

SmartGrowth Leadership Group Agenda for Meeting No. SG26/06

Date and time 17 June 2026 at 9:00am

Venue Bay Of Plenty Regional Council, 1 Elizabeth Street, Tauranga (Chambers)

SmartGrowth Leadership Group – Committee Members

| | |
|--|---|
| Chairperson | Mayor James Denyer |
| Bay Of Plenty Regional Council | Cr. Stuart Crosby Cr. Kat MacMillan Cr. John Scrimgeour Cr. Kate Graeme (alternate) |
| Tauranga City Council | Mayor Mahé Drysdale Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular Cr. Marten Rozeboom Cr. Glen Crowther (alternate) |
| Western Bay of Plenty District Council | Cr. Margaret Murray-Benge Cr. Grant Dally Cr. Graeme Elvin (alternate) |
| Tangata Whenua Representatives | Matire Duncan Whitiora McLeod Hakopa Tapiata Heta Gardiner Riki Nelson (alternate) |
| Department of Internal Affairs | Rebecca Maplesden (alternate) |
| Ministry for Housing and Urban Development | Sarah Stevenson (alternate) |
| Ministry for Transport | |
| Priority One | Dave Courtney (Non-voting) |
| Te Whatu Ora – Te Manawa Taki | Sarah Fenwick (Non-voting) |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Transport System Plan | Dean Kimpton (Non-voting) |
| | Paul Tarrant (alternate) |
| Waka Kotahi | Andrew Corkill (Non-voting) |
| | Cole O’Keefe (alternate) |

Quorum 11
 Meeting Frequency Quarterly

SmartGrowth Leadership Group – Terms of Reference

Purpose: The purpose of the Joint Committee (SmartGrowth Leadership Group) is to undertake and implement strategic spatial planning across the western Bay of Plenty sub-region¹ in accordance with the SmartGrowth Strategy and the outcomes from the Urban Form and Transport Initiative.

The SmartGrowth Leadership Group carries out its purpose in accordance with the delegations set out in the Agreement.

General Principles: The SmartGrowth Leadership Group operates under the following principles:

- Supporting an integrated approach to urban growth and strategic / spatial planning which incorporates cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being.
- Building on the SmartGrowth ‘live, learn, work and play’ vision.
- Reinforcing an integrated planning approach incorporating land use, all infrastructure and funding.
- Building on existing SmartGrowth work, including the outcomes from Urban Form and Transport Initiative, and the general SmartGrowth arrangements already in place.
- Adopting a shared evidence base so that all parties are using common data.
- Recognising and supporting the existing Urban Form and Transport Initiatives which will underpin the development of the 2023 SmartGrowth Strategy.
- Having an integrated SmartGrowth Strategy for the sub-region which includes the requirements for a future development strategy under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development.
- Taking account of the Western Bay of Transport System Plan and its priorities.
- Acknowledging the benefits of a collaborative approach to urban growth and spatial planning, and to share responsibility for such planning between parties.
- Supporting the values, and economic and social aspirations of tangata whenua while protecting cultural identity.
- Sustaining and improving the natural environment.
- Responding to climate change at a strategic level.
- Promoting affordable housing.

¹ The ‘sub-region’ refers to the territorial areas of Tauranga City council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council.

Monitoring and Review:

The SmartGrowth Leadership Group has responsibility for:

- Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Urban Form and Transport Initiative, including the key performance indicators.

Reviewing and recommending any changes to the SmartGrowth Strategy if circumstances change.

Membership:

That representation of the SmartGrowth Leadership Group be comprised of:

- Three elected member representatives each as appointed by the contributing local authorities, including the Mayors of Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District – voting
- Four representatives to be nominated by tāngata whenua - voting
- An Independent Chairperson, to be appointed by the Leadership Group, to chair the Group – voting
- Up to three Ministers of the Crown – voting
- Additional Ministers, if and when relevant and required – non-voting
- One Te Whatu Ora – Te Manawa Taki representative – non-voting
- One NZTA representative – non-voting
- One Water Services Entity B representative – non-voting
- One Transport System Plan representative – non-voting
- One Priority One representative – non-voting
- One alternate member per voting organisation

That the standing membership of the Leadership Group shall be limited to 22 members (including the Independent Chairperson), but the SmartGrowth Leadership Group has the power to co-opt up to a maximum of three additional non-voting members where required to ensure the effective implementation of any part or parts of the SmartGrowth Strategy.

Meeting Frequency: Quarterly, or as necessary and determined by the Independent Chairperson.

SmartGrowth Leadership Group Agenda for Meeting No. SG26/06

Date and time 17 June 2026 at 9:00am

Venue Bay Of Plenty Regional Council, 1 Elizabeth Street, Tauranga (Chambers)

Order of Business

| Item | Topic | Page |
|------|--|------|
| 1. | Karakia | - |
| 2. | Apologies | - |
| 3. | Conflict of Interest | - |
| 4. | Public Forum (if required) | - |
| 5. | Confirmation of Minutes (Paper A) Confirmation of the Minutes of the SmartGrowth Leadership Group: (SG26/03) dated 19 March 2026. Recommendation: That the minutes of the SmartGrowth Leadership Group (SG26/03) dated 1p March 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record. | 6 |

Part A: Agenda Business

| Item | Topic | Page |
|------|---|------|
| 6. | Quarterly Report – June 2026 (Paper B) | 15 |
| 7. | Tū Pakari Report – June 2026 (Verbal) | - |
| 8. | NZTA – Strategic Transport Plan – June Update (Paper C) | 29 |
| 9. | Population Projection Review (Paper D) | 38 |
| 10. | Resource Management Reform – Mayoral Forum Report (Paper E) | 70 |
| 11. | Priority One - Western Bay Of Plenty Regional Deal Update (Paper F) | 88 |
| 12. | Implementation Plan Update for 2026-27 (Paper G) | 95 |

| Item | Topic | Page |
|------|---|------|
| 13. | <p>Public Excluded Session</p> <p>That the SmartGrowth Leadership Group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree that the public be excluded from the following parts of this meeting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approval of Closed Minutes – 19 March 2026 b) Priority Development Area Tracker 2. Note that this resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and that the reports are to be considered under closed in accordance with s7(2)(i) - enables any local authority holding information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations). 3. Noted that at the end of the closed session the meeting will move back into open. <p>NB – The agenda for the “Public Excluded session” will be circulated separately.</p> | - |

SmartGrowth Leadership Group

Minutes for Meeting No. SG26/03

Date and time 19 March 2026 at 2:00pm

Venue Bay Of Plenty Regional Council, 1 Elizabeth Street, Tauranga (Chambers)

| Members | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|--|
| In attendance | Mayor James Denyer | Chairperson |
| In attendance | Cr. Stuart Crosby | Bay Of Plenty Regional Council |
| In attendance | Cr. Kat MacMillan | Bay Of Plenty Regional Council |
| In attendance | Cr. John Scrimgeour | Bay Of Plenty Regional Council |
| In attendance | Cr. Kate Graeme (alternate) | Bay Of Plenty Regional Council |
| In attendance | Mayor Mahé Drysdale | Tauranga City Council |
| In attendance | Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular | Tauranga City Council |
| In attendance | Cr. Marten Rozeboom | Tauranga City Council |
| In attendance | Cr. Glen Crowther (alternate) | Tauranga City Council |
| In attendance | Deputy Mayor Margaret Murray-Benge | Western Bay of Plenty District Council |
| In attendance | Cr. Grant Dally | Western Bay of Plenty District Council |
| In attendance | Cr. Graeme Elvin (alternate) | Western Bay of Plenty District Council |
| In attendance | Maire Duncan | Tāngata Whenua Representatives |
| In attendance | Whitiora McLeod | Tāngata Whenua Representatives |
| In attendance | Riki Nelson | Tāngata Whenua Representatives |
| In attendance | Hakopa Tapiata | Tāngata Whenua Representatives |
| - | tbd (alternate) | Tāngata Whenua Representatives |
| In attendance | Rebecca Maplesden (alternate) | Department of Internal Affairs |
| In attendance | Sarah Stevenson (alternate) | Ministry for Housing and Urban Development |
| - | tbd | Ministry for Transport |
| In attendance | Andrew Corkill (Non-voting) | Waka Kotahi |
| In attendance | Cole O'Keefe (alternate) | Waka Kotahi |
| In attendance | Dave Courtney (Non-voting) | Priority One |
| Apologies | Andrew Boyd (Non-voting) | Te Whatu Ora – Te Manawa Taki |
| In attendance | Dean Kimpton (Non-voting) | Transport System Plan |

Quorum 11

Meeting Frequency Quarterly

THESE MINUTES ARE YET TO BE CONFIRMED

Confirmed by the SmartGrowth Leadership Group on 17 June 2026

Page 6 of 187

| Support | | |
|---------------|------------------|---|
| In attendance | Craig Batchelar | SmartGrowth Strategic Advisor |
| In attendance | Nichola Lennard | SmartGrowth Technical Advisor |
| In attendance | Te Pio Kawe | SmartGrowth Pou Ārahi Advisor |
| In attendance | Elisha Rolleston | SmartGrowth Kai Ārahi Advisor |
| In attendance | Eileen Mares | Tauranga City Council / SmartGrowth Coordinator |
| In attendance | Ernst Zoellner | Kainga Ora |
| In attendance | Josephine Tam | Kainga Ora |
| In attendance | Robert Brodnax | Beca Limited for Future Proof |
| In attendance | Andrew Mead | Tauranga City Council |
| In attendance | Namouta Poutasi | Bay Of Plenty Regional Council |
| In attendance | Adele Hadfield | Bay Of Plenty Regional Council |
| In attendance | Emily Watton | Western Bay of Plenty District Council |

SG26/03.01 Karakia Tīmatanga

Elisha Rolleston opened the meeting with a Karakia.

SG26/03.02 Apologies

Apologies for absence received from Andrew Boyd, Marty Grenfell, Fiona McTavish.
Apologies for lateness received from Matire Duncan, Cr. Margaret Murray-Benge, Cr. Graeme Elvin, Hakopa Tapiata.

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular Seconded by: Cr. Stuart Crosby

That it be Resolved

That the apologies be accepted.

CARRIED

SG26/03.03 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No declarations received

SG26/03.04 Public Forum

There were no public forum items.

SG26/03.05 Confirmation of Minutes

The Committee considered the minutes of SmartGrowth Leadership Group (SG25/12) dated 15 December 2025 circulated with the agenda.

THESE MINUTES ARE YET TO BE CONFIRMED

Confirmed by the SmartGrowth Leadership Group on 17 June 2026

Page 7 of 187

Request for correction was received for SG25/12.07 Resolution 4. Change from “**Notes** the appointment of Hakopa Tapiata as the Te Arawa ki Tai Tāngata Whenua Forum representative to the SmartGrowth Leadership Group” to “**Notes** the appointment of Hakopa Tapiata as the Te Ihu o Te Arawa Forum representative to the SmartGrowth Leadership Group.”

Moved by: Whitiara McLeod

Seconded by: Cr. Stuart Crosby

That it be Resolved

That the minutes of SmartGrowth Leadership Group (SG25/12) dated 15 December 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record, subject to the change of SG25/12.07 Resolution 4 to “**Notes** the appointment of Hakopa Tapiata as the Te Ihu o Te Arawa Forum representative to the SmartGrowth Leadership Group.”

CARRIED

SG26/03.06 SmartGrowth Quarterly Report (Paper B)

Craig Batchelar spoke to the SmartGrowth Quarterly Report (Paper B) which was taken as read with the following updates:

Group Discussion

Development Opportunities Process

Further round of engagement with the submitting parties will take place before the recommendations are reported back to SmartGrowth Leadership Group in June 2026.

Population Projections

The review of the Stats NZ projections will be undertaken at a regional level.

A question was raised regarding the extent of modelling that will be undertaken for risk assessment relating to the population projections. Craig Batchelar explained that SNZ projections are typically reviewed at the local authority level and then sense-checked. He noted that modelling is carried out across multiple scenarios—high, medium, and low—for different planning purposes. For example, high-growth scenarios are often used for broader long-term planning, while medium-growth scenarios are generally applied to infrastructure planning.

The current issue is that the high-growth projection figures from Stats NZ are significantly higher than those previously released, which affects expectations for land supply. This discrepancy has prompted the review that will now be undertaken to address the shared concern about the accuracy validity of the projections and to get consistency within the region and with Waikato for e.g. transport modeling.

SmartGrowth Implementation Plan

A question was raised regarding recommendation 3 of the paper and whether the Future Development Strategy could be incorporated automatically into the upcoming Regional Spatial Plan (RSP). This matter was deferred for discussion in the subsequent workshop.

Craig Batchelar advised that the intention of the recommendation is to review the Implementation Plan to see whether it is the Key Actions are fit for purpose in relation to the upcoming RSP. It was also noted that Bay of Plenty has 3 well established sub-regional spatial plans that could feed into the new RSP to avoid duplication of work and unnecessary costs. With final legislation not yet released, and depending on receiving national direction from Central Government.

THESE MINUTES ARE YET TO BE CONFIRMED

Confirmed by the SmartGrowth Leadership Group on 17 June 2026

Page 8 of 187

National Infrastructure Plan

Report mentions infrastructure being mostly existent for the coming 30-year needs. Cr. Scrimgeour commented that electricity supply is an issue which needs to be addressed by SmartGrowth. It was noted that the National Infrastructure Plan talks about New Zealand as a whole and not about separate regions but clearly highlights to make better use of existing infrastructure

Mayor James Dneyer introduced the new SmartGrowth Leadership Group representative for Te Ihu o Te Arawa Forum – Hakopa Tapiata - to the SmartGrowth Leadership Group.

Tū Pakari Update

Te Pio Kawe provided an update on Tū Pakari and noted, in addition to the information included in the report, that CTWF is reviewing its Terms of Reference (TOR). The purpose of the review is to update outdated elements of the TOR and ensure it reflects the Outcomes Performance Measures Framework, as well as CTWF's direction regarding iwi-led tāngata whenua and mana whenua approach.

Question was raised if Tāngata Whenua is represented on the transport and housing matters. Te Pio Kawe noted that members sit on TSP and Tu Pakari Advisors are on the Housing Working Group.

Moved by: Cr. Marten Rozeboom

Seconded by: Cr. Kat MacMillan

That it be Resolved

That the **SmartGrowth Leadership Group:**

1. **Receives** the report “Quarterly Update – March 2026”.
2. **Notes** that further updates on population projections, regional spatial planning preparation, and housing delivery will be reported to future meetings.
3. **Notes** the proposed update of the SmartGrowth Implementation Plan and the need to consider the timing and sequencing of Key Actions in relation to the emerging Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) programme signalled in the Planning Bill.

CARRIED

SG26/03.07 Hamilton to Tauranga Corridor Spatial Study (Paper C)

Craig Batchelar spoke to the Hamilton to Tauranga Corridor Spatial Study Report (Paper C) and highlighted that the study has been a significant workstream for both Future Proof and SmartGrowth over the last 12 months. Future Proof led the project providing resources 75% to 80% of the work. Future Proof governance has considered the same report and adopted the same recommendations in February 2026.

Nichola Lennard noted that a comprehensive summary is provided on the agenda, with detailed governance-level recommendations outlined. The study also includes important recommendations on how this work will inform regional spatial planning, along with technical recommendations relating to monitoring.

The key outcome is that while significant growth is anticipated across the area, it is already well planned for under both Future Proof and SmartGrowth FDS's. The main factor to monitor will be potential impacts on smaller towns once the two RoNS are in place, as those will give enhanced access to Tauranga and Hamilton which is not currently reflected in their existing growth plan.

Group Discussion

SH 29 - Long standing issue of intersections along State Highway 29 needs to be addressed with NZTA.

THESE MINUTES ARE YET TO BE CONFIRMED

Confirmed by the SmartGrowth Leadership Group on 17 June 2026

Page 9 of 187

Reason for the study - It was clarified that the study is intended to support discussions about land-use planning. For example, the findings indicate that there is no need to take any specific steps to increase land supply in Hamilton or Tauranga as a direct response to the roading investment. The study was needed to understand the impact of these large investments and what it does to the corridor and its attractiveness. Such large roading investment typically creates land use changes that aren't anticipated or underestimated. If this is not addressed in an integrated manner, Waikato will get may find itself under pressure for a new town along SH29 in the area of Te Poi / Hinuera and not having the infrastructure to support that.

Passenger Rail – Nichola Lennard and Robert Brodnax highlighted that an in depth investigation of this issue wasn't part of the study but it was certainly acknowledged. Initial piece of work done but further work on viability for passenger rail needs to be done. This project looked into land use impact for the investments made to date. NZTA piece of transport strategy work which is going to take this land use information and look into the entire transport system, including rail, between Hamilton and Tauranga.

Cole O'Keefe referred to the next agenda items providing an overview. Regarding the future role of rail NZTA is working closely with KiwiRail. Early work done through UFTI concluding that passenger rail was highly unlikely in the next 30 years. This workstream provide an update on what has changed.

Cr Crosby: very useful report that highlights that SmartGrowth has to keep an eye on other infrastructure investments for possible impact within this area. E.g. Auckland's recent decision not to intensify the southern suburbs might create consequences for Waikato and BOP. A robust transport infrastructure will drive commercial, industrial and residential growth.

A concern was raised on whether it was desirable that people might commute over the Kaimais from Matamata to Tauranga and if this should be prevented or discouraged. It was noted that this was already the case, driven by housing market differentials.

Moved by: Cr. Kat MacMillan

Seconded by: Cr. Margaret Murray-Benge

That it be Resolved

That the **SmartGrowth Leadership Group**:

1. **Receives** the report "Hamilton to Tauranga Corridor Spatial Study".
2. **Approves** in principle the study findings and recommendations set out in Appendix 1, as a standalone strategic framework to guide the development of Regional Spatial Plans, subject to final approval by a joint meeting of the Chairs / Mayors / Chairs of SmartGrowth and Future Proof.
3. **Endorses** the information contained in the study as a basis for communication with central government and other key stakeholders on land use and infrastructure in the Hamilton to Tauranga corridor.

CARRIED

SG26/03.08 NZTA – Transport Strategies for Tauranga Urban and Hamilton to Tauranga project (Paper D)

Cole O'Keefe spoke to the Strategic Transport Plans presentation (Paper D) and highlighted the following.

Strategic transport planning bridges the gap between high level direction and detailed solutions. It identifies activities and actions that could efficiently and effectively address transport problems and deliver transport benefits.

THESE MINUTES ARE YET TO BE CONFIRMED

Confirmed by the SmartGrowth Leadership Group on 17 June 2026

Page 10 of 187

Two plans underway (Hamilton to Tauranga Strategic Corridor Plan; and Tauranga Strategic Urban Network Plan) to help guide how the state highway network should develop over time.

Tauranga Strategic Urban Network Plan (see image) –

- dotted lines represent corridors where deficiencies are already recognised and are being addressed through existing plans.
- The bold lines indicate routes where no strategies exist yet. These corridors currently have significant capacity gaps, which are expected to increase over time.

The purpose of this plan is to address those gaps as well as:

- outline the downstream effects on the wider urban network and clarify how these impacts will be managed.
- how the network will need to change over time (roles of roads evolution over time - state highways and urban network)
- what are future needs and long-term role of the rail for freight



Timeframe – final plan finalised by September/October 2026

NZTA would like to work closely with council staff and iwi and hapū through developing the plans and would like to provide regular updates to SmartGrowth.

Group Discussion

Tunnel through Kaimais – previous work on this indicating constraints and affordability challenges. NZTA will explore what has changed since the original work has been done and if anything is more feasible today.

Public Transport (bus lanes, multi model cycling) - Tauranga Strategic Urban Network Plan would look at the role State Highways would play in supporting those. Plan will address where this needs to be provided on a state highway and where it isn't as the function is picked up on the urban network.

Regional Spatial Plan – how is NZTA included in that. Intended that NZTA strategies and plans will inform the Regional Spatial Planning.

Dependance on central government set up – the plans are 30-year long-term plan looking at long-term outcomes across multi outcomes not confined to current investment priorities to help identify investment choices.

Tāngata Whenua Engagement – NZTA is working with Brian Nicolas setting up an engagement plan. Also, would like to come through CTWF to find out how CTWF would like to be engaged.

THESE MINUTES ARE YET TO BE CONFIRMED

Confirmed by the SmartGrowth Leadership Group on 17 June 2026

Page 11 of 187

Will also engage through TSP - Integration across the different workstreams is already being considered. For example, the current planning work will directly inform the TSO 0–10 segment, and conversations are already taking place to support that alignment. NZTA does not expect any new information in the short term, and therefore no additional activities are anticipated to be identified for the 0–10 segment at this stage. Focus is on the medium to long-term evolution of the corridors.

Standardisation is needed for how state highways connect with smaller local roads, how buses safely enter and exit school sites, and how safety considerations are integrated into planning. Comparable sections of the corridor should follow a consistent suite of responses, with adjustments made where necessary to reflect local topography and context. Will also integrate work done elsewhere for areas similar demand, context, deficiencies, etc.

Members supported regular updates, and also suggested direct contact or discussions with partners if that would be helpful for NZTA.

Hamilton – Tauranga workstream will investigate interregional journeys and how demand flows have changed following the completion of the Waikato Expressway.

A Strategic Plan already exists for State Highway 2. Work will commence with the next tranche of activities and will be connected with the outcomes of the current work.

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular

Seconded by: Cr. Margaret Murray-Benge

That it be Resolved

That the **SmartGrowth Leadership Group:**

1. **Receives** the Strategic Transport Plans presentation.

CARRIED

SG26/03.09 Housing System Plan Update (Paper E)

Craig Batchelar spoke to the Housing System Plan Update report (Paper E).

Introduction of Josephine Tam (Kainga Ora – Urban Growth Partnering Team) to SmartGrowth Leadership Group. Josephine Tam will be the Programme Lead for this working group and HSP development.

A goal for the working group is to close knowledge gaps around housing delivery data mentioned during last SmartGrowth Leadership Group meeting.

Group Discussion

Cr. Crosby offered support for the working group should elected members be needed.

A question was raised about the Housing System Plan not being finalised in 2024 due to uncertainty around national direction. In response, Craig noted that although some uncertainty remains, clarity is beginning to emerge. For example, recent information on the Flexible Fund. He also highlighted that the first meeting provided an opportunity for members to share useful insights with one another. This led to discussions about supporting each other working through known issues. Main topics mentioned were issue around feasibility of projects and how fragile delivery is due to costs.

The group should consider where Central Government has a role and where it does not, to ensure that Local Government is not required to fill gaps created by Central Government decisions. This distinction should be reflected in the Terms of Reference. The working group can identify gaps and barriers and ideally propose

potential solutions. Where gaps in Central Government delivery are identified, these should be reported back to Central Government.

Bay of Plenty Region has the most expensive houses in the country along with Auckland. If this is ignored, the only solution is social housing. Local Government obligation is to provide sufficient land that houses can be built according to the demand.

Recommendation to include local iwi members into the working group.

Moved by: Cr. Stuart Crosby

Seconded by: Mayor Mahé Drysdale

That it be Resolved

That the **SmartGrowth Leadership Group:**

1. **Receives** the report “Housing System Plan Update”.
2. **Notes** the re-establishment of the Housing System Working Group as a cross-sector forum to support housing delivery across the sub-region.
3. **Supports** the intended completion of a refreshed Housing System Plan in 2026, focused on practical delivery actions over the next three to five years.
4. **Recommends** inclusion of iwi members into the working group.

CARRIED

SG26/03.10 Public Excluded Session

The SmartGrowth Leadership Group:

1. **Agree** that the public be excluded from the following parts of this meeting:
 - a) Approval of Closed Minutes – 15 December 2025
 - b) Priority Development Area Tracker
2. **Note** that this resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and that the report are to be considered in public excluded in accordance with s7(2)(i) - enables any local authority holding information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).
3. **Noted** that at the end of the closed session the meeting will move back into open.

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular

Seconded by: Cr. John Scrimgeour

That it be Resolved

The meeting moved to closed at 3:30pm

The meeting resumed in open at 3:55pm

CARRIED

The following resolution made in the Public Excluded Session be moved to the Open part of the minutes, to give effect to the intention to support matters being addressed by Tauranga City Council.

THESE MINUTES ARE YET TO BE CONFIRMED

Confirmed by the SmartGrowth Leadership Group on 17 June 2026

Page 13 of 187

That it be Resolved

That the **SmartGrowth Leadership Group supports** advocacy that existing PDAs are recognised within the transitional provisions of the new Planning Act, so that these areas can progress ahead of the Regional Spatial Plan and Land Use Plan processes.

SG26/03.11 Other Business

There was no other business

SG26/03.12 Karakia Whakamutunga

Elisha Rolleston formally closed the proceedings.

The meeting concluded at 3:56pm

Confirmed as a true and correct record.

Mayor James Denyer
Chairperson

Date:

Quarterly Report June 2026

| | |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Committee name | SmartGrowth Leadership Group |
| Meeting date | Wednesday, 17 June 2026 |
| Author(s) | SmartGrowth Advisory Team |
| Purpose | Update on SmartGrowth Activities |

Executive Summary

Significant national reform initiatives continue to reshape the operating environment for growth management in the western Bay of Plenty, including local government reorganisation, resource management reform, infrastructure system reform, and implementation of the Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal.

In response, SmartGrowth is actively progressing work programmes that support both the transition to the emerging Regional Spatial Plan framework and delivery of Regional Deal commitments, while maintaining a strong focus on housing delivery, infrastructure coordination and long-term growth outcomes.

Recommendations

That the SmartGrowth Leadership Group:

1. **Receives** the report Quarterly Report June 2026.
2. **Invites** the new Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Tauranga City Council joint water organisation to appoint a representative to the SmartGrowth Leadership Group as provided under the SmartGrowth Leadership Group (Joint Committee) Agreement 2023.

Operating Environment

An updated Operating Environment Statement is provided in Paper E Implementation Plan Update, with highlights and implications noted below.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government escalated its local government reform programme with the “Head Start” pathway, giving groups of councils (other than regional councils) a three-month window (by 5 August 2026) to actively develop reorganisation proposals before central government intervention occurs.

Final decisions are expected in 2027, with changes implemented ahead of the 2028 local elections.

The recent announcement indicates a strong policy direction toward simplified governance arrangements, greater regional coordination, reduced duplication, and larger-scale delivery for infrastructure and planning functions.

This reform direction is closely linked to the replacement resource management system and emerging Regional Spatial Plan framework. Undertaking resource management reform while leaving local government as it is, could be seen as locking in the same problems of fragmented governance and duplicated functions,

creating difficulty in implementing the new planning system and ongoing misalignment between land use, infrastructure and funding.

Local Government System Improvements

In 2025 the Government introduced the Local Government (System Improvements) Bill. The Bill introduces five main changes:

- Refocusing the statutory purpose of local government;
- Placing focus on certain types of “core services”;
- Better measurement and publicising of council performance;
- Strengthening council transparency and accountability rules, to improve the relationship between councils and their communities;
- Reducing some regulatory requirements applying to councils.

The Government has recently announced amendments to the Bill, which is currently before Parliament. The amendments will mean that only elected members will be able to vote on council committees. If enacted, this will have implications for the SmartGrowth Leadership Group, which is a Joint Committee under the Local Government Act 2002. Voting rights for the independent chair, crown representatives, and tangata whenua would be removed under this proposal.

Resource Management System Reform

The Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bills are now before Parliament’s Environment Committee.

The Select Committee is set to report back on 26 June, with legislation expected to be passed into law in September.

Going for Housing Growth

Budget 2026 has allocated \$400 million nationally over four years to introduce a new financial incentive for councils to encourage housing growth. From April 2027, councils will receive payments linked to the number of new homes consented (understood to be annual consents as % of existing dwellings) with higher rates of growth attracting larger payments.

The initiative is intended to address financial disincentives associated with growth and may provide additional funding to support growth-related infrastructure and services. The fund is relatively modest compared with the infrastructure costs associated with growth but will partially offset the costs councils incur in enabling housing growth.

National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga (NES-P)

The NES-P was enacted on 6 June 2026. The NES-P introduces consistent rules that apply directly in all districts. It applied only on Māori land (as defined in Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 2023) and certain types of Māori-owned general land.

The standards provide a nationally consistent framework for enabling papakāinga housing and associated activities on Māori ancestral land and Treaty settlement land¹. The rules override district plan provisions, unless the local rules are more enabling.

¹ <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/legislation/nes-papakaiinga/>

For Tauranga and Western Bay the existing rule framework for Papakainga is similar to the NES. As a result, the practical impact in the Western Bay of Plenty may be less significant than in districts that currently have limited or no papakāinga provisions, although some existing local rules may still need to be reviewed and aligned with the new national standards.

The NES-P works alongside regional plan rules, district plan provisions for matters such as natural hazards, heritage and infrastructure, and the Building Act, which all continue to apply to help ensure safe and sustainable development.

Allied to this, TCC has recently adopted a targeted distribution model for the Council's Papakāinga Fund, focusing on removing key barriers that have prevented developments from progressing.

National Infrastructure Plan

The Government has reaffirmed its statutory obligation to respond to the National Infrastructure Plan in a speech to the Infrastructure NZ conference (26 March).

A response is expected in June 2026 and may be released before the 17 June SLG meeting. An analysis of SmartGrowth implications will be tabled if the response is available before the meeting.

On 22 April, the Government also announced that it will improve how it selects infrastructure projects by making a series of changes to the Investment Management System. This includes transferring responsibility for infrastructure project assurance from The Treasury to the independent NZ Infrastructure Commission.

Local Water Done Well

On 2 April 2026, Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council agreed to establish a joint Water Organisation to deliver water services under the Government's Local Water Done Well reforms.

Regional Deal

A Regional Deal for the Western Bay of Plenty was announced on 14 May 2026.

An update is provided in Paper F Regional Deal Update.

Implementation Plan Workstreams

Implementation Plan Annual Update

The SmartGrowth Implementation Plan was first approved in October 2024, reviewed in June 2025, and is now subject to its 2026 annual update cycle. A separate report is included in Paper G on this agenda. The update primarily addresses implications of the transition to Regional Spatial Plan, and the Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal.

Mapping the Path to an Integrated Regional Spatial Plan

An update on progress of the regional spatial planning programme is provided in the paper from BOPRC (See Paper E). This paper is the report to the Mayoral Forum to be held on 11 June 2026.

