

Me panoni me aha rānei mō
te tiki ipupara ā-Raumati?

Bin There, Done That:

Rethinking Summer Rubbish Pick-ups

A consultation document on our 2025/26 Annual Plan

Let us know
what you think about
changes we are proposing
to rubbish and glass
collections over the
peak summer.

GLASS
RECYCLING



GENERAL
RUBBISH



He aha tēnei Kaupapa?

What is this about?

We're talking rubbish again– literally! Between the week of Christmas and the week of Waitangi Day we increase rubbish and glass recycling collections in our eastern communities to handle the seasonal influx of visitors. Between Christmas and Waitangi Day, we increase the rubbish and glass collections from once a fortnight to twice a week, and recycling from once a fortnight to once weekly. We've been monitoring how this is working and have an opportunity to reduce our environmental impact and run things more efficiently. As a bonus it would also help keep your rates down. Before we lock this proposal in, we'd like to hear whether you're up for a change.

Like everyone, our costs are increasing year on year. These increases are partly paid for by your rates. When we developed our 2024-2034 Long Term Plan (LTP) last year we set out our forecast rates increases for the next ten years. It's a big job, not done lightly and only after much consideration of what we need to spend. We forecast that in the coming financial

year (that's the 12 months from July 2025 to 30 June 2026), we'd need to increase property rates by 7.7% on average, and certainly no more than 8.8%. We've been updating this forecast, and due to things out of our control our costs are increasing higher than we'd like. So, we've been looking at ways to stick to the 7.7% forecast in our LTP

This consultation document is prepared in accordance with section 95 of the Local Government Act 2002.

Addendum: After publication of our consultation documents, we noticed an error in our kerbside rubbish and glass collection calculations. The error does not affect the proposal we are consulting on, but we want to ensure our community has accurate information, so we have amended the graph on page 5 of this consultation document. We have also amended the *Rubbish and Recycling Collection Data* supporting document. We apologise for any inconvenience.

What's behind the increases?

As you've probably heard in the news, there have been some big changes to what central government is requiring from local councils in the last 12 months.

The 'Three Waters' Services

We know that the way three waters – water supply, wastewater and stormwater - is being delivered will change this year - and we'll be consulting on it this soon - but in the meantime we need to make sure the district continues to receive reliable three waters services. Preparing and consulting on proposals for the future delivery of our three waters services comes at a cost that we hadn't budgeted for. The timing of the change also means that we're renewing our major waters contracts for short periods rather than our usual multi-year periods. This costs us more.

Our transport infrastructure

New requirements about speed limits requires us find the money to change a lot of our road signage. At the same time, Waka Kotahi NZTA has reduced the amount of subsidy they give us for works like new footpaths and that means we've had to cut back on those projects.

We've also had to spend more on repairs after Cyclone Gabrielle and other storms and there have been some other unforeseen and essential asset repair costs.

We've already found ways to offset these cost increases. We're deferring some projects that had been lined up for the 2025/26 year in the LTP. The deferral is only one year. You can read more about the projects and what the deferral means later on. We're also increasing some fees and charges to keep up with inflation and looking across all our other activities to find other savings. However, we operate on a very slim budget which means there isn't much fat to trim. We're looking closely to see how we can make savings without affecting service delivery.

What else can we do?

We have an opportunity to make one more change that would help. We're proposing to change summer rubbish and glass recycling collections on the East Coast to once a week. This is still more frequent than the rest of the year (once fortnightly), but not as often as it currently is during the peak period (twice per week). There are a couple reasons we're thinking about this change, not least of which is that it would help to keep rates at what we forecast. This change would save our ratepayers an average of \$33.33 in rates, while those from Mercury Bay North to Whangamatā would see a slightly higher saving than other wards.

This change wouldn't affect our transfer station opening hours, public bin servicing or which properties have their waste collected at the kerb.

There's more to it than saving money. By making this change we can reduce our carbon emissions by having fewer truck movements on the roads, making our waste collection services more efficient and encouraging better waste habits.

He aha ka panonitia? What would change?

Right now:



Peak summer season:

(week of Christmas Day to week of Waitangi Day)

In our Eastern Seaboard communities rubbish and glass are picked up twice a week, and recycling once a week.

fortnightly Rest of the year

These collections happen fortnightly.



Food scraps remain the same year-round: once a week.

We're proposing:



Peak summer collections

for rubbish and glass would be once a week instead of twice, aligning it with the current weekly collection of recycling during the summer peak.

fortnightly Rest of the year

There would be no changes to the usual off-peak schedule.



