

# Hamilton Consultation Feedback and Recommended Final Networks.

Hamilton is a rapidly growing city. We have proposed several changes to its bus services from 2028 onwards to respond to and support this growth. We are proposing changes towards more direct and frequent bus services. This will result in more people being able to access reliable, frequent public transport than before. Hamilton City continues to invest in accessible walking and cycling networks for people to get to and from bus stops. Since the implementation of the Comet and Meteor bus services, we have seen how successful the higher frequency, more direct services can be. So, as we shift to more frequent and direct public transport services, as envisioned in the Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) and Metro Spatial Plan (MSP), a component of achieving this aspiration is the reduction in coverage services.

Overall, 576 people responded to feedback on the bus network proposals for Hamilton, or 47.3% of all consultation responses. Section one and two of this report summarizes the survey responses and recommended network changes while section three outlines the final short- and long-term bus networks for Hamilton.

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# 1 Survey Feedback

Before going into specific network changes, we asked the public general questions on transport choices and frequency. Regarding frequency, we first ask “in general, which of the following do you prefer?”. 59.6% (332) of respondents indicated that they preferred “Walking a greater distance to access a more frequent bus service (i.e., you have to walk further but the buses run more often)” while 40.4% (225) of respondents indicated that they preferred “Walking a shorter distance to access a less frequent bus service (i.e., you do not have to walk as far but the buses run less often)”.

This indicated that most respondents prioritize service reliability and convenience over proximity. It also suggests that waiting time is a more significant barrier to using public transport than walking distance for many users. Lastly, it also reflects a commuter mindset, where predictability and frequency are key to planning daily travel. Overall, this supports a network design where high-frequency services operate on main corridors and local connections or active modes (walking, cycling) can bridge the gap to stops. However, the 40.4% who prefer shorter walks may reflect the needs of mobility-limited or time-constrained users. The recommended network design should therefore prioritize frequency while ensuring equitable access through safe walking infrastructure and targeted coverage.

We then asked the public “If the bus service(s) closest to your home cannot take you to your destination, please indicate what you are most likely to do.” Responses were:

- 43.7% (246) said they would use a different mode of transport to reach their destination
- 25.9% (146) said they would walk a short distance to an initial service and then transfer onto a second service to reach their destination
- 25% (141) said they would walk a greater distance to access a service that can reach their destination without requiring them to transfer
- 5.3% (30) said ‘other’. These ‘other’ respondents highlighted the below themes in a feedback box:
  - **Driving as a Practical Default**
    - Many respondents would drive to a bus stop or drive the full journey, especially if:
      - Transfers are unreliable
      - Walking distances are too long
      - Parking is available
    - Example: *“Drive and park to access a service that can reach my destination without requiring me to transfer.”*
  - **Walking and Transfers Are Conditional**
    - Decisions depend on:
      - Time added to the journey
      - Reliability of connections
      - Physical ability or age
      - Weather and safety
    - Example: *“Depends how far the greater distance is and whether there are easy connections.”*
  - **Mobility and Accessibility Concerns**
    - Seniors and those with limited mobility expressed concern about walking longer distances or losing direct services.
    - Example: *“We are pensioners so walking extra distance may affect us as we age.”*
  - **Service Reliability and Integration**
    - Transfers are seen as unreliable or stressful, especially if buses are late or poorly timed.
    - Example: *“I dislike transfers because I find the services unreliable.”*
  - **Desire for Multi-modal Options**
    - Suggestions include:
      - Bike integration (e.g. fold-up bikes on buses)
      - Smaller, more frequent vehicles for better coverage

- Example: *“I’d like to take my 12-inch fold-up bike on the bus.”*
- **Case-by-case Decision Making**
  - Many users make dynamic choices based on time, destination, and available options.
  - Example: *“It is a very dynamic situation.”*

The survey results show that 43.7% of respondents would switch to a different mode of transport if the bus closest to their home didn’t serve their destination, while 25.9% would walk a short distance and transfer, and 25% would walk a greater distance to avoid transferring. The remaining 5.3% selected ‘other’, with open-text responses revealing a mix of strategies and concerns. These include driving to a suitable bus stop, using a fold-up bike, relying on specific routes, and making decisions based on time, reliability, and physical ability. Many respondents expressed a preference for flexibility and efficiency, with transfers viewed as inconvenient unless well-timed. Seniors and mobility-limited users raised concerns about walking longer distances, while others highlighted the importance of preserving key routes like the Orbiter and Comet. Overall, the responses suggest that while some users are adaptable, many rely on direct, reliable, and accessible services to maintain independence and avoid defaulting to car travel.

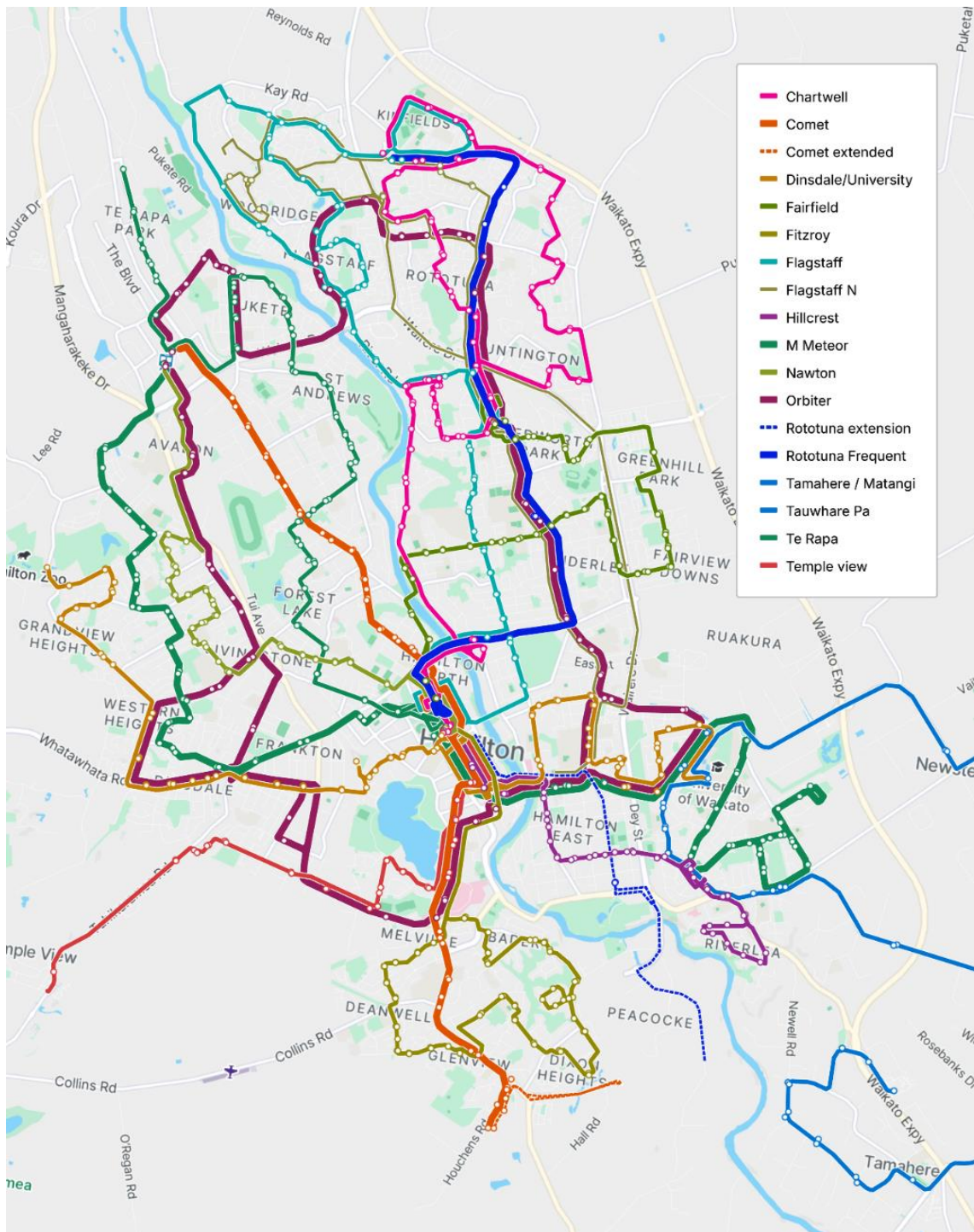
## 1.1 Proposed Short Term Changes That Were Consulted On

In 2028 we are proposing changes to make Hamilton’s bus network more useful for more people. The changes described in this document have been developed to provide services for as many people to make bus trips as possible, roughly within existing funding limits. Where proposed routes show changes from the current (2025) routes, it is to make them more accessible for more people, responding to growth within the city, and making the most of on-the-ground street changes proposed by Hamilton City Council to help buses move around the city efficiently.

To enable higher-frequency services on some routes within existing budgets, the proposal showed reduced coverage on other routes. That means that some services which currently run every 30 minutes for some of the day may only operate every 60 minutes in the future.

WRC recommended that the following network changes for Hamilton are implemented in the new bus contracts, contingent on funding, with the intention to be launched in 2028. The proposed routes are shown in the corresponding Figures. Note that regional services that travel into Hamilton are not included in any maps.

The proposal provides more services for the frequent routes, and in many cases fewer services on other routes. The simplified timetable shows the Orbiter, Meteor, Comet, and a new Rototuna frequent service operating every 15 minutes from 7am to 10pm, and every 30 minutes from 6am to 7am, and from 10pm to midnight. All other services are proposed to operate every 60 minutes from 7am – 9pm, seven days per week.



The existing and proposed routes are detailed in the table below, and maps on the following pages. Note that frequencies and hours of operation for existing routes are approximate.

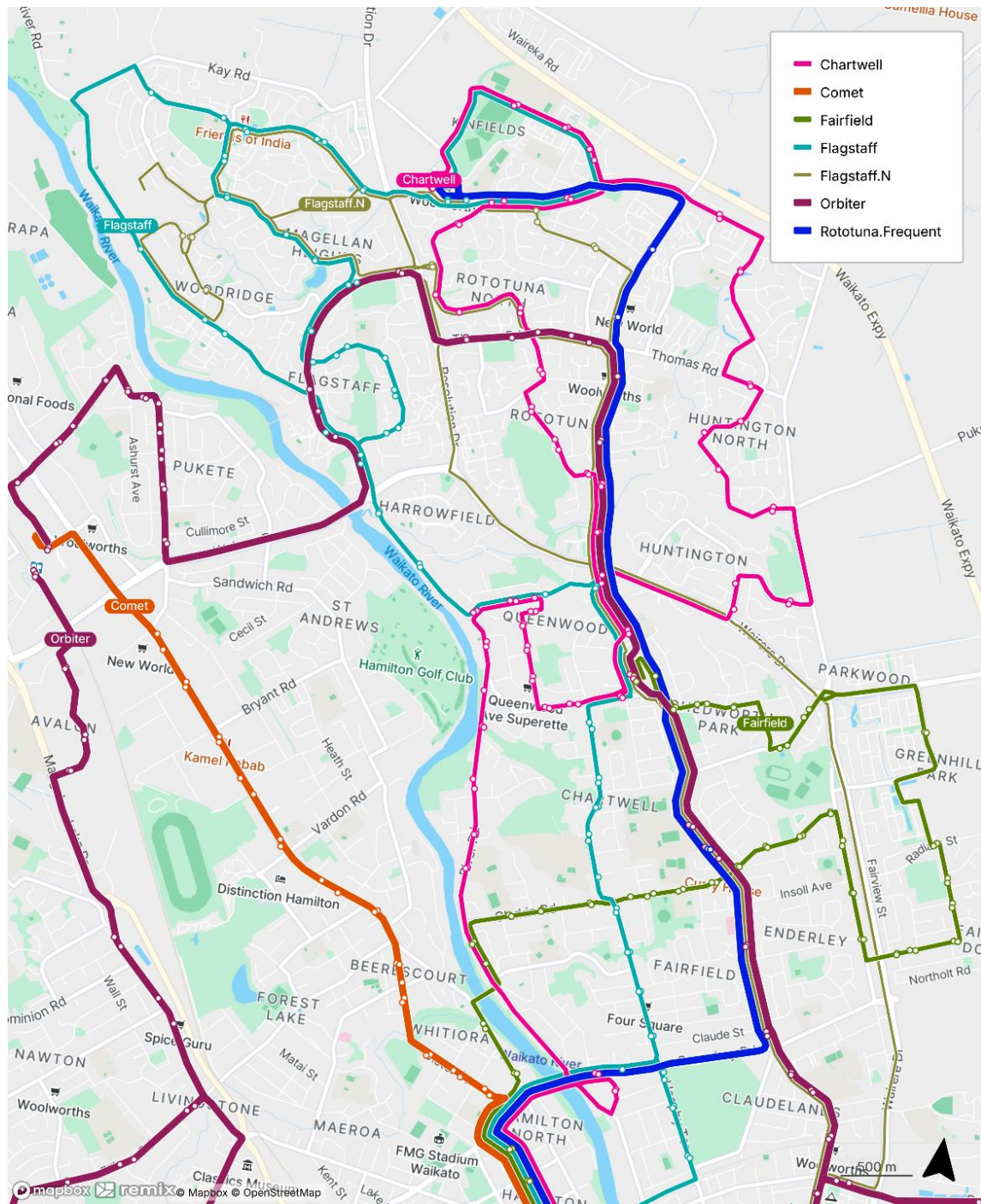
Route	Existing (2025): Frequency and hours of operation	Proposed (2028): Frequency and hours of operation
Orbiter	Every 15 minutes, 6am – 6pm weekdays Every 20 – 40 minutes, 6pm – 9pm weekdays; 7am – 8pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Every 15 minutes, 7am – 10pm Every 30 minutes, 6am-7am and 10pm-midnight Seven days per week and public holidays
Comet	Every 15 minutes, 6am – 6pm weekdays Every 30-40 minutes, 6pm – 9pm weekdays; 7am – 8pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Every 15 minutes, 7am – 10pm Every 30 minutes, 6am-7am and 10pm-midnight Seven days per week and public holidays

