

- By email on policy@icc.govt.nz
- By phone on 03 211 1777



- By dropping off your submission to Te Hīnaki – Civic Building, 101 Esk Street, or Bluff Service Centre, 98 Gore Street, or Invercargill Public Library, 50 Dee Street, or Murihiku Marae, 408 Tramway Road
- By post to "Annual Plan 2025/26 Submission, Private Bag 90104, Invercargill"

Rating Policy amendments – Stormwater Boundaries

Q: What changes are being proposed to stormwater ratings?

A: Council is proposing to include new maps in the rating policy which will clarify which properties will be charged a targeted stormwater rate, for being connected to the stormwater drainage network. This includes overland drainage pathways that discharge into the stormwater network.

Q: Why are these changes being suggested?

A: Council has used new elevation data based on LiDar (light detection and ranging), which provides accurate and high resolution imaging from which we can understand how water flows over the land. From this we have been able to accurately identify which properties in the district directly benefit from the stormwater network. By updating the maps, the costs relating to the stormwater network will be spread more evenly between all those who directly benefit from this service.

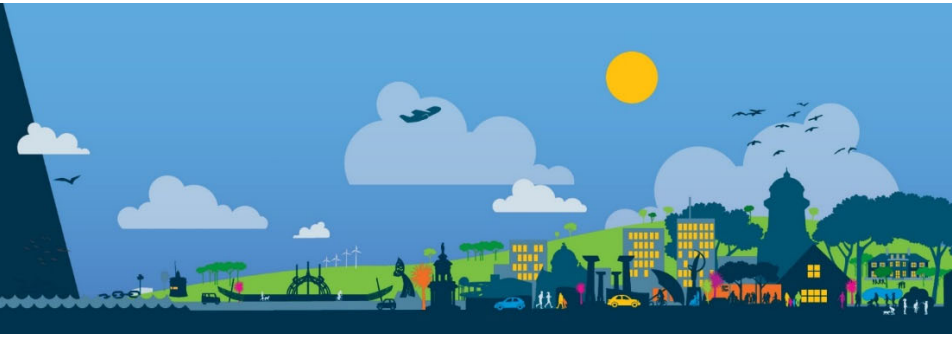
Q: Who will these changes affect?

A: The maps below show a green line which indicates the proposed new boundary for targeted stormwater rating. Properties effected will receive a letter.

Q: What are targeted rates compared to general rates?

A: General rates are those paid by all rate payers for services that everyone in the district can benefit from. For example, road maintenance, the library, Splash Palace or the Civic Theatre. On the other hand, some services are only provided to a limited number of ratepayers, and so a targeted rate is charged just to those ratepayers who benefit from them.

For stormwater, everyone benefits somewhat from the stormwater drains working properly throughout the district and not causing flooding, whether or not their property is connected to the stormwater network. This is why stormwater is partially funded by general rates. However, not every property drains into the stormwater network, so not every property is charged the additional targeted rate.



Q: Who can I contact for maintenance?

A: Any stormwater issues can be notified to Council by phoning 03 211 1777. You can call this number out of hours for urgent assistance.

Q: Who can I contact to query my stormwater rating status?

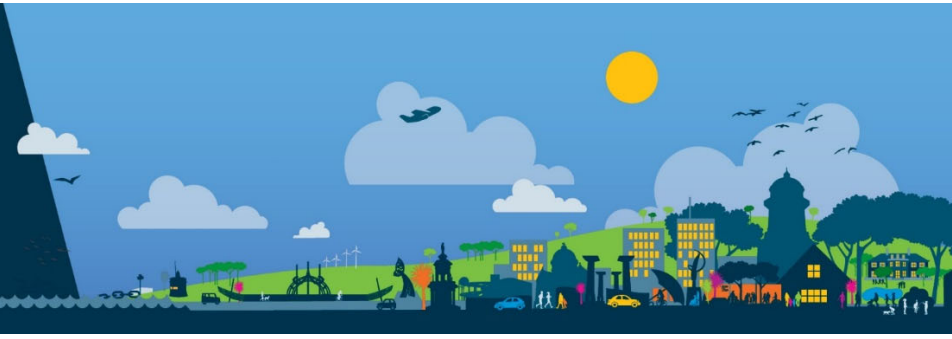
A: Contact policy@icc.govt.nz

Q: How do I submit on the stormwater boundaries?