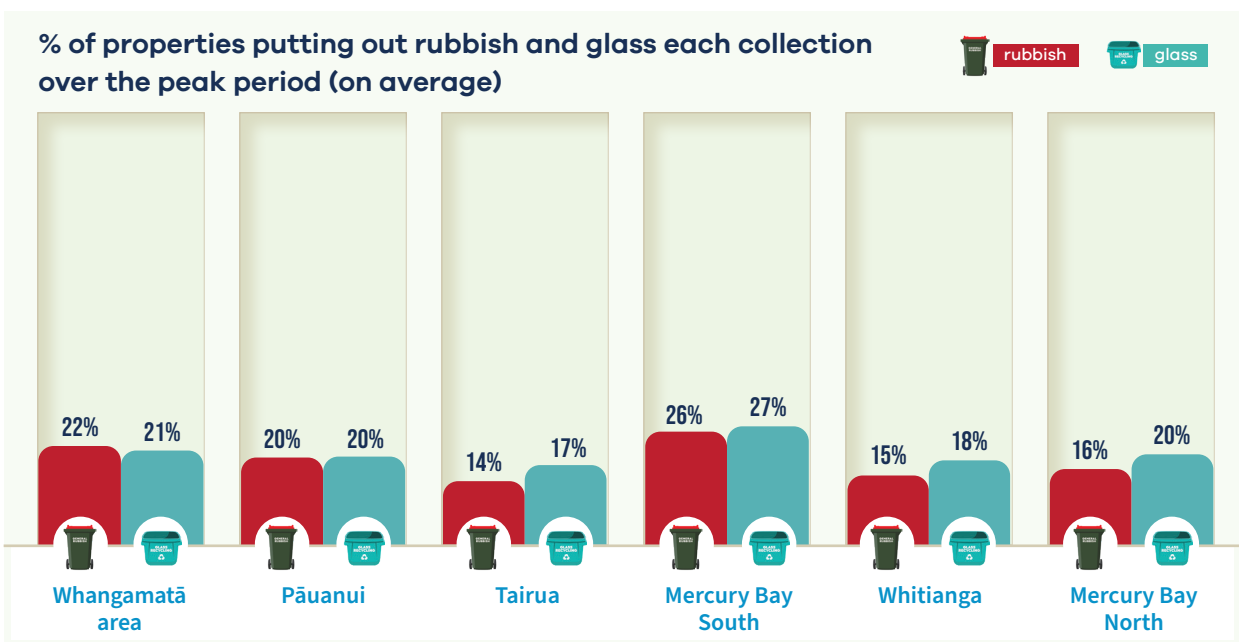
Food scraps remain the same year-round: once a week.

This change would help reduce costs while still providing a reliable waste service during the busiest time of the year.

He aha i kōkiritia ai tēnei?

Why are we suggesting this?

- 1 We're not using it** – we're seeing low uptake of all the collection days, suggesting that two days per week may exceed the actual demand. On average, less than 40% of properties put rubbish and glass out each collection over the peak period. This means we're paying our contractors to make a second collection when there isn't much to pick up. Our reviews suggest this might be because we've extended our refuse and recycling transfer station hours so that it's easier to drop off extra waste, and as well, we've introduced bins.



- 2 It's more environmentally friendly** – fewer truck trips mean reduced carbon emissions, which helps reduce our impact on the environment. This small change would add up over time and contribute to our climate goals.
- 3 It saves money** – less frequent collections mean lower rates, as we won't need to pay contractors for that extra collection run.
- 4 It encourages better waste habits** – reducing collection frequency encourages waste reduction and less reliance on landfills. It's a small nudge to making more sustainable choices.
- 5 We're working smarter** – we think we can get the same job done with one collection per week, improving efficiency for our teams, our contractors, and our communities. There are still other options for disposing of your rubbish and glass – you can take it to our refuse and recycling transfer stations which are open every single day of the week.

Would our proposal work for you? We have our reasons to think it's a good idea, including a savings on your rates bill, but we want to know what you think.

Te Pūtea

The dollars

Option 1: No change to the current peak summer collections (pick-ups of rubbish and glass twice a week during the peak summer period from week of Christmas to week of Waitangi Day).

The pros and cons of this option

- ✓ Convenient for some households
- ✗ Costs more to maintain
- ✗ Inefficient, as our data suggests the collection frequency doesn't match the demand.
- ✗ Results in more emissions from our rubbish trucks.