Meteor	Every 15 minutes, 7am – 6pm weekdays Every 20-30 minutes, 6pm – 9pm weekdays; 7am – 8pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Every 15 minutes, 7am – 10pm Every 30 minutes, 6am-7am and 10pm-midnight Seven days per week and public holidays
Rototuna Frequent	n/a	Every 15 minutes, 7am – 10pm Every 30 minutes, 6am-7am and 10pm-midnight Seven days per week and public holidays

Route	Existing (2025) Frequency and hours of operation	2028: proposed service, frequency and hours of operation:
1 Pukete <i>This #1 Pukete service and the #18 Te Rapa service are combining into one Te Rapa service</i>	Every 30-60 minutes, 6am – 8pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 8am – 8pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Te Rapa: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
3 Dinsdale <i>This #3 Dinsdale service and the #13 University service are combining into one Dinsdale/Uni service</i>	Every 30-60 minutes, 7am – 7pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 7am – 6pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Dinsdale University: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
4 Flagstaff	Every 30-60 minutes, 6am – 8pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 8am – 8pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Flagstaff: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
4N Flagstaff North	Two services morning and afternoon on weekdays in school term time only	Flagstaff N: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
5 Chartwell	Every 30-60 minutes, 6am – 7pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 7am – 7pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Chartwell: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
9 Nawton	Every 30-60 minutes, 6am – 8pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 9am – 7pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Nawton: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
10 Hillcrest	Every 30-60 minutes, 7am – 8pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 8am – 7pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Hillcrest: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
11 Fairfield	Every 40 minutes, 7am – 7pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 8am – 7pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Fairfield: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
12 Fitzroy	Every 30-60 minutes, 7am – 7pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 8am – 7pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Fitzroy: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
13 University <i>This #3 Dinsdale service and the #13 University service are combining into one Dinsdale/Uni service</i>	Every 60 - 90 minutes, 7am – 8pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 9am – 6pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Dinsdale University: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
14 Claudelands	Every 30-40 minutes, 7am – 7pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 8am – 7pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	<i>This service is being replaced by / combined with Fairfield. So there will be no frequency, but people will need to use either Rototuna frequent or Fairfield instead</i>

16 Rototuna	Every 30-60 minutes, 7am – 7pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 7am – 7pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	<i>This service is being replaced by the Rototuna High Frequent service.</i>
RC Rototuna Circular	Every 60-120 minutes, 6am – 6pm weekdays Every 120 minutes, 8am – 6pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	<i>This service is being replaced largely by the Flagstaff service. People can also use Flagstaff N, Chartwell and Rototuna High Frequent</i>
17 Hamilton Gardens Uni	Every 30-60 minutes, 7am – 8pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 9am – 7pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	<i>This service is proposed to be removed.</i>
18 Te Rapa <i>This #1Pukete service and the #18 Te Rapa service are combining into one Te Rapa service</i>	Every 40 minutes, 7am – 7pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 7am – 7pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Te Rapa: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week
19 Bremworth / Temple View	Every 30-90 minutes, 7am – 7pm weekdays Every 60 minutes, 7am – 6pm Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays	Templeview: Every 60 minutes, 7am – 9pm, seven days per week

### 1.1.1 Changes proposed for 2028: northeast



**Figure 1 Hamilton bus services, Northeast, proposed for 2028**

The proposed changes for buses in Hamilton’s northeast are shown in the figure above and outlined in the previous table. In summary, the proposed changes are:

1. New frequent service: Rototuna Frequent
2. Changes to route coverage in all suburbs
3. Consistent and higher frequencies for the Orbiter and new Rototuna Frequent service
4. Changed frequency on all other services

## 1.1.2 Changes proposed for 2028: southeast

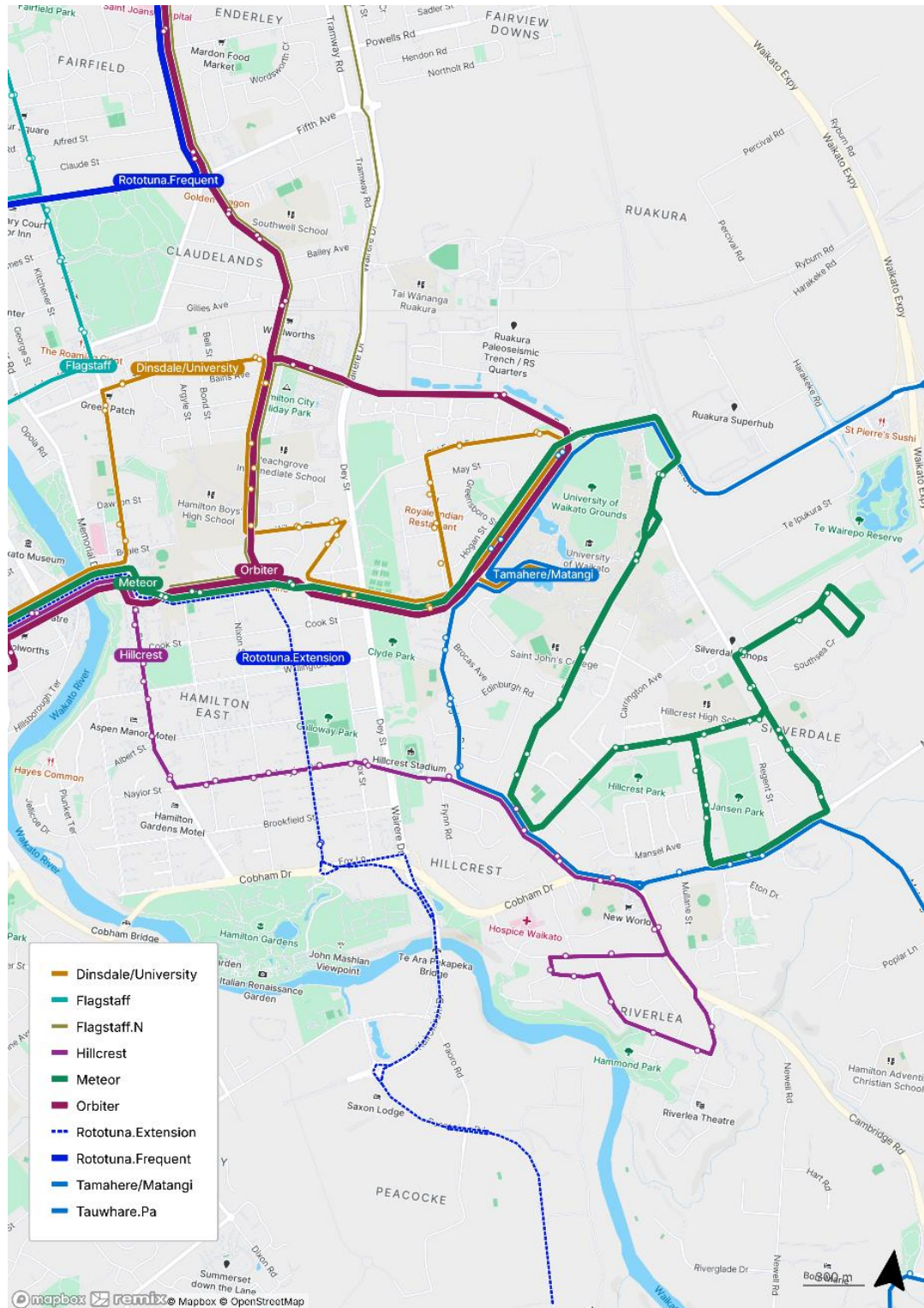


Figure 2 Hamilton bus services, Southeast, proposed for 2028 (right)

Changes for buses in Hamilton’s southeast are shown in the figure above and outlined in the previous table. In summary, the proposed changes are:

1. Changes to route coverage in all suburbs
2. No service to Hamilton Gardens
3. Consistent and higher frequencies for the Orbiter and Meteor
4. Reduced frequency on all other services

### 1.1.3 Changes proposed for 2028: northwest

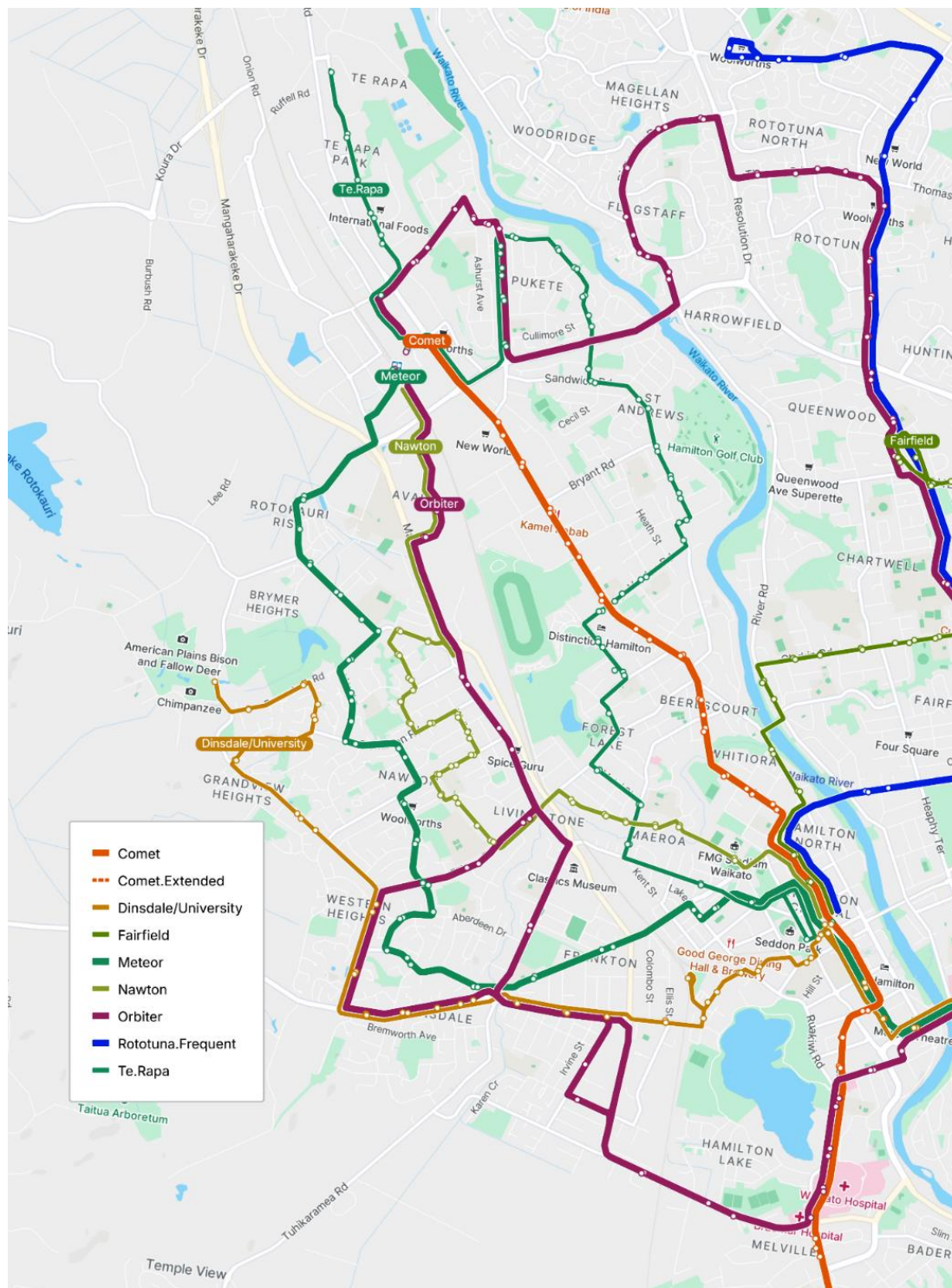
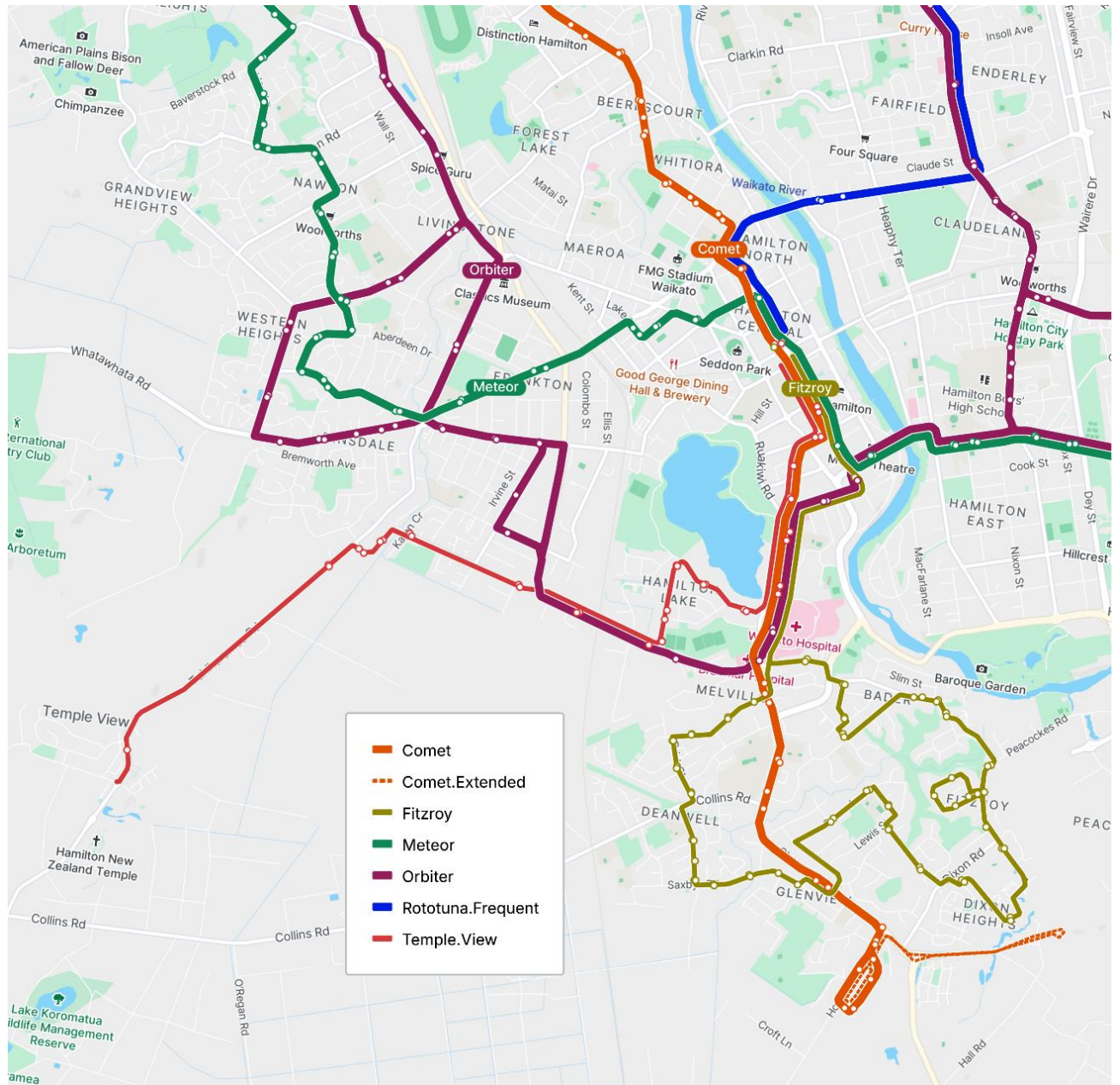