Commercial Centre Strategy

The project has now moved into the evidence and engagement phase. A draft economic assessment is underway to inform the future hierarchy, function, and growth direction of commercial centres, with targeted stakeholder engagement commencing in June 2026 and tangata whenua engagement proposed through the Combined Tangata Whenua Forum in July 2026.

The project has identified strategic challenges affecting centre performance and resilience, including fragmented commercial growth outside centres, declining city centre activity, infrastructure alignment issues, transport connectivity, urban design quality, and climate/natural hazard constraints.

The strategy is intended to provide clear direction for the role and function, growth and development across commercial centres within the sub-region.

A draft strategy is anticipated by September 2026, noting implementation pathways will need to adapt to the resource management reforms and Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) process. Next steps and milestones will be confirmed once certainty is provided on the resource management reforms. This will be reported through SMG, SGIG and SLG in due course.

Development Opportunities Process

In 2025, SmartGrowth invited Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for significant development opportunities that are not currently identified in the SmartGrowth Future Development Strategy². Seven proposals were received on a confidential basis covering a range of residential, business land, mixed-use and infrastructure-related developments across the western Bay of Plenty.

The Development Opportunities process is intended to help identify and understand significant future growth opportunities and associated infrastructure requirements, while informing future strategic planning processes. Particular attention is being given to ensure that the information and assessments developed through this work will support and align with the emerging Regional Spatial Planning framework.

SmartGrowth partners have continued detailed assessment of the proposals against agreed strategic, infrastructure and policy criteria, including alignment with Regional Policy Statement provisions relating to unanticipated or out-of-sequence growth.

The Development Opportunities Working Group is currently finalising assessments and considering appropriate next steps for individual proposals. Further engagement with proponents and relevant stakeholders will be undertaken as required, with recommendations and outcomes to be reported through SmartGrowth governance processes after the Planning Act comes into force later this year.

Housing System Plan Refresh

Significant progress has been made on the refresh of the Western Bay of Plenty Housing System Plan (HSP) during the quarter.

The Housing Working Group has completed a series of workshops in April and May to review housing system characteristics, identify priority actions, and align the HSP with recent government policy changes, including the Going for Housing Growth programme and the Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal.

The Working Group has agreed to focus the refreshed Housing System Plan on a small number of well-focused actions that address key system-wide issues and where collective action can make a meaningful difference to housing outcomes in the western Bay of Plenty.

² <https://www.smartgrowthbop.org.nz/smartgrowth-development-opportunities-expressions-of-interest>

The emerging actions are currently organised around three key themes:

- Evidence and Monitoring – establishing a stronger evidence base through development of a Subregional Housing Story and regular monitoring and reporting of housing delivery barriers, trends and emerging issues.
- Housing Policy Advocacy – strengthening the ability of partners to collectively influence central, regional and local policy settings, including engagement with the Government's Housing Investment Plan and implementation of Regional Deal housing initiatives.
- Promoting Housing Choice and Affordability – identifying opportunities to improve housing diversity and affordability, supporting residential intensification, strengthening community housing provider capability, and exploring opportunities to support impact investment in social, affordable and Māori housing.

The initial intention was to have the HSP in a form ready for SLG adoption at its June meeting. However, the timeframe for this proved to be too compressed, meaning HSP approval will now be targeted to adoption by SLG at its September meeting.

The focus for the next quarter will be finalisation of the refreshed Housing System Plan, confirmation of implementation priorities, and establishment of monitoring and reporting arrangements to support delivery.

This will allow engagement on the draft HSP with the Development Sector Group and Combined Tangata Whenua Forum.

A membership list is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Te Puna and Minden Spatial Plan

The Te Puna and Minden Spatial Plan remains in the early engagement stage, with the initial “scout mode” and “community quest” completed. The Community Ideas Forum will now reassemble for a “draft mission” to help develop the Draft Spatial Plan.

Population Projections

Consideration has now been given to expanding the scope of this work across the Bay of Plenty region to support development of a shared regional population evidence base aligned with the Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) process. This approach has received strong support, and the work is now proceeding on this basis.

Updated population projections released by Stats NZ in 2025 indicated a step change in growth assumptions across the Bay of Plenty. A review of these projections has been completed by Waikato University (Te Ngira) and is reported separately in Paper C on this agenda.

A Stage 2 programme would develop regionally consistent growth projections with a more “bottom up” locally informed assessment. Key features of the programme are:

- Regionally consistent 50-year projection scenarios developed to underpin future RSP and LTP decisions on growth, land supply and infrastructure timing.
- Support by a technical working group to provide cross-agency input and assurance on assumptions, methodology and outputs formed from the existing technical group. Central government, tangata whenua and economic sector inputs also need to be considered.
- The project to be managed by the SmartGrowth, with outputs adopted through partner management/governance structures as necessary.
- Management and oversight arrangements to be reviewed quarterly by SMG to ensure alignment with evolving RSP direction and programme requirements.

A project funding model has been agreed with funding contributions allocated across partners to reflect regional benefit and relative scale.

Marae as Centres Implementation Framework

Tū Pakari and the Combined Tangata Whenua Forum (CTWF) are progressing development of a Marae as Centres (MAC) Implementation Framework to support delivery of the SmartGrowth Strategy and inform future Regional Spatial Planning work.

The framework seeks to translate the Marae as Centres concept from a strategic aspiration into a practical implementation pathway that supports Māori housing, economic development, infrastructure planning, environmental stewardship, and community wellbeing. It is intended to provide a stronger evidence base for integrating tangata whenua priorities into future growth planning, investment decisions, and statutory planning processes.

During the quarter, CTWF considered a discussion paper on the framework and provided feedback on its purpose, scope, outcomes, and implementation. Key themes included the role of marae as community hubs, the importance of supporting Māori land development, infrastructure and emergency management needs, economic development opportunities, and the need for clear implementation pathways and measurable outcomes.

The SmartGrowth Implementation Plan has recently strengthened the Marae as Centres work programme, including a specific focus on informing future Regional Spatial Planning. A project plan is now being prepared with support from SmartGrowth advisors and will be considered by CTWF's Te Rōpū Arotahi. Supporting work is also underway to identify existing tangata whenua spatial planning information and data gaps that will help inform the development of the framework.

This work represents an important step in strengthening the integration of tangata whenua aspirations into long-term growth planning and investment decisions across the Western Bay of Plenty sub-region.

Waka Kotahi Strategic Transport Plans

Work is proceeding with early engagement for both the Tauranga Urban Network Strategy and Hamilton to Tauranga Corridor Strategy. The Strategy work plans were presented to CTWF by Waka Kotahi on 12 May, and direction given on further engagement.

A separate detailed update from NZTA is included on the Agenda.

The Implementation Plan update recommends that these key workstreams be recognised as Subregion-wide Key Actions and reported quarterly through SMG, SGIG and SLG. Waka Kotahi supports this approach.

Hamilton to Tauranga Corridor Spatial Study

Following approval of the recommendations by Future Proof and SmartGrowth governance, a joint meeting was held on 8 May to jointly sign off of the Study and to discuss implementation.

The meeting highlighted the importance of rail transport, both freight and passenger, and the blue green network, and ensuring that this thinking is not “lost in the ether” during planning reform and local government reorganisation.

The meeting discussed follow-up actions being taken jointly by FP and SG and providing monitoring and regular reporting on progress.

The meeting on 8 May also highlighted the need for clarity on the timing of key decisions to ensure that the right conversations occur at the right time. Direction was given to develop a timeline with key decision pathways identified.

Monitoring

Priority Development Areas

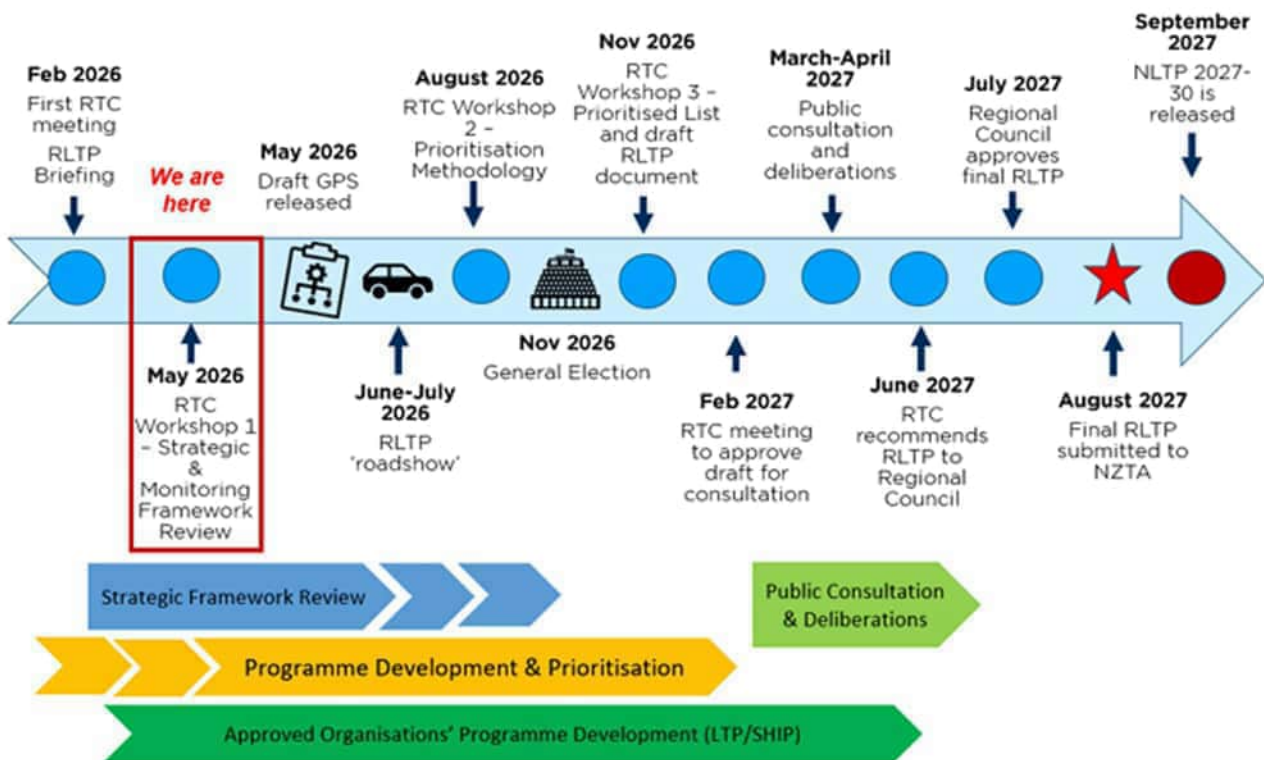
A separate report is included in the closed section of this agenda.

Strategic Alignment

Regional Land Transport Plan

A governance workshop held on 8 May 2026 reviewed the strategic framework and monitoring framework for the next RLTP.

The RLTP Development Timeline is shown below:



SmartGrowth will assist in ensuring the RLTP is aligned with the most up to date policy direction as the process goes forward including the 2024 SmartGrowth Strategy and FDS, the Implementation Plan, and the H2T Spatial Strategy, the UNISA Infrastructure Development Plan, and any outputs from the Commercial Centres Strategy.

Transport System Plan

See TSP update in **Appendix 2**.

A recent TSP Governance Group Hui was held on 9 June 2026.

UNISA

UNISA met in Auckland on Friday 24 April. The meeting confirmed an emerging 2026–2028 strategic focus centered on resilient, affordable, and nationally significant infrastructure connections across the Upper North Island.

Priority areas identified include an integrated Upper North Island port strategy, freight and route resilience across road and rail networks, infrastructure affordability and value-for-money, and coordinated advocacy to central government on nationally significant issues including energy resilience, natural environment management, emergency response, and Māori economic development.

Of relevance to SmartGrowth is the emphasis on integrated Upper North Island freight and economic corridor planning, including the strategic relationship between the Port of Tauranga, Auckland and Northland ports, and inland freight hubs such as Ruakura. The work programme also aligns strongly with existing joint H2T corridor initiatives and broader inter-regional spatial planning discussions.

Energy Leadership Group

The Energy Leadership Group was established by Priority One in November 2025 to support regional thinking on the energy challenges and opportunities associated with Tauranga’s long-term growth. Its initial work programme was developed through a Strategic Doing workshop that identified and prioritised a shortlist of initiatives. From this, the group selected development of a regional future energy scenario model as its highest-value initiative.

This modelling work will be undertaken by an engineering student from the University of Waikato, with guidance from the group to ensure scenarios, assumptions, and constraints reflect local conditions and realistic growth pathways. In addition to informing regional energy planning, the initiative provides an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between local industry and the university.

A second priority initiative is a programme of targeted energy events for local organisations. These events are intended to build capability across the region by providing practical learning opportunities and creating structured forums for businesses to share knowledge, experience, and lessons on specific energy topics.

A consistent theme emerging from the energy strategy work over the past 18 months has been that uncertainty remains a significant barrier to investment and action. These events are therefore designed to reduce both technical and commercial uncertainty by increasing understanding of emerging or underutilised technologies and their application. The first event is scheduled for 2 July and will focus on energy storage—an area with growing relevance for the region given its potential to improve resilience and support more flexible management of future electricity demand.

The group has also engaged with Transpower on its Te Kānapu Future Grid Blueprint. This work explores a range of hypothetical future scenarios for New Zealand’s economy and considers how these different pathways could affect the national electricity grid. The Energy Leadership Group participated in a Transpower-facilitated workshop to provide Bay of Plenty input, helping test what these national scenarios could mean for the region and ensuring local perspectives are reflected in wider system planning.

Stakeholder Communications and Engagement

Development Sector Group (DSG)

The DSG met in April. Updates from SG partners included the RM Reform and RSP transition issues.

A significant concern was raised at the meeting over the potential for previously agreed growth decisions in the Strategy and FDS to be revisited through the transition to the new planning system.

There is a clear signal from the development sector that uncertainty around how existing spatial strategies, growth areas and development pathways will be treated under Regional Spatial Plans will affect confidence and investment decisions.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10 June where updates will be given by SG on the Implementation update and progress with the Housing System Plan. Local Government partners will provide updates on the RSP programme and other workstreams.

Governance, Management and Administration

Local Water Done Well Representation on SLG

The SmartGrowth Leadership Group (Joint Committee) Agreement 2023 includes provision for “Water Services Entity B” to be represented on the Leadership Group, by a nominated person with speaking rights but in a non-voting capacity.

With the establishment of the new joint water organisation, an invitation should be made for the appointment of a representative as intended by the Agreement.

As for the other similar partnership entity memberships, this may be either a governance or executive level appointee.

Combined Tangata Whenua Forum (CTWF)

Heta Gardiner and Hakopa Tapiata have recently been confirmed as the Combined Tangata Whenua Forum representatives on the SmartGrowth Leadership Group. We welcome Heta and Hakopa and acknowledge the ongoing contribution of CTWF representatives to SmartGrowth and we recognise the valuable and articulate mana whenua input Riki Nelson provided during his time on Committee since March 2023.

CTWF is progressing initiatives to strengthen tangata whenua participation in SmartGrowth implementation, in two phases. Phase 1 proposes appointment of tangata whenua representation on the SmartGrowth Implementation Group and SmartGrowth Management Group. Subject to review of the Phase 1 arrangements and effectiveness, Phase 2 will consider representation on selected technical working groups such as the PDA Working Group. This approach is modelled on similar arrangements for the Transport System Plan and new Water Organisation.

Appendix 1 – Housing System Working Group – Membership

Housing System Working Group – Membership

| Name | Affiliation | Working Group Role |
|------------------|--|--------------------|
| Craig Batchelar | SmartGrowth | Interim Chair |
| Josephine Tam | Kainga Ora | Programme Lead |
| Adele Hadfield | Bay of Plenty Regional Council | Member |
| Lucy Holden | Bay of Plenty Regional Council | Member |
| Carl Lucca | Tauranga City Council | Member |
| Helen Peat | Tauranga City Council | Member |
| Jodie Rickard | Western Bay of Plenty District Council | Member |
| Libby Gosling | Accessible Properties Limited (APL) | Member |
| Tania Wilson | Accessible Properties Limited (APL) | Member |
| Sam Cummins | Bay Trust | Member |
| Terri Eggleton | Bay Trust | Member |
| Hope Simonsen | Emerge Aotearoa | Member |
| James Widgery | Emerge Aotearoa | Member |
| Gareth Pottinger | Kainga Ora | Member |
| Dan Shenton | MHUD | Member |
| Sarah Stevenson | MHUD | Member |
| Jacob Davies | MSD | Member |
| Jacqui Arstall | MSD | Member |
| Jacqui Ryan | Tauranga Community Housing Trust | Member |
| Kyle Dickinson | Urban Task Force | Member |
| Scott Adams | Urban Task Force (Chair) | Member |
| Nichola Lennard | SmartGrowth | Member |
| Te Pio Kawe | SmartGrowth | Member |
| Roy Thompson | BOP Housing Equity Fund | Information Only |
| Greg Simmons | Priority One | Information Only |

Appendix 2 – TSP Update

TSP Update Report – Information Only

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Committee name | SmartGrowth Leadership Group |
| Meeting date | Wednesday, 17 June 2026 |
| Author(s) | Paul Tarrant - TSP Programme Manager |
| Purpose | Update Report – Information Only |

This report provides an update on the current TSP programme for 2026 and 2027, including progress since the previous SmartGrowth Leadership Group (SLG) meeting.

Matthew Kilpatrick has now left the Bay of Plenty Regional Council and has handed over the Transport System Plan responsibilities to Paul Tarrant at Tauranga City Council, who is now acting as the TSP Programme Manager.

The revised operating model has placed the TSP in a ‘low resource mode’. Changes to the Government Policy Statement on land transport (GPS) 2024 have significantly altered the funding landscape. In particular, the 2024–27 NLTP includes a substantial increase in investment for State Highway improvements (approximately \$1 billion over three years), alongside a reduction in funding for local road improvements and partnership-based approaches such as TSP. As a result, the Executive Steering Group (ESG) has agreed to transition the TSP into a low resource mode for the next 12 months.

To reflect the revised operating model, the primary focus of the TSP programme for 2026/27 is the Transport System Operating Framework (TSOF) Version 3 review. This review recalibrates the existing 30-year transport programme to reflect updated information and policy changes since the last review was completed in mid-2023. The review is undertaken every three years to broadly align with the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP), which is guided by the GPS.

Working groups made up of representatives from across the partnership have been established to support TSOF Version 3 and provide additional resourcing to the lead consultant, Beca Ltd. Nichola Leonard is part of this working group to ensure alignment with SmartGrowth.

Ensuring alignment and integration between TSOF and these processes is critical to securing local share funding from partners and supporting inclusion in the RLTP for consideration of NZTA funding. Key dates for these wider partner organisation processes are set out below:

Table 1 - TSP Partner Timelines

| Organisation | LTP / RLTP / SHIP Phase | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| | Pre-Engagement | Consultation | Adoption |
| Tauranga City Council | September – October 2026 | November – December 2026 | June 2027 |
| Bay of Plenty RC - LTP | September – October 2026 | March – April 2027 | June 2027 |
| NZTA (SHIP) | | February – March 2027 | August 2027 |
| NZTA NLTP | August 2026 – January 2027 | | August 2027 |
| WBOPDC | August – October 2026 | March – April 2027 | June 2027 |
| Bay of Plenty RC - RLTP | N/A | March 2027 | June 2027 |

The final version of Transport System Operating Framework Version 3 has been agreed and recently endorsed by the TSP Project Management Group. This will help inform the RLTP and LTP processes, as well as funding considerations, to guide investment in transport system improvements that deliver shared objectives.

Strategic Transport Plan update

SmartGrowth SLG - June 2026

Overview

- Hamilton to Tauranga Strategic Corridor Plan
 - Recap - Why? and context
 - Part 1 Initial Findings - Key challenges
- Tauranga Strategic Urban Network Plan
 - Recap - Why? and context
 - Part 1 Initial Findings - Key challenges
- Māori Engagement
- Timeframe and next steps

Hamilton to Tauranga Strategic Corridor Plan – Recap Why? and Context

Focus of the plan

- This plan focuses on the state highways connecting Hamilton and Tauranga (1, 2, 24, 26, 27, 28 and 29) and the East Coast Main Trunk line (ECMT) rail corridor from Hamilton to Tauranga including associated spur railways.
- We are doing this plan because there have been significant changes since our previous long-term planning for the corridor was undertaken. This includes the opening of the Waikato Expressway and Ruakura inland port, as well as project specific planning for RoNS projects (Hamilton Southern Links, Cambridge to Piarere and Tauriko West).
- We are using the FutureProof (Waikato) and SmartGrowth (Bay of Plenty) partnerships to engage on this work. Key stakeholders such as KiwiRail have been actively engaged.

Context

- The Hamilton–Tauranga corridor is one of New Zealand’s most strategically important transport links, forming a core part of the Upper North Island (UNI) network, connecting Waikato, and the Bay of Plenty via road and rail.
- Collectively with Northland and Auckland, the UNI accounts for 53% of New Zealand’s population and generates 55% of national GDP. This network supports inter-regional movements between the rapidly growing cities of Hamilton and Tauranga.
- The network connects NZ’s largest port (by volume), the Port of Tauranga to inland logistics hubs in the Waikato and the wider UNI and NZ economy.
- The UNI is projected to account for over 70% of NZ’s growth over the next 30 years (approx. 1million over 30 years). This will place increasing pressure on the highways and railways within the Hamilton-Tauranga corridor.



 Area of focus for the plan
 State Highways that are a focus of the plan
 ↔ Movement flows

Hamilton to Tauranga: Part 1 key challenges – initial findings



Safety, resilience and reliability deficits are concentrated and intensify on the most constrained segments

- The SH1/SH29 corridor is a critical connection for interregional movements between Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga. If performance erodes, supply-chain costs rise, reliability falls, diversion pressure increases, and the economic impact is system-wide across the Upper North Island.
- Deficiencies on the SH29 Kaimai Range (Te Poi–Tauriko) and SH1 Cambridge–Piarere result in a disproportionate share of deaths and serious injuries, closures, and unpredictable journey times; incident disruption will increasingly cascade across the wider network.



Growth pressures undermine the efficiency of all types of trips

- Current and planned housing and industrial development pressure on the outskirts of Hamilton and Tauranga is causing pressure on the state highway network to provide for both local trips and its interregional freight/connection role.



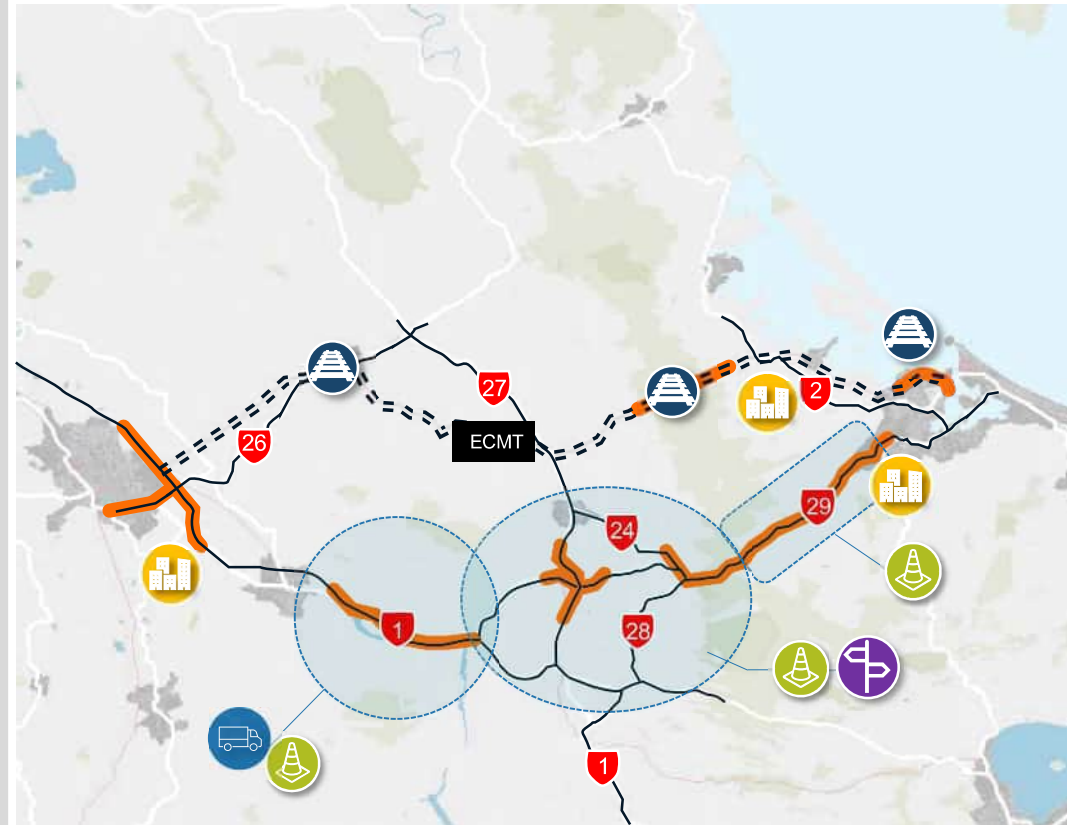
The role of rail for freight is strategically important but greater utilisation is constrained

- Single-track sections, the Kaimai Tunnel, lack of electrification, level crossings and resilience vulnerabilities limit the growth of freight capacity on the ECMT.
- The state highway network is used by a high proportion of heavy vehicles (~13-15%). This compounds crash risk, worsens journey time unreliability, accelerates pavement/structure deterioration, and increases whole-of-life cost to maintain acceptable service levels.
- The road network will need to accommodate growth in freight volumes if rail capacity and reliability is not increased – this has consequences for the investment needed to improve and maintain the road network.



There is duplication in parts of the network as travel patterns change

- Diversion of traffic onto the secondary routes of SH24, SH26, SH27, SH28 can shift safety and amenity impacts onto rural communities and still deliver poorer and less reliable travel times.
- Secondary routes can help during incidents but cannot substitute at scale due to lower standards, higher access density and higher risk.
- SH27 south of Matamata and SH28 are increasingly providing for local connections rather than a wider state highway function.



Key gap or constraint

Cambridge to Piarere RoNS

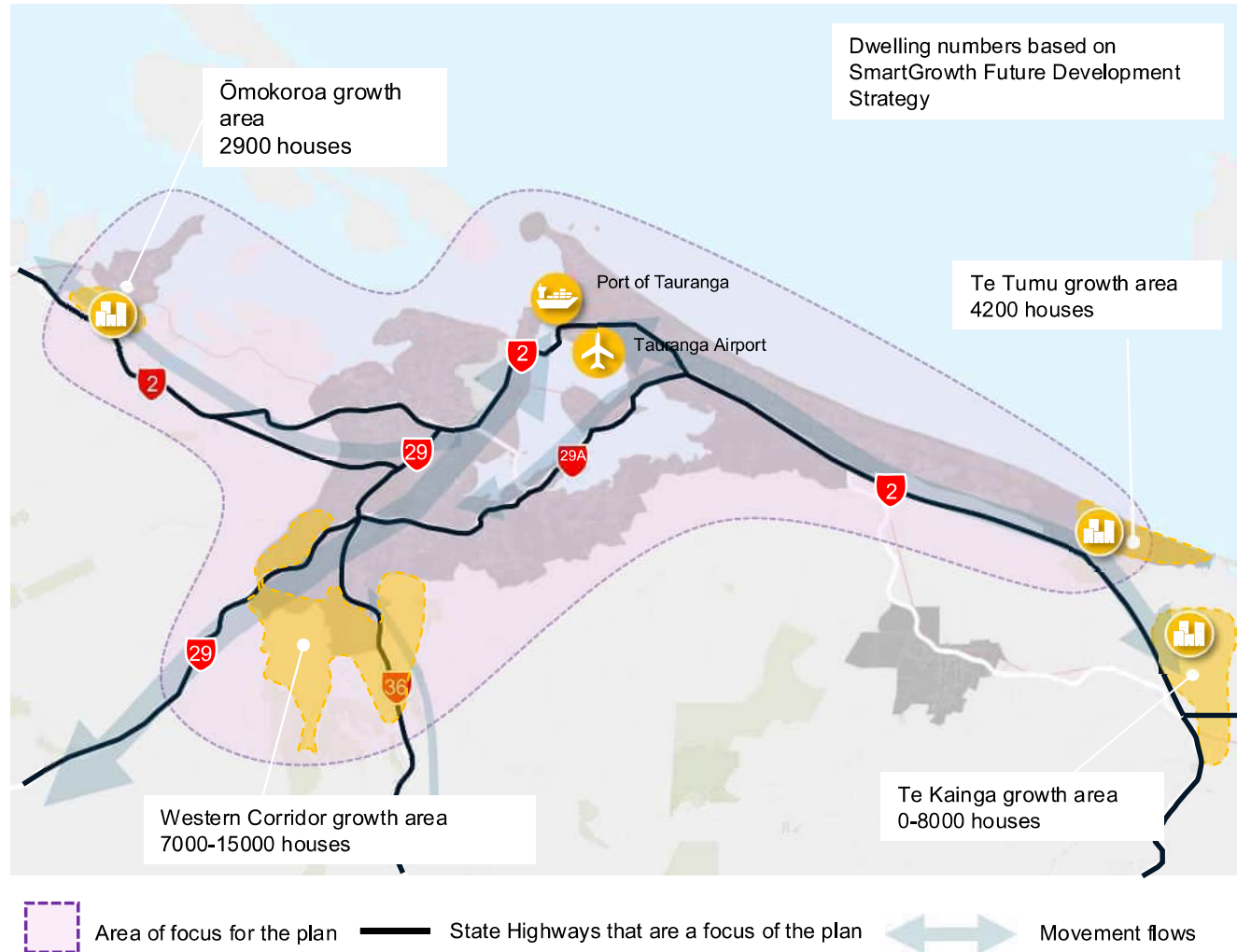
Tauranga Strategic Urban Networks Plan - Recap Why? and Context

Focus of the plan

- This plan focuses on Tauranga's urban state highway network while also considering the roles of rail and key complementary local roads.
- We are doing this plan because to guide when, where, and how interventions are made to the Tauranga state highway network, integrating recent business case decisions and addressing corridor deficiencies to meet future needs and statutory requirements, and deliver on agreed outcomes.
- We are using the SmartGrowth (Bay of Plenty) partnership to engage on this work.

