Mercury Baypark Arena Extension Project Community Consultation Submissions Summary

Executive summary

Consultation showed overwhelming support for Manawa Trust funding the Baypark Arena Extension, with the two additional submissions both supporting the project.

Of 58 submissions, 54 supported funding, three opposed it and one was unsure. Supporters consistently described the project as a response to a shortage of indoor courts and to continuing population and participation growth across Tauranga and the Western Bay of Plenty.

- **93.1% supported funding**, compared with 5.2% opposed and 1.7% unsure.
- Submitters saw benefits extending beyond sport, including major events, entertainment, cultural gatherings, community wellbeing and visitor spending.
- Support was often accompanied by expectations about accessibility, transport and parking, environmental protection, operational funding, affordability and robust cost control.

Overall, the submissions provide a strong mandate to progress consideration of the investment, while incorporating clear design, access, operating and accountability safeguards.

Submission profile

Response distribution

Position	Submissions	Share
Yes	54	93.1%
No	3	5.2%
Unsure	1	1.7%
Total	**58**	**100.0%**

Fifty submissions included substantive comments; eight recorded a position without comment. The high support rate was reinforced by submissions from sporting and event stakeholders, alongside individual community members.

Themes that emerged

1. Indoor-court shortage and regional growth

The dominant theme was that existing indoor capacity has not kept pace with population growth or participation in basketball, volleyball, pickleball and other activities. Submitters linked additional courts to better access for training, leagues, tournaments and community programmes, with fewer clashes between everyday users and major events.

2. Community wellbeing, inclusion and broad participation

Many respondents connected the project with physical activity, youth development, social connection and safe community spaces. Several asked that access extend beyond organised sport to affordable casual recreation, smaller community gatherings, cultural activity and users across age groups and abilities. The two additional submissions reinforce the breadth of community support reflected in the consultation.

3. Major events and economic opportunity

Submitters saw the extension as strengthening Tauranga's capacity to host AIMS Games, HoopNation and other regional, national or international events. Anticipated benefits included visitor spending, local business activity, employment and a stronger regional profile.

4. A flexible, multi-purpose venue

A substantial group urged the project to support concerts, exhibitions, conferences, cultural events and touring productions as well as sport. Suggested future-proofing features included concrete flooring, loading access, storage, rigging capacity, acoustics, power, backstage facilities, flexible seating and efficient changeovers.

5. Accessibility, transport and supporting infrastructure

Comments called for universal design beyond minimum compliance, accessible parking and drop-off areas, seating, toilets and changing facilities, and safe movement through the precinct. Parking capacity, public transport, shuttle or park-and-ride options, and the effect of concurrent events were recurring considerations.

6. Financial and operational assurance

The three opposing submissions focused on alternative uses for the funding, Bay Venues' operating performance, potential cost overruns and pressure on ratepayers. Supportive respondents also sought assurance that staffing, maintenance and operating budgets would be adequate and that community participation would remain affordable.

7. Environmental resilience and wider precinct planning

Individual submissions sought protection of surrounding wetlands, measurable sustainability commitments, stronger public-transport provision and consideration of civil-defence shelter capability. Others encouraged a precinct-wide view covering accommodation impacts, housing pressure and complementary community spaces.

What the consultation means for Trustees

- **The consultation condition has been positively addressed**: 54 of 58 submitters supported Manawa Trust funding the project, providing a clear indication of community backing.
- **The proposed investment responds to an identified community need: feedback** consistently highlighted the shortage of indoor courts and the pressures created by regional and participation growth.
- **The anticipated benefits are broad:** submitters expect improved access to sport and recreation, stronger community wellbeing, and greater capacity for major sporting, cultural and entertainment events.
- **Support is not limited to one user group:** submissions reflected individual community voices as well as perspectives from sporting organisations, event organisers and venue users, with the two additional submissions further strengthening the overall level of support.
- **Concerns were limited but relevant:** opposition centred mainly on affordability, ratepayer exposure, operating performance and cost overruns, while supportive submissions raised accessibility, transport and environmental considerations.