Figure 3 Hamilton bus services, Northwest, proposed for 2028 (right)

Changes for buses in Hamilton’s northwest are shown in the figure above and outlined in the previous table. In summary, the proposed changes are:

1. Changes to route coverage in all suburbs
2. Orbiter terminates and begins at Rotokauri: all through-passengers to change buses, enabling higher frequencies and improved reliability
3. Consistent and higher frequencies for the Orbiter and Comet
4. Reduced frequency on all other services
5. Combining the existing Pukete and Te Rapa services to one ‘Te Rapa’ service

### 1.1.4 Changes proposed for 2028: southwest



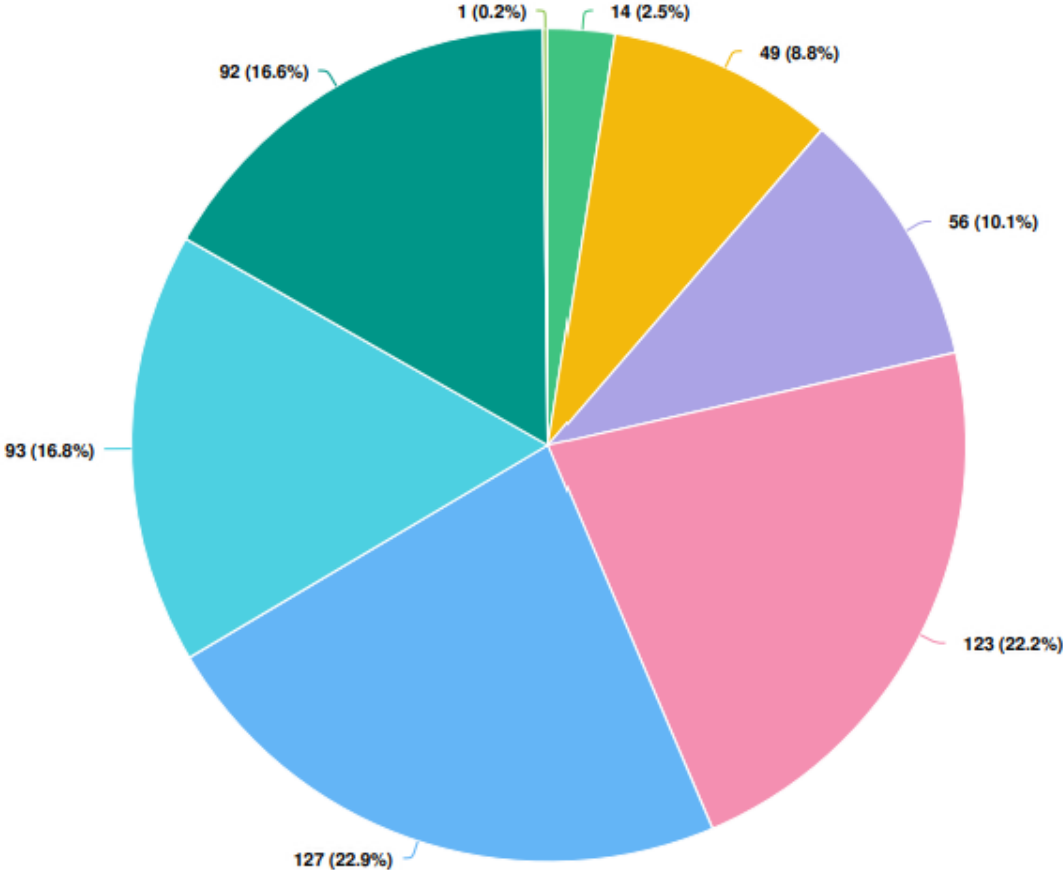
**Figure 4 Hamilton bus services, Southwest, proposed for 2028 (right)**

Changes for buses in Hamilton’s southwest are shown in the figure above and outlined in the previous table. In summary, the proposed changes are:

1. Changes to route coverage in most suburbs
2. Consistent and higher frequencies for the Orbiter and Comet
3. Reduced frequency on all other services
4. Options to extend the Meteor into Peacocke as growth requires

# 2 Consultation feedback

Below is the age breakdown of the respondents to the Hamilton survey.



**Question options**

- 17 or under
- 18-25
- 26-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61 or older
- Prefer not to say

## 2.1 High frequent services

The proposal provides more services for the frequent routes, and in many cases fewer services on other routes. The simplified timetable shows the Orbiter, Meteor, Comet, and a new Rototuna frequent service operating every 15 minutes from 7am to 10pm, and every 30 minutes from 6am to 7am, and from 10pm to midnight. We therefore asked the public on these proposed changes.

We asked: "Would the proposed changes to the Comet's schedule impact your use of this service?". Responses to this question were:

- 36.5% (203) responded "Yes, I will use it more often than I currently do"
- 31.7% (176) responded "No, I will continue to use it as often as I currently do"
- 29.3% (163) responded "No, I will continue to not use it"
- 2.5% (14) responded "Yes, I will use it less often than I currently do"

We asked: “Would the proposed changes to the **Orbiter’s** schedule impact your use of this service?”. Responses to this question were:

- 38.8% (214) responded “Yes, I will use it more often than I currently do”
- 35.6% (196) responded “No, I will continue to use it as often as I currently do”
- 23.4% (129) responded “No, I will continue to not use it”
- 2.2% (12) responded “Yes, I will use it less often than I currently do”

We asked: “Would the proposed changes to the **Meteor’s** schedule impact your use of this service?”. Responses to this question were:

- 34.3% (190) responded “No, I will continue to not use it”
- 32.5% (180) responded “Yes, I will use it more often than I currently do”
- 31.6% (175) responded “No, I will continue to use it as often as I currently do”
- 1.6% (9) responded “Yes, I will use it less often than I currently do”

The survey results show a generally positive response to the proposed frequency increases for the Comet, Orbiter, and Meteor services. For those that answered “Yes, I will use it less often than I currently do” for the above three questions, we provided an opportunity for respondents to explain why they would use the service less. The open-text feedback from those who said they would use the services less reveals concerns that should inform implementation of the overall network:

- **Accessibility and walking distances:** Many respondents cited increased walking distances to stops as a barrier, especially for elderly and disabled users. Some mentioned walks of 15–30 minutes, which are not feasible for all users.
- **Loss of coverage:** Several comments referenced the removal of specific routes (e.g. Route 17, C1/C2), which would disconnect certain suburbs or reduce direct access to key destinations like Hamilton Hospital, Hillcrest High School, and Mental Health Services.
- **Shelter and safety:** Poor shelter infrastructure and lack of lighting were noted as deterrents, particularly in bad weather or early morning hours.
- **Confusing network design:** A few users described the system as difficult to navigate, especially for students or those unfamiliar with transfers.
- **Capacity and frequency concerns:** Some worry that reduced coverage or increased transfers will lead to overcrowding, especially for users with mobility aids or children.

While most respondents support the proposed frequency increases and expect to use the services more often, a significant minority—particularly those affected by route removals or increased walking distances—express concerns about accessibility, connectivity, and usability. These concerns are especially pronounced among vulnerable groups, including seniors, disabled users, and those with healthcare or school-related travel needs.

The recommendation is therefore to proceed with the proposed frequency enhancements for the Comet, Orbiter, and Meteor services, as they are broadly supported and align with goals for increased ridership and network efficiency. However, to ensure equity and usability, the following actions are recommended:

1. **Mitigate impacts of route removals:**
  - Consider alternative coverage options such as feeder services or demand-responsive transport.
2. **Improve accessibility and infrastructure:**
  - Ensure safe, well-lit walking routes to frequent corridors.
  - Upgrade shelters to provide protection from weather, especially in areas with longer walks.
3. **Enhance network clarity and support:**
  - Provide clear, user-friendly maps and signage, especially for transfer points.
  - Offer travel training or support materials for students and new users.