Context

- The Port of Tauranga is a critical destination in the Upper North Island logistics chain. It is New Zealand's main international gateway accounting for 32% of New Zealand's total trade by volume and 47% of all export trade by value.
- The BOP region contributes \$20.5 billion per annum to the New Zealand's economy, with Tauranga-based import and export trade activities contributing around 9% of New Zealand's GDP.
- The Tauranga urban state highways need to provide for several competing roles:
 - Enabling people to move around and across Te Awanui (Tauranga Harbour) to access destinations throughout the city.
 - Providing inter-regional freight access to the PoT from the wider UNI and elsewhere in NZ
 - Enabling planned growth and providing access to key logistic centres and businesses within Tauranga.
- Tauranga is one of the fastest growing cities in NZ, with the population expected to grow by 56% (121,300 people) over the next 30 years
- In the future, journey times on the urban state highway network are forecast to worsen with the increase in freight across the UNI, population growth, and high use of single occupancy private vehicles.



Tauranga Urban: Key challenges



Limited connections across the harbours and around the city, along with poor travel choices concentrates demand onto the urban SH network

- The state highways perform competing dual roles of moving nationally significant inter-regional travel and freight while also supporting local access and movement.
- Competing demands are expected to continue to reduce reliability for inter-regional freight and travel and make local trips slower and less predictable.
- High levels of private vehicle use (75.6%) means the network continues to reach capacity sooner at peak periods and congestion impacts spread more widely.



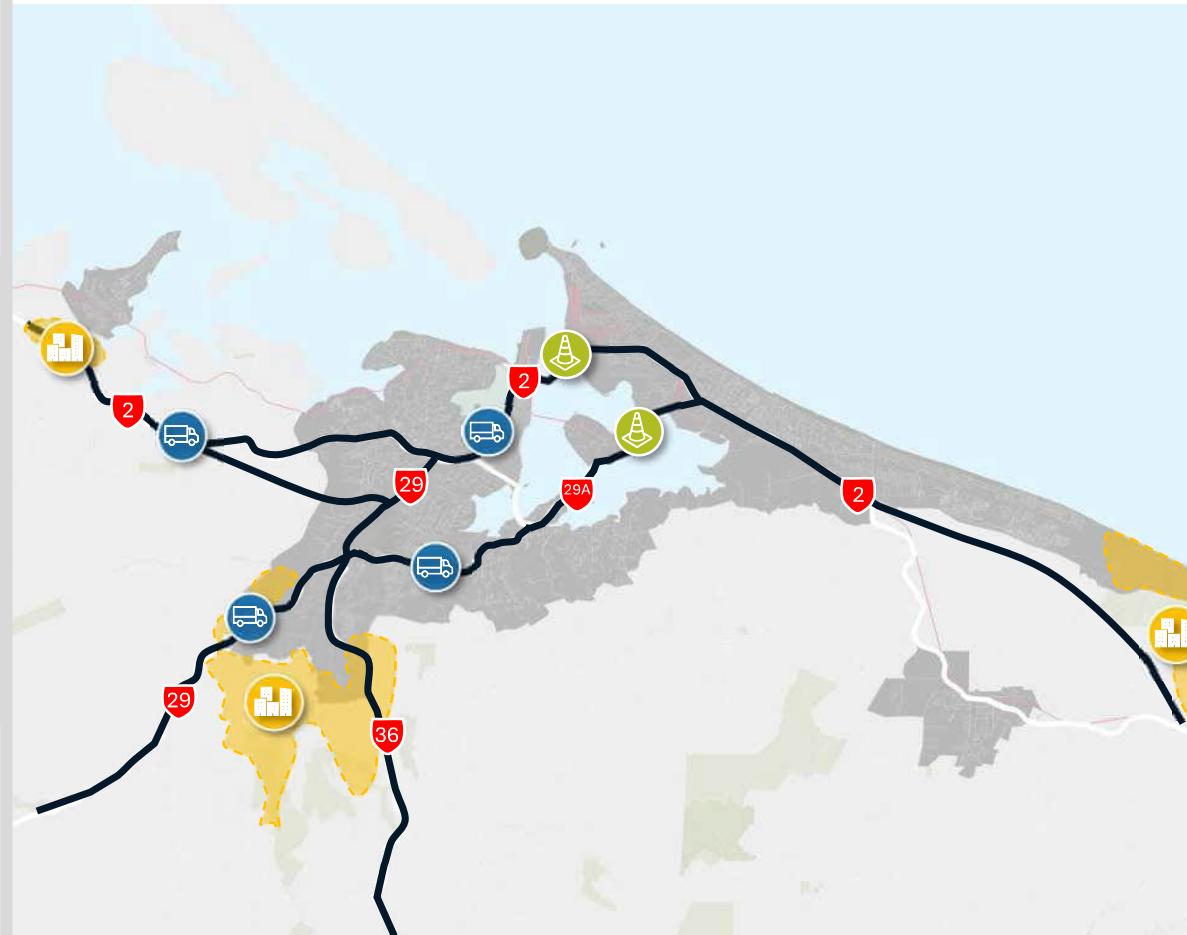
Current and future levels of population and economic growth is increasing pressure on the urban SH network

- Large scale development occurring at the edge of the city and key destinations concentrated in/near the central Te Papa peninsula is increasing the frequency and length of local trips on the state highway network
- Regional growth plans rely on significant changes to the role and function of some sections of the state highway network. The ability to implementing these changes and the implications on the wider transport system are not well understood.



The network is vulnerable to disruptions with limited route options and high exposure to natural hazards

- Limited routes around and across Tauranga Harbour leaves the network vulnerable to disruption. Climate events, incidents, or maintenance can quickly sever key connections and create city-wide delays and detours.
- Growth is exacerbating impacts on health, safety, and the environment across the urban state highway network, particularly in sections of the network that have not had recent investment / are of a lower standard.



Māori Engagement

- Key output from initial engagement was building an understanding of how to engage with the development of the plan;
- Initial insights to feed into plan include:
 - Access to marae. Resilient access important during natural events when marae become lifelines;
 - Access to Māori land and enabling opportunities;
 - Role of rail
 - Noise and air quality; and
 - Stormwater run-off and management.

Timeframes & next steps

- Next steps:
 - Phase 2 Māori engagement
 - Part 2 Consideration of strategic responses and choices to address identified challenges.
 - Engagement on initial findings of Part 2



Part 1 -
Understanding the challenge

Part 2 -
Strategic approach

Part 3 -
Identifying activities

Hei konā mai Thank you



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Population Projections Review

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Committee name | SmartGrowth Leadership Group |
| Meeting date | Wednesday, 17 June 2026 |
| Author(s) | BOP Regional Population Working Group; Michael Cameron Te Ngira |
| Purpose | Present the findings of an independent review of the Stats NZ 2023-base population projections. |

Summary

The BOP Population Projections Working Group commissioned the University of Waikato's Te Ngira Institute for Population Research to undertake an independent review of the Stats NZ 2023-base population projections for the Bay of Plenty region.

The review was commissioned following previous reporting that identified a significant upward revision in projected long-term population growth for both the Bay of Plenty region and the SmartGrowth sub-region compared with earlier projection series. This increase has important implications for future housing demand, infrastructure investment, growth sequencing and long-term planning.

The work also responds to the evolving national policy environment, including the Government's Going for Housing Growth proposals, which place increased emphasis on planning for long-term housing and business land demand and may require greater reliance on Stats NZ high population projections when assessing future development capacity requirements.

The review examines the methodology and assumptions underpinning the Stats NZ projections, assesses the reasons for the revised growth outlook, and considers the implications for growth management and infrastructure planning across the Bay of Plenty.

The report (see Appendix 1) concludes that the Stats NZ projections remain an appropriate starting point for planning purposes but should be supplemented by local evidence, ongoing monitoring and scenario testing to ensure planning remains responsive to changing local circumstances and development capacity constraints.

Recommendations

That the SmartGrowth Leadership Group:

1. **Receives** the report Population Projections Review

Appendix 1: Population Projection – TeNigra – Commissioned Research Report – June 2026



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

**Review of Stats NZ 2023-base Population Projections
for the Bay of Plenty Region**

Michael P. Cameron ^{a,b}

^a Economics Group, University of Waikato

^b Te Ngira – Institute for Population Research, University of Waikato

Commissioned Research Report

Prepared for Bay of Plenty Population Working Group

June 2026

Review of Stats NZ 2023-base Population Projections for the Bay of Plenty Region

Any queries regarding this report should be addressed to:

Professor Michael P. Cameron
Economics Group
Waikato Management School
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240
E-mail: mcam@waikato.ac.nz
Phone: +64 7 858 5082.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not reflect any official position on the part of the University of Waikato.

Disclaimer

The projections discussed in this report are based on historical data and assumptions made by the authors. The University of Waikato will not be held liable for any loss suffered through the use, directly or indirectly, of the information contained in this report.

Acknowledgements

We thank Statistics New Zealand for providing much of the data used to generate these demographic projections. We also thank Ayvron Greenaway, Chloe Thyne, Craig Batchelar, Daniel Smith, and Sean Callis for their insightful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft report.

© 2026 Waikato Management School
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton
New Zealand

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Disclaimer | i |
| Acknowledgements..... | i |
| Table of Contents | ii |
| List of Figures | ii |
| List of Tables | ii |
| Executive Summary | iii |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Going for Housing Growth..... | 1 |
| 3. Review of Stats NZ Methods and Demographic Assumptions | 3 |
| 3.1 Stats NZ methods..... | 3 |
| 3.2 Stats NZ fertility assumptions | 5 |
| 3.3 Stats NZ mortality (Survivorship) assumptions..... | 6 |
| 3.4 Stats NZ net migration assumptions | 7 |
| 4. Material Changes between 2013-base, 2018-base, and 2023-base Stats NZ Projections..... | 9 |
| 5. Limitations of using Nationally-Derived Projection Assumptions at the Subnational Level..... | 14 |
| 6. Implications for Growth Sequencing, Infrastructure Planning, and Development Capacity Risk..... | 16 |
| 6.1 Implications for growth sequencing and infrastructure planning | 17 |
| 6.2 Key areas of uncertainty and risk | 18 |
| 6.3 Potential impacts of persistent development capacity shortfalls | 19 |
| 7. Conclusions | 20 |
| References | 23 |
| Appendix | 25 |

List of Figures

| | | |
|----------|---|----|
| Figure 1 | Regional population growth rate 2018-2023 and change in medium-variant population projections between the 2018-base and 2023-base projections..... | 12 |
| Figure 2 | Territorial authority and local board population growth rate 2018-2023 and change in medium-variant population projections between the 2018-base and 2023-base projections..... | 14 |

List of Tables

| | | |
|----------|--|----|
| Table 1 | Stats NZ fertility assumptions, 2023-2023..... | 5 |
| Table 2 | Stats NZ life expectancy assumptions, 2023-2053 | 7 |
| Table 3 | Stats NZ net migration assumptions, 2023-2053 | 8 |
| Table 4 | Comparisons of recent Stats NZ medium-variant projections | 10 |
| Table A1 | Comparison of 2053 projected population between Stats NZ 2023-base projections and University of Waikato 2023-base projections | 25 |

Executive Summary

This report reviews Stats NZ's 2023-base population projections for the Bay of Plenty region, with a focus on how they should be interpreted for long-term growth planning, infrastructure sequencing, and development capacity decisions. The review is particularly important in light of the proposed Going for Housing Growth reforms.

Stats NZ's subnational population projections are demographic projections, not forecasts. They show how population could change under specified assumptions about fertility, mortality, and net migration. The low, medium, and high variants should therefore be understood as a planning envelope rather than as "wrong" and "right" alternatives.

Stats NZ uses a standard cohort-component method, in which future population is derived from assumptions about future births, deaths, and migration. The projections also use a top-down approach, meaning that national projections are prepared first and subnational projections are constrained within them. This provides consistency across areas, but it also means the projections are not driven by a full local growth model, and do not explicitly model local drivers.

Net migration is the most uncertain and policy-sensitive component of the projections. Fertility and mortality assumptions matter, but future growth in the Bay of Plenty will depend most heavily on whether people can and choose to move into the region. Stats NZ's migration assumptions combine internal and international migration, but these components are not separately presented at the regional or territorial authority level. The assumed migration pattern is not generated from a formal economic model of jobs, house prices, land supply, or infrastructure capacity.

The 2023-base projections assume substantial net migration into the Bay of Plenty, with most of that migration concentrated in the SmartGrowth subregion of Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District. Under all three Stats NZ variants, SmartGrowth accounts for the overwhelming majority of projected regional net migration. By contrast, Kawerau and Ōpōtiki Districts are assumed to experience low to no net migration, while Rotorua and Whakatāne Districts are more sensitive to the choice of variant, with negative net migration under the low projection and positive net migration under the high projection.

A key finding is that the 2023-base projections imply substantially higher long-term growth than previous projection rounds. The projected Bay of Plenty population in 2043 has increased from 353,100 in the 2013-base projections to 438,400 in the 2023-base projections: an increase

of more than 85,000 people, or 24 percent. The largest absolute increases are for Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District, while the largest relative increases are for Kawerau and Ōpōtiki Districts.

Some upward revision is to be expected as new data become available, especially for fast-growing areas that may previously have been under-projected. However, the scale of the upward revision for the Bay of Plenty is larger than can be explained by observed population growth between 2018 and 2023. This may reflect Stats NZ improving its assumptions for the region. However, it may also represent an over-correction, from projections that were previously too pessimistic to projections that may now be too optimistic, particularly for the SmartGrowth subregion.

This creates important planning risks. For the SmartGrowth subregion, the main risk is that the Stats NZ projections, especially the high variant, may be too high relative to realised growth. This could lead to stranded infrastructure, increased up-front development costs, and financial sustainability risks if capacity and infrastructure are provided ahead of demand that does not eventuate. However, if housing and infrastructure capacity falls short while demand remains strong, the result may instead be higher prices and rents, crowding, congestion, longer commutes, and displacement of lower-income households and key workers. For the Rotorua Lakes and the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion, the risk is different. The key task for those councils is to avoid under-planning for moderate or uncertain growth.

The risks across the Bay of Plenty are therefore asymmetric. Adopting a single Stats NZ projection variant across the region risks over-projecting some subregions while under-projecting others. The University of Waikato projections provide a useful comparison because they separately model internal and international migration and use a bottom-up approach. Compared with Stats NZ's 2023-base projections, they are lower for the SmartGrowth subregion, similar but with a wider range for Rotorua, and generally higher for the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion.

Overall, Stats NZ's projections provide an important official starting point, but they should not be treated as definitive forecasts or a complete local growth model. Councils should supplement them with local evidence, and consider whether the University of Waikato projections provide an improved alternative. If Stats NZ projections are retained for planning purposes, constructive engagement with Stats NZ is imperative.

1. Introduction

The Bay of Plenty is one of the fastest growing regions in the 2023-base Stats NZ population projections (Stats NZ, 2025).¹ Thus, it is important to consider the validity and accuracy of population projections for the region. On behalf of the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum and the SmartGrowth Implementation Group, the Population Projections Working Group approached the University of Waikato in 2026 with a request to review Stats NZ 2023-base population projections for the Bay of Plenty region. This request reflected the significance of the national government’s proposed Going for Housing Growth reforms (MHUD and MfE, 2025),² which could require ‘Tier 1 and 2’ local councils (including Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, and Rotorua District Council) to plan for thirty years of housing and business land demand using the Stats NZ high-variant population projections and contingency allowances. The review will help ensure planning and infrastructure decisions are based on robust and well-understood evidence. This brief report presents that review, concentrating on where the local government planners and decision-makers in the region may need to qualify, supplement, or contextualise the use of Stats NZ projections, along with advice on constructive engagement with Stats NZ.

The report considers the whole Bay of Plenty region, and where appropriate separately considers the SmartGrowth subregion (Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District), Rotorua Lakes subregion (Rotorua District), and the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion (Whakatāne District, Kawerau District, and Ōpōtiki District), or the six individual territorial authorities that largely constitute the Bay of Plenty region.³

2. Going for Housing Growth

An important contextual aspect of this report is the national government’s Going for Housing Growth (GHG) reforms. The 2025 GHG discussion paper (MHUD and MfE, 2025) proposes housing growth targets for Tier 1 and Tier 2 councils (including Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, and Rotorua District

¹ See also: <https://www.SmartGrowthbop.org.nz/>

² See also: <https://www.hud.govt.nz/our-work/going-for-housing-growth-programme>

³ A brief technical caution is warranted. The Bay of Plenty region is not contiguous with the boundaries of the constituent territorial authorities, so where projection outputs are presented in this report, the territorial authority totals do not sum to the regional total. Specifically, part of Rotorua District is in the Waikato region, while part of Taupō District is in the Bay of Plenty region.

Council). In the new resource management system, those councils would be required to “enable enough feasible and realistic development capacity to meet 30 years of demand based on high household projections, plus a 20 percent contingency margin” (MHUD and MfE, 2025, p.18) in their regulatory plan. This is a marked change from the current approach under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD), where only short-term capacity (0-3 years) must be enabled in an operative district plan, medium-term capacity (3-10 years) may be in an operative or proposed plan, and long-term capacity (10-30+ years) only needs to be identified in a Future Development Strategy. For business land, the GHG discussion paper separately proposes that councils should enable enough business capacity in regulatory plans to meet long-term (30-year) demand, with councils retaining discretion over the projections used because there are no centrally provided business-land demand projections.

The paper notes that all development capacity required to meet the housing growth target would need to be enabled in the regulatory plan, but “not expected that all capacity will be immediately serviced by infrastructure” (MHUD and MfE, 2025, p.18). It also states that it would generally be unviable to provide infrastructure at once to service all plan-enabled capacity. Accordingly, the infrastructure components of development capacity would remain staggered over time and based on councils’ assessment of the most likely demand scenario. The infrastructure-ready capacity requirements are described as generally based on the NPS-UD, while allowing more scope for infrastructure that is privately funded, privately delivered, or both, to count towards medium- and long-term capacity. Under the NPS-UD definition, capacity is infrastructure-ready in the short term where adequate development infrastructure already exists, in the medium term where that infrastructure exists or funding is identified in a long-term plan, and in the long term where it is identified in the local authority's infrastructure strategy.

With respect to demand projections, the proposals are that councils would:

- use the growth projection they consider most likely for infrastructure planning and for meeting the infrastructure component of development capacity;
- have discretion over the projections used for business land demand, because there are no centrally provided projections;
- determine housing growth targets using 30-year household projections to be provided on the MHUD website, based on Statistics NZ SA2 high-variant projections; and

- include a 20 percent contingency margin in the housing growth target, “in place of the current competitiveness margin” (MHUD and MfE, 2025, p.20), on top of growth projections. The stated rationale for the margin is that “the risks of undersupply are much higher than oversupply” (MHUD and MfE, 2025, p.20).

Additional standardisation proposed for housing growth targets includes:

- each relevant council would have its own target, applying only to the urban environment (not rural or semi-rural areas);
- councils within an urban environment could transfer a portion of a target between themselves by mutual agreement;
- councils would aggregate relevant urban SA2 areas to produce a household projection for their urban environment, then convert this to demand for dwellings; and
- councils could choose a higher housing projection, but not a lower one.

1. Review of Stats NZ Methods and Demographic Assumptions

3.1 Stats NZ methods

Stats NZ’s 2023-base subnational population projections are scenario-based projections, not forecasts.⁴ Stats NZ is explicit that the projections are intended as an indication of broad future trends, not a year-by-year prediction of what will happen. They do not attempt to incorporate non-demographic shocks such as major policy changes, wars, catastrophes, major investment decisions, or other events that could materially change population outcomes. Instead, the projections show how population could change under specified assumptions about fertility, mortality and migration, using the estimated resident population at 30 June 2023 as the base and projecting to 2053 at five-year intervals (Stats NZ, 2025). Stats NZ considers the medium projection suitable for assessing future population change at the time of release, but the low and high variants are important for stress-testing planning decisions.

Stats NZ’s subnational projections use a demographic projection approach in which future population is shaped by three core drivers: (1) fertility; (2) mortality; and (3) net migration. The projections indicate the possible future size and age-sex structure of populations in New

⁴ See: <https://datainfolplus.stats.govt.nz/item/nz.govt.stats/94473b3b-645a-4728-b689-5dac9c38ef83/63>

Zealand's 16 regional council areas, 67 territorial authority areas, and Auckland local board areas, based on different combinations of those assumptions and current policy settings (Stats NZ, 2025).

The broad model that Stats NZ employs is the standard cohort-component method, which dates back at least to Whelpton (1928). This is also the type of model employed by the University of Waikato in projections that are used in planning by FutureProof and the Waikato Regional Council (Cameron, 2025; Cameron and Cochrane, 2021; Cameron 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; Cameron and Cochrane, 2014; 2015; 2016; Jackson et al., 2014b; Cameron et al. 2007; 2008). It was also the method employed in 2013-base population projections by the University of Waikato for the SmartGrowth subregion (Jackson et al., 2014a). In this method, the base population is aged forward by sex and age cohort; deaths and migration are applied to those cohorts; and new birth cohorts are added by applying fertility assumptions to women of childbearing age.⁵

Stats NZ population projections also use a 'top-down' approach (Willekens, 1983). A top-down approach projects the population at the national level first, using a national-level model, then projects each sub-national area either separately or as part of a multi-regional model. The sub-national projections in a top-down approach are constrained to sum to the previously determined national projection. Stats NZ explains that this helps avoid implausible aggregate results and supports faster release of larger-area projections.⁶ For more on the advantages and disadvantages of 'top-down' versus 'bottom-up' approaches to population projections, see Cameron et al. (2021).

The 2023-base subnational projections use the estimated resident population at 30 June 2023 as the base. That base is derived from the 2023 Census usually resident population count, adjusted for net census undercount, residents temporarily overseas, births, deaths, and net migration between census night and 30 June 2023, and reconciliation with demographic estimates for ages 0-14.⁷

⁵ Stats NZ's ethnic population projections follow a similar approach, but also incorporate ethnicity as an additional characteristic.

⁶ <https://datainfolus.stats.govt.nz/Item/nz.govt.stats/639b804e-9bd7-4b49-99c1-019d5e59928f>

⁷ This reconciliation is conducted only for ages 0-14, rather than for all ages, because for the youngest cohorts there is a strong independent benchmark for the population, based on high-quality linked data from birth registrations, death registrations, and international migration records. These administrative data sources allow Stats NZ to produce precise estimates by single year of age for the youngest ages, making reconciliation particularly appropriate for these cohorts.

Stats NZ publishes three main projection variants for each subnational area:

1. A *low variant*, that assumes low fertility, high mortality, and lower net migration;
2. A *medium variant*, that assumes medium fertility, medium mortality, and medium net migration; and
3. A *high variant*, that assumes high fertility, low mortality, and high net migration.

The medium variant is consistent with the median, or 50th percentile, of the 2024-base national population projections (Stats NZ, 2025).

3.2 Stats NZ fertility assumptions

Stats NZ’s fertility assumptions operate through projected births. Birth numbers are not determined only by the assumed fertility rate, but also depend on the size and age structure of the female population of childbearing age. A place can therefore have rising births even with relatively low fertility if it has growth in the number of people in childbearing ages.

Table 1 summarises Stats NZ’s fertility assumptions for the Bay of Plenty region and territorial authorities. The assumptions are presented as the period total fertility rate, which is the number of births a woman would have over their lifetime if they experienced each age-specific fertility rate assumed in that year. For simplicity, the table only includes the assumed total fertility rate for the five years ending 2028 and 2053 under each of the three projection variants.

Table 1: Stats NZ fertility assumptions, 2023-2053

| Area | Low variant | | Medium variant | | High variant | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------|----------------|------|--------------|------|
| | 2028 | 2053 | 2028 | 2053 | 2028 | 2053 |
| Bay of Plenty region | 1.74 | 1.63 | 1.85 | 1.79 | 1.96 | 1.95 |
| Western Bay of Plenty District | 1.75 | 1.64 | 1.86 | 1.80 | 1.97 | 1.96 |
| Tauranga City | 1.56 | 1.49 | 1.66 | 1.62 | 1.76 | 1.75 |
| Rotorua District | 1.90 | 1.75 | 2.01 | 1.94 | 2.13 | 2.12 |
| Whakatāne District | 2.04 | 1.86 | 2.16 | 2.07 | 2.28 | 2.27 |
| Kawerau District | 2.24 | 2.02 | 2.36 | 2.25 | 2.49 | 2.48 |
| Ōpōtiki District | 2.33 | 2.09 | 2.46 | 2.34 | 2.60 | 2.59 |

The general pattern is one of assumed fertility decline, both for the region as a whole and for each of the constituent territorial authorities. Fertility decline is a feature of all three projection

variants, although the assumed decline is greatest for the low variant projections, with minimal decline assumed for the high variation projections. The fertility assumptions also differ strongly across the region, with lower fertility in the SmartGrowth subregion (and especially in Tauranga City), and higher fertility in the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion (and especially in Ōpōtiki District). These assumed patterns are consistent with observed fertility differences across the region.

3.3 Stats NZ mortality (survivorship) assumptions

The mortality (or survivorship) assumptions are reflected in projected deaths and in the changing age structure. Stats NZ's national and subnational projections generally assume continued mortality improvement, but the number of deaths can still rise because more people are reaching older ages.

Table 2 summarises Stats NZ's mortality (or survivorship) assumptions for the Bay of Plenty region and territorial authorities. The assumptions are presented as the period life expectancy, separately for males and females. For simplicity, the table only includes the assumed life expectancy for the five years ending 2028 and 2053 under each of the three projection variants.

The general pattern is one of assumed increases in life expectancy, both for the region as a whole and for each of the constituent territorial authorities. Increasing life expectancy is a feature of all three projection variants, although the assumed increase is greatest for the high variant projections. Life expectancy is assumed to increase for both men and women, although the increase is assumed to be greater for men, narrowing the gap in life expectancy under all three projection variants. The life expectancy assumptions also differ strongly across the region, with higher assumed life expectancy in the SmartGrowth subregion (and especially in Western Bay of Plenty District), and lower assumed life expectancy in the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion (and especially in Kawerau District). Unlike the gender gap in life expectancy, the gap in life expectancy between the territorial authorities is only assumed to narrow marginally over the period from 2023 to 2053. These assumed patterns are consistent with observed mortality differences across the region.

Table 2: Stats NZ life expectancy assumptions, 2023-2053

| Area | Low variant | | Medium variant | | High variant | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------|----------------|------|--------------|------|
| | 2028 | 2053 | 2028 | 2053 | 2028 | 2053 |
| <i>Male life expectancy</i> | | | | | | |
| Bay of Plenty region | 80.1 | 82.8 | 80.5 | 84.0 | 81.1 | 85.2 |
| Western Bay of Plenty District | 81.7 | 84.3 | 82.1 | 85.5 | 82.7 | 86.7 |
| Tauranga City | 81.2 | 83.8 | 81.6 | 85.0 | 82.2 | 86.3 |
| Rotorua District | 77.8 | 80.5 | 78.2 | 81.7 | 78.8 | 83.0 |
| Whakatāne District | 79.1 | 81.8 | 79.5 | 83.0 | 80.1 | 84.2 |
| Kawerau District | 75.7 | 78.5 | 76.1 | 79.7 | 76.7 | 81.0 |
| Ōpōtiki District | 76.1 | 78.9 | 76.5 | 80.1 | 77.1 | 81.4 |
| <i>Female life expectancy</i> | | | | | | |
| Bay of Plenty region | 84.1 | 85.7 | 84.4 | 86.8 | 85.0 | 88.0 |
| Western Bay of Plenty District | 85.6 | 87.1 | 85.9 | 88.2 | 86.5 | 89.4 |
| Tauranga City | 85.1 | 86.7 | 85.4 | 87.7 | 86.0 | 88.9 |
| Rotorua District | 81.8 | 83.6 | 82.1 | 84.6 | 82.7 | 85.8 |
| Whakatāne District | 83.1 | 84.8 | 83.4 | 85.8 | 84.0 | 87.0 |
| Kawerau District | 79.8 | 81.7 | 80.1 | 82.7 | 80.7 | 83.9 |
| Ōpōtiki District | 80.2 | 82.1 | 80.5 | 83.1 | 81.1 | 84.3 |

3.4 Stats NZ net migration assumptions

Stats NZ defines net migration in the subnational components as long-term arrivals to an area minus long-term departures, including migration within New Zealand. Net migration is the most uncertain and most policy-sensitive component of population projections. This is especially true of subnational projections, which should account for both net internal migration (between different regions or territorial authorities within New Zealand) and net international migration (between each region or territorial authority and the rest of the world). International migration in particular has been identified as the most difficult component of population change to project (Azose et al. 2016).

Although it is possible to separately account for net internal migration and net international migration (as the University of Waikato projections do – see Cameron (2025) for example), Stats NZ’s subnational population projections do not present separate projected components for internal migration and international migration at the regional or territorial authority level. Instead, the projections use an assumed net migration measure that combines both migration to and from other parts of New Zealand and migration to and from overseas. Stats NZ explicitly

notes that subnational migration has both internal and external components, but that these separate components are difficult to quantify.⁸

The assumed net migration pattern is not generated from a formal economic model of jobs, house prices, land supply or infrastructure capacity. Rather, Stats NZ formulates migration assumptions after assessing short- and long-term demographic trends, information from local planners, and relevant government policy settings. For each area, the assumed combined net migration takes account of observed net migration over intercensal periods from 1996 to 2023, annual estimates for 2024 and 2025, capacity for further growth in areas with net inflows, whether historical outflows can be sustained in areas with net outflows, the desirability of the area to new migrants, and local-authority information on developments that may affect population change. The age-sex pattern of migration is also based on observed intercensal net migration patterns and the latest national migration assumptions.

Table 3 summarises Stats NZ’s net migration assumptions for the Bay of Plenty region and territorial authorities. For simplicity, the table only includes the assumed net migration for the five years ending 2028 and 2053 under each of the three projection variants.