Impact on your rates:*

Average rubbish and recycling rates charge of **\$430.02 per year** for affected communities.

The average rates charge for each community board area would be:

Thames CB: \$392.40
Coromandel-Colville CB: \$392.40
Mercury Bay CB: \$430.15
Tairua-Pāuanui CB: \$460.33
Whangamatā CB: \$460.33

As our Fees and Charges will be increasing at the level of inflation, rubbish tag costs will increase from **\$8 to \$8.25**.

Impact on our debt levels: No change

Option 2: Reduce rubbish and glass collections from twice per week to once per week during the peak summer period (week of Christmas to week of Waitangi Day). The fortnightly collections for the rest of the year would stay the same.

The pros and cons of this option:

- ✓ Costs less
- ✓ Savings are passed on to ratepayers. More of the savings are passed on to our Eastern Seaboard communities as they will experience the service change. Even though Thames and Coromandel-Colville would not be getting a service reduction, they will still see a benefit because the entire rubbish and recycling budget is shared across the district.
- ✓ Reduces carbon emissions
- ✓ We still increase our pickup services over the peak period, but only to once a week
- ✓ More efficient for the community, the council, and contractors: we believe we can still get the same job done
- ✗ Less convenient for some households

Impact on your rates:*

Average rubbish and recycling rates charge of **\$396.69 per year** for affected communities. **This would be \$33.33 less than option 1 and a decrease of 7.7% for the rubbish and recycling charge.**

The average rates charge for each community board area would be:

Thames CB: \$365.11
Coromandel-Colville CB: \$365.11
Mercury Bay CB: \$396.80
Tairua-Pāuanui CB: \$422.14
Whangamatā CB: \$422.14

(This would bring down the average rate increase across the district by 0.5%)

As our Fees and Charges will be increasing at the level of inflation, rubbish tag costs will increase from **\$8 to \$8.25**.

Impact on our debt levels: None

*Rates figures are included to provide an indication of the impact to an average residential property, but they will vary for each property.

E kimi kōrero anō?

Want more detail?



Go online

to see more detail about our proposal.



We'll have elected members and staff available at the following locations to chat:

Whangamatā

APRIL 14TH

10am - 2.30pm

Council office

Whitianga

APRIL 15TH

10am - 2.30pm

Council office

Tairua

APRIL 16TH

10am - 2.30pm

St Francis House



And you can always contact your local elected member or TCDC office.

We're a friendly bunch.

Pēwhea ō whakaaro? What do you think?

Ways to let us know:

Prefer to jot your views down?



- Fill out our feedback form online
- Drop us a line on our Facebook page
- Post a completed paper form or drop it in to one of our libraries or offices

Please ensure all your written feedback is with us by 29 April.

Prefer to kōrero | chat?



- Share your thoughts at the drop-in sessions on the east coast
- Speak to our Mayor and Councillors at their meeting public forum on **8 April, 9am in Thames or online** (contact us to book)
- Give an informal presentation to our Mayor and Councillors on **5 May** in-person in our Thames office, online from either our Whangamatā or Whitianga offices, or online from your own location (use the feedback form or contact us to book).

Ka aha ā muri ake? What happens next?

After that we'll review all your feedback and make a decision. If the change goes ahead it would take effect the summer of 2025/26. It would be included in our 2025/26 Annual Plan which sets out our programme of action and budgets for the year ahead.

Ētehi atu mahere mō 2025/26

Our other plans for 2025/26

While you're here, we'd like to update you on what else is happening in 2025/26. Overall, we're sticking to the plan, but we've had to make some minor changes.

We've faced some unforeseen cost increases and income reductions, but we've done the best we can to counter them through these changes. We know that some communities would like us to deliver more, but we've decided to make do with what we have and not put more of a burden on our ratepayers. Here are some examples of what's in the budget for 2025/26. See our 2024-34 LTP for the full budget.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

We're planning on spending just under **\$2 MILLION** on providing our community facilities, including community halls, harbours/wharfs, libraries, and refuse transfer stations.

OUR BUDGET INCLUDES:

- Preparation for a new Thames Aquatic Facility.
- Harbour renewals in Coromandel, Mercury Bay, Tairua-Pāuanui, and Whangamatā.
- Investment in the library collections in Thames, Mercury Bay, and Tairua-Pāuanui.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Just under **\$3 MILLION** on maintenance, renewals, and reseals work is programmed for our parks and open spaces around the district.