A: Submissions can be made online via letstalk.icc.govt.nz

Other options include:

- By email on policy@icc.govt.nz
- By phone on 03 211 1777
- By dropping off your submission to Te Hīnaki – Civic Building, 101 Esk Street, or Bluff Service Centre, 98 Gore Street, or Invercargill Public Library, 50 Dee Street, or Murihiku Marae, 408 Tramway Road
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Urban Play

Q: What is the history of the urban play project?

A: Urban play was identified as a key aspect to drive city centre rejuvenation via our City Centre Master Plan in 2020, and it was a key topic in the 2021-2031 Long-term Plan. A feasibility study was completed in 2023 and we are now in a position to make some decisions about what this could look like for Invercargill. We are also asking if now is the right time for this project, or if it should be put on hold.

Q: Why is urban play important?

A: Urban play supports community wellbeing and economic vitality. Interactive and engaging city centre spaces enhance community pride, our sense of belonging, and social connections for all ages. Research also shows that improved walkability and pedestrian infrastructure boost the local economy by making the city centre a vibrant place where people gather and connect rather than simply passing through.

Q: What is a play hub?

A: A 'play hub' is our vision for a centrally located public park that, while multipurpose, including unique and fun interactive play elements suitable for multiple ages, is not at the scale of other parks or the style of a traditional playground. The review has shown there are only limited options in the centre for a significant play hub so the play trail and activations are likely to be more important.

Q: Why couldn't we have both Option 1 and Option 2 for urban play?

A: At this stage we don't have the budget to deliver the full city centre play programme—which aims to includes a play hub, play trail, and play activations—while also enhancing multiple areas across the city and Bluff. This is why we are asking for your help in deciding where to make the investment, if the project goes ahead at this stage.

Q: Why was 66 Dee Street originally suggested as the play hub site?

A: It is recognised that all the potential locations have limitations. 66 Dee Street is already owned by Council and is conveniently centrally located, close to other rejuvenation sites at Don St, Esk St and Wachner Place, as well as the library, public toilets and parking. It is sheltered from the wind and presents a potential option to create a covered play area, however there are limitations linked to

size, lack of sunlight and safety concerns. In their discussions Council was concerned that the benefits did not outweigh the negatives for the site.

Q: How much money has been set aside for this already?

A: Council has already approved $4.956 million across four financial years for the urban play project, through the 2024-34 Long-term Plan. This means there is no additional rates impact from Options 1 or 2, compared to what has already been agreed in the Long-term Plan. Removing urban play from the programme would result in a -0.60% saving in rates

Q: How much will each site receive if the preference is to disperse the money across various sites?

A: The intent is for each site to get a similar share of the funding to improve play quality across the district. Exact figures for each project will be determined during the planning process.

Q: How were the proposed sites for the dispersed option picked?

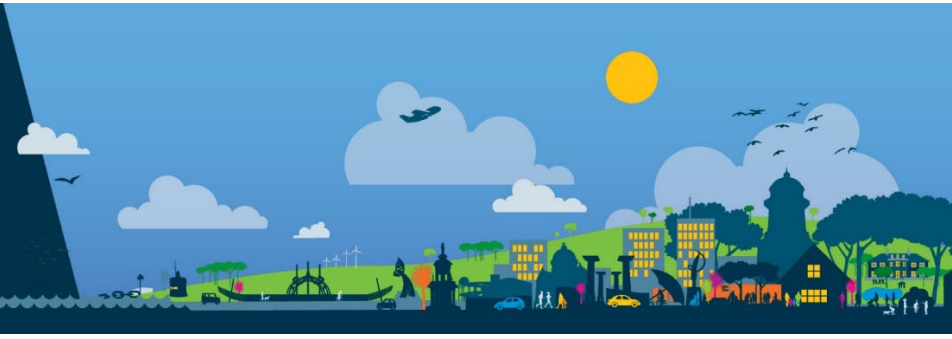
A: The proposed sites of Bluff, South Invercargill, the City Centre, and North Invercargill were chosen as some locations already have funding for planning and design but not implementation, while others are due for future upgrades. A portion of the funding remains in the city centre, reflecting our ongoing commitment to play in this area.

Q: I've seen some really cool destination playgrounds in other centres, can we have one of those?

We don't have the space in the city centre for a large, traditional destination playground—typically a big, standalone play space designed mainly for children with large, structured play equipment. However, there are spaces which would be suited to an intergenerational public space concept, which offers experiences for all ages. Both Option 1 and Option 2 aim to provide high play value, working with the budget and sites we have available.