Table 3: Stats NZ net migration assumptions, 2023-2053

| Area | Low variant | | Medium variant | | High variant | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--------|----------------|--------|--------------|--------|
| | 2028 | 2053 | 2028 | 2053 | 2028 | 2053 |
| Bay of Plenty region | 9,400 | 14,000 | 16,000 | 20,600 | 22,700 | 27,300 |
| Western Bay of Plenty District | 3,800 | 4,800 | 5,000 | 6,000 | 6,200 | 7,200 |
| Tauranga City | 7,000 | 10,300 | 10,000 | 13,300 | 13,000 | 16,300 |
| Rotorua District | -1,000 | -800 | 400 | 600 | 1,800 | 2,000 |
| Whakatāne District | -500 | -300 | 200 | 400 | 900 | 1,100 |
| Kawerau District | 50 | 50 | 200 | 200 | 350 | 350 |
| Ōpōtiki District | 0 | 0 | 200 | 200 | 400 | 400 |

Unsurprisingly, net migration is most positive in the high variant, and lower in the other two projection variants. However, while the region as a whole is projected to experience positive net migration, the assumed net migration differs strongly across the region and across the projection variants. The SmartGrowth subregion is assumed to account for more than 85

⁸ <https://datainfolplus.stats.govt.nz/item/nz.govt.stats/6280d602-7493-42bb-841f-d484423bf149>

percent of net migration for the region as a whole under all three projection variants.⁹ In contrast, Kawerau and Ōpōtiki Districts are assumed to experience low to no net migration under all three projection variants. Rotorua and Whakatāne Districts are the most sensitive to the choice of projection variant and are projected to experience negative net migration under the low variant projection, but strong positive net migration under the high variant projection.

2. Material Changes between 2013-base, 2018-base, and 2023-base Stats NZ Projections

Stats NZ has historically updated its population projections subsequent to each quinquennial Census, with occasional updates in-between Censuses (particularly for national population projections). The last three main sets of subnational population projections are the 2013-base updated projections (updated and released in February 2017), 2018-base projections (released in March 2021), 2018-base updated projections (released in December 2022), and 2023-base projections (released in September 2025). Each new set of projections (other than the updated 2018-base projections) also extends the projection horizon by five years.¹⁰

Each set of subnational population projections can be considered a ‘material reset’ from previous projections. Each new projection updates the base populations and the underlying national projection series (to which the subnational projections must sum, due to the top-down nature of the projections method), as well as the fertility, mortality (or survivorship), and net migration assumptions. The assumptions for the components of population change are updated with the latest available data on births and deaths, including trends in decreasing fertility and increasing life expectancy, as well as the latest data on international travel and migration.

Table 4 presents comparisons between the recent medium-variant population projections for the Bay of Plenty region and its constituent territorial authorities for two time points: (1) for 2023, which is the base population for the 2023-base projections; and (2) for 2043, which is the projection horizon for the 2013-base updated projections. For the 2023-base projections, the populations in 2023 are based on population estimates, not projections – they are the best

⁹ And in the case of the low-variant projection, the SmartGrowth subregion is assumed to account for more than 100 percent of net migration for the region as a whole, due to the assumed negative net migration for Rotorua District and Whakatāne District.

¹⁰ In the subnational population projections, this means that the 2013-base projections projected to a horizon of 2043, the 2018-base projections projected to a horizon of 2048, and the 2023-base projections projected to a horizon of 2053.

estimate of the population at that point in time and provide a key comparison point for the accuracy of the earlier projections.

Table 4: Comparisons of recent Stats NZ medium-variant projections

| | 2013-base | 2018-base | 2018-base updated | 2023-base |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| <i>2023 projected population</i> | | | | |
| Bay of Plenty region | 318,400 | 346,900 | 370,200 | 346,500 |
| Western Bay of Plenty District | 51,800 | 58,100 | 64,700 | 58,800 |
| Tauranga City | 145,800 | 156,900 | 172,700 | 158,900 |
| Rotorua District | 73,400 | 78,900 | 78,700 | 76,600 |
| Whakatāne District | 36,200 | 38,800 | 39,100 | 38,100 |
| Kawerau District | 6,630 | 7,910 | 7,970 | 7,640 |
| Ōpōtiki District | 8,550 | 10,250 | 10,850 | 10,200 |
| | | | | |
| <i>2043 projected population</i> | | | | |
| Bay of Plenty region | 353,100 | 395,500 | 417,100 | 438,400 |
| Western Bay of Plenty District | 57,900 | 66,700 | 73,900 | 80,400 |
| Tauranga City | 179,500 | 191,400 | 207,400 | 216,000 |
| Rotorua District | 72,600 | 84,200 | 82,200 | 85,500 |
| Whakatāne District | 35,100 | 39,300 | 39,100 | 40,700 |
| Kawerau District | 5,180 | 7,860 | 7,620 | 8,840 |
| Ōpōtiki District | 6,670 | 10,150 | 11,050 | 11,450 |

The projected population for 2023 increased for the region as a whole, and for each of the constituent territorial authorities, between the 2013-base projections, the 2018-base projections, and the 2018-base updated projections. However, the 2023-base projections had lower projected population numbers than the 2018-base updated projections, and were more similar to the original 2018-base projections for all areas with the exception of Rotorua District. This suggests that the 2018-base updated projections, which were released in December 2022, systematically over-projected the 2023 population. This is surprising given that there was only six months between the date that the projections were released and the date (30 June 2023) that they were projecting to. However, the post-pandemic period was particularly uncertain in terms of international migration flows due to pandemic border restrictions, reopening, and rapid changes in international migration flows, and this no doubt contributed to the inaccuracy of the 2018-base updated projections.

The projected population for the Bay of Plenty region in 2043 has increased in each subsequent round of projections. While in the 2013-base projections the regional population was projected

to be 353,100 in 2043, by the 2023-base projections the 2043 population was projected to be 438,400, an increase in projected population of 24 percent. There is now projected to be more than 85,000 more people in the region in 2043 than what was projected for 2043 ten years earlier. In absolute terms, the largest increase in the projected population in 2043 have been for Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District. However, the increase in projections between the 2013-base projections and the 2023-base projections has occurred for every territorial authority in the region, and the largest increases in relative terms have been for Kawerau District (where the 2023-base projection for 2043 is 71.7 percent higher than the corresponding 2013-base projection for 2043), and Ōpōtiki District (where the 2023-base projection for 2043 is 70.7 percent higher).

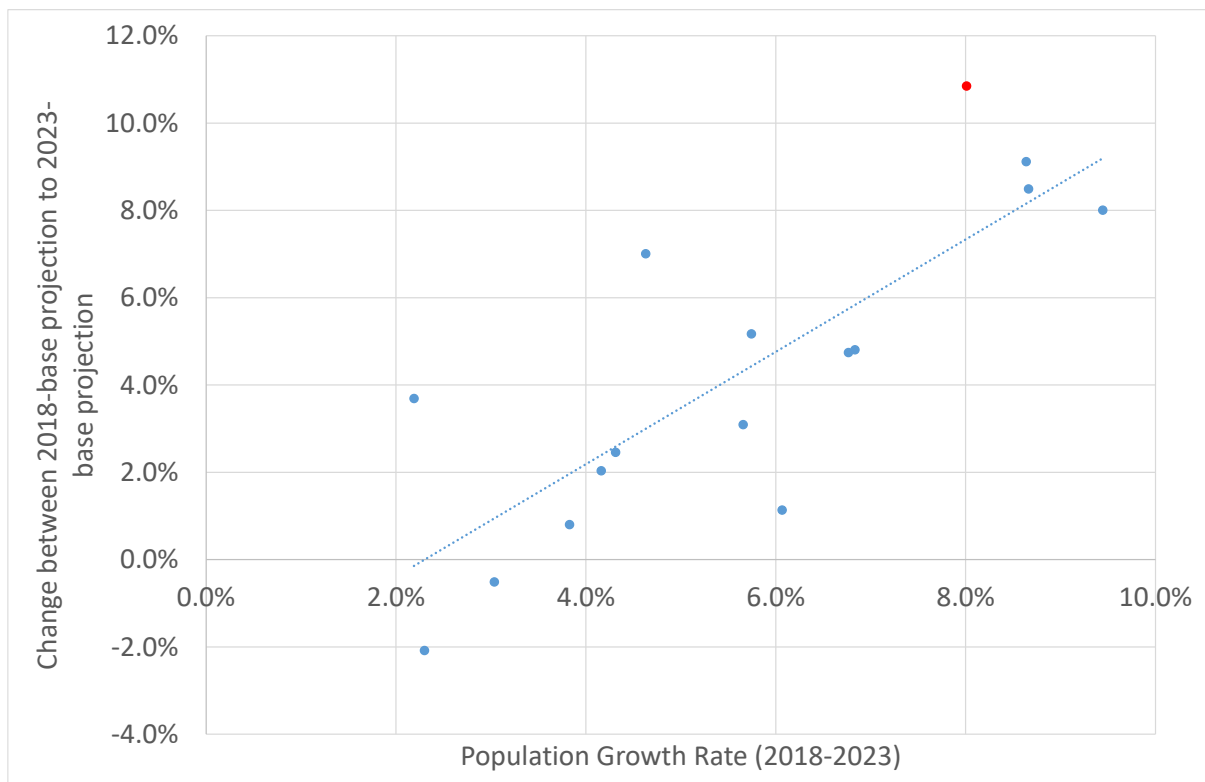
An important point in this comparison is that projections tend to be more accurate over shorter time horizons than over longer time horizons (Wilson and Rowe, 2011). So, we might expect the projections to converge on the ‘true’ population as the projection horizon shortens. The fact that the projections for the Bay of Plenty region and territorial authorities are consistently being revised upwards could arise from several possibilities. First, there might be some underlying factor within the methodology that tends towards systematic under-projection of fast-growing areas, such as the territorial authorities in the Bay of Plenty, and especially Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District. Cameron and Poot (2011) noted this problem using data from earlier Stats NZ population projections. The top-down approach to projections tends to over-project slow growing or declining areas, while under-projecting fast growing areas.

Second, the Stats NZ national population projections themselves have undergone substantial upward revisions over time, as net international migration has grown substantially over recent decades. As the national projection forms part of the basis for the subnational projections under the top-down approach, each upward revision of the national projections becomes a consequent driver of upward revision of the subnational population projections as well.

The third possibility is that the assumptions that Stats NZ employs for the Bay of Plenty region are incorrect. Given that Stats NZ employs the same approach to developing fertility and mortality (or survivorship) assumptions for every subnational area, it seems unlikely that this would drive substantial differential impacts on the Bay of Plenty region than other regions. However, the methods underlying the net migration assumptions are less transparent, and it may be that these need to be more carefully considered in light of the upward revisions of projections for the region.

The contribution of the three factors outlined above may be inferred by looking at the extent of projection revisions across different regions, and how those revisions compare with actual population growth. Figure 1 plots the five-year population growth rate between 2018 and 2023 for each of New Zealand’s sixteen regions on the x-axis, and the percentage revision in the 2043 projected population between the 2018-base projections and the 2023-base projections. Each point on the graph represents one of the regions. The dotted trendline shows that areas that grew more strongly between 2018 and 2023 had, on average, larger upward revisions in their 2043 projected populations. This is consistent with faster-growing regions being under-projected and, as subsequent data on population change become available, this resulting in greater revisions to subsequent sets of projections. Points that are further from the trendline represent regions where the revisions in their 2043 projected population are larger, or smaller, than could have been predicted based only on the observed population growth between 2018 and 2023.

Figure 1: Regional population growth rate 2018-2023 and change in medium-variant population projections between the 2018-base and 2023-base projections

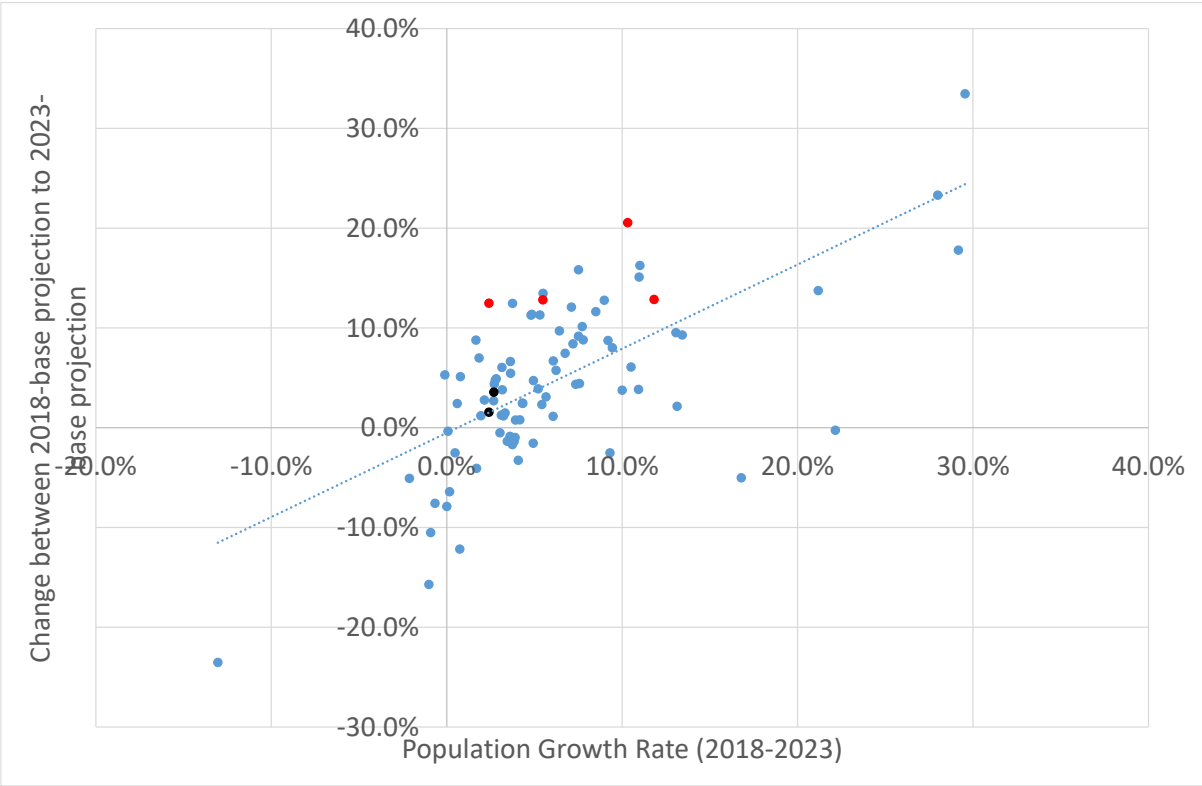


The red point on the graph represents the Bay of Plenty region. The Bay of Plenty was one of the fastest growing regions between 2018 and 2023 (behind Tasman, Waikato, and Canterbury).

However, the upward revision in the 2043 population projection between the 2018-base and 2023-base projections for the Bay of Plenty is far larger than explained solely by population growth between 2018 and 2023, and far larger than for the other fast-growing regions. That suggests that, in revising the population projection assumptions, Stats NZ is projecting higher growth for the Bay of Plenty region than is supported by recent population growth trends. This may represent Stats NZ attempting to counter previous criticisms that their projections are overly conservative for fast-growing regions (as noted above and in Cameron and Poot (2011)). Moreover, Stats NZ's 2023-base projections have significantly re-positioned the Bay of Plenty region as a substantial attractor of growth, relative to earlier projections.

The results are somewhat more nuanced at the territorial authority and local board area, as shown in Figure 2. In this figure, each point represents one of the territorial authorities or local boards, but otherwise the interpretation is the same as for Figure 1. In this figure, the four red dots above the trendline are, from left to right, Kawerau District, Ōpōtiki District, Western Bay of Plenty District, and Tauranga District. The two black dots that are close to or on the trendline are Whakatāne District (slightly above the trendline) and Rotorua District (on the trendline). In revising the population projection assumptions, Stats NZ is projecting higher growth in the 2023-base projections for the SmartGrowth subregion and parts of the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion than is supported by recent population growth trends. However, this is not the case for Rotorua District (or Whakatāne District). This suggests that, in re-positioning the Bay of Plenty region as a substantial attractor of growth, relative to earlier projections, Stats NZ has positioned the SmartGrowth subregion and the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion as key growth areas within the region.

Figure 2: Territorial authority and local board population growth rate 2018-2023 and change in medium-variant population projections between the 2018-base and 2023-base projections



3. Limitations of using Nationally-Derived Projection Assumptions at the Subnational Level

Stats NZ’s 2023-base subnational population projections may be an appropriate official reference point for Bay of Plenty planning, but they should not be interpreted as a full local growth model. The projections are produced within a national demographic framework and are constrained by national assumptions. This gives the projections internal consistency, but it also means that some important local drivers of growth, such as housing supply, infrastructure timing, land release, transport accessibility, affordability, labour market changes, iwi and Māori development, and climate-risk constraints, are not explicitly modelled or incorporated into the projections.

The issue is not that Stats NZ ignores local information. Stats NZ states that subnational assumptions are informed by short- and long-term demographic trends, current policy settings, local-authority information, growth capacity, desirability to migrants, and other area-specific

considerations.¹¹ However, these are still conditional assumptions, not a behavioural model of how households, workers, firms, developers, infrastructure providers, iwi, hapū, or central government will respond to changing local conditions. Stats NZ do not attempt to model the feedback effects between population growth and local conditions such as house prices, dwelling supply, infrastructure funding, congestion, water-network capacity, employment creation, land development constraints, or climate-risk policy.

This distinction is particularly important for the Bay of Plenty region because the region's population change is strongly driven by trends in migration. In a region like the Bay of Plenty, small changes in assumptions about household location choice, housing affordability, infrastructure availability or employment opportunities can have large effects on the projected population. A projection can therefore be demographically coherent but still not fully capture the local system dynamics that determine whether people can, or will, move into the region.

The implications for the region, and for the SmartGrowth subregion in particular, flow most directly from the migration assumptions. If the Stats NZ migration assumptions are realised, the SmartGrowth subregion must accommodate a large inflow of residents through a combination of intensification, greenfield development, infrastructure delivery and transport-system change. If housing and infrastructure delivery lag, some projected migration may be displaced to other subregions (or outside the region) and/or housing affordability will substantially worsen. Conversely, if planning reforms, infrastructure investment, regional deals or market conditions unlock more feasible housing capacity than assumed, growth may exceed the projected projection.

Moreover, the national policy environment creates a potential mismatch between national-level demographic assumptions and local implementation realities. A national projection can allocate growth to the Bay of Plenty because the region has historically attracted migrants and appears desirable. However, actual realised migration will depend partly on whether households can find dwellings of the right type, price and tenure in accessible locations. This is especially relevant for lower-income households, renters, older people, Māori households seeking papakāinga and housing on whenua Māori, key workers, and families seeking larger dwellings. If feasible and infrastructure-ready capacity is materially lower than demographic

¹¹ <https://datainfolplus.stats.govt.nz/item/nz.govt.stats/94473b3b-645a-4728-b689-5dac9c38ef83/71>

demand, the projections may overstate realised population growth. In contrast, if capacity is unlocked faster than assumed, it may understate growth.

Transport and infrastructure constraints are another area where national-level assumptions may not fully capture local conditions. Stats NZ’s projections do not explicitly model a scenario in which congestion, infrastructure funding constraints, delayed water or wastewater servicing, or under-delivery of transport projects change migration behaviour. These factors are therefore best treated as local risk modifiers around the Stats NZ variants.

National-level assumptions may also understate the extent to which local environmental and hazard constraints shape where growth can occur. This is not simply an environmental planning issue. It is a demographic assumption issue because spatial constraints can alter the feasible distribution of population growth. A regional projection may be plausible in aggregate, while the local distribution of growth implied by current settlement patterns may be less feasible once hazard, infrastructure, cultural landscape, productive land and environmental constraints are applied. This is particularly important for the SmartGrowth subregion because the scale of projected migration-led growth means that land-use constraints have direct consequences for housing affordability, transport demand and infrastructure cost.

A further local limitation is that national-level assumptions are unlikely to capture the full implications of tangata whenua aspirations, Māori land development, papakāinga, marae-based development and Treaty settlement-related economic development. These matters are not marginal to growth planning in the Bay of Plenty – they affect housing supply, infrastructure needs, community wellbeing, cultural landscapes, and local economic development. These limitations are apparent throughout the region, but are most consequential in Rotorua District and the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion.

4. Implications for Growth Sequencing, Infrastructure Planning, and Development Capacity Risk

The preceding sections show that the Stats NZ projections should be treated as a planning envelope rather than as a single forecast. The medium projection is a useful central reference point, but the low and high variants should be used to test the robustness of long-term planning, infrastructure sequencing, and financial assumptions. For local government and planning purposes, the low and high series should not be treated as “wrong” alternatives to a “correct”

medium scenario. The key policy question is not simply “which number is right?”, but rather “what decisions are robust if growth is materially lower or higher than the medium projection?”

This is especially important for the Bay of Plenty because the region’s projected growth is strongly linked to net migration flows, and because the assumed migration is concentrated heavily in the SmartGrowth subregion. Migration assumptions are not merely demographic inputs; they are affected by housing affordability, employment opportunities, transport access, iwi and Māori development opportunities, education pathways, lifestyle preferences, climate risk, infrastructure capacity, and national immigration settings. Stats NZ’s projections assume current policy settings and do not attempt to anticipate major future policy changes or local implementation constraints.

The implication is that growth sequencing and infrastructure planning should not be based only on projected population totals. They should also consider the feasibility, timing, location, and affordability of development capacity. A population projection may be internally coherent from a demographic perspective, while still being difficult to realise in practice if housing supply, infrastructure investment, land release, transport improvements, or community infrastructure do not keep pace with the implied settlement pattern.

6.1 Implications for growth sequencing and infrastructure planning

The most important infrastructure implication is the need to distinguish between long-term demographic demand and short- to medium-term capacity. Stats NZ projections indicate how population could grow under particular assumptions, but they do not determine whether sufficient housing and infrastructure capacity will be available at the required time and in the required locations. The National Policy Statement on Urban Development requires councils to consider whether capacity is plan-enabled, infrastructure-ready, feasible, and reasonably expected to be realised. This distinction is critical for the Bay of Plenty, where demographic demand is high but the practical ability to convert zoned or identified capacity into dwellings and serviced communities varies significantly across places.

For the SmartGrowth subregion, sequencing is the central planning issue. The subregion is projected to account for most of the Bay of Plenty’s future population growth and almost all of its assumed net migration. This means that decisions about the timing of greenfield growth areas, the pace and location of intensification, transport investment, water and wastewater

upgrades, stormwater management, schools, health services, parks, community facilities, and funding tools will have region-wide consequences. If infrastructure is delivered too late, growth pressure is likely to appear as higher house prices and rents, increased congestion, crowding, longer commutes, reduced affordability for key workers, and displacement of some households to other parts of the region or beyond. If infrastructure is delivered too early or in the wrong locations, councils may face stranded capacity, lower-than-expected development contributions, and affordability pressures.

6.2 Key areas of uncertainty and risk

The three subregions face different uncertainty profiles. For the SmartGrowth subregion, the major uncertainty is whether the subregion can continue to absorb a large share of regional migration while maintaining housing affordability, transport accessibility, infrastructure service levels, and community wellbeing. The Stats NZ projections assume strong net migration into Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty, but they do not model whether the housing market and infrastructure system can deliver the required capacity. If development capacity shortfalls persist, the medium projection may overstate the realised population of the SmartGrowth subregion, or the population may still grow but under conditions of greater affordability pressure, overcrowding, delayed household formation, and displacement of lower-income households.

For Rotorua District, the key risk is misreading moderate growth as low planning significance. Rotorua District's projected growth is not of the same scale as the SmartGrowth subregion, but it still implies additional housing, infrastructure, employment land, health, education and community-service demand. Rotorua District also has a different demographic profile, with a younger population structure, a larger contribution from natural increase, and important iwi, Māori, tourism and public-sector dimensions. Planning should therefore focus less on whether Rotorua becomes a high-growth area, and more on whether the right type of capacity is available in the right places.

For the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion, the key risk is that the projections mask a wide range of possible futures. The Eastern Bay could experience slower growth or decline if out-migration, ageing, limited employment growth, or infrastructure constraints dominate. Alternatively, economic development, iwi and hapū initiatives, Māori land development,

resilience investment, and local growth strategies could produce stronger growth than implied by the medium projection. The appropriate planning response is not to assume a single growth path, but to use staged, place-based investment that can be scaled as conditions change.

6.3 Potential impacts of persistent development capacity shortfalls

Persistent development capacity shortfalls would not automatically invalidate the Stats NZ projections, but they would make the medium and high projections less likely to be realised in the affected areas. Population projections are not demand forecasts in the housing-market sense. They do not model prices, rents, dwelling feasibility, infrastructure funding, congestion, or landowner behaviour. Therefore, where a projection assumes sustained net migration into an area, but the area cannot provide sufficient feasible and infrastructure-ready housing capacity, several outcomes are possible.

First, some population growth may be displaced spatially. Households that would otherwise have located in Tauranga or Western Bay of Plenty may instead locate in other parts of the Bay of Plenty, the Waikato, Auckland, or elsewhere. Within the Bay of Plenty, this could shift demand toward areas with more available or affordable housing, including parts of Rotorua or the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion, as well as Matamata-Piako District in the Waikato region. However, this displacement would depend on employment access, commuting costs, transport connectivity, household preferences, school and health access, and the availability of suitable dwellings. Displacement is therefore unlikely to be neutral: it may increase travel demand, intensify pressure on smaller settlements, and create new infrastructure demands in areas not originally sequenced for rapid growth.

Second, some growth may be delayed or suppressed. Housing shortages and high prices can prevent household formation, cause young adults to remain longer in parental homes, reduce the ability of key workers to move to or remain in the region, and limit migration by lower- and middle-income households. In this case, the population may fall below the projections, particularly in the working-age and family-forming age groups. This could reduce labour supply, constrain local businesses and public services, and change the age structure relative to the projection.

Third, the population may grow but with worsening social and economic outcomes. If people continue to move into the subregion despite capacity shortfalls, the result may be higher rents

and house prices, increased crowding, reduced housing choice, greater pressure on emergency and social housing, longer commutes, and increased infrastructure stress. In this case, the projection may still appear accurate in aggregate population terms, but the implied wellbeing, affordability and infrastructure conditions would be materially different from what local planning intended.

The most direct demographic effect of persistent shortfalls would be on migration, not fertility or mortality. Natural increase will continue to be shaped by the existing age structure and fertility assumptions, but migration is more responsive to housing availability, affordability, employment opportunities and infrastructure conditions. This means that development capacity shortfalls are most consequential for the SmartGrowth subregion.

5. Conclusion

Stats NZ's 2023-base population projections provide one possible starting point for long-term planning in the Bay of Plenty region. The medium projection is a useful central planning scenario, but the low and high variants are essential for considering the robustness of growth sequencing, infrastructure investment, development capacity, and financial planning decisions. This is particularly important because the 2023-base projections imply substantially higher long-term population growth than earlier projection rounds, with much of that growth concentrated in the SmartGrowth subregion.

Should the Stats NZ high-variant projections be mandated for councils to adopt, as is proposed for 'Tier 1 and Tier 2' councils under the Going for Housing Growth reforms? For the Bay of Plenty region, the 2023-base Stats NZ medium-variant projections are substantially higher than previous sets of projections (as shown in Table 4). The high-variant projections are, unsurprisingly, even higher than the medium-variant projections. The changes between the 2018-base and 2023-base medium-variant projections for the Bay of Plenty region collectively, and for Tauranga City, Western Bay of Plenty District, Kawerau District, and Whakatāne District in particular, were far larger than can be explained by population growth between 2018 and 2023. That may reflect Stats NZ improving its assumptions for the Bay of Plenty. However, it might also represent an over-correction from projections that were previously too pessimistic to projections that are overly optimistic.

The key area of uncertainty in projections is net migration. Fertility and mortality assumptions are important, but future growth will depend most heavily on whether people can and choose to move into the region, and especially into Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District. Those migration outcomes will be shaped by housing affordability, infrastructure readiness, land availability, transport accessibility, employment opportunities, iwi and Māori development, environmental constraints, and national immigration settings. Because Stats NZ's projections do not explicitly model these local system dynamics, councils should supplement them with local evidence on feasible and infrastructure-ready development capacity, housing market conditions, infrastructure sequencing, and place-based growth constraints.

Alternatively, projections other than those developed by Stats NZ might provide more information for planning purposes. For instance, the subnational projections approach developed at the University of Waikato separately models internal and international migration, allowing for both to be accounted for in a more explicit way (Cameron, 2025). Moreover, the Waikato projections adopt a bottom-up rather than top-down approach, avoiding the tendency for projections to systematically under-project fast growing areas. Projections by the University of Waikato are currently used by the FutureProof partner councils in the Waikato Region, as well as some other councils. They have also previously been used by the SmartGrowth region, and by the Ministry of Education.

As a point of comparison, Appendix Table A1 shows the 2023-base Stats NZ projections for 2053 for each territorial authority in the Bay of Plenty region, and the corresponding 2023-base projection produced by the University of Waikato for the same year. The University of Waikato projections are derived from the set of projections that are used by the Futureproof partner councils in the Waikato region (Cameron, 2025).¹² The University of Waikato projections assume lower net international migration and lower fertility rates than the Stats NZ projections. However, they also explicitly model internal migration flows, better capturing the relationship between the territorial authorities. As a consequence, the University of Waikato 2023-base projections are lower than the corresponding Stats NZ projections for the SmartGrowth subregion (Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District), similar to the Stats NZ projections but with a broader spread between the low-variant and high-variant for Rotorua

¹² Although only the results for the Waikato region have been previously reported (see Cameron, 2025), the projection model actually prepares projections for all territorial authorities in New Zealand and local boards in Auckland, with the exception of Chatham Islands territory.

District, and generally higher than the corresponding Stats NZ projections for the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion (Whakatāne District, Kawerau District, and Ōpōtiki District).

There are key risks for councils in their choice of population projections for future planning purposes. For the SmartGrowth subregion, the risk is that Stats NZ projections, especially the high-variant projection, are too high relative to realised population growth. This risks stranded infrastructure and increased up-front development costs that are not recouped for some time, affecting the financial sustainability of the councils if capacity and infrastructure are provided ahead of demand that does not eventuate. For the Rotorua Lakes and Eastern Bay of Plenty subregions, the task is to avoid under-planning for moderate or uncertain growth. The risk in those subregions, and especially in the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion, is that Stats NZ projections are too low relative to realised population growth.