OUR BUDGET INCLUDES:

- Playground and skate bowl maintenance in Thames and Tairua-Pāuanui.
- Renewals of parks and reserves in Thames, Coromandel, Mercury Bay, Tairua-Pāuanui, and Whangamatā.
- Carpark maintenance in Coromandel, Mercury Bay, and Whangamatā.



COASTAL HAZARD MANAGEMENT

We'll be spending **\$16K** on dune protection projects.



STORMWATER

We've planned for a spend of nearly **\$5 MILLION** on restoration, improvement, and renewal stormwater activities.

OUR BUDGET INCLUDES:

- Improvements to the Tōtara Valley Road stormwater services.
- Whangamatā, Whitianga, Matarangi, and Austin Drive stormwater improvements.
- Cooks Beach Lakes riparian restoration plan.

This is an increase of \$687k due to rephasing of Tōtara Valley Road stormwater services.



TRANSPORT

Across footpath maintenance, streetlight renewals/upgrades, sealing and resealing, signage, and general roading maintenance, we're planning to spend **\$28 MILLION**. 51% of this is funded by NZTA (or other).

This is a slight increase of \$42k due to inclusion of School Speed Signs and storm event projects. A reduction has been made to some projects due to a reduced NZTA funding allocation which has offset some of the increase.

We're deferring the street lighting upgrade to Pollen Street, Thames by one year. In the meantime, the existing lighting will continue to operate safely and reliably.



WASTEWATER

Just over **\$3 MILLION** is planned for renewals and upgrades for this crucial service.

This is a slight increase of \$33k due to rephasing of Tōtara Valley Road wastewater services .

The repair to an irrigation field at the Cooks Beach treatment plant will be deferred for one year. The plant will continue to operate as usual.



WATER SUPPLY

We're planning to spend just over **\$5.7 MILLION** on necessary renewals and upgrades for this service.

We brought forward drinking water station upgrades to the 2024/25 financial year and this has resulted in a decrease of \$3.3 million.

We added \$132k to transition to the new mandatory water delivery requirements.

The new Thames South water treatment plan project at Pūriri has had some delays, so some funding has been deferred. The project will still be completed by 2028/29.



SOLID WASTE

Renewals and refuse station improvements have a planned programme of **\$8.3 MILLION**.

The installation of additional weighbridges at some of our refuse transfer stations (RTSs) has been deferred for a year. This does not affect the Whitianga RTS.

Reduced waste means less transport and landfill costs (-\$108,000) This is the result of more efficient waste habits reducing the costs of transporting/processing.



GOVERNANCE

We received **\$183,000 FUNDING** to continue the Mayors' Task Force for Jobs programme.

This is funding from central government so there is no rating impact.



OTHER MONEY MATTERS

- The value of our assets increased as they did for housing. This means we need to put more aside to replace them in future.
- Reduced interest rates result in savings of \$110,000.
- Some fees are going up to match inflation (so ratepayers don't have to cover \$100,800 of our inflation costs).
- We're using some of our unspent funds (retained earnings) to reduce the income we need from rates. We'll be keeping some in case of emergency.
- We've reduced the amount of interest and depreciation costs associated with delivering projects by adjusting our capital delivery assumption. This is a budget reduction of \$124,000.

These are some of the other changes we've made to help keep the rates increase to what we planned for in the LTP.



Ka pēwhea te tahua pūtea?

What it means for our financial management

The rubbish service proposal and other minor changes in this document allow the Council to remain compliant with our limit for rates increases for 2025/26 of 8.8% (set in our 2024-34 Long Term Plan). Our revised budget, including the savings from our rubbish service proposal will allow for an approximate district average rate increase of 7.7%. The proposal will also allow us to stay within all our debt limits and meet our financial prudence benchmarks.

Using some of our retained earnings to reduce the extent that rates increase next year is a short-term fix. It means that we are delaying the increase for a year, but for the following year (2026/27), rates will need to rise more to cover costs when those savings are no longer available. Our Council may need to look into other options if we are to stay under our rates increase limits.



Whakapā mai | **Contact us**



Email: customer.services@tcdc.govt.nz
Phone: 07 868 0200

Service Centres:
515 Mackay Street, Thames
355 Kapanga Road, Coromandel Town
10 Monk Street, Whitianga
620 Port Road, Whangamatā
2 Manaia Road, Tairua (Tairua Library)

Post: Thames-Coromandel District Council
Private Bag 1001, Thames, 3540