Case Study: Local Leadership in Digital Growth - Hamilton City Council as Customer and Connector

Organisation: Hamilton City Council (HCC) - Economic Development programme.

Contact: Mike Bennett, Economic Development Manager | Commercial & Analytics.

Overview

Hamilton City Council is at the centre of Waikato's digital transformation, both as a major consumer of technology services and as a champion for industry growth. Through initiatives like *Tech in the Tron*, the Council's Economic Development Programme (EDP) works to foster innovation and attract digital investment to the region.

Experience with the Ecosystem Mapping Prototype

Mike participated in the prototype testing because he recognised the importance of locally-led digital mapping for regional development.

> *"Familiarity and respect for those organising and leading the effort, and an understanding of the important role that it can play."*

He found the ecosystem map to be a uniquely valuable tool - validated and grounded in local context.

> *"An organised, validated, and locally-developed tool that can help provide tangible information and measures about the sector in a way that others (TIN, etc.) can't."*

The prototype demonstrated how local insight can produce more actionable data than broad national datasets, enabling Hamilton to make better, evidence-based decisions.

Key Impacts and Opportunities Identified

The participation of the HCC EDP highlighted the dual role the Council can play as both a *customer* and *connector*.

- As a customer, the map can help HCC identify and engage local suppliers for technology projects, strengthening the regional economy.
- As an economic development leader, the Council can use its connections to enhance the dataset, attract wider participation, and promote collective ownership of the tool.

The project also revealed a common ecosystem challenge - the need for more precise sub-sector classification.

> *"The difficulty in classifying or categorising sub-sectors within the ecosystem, particularly if a single company operates across many of them."*

By addressing this, future iterations could deliver sharper insights into regional capability and help align investment with sector strengths.

Quote

> *"It could establish a better, clearer picture of which organisations are most active in which tech subsectors, and what challenges or opportunities exist for them."*

Looking Ahead

Hamilton City Council EDP sees ongoing potential in the Waikato Digital Technology Ecosystem Map as both a planning and procurement tool. Mike envisions leveraging the Council's networks to expand its adoption and ensure its long-term sustainability. His closing reflection captures the collaborative spirit behind the project:

> *"Very ambitious project and a significant effort to create the framework and initial prototype."*