The risks across the Bay of Plenty region are therefore asymmetric. Adopting a common Stats NZ projection variant for planning purposes across the entire region risks over-projecting the SmartGrowth subregion while under-projecting the Eastern Bay of Plenty subregion (if the high-variant projection were adopted), or vice-versa (if the low-variant or medium-variant projection were adopted). The University of Waikato projections may mitigate this risk to some extent and represent an improvement over the Stats NZ projections, not least because they explicitly capture inter- and intra-regional migration flows.

Nevertheless, if Stats NZ projections are retained for planning purposes, constructive engagement with Stats NZ, combined with regular local monitoring and scenario testing, will be essential to ensure that regional planning remains both demographically informed and responsive to changing local realities.

References

- Azose, J.J., Sevčíková, H., and Raftery, A.E. (2016). Population projections with migration uncertainty. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 130(23), 6460-6465.
- Cameron, M.P. (2025). *2023-base Population, Family and Household, and Labour Force Projections for the Waikato Region, 2018-2068*, research report commissioned by Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Cameron, M.P. (2020a). *2020 Update of Population, and Family and Household Projections for Hamilton City, 2013-2063*, research report commissioned by Hamilton City Council, Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Cameron, M.P. (2020b). *2020 Update of Population, and Family and Household Projections for Waikato District, 2013-2063*, research report commissioned by Waikato District Council, Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Cameron, M.P. (2020c). *2020 Update of Population, and Family and Household Projections for Waipā District, 2013-2063*, research report commissioned by Waipā District Council, Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Cameron, M.P., and Cochrane, W. (2014). *Population, Household, and Labour Force Projections for the Waikato Region, 2013-2063*, research report commissioned by Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Cameron, M.P., and Cochrane, W. (2015). *Population, Household, and Labour Force Projections for the Waikato Region, 2013-2063 (2015 Update)*, research report commissioned by Waikato Regional Council. Hamilton, New Zealand: University of Waikato.
- Cameron, M.P., and Cochrane, W. (2016). *2016 Update of Population, Family and Household, and Labour Force Projections for the Waikato Region, 2013-2063*, research report commissioned by Future Proof, Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Cameron, M.P., and Cochrane, W. (2021). *2018-base Population, Family and Household, and Labour Force Projections for the Waikato Region, 2023-2073*, research report commissioned by Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Cameron, M. P., Cochrane, W., & Poot, J. (2007). End-user informed demographic projections for Hamilton up to 2041, , *PSC Discussion Paper No. 66*. Hamilton, New Zealand: University of Waikato, Population Studies Centre.
- Cameron, M.P., Cochrane, W., and Poot, J. (2008). *Population projections until 2061 for Future Proof - the Hamilton sub-regional growth strategy*, research report commissioned by Hamilton City Council, Waikato District Council, and Waipa

District Council. Hamilton, New Zealand: University of Waikato, Population Studies Centre.

Cameron, M.P., and Poot, J. (2011). Lessons from stochastic small-area population projections: The case of Waikato subregions in New Zealand. *Journal of Population Research* 28(2-3), 245-265.

Jackson, N.O., Cameron, M.P., and Cochrane, W. (2014a). *2014 Review of Demographic and Labour Force Projections for the Bay of Plenty Region for the Period 2013-2063*, research report commissioned by the SmartGrowth Implementation and Management Group, Hamilton: National Institute for Demographic and Economic Analysis, University of Waikato.

Jackson, N.O., Cameron, M.P., and Cochrane, W. (2014b). *2014 Review of Demographic and Labour Force Projections for the Waikato Region for the Period 2013-2063*, research report commissioned by Hamilton City Council, Waikato District Council, and Waipa District Council, Hamilton: National Institute for Demographic and Economic Analysis, University of Waikato.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Development Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga [MHUD], and Ministry for the Environment Manatū Mō Te Taiao [MfE]. (2025). *Going for Housing Growth – Providing for Urban Development in the New Resource Management System – Discussion Paper*. Wellington: New Zealand Government.

Stats NZ. (2025). Subnational population projections: 2023(base)–2053. Available online: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/subnational-population-projections-2023base-2053/>

Whelpton, P.K. (1928). Population of the United States, 1925 to 1975, *American Journal of Sociology*, 34(2), 253-270.

Willekens, F.J. (1983). Multiregional population analysis for urban and regional planning. In Batty, M., and Hutchinson, M. (Eds.). *System analysis in urban policy making and planning*. New York: Plenum Press.

Wilson, T., and Rowe, F. (2011). The forecast accuracy of local government area population projections: A case study of Queensland, *Australasian Journal of Regional Studies*, 17(2), 204-243.

Appendix

Table A1: Comparison of 2053 projected population between Stats NZ 2023-base projections and University of Waikato 2023-base projections

| | Low-variant projection in 2053 | Medium-variant projection in 2053 | High-variant projection in 2053 |
|--|---|--|--|
| <i>Stats NZ projections</i> | | | |
| Western Bay of Plenty District | 81,200 | 91,000 | 100,400 |
| Tauranga City | 223,600 | 248,200 | 272,300 |
| Rotorua District | 78,100 | 90,200 | 102,500 |
| Whakatāne District | 35,100 | 41,000 | 47,000 |
| Kawerau District | 8,110 | 9,420 | 10,750 |
| Ōpōtiki District | 10,100 | 11,850 | 13,650 |
| <i>University of Waikato projections</i> | | | |
| Western Bay of Plenty District | 73,026 | 80,567 | 87,719 |
| Tauranga City | 208,589 | 233,734 | 258,227 |
| Rotorua District | 75,387 | 90,149 | 105,299 |
| Whakatāne District | 35,283 | 41,974 | 48,817 |
| Kawerau District | 8,030 | 9,438 | 10,871 |
| Ōpōtiki District | 10,285 | 12,104 | 13,955 |

Resource Management Reform – Mayoral Forum Report

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Committee name | SmartGrowth Leadership Group |
| Meeting date | Wednesday, 17 June 2026 |
| Author(s) | BOPRC |
| Purpose | An update on progress of the regional spatial planning programme. |

Executive Summary

An update on progress of the regional spatial planning programme is provided in the paper from BOPRC as attached. This paper is the report to the Mayoral Forum to be held on 11 June 2026.

An update on outcomes of the Forum will be provided at the meeting.

Recommendation

That the SmartGrowth Leadership Group:

1. **Receives** the report “Resource Management Reform – Mayoral Forum Report”

Appendix 1 – Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan Update



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Report To: | Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum |
| Meeting Date: | 11 June 2026 |
| Report Writer: | Adele Hadfield, Strategy and Planning Manager |
| Report Authoriser: | Namouta Poutasi, General Manager, Strategy and Science |
| Purpose: | To provide an update on progress of the regional spatial planning programme |

Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the Bay of Plenty (BOP) regional spatial planning (RSP) programme. The programme emphasises the importance of sub-regional spatial planning within a wider regional framework to meet the requirements of the resource management system reform. The focus of the pre-enactment phase (now to September 2026) is to set a strong foundation for post-enactment requirements.

Progress updates since the 12 March Mayoral Forum meeting are as follows:

- Letter sent 21 April 2026 from Mayoral Forum to Minister Bishop seeking confirmation of appropriateness of proposed approach. Response received 27 May (refer to attachments 1 and 2).
- Establishment of a Project Control Group (PCG) of senior staff across all the partner councils. Technical groups now working on specific parts of the project.
- Council partners are working together to finalise the draft data stocktake and gap analysis report.
- Planned hui (June 2026) of Council Māori policy units across the region to develop approach for working with iwi and hapū at all levels of the project.
- A draft communications and engagement framework is being developed.

Recommendations

That the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum:

- 1 Receives the report, Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan.**

1. Introduction

Proposed statutory timeframes for preparing the first RSP are short. In anticipation of needing to act quickly on 12 March 2026 the BOP Mayoral Forum (the Forum) supported the foundational 'no regrets' work to continue during 2026.

The Forum endorsed the proposed high level RSP programme, noting further work is being undertaken with staff across Councils to develop a more detailed programme. That work has progressed since the 12 March Forum meeting, including the two action points from the Forum meeting:

- Draft a letter to Minister Bishop seeking direction on and endorsement for the region's current proposed approach which emphasised the importance of sub-regional spatial planning within a wider regional framework. This letter was sent on 21 April 2026. The brief response was received 27 May and is attached to this Agenda.
- Ensure the first-generation BOP RSP includes the holistic lens that was a feature of the sub-regional spatial plans, e.g., demographic trends, social and community infrastructure. This will be reported back on through the Mayoral Forum on 10 September, with consideration given to what matters are prescribed through the Planning Bill.

The PCG are aware of other comparable regions progressing with foundational work on preparing for an RSP. There is active collaboration across the sector regarding our respective pre-enactment work to streamline this process.

1.1 Legislative Framework

The Planning and Natural Environment Bills are progressing through the parliamentary process, with the Environment Select Committee report back due by 26 June 2026 and enactment expected by September 2026. A substantial package of National Instruments (secondary legislation) is currently being drafted, which is intended to guide effective and efficient transition and implementation of the new system, however most of these instruments are likely to be finalised by the next Government in mid-2027 onwards.

2. Update on Work Programme

This paper reports on progress of the BOP RSP work programme adopted by the Mayoral Forum on 12 March 2026 and has been prepared and endorsed by Project Control Group (PCG) representatives from all partner councils. In April 2026, commercial law firm Simpson Grierson independently issued general guidance 'Getting started with regional spatial planning: a practical roadmap' (refer to Attachment 3). We have assessed both the focus of our work and progress against Simpson Grierson's suggested pre-enactment 'do now' areas. Overall, there is a high alignment between the Simpson Grierson 'do now' areas and the 'no-regrets' focus areas of the pre-enactment programme, endorsed at the 12 March 2026 Mayoral Forum.

| Work Programme Task | Status update and next steps for pre-enactment work in BOP region |
|---|---|
| <p>Establish pre-enactment programme structure</p> | <p>Established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pre-enactment governance structure, based on existing council and sub-regional joint Committees, the Eastern Bay Joint Committee, the Rotorua Future Development Joint Committee and SmartGrowth Leadership Group are now all receiving papers and updates. All partner councils are now represented on the PCG and technical working groups. |
| <p>Early engagement of Iwi, key partners, and stakeholders</p> | <p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft communications and engagement framework is being developed. It highlights partners and key stakeholders in terms of levels of interest and influence, details early engagement actions, and outlines key messages to be shared during this pre-enactment period. Any pre-enactment discussions will focus on high interest, high influence partners, and stakeholders to communicate what is happening and why pre-enactment. The Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) Te Amorangi team is coordinating discussions with Council Māori policy/ relationships teams/leads across the region to determine the best approach to early engagement with iwi. A region wide hui of Māori policy units is planned for mid-June to develop options for a way forward. |
| <p>Develop draft Process Agreement Options</p> <p>(Options will be subject to the enactment of the Bills, any changes that may result at that time, and associated national direction).</p> | <p>Underway</p> <p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering draft terms of reference for the Spatial Plan Committee Working towards agreement on the key geographic areas, issues, and opportunities that the first RSP should focus on, based on the existing sub-regional spatial plans and the relevant clauses in the Planning Bill, subject to National Instruments. |

| Work Programme Task | Status update and next steps for pre-enactment work in BOP region |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering roles of each local authority in the process, how local authorities will work with central government and how local authorities will work with other local authorities in adjacent areas. • Identification of relevant Treaty settlement legislation and implications for the spatial plan. • Identification of relevant iwi authorities, Coastal Marine Title groups and potential designating authorities in advance of consultation. • Draft options will be presented in the Process Agreement Options Report to Mayoral Forum in September 2026. |
| Develop Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan Programme Plan | <p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ‘plan on a page’ has been produced for the pre-enactment phase, focussed on the items in this update report. • A draft programme plan for post-enactment activity will be developed by all partner councils. |
| Technical preparation | <p>Underway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A data stocktake and gap analysis report based primarily on our three sub-regional spatial plans was drafted and circulated to partner councils’ staff for feedback. This work will assist with data alignment to reduce duplication and highlight gaps. • Creation of potential technical workstreams to resolve gaps and ensure alignment with new legislation and national instruments where necessary. |

3. Considerations

3.1 Risks and Mitigations

| Risk/Issue | Mitigation action |
|---|---|
| <p>Timing and final form of legislation and national instruments and related changes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor possible amendments to the Planning Bill through the upcoming parliamentary stage of 2nd Reading (Committee of the Whole House) in particular. • Note the high level of support for regional spatial planning in submissions to the Bills. • Process Agreement options and programme plan will be reviewed and finalised with a decision sought from partner councils after enactment. |
| <p>Time needed to reach alignment across Councils and partners</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation discussions across councils and partners are underway. • Ensuring direction is consistently sought as per the endorsed governance structure and achieved before moving forward with work programme. |
| <p>Capacity and resourcing constraints</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOPRC is resourced to coordinate pre-enactment activities as outlined in programme. • The pre-enactment programme plan will highlight timeframes and effort required, allowing for resource planning in councils. The PCG will manage the programme scope. |
| <p>Ensuring iwi/hapū/Māori involvement in the Regional Spatial Plan Project Control Group and in the wider programme during the pre-enactment phase</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Programme Team and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) Te Amorangi team are coordinating discussions with Council Māori policy/ relationships teams/leads across the region to begin working directly with Māori. • A region-wide hui of Māori policy units is planned for mid-June to confirm a way forward. |
| <p>Managing stakeholder and community expectations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders are being identified. • A communication and engagement plan is under development, noting limited focus during the pre-enactment phase beyond partners. |

| Risk/Issue | Mitigation action |
|--|--|
| Managing Elected Member expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils are briefed regularly on the pre-enactment programme. • Ensure relevant staff from all partner councils are involved in the pre-enactment programme. |
| How will pre-enactment governance work across eight councils? | The governance structure is now in place with any items to be presented to councils, joint committees, and the BOP Mayoral Forum. |
| Broader operating environment changes - Central Government elections, other related reforms. | Maintaining situational awareness of our strategic and operating environment. |
| Gaps identified in technical analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify if gaps are critical to delivery. • Make transparent decisions on gaps and whether to close them or not, and why. |

3.2 Implications for Māori

The programme team is liaising with Iwi Policy Units across the councils. A coordinated approach for partnering with Māori through the pre-enactment phase is currently being developed by Māori policy units across the region.

3.3 Community Engagement

A communication and engagement plan is under development, noting limited focus during the pre-enactment phase beyond partners.

4. Next Steps

The project control group will continue to focus on preparation for regional spatial planning in line with direction from Mayoral Forum on 12 March 2026. The next steps will entail:

- Establishing the pre-enactment programme structure.
- Pre-enactment targeted engagement with iwi, partners, and key stakeholders.
- Developing process agreement options report for direction from September Mayoral Forum.
- Developing a draft BOP RSP programme plan.

Opportunities for discussion through workshops and/or formal meetings will be provided to each Council and Joint Committee prior to the September Mayoral Forum.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Letter to Minister Bishop re: Regional Spatial Planning from Chair BOP Mayoral Forum 21 April 2026 [↓](#)
- Attachment 2 - Letter from Minister Bishop dated 27 May responding to letter from Mayoral Forum re: Regional Spatial Planning [↓](#)
- Attachment 3 - Simpson Grierson general advice on getting started with regional spatial planning: a practical roadmap - April 2026 [↓](#)



THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

21 April 2026

Minister Chris Bishop
 Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
 Parliament Buildings
 Wellington 6160

Doc No. 22668092

By email: Chris.Bishop@parliament.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Minister Bishop

Subject: Regional spatial planning

The Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum is a joint committee of eight partner councils of the region: Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City Council, and Western Bay of Plenty, Rotorua, Whakatāne, Kawerau, Ōpōtiki, and Taupō District Councils. As the integrating part at the top of the proposed 'funnel' of the new system design, we acknowledge the value and role of the regional spatial plan. Consequently, all councils across the Bay are now working collaboratively to prepare during this pre-enactment phase. We are seeking your endorsement for our approach to regional spatial planning that recognises the importance of layers - regional, inter-regional and sub-regional components - and the scope of work to be progressed prior to enactment of the proposed new planning system.

As a region, we are uniquely positioned for the development of a regional spatial plan, given the existing sub-regional growth planning partnerships and previously developed spatial plans/Future Development Strategies that are critical foundations of a future regional spatial plan.

Focus/Approach

Our intended focus during the pre-enactment phase is to set a strong foundation for the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan that builds on the current sub-regional work: SmartGrowth in the Western Bay of Plenty, the Rotorua Future Development Strategy and the Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan. This will cover:

- Drafting a programme plan to ensure we create a robust first generation regional spatial plan within any timeframe provided in the final legislation
- Exploring governance options for regional spatial plan decision-making so our region is ready to adopt a process agreement as quickly as possible
- Reviewing our technical evidence and system preparedness to ensure critical information and data, for example those data sets related to mandatory matters, are fit for purpose.

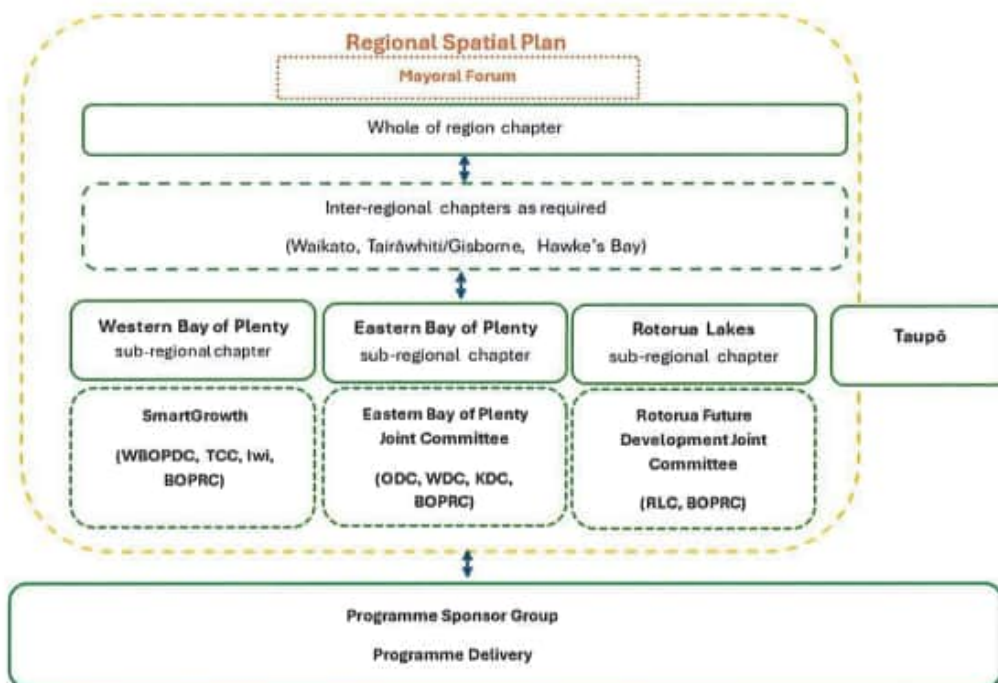


Civic Centre, 1061 Haupapa Street, Private Bag 3029, Rotorua 3046, New Zealand
 +64 7 348 4199 | info@rotorualc.nz | rotorualakescouncil.nz

We do not intend to dive into preparing detailed content of a regional spatial plan until further guidance and national direction is provided.

Within the last three years the sub-regional partnerships involved in each of the plans used robust community, governance and technical processes. The final adopted plans reflect the priorities of each part of our region, including the delivery of housing, industrial land, providing for tourism, improving resilience and caring for the environment. There are existing partnerships between territorial authorities, the regional council, central government and iwi / hapū. We want to leverage the time and resources that our communities have invested into these sub-regional processes within the regional spatial plan, rather than starting from a blank page. This was a critical submission point on the Planning Bill made by various councils and growth partnerships in our region. We also intend to reflect the outcomes of key actions in these existing sub-regional spatial plans that have been progressed in the period between plan adoption and notification of the Regional Spatial Plan.

The diagram below shows how this could work from both a governance and deliverables perspective.



The proposed approach integrates 'whole of region' with 'sub-regional' priorities, while also providing for inter-regional alignment as required (for example, with adjoining Waikato and Tairāwhiti regions). Local priorities and detailed direction would be addressed through sub-regional chapters, which would incorporate relevant content from existing spatial plans provided it aligns with the statutory scope and intent of the new legislation and forthcoming national direction.

Our regional spatial plan will give effect to the legislation and national direction to enable growth while managing and protecting those matters of importance to our communities.

Conclusion

We collectively believe that preparing early is critical, as every part of our region is facing issues with growth, housing, infrastructure and community and environmental outcomes. Our proactive approach is intended to expedite future planning processes and ultimately achieve the goals of the Planning and Natural Environment Acts.

We are seeking confirmation that our proposed approach is appropriate in terms of consistency with legislative intent and the short timeframe proposed to notify a regional spatial plan and noting the level of investment in sub-regional approaches to date.

We look forward to hearing from you on this and would be happy to discuss this in more detail with you if required.

Ngā mihi,



Mayor Tania Tapsell
Chair
Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum

Hon Chris Bishop

Attorney-General
Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister of Transport
Associate Minister of Finance



27 MAY 2026

CB-COR2850/26-CORM-01088

Tania Tapsell
Chair, Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum
By email: Office.Mayor@rotorualc.nz

Dear Tania,

Thank you for your letter of 22 April 2026 about regional spatial planning.

I appreciate your proactive work on regional spatial planning. While the Planning Bill is being considered by the Environment Select Committee, I cannot comment on the details of the new system. Your intended approach of focusing on the basics (programme planning, governance and evidence and data) and getting prepared is a sensible approach.

As you have noted, existing spatial plans and future development strategies will be useful inputs into a regional spatial plan. However, it is important that regional spatial plans are prepared under the new legislation and national instruments, as the scope and goals of the new system will differ from those under the Resource Management Act 1991.

You will be aware of the Government's wider reform programme, including Simplifying Local Government. I encourage your councils to work together constructively to consider a Head Start proposal or proposals.

Thank you for your correspondence on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Bishop'.

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform

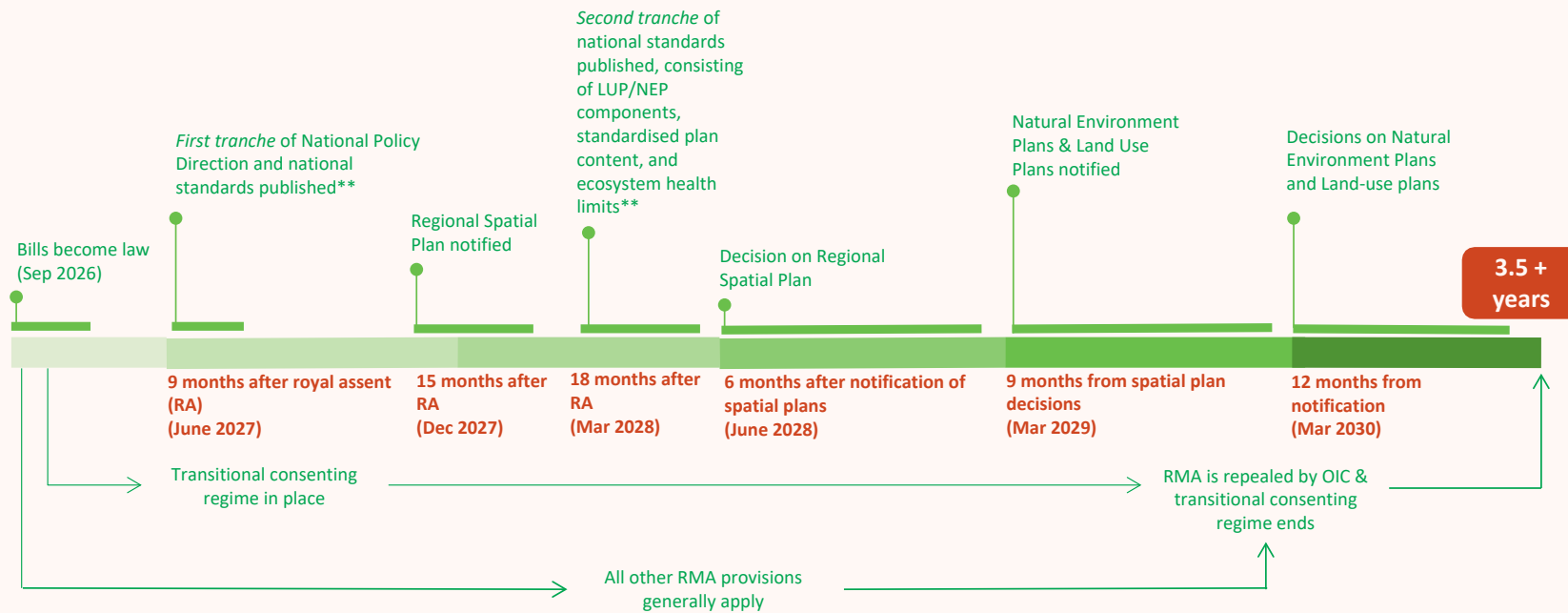


SIMPS
GRIERS  N

Getting started with regional spatial planning: a practical roadmap

April 2026

Reform implementation timeline*

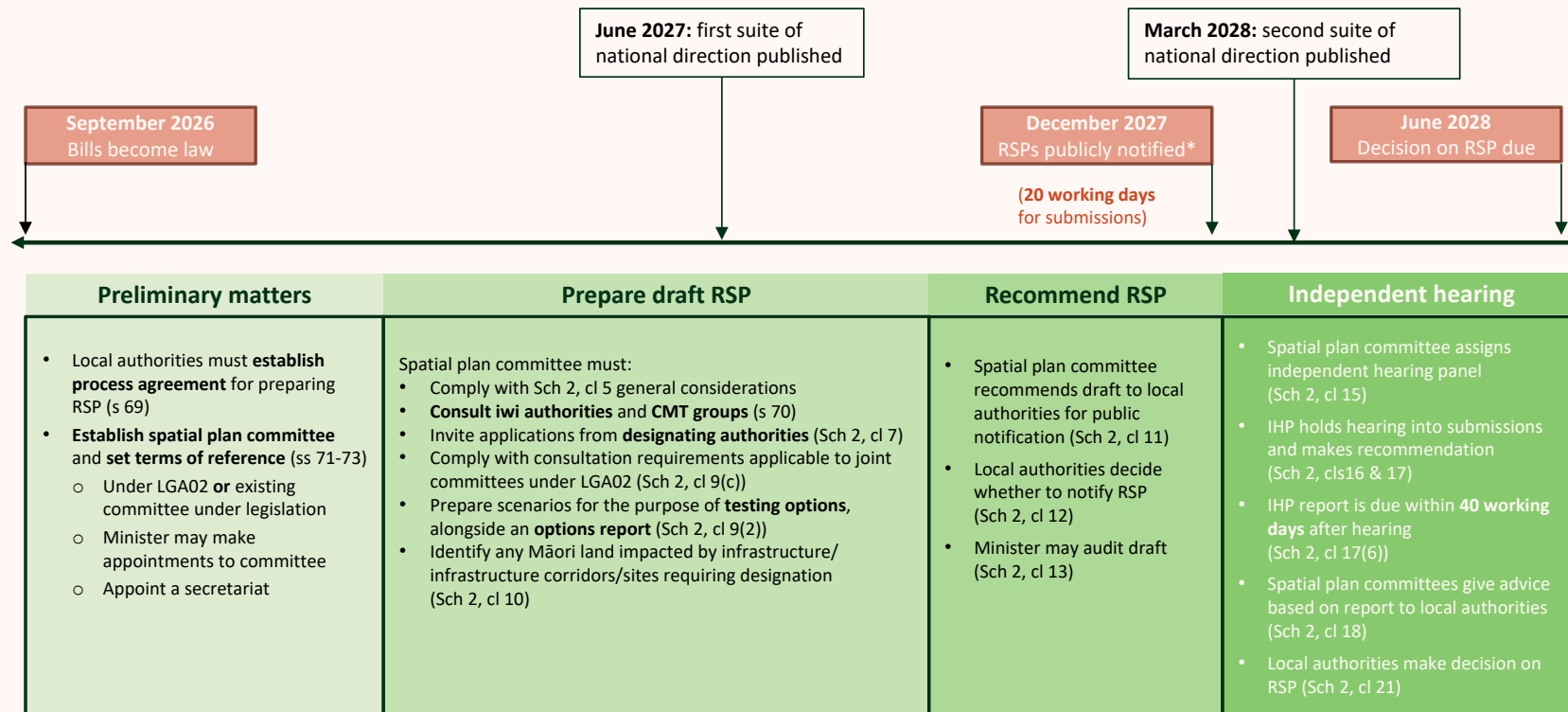


* Based on the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill as introduced. Timing in the bills is aspirational and likely to change.

** Noting that the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill are not entirely clear on what content will be included in each tranche of national policy / standards.



Regional spatial planning process overview*



* Based on the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill as introduced. All aspects subject to change.