**Recommendation: Implement the simplified timetable for the Orbiter, Meteor, Comet, and a new Rototuna frequent service operating every 15 minutes from 7am to 10pm, and every 30 minutes from 6am to 7am, and from 10pm to midnight (should funding allow for the extension of operating hours).**

Regarding the proposed new Rototuna High Frequent service, we asked the public “If the proposed Rototuna high frequency service was introduced, would you use it?”. 59.6% (329) of respondents said ‘no’ while 40.4% (223) of respondents said ‘yes’. Those that answered ‘yes’, were then asked: “How often do you think you would use this service?”. Responses to this question were:

- 28.3% (63) said “Weekly”
- 20.2% (45) said “Monthly”
- 19.7% (44) said “Less often than monthly”
- 19.3% (43) said “Daily (excluding weekends)”
- 12.6% (28) said “Daily (including weekends)”

While a majority (59.6%) indicated they would not use the service, this likely reflects the fact that respondents may not live in the Rototuna area and therefore would not be expected to use this service. This is a common limitation in city-wide surveys when asking about geographically specific services. Among those who do expect to use the service, the usage intent is strong and diverse:

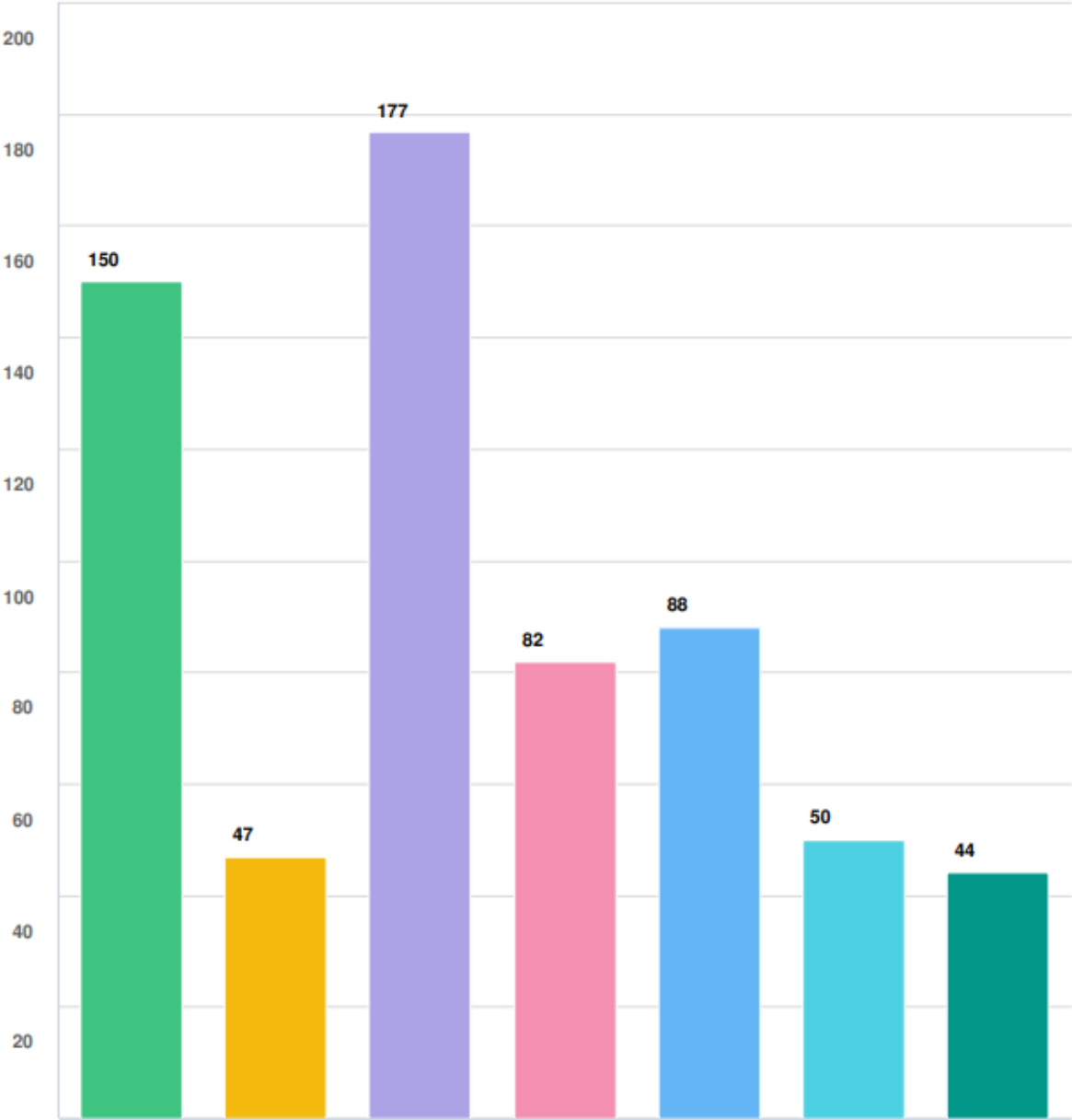
- Over 30% of potential users would use it daily, indicating strong commuter or regular travel demand.
- Another 48% would use it weekly or monthly, suggesting it would also serve occasional and discretionary trips (e.g. shopping, appointments, social visits).

This mix of high-frequency and moderate-frequency users supports the case for a reliable, frequent service that can accommodate both regular commuters and flexible users. Coupled with the success of other high frequent services in Hamilton, it is recommended that this new service be implemented.

**Recommendation: Implement the Rototuna High Frequent service.**

## 2.2 Coverage Services

We asked the public “What is your view on the proposed standard operating hours and frequency for **non-frequent bus services** (every 60 minutes, 7am to 9pm, seven days a week)?”. The figure below shows the responses.



**Question options**

- I support this change – it improves clarity and consistency
- I support it, but would prefer slightly longer or different hours
- I support it, but would prefer more frequent buses only during peak hours
- I support it, but would prefer more frequent buses all day
- I do not support this change – the frequency is too low
- I do not support this change – the hours don't meet my needs
- I'm not sure / I need more information

The strongest support (177 responses) was for the option: “I support it, but would prefer more frequent buses only during peak hours”. This suggests that while the proposed model is acceptable, many users feel hourly frequency is insufficient during busy times (e.g., school and work commutes). 150 respondents fully support the change as-is, valuing clarity and consistency in the network. 82 respondents want more frequent buses all day, indicating a desire for better service even outside peak hours. 88 respondents do not support the change due to low frequency, and 50 due to inadequate hours, showing that a significant minority (135) find the proposal too limiting. 47 respondents support the model but would prefer slightly longer or different hours, suggesting flexibility in start/end times could improve

satisfaction. 44 respondents were unsure or needed more information, highlighting a need for clearer communication about what the change means in practice.

We then asked the public “If you selected 'do not support' or 'unsure', please tell us why”. From the 145 responses, the feedback indicates that while consistency in service hours is appreciated, the proposed hourly frequency is widely viewed as insufficient, particularly during peak times. Many respondents said they would stop using the bus if they had to wait an hour, especially if they missed a connection. A 30-minute frequency during peak hours was widely suggested as a more acceptable standard. Additionally, regarding the operating hours, it was generally indicated that a 7am start time is too late for shift workers and early commuters and a 9pm finish time is too early for hospital workers, eventgoers and late afternoon/evening shift staff. Suggestions included starting at 6am and extending to 10pm.

The results indicate that while the proposed standard (hourly service from 7am–9pm, 7 days a week) is broadly acceptable, there is a strong preference for more nuanced service levels, particularly:

1. Increased frequency during peak hours to support commuters and students.
  - a. A 30-minute peak frequency is widely suggested as acceptable (**proposed to be implemented in 2028**)
2. Flexibility in operating hours to better serve early/late shift workers or weekend users.
  - a. A 6am or 6:30am start time is being suggested (**proposed to be implemented in 2028**)
  - b. A 10pm end time is being suggested (**proposed to be implemented on some services in 2037**)
3. Clearer communication to help users understand how the changes will affect their travel.

This feedback supports a tiered service model, where non-frequent routes maintain hourly service off-peak, but increase to 30- or 20-minute frequency during peak times, and where on-demand services or extended hours could fill remaining gaps.

## 2.2.1 Northeast

160 people provided feedback on the proposed changes to the northeast services.

Regarding the proposed changes to introduce the Rototuna high frequent service and make changes to the Chartwell, Flagstaff and Flagstaff North services, we asked the public “The proposal shows the removal of some services and the introduction of others. Which of the following options do you prefer?”. 76.5% (114) of respondents said they preferred to “Introduce the new Rototuna high frequent service and changes to the Chartwell, Flagstaff and Flagstaff North services” while 23.5% (35) said they preferred to “Keep the existing Rototuna and Rototuna Circular services”. We then asked the public “Do you have any feedback or suggestions about these proposed changes to services for Flagstaff and Rototuna?”. Key themes of their responses included:

- **Frequency and Coverage**
  - Strong support for increased frequency, especially during peak hours.
  - Concerns that hourly services (e.g., Chartwell) are insufficient, especially for areas like Queenwood.
- **School and Youth Access**
  - Multiple comments highlight the importance of direct routes to schools (e.g., Dio, St Joseph’s, HGHS).
  - Loss of specific services (e.g., Flagstaff via River Rd) could disrupt school commutes.
- **Route Directness and Travel Time**
  - Concerns that new routes may be less direct, increasing travel time and requiring longer walks.
  - Several users indicated they would stop using the bus if routes became slower or less convenient.
- **Accessibility and Safety**
  - Comments about long walking distances to new frequent routes (e.g., 20+ minutes in winter/summer conditions).

- Safety concerns in areas with poor infrastructure or long transfer times.
- **Connectivity to Key Destinations**
  - Requests to ensure services connect to Hamilton Hospital, Claudelands, and MADE shopping area.
  - Importance of timed connections to Comet and Orbiter for hospital workers.
- **Suburban Coverage**
  - Concerns about loss of coverage in suburban streets.

We then asked the public “If we introduce the new Rototuna high frequent service and changes to the Chartwell, Flagstaff and, Flagstaff North services, do you have any suggestions/feedback on how this can be improved?”. The feedback is largely constructive and supportive, with many respondents welcoming the high-frequency service. Key themes in the feedback include:

- **Frequency and Capacity**
  - Strong support for 15-minute frequencies during peak hours (7–9 AM, 3–5 PM).
  - Concerns about overcrowding, especially for school students (e.g., Rototuna High, Dio, Boys’ High).
  - Suggestions for assist buses or high frequency during school peaks.
  - Off-peak frequency could be reduced to 30–60 minutes to optimize resources.
- **School and Youth Access**
  - Many rely on services for school commutes; reliability and capacity are critical.
  - Requests for better coverage and timing for Dio, Boys’ High, and Rototuna High.
- **Route Design and Coverage**
  - Requests to:
    - Extend service to Waikato Hospital, near Hamilton Gardens, and Claudelands Event Centre.
    - Include Horsham Downs, Greenhill, and Callum Brae.
    - Avoid duplicating Orbiter routes—suggested parallel routing for broader coverage.
    - Simplify and streamline routes (e.g., avoid Lynden Court, use Hukanui Rd directly).
- **Connectivity and Integration**
  - Emphasis on timed transfers to Comet, Orbiter, and other key routes.
  - Support for Park & Ride options and express buses to the CBD.
  - Desire for reliable real-time tracking via apps or real time screens to reduce uncertainty.
- **Accessibility and Infrastructure**
  - Requests for:
    - More bus stops (e.g., between St Paul’s and Chartwell, Claudelands).
    - Shelters, seating, and natural shade at stops.
    - Smaller buses for local loops and narrow streets.
    - Electric buses and reduced wear on roads.
- **Urban Design, Efficiency and other suggestions**
  - Avoid terminating all routes in the CBD—enable cross-town travel.
  - Reduced off-peak fares for seniors.
  - Better service to the south of the CBD.

Regarding changes elsewhere in the northeast of Hamilton (Chartwell, Claudelands, Fairfield, Fairview etc.) we asked the public “the proposal shows the removal of some services and the introduction of others. Which of the following options do you prefer?”. 66% (93) of respondents said they preferred to “Introduce the changes to the Chartwell and Fairfield services” while 34% (48) of respondents said they preferred to “Keep the existing Claudelands service”. We then asked, “Do you have any feedback or suggestions about these proposed changes to services for Chartwell and Claudelands?”. Feedback included:

- Claudelands and Fairfield routes are seen as critical for students, workers, and pensioners.
- Hourly services on the coverage routes are generally viewed as insufficient, especially for work, school, and university commutes.
- Concerns about removal of stops (e.g., Fifth Ave), which would force users—especially those with disabilities—to walk further and cross busy intersections.

- Concerns about the overlap between Orbiter and Rototuna frequent routes on Hukanui Road, at the expense of reduce overall coverage.
- Suggestions to retain direct routes to key destinations like the University and Hamilton Gardens.
- Suggestion to extend a service to cross Anzac Parade bridge so people can have more direct access to Hamilton East (MADE).
- Request to keep the Hamilton Gardens service as part of the network.

We then asked, “If we introduce the changes to the Chartwell and Fairfield services, do you have any suggestions/feedback on how this can be improved?”. The feedback is largely constructive, with many respondents offering practical suggestions to improve frequency, accessibility, and route design. While some support the proposed changes, others express concerns about coverage gaps, loss of key stops, and impacts on vulnerable users. Overall, key themes identified include:

- Strong support for increased frequency, especially during peak hours. Suggestions for 15–30-minute intervals instead of hourly. More frequent services would encourage use by children, commuters, and elderly users.
- Concerns about school routes being removed or not timed well for early finishes.
- Requests to review services for Dio and Boys’ High students.
- Suggestions to:
  - Use existing infrastructure to expand coverage without new builds.
  - Improve connectivity between services (e.g., Fairfield, Rototuna, Orbiter).
  - Consider hub-based models or shuttle services to key destinations like Chartwell and Waikato Hospital.
- Enhance infrastructure and accessibility at stops.

While the recommendation will be to proceed with the proposed network changes, it is being recommended to increase the frequency of the coverage services in this area to operate at 30-minute frequencies in the peak hours, and 60-minute frequencies at off-peak.