Q: Will there be play in the mall?

Invercargill Central currently has a pop-up play space, but as it's in a leasable area, it could be repurposed at any time. There are plans for an indoor playground in future upgrades, though this is not currently funded. While Council is a shareholder in the mall, decisions about play within the space are made independently by Invercargill Central.



Q: I like the urban play idea; can we have a little bit in town and the rest dispersed?

A: Yes, Option 1 includes an aspect of play in the city centre at a reduced scale and this is the Council's preferred option.

Q: If it is decided now is not the right time to invest in urban play, what will happen to the money that has been budgeted through the LTP?

A: The budget will be removed and the debt repayment costs removed from future forecast rates increases.

Q: How can I submit on urban play?

A: Submissions can be made online via letstalk.icc.govt.nz

Other options include:

- By email on policy@icc.govt.nz
- By phone on 03 211 1777
- By dropping off your submission to Te Hīnaki – Civic Building, 101 Esk Street, or Bluff Service Centre, 98 Gore Street, or Invercargill Public Library, 50 Dee Street, or Murihiku Marae, 408 Tramway Road
- By post to "Annual Plan 2025/26 Submission, Private Bag 90104, Invercargill"

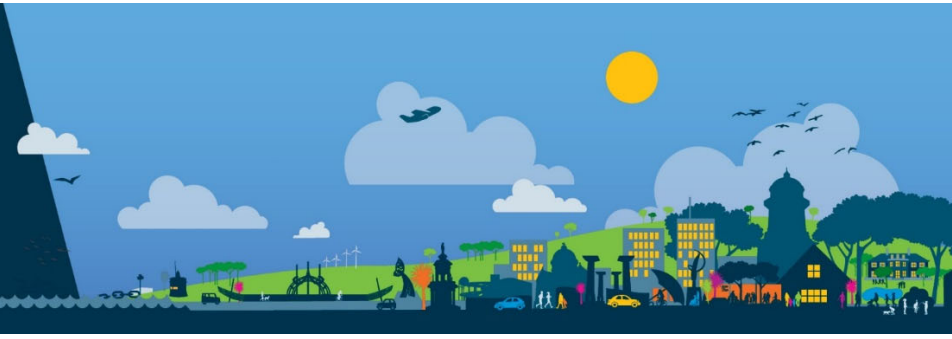
Play Strategy

Q: What is a strategy?

A: A strategy is a document that outlines a vision for a city-wide topic, and describes the outcomes and journey to reach that vision. Our strategies have a long-term focus and support Council's overarching vision of He Ngākau Aroha – Our City with Heart.

Q: How does this relate to the urban play programme and the two options being presented?

A: The Play Strategy will set the overall vision and outcomes for play across the district, including the delivery of the urban play programme. Option 1 and Option 2 are both in line with the direction of the draft strategy. Even if we do not go ahead with urban play at this time, we can adopt the strategy.



Q: How much will the Play Strategy cost?

A: The Play Strategy itself does not have a specific cost. Instead it provides direction for how Council will spend money relating to play, as and when that is budgeted.

Q: You said the Play Strategy is including but going beyond traditional playgrounds. What does that mean?

A: Playgrounds have become the go-to model to enable play in cities, but they are not the only way to create play-friendly environments. While the strategy still includes traditional playgrounds, it also considers a wider range of possibilities, including adventure playgrounds, natural play spaces, playable street furniture, interactive art, school streets, play trails, mobile play setups, loose parts, pop-up play experiences, community-led play interventions, informal urban sport, play events, and new playful programmes. Play is broader than fixed equipment—it can be woven into the fabric of the city in many ways. If you want to learn more about these concepts or have your own ideas, contact our play advocate.

Q: How does the Play Strategy impact me?

A: The Play Strategy impacts everyone by promoting spaces and opportunities for play that cater to all ages and abilities. Whether you're a parent, young person, older adult, or someone without kids, the strategy envisions environments that encourage physical activity, social connections, and personal well-being for all community members. It aims to make play accessible and beneficial, whatever your age or background.

Q: How do I submit on the play strategy?

A: Submissions can be made online via letstalk.icc.govt.nz

Other options include:

- By email on policy@icc.govt.nz
- By phone on 03 211 1777
- By dropping off your submission to Te Hīnaki – Civic Building, 101 Esk Street, or Bluff Service Centre, 98 Gore Street, or Invercargill Public Library, 50 Dee Street, or Murihiku Marae, 408 Tramway Road
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