What steps can councils take now to get underway?

| Now | | From 2027 |
|---|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Governance and process</p> <p>1. Prepare process agreement – setting out how councils will work together (scope, sequencing, governance and inter-council interfaces) including contacts for each council, views on s 69(1) criteria, and where inter-regional issues might arise (Sch 2, cl 8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has parallels with joint committee agreements and plan-making MOUs • Involves early policy judgement, governance risk, and inter-council alignment <p>2. Consider make-up and draft terms of reference for the spatial plan committee (s 71), working with other local authorities in the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has parallels with committee establishment and governance terms of reference under the LGA and RMA • Sets decision-making roles, escalation pathways and the committee’s influence over future plan content <p>3. Identify relevant Treaty settlement legislation and implications for spatial plan committee membership and process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early decisions affect committee legitimacy, decision-making dynamics and ongoing iwi relationships <p>4. Identify relevant iwi authorities, CMT groups (s 70), and potential designating authorities in advance of consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing and framing of engagement can materially affect trust, expectations and future evidence processes <p>For actions 1 and 2, Mike Wakefield or Paddy McNamara or your usual Simpson Grierson contact can assist.</p> <p>For actions 3 and 4, Gerald Lanning or your usual Simpson Grierson contact can assist.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Substantive foundations</p> <p>5. Early work under s 69(1)(a) – agreeing the key regional issues and priorities that should shape the content and focus of the first RSP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires prioritisation choices under compressed timeframes and limited policy resource <p>6. Preliminary consideration of Sch 2, cl 3(1) mandatory matters for the RSP (building on existing Regional Policy Statements, Future Development Strategies, Long Term Plans, infrastructure strategies, climate adaptation and iwi planning frameworks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires early reconciliation of assumptions, time horizons and policy priorities across documents that were prepared for different purposes <p>7. Consolidate and align existing spatial planning data held by each local authority (particularly across districts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often underpins scenario testing, infrastructure corridors and designation processes • Early data alignment reduces duplication and avoids re-work <p>For actions 5 to 7, Sarah Mitchell, Matt Conway or Sarah Scott or your usual Simpson Grierson contact can assist.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Integration check and plan-making</p> <p>8. Early 2027 – review draft first suite of national direction, make submissions and sense-check initial RSP thinking</p> <p>9. Mid-late 2027 – begin preparing Land Use Plans and Natural Environment Plans (including how they may need to align with the RSP ahead of the IHP decision)</p> <p>10. Early-mid 2028 – identify direction from the second suite of national direction that may need to be incorporated into the RSP later</p> |





Sarah Mitchell | Partner

+64 9 977 5256 | +64 21 420 015

sarah.mitchell@simpsongrierson.com



Matt Conway | Partner

+64 4 924 3536 | +64 21 455 422

Matt.Conway@simpsongrierson.com



Sarah Scott | Partner

+64 3 968 4018 | +64 27 307 4318

Sarah.Scott@simpsongrierson.com



Padraig McNamara | Partner

+64 9 977 5095 | +64 21 924 350

Padraig.McNamara@simpsongrierson.com



Mike Wakefield | Partner

+64 4 924 3598 | +64 22 355 1231

Mike.Wakefield@simpsongrierson.com



Bill Loutit | Partner

+64 9 977 5092 | +64 21 839 422

Bill.Loutit@simpsongrierson.com



THIS GUIDE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE LEGAL ADVICE.

Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal Update

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Committee name | SmartGrowth Leadership Group |
| Meeting date | Wednesday, 17 June 2026 |
| Author(s) | Strategic Advisor |
| Purpose | Provide the SmartGrowth Leadership Group with an update on implementation of the Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal. |

Executive Summary

The Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal was signed in May 2026. The Regional Deal establishes a long-term partnership between central government, local government, tangata whenua and regional stakeholders to better coordinate investment, infrastructure delivery and growth management across the sub-region.

Priority One will provide an update on the Regional Deal, including progress with implementation planning.

Amendments to the Smart Growth Implementation Plan are proposed to respond directly to several Regional Deal commitments and priorities where there is already clear alignment between the two programmes. Further alignment opportunities are expected to emerge as the Regional Deal Implementation Plan is developed and implementation arrangements are refined.

Recommendations

That the SmartGrowth Leadership Group:

1. **Receives** the report titled Regional Deal Update – Priority One; and
2. **Receives** the attached Western Bay of Plenty City and Regional Deal Summary; and
3. **Notes** that Priority One representatives will provide a presentation and further update at the meeting.

Background

The Western Bay of Plenty City and Regional Deal was signed in May 2026 and establishes a long-term partnership between central government, local government, tangata whenua and regional stakeholders to support economic growth, infrastructure delivery and housing outcomes across the sub-region.

The Deal includes commitments relating to transport infrastructure, housing and urban development, social infrastructure, export growth and economic diversification.

Priority One has been invited to provide a presentation to the Leadership Group on progress with implementation of the Deal and emerging opportunities for collaboration across the sub-region.

Discussion

The attached summary document (See Appendix 1) outlines the key themes and initiatives within the Regional Deal, including:

- Transport infrastructure investment supporting growth in the northern, western and eastern corridors;
- Housing and urban development initiatives, including implementation of a refreshed sub-regional spatial plan, and infrastructure funding approaches;
- Social infrastructure planning for health and education services;
- Export growth initiatives; and
- Economic diversification and Māori economy opportunities.

Proposed amendments to the Implementation Plan (See Paper G on the agenda) include several immediate changes that directly respond to Regional Deal commitments and priorities where there is already a clear alignment between the two programmes.

These changes are intended to ensure that SmartGrowth implementation supports delivery of the Regional Deal and reflects the shared commitment of partners to better coordinated growth management, infrastructure planning and investment.

It is anticipated that further changes to SmartGrowth work programmes, priorities and implementation actions may be required over time as the Regional Deal Implementation Plan is further developed and implementation arrangements are refined.

Next Steps

SmartGrowth will continue to work alongside Priority One and Regional Deal partners to identify opportunities for alignment and to ensure that SmartGrowth remains an effective mechanism for supporting the delivery of agreed Regional Deal outcomes.

Implementation progress will be reported to SLG as part of the regular quarterly report.

Appendix 1: Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal



Western Bay of Plenty City & Regional Deal

New Zealand's Global Trade Gateway

As New Zealand's primary hub for trade, emerging industries, and global connections, Western Bay of Plenty sub region is positioned to lead the country's economic growth. By attracting investment, growth companies, and skilled talent, Western Bay of Plenty sub region will continue to fuel economic growth while celebrating its vibrant culture and unique lifestyle.

Through a partnership between Central Government and Local Councils, the City and Regional Deals programme will support economic growth, deliver connected and resilient infrastructure, and improve the supply of affordable and quality housing. It will support accommodating land for coordinated development and infrastructure investment, upgrades to optimise transport networks, and contribute to building a thriving city.

The Deal supports a range of commitments, including a refreshed Western Bay of Plenty Sub Regional spatial plan. This plan will help underpin future investment in transport, education and health in the sub region. The Deal also includes a number of initiatives to unlock and enable quality urban growth across the Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region. These commitments will be supported through existing funding and financing tools to further enable growth across the Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region, making development easier, faster and more coordinated, while strengthening critical infrastructure, and improving community wellbeing. This long-term partnership between the Central Government and Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region will focus on unlocking the Sub Region's full growth potential.

Together, Central Government and Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region are committing to a coordinated, strategic investment approach that aligns with regional priorities and delivers long-term economic and social outcomes for the sub region and New Zealand. The Western Bay of Plenty Deal Agreement is a 10 year plan for sub region's future that contains a series of commitments as set out in this Agreement.

The implied investment into the region over a 10-year period through new and existing funding by both the Crown and the sub-region is likely to exceed \$4bn across roading, waters, health and education.

There are 5 key themes in the Western Bay of Plenty Sub Regional Deal.

Transport
Infrastructure

Land & Housing
Development

Social
Infrastructure

Export Growth

Economic
Diversification

Transport Infrastructure

Objective: Enable growth by removing transport constraints and sequencing land release alongside major roading investment.

Initiatives

- 1) The Government will prioritise:
 - a) **Takitimu North Link Stage 2 (TNL2, Te Puna–Ōmokoroa)**
 - i) This unlocks the Northern Corridor including Ōmokoroa and will enhance residential and commercial opportunities in Katikati.
 - b) **Widening of SH29A (Tauriko West, Barkes Corner–Tauriko Roundabout).**
 - i) This enables the completion of Tauriko Business Estate and Tauriko West Residential development and has the potential to unlock other growth nodes in the west.
 - c) **Investigate tolling options** with the Region.
 - i) Looking at how new approaches may work for the region to fund its roading network.

Land and Housing Development

Objective: Unlock and accelerate housing delivery through greenfield growth in the Eastern Corridor, supported by the existing Tauranga Eastern Link, including the developments in Wairakei, Pāpāmoa East, Te Tumu, Bell Road and Te Kāinga; Northern Corridor, including developments in Ōmokoroa and Katikati; Western Corridor (Tauriko), and infill/intensification on the Te Papa peninsula over 10 years.

Initiatives

- 1) **Refreshed sub regional spatial plan** which will empower the region under the new resource management reforms.
- 2) **Eastern corridor waters infrastructure:** The sub region, with Crown support, will explore methods of funding and financing the waters infrastructure requirements in the east that can operate within the intended 'Waters Done Well' framework. This will unlock housing in the eastern corridor.

- 3) **Prioritise funding for local road improvements** supporting housing growth in eastern, northern, and western corridors as part of NLTF GPS 2027.

The specific roading projects in each corridor over the 10-year term of the Deal are:

Northern Corridor:

- Ōmokoroa
 - Francis Road
 - Francis Link Road
 - Francis Link Road to Bridge

Eastern Corridor:

- Te Tumu
 - Te Okuroa Drive
 - The Boulevard
- Te Puke/Bell Road
 - Seddon Street
- Rangioru
- Young Road

Western Corridor:

- Keenan Road (incl intersection with SH36)
- Belk Road
- Kaweroa Dr extension to SH36



Social Infrastructure

Objective: Align health and education investment with growth to keep services in step with population change.

Initiatives

1) Health

- a) The sub-region and the Crown will form an independent joint planning group that will agree on a plan that meets the anticipated future growth needs.
- b) Planned redevelopment of Tauranga Hospital to Tier 2.
- c) Creation of a new ambulatory hub aligned with HealthNZ's infrastructure plans.

2) Education

The sub-region and the Crown will form an independent joint planning group and agree on a plan that meets the anticipated future growth needs.



Export Growth

Objective: Improve productivity and freight efficiency along State Highway 2 and support key export sectors.

Initiatives

- 1) The sub-region to investigate an asset recycling programme which would attract a Crown uplift. Provisionally this would be used to fund 'Connecting Mount Maunganui' (Hull, Hewlett's and Totara, State Highway & local roading upgrades) and the Katikati bypass.
- 2) Align local and national Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) worker housing rules to support projected kiwifruit growth in the Western Bay of Plenty.



Economic Diversification

Objective: Enable growth by driving economic diversification and unlocking the opportunities in the Māori Economy.

Initiatives

- 1) **Economic Diversification:** the sub-region and the Crown will work together on economic diversification opportunities across horticulture and robotics, automation, marine science and aquaculture, and freight and logistics decarbonisation.
- 2) **Activating the Māori Economy:** The sub region's Iwi and the Crown would work together across social procurement, housing and papakāinga, land leasing, and public infrastructure.

SmartGrowth Implementation Plan

Update for 2026–27

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Committee name | SmartGrowth Leadership Group |
| Meeting date | Wednesday, 17 June 2026 |
| Author(s) | SmartGrowth Advisory Group |
| Purpose | Present the updated SmartGrowth Implementation Plan for 2026–2027 for review and approval. |

Executive Summary

The Implementation Plan has been updated as part of the annual review cycle to ensure alignment with current delivery priorities and progress, operating environment changes, and emerging statutory requirements.

The signing of the Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal (Regional Deal) requires realignment of several actions and background information.

The Implementation Plan can serve as a transition tool, bridging the current SmartGrowth Strategy and delivery programme with the Regional Spatial Plan framework under RM reform, while maintaining coordination of partner delivery through to around mid-2028.

Recommendations

That the SmartGrowth Leadership Group:

1. **Receives** the report “SmartGrowth Implementation Plan Update for 2026-27”
2. **Approves** the SmartGrowth Implementation Plan Update for 2026-27 with changes as recommended for the reasons as set out in the summary table.
3. **Authorises** the SLG Chair to make minor editorial and factual changes or corrections where necessary.
4. **Notes** that the SmartGrowth Implementation Plan may require further amendment after a Regional Deal Implementation Plan is finalised later in 2026

Background

The Implementation Plan is required under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) and supports delivery of the SmartGrowth Strategy, including the Future Development Strategy (FDS).

An Implementation Plan:

- is not part of the SmartGrowth Strategy and FDS

- is not subject to the consultation and engagement requirements under the Local Government Act, and
- does not have the effect of an FDS when Councils are preparing or changing RMA planning documents

An Implementation Plan is a coordination document. It provides a mechanism for partners and key stakeholders to align their planning, funding and delivery.

The SmartGrowth Implementation Plan was first approved in October 2024, reviewed in June 2025, and is now subject to its 2026 annual update cycle.

The Implementation Plan identifies “Key Actions” that require scoping, resourcing and funding in three areas:

- **Future Development Strategy:** Key Actions where a SmartGrowth partnership-led approach can add value to the implementation of the FDS for the sub-region and each of the Growth Corridors;
- **Future Horizons:** Key Actions to implement longer term spatial planning outcomes;
- **Urban Growth Partnership:** Key Actions that are needed to meet statutory obligations, enable delivery, and maintain and enhance SmartGrowth partnership arrangements.

The Implementation Plan is intended to be a “living document” able to respond to changing needs and requirements in the operating environment. The Implementation Plan is reviewed annually and updated to respond to emerging challenges and changes including responses to government policy settings.

The update is informed by Advisory Team policy and environmental monitoring, regular action status updates, the PDA tracker, and insights provided by members of technical working groups, SMG and SGIG.

The Implementation Plan contains an Operating Environment Statement which is updated each quarter, informed by insights from across the partnership.

Update

Overview

Several changes have been made to support both the transition to the emerging Regional Spatial Plan framework, and delivery of Regional Deal commitments. Other changes mostly reflect progress with delivery of Key Actions

A table setting out the main updates and the reason for the updates is included in Appendix 1. The table rows in orange highlight the changes directly related to alignment with Regional Deal commitments.

The draft Implementation Plan Update is included in Appendix 2. This shows the main updates underlined.

The main updates are summarised below.

Introduction Sections

- Noting new mandates under the RM reform including a single Regional Plan integrating the RSP, Natural Environment Plan, and territorial land-use plans, with potential sub-regional chapters building on existing FDS work.
- A Coordination Plan that will follow with the current Implementation Plan remaining in place through the transition to around mid-2028. The need for or scope of the Implementation Plan can then be reassessed depending on the direction of the Regional Plan Process Agreement.

Future Development Strategy Key Actions

- For the subregion-wide Key Actions:
 - Including reference to the Western Bay of Plenty Energy Strategy as an “Existing Action” for Priority One.
 - Including reference to subregional and central government commitments under the Regional Deal:
 - Other enablers of Growth: Additional Financing and Funding Mechanisms for priority projects under the Regional Deal.
 - Taking a coordinated approach to transport investment that assist in unlocking the Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region’s urban growth potential.
 - Commitments to explore governance, regulatory and other options to address any residual barriers to urban development that might remain following implementation of the Government’s Going for Housing Growth policies, RM reform and other related reforms.
 - Region and the Crown working together to ‘activate’ and enable involvement of Iwi Māori in the Region in the wide-ranging opportunities that will arise from the regional deal
 - Changing “Road Pricing Opportunities” from a short to long-term action, with TSP taking a watching brief and ultimately council-led;
 - Reflecting progress with the Housing System Plan refresh and Working Group re-establishment;
 - Recognising the Tauranga Strategic Urban Network Plan and Hamilton to Tauranga Strategic Corridor Plan as new Key Actions.
- For the Growth Corridor Key Actions
 - Reflecting progress with delivery of Key Actions, including
 - Tauriko Network Connections Enabling Works, Ōmanawa Bridge and Corridor Protection
 - Cameron Road Stage 2 implementation proceeding;
 - Tākitimu North Link Stage 2 Fast Track approval;
 - Progress with initial feasibility and structure planning for Keenan and Upper Belk Rd areas;
 - Opening of the Papamoa East interchange;
 - Te Tumu Structure Planning and Zoning process under the RM Reform.
 - Including reference to subregional and central government commitments under the Regional Deal for Eastern Corridor Waters Infrastructure

Future Horizons/Spatial Planning Key Actions

- Recognising the RSP Transition including pre-enactment work on a Process Agreement.
- Including reference to subregional commitments under the Regional Deal to:
 - a “Refreshed Sub Regional Spatial Plan”

- Partnership to support the provision of health and education facilities under the Regional Deal.
- Framing the development of the “Refreshed Sub Regional Spatial Plan” and aggregating the Key Actions that will support the transition, including:
 - Population projections;
 - HBA or equivalent mechanism;
 - Supporting existing and future industry;
 - Future growth area investigations;
 - Development Opportunities;
 - Marae as Centres;
 - Te Puna Minden and Katikati Spatial Plans
 - Hamilton to Tauranga (H2T) Corridor Spatial Plan;

Urban Growth Partnership Key Actions

- Recognising the progress on Local Water Done Well delivery model, and the need to consider implications for governance and management of infrastructure delivery for RSP.

Further Assessment and Update of Key Actions

At a broader level, new legislation and national direction later this year may require further Implementation Plan updates, although the timing for this and scope is uncertain.

The Implementation Plan for the Regional Deal is currently being developed. Further consequential changes to the Smart Growth Implementation Plan may be needed to ensure alignment with the SmartGrowth Implementation Plan.

Mid cycle updates can be made if there are changes that significantly impact implementation.

Delegated Authority to Approve Updates

The SLG has delegated authority to approve updates to the IFP under the SLG Joint Agreement 2023 without reference back to the partner organisations. All partners have contributed to the update through SMG and SGIG.

It is recommended that the SLG Chair be authorised to make minor editorial and factual changes or corrections where necessary.

Conclusion

The Implementation Plan Update for 2026-27 responds to RM reform, positioning SmartGrowth for transition to the RSP while remaining as the primary coordination tool through to mid-2028.

Key changes to the Implementation Plan include the addition of strategic transport and spatial planning actions, updates to reflect progress on PDAs and major infrastructure, and alignment with the recently approved Regional Deal.

Appendix 1: Implementation Plan Update Summary

| Plan Section | | Page | Change | Reason |
|------------------------------------|---|------|--|--|
| Introduction Sections | | | | |
| 2.3 | Spatial Planning and Future Horizons | 3 | Change heading and text to refer to spatial planning, and delete “Future Horizons” | Alignment with Planning Bill requirements. Removal of ambiguous heading. |
| 3.0 | Mandate | 5 | Refer to new mandates under RM reform | Recognising the programme for reform, an Implementation Plan will be required during transition until mid-2028. |
| Subregional Overview | | | | |
| 6.1.2 | Context Dwelling Allocations | 12 | Add footnote that Katikati has been identified in the Regional Deal as an area where additional housing opportunities may be enabled. | Alignment with Regional Deal. |
| 6.1.4. | 6.1.4 Hamilton to Tauranga Strategic Corridor | 13 | Update narrative to reflect joint Spatial Study outcomes. Replace map with updated version illustrating land use strategy and updated transport components. | Delivery progress |
| Sub-region Wide Key Actions | | | | |
| 6.2.2 | Sub-regional Key Actions Existing Actions | 15 | Include reference to the Western Bay of Plenty Energy Strategy | The ability for the sub-region to grow in alignment with the transformational shifts is fundamentally at risk if not delivered. The strategy fills a gap where no single agency is responsible. |
| 6.2.2 | Sub-regional Key Actions Existing Actions | 15 | Remove MOE action on working with partners. | This is not an action – it is a way of working. Remove as per SLG reporting on BAU actions, Dec. 2025. There are specific actions relating to schools in certain areas. |
| 6.2.2 | Sub-regional Key Actions Existing Actions | 15 | Delete reference to Hot Springs Road Regional Park | The action is important but not critical having regard to the agreed prioritisation criteria. |

| Plan Section | | Page | Change | Reason |
|--------------|---|------|--|--|
| 6.2.3 | Ensuring Alignment between Growth Strategy and Investment by local and central government | 17 | <p>Include reference to subregional and central government commitments to Other enablers of Growth: Additional Financing and Funding Mechanisms for priority projects under the Regional Deal.</p> <p>Assign Key Action leadership to Regional Deal</p> | Alignment with Regional Deal |
| 6.2.3 | New Key Action: Transport Infrastructure: coordinated approach to transport investment that assist in unlocking the Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region's urban growth potential | 18 | <p>Include reference to subregional and central government commitments to enable a coordinated approach to transport investment that assist in unlocking the Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region's urban growth potential.</p> <p>Assign Key Action leadership to Regional Deal</p> | Alignment with Regional Deal |
| 6.2.3 | Lower the barriers to delivery of Priority Development Areas | 19 | <p>Include a commitment to continue to identify PDAs.</p> <p>Include reference to subregional and central government commitments to explore the range of governance, regulatory and other options to address any residual barriers to urban development that might remain following implementation of the Government's Going for Housing Growth policies, RM reform and other related reforms.</p> | Alignment with Regional Deal |
| 6.2.3 | Empower Māori housing delivery | 20 | <p>Include reference to Marae as Centres Implementation Framework.</p> <p>Include reference to Region and the Crown working together to 'activate' and enable involvement of Iwi Māori in the Region in the</p> | <p>Reflects refocus of CTWF implementation approach.</p> <p>Alignment with Regional Deal</p> |

| Plan Section | | Page | Change | Reason |
|--------------------------|---|------|--|--|
| | | | wide ranging opportunities that will arise from the regional deal | |
| 6.2.3 | Progress a Coordinated approach to Road Pricing Opportunities | 21 | Change to long term action, with TSP taking a watching brief. | While legislation is now in place, subregion is not likely to be an early adopter. |
| 6.2.3 | Deliver Tauriko Network Connections | 19 | Update and move to Western Corridor | Delivery progress and Alignment with Regional Deal |
| 6.2.3 | HSP: Delivery of Place Based Housing Plan | 22 | Housing Working Group now underway and Housing System Plan being developed (Short term). | Delivery progress. |
| 6.2.3 | Tauranga Strategic Urban Network Plan | 22 | Develop an agreed plan and approach for high value activities for prioritisation via investment processes (Short term) | New Action. Align growth with coordinated, fundable transport investment rather than reactive delivery. |
| 6.2.3 | Hamilton to Tauranga Strategic Corridor Plan | 22 | Develop an agreed plan and approach for high value activities for prioritisation via investment processes (Short term) | New Action Align growth with coordinated, fundable transport investment rather than reactive delivery. |
| Central Corridor | | | | |
| 6.3.3 | Planning, funding, financing and delivery of Central Corridor transport network | 24 | Cameron Road Stage 2 implementation now proceeding following funding confirmation. (Short term) | Delivery progress. |
| | Pukehinahina/Gate Pā and Merivale | 24 | Action progressing, including TCC support through infrastructure funding. (Short term) | Delivery progress. |
| Northern Corridor | | | | |
| 6.4.3 | Te Puna Minden Spatial Plan | 25 | Move to Spatial Planning section | Input to RSP. |
| 6.4.3 | Tākitimu North Link Stage 2 | 25 | Consenting – completed under Fast Track Consent | Delivery progress. |
| Western Corridor | | | | |
| | Deliver Tauriko Network Connections | 27 | Update and move to Western Corridor | Delivery progress. |

| Plan Section | | Page | Change | Reason |
|-------------------------------------|---|------|---|---|
| | Western Corridor - Structure Planning for Keenan Road and Upper Belk Road | 28 | Structure planning for Keenan and Upper Belk Rd including undertaking feasibility work (Short term) | Delivery progress. |
| Eastern Corridor | | | | |
| 6.6.2 | Existing Actions | 29 | Delete PEI as now complete/open. | Delivery progress. |
| | Existing Actions | 29 | Monitoring Fast Track Approval proposal for Wairakei South through PDA tracker. | Additional development priority |
| | Existing Actions | 29 | Te Tumu Structure Planning and Zoning | Programme amended to align with RM Reform. |
| | New Action: Eastern Corridor Waters Infrastructure | 30 | The Region, with Crown support, will explore methods of funding and financing the waters infrastructure requirements in the east | Alignment with Regional Deal |
| Māori Housing / Papakāinga | | | | |
| 6.7.2 | Existing Actions – reference to Te Matapihi | 32 | Remove this action | This is not currently worded as an action. Remove as per SLG reporting on BAU actions in Dec. 2025. |
| 6.7.2 | Resourcing spatial planning models that engage with each of the appropriate tāngata whenua Council forums within each corridor: | 32 | Include reference to Marae as Centres Implementation Framework | Reflects refocus of CTWF implementation approach. Also, update to reflect outcome of Regional Deal |
| Key Actions: Future Horizons | | | | |
| 7.0 | Heading: Future Horizons | 31 | Change heading to “Spatial Planning” | Alignment with Planning Act 2026 |
| 7.1 | Context | 31 | Update context to refer the Regional Spatial Plan and emerging agreement across the region’s local authorities on the thinking for the RSP: that it should take an approach which addresses “whole of region” components, with “sub-regional” chapters. | Alignment with Planning Act 2026 |

| Plan Section | | Page | Change | Reason |
|--------------|--|------|---|--|
| 7.2 | Coordinate the pathway of the pathway to an integrated regional spatial plan | 34 | Include pre-enactment work on Process Agreement. | Requirement for RSP. |
| 7.2 | New Key Action: Refreshed Sub Regional Spatial Plan | 35 | Prepare a draft spatial plan chapter for the WBOP subregion for urban development and infrastructure within environmental limits and constraints, providing strategic direction for growth over a 30-year period (Short term) | Requirement for RSP Alignment with Regional Deal |
| 7.2 | New Key Action: Population Projections | 35 | Contribute to population projections project for the BOP Region as an input to the Regional Spatial Plan (Short Term) | Current Key action not recognised in the Implementation Plan Requirement for RSP. |
| | Te Puna Minden Spatial Plan | 35 | Relocate from Northern Corridor | Requirement for RSP. |
| | New Key Action: Katikati Spatial Plan | 35 | Include reference to unlocking housing growth opportunities in the Northern Corridor including Katikati. | Alignment with Regional Deal |
| 7.2 | Supporting existing and future industry: Issues and Options Analysis | 35 | Change to short term | Requirement for RSP. |
| 7.2 | Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment | 36 | Prepare Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment (or equivalent as may be required by national direction) as an input to the Regional Spatial Plan. | Requirement for RSP. |
| 7.2 | Review and Update of FDS | 37 | Delete "Review and Update of FDS" | Superseded by requirements for RSP. |
| 7.2 | New Action: Marae as Centres Implementation Framework | 37 | Develop a Marae as Centres Implementation Framework to support the delivery of the CTWF's growth, development, and protection outcomes for marae centres and Māori | Requirement for RSP. |

| Plan Section | | Page | Change | Reason |
|--|---|------|---|--|
| | | | land, as an input to the Regional Spatial Plan. | |
| 6.2.3 | New Key Action: Development Opportunities | 37 | Coordinated assessment of urban growth proposals that sit outside the current Future Development Strategy and provides an input into future RSP considerations | A Key Action not recognised in the Implementation Plan. |
| 7.2 | New Action: Hamilton to Tauranga Corridor Spatial Plan | 37 | Develop and maintain a coordinated, inter-regional spatial plan for the Hamilton–Tauranga Corridor that aligns land use, infrastructure capacity, and funding priorities across the SmartGrowth and Future Proof sub-regions to support staged, system-led growth, nationally significant freight and economic outcomes, and any necessary inputs to the Regional Spatial Plan. | Requirement for RSP. |
| | New Key Action: Partnership to support the provision of health and education facilities | 38 | Include reference to subregional and central government commitments to form health and education joint planning groups. Assign Key Action leadership to Regional Deal | Alignment with Regional Deal and RSP. Health and education are core infrastructure components of the RSP. |
| Key Actions: Urban Growth Partnership | | | | |
| 8.1 | Working Together: SmartGrowth Governance, Management and Operations | 35 | Update structure diagram | Leading for Delivery subcommittee no longer operational |
| 8.2.5 | Priority Development Areas and Working Group | 37 | Remove map and replace with list | Map out of date and subject to ongoing status updates. |
| 8.6.1 | Regional Deals | 40 | Updated description | Alignment with Regional Deal |
| 8.9 | Māori Housing Joint Agency Group | | Change from short term to medium term. | Defer until SG has more certainty on the future funding for Papakāinga development to oversee and |

| Plan Section | | Page | Change | Reason |
|--|---|------|--|---|
| | | | | coordinate the delivery. housing on Māori land. Also, update to reflect outcome of Regional Deal |
| 8.9 | HSP: Monitoring | 43 | Change to short term | Progress with delivery. |
| 8.9 | Local Water Done Well Delivery Model | 43 | Investigate and implement the government's Local Water Done Well delivery model, consistent with TCC and WBOPDC decisions, to enhance infrastructure investment and ensure long-term financial sustainability of sub-regional water services. Consider Implications for governance and management of infrastructure delivery for RSP. | Reflect delivery progress and implications for inter4gated infrastructure planning and implementation. |
| Managing Risk and Uncertainty | | | | |
| 9.0 | Population growth | | Going for Housing Growth may require higher population growth assumptions to be used. | Consequences of higher growth targets need to be considered. |
| 9.0 | Changes in government policy | | Change risk from high to moderate | Policy change proposals should broadly reduce implementation risk. |
| 9.0 | Global Events and Impact of Technology | | Global events such as the Global Financial Crisis, COVID pandemic and the Iran war can have a significant impact on the operating environment. | Consequences of global need to be considered in terms of transitory or structural impacts. |
| Operating Environment Statement | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Appendix B Development Infrastructure | | | | |
| | Updating of completed projects and funding changes. | | | |

Appendix 2: Draft Implementation Plan Update for 2026-27



SmartGrowth

Building our futures together

SMARTGROWTH STRATEGY 2024-2074

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Version Control

| Version | Date | Author | Rationale |
|---------|--------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1.0 | 19 May 2025 | SmartGrowth Advisory Team | 2025 Annual Review and Update - Review by SMG |
| 2.0 | 3 June 2025 | SmartGrowth Advisory Team | Review by SGIG |
| 3.0 | 23 June 2025 | SmartGrowth Advisory Team | Approval of updated Implementation Plan by SLG Inclusion of updated OES |
| 4.0 | 6 May 2026 | SmartGrowth Advisory Team | 2026 Annual Review and Update - Review by SMG |
| 5.0 | 2 June 2026 | SmartGrowth Advisory Team | Amendments following Regional Deal Announcements |

Document Change Summary

The Implementation Plan is monitored quarterly and reviewed and updated each year in alignment with the annual and long-term plan cycles of SmartGrowth Partners.

This version represents the 2026/2027 update of the Implementation Plan, with changes made in the following areas:

Transition to Regional Spatial Planning

Refocusing the plan from "Future Horizons" to statutory spatial planning, aligning with resource management reform and the forthcoming Regional Spatial Plan, including new actions for sub-regional spatial planning, population projections, corridor planning, development opportunities and integration with allied work programmes.

Regional Deal Implementation and Growth Enablement

Integrating Regional Deal commitments throughout the Implementation Plan, including transport investment, infrastructure funding and financing, Priority Development Areas, housing delivery, Māori development opportunities, health and education planning, and strategic growth-enabling infrastructure.

Implementation Progress

Removing business-as-usual activities, updating completed or progressing projects, refining governance arrangements, improving action prioritisation, and reflecting current delivery status across major programmes and projects.