**Recommendation: Proceed with the proposed network changes to the Northeast of Hamilton but increase the frequency and operating hours of the coverage services in the peak times.**

## 2.2.2 Southeast

171 people provided feedback on the proposed changes to the southeast services.

As part of the network changes to the southeast of Hamilton, we proposed to remove the Hamilton Gardens Uni service. We therefore asked the public “The proposal shows the removal of the Hamilton Gardens Uni service due to low patronage. Which of the following options do you prefer?”. 60.2% (97) of the respondents said that they preferred to “Keep the existing Hamilton Gardens Uni service” while 39.8% (64) of respondents said that they preferred to “Remove the existing Hamilton Gardens Uni service”. We then asked “If we kept the existing Hamilton Gardens Uni service, do you have any suggestions/feedback on how this can be improved?”. We received 66 responses to this question and the feedback is strongly supportive of retaining the service, with many respondents emphasizing its social value, accessibility, and potential for improvement. While some acknowledge low usage, most argue that the service is essential for specific groups and could be better utilized with targeted adjustments. Key themes from the feedback including:

- **School and Youth Access**
  - The service is used by students attending Berkley Intermediate, Hillcrest High, and Hamilton Girls’ High.
  - Parents expressed safety concerns about children walking longer distances, especially in poor weather or from Hayes Paddock.
- **Elderly and Mobility Needs**

- The route serves elderly residents and those with mobility impairments, particularly in Hayes Paddock and Graham Street. Removing the service would isolate vulnerable users who cannot walk to Grey Street or afford alternative transport.
- **Access to Hamilton Gardens (Mixed views):**
  - Some support for removing the Gardens service due to low usage and delays.
  - Others argue the Gardens are a major tourist destination and should remain accessible via public transport.
  - Suggestions include seasonal service, weekend-only trips, or on-demand options.
- **University Connectivity**
  - Strong support for maintaining or improving access to the University.
  - Suggestions to:
    - Reroute to avoid Gardens during peak hours.
    - Promote the service to students and staff to increase uptake.
- **Frequency and Scheduling**
  - Requests for:
    - Half-hourly service, especially during peak times.
    - Fewer trips during off-peak hours.
    - Better alignment with other routes (e.g., staggered timing with Route 10).
    - Clearer signage and timetables at stops.
- **Promotion and Awareness**
  - Calls for better advertising of the service, including themed buses or partnerships with Hamilton Gardens.
  - Ideas for tourism-focused shuttles or event-based services (e.g., Gourmet in the Gardens, Arts Festival).

To improve the Hamilton Gardens Uni service while retaining its value, the feedback suggests:

- Maintain core service, especially for Hayes Paddock, school students, and elderly users.
- Reroute or reduce Gardens trips, focusing on peak commuter needs.
- Increase frequency during peak hours, reduce during off-peak.
- Use smaller buses and explore on-demand or seasonal options.
- Promote the service to tourists, students, and residents.
- Improve infrastructure, signage, and integration with other routes.

Considering the above feedback, and the importance of the Hamilton Gardens to Hamilton, it is WRC's recommendation to retain the Hamilton Gardens Uni service in response to strong community support, particularly from parents, students, and elderly residents who rely on it for safe and accessible transport. However, to address concerns around low patronage and delays, it is proposed that the service is refined and that the route operates as an express service to and from Hamilton Gardens only—removing the University leg—to better serve key user groups and the Hamilton Gardens destination while improving efficiency and reliability.

The proposed express route will operate at the same frequency of all other coverage routes – 30-minutes during the peak and 60-minutes during the off-peak. The performance of the service will be continually monitored over the coming years, and effort will be made to better promote the service. While the service is intended to remain in the 2037 Hamilton network, this may depend on its performance.

**Recommendation: Retain the Hamilton Gardens service as part of both the 2028 and 2037 networks but on an express routing.**

**Recommendation: Proceed with the proposed network changes to the Southeast of Hamilton (with the inclusion of the Hamilton Gardens service) but increase the frequency and operating hours of the coverage services in the peak times.**

## 2.2.3 Northwest

144 people provided feedback on the proposed changes to the northwest services.

The key change to coverage services in the northwest is reduced frequency of all the coverage services to hourly and the combination of the existing Pukete and Te Rapa services to one new 'Te Rapa' service. We asked the public "The proposal shows the removal of some services and the introduction of others. Which of the following options do you prefer?". 57.9% (81) of the respondents said to "Introduce the new 'Te Rapa' service" while 42.1% (59) of the respondents said to "Keep the existing Pukete and Te Rapa services". For those that responded to keep the existing Pukete and Te Rapa services, we then asked "If we kept the existing Pukete and Te Rapa services, do you have any suggestions/feedback on how these can be improved?". Key themes from the open-ended responses included:

- Support to maintain the existing coverage. Many respondents expressed satisfaction with the current Pukete and Te Rapa services, citing convenience, directness, and proximity to schools and homes. There is concern that combining the routes would reduce accessibility, especially for areas like Pukete, Maeroa, and St Andrews.
- Frequency and Peak time demand. Some comments emphasized the need for higher frequency during peak school and work hours, with suggestions for 15–30-minute intervals in the morning and afternoon. Overcrowding during school times was a recurring issue, with some users reporting buses passing them by due to being full.
- School and Youth Accessibility. Respondents noted that the current services are heavily used by school students, including those attending Maeroa Intermediate, HGHS, HBHS, Sacred Heart, and St John's College. Parents expressed concern about safety, especially if students are forced to transfer or walk longer distances, including through poorly lit or unsafe areas.
- Walking distance and accessibility. Several respondents noted that alternative routes (e.g. Comet or Orbiter) would require long walks (15–30 minutes), which are not feasible for children, elderly, or disabled users. There is concern that reduced coverage would push users back into cars, undermining public transport goals.

We then asked the public "If we introduce the new 'Te Rapa' service, do you have any suggestions/feedback on how this can be improved?". Responses re-iterated some of the key themes mentioned above while new themes were also introduced, namely:

- **Frequency and Peak-Time Demand**
  - A strong theme across responses is the need for greater frequency, especially during peak hours (6–9am and 2:30–6pm).
  - Suggestions included:
    - 30-minute or 45-minute intervals instead of hourly
    - More buses during school and work commute times
- **School and Youth Accessibility**
  - Concerns were raised about overcrowding, especially for school students who currently rely on both Te Rapa and Pukete services.
  - Respondents questioned how a single hourly service could accommodate existing demand.
- **Stop Placement and Infrastructure**
  - Several comments focused on the importance of maintaining key stops (e.g. Mitcham Ave, Garnett Ave) and ensuring safe, sheltered, and accessible transfer points.
  - Lack of infrastructure (e.g. shelters, crossings) was seen as a barrier to use, especially in poor weather.
- **Connectivity and Integration**
  - Respondents emphasized the need for seamless transfers to high-frequency routes like the Comet and Orbiter.
  - Suggestions included mini transfer hubs, timed connections, and better signage.

The feedback on the proposed new Te Rapa service highlights several key themes: a strong desire for increased frequency, especially during peak hours; concerns about overcrowding, particularly for

school students; and the need for better infrastructure at stops and transfer points. Respondents also emphasized the importance of safe, accessible connections to high-frequency routes. These insights align closely with the goals of the Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan, which prioritizes:

- Growing patronage in urban areas
- Improving access and connectivity
- Delivering more frequent and reliable services
- Supporting carbon neutrality and mode shift

We also asked the public “Do you have any feedback or suggestions about these proposed changes to services for Frankton and Hamilton West?”. Key themes from the feedback (27 responses, 8 of which said there would be no impact to them) were similar to the feedback above:

- **Concerns about accessibility**
  - Frankton is described as a busy area needing better coverage, especially for schools.
  - Grandview Heights and Pukete residents are worried about long walks to high-frequency routes, especially uphill or in poor weather.
  - Mobility issues were raised, with some users unable to walk to alternative stops.
- **Concerns about route changes**
  - Requests to reincarnate Rifle Range Road service and maintain existing routes.
  - Concerns about combining Te Rapa and Pukete services, which could lead to overcrowding and longer travel times.
- **Suggestions for improvement**
  - Add digital bus timetables at stops.
  - Extend routes (e.g., up Aberdeen Drive).
  - Improve connections for train commuters.
  - Maintain a mix of frequent and non-frequent routes for broader coverage.

Lastly, we asked “If we introduce the new network, do you have any suggestions/feedback on how this can be improved?”. The feedback is largely constructive, with many respondents offering practical suggestions to improve coverage, accessibility, frequency, and safety. A few responses expressed concerns or limitations, while others were neutral or not applicable. Overall themes include:

- **Service Hours and Frequency**
  - Later service hours requested, especially for hospital workers finishing late (e.g., 11:20 PM).
    - Opposing views: one respondent felt extending hours past 10 PM is unsafe for drivers.
  - Requests for non-frequent routes to run every 30 minutes instead of hourly.
  - Suggestions for 45-minute cycles and weekend/daytime services to destinations like Hamilton Zoo and Waiwhakareke Regional Park.
- **Route Adjustments**
  - Suggestions to reroute the Meteor through Bartholomew and Hyde Ave for better coverage.
  - Proposed changes to Orbiter ACW to serve industrial areas more safely and effectively.
  - Requests to avoid unnecessary detours to Frankton Train Station unless timed with train arrivals/departures.
  - Suggestions to serve Te Kowhai
  - Suggestion to not send every Dinsdale service to the Frankton Train Station, only trips that align with train times.
- **Accessibility and Infrastructure**
  - Emphasis on wheelchair accessibility and concerns about buses that can’t accommodate power chairs.
  - Requests for more bus shelters at key stops.
  - Highlighted safety issues with walking routes lacking footpaths or crossing busy roads.
- **Integration and Connectivity**
  - Desire for clear transfer points between local and high-frequency services.
  - Support for Park & Ride concepts with integrated ticketing.
  - Requests for bus lanes or T2 lanes to improve speed and reliability.

While the recommendation will be to proceed with the proposed network changes, it is being recommended to increase the frequency of the coverage services in this area, at least during the peak hours, to operate at 30-minute frequencies. For the Dinsdale/University service, it is also recommended to only divert trips to the Frankton Train Station if they align with Te Huia train times (i.e. not every trip).

**Recommendation: Proceed with the proposed network changes to the Northwest of Hamilton but increase the frequency and operating hours of the coverage services in the peak times.**

**Recommendation: to only divert specific trips on the Dinsdale/Uni service to the Frankton Train Station that align with the train times.**

## 2.2.4 Southwest

124 people provided feedback on the proposed changes to the southwest services.

For the proposed changes in the southwest of Hamilton, we asked the public “The proposal shows changes to the southwest Hamilton network. Which of the following options do you prefer?”. 57.8% (67) of respondents preferred to “Introduce the new southwest network” while 42.2% (49) of respondents preferred to “Keep the existing southwest network”. Regarding these changes, we then asked “Do you have any feedback or suggestions about these proposed changes to services for Hamilton West?”. While a majority supported the new southwest network, the open-ended feedback reveals significant concerns about accessibility, route efficiency, and service reliability. Many respondents are worried about longer travel times, loss of direct connections, and impacts on vulnerable groups such as school students, hospital workers, and people with disabilities. Key themes identified in the feedback include (25 responses):

- **Travel Time and Route Efficiency**
  - Concerns that the Fitzroy loop will result in longer travel times, especially if it operates one-way.
  - Users fear added walking time and multi-bus transfers will discourage use, particularly in poor weather.
  - Some questioned the logic of merging services, which may reduce convenience and increase complexity.
- **Access to Waikato Hospital**
  - Strong feedback to retain direct access to the hospital via Comet and Fitzroy routes (which is proposed to remain in the short term)
  - Hospital staff and patients rely on timely and direct services, and changes could disrupt commutes.
- **School and Youth Access**
  - The Orbiter and other routes are heavily used by Fraser High and other school students.
  - Removing or rerouting services could limit access from areas like Dinsdale, Western Heights, and Grandview Heights.
- **Accessibility and Equity**
  - Concerns about longer walks to bus stops, especially for people with disabilities or mobility challenges.
  - Areas like Bremworth, Queens Ave, and Higgins Rd may lose coverage, forcing users to walk 20+ minutes.
- **Service Frequency and Timing**
  - Requests for more frequent services, especially during peak hours.
  - Criticism of hourly services and late start times (e.g., 7 AM), which don’t suit shift workers or early commuters.
  - Suggestions to maintain 30-minute intervals and avoid reducing peak-time options.
- **Route Retention and Integration**
  - Requests to retain existing Orbiter and Dinsdale routes due to their reliability and directness (which is proposed in the short term)
  - Desire for better central city access and more stops for high-frequency services.