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1.0 Purpose | 1 |
| 2.0 SmartGrowth Strategy | 1 |
| 2.1 Overview | 1 |
| 2.2 Future Development Strategy | 3 |
| 2.3 Spatial Planning | 3 |
| 2.4 Urban Growth Partnership | 4 |
| 3.0 Mandate | 5 |
| 4.0 Key Actions | 6 |
| 4.1 Scope | 6 |
| 4.2 Prioritisation | 7 |
| 5.0 Operations | 8 |
| 5.1 Partnership Implementation | 8 |
| 5.2 Annual Programming | 9 |
| 5.3 Monitoring and Review | 9 |
| 5.4 Operating Environment Statement | 9 |
| 6.0 Key Actions: Future Development Strategy | 11 |
| 6.1 Context | 11 |
| 6.2 Sub-region Wide | 15 |
| 6.3 Central Corridor | 22 |
| 6.4 Northern Corridor | 24 |
| 6.5 Western Corridor | 26 |
| 6.6 Eastern Corridor | 29 |
| 6.7 Māori Housing / Papakāinga | 31 |
| 7.0 Key Actions: Spatial Planning | 34 |
| 7.1 Context | 34 |
| 7.2 Key Actions Summary | 34 |

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 8.0 | Key Actions: Urban Growth Partnership | 39 |
| 8.1 | Working Together: SmartGrowth Governance, Management and Operations | 39 |
| 8.2 | Targeted Delivery | 40 |
| 8.3 | Other Growth Management Organisations | 45 |
| 8.4 | Monitoring and Reporting | 46 |
| 8.5 | Key Actions Summary | 47 |
| 9.0 | Managing Risk and Uncertainty | 49 |

Appendices

Appendix A: Operating Environment Statement

Appendix B: Development Infrastructure

Appendix C: Glossary and Definitions

Appendix D: Te Reo Māori terms

1.0 Purpose

The Implementation Plan sets out the details of Key Actions over three years that are required to give effect to the SmartGrowth Strategy.

The aim of the Implementation Plan is to ensure that agreed implementation of the Strategy is clear, up to date and accessible to the SmartGrowth Partners and the community.

2.0 SmartGrowth Strategy

The SmartGrowth Strategy provides a 50 year direction for housing, employment, and people's wellbeing in the face of rapid and sustained long term growth, while safeguarding what people value most about the sub-region.

The SmartGrowth Strategy provides the "*where we want to be*" through the SmartGrowth vision and objectives, transformational shifts, spatial plan, and the Future Development Strategy.

The Implementation Plan provides the '*how we will get there*' for the SmartGrowth Strategy.

2.1 Overview

An overview of the key elements of the SmartGrowth Strategy is provided in the figure below.

SMARTGROWTH STRATEGY 2024-2074

SmartGrowth – An urban growth partnership involving Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, tāngata whenua and central government. The purpose of SmartGrowth is to take a collaborative and coordinated approach to managing and shaping growth within the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.

Vision and Transformational Shifts

The SmartGrowth Strategy provides a 50 year direction for housing, employment, and people's wellbeing in the face of rapid and sustained long term growth, while safeguarding what people value most about the sub-region. The SmartGrowth Vision is: **Western Bay – a great place to live, learn, work and play.**

The Strategy identifies six transformational shifts for change:

| | |
|---|---|
| Homes for Everyone | Targeted actions across all agencies strengthen the segments of the housing system that are facing the most significant challenges. |
| Marae as Centres and Opportunities for Whenua Māori | Marae as cultural, social, and economic centres, activate the affordable development of housing on whenua Māori and opportunities for papakāinga (housing, education, social, hauora facilities). |
| Emissions Reduction through Connected Centres | Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced through accessible Connected Centres. |
| Strong economic corridors linking the East and West to the City and the Port | Economic corridors provide important intra and inter-regional linkages into the Eastern Bay of Plenty, Rotorua and the Waikato. |
| Restore and enhance eco-systems for future generations | Beaches, harbour, open spaces, native bush, wetlands and air are restored and enhanced to a healthy functioning state |
| Radical change to the delivery, funding and financing model for growth | Funding, financing and delivery models, including public and private sector partnerships support agreed priority development areas and infrastructure for urban growth. |

Spatial Plan

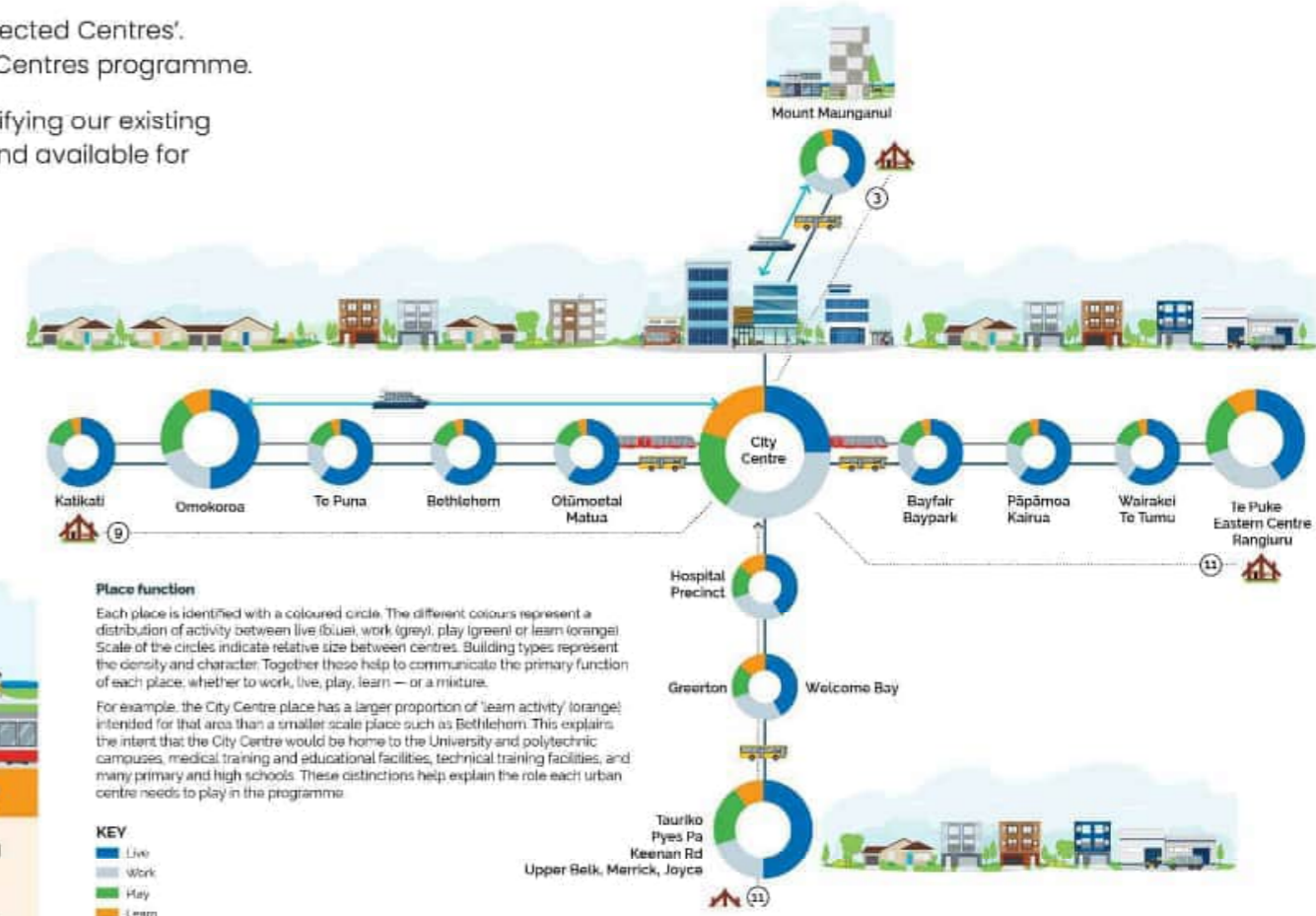
The Spatial Plan identifies the likely future scenario for population growth and change, the constraints and opportunities for accommodating future population, and provides the direction for how future development should be managed for future generations.

Connected Centres

The spatial scenario underpinning the strategy is 'Connected Centres'. There are two core concepts critical to the Connected Centres programme.

The first is increasing the number of dwellings by intensifying our existing urban and new growth areas. This is to maximise the land available for development and support a well-functioning multimodal transport system.

The second is being able to access local social and economic opportunities within a 15-minute walk or bike ride, and sub-regional social and economic opportunities within 30-45 minutes. These concepts encourage strong local centres and connected neighbourhoods.



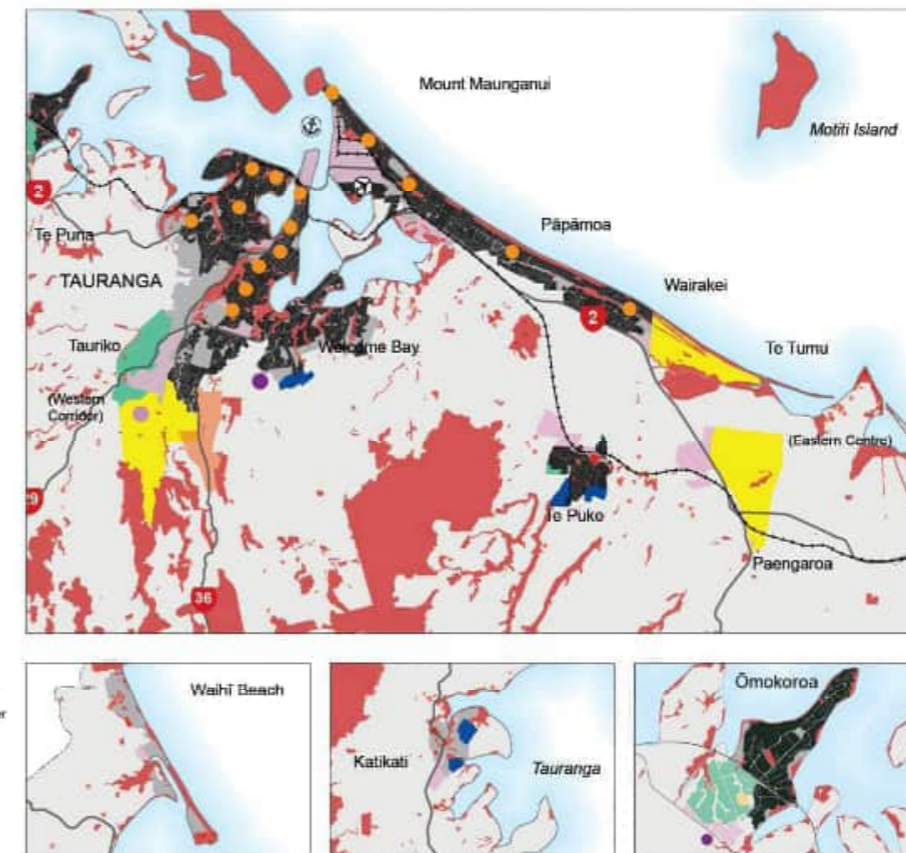
Future Development Strategy

The western Bay of Plenty has seen a rapid and sustained increase in population, with the sub-region's population expected to increase to reach between 246,000 and 318,000 people in the next 30 years.

The FDS shows how the sub-region will accommodate this growth for both housing and business land – it is underpinned by the Connected Centres programme. The FDS provides for an additional 43,000 houses and 1,000 ha of business land.



Future Development Strategy – Staging Map



Implementation and Funding

The SmartGrowth Strategy has a separate Implementation and Funding Plan for the next 3 years. Providing and funding the infrastructure required to meet demand and adequately accommodate growth is a critical issue for the sub-region and for the social and economic wellbeing of the community.

To see the full SmartGrowth Strategy, go to: smartgrowthbop.org.nz

2.2 Future Development Strategy

The purpose of the Future Development Strategy (FDS) is to show the areas for development over the next 30 years, and the infrastructure needed to support it.

An FDS helps local authorities set the high-level vision for accommodating urban growth over the long term and identifies strategic priorities to inform other development-related decisions, such as district plan zoning and related plan changes and priority outcomes in long-term plans and infrastructure strategies.

The spatial scenario underpinning the FDS is “Connected Centres”. The FDS has been informed by the Spatial Plan, including “No-Go” and “Go Carefully” constraints on development, and iwi values and aspirations for urban development: Manaakitanga – respect and care for others, and Kaitiakitanga – environmental responsibility and reciprocity.

These fundamental principles seek to achieve a balance between the growth and development imperatives with the Te Taiao – environmental values, community wellbeing, social services and amenity for future generations.

There are fundamental environmental and climate change principles that are embedded within the delivery of the FDS. These are ongoing and give effect to national, regional and local policy direction.

The Implementation Plan identifies the Key Actions where a SmartGrowth partnership-led approach can add value to the implementation of the FDS for the sub-region and each of the Growth Corridors, including land use planning, infrastructure delivery, and funding (including identifying investment needs) aligned with the plans of partners, including Long Term Plans.

2.3 Spatial Planning

The Spatial Plan sets out the spatial approach for the western Bay of Plenty sub-region over the next 50 years. It identifies existing and future areas for growth, development and improvement including uses and activities, transport, Te Taiao (environment) and infrastructure.

For each spatial layer, an introduction and background information, Key Challenges, and Growth Directives are set out. The “Key Challenges” are the main hurdles that need to be overcome. The “Growth Directives” identify the significant policies, methods and other measures that should be implemented over time by partners to achieve the SmartGrowth vision and objectives. Partners have varying abilities to implement Growth Directives, affected by their legal and policy mandates, resourcing and information availability.

The Implementation Plan identifies the “Spatial Planning” Key Actions. These Key Actions primarily relate to the investigations and evidence programme that is needed to support the development of a Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) under the Planning Act 2026.

2.4 Urban Growth Partnership

The Strategy has commitment from a formal partnership between Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, tāngata whenua, central government and other key organisations.

The partnership brings together the people and organisations that have a significant role in managing growth. Strategy development and implementation rests on four key pillars:

- Partnership;
- Integration;
- Collaborative Leadership;
- Evidence-base.

The partnership is also underpinned by Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) principles, including partnership, making informed decisions, and active protection.

The Implementation Plan identifies “Urban Growth Partnership” Key Actions that are needed to meet statutory obligations, enable delivery, and maintain and enhance SmartGrowth partnership arrangements.

3.0 Mandate

The Implementation Plan incorporates all SmartGrowth implementation initiatives (“Key Actions”) to implement the FDS and SmartGrowth Strategy spatial plan, and the urban growth partnership.

The NPS-UD 2020 requires an Implementation Plan to be prepared for the FDS:

“3.18 FDS implementation plan

- (1) Every tier 1 and tier 2 local authority must prepare and implement an implementation plan for its FDS.*
- (2) If a tier 1 or tier 2 local authority consists of more than one local authority, the implementation plan must be prepared as a single document by all the local authorities that jointly prepared the FDS.*
- (3) Every implementation plan, or part of an implementation plan, must be updated annually.*
- (4) An implementation plan or part of an implementation plan:
 - (a) is not part of the FDS to which it relates; and*
 - (b) does not need to be prepared using the consultation and engagement requirements set out in clause 3.15; and*
 - (c) does not have the effect of an FDS as described in clause 3.17.”**

New mandates will apply within the next 12 months under the Planning Act and Natural Environment Act, and the requirements for a single Regional Plan incorporating a Regional Spatial Plan, Natural Environment Plan and Land-Use Plans for each territorial authority.

A “Coordination Plan” will be required after the Regional Spatial Plan is prepared.

This Implementation Plan will be required during the transition period at least until mid-2028 when decisions on the RSP are made¹.

¹ Based on the Planning Bill as introduced.




4.0 Key Actions

4.1 Scope

For each key action, the Implementation Plan identifies:

- Actions
- Timeframe
 - Short: 2024-2027
 - Medium: 2027-2034
 - Long: 2034-2054+
- Indicative costs and funding
 - cost based on ranges, with estimates in background information in the following bands:
 - \$ <\$1m
 - \$\$ \$1 – \$10m
 - \$\$\$ \$10 – \$25m
 - \$\$\$\$ \$25 – \$100m
 - \$\$\$\$\$ >\$100m
 - \$\$\$\$\$\$ >\$1bn

- funding categorised as follows:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Funded |  |
| Partially Funded |  |
| Not Funded |  |

- Partner role allocation to actions, including who leads and supports. The partner allocated to lead Key Action is responsible for delivery of that action, including regular reporting on progress. This Plan identifies the 'lead' agency in bold and others that are required to support the Key Action.

A database includes detailed information on all potential Key Actions. This database includes how each action links to the SmartGrowth transformational shifts, dependencies and interdependencies between Key Actions.

There is uncertainty for some Key Actions that relate to infrastructure requirements, in particular timing, cost and funding. Some of the information provided in this Implementation Plan is subject to change and is linked to other processes such as the outcomes of Long-Term Plans and other funding plans.

4.2 Prioritisation

Prioritisation of Key Actions is based on the extent to which the following criteria apply:

- Required to achieve SmartGrowth Transformational Shifts; SmartGrowth Objectives or Growth Directives;
- Meets a legal or policy requirement;
- Enables a cross-organisational outcome to be achieved (i.e. not business usual);
- Realise the benefits of joint partner capacity and influence.

For the consideration of infrastructure priority under the FDS, one or more of the following are applicable:

- the ability for a substantial planned growth area to deliver serviced land is fundamentally at risk if not delivered.
- the ability for the sub-region to grow in alignment with the transformational shifts is fundamentally at risk if not delivered.
- it supports sustainability goals and enhances the city's resilience to climate change, natural disasters, and other potential crises.
- it is essential to social and cultural wellbeing, such as schools, hospitals, regional parks, recreational facilities, and cultural institutions.

An outline of the priority Key Actions is shown in the Implementation Plan.

There are a number of actions which the SmartGrowth partners currently undertake which are considered 'Business as Usual'. These include important community infrastructure and open space activities as well as other projects that are the responsibility of individual partners.

These have been excluded from the Key Actions outlined in the Implementation Plan as they do not require cross-organisational leadership by the partnership in order to be achieved. They have not been included in the Key Actions, but they are an important part of delivery for each corridor as a well-functioning urban environment. These are referred to as 'Existing Actions'.

5.0 Operations

The Implementation Plan is intended to be a “living document” able to respond quickly to changing needs and requirements in the operating environment.

5.1 Partnership Implementation

SmartGrowth is implemented through a range of mechanisms and across the partnership. There are some actions that require a SmartGrowth partnership approach and others that fall within the responsibility of individual partners. This is illustrated in the diagram below.



5.2 Annual Programming

The Implementation Plan provides the direction for SmartGrowth programming and budget each year, with indicative programmes and budgets for years 2 and 3 following.

Detailed Project Plans are developed and implemented by the lead agency for the delivery of Key Actions.

5.3 Monitoring and Review

The Implementation Plan Key Actions are monitored and reported each quarter. This is coordinated by the SmartGrowth Advisory Team.

The Implementation Plan is reviewed and updated each year in alignment with annual and long-term plan cycles of SmartGrowth Partners. Partner agreed midcycle updates can also occur when warranted by changing needs in the operating environment. Any updates are approved through the SmartGrowth structure.

The other strategy delivery Existing Actions undertaken by SmartGrowth partners are monitored and reported annually or as needed.

5.4 Operating Environment Statement

The Strategy and FDS follows the requirements of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development, informed by related national policy direction on housing, transport and the environment under the Urban Growth Agenda.

It is important that strategy delivery responds appropriately to the changing operating environment.

Changing policy settings in the following areas have a significant impact on the delivery of the Future Development Strategy:

- SmartGrowth Partnership;
- Housing and Business;
- Infrastructure;
- Transport;
- Funding and Finance;
- Three Waters;
- Climate Change;
- Resource Management System Reform;
- Tāngata Whenua/Māori

These policy settings are monitored regularly, and an assessment made of the need for changes or adjustments to the Implementation Plan and, where necessary, updates to the Future Development Strategy and/or Spatial Plan.

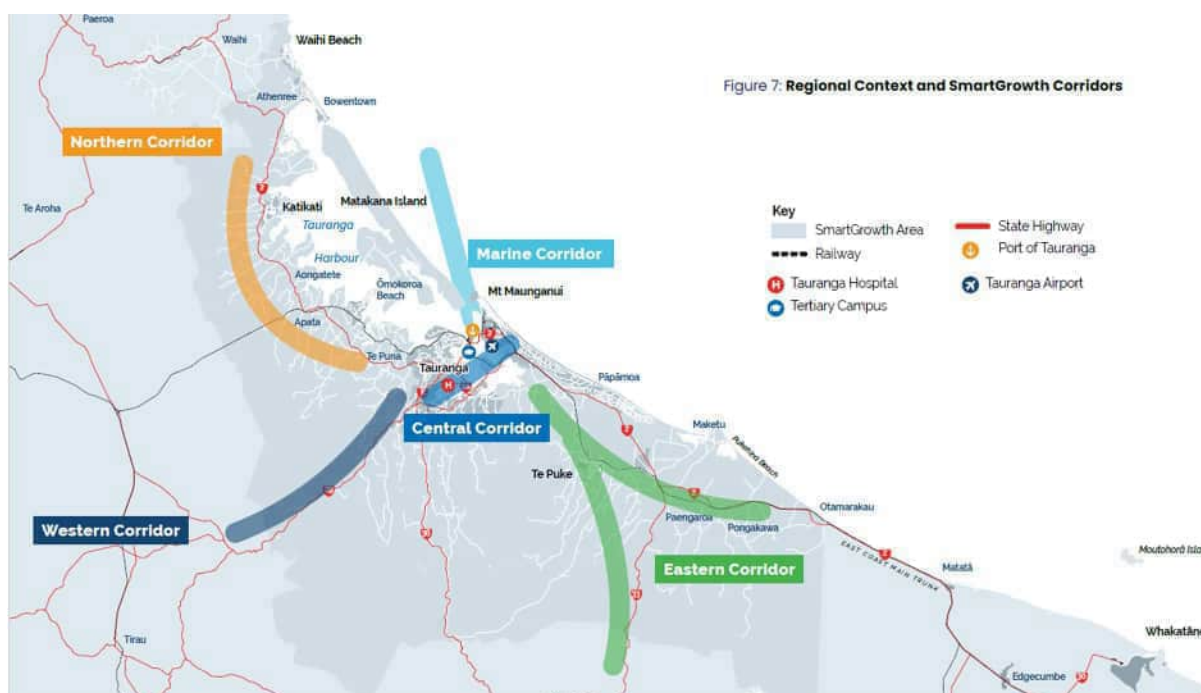
The Operating Environment Statement (OES) in Appendix A provides an outline of expected or likely policy settings at national, regional and local level that have the potential to have a significant impact on the delivery of the Future Development Strategy over the next three years. The OES is monitored and updated on a quarterly cycle.

6.0 Key Actions: Future Development Strategy

6.1 Context

6.1.1 Growth Corridors

The spatial scenario underpinning the FDS is “Connected Centres”. Connected Centres is made up of the corridors shown below, and referred to in the Implementation Plan:



| Corridor | Key Growth Areas ² |
|-----------------|---|
| Central | Te Papa, Ōtūmoetai, Mt Maunganui - Arataki/Bayfair |
| Western | Tauriko West, Keenan Road, Tauriko Business Estate, Upper Belk Rd |
| Eastern | Te Puke, Pāpāmoa, Wairakei, Te Tumu, Rangiuuru, Eastern Centre |
| Northern | Ōmokoroa, Katikati |

6.1.2 Dwelling Allocations

The FDS contains the following proposed dwelling allocations over the next 30 years to support the connected centres programme. These allocations have been informed by the HBA and Long-Term Plans. The allocations cover the period 2024 to 2054.

² Some growth areas are subject to further detailed investigations and other processes. As a result, the extent and nature of these areas may change.

| Area | Dwellings Short term (2024–2027) | Dwellings Medium Term (2027–2034) | Dwellings Long Term (2034–2054) | Totals (2024–2054) |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Infill / Intensification (sub-region wide) | | | | |
| Tauranga City Intensification Areas: Te Papa, Tauranga West, Mount Maunganui. Intensification of established areas outside of Intensification Area | 900 | 3,300 | 8,000 ³ | 12,100 |
| Western Bay of Plenty Intensification areas: Te Puke and Ōmokoroa | 80 | 150 | 330 | 560 |
| Northern Corridor | | | | |
| Waihī Beach – Bowentown / Athenree | 40 | 100 | 10 | 150 |
| Katikati ⁴ | 80 | 290 | 360 | 730 |
| Ōmokoroa | 340 | 1,160 | 1,440 | 2,940 |
| Central Corridor | | | | |
| Bethlehem | 270 | 890 | 530 | 1,690 |
| Eastern Corridor | | | | |
| Pāpāmoa | 230 | 520 | 170 | 920 |
| Wairakei | 500 | 1,380 | 270 | 2,150 |
| Te Tumu ⁵ | | | 4,200 | 4,200 |
| Te Puke | 410 | 2,230 | 10 | 2,650 |
| Eastern Centre* | | | Up to 8,000 | Up to 8,000 |
| Western Corridor | | | | |
| Pyes Pā | 40 | 140 | 70 | 250 |
| Pyes Pā West | 110 | 180 | 130 | 420 |
| Ohauti | 100 | 230 | 120 | 450 |
| Welcome Bay | 60 | 110 | 30 | 200 |
| Tauriko West | 150 | 1,260 | 2,090 | 3,500 |
| Ohauti South | | 190 | 280 | 470 |
| Keenan Road ⁶ | | | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Upper Belk Rd followed by Merrick Rd/Joyce Rd* | | | Up to 8,000 | Up to 8,000 |
| Total | 3,310 | 12,030 | 20,040 – 28,040 | 35,380 – 43,380 |
| Papakāinga (sub-region) | 128 | 51 | 284–400 | 463–579 |

*The feasibility, timing, number of dwellings, mix of uses and spatial extent of these areas is still subject to investigation. Once these investigations are completed, the up to 8,000 dwelling allocation could be located across one or more of the areas of Upper Belk Rd, Merrick Rd, Joyce Rd, or the Eastern Centre. These areas have the capacity to provide for significantly more growth than this.

³ The infill / intensification figures in the long-term period assumes at least 40% of total Tauranga City growth depending on intensification uptake and timing of other areas.

⁴ Katikati has been identified in the Regional Deal as an area where additional housing opportunities may be enabled.

⁵ Te Tumu Urban Growth Area is a Priority Development Area. Tauranga City Council and landowners are progressing a Plan Change for the growth area with the aim of it being notified by early 2026. Futureproofing for development includes infrastructure to service the growth area where that infrastructure also provides for growth in the Papamoa and Wairakei areas, and funding for infrastructure initial investigation, consenting, design and land purchase activities. Council, landowners and Central Government are working together to identify and secure the infrastructure funding or other financial arrangements that will enable the infrastructure that is required for the growth area to be brought forward and delivered in the 2024–34 LTP period.

⁶ Generation 4 Seaforth Rd, Fergus & Athenree Rd. Estimated developable land at 30 dwellings/ha. Future structure planning and hazard identification may alter numbers.

6.1.3 Business Land Allocations

The existing strategic industrial land allocations in the sub-region are as follows:

| Industrial Area | Short Term (2024-2027) | Medium Term (2027-2034) | Long Term (2034-2054) | Allocation (hectares) |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Wairakei | 8 | 10 | 12 | 30 |
| Te Tumu | 0 | 0 | 60 | 60 |
| Rangiuuru Business Park | 29 | 61 | 60 | 150 |
| Te Puke | 8 | 55 | 55 | 118 |
| Tauriko Business Estate (including expansion) | 30 | 70 | 20 | 117 |
| Te Puna | 30 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Ōmokoroa | 6 | 17 | 7 | 30 |
| Katikati | 13 | 13 | 13 | 39 |
| Waihī Beach | 0 | 0 | 25 | 25 |
| TOTAL | 124 | 226 | 252 | 602 |

The following table outlines the potential additional business land allocations over the next 30 years and beyond, informed by the HBA and supporting assessments.

| Corridor | Potential Long-term Growth Area – Business Land | Allocation (hectares) | Delivery timing |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Western | Upper Belk Road | 150-200 | Long-term (2034-2054) |
| Northern | Ōmokoroa/Apata | 70 | Long-term (2034-2054) |
| Western | Pukemapu ⁷ | 115 | Post-2054 |
| Eastern | Rangiuuru Business Park extension | 45 | Long-term (2034-2054) |

6.1.4 Hamilton to Tauranga Strategic Corridor

The Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions have an aligned approach to the Hamilton–Tauranga Corridor, reflecting its strategic significance. Shared objectives and priorities are supported by a joint investment programme (see Figure below) aimed at enabling sustainable economic growth, recognising the corridor’s national role in linking export industries with the Ports of Tauranga and Auckland, and inland ports.

A joint Spatial Study (2026) found that most growth driven by planned transport investment is already anticipated within existing Future Development Strategies. However, these investments are likely to have a more pronounced land use impact in smaller settlements such as Matamata, Tirau, and Cambridge.

⁷ Pukemapu is subject to further assessment for urban purposes and feasibility

Hamilton to Tauranga

Investment Programme

Fuelling sustainable economic growth for New Zealand

Key Outcomes:



Providing safe and efficient options for goods and people to travel between Hamilton and Tauranga.



Ensuring people living and working along the corridor can access the services they need (e.g. hospitals, schools, work) within 90 minutes.



Supporting the transition to clean energy by providing key infrastructure and incentivising different ways to travel.



Making the best use of land, ports, road and rail assets to support economic activity and community well-being

Why do we need to invest?



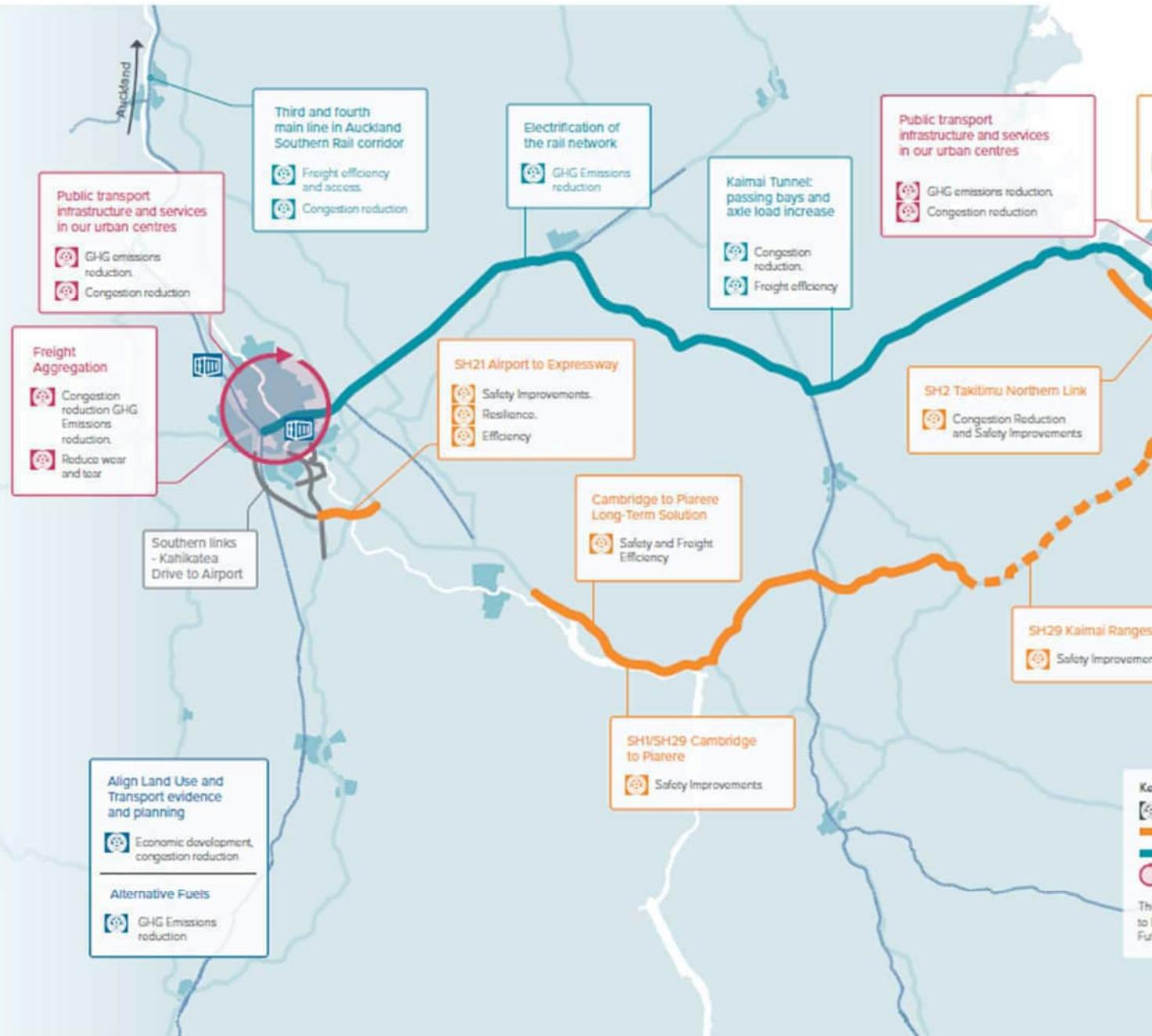
The population of the metro cities of Hamilton and Tauranga and towns along the corridor is growing rapidly resulting in additional traffic, reducing transport efficiency and creating safety issues.



Reliable journeys and efficient access to the port is critical for fuelling our economic growth but is currently constrained due to congestion and resilience issues.



We need to reduce carbon emissions from transport.



6.1.5 Critical Enabling Infrastructure and Investment Needs

Critical enabling infrastructure required to support the development shown in the FDS is shown in Appendix B.

This illustrates the capital investment need that exists whereby infrastructure is either fully funded, partly funded or unfunded, or is unknown and subject to a business case and/or other decision.

This table is updated on an annual basis as funding decisions are made.

This information can be improved over time to include quantified costs, and whole-of-life costs as the methods for assessing this are developed.

6.2 Sub-region Wide

6.2.1 Context

This section sets out the FDS Key Actions that transcend the SmartGrowth corridors and are of sub-regional significance, and may also be of regional, interregional, or national significance in some cases.

Implementing these Key Actions will be transformational for the sub-regional and have a major economic, social, environmental and cultural impact.

These actions underpin delivery of the Connected Centres programme including the 43,000 homes required and the 650ha of business land required over the next 30 years.

6.2.2 Existing Actions

There are a number of actions that are either underway or planned for the sub-region. These are summarised below. These are critical actions led by SmartGrowth partners or key stakeholders. They do not require a SmartGrowth partnership-led approach so have not been included in the Key Actions summary.

- Electricity: Transpower and Powerco progressing a range of upgrades and investments in the distribution and transmission networks to meet long-term growth including, new interconnecting transformers; establishing new Grid Exit Points; new 220 kV and/or 110 kV transmission lines and non-transmission solutions such as demand response.
- The Western Bay of Plenty Energy Strategy, led by Priority One, is progressing a coordinated sub-regional approach to ensure energy supply supports growth. This includes strengthening network capacity and resilience, enabling electrification.

low-temperature geothermal and alternative fuels, and aligning energy infrastructure with planned urban and industrial development.

- Potential redevelopment of Tauranga Hospital, including consideration of existing site and 'greenfield' opportunities (including Greerton Maarawaewae), to meet the health needs of the growing population.

6.2.3 Key Actions Summary

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 3-00 | <p>Advancing Infrastructure Investment</p> <p>To address the most significant issues facing the sub-region, identify and monitor the investment need and to take a coordinated approach to implementing funding and financing tools that will meet that need.</p> <p>Partners engage actively in processes underway by government to review existing funding tools and develop new ones.</p> <p>Partners seek to engage, align, and apply consistent principles in their funding and financing decisions.</p> <p>Funding strategies for the infrastructure needs of new urban growth areas are developed alongside plan change and structure planning processes.</p> <p>Tools are fit-for-purpose for each growth area or corridor, considering factors such as scale, land ownership, development yield, existing and planned infrastructure capacity, and overall feasibility.</p> <p>Understanding whole-of-life costs for infrastructure, such as maintenance and depreciation is an</p> | Short | \$ | SmartGrowth |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| | <p>important part of the funding and financing story, as is “growth paying for growth” and demand management opportunities.</p> <p>Relationships and structure are an important component of achieving coordination across multiple agencies.</p> | | | |
| 3-02 | <p><u>Ensuring Alignment between Growth Strategy and Investment by local and central government</u></p> <p><u>Commitment between local and central government on the key actions required to deliver the FDS and provide for 30 years of housing capacity.</u></p> <p><u>This action includes identifying a means of providing enduring long-term commitment and certainty for the feasibility, funding and delivery of the agreed projects in a timely manner under the Regional Deal including:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>The subregion exploring the use of current and future funding and financing tools available to ensure growth enabling infrastructure (including water) is funded in a timely way.</u> <u>Central Government (NIFF) will support the Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region to consider the use of a wider range of funding tools, including the Infrastructure Funding and Financing Act, to ensure further housing development including the</u> | Short | \$ | Regional Deal |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| | <p><u>existing Eastern link as well as the Northern and Western link areas.</u></p> | | | |
| | <p><u>Transport Infrastructure: coordinated approach to transport investment that assist in unlocking the Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region’s urban growth potential</u></p> <p><u>Under the Regional Deal, the Crown will identify Takitimu North Link Stage 2 (TNL2) and Tauriko West (Widening of 29A) as priority projects in the Government Policy Statement on land transport 2027 (GPS 2027) and will reflect the agreements made in the Deal.</u></p> <p><u>The Crown, NZTA, and the Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region will explore tolling to form part of the funding for the regional roading priorities. The Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region will support community consultation requirements on tolling options as needed.</u></p> <p><u>Tolling options may include tolling of the three main highway entrances to Tauranga with consideration given to a differentiated tolling rates for Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCV).</u></p> <p><u>The Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region will coordinate the release of land or capacity for redevelopment of sites for housing and commercial development - across both greenfield areas and existing urban locations - to ensure timely growth opportunities are available and</u></p> | Short | | Regional Deal |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | <u>supported by enabling infrastructure, including waters and local roads.</u> | | | |
| 35-00 | <p><u>Lower the barriers to delivery of Priority Development Areas</u></p> <p><u>Continue to identify locations where coordinated planning, infrastructure investment, regulatory processes, and partnerships are focused to accelerate the delivery of housing, employment land, and supporting infrastructure.</u></p> <p><u>Improve PDA delivery and outcomes by working collaboratively with central government agencies and across SmartGrowth partners to improve efficiency and effectiveness of planning processes, including consenting.</u></p> <p><u>This action also includes an organisation-wide focus for each partner on systems, culture and behaviour to support the delivery of the PDAs. The intention is to develop and agree a protocol to address this across the partnership.</u></p> <p><u>Under the Regional Deal, the Sub Region and the Crown agree to explore the range of governance, regulatory and other options to address any residual barriers to urban development that might remain following implementation of the Government’s Going for Housing Growth policies, RM reform and other related reforms.</u></p> | Short | \$ | SmartGrowth |
| 15-03 - 15-07 | <u>Empower Māori housing delivery</u> | Short - By June 2026 | \$ | SmartGrowth Tū Pakari, |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | <p><u>Through the Marae as Centres Implementation Framework and Māori Land Trusts:</u></p> <p>1. <u>Capturing the spatial context of the required feasibility, consenting, and infrastructure services required to deliver social housing and home ownership on Māori land that aligns with , economic and transport corridors.</u></p> <p>2. <u>Resourcing spatial planning models that engage with each of the appropriate tāngata whenua Council forums within each corridor:</u></p> <p>a) <u>Te Kāhui Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana within the Northern and Western Corridors.</u></p> <p>b) <u>Te Ihu o te Waka o Te Arawa within the Eastern Corridor.</u></p> <p>c) <u>Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana within the Central Corridor.</u></p> <p><u>Through the Regional Deal, the Region and the Crown would work together to ‘activate’ and enable involvement of Iwi Māori in the Region in the wide ranging opportunities that will arise from the regional deal:</u></p> <p>a) <u>Te Puni Kokiri will consider a funding application from iwi to support their inclusion in the implementation of the Deal. This will enable iwi to undertake due diligence and consider business cases which contribute to the Deal.</u></p> <p>b) <u>The Crown and Iwi would investigate issues associated</u></p> | Ongoing approach. | | CTWF, TCC, WBOPDC and Toi Moana |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--------------------|---|--|
| | <u>with multiply owned Māori land development.</u> | | | |
| 3-04 | <p><u>Progress a Coordinated approach to Road Pricing Opportunities</u></p> <p><u>Progress a coordinated sub-regional approach to road pricing, including exploring time-of-use pricing with the community.</u></p> <p><u>Road pricing is a key demand management tool to improve network efficiency, reduce congestion, and influence travel behaviour. Revenue generated could be reinvested into transport infrastructure and may also shape development patterns.</u></p> <p><u>Any approach will need to address social equity impacts and ensure viable public transport alternatives.</u></p> <p><u>A consistent and aligned approach to road tolling across the sub-region should also be developed.</u></p> | Medium | \$\$ | <p>TSP</p> <p>Waka Kotahi, TCC, WBOPDC,</p> |
| 32-00 & 41-00 | <p>Create High Frequency Public Transport Connections</p> <p>Creating high frequency public transport routes. Includes enhanced public transport services, infrastructure and corridor improvements as identified in the public transport services and infrastructure business case and is a core concept in delivering “Connected Centres”.</p> | Short - Medium | <p>Subject to a business case</p> <p>\$\$\$\$\$</p> <p>Not currently funded in NLTP</p> | <p>BOPRC,</p> <p>Waka Kotahi, TCC, WBOPDC</p> |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | |
| 16-01 | <p>HSP: Develop and Deliver a Place Based Housing System Plan</p> <p>Monitor and respond to changes in central government social housing delivery and Going for Housing Growth direction.</p> <p>Update Housing System Plan actions.</p> <p>Resourcing for the coordination of the Housing Working Group</p> | Short | \$ | HWG Kainga Ora |
| | <p><u>Tauranga Strategic Urban Network Plan</u></p> <p><u>Develop an agreed plan and approach for high value activities for prioritisation via investment processes</u></p> | Short | \$ | Waka Kotahi |
| | <p><u>Hamilton to Tauranga Strategic Corridor Plan</u></p> <p><u>Develop an agreed plan and approach for high value activities for prioritisation via investment processes</u></p> | Short | \$ | Waka Kotahi |

6.3 Central Corridor

6.3.1 Context

- City Centre – cultural and economic hub of the region – civic facilities, business, residential, tertiary education and hospital
- Compact City – focussing more development within existing urban area – including social and affordable housing
- Te Papa Peninsula – residential intensification, business, community facilities

- Supporting quality urban growth within Ōtūmoetai and Mt Maunganui
- Providing safe and multimodal transport choices across the central corridor

6.3.2 Existing Actions

There are a number of important actions that are either underway or planned for the Central Corridor. These are summarised below. They are critical actions but do not require a SmartGrowth partnership-led approach so have not been included in the Key Actions summary.

- Three Waters Projects, particularly stormwater to support Te Papa/Cameron Rd intensification. Stormwater is particularly challenging and important for the central corridor.
- Te Manawataki o Te Papa (city centre) – library, museum, community hub space, waterfront public realm upgrades including destination playground. This is a flagship project for the city centre that will provide important community space and help to support intensification outcomes.
- Community infrastructure to support growth and meet required levels of service, including provision of new and improved existing open spaces and community facilities such as Blake Park, Pōteriwahi and Memorial Park Pool, Baypark community sports hub.
- Provision of an interconnected network of open spaces, reserves and ecological corridors.
- Education – growth likely to be accommodated in existing school network.
- Monitoring Te Papa delivery through PDA tracker.
- Ongoing monitoring of the 12 Marae in TCC and Te Whetu o Te Rangī Marae Welcome Bay which is in WBOPDC area and Māori Land Trusts through the Papakāinga PDA.
- Tāngata whenua engagement with Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Forum at the Tauranga City Council.

6.3.3 Key Actions Summary

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 23-03, 23-27, 25-13 | <p>Planning, funding, financing and delivery of Central Corridor transport network</p> <p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron Road Stage 2 multimodal upgrade. • Connecting the People - Fifteenth Avenue to Welcome Bay. • Connecting Mount Maunganui - Hewlett's Road sub area. | Short - Long | <p>\$\$\$\$\$</p> <p>Cameron Road Stage 2 - funded</p> <p>Connecting the People - funded</p> <p>Connecting Mount Maunganui likely to have partial funding</p> | TCC, Waka Kotahi, TSP |
| 23-23 | <p>Pukehinahina/Gate Pā and Merivale</p> <p>Support APL to provide additional social, affordable and market housing, including a collaborative approach to planning and infrastructure investment.</p> | Short - Long | \$\$ | HUD, APL, TCC |

6.4 Northern Corridor

6.4.1 Context

- Growth area of Ōmokoroa (residential, business, community facilities, schools)
- Smaller growth area at Katikati (residential, business)
- Long-term Growth Area opportunity for investigation – Te Puna
- Reliable and safe strategic corridors for freight and longer distance movements
- Rail links to Hamilton and Auckland

6.4.2 Existing Actions

There are a number of important actions that are either underway or planned for the Northern Corridor. These are summarised below. They are critical actions but do not

require a SmartGrowth partnership-led approach so have not been included in the Key Action summary.

- SH2/Ōmokoroa intersection and Francis Road / Industrial Road intersection on Ōmokoroa Road
- Ōmokoroa Structure Plan stage 3 implementation – roading (developer delivered)
- Tākitimu North Link Stage 1 - connecting Tauranga and Te Puna with a new four-lane expressway and shared path. Construction is underway.
- Ōmokoroa - reserves and open space
- Planning for Ōmokoroa school provision
- Monitoring Ōmokoroa delivery through PDA tracker.
- Ongoing monitoring of the 11 Marae including 4 Marae on Matakana and Rangiwaea Islands and Māori Land Trusts through the Papakāinga PDA.
- Tāngata whenua engagement with Te Kāhui Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Forum at the WBOPDC.

6.4.3 Key Actions Summary

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--|---|-------------|
| 24-13 | Tākitimu North Link Stage 2 | Design – Short Consenting – completed under Fast Track Consent Construction – Medium | \$\$\$\$\$ RONS so has initial funding in NLTP | Waka Kotahi |
| 24-01 | Ōmokoroa/Apata - potential long-term industrial land. Further investigations to determine feasibility, scale and range of uses. | Medium | \$ | WBOPDC |

6.5 Western Corridor

6.5.1 Context

- Growth area at Tauriko West and Keenan Rd (residential, community facilities, schools)
- Long-term Growth Area opportunities (Belk, Joyce, Merrick)
- Tauriko Business Estate including extension
- Improved links to the Waikato and Auckland
- Multimodal transport to enable urban growth
- Reliable freight connections to Port of Tauranga

6.5.2 Existing Actions

There are a number of important actions that are either underway or planned for the Western Corridor. These are summarised below. They are critical actions but do not require a SmartGrowth partnership-led approach so have not been included in the Key Action summary.

- Structure Planning for Keenan Rd
- Keenan Road access to planned urban growth
- Tauranga Crossing bus facility improvements
- Tauriko West Spine Road - developer delivered
- Tauriko West Enabling Works (transport)
- Western Corridor Ring Route (SH29-SH36) - further planning and route protection.
- Western Corridor - Three Waters Enabling Works
- Western Corridor - Water Supply & Wastewater - Stages 1 & 2 and Stages 3 & 4
- Relocation and expansion of Tauriko School, establishment of a new co-educational secondary school, possible educational provision elsewhere in the Western Corridor as growth proceeds.
- Delivery of community infrastructure to support growth and meet required levels of service including Tauriko West active reserve and community facilities, Western Corridor active reserves and indoor sports centre.
- Provision of an interconnected network of open spaces, reserves, and ecological corridors.
- Monitoring Tauriko West and Tauriko Business Estate delivery through PDA tracker.

- Ongoing monitoring of the Akeake / Taumata Marae located in the upper Pyes Pa Road area and Māori land Trusts through the Papakāinga PDA.
- Tāngata whenua engagement with Te Kāhui Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Forum at the WBOPDC.

6.5.3 Key Actions Summary

Delivering the Tauriko Network Connections is also included as a Sub-regional Key Action as part of the coordinated Regional Deal approach to transport investment. Tauriko Network Connections will deliver enhanced sub-regional network and freight connections including to and from the Waikato and Port as well as supporting significant local housing and business capacity in the Western Corridor.

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------|--|------------------------|
| 25-30, 25-31 & 25-32 | Deliver Tauriko Network Connections | Long ⁸ | \$\$\$\$\$\$ RONs so has initial funding in NLTP | Waka Kotahi |
| | The transport package will deliver enhanced sub-regional network and freight connections including to and from the Waikato and Port as well as supporting significant local housing and business capacity. | | | |
| | Tauriko Network Connections (Stages 1-2) – Omanawa Stream Bridge and Corridor Protection | Construction short | | |
| | Tauriko Network Connections (Stage 3) SH29 Off-line | Long ⁹ | | |
| | Tauriko Network Connections (Stage 4) SH29A Tauriko to Barkes | | | |

⁸ SmartGrowth local government and tāngata whenua partners have resolved and communicated to the Waka Kotahi – NZTA board that there is a strong preference and need for Western Corridor transport improvements to be delivered in a single stage within a decade (by 2034) as opposed to the proposed staged delivery over many years potentially extending until 2050 given the significance of the corridor locally and nationally. These transport improvements not only enable housing but also business land and provide important improvements to a significant freight route and connection to the Port of Tauranga.

⁹ SmartGrowth local government and tāngata whenua partners have resolved and communicated to the Waka Kotahi – NZTA board that there is a strong preference and need for Western Corridor transport improvements to be delivered in a single stage within a decade (by 2034) as opposed to the proposed staged delivery over many years potentially extending until 2050 given the significance of the corridor locally and nationally. These transport improvements not only enable housing but also business land and provide important improvements to a significant freight route and connection to the Port of Tauranga.

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|---|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 25-06 & 25-19 | <p>Western Corridor – Structure Planning for Keenan Road and Upper Belk Road</p> <p>Undertake structure planning for Keenan and Upper Belk Rd including undertaking feasibility work. Structure planning will include further investigations required for industrial land.</p> <p>This will also need to consider boundary arrangements.</p> | Short | \$\$ | TCC, WBOPDC |
| 25-19 | <p>Potential long-term industrial land – Pukemapu</p> <p>Further investigations to determine feasibility, scale and range of uses.</p> | Medium | \$ | TCC, WBOPDC |
| 3-03 | <p>Western Corridor – Feasibility, Funding and Financing Planning</p> <p>Undertake feasibility studies and develop funding / financing plan for other infrastructure needs (est. at \$5-9b based on SDP work)</p> | Short | \$\$ | TCC |
| 25-18 | <p>Wastewater Treatment for long term growth</p> <p>Initial planning for a long-term wastewater solution for the Western Corridor. Investigations to occur in the short term, delivery would be in the long term. Directly related to structure planning for Upper Belk Rd.</p> | Short – Medium (planning) Medium – Long (delivery) | \$ - \$\$ (planning) | TCC |

6.6 Eastern Corridor

6.6.1 Context

- Growth Area at Pāpāmoa East – Wairakei and Te Tumu (residential, business, community facilities, schools)
- Growth Area at Te Puke (residential, business, community facilities)
- Rangiora Business Park
- New Eastern Centre (Te Kāinga) opportunity (residential, business, community facilities)
- Links to the eastern Bay of Plenty and Rotorua
- East/west safe and connected networks for existing and planned urban growth
- Strategic corridors for future Rangiora area growth

6.6.2 Existing Actions

There are a number of important actions that are either underway or planned for the Eastern Corridor. These are summarised below. They are critical actions but do not require a SmartGrowth partnership-led approach so have not been included in the Key Actions summary.

- Wairakei WWPS to Te Maunga WWTP
- Wairakei to Kaituna Stormwater Overflow – Phases 1 & 2
- Te Puke Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade
- Te Tumu Structure Planning and Zoning – Complete the structure plan development and rezoning under Planning Act; in parallel, undertake further feasibility, funding and financing work to respond to funding gaps and needs to enable delivery.
- Te Tumu Trunk Mains
- Resolve access to Te Tumu: Securing infrastructure corridors through Tumu Kaituna 14 (TK14) land
- Te Puke Spatial Plan
- New schools in Te Tumu if that development proceeds. Te Kāinga would require careful consideration of school network provision.
- Te Kāinga Strategic Case in partnership with HUD.
- Tāngata whenua engagement with Te Ihu o te Waka o Te Arawa Forum at the WBOPDC.

- Delivery of community infrastructure to support growth and meet required level of service, including: Wairakei/Te Tumu active recreation and community facilities.
- Provision of an interconnected network of open spaces, reserves, and ecological corridors.
- Monitoring delivery of Rangiuuru, Te Tumu and Te Kāinga through PDA tracker.
- Ongoing monitoring of the 11 Te Arawa Marae and Māori Land Trusts through the Papakāinga PDA.
- Monitoring Fast Track Approval proposals for Wairakei South and Tara Road through PDA tracker.

6.6.3 Key Actions Summary

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 26-27 | <p>Te Kāinga</p> <p>Understanding infrastructure and feasibility.</p> | Short | \$ | WBOPDC |
| | <p><u>Eastern Corridor Waters Infrastructure</u></p> <p><u>The Region, with Crown support, will explore methods of funding and financing the waters infrastructure requirements in the east that can operate within the intended Waters Done Well framework.</u></p> <p><u>This will include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Infrastructure Funding and Financing Model (IFF) through an SPV.</u> • <u>Private Infrastructure Investment & Delivery</u> | Short | | Regional Deal TCC, WBDC, Waters CCO |

6.7 Māori Housing / Papakāinga

6.7.1 Context

The SmartGrowth partnership has the opportunity to enable the development of Māori freehold land in the western Bay of Plenty subregion to contribute to the delivery of affordable, healthy, safe, durable, sustainable, and intergenerational housing solutions for whānau. The western Bay of Plenty subregion has an estimated 19,558ha of Māori freehold land in subregion which is approximately 10% of the total land area in the subregion.

Rural Māori freehold lands are most common type of Māori land in the western Bay of Plenty subregion, and is approximately 18,697ha, which is 96% of the total Māori land in the subregion. A total of 17,633ha (94%) in the WBOPDC and 1,063ha (6%) in Tauranga City. These rural land blocks enable a diverse range of land use activities that support many primary agriculture and horticulture production as well as cultural amenities and services including marae, urupā, kaumātua units, kohanga reo, hauora, whānau papakāinga and heritage sites.

Māori freehold lands in urban areas that are zoned residential total approximately 718ha in the subregion. A total of 616ha (86%) in TCC, with 306ha (43% of the TCC Total) are in the Te Tumu Kaituna blocks in Papamoa East. The balance of 102ha of residentially zoned Māori freehold lands are in the WBOPDC.

There is 37 Marae that are supported by whānau, hapū and Iwi as their cultural centres providing indigenous services and facilities across the western Bay of Plenty subregion. There is 24 Marae in WBOPDC, 11 Marae in TCC and 2 Marae on Motiti Island.

The collaboration between Marae and Māori land trusts on their common future housing needs and aspirations are aligned with the appropriate transport corridor:

- Northern and Western corridors with Te Kāhui Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana at WBOPDC
- Eastern corridor with Te Ihu o te Waka o Te Arawa at WBOPDC
- Central corridor with Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana at TCC.

6.7.2 Existing Actions

There are several important actions that are either underway or planned that support and enable Māori housing. These are summarised below. They are critical projects but do not require a SmartGrowth partnership-led approach so have not been included in the key action's summary:

- The SmartGrowth Western Bay of Plenty Te Keteparaha mō ngā Papakāinga (Māori Housing Toolkit) 2019.

- Monitoring the delivery of Māori Housing / papakāinga on Marae, Māori Land Trusts, Iwi Housing providers and other options through the PDA tracker.
- The delivery of Māori housing development workshops, and support services in the western Bay of Plenty subregion by Ara Rau Tāngata Inc.

6.7.3 Key Actions Summary

Empowering Delivery of Māori Housing is included as a Sub-regional Key Action in section 6.2.3 above. Empowering Delivery of Māori Housing requires a subregional approach to establish an agreed business case framework and resourcing approach.

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 15-01 | <p>Iwi PSGE's and Māori Housing / Papakāinga</p> <p>Work with Iwi Post-Settlement Governance Entities (PSGE) regarding opportunities to utilise and develop housing projects on commercial redress properties in WBOP sub-region.</p> | Medium | Subject to a business case | TCC/WBOPDC |
| 15-03 – 15-07 | <p>Resourcing spatial planning models that engage with each of the appropriate tāngata whenua Council forums within each corridor:</p> <p>a) Te Kāhui Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana within the Northern and Western Corridors.</p> <p>b) Te Ihu o te Waka o Te Arawa within the Eastern Corridor.</p> <p>c) Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana within the Central Corridor.</p> <p>The CTWF will provide overall direction and co-ordination for</p> | Short | \$\$ | CTWF. SmartGrowth – Tū Pakari. |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| | each Iwi / Tāngata Whenua Forum. | | | |

7.0 Key Actions: Spatial Planning

7.1 Context

This section sets out the Spatial Planning Key Actions that need to be completed to inform the development of a Regional Spatial Plan under the Planning Bill 2025.

There is emerging agreement across the region’s local authorities on the thinking for the RSP: that it should take an approach which addresses “whole of region” components, with “sub-regional” chapters for WBOP, Rotorua Lakes and EBOP leveraging off the existing spatial plans/FDS that have been produced over the last 2 years.

Only the actions identified as being critical are included below.

7.2 Key Actions Summary

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | <p>Coordinate the pathway to an integrated regional spatial plan</p> <p>Map the development of a single, integrated regional spatial plan, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating a stocktake of existing spatial planning information (including any updated information) and reviewing direction provided in the SmartGrowth strategy. Testing alignment between existing SmartGrowth Spatial Planning Initiatives and RM Reform direction; Understanding how to incorporate national direction requirements; Pre-enactment work on Process Agreement. Engagement with Iwi and Hapū, and Stakeholders. | Short | \$ | BOPRC, TCC, WBOPDC |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| | <p><u>Refreshed Sub Regional Spatial Plan</u></p> <p><u>Coordinate the investigations and evidence needed for a draft spatial plan chapter for the WBOP subregion for urban development and infrastructure within environmental limits and constraints, providing strategic direction for growth over a 30-year period.</u></p> | Medium | \$ | SmartGrowth |
| | <p><u>Population Projections</u></p> <p><u>Contribute to population projections project for the BOP Region as an input to the Regional Spatial Plan.</u></p> | Short | \$ | SmartGrowth |
| | <p><u>Katikati Spatial Plan</u></p> <p><u>Provide a framework for managing growth, infrastructure investment, environmental protection and community development over the next 30–50 years.</u></p> <p><u>Includes consideration of the SH2 Katikati Bypass for reducing heavy traffic through the town centre and improving safety and amenity.</u></p> | Short | \$ | WBOPDC |
| 24-26 | <p><u>Te Puna Minden Spatial Plan</u></p> <p><u>Provide a framework for managing growth, infrastructure investment, environmental protection and community development over the next 30–50 years.</u></p> | Short | \$ | WBOPDC |
| 6-00 | <p><u>Supporting existing and future industry: Issues and Options Analysis</u></p> | Short | \$ | SmartGrowth |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| | Consider pathways for heavy and emitting industries to potentially relocate to low sensitivity areas and/or implement progressive environmental improvements. Consider feasibility, energy requirements, health risk, amenity and odour etc. | | | |
| 17-00 | <p>Allocation of Growth between East/West Corridor</p> <p>Building on existing and planned work, investigate feasibility, timing, mix of uses and spatial extent of long-term urban development in the Eastern and Western Corridors.</p> <p>This work will need to undertake a cost-benefit, MCA or other evaluation of options to support decisions.</p> <p>Requires actions in Western and Eastern Corridors to be completed to inform this work.</p> | Short - Medium | \$ | SmartGrowth |
| 19-00 | <p>Commercial Centres Strategy</p> <p>Prepare a Commercial Centres Strategy, to assist in future planning and decision making for the sub-region, including relevant plan changes.</p