We then asked the community “If we introduce the new network, do you have any suggestions/feedback on how this can be improved?”. Feedback was similar to that mentioned above with the key theme’s being (34 responses):

- **Frequency and Timetabling**
  - Strong support for higher frequency, especially during peak hours.
  - Suggestions to align services with flight times at the airport and school schedules.
- **Route Design and Coverage**, requests to:
  - Extend coverage to Grandview Heights, Dixon Heights, Te Inuwai Park, and Peacocks.
  - Add stops on Rifle Range Road, Lake Crescent, and near Te Huia railway station.
  - Consider a Southwest circular route linking Glenview Shopping Centre and the hospital.
- **School and Youth Access**
  - Concerns about overcrowded buses during school peaks.
  - Requests for separate school services to reduce disruption for other passengers.
  - Emphasis on maintaining safe and reliable access for students using Orbiter and Meteor.
- **Accessibility and Infrastructure**
  - Feedback from users with mobility challenges requesting: Direct access to Glenview Medical and Waikato Hospital, and avoidance of transfers and long walks.
- **Integration and Reliability**, desire for:
  - Reliable real-time tracking via apps.
  - Better transfer coordination between services (e.g., Comet, Fitzroy).
  - Clearer maps and route information, especially for Orbiter changes.

To focus in on the proposed changes to the Comet and Fitzroy routes in the Glenview and Melville area we asked “The proposal shows changes to the service routes in Glenview and Melville. Which of the following options do you prefer?”. 55.9% (57) of respondents said they preferred to “Introduce the new Glenview and Melville service routes” while 44.1% (45) of respondents said they preferred to “Keep the existing Glenview and Melville service routes”. We then asked respondents if they “have any feedback or suggestions about these proposed changes to services for Glenview and Melville?”. While a slight majority supported the proposed changes, the open-ended feedback reveals strong concerns about reduced frequency, longer travel times, and loss of direct access. Many respondents feel the changes could negatively impact daily commutes, especially for school students, hospital workers, and those in less central areas. Feedback themes include (14 responses):

- **Frequency and Reliability**
  - Widespread concern about the hourly frequency of the proposed Fitzroy route.
  - Requests to retain 30-minute intervals, especially during peak times.
- **Route Efficiency and Travel Time**
  - Merging routes into a single Fitzroy loop is viewed as inefficient. Longer travel times and indirect routing reduce appeal.
- **Access to Key Destinations**
  - Hospital access is a recurring concern.
  - Loss of direct connections to the CBD and other services is seen as a barrier.
- **School and Youth Access**
  - Reduced frequency and longer routes could disrupt school commutes.
  - Peak-time service is essential for students in Glenview, Melville, Deanwell, and Mahoe.
- **Accessibility and Equity**
  - Concerns about longer walks to bus stops, especially in poor weather.
  - Emphasis on maintaining coverage within 15–20 minutes walking distance.

Lastly, we asked “If we introduce the new service routes, do you have any suggestions/feedback on how this can be improved?”. The feedback is generally positive and constructive, with several respondents expressing support for the proposed changes. However, there are specific suggestions aimed at improving frequency, accessibility, infrastructure, and clarity. This feedback (16 responses) included the below key themes:

- **Frequency and Service Hours**
  - Support for higher frequency, especially during peak hours.
  - Suggestions for 45-minute cycles and late-night services (e.g., 11:30 PM for hospital staff).
  - Desire for extended service hours, especially for shift workers.
- **Access to Key Destinations**
  - Emphasis on improving access to Waikato Hospital due to parking challenges.
  - Suggestions to extend Comet to Te Inuwai Park, Dixon Heights, and Pukete.
  - Positive feedback on improved access to Glenview Shopping Centre.
  - Have a new service run to the airport
- **Vehicle Type and Efficiency**
  - Suggestions to use smaller, more frequent buses that don't require HT licences. Benefits include better access to narrow streets, reduced road wear, and potential for electric vehicles. Larger buses could be reserved for cross-town and circular routes.
- **Infrastructure and Clarity**, Requests for:
  - Clear signage at bus stops with large fonts and accurate wait times.
  - Removal of unnecessary detours (e.g., Norrie Street loop)(which is proposed)
  - More direct routing to simplify the network and improve usability.
- **Affordability and Uptake**
  - One respondent highlighted the importance of keeping fares affordable to ensure high usage and avoid underutilization of services.

While the recommendation is to proceed with the proposed network changes, it is being recommended to increase the frequency of the coverage services in this area, at least during the peak hours, to operate at 30-minute frequencies and to start the coverage services earlier.

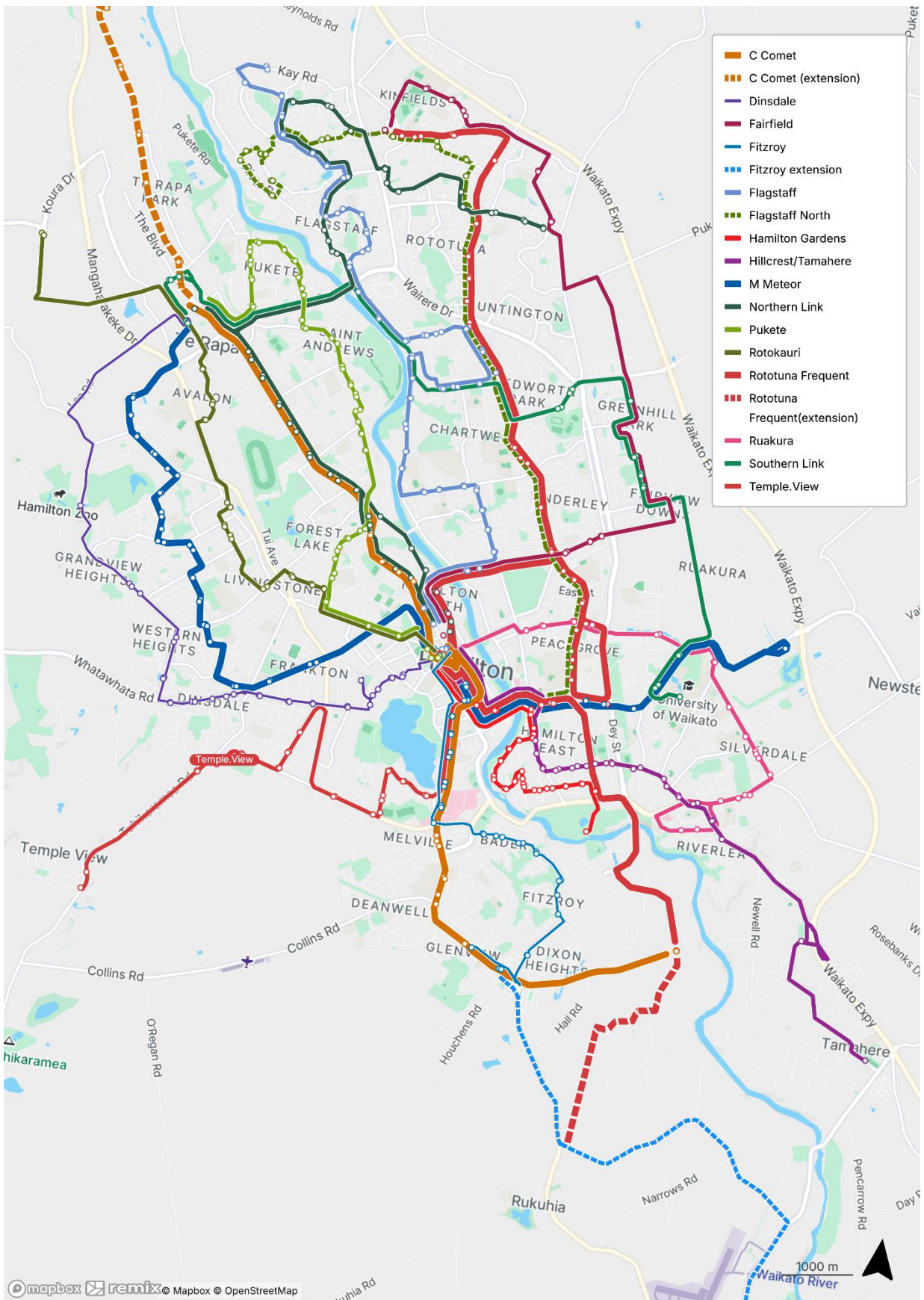
**It is being recommended to reconsider the start/end location of the Fitzroy service so that the Glenview route into Hamilton isn't unnecessarily long. It is also recommended to re-name to Fitzroy route that travels via Deanwell to a more relevant name.**

**Recommendation: Proceed with the proposed network changes to the Southwest of Hamilton but increase the frequency and operating hours of the coverage services in the peak times.**

## 2.3 Long Term

In the medium and longer term, we are proposing options that can respond to Hamilton's growth in different ways. By providing medium-to-longer term options that align with our longer-term public transport vision and aspirations for the city, future decision-makers can balance the needs of growing and changing populations with fiscal demands of the day. These options provide for more frequent and direct services in some areas, while maintaining coverage of services in other areas.

In the longer term, we intend to continue our shift to more and improved high-frequency services. This will be achieved by increasing the frequency of existing services (if and where possible) such as the Comet, Meteor and Rototuna high frequent service to 10 minutes – these will become 'rapid' services. Some of these services will also be extended to service new growth cells such as Peacocke. We also intend to implement two new high frequent services and remove the Orbiter service. These will be the 'Northern Link' and the 'Southern Link'. The future network can be seen in the image below. Implementing this vision will require a significant increase in funding and so all changes to services are subject to funding decisions, and more detailed consultation, closer to the time.



**Figure 5. 2037 longer-term option network**

Regarding these plans, we asked the public to indicate which option they preferred, 63.8% (315) of respondents said they prefer to “keep the Orbiter within the high-frequency network” while 36.2% (179) of respondents said they prefer to “Remove the Orbiter and introducing a Northern and Southern Link into the high-frequency network”.

We then asked “Do you have any feedback or comments you would like to make on the long-term plan for this area?”. From the 278 responses, the feedback reflects a high level of engagement, with a mix of support, concern, and constructive suggestions. While many respondents appreciate the ambition and direction of the long-term plan, there are strong concerns about reduced coverage, loss of key routes, and accessibility impacts, particularly for vulnerable users and key destinations like the hospital, university, and Hamilton Gardens. The key themes from the feedback include:

- **Orbiter Route Removal**
  - Widespread opposition to removing the Orbiter.
  - Seen as a critical connector for hospital, university, schools, and shopping centres (in particular, connecting the south and southwest of Hamilton to East Hamilton)
  - Concerns about increased transfers, longer travel times, and reduced accessibility for elderly, disabled, and students.
- **Hospital Access**
  - Strong demand for more direct, frequent services to Waikato Hospital (not just the Comet).
  - Hospital staff, patients, and visitors rely on public transport due to limited parking.
  - Suggestions to retain or reroute services to maintain hospital connectivity.
- **School and Youth Access**
  - Concerns about loss of direct school routes, especially for students in Pukete, Hayes Paddock, Flagstaff, and Hillcrest.
  - Requests for peak-time frequency increases and safe walking distances.
- **Hamilton Airport Connection**
  - Broad support for introducing a bus service to the airport.
  - Seen as essential for international visitors, workers, and regional connectivity.
  - Suggestions for direct, express-style service or integration with existing routes.
  - Support to bring forward the implementation of this service.
- **Coverage and Accessibility**
  - Many respondents noted reduced coverage in areas like Hayes Paddock, Riverlea, Glenview, Hillcrest, and Dinsdale.
  - Concerns about long walks to bus stops, especially for elderly and disabled users.
  - Requests for smaller, more frequent buses and/or on-demand services to fill coverage gaps.
- **Frequency and Integration**
  - Support for high-frequency corridors, but concern about low-frequency coverage routes.
  - Suggestions to:
    - Maintain 30-minute minimum frequency.
    - Improve transfer coordination and real-time tracking.
    - Ensure fare integration across transfers.
- **Infrastructure and Design**, calls for:
  - Bus lanes, especially in congested areas.
  - Shelters and safe crossings at stops.
  - Bike racks and multi-modal integration.
  - Better signage and route clarity.
- **Promotion and Engagement**, suggestions to:
  - Promote services to students, hospital staff, and tourists.
  - Use seasonal or event-based services (e.g., to Hamilton Gardens).
  - Improve public understanding of changes and rationale.

We then asked the community “Are there any new or current destinations that the Hamilton urban bus network must reach to make it work for you?”. From the 256 responses, the responses show strong community interest in ensuring the network reaches key destinations, especially those related to healthcare, education, transport hubs, and growing suburbs. Many respondents also emphasized the importance of frequency, accessibility, and direct connections. Key destinations identified include:

- **Waikato Hospital**
  - Most frequently mentioned destination.

- Requests for direct, frequent services from all parts of the city, especially from: Dinsdale, Nawton, Flagstaff, Chartwell, Riverlea, and Hamilton East.
- Suggestions for park-and-ride options and shift-aligned services for hospital staff.
- **University of Waikato & Schools**, strong demand for better access from:
  - Hamilton East, Hillcrest, Flagstaff, Rototuna, and Hayes Paddock.
  - Specific schools mentioned: Dio, Boys’ High, Berkley Intermediate, Hillcrest High, St Joseph’s.
  - Requests for school-time frequency increases and safe walking distances.
- **Hamilton Airport**
  - Widely supported as a new essential destination.
  - Seen as critical for:
    - Tourists, workers, and international visitors.
    - Reducing reliance on expensive taxis and limited parking.
  - Suggestions for direct express-style services and integration with Te Huia train.
- **Frankton & Rotokauri Train Stations**
  - Requests for better bus-train integration, especially for Te Huia passengers.
  - Need for timed connections and safe pedestrian access.
- **Shopping Centres**
  - Frequent mentions of: The Base, Chartwell Mall, Centre Place, Glenview Mall.
  - Desire for direct and frequent services, especially from outer suburbs.
- **Parks & Recreation**
  - Requests for access to: Hamilton Gardens, Claudelands Event Centre, Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park, Hamilton Zoo, Waterworld.
  - Suggestions for weekend and event-based services.
- **Suburbs & Growth Areas**
  - Areas identified as underserved or needing better coverage: Hayes Paddock, Riverlea, Glenview, Hillcrest, Dinsdale, Rototuna North, Huntington, Te Kowhai, Tamahere, Matangi, Tauwhare, Fairview Downs, Western Heights, Greenhill Park, Maeroa, Avalon.

Based on the feedback received and the strategic direction established through the PT Pathways project, we are recommending proceeding with the proposed long-term public transport network for Hamilton. This network has been developed through detailed and thorough planning aligned with best practice and reflects the city's aspirations for a more connected, frequent, and sustainable transport system. However, in response to concerns—particularly around the removal of the Orbiter and its impact on southwest Hamilton—we acknowledge the need for further analysis to ensure accessibility is not compromised. To help bridge coverage gaps and support connectivity in the short term, we are proposing to introduce on-demand services. These flexible options can provide access in areas with reduced fixed-route coverage and help ease the transition to the long-term network.

**Recommendation: only divert trips that aligns with the Te Huia train times to the Frankton Station on the Dinsdale service.**

**Recommendation: Proceed with the overall long-term network plan for the city.**

**Recommendation: Determine how on-demand will operate alongside the proposed network plan.**

**Recommendation: Increase coverage service frequencies to 30 minutes in the peak.**

**Recommendation: Considering extending some services to areas outside of the Hamilton boundary including Te Kowhai, Matangi and Tauwhare** (to be scoped, determined, and consulted on in the coming years).

We then asked the public “Do you have any concerns about the planned shift towards more high-frequency services or about making transfers between services?”. From the 282 responses, the feedback reveals a mixed response. While many support the concept of high-frequency services, there

are widespread concerns about the practical impacts of increased transfers, reduced coverage, and accessibility challenges, particularly for vulnerable users. Key themes include:

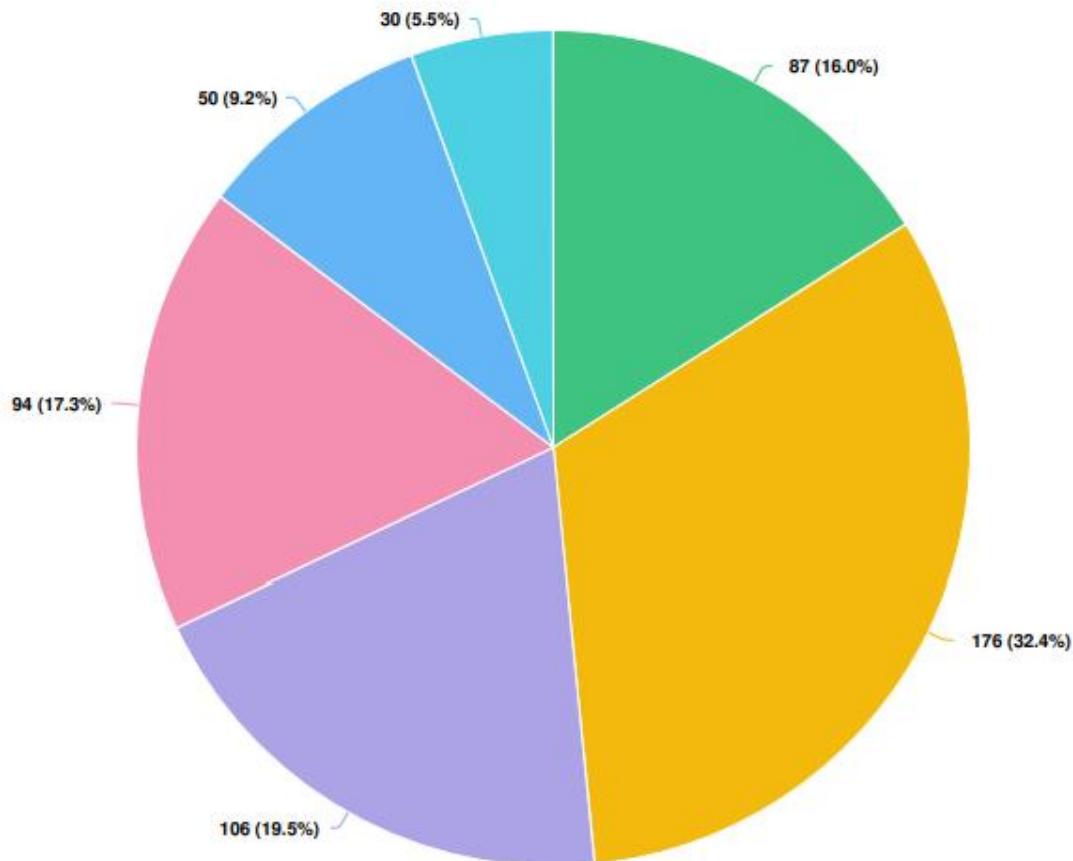
- **Transfers: Convenience, Reliability, Infrastructure & Safety**
  - Top concern: Transfers add complexity, especially when:
    - Services are not reliably timed.
    - Wait times are long (especially for low-frequency routes).
    - Transfers occur in unsafe or poorly sheltered locations.
    - *"I suppose I am less worried about transfers if the connecting services are ALL high frequency."*
  - Many said they would stop using the bus if forced to transfer, especially for short or local trips.
  - Parents and elderly users expressed concern about children or vulnerable people needing to transfer, particularly in the CBD.
  - *"Transfer hubs are often unsafe"*
  - *"Can we support accessible footpath and covered bus stops for bus users that have to walk/roll a further distance"*
- **Coverage vs Frequency**
  - Many respondents felt the shift to high-frequency services comes at the expense of local coverage.
  - Concerns that longer walks to stops (especially in hilly or unsafe areas) will discourage use.
  - Requests to retain key routes (e.g., Orbiter, Route 17) that currently provide direct access to schools, hospitals, key destinations and shopping centres.
  - *"high frequency is better"*
  - *"It is exactly the right direction. Good work on this."*
  - *"I have no concerns. This is a fantastic model that has worked very well in Wellington and Auckland, and I am really looking forward to these changes being introduced in Hamilton."*
  - *"Having transfers between services would complicate things. It would probably result in me not using public transport"*
- **Equity and Accessibility**
  - Strong concerns from:
    - Elderly and disabled users about longer walking distances and the physical burden of transfers.
    - Low-income communities who rely on direct, affordable access to essential services.
  - Calls for accessible infrastructure at transfer points (shelters, lighting, real-time info).
- **Key Destinations at Risk**
  - Many noted that the proposed changes reduce direct access to:
    - Waikato Hospital
    - University of Waikato
    - Schools
    - Hamilton Gardens
  - These destinations are seen as essential and should remain directly connected.
  - *"Further consideration for southeast and southwest access."*
  - *"I also have the concern for the West side of Hamilton not getting that much attention in the terms of route access to the city"*
- **Timing and Coordination**
  - Concerns about:
    - Missed connections due to delays.
    - Increased total travel time due to transfers.
    - Lack of real-time information to support seamless journeys.
  - Suggestions for:
    - Timed transfers and transfer guarantees.
    - Fare integration to avoid paying multiple fares for one journey.
  - *"Timing - make sure that all the buses are not leaving at same time from transport Centre so you can change services."*
- **Vehicle Type and Service Design**

- Support for:
  - Smaller buses on local or low-demand routes.
  - Express services during peak times.
- Requests to retain some direct routes even if less frequent.

Feedback on the shift toward high-frequency services and increased transfers highlights the need for well-designed infrastructure at transfer points, including shelters, lighting, and real-time information to ensure comfort and safety. Many respondents expressed concern about long wait times, missed connections, and increased travel complexity, particularly for elderly, disabled, and school-aged users. To support this transition, it will be essential to coordinate services effectively, minimize transfer burdens through timed connections and fare integration, and invest in clear, proactive communication to help shift public perceptions around transfers and safety at hubs. Building trust in the reliability and convenience of transfers will be key to encouraging uptake and maintaining accessibility.

## 2.4 On Demand

To plug any gaps in the network, on-demand services are being considered. We therefore asked the public “If your area is no longer directly served by a regular bus route, would you consider using an on-demand public transport service instead?”. Below are the results from 543 responses.



### Question options

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, if it's easy to book and affordable
- Maybe, I'd need more information
- No, I prefer regular scheduled services
- No, it wouldn't meet my needs
- I'm not sure

The results show that 48.4% of respondents are open to using on-demand services, either enthusiastically or conditionally. An additional 19.5% are undecided but curious, indicating that over two-thirds of respondents (67.9%) could be receptive to on-demand public transport if it is well-designed, affordable, and clearly explained.

However, 26.5% of respondents expressed reservations or outright opposition, preferring traditional scheduled services or doubting that on-demand would meet their needs. This highlights the importance of not fully replacing fixed routes, especially in areas with high dependency or limited digital access.

The survey results show that nearly half of respondents are open to using on-demand public transport, particularly if it is easy to book and affordable. To successfully introduce on-demand services as a way to plug gaps in the network, it will be important to ensure the service is accessible, reliable, and well-communicated. This includes offering multiple booking options, maintaining affordable fares, and providing clear information about how the service works. Piloting on-demand in targeted areas (if possible), especially those losing fixed-route coverage, will help build trust and allow for refinement. Importantly, on-demand should be integrated with the wider network, with free or discounted transfers and safe, visible pickup points. Ongoing feedback and monitoring will be essential to ensure the service meets community needs and complements the shift toward a more frequent, direct network.

In light of community concerns about reduced coverage services and to support the transition to a more frequent and direct public transport network, Waikato Regional Council proposes to introduce on-demand public transport services in the short term. This flexible option will help bridge gaps in the network, particularly in areas no longer served by regular routes, and provide a more responsive solution for users with diverse travel needs. Introducing on-demand services will support accessibility, maintain equity, and ease the transition toward a more efficient and connected network.

**Recommendation: to introduce on-demand service options as an integral component of both the 2028 and the 2037 bus networks.**

## 3 Final Network

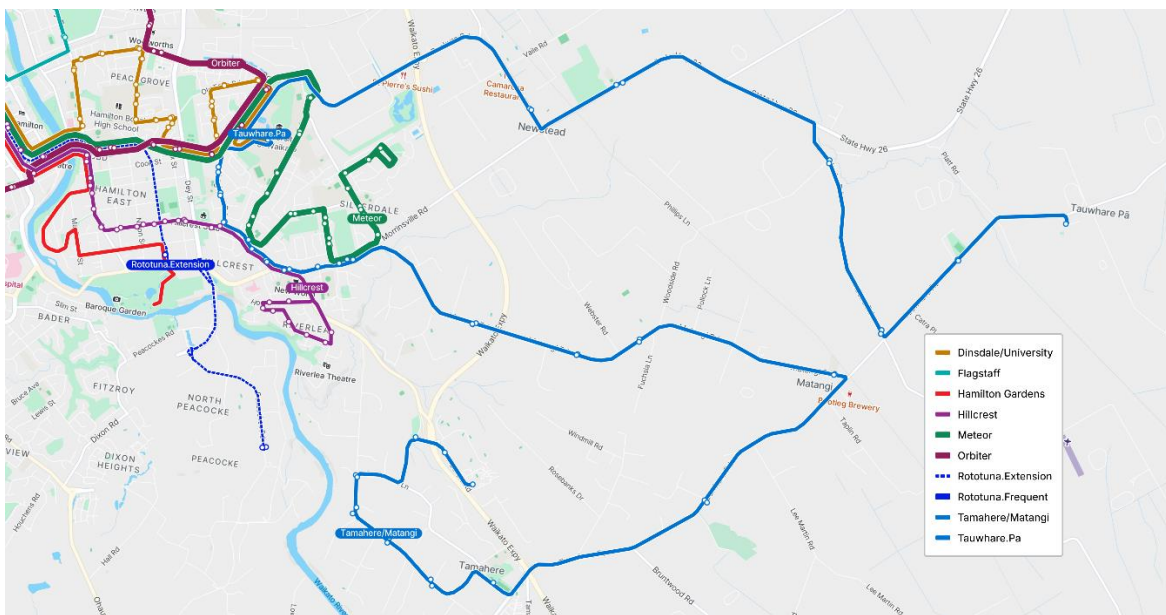
### 3.1 Short Term

The short term (2028) changes for Hamilton are city-wide, encompassing many changes as we shift to a more direct and frequent bus network in the city. Key changes to the network include:

1. The introduction of a new high frequent service – the Rototuna High Frequent, connecting Rototuna and Hamilton north-east with the city centre
  - a. The introduction of this service removes the Claudelands, Rototuna and Rototuna Circular services from the network. The proposed Chartwell and Fairfield services have undergone relatively significant route changes to replace some of these services too.
2. The combining of the Te Rapa and Pukete services to have one 'Te Rapa' service
3. The combining of the Dinsdale and University services to have one 'Dinsdale/Uni' service
4. Almost all services within the city have some route change, these include (but are not limited to)
  - a. The routing of the Dinsdale/Uni service into the Frankton railway station (to align with train arrival/departure times)
  - b. The Hamilton Gardens service is a targeted service to the Hamilton Gardens and back (via Hayes Common) and no longer travels to Hillcrest, the University or the Hamilton Park Cemetery.
  - c. The Comet service no longer splits into two legs but rather remains on SH3 to Glenview. Instead, the Fitzroy service provides the coverage service for Fitzroy, Glenview, Deanwell, and Melville areas.

- d. The Orbiter is no longer one continuous loop but rather starts at the Base shopping centre and terminates at the Rotokauri Transport Hub (and vice versa).

There is also a simplified and consistent timetable based on service route classifications. These times, and the classifications, for both the short term and long term can be found in **table 1** and **table 2** in the section below. **Figures 6** and **7** below show the Hamilton 2028 network (the former figure zooming in one two services that are cut out of the larger network figure). Acknowledging that there is a reduction in the overall coverage services, on-demand services are proposed to operate alongside the bus network in Hamilton. On-demand transport services enhance the bus network by providing flexible, responsive travel options that fill gaps in coverage and improve access to public transport. They work alongside fixed-route buses by serving areas with lower demand, connecting passengers to main corridors, and extending service hours where traditional routes may not be viable. This integrated approach helps create a more inclusive, efficient, and user-focused transport system. This work is still being scoped but will feed into the bus contract extension renewal tender documents.



**Figure6. Hamilton network - 2028 (short term)**

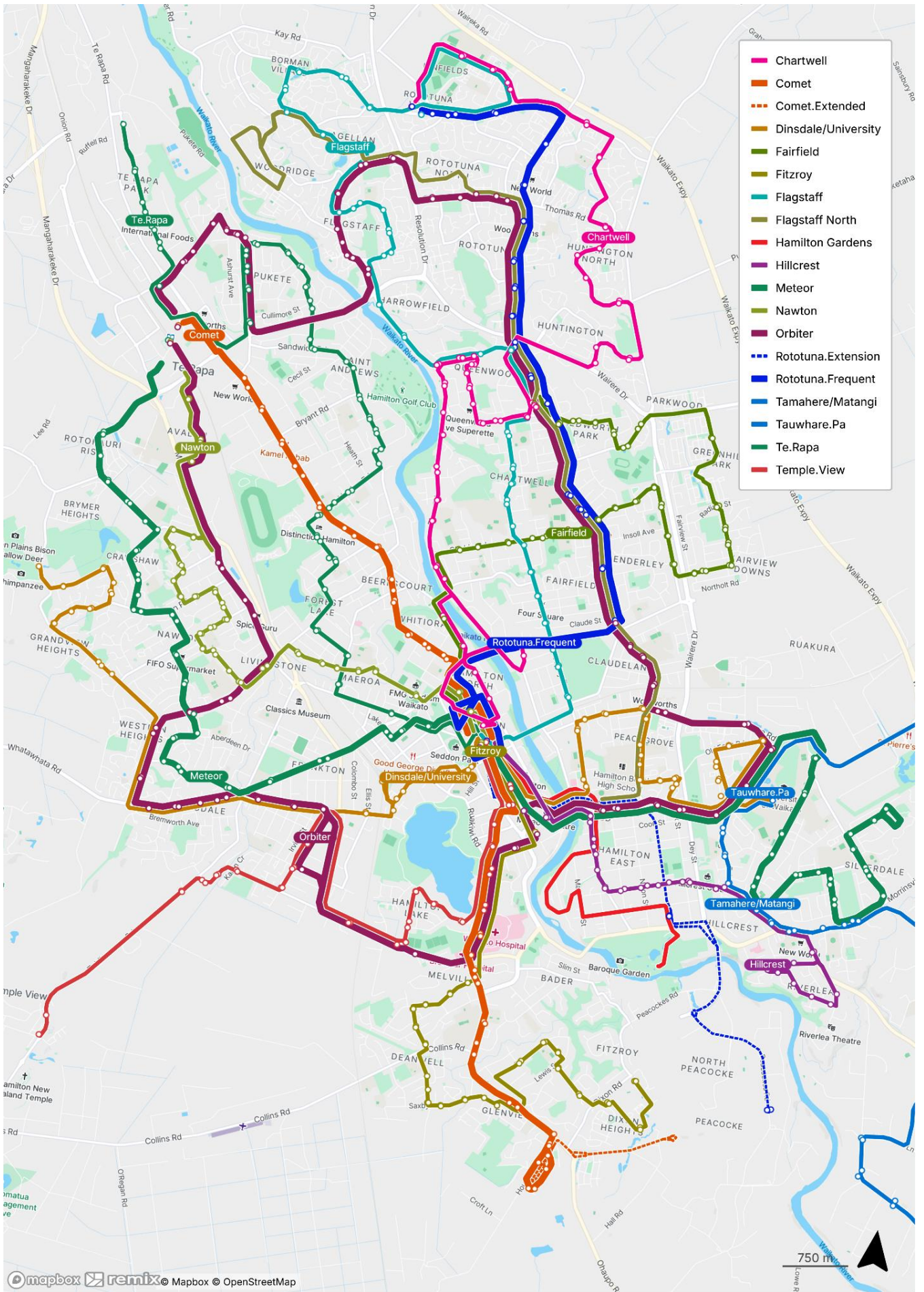


Figure 7. Hamilton network - 2028 (short term)

### 3.1.1 Hamilton Service Frequencies

Below are the indicative frequencies of the services within Hamilton for both the short term and the long term. Frequencies have been based on their route classifications that were determined in the PT Pathways projects, with some adjustments.

**Table 1. Hamilton service route classifications (based on PT Pathways).**

	Peak span (7 days)	Peak Frequency (min)	Off-Peak Span (7 days)	Off-Peak Frequency (min)
<b>T1F (Tier 1 Frequent)</b>	6:30am-7pm	10	6-7am 7-11pm	30
<b>T2F (Tier 2 Frequent)</b>	7am-7pm	15	5-7am 7-11pm	30
<b>HC (Hamilton Coverage)</b>	6:30am-9am 3pm-6pm	30	9am-3pm 6pm-8pm	60
<b>TS (Targeted service)</b>	Case by case	Case by case	Case by case	Case by case

**Table 2. Hamilton service route frequencies (indicative)**

Route	2028	2038
Te Rapa (combined with Pukete)	HC	T2F
Dinsdale/Uni	HC	HC
Flagstaff	HC	T2F
Nawton (Rotokauri in PTP)	HC	T2F
Hillcrest (Tamahere in PTP & 2037)	HC	T2F
Fitzroy	HC	HC
Flagstaff N	TS	TS
Chartwell (Greenhill in PTP)	HC	-
Fairfield	HC	T2F
Hamilton Gardens Uni	HC	HC
Temple View	HC	HC
Tamahere/Matangi	TS	-
Tauwhare Pa	TS	-
Ruakura (replaces Dinsdale/Uni on East of River in 2037)	-	T2F
Southern Link	-	T2F
Northern Link	-	T2F
Meteor	T2F	T1F
Orbiter	T2F	-
Rototuna High Frequent	T2F	T1F
Comet	T2F	T1F

To note is that there may be slight variations to the route frequencies and/or span (operating hours). While the above provides a general indication of what these will be per service, changes may occur on a route-by-route basis. This is simply the guideline and indicative frequencies and operating hours.

## 3.2 Long Term

The long-term network for Hamilton is a continuation of the shift to more direct, high frequent services with less services overall, but high frequency of the services that are operating. The most significant change is the removal of the high frequent Orbiter service and the introduction of two new high frequent services – the Southern Link and the Northern Link. The Meteor, Comet and Rototuna High Frequent service all also increase to a 'T1F' category – operating 10 minutes in the peak. There are also extensions to several new areas, such as Peacockes and the Hamilton Airport. The network, to be looked at alongside the frequencies identified in the tables above are shown in the **figure 8** below.

Similar to the short term, on demand services will operate within the Hamilton boundary to support the network and plug the gaps in coverage which may occur when coverage services are reduced.

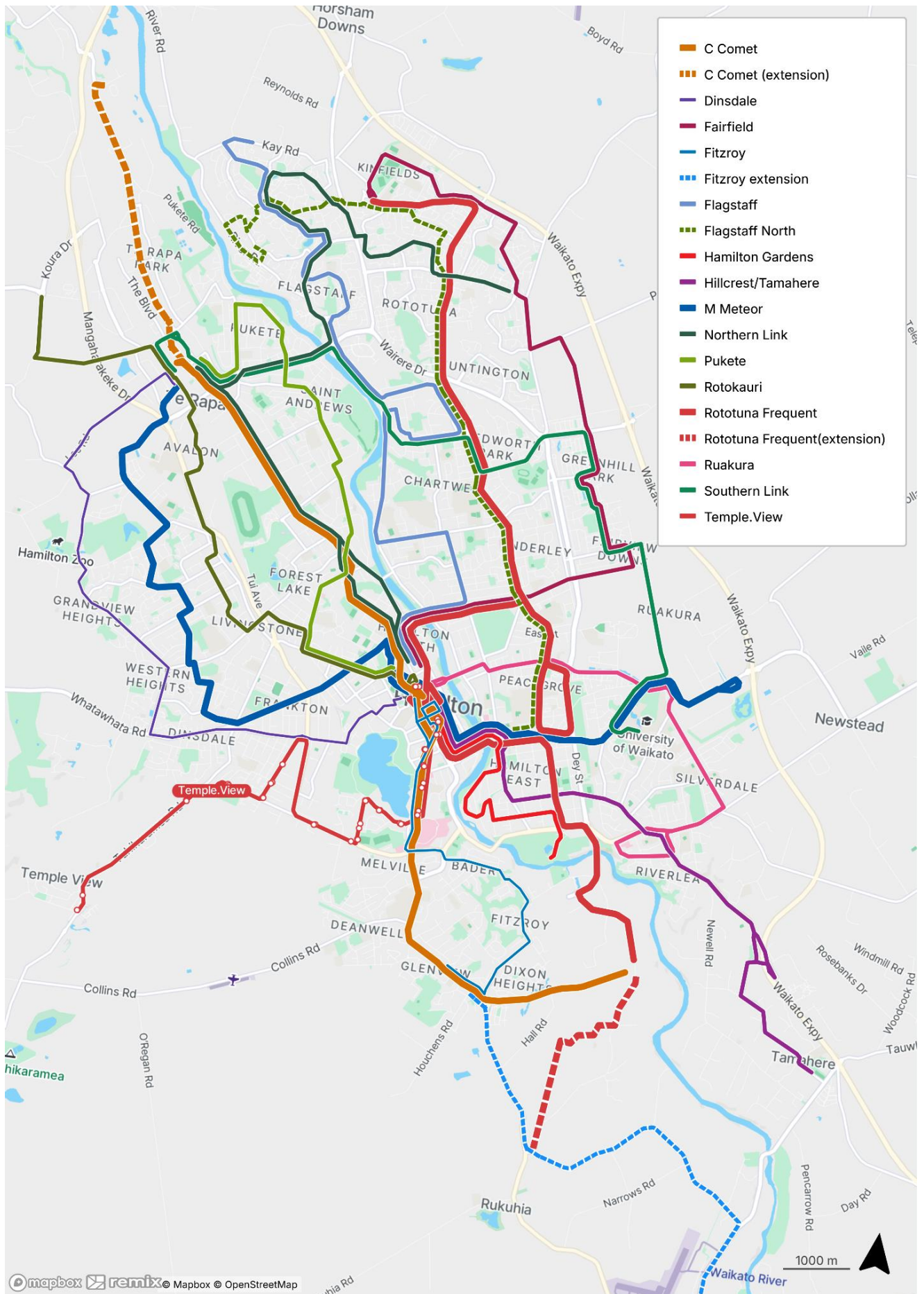


Figure 8. Hamilton network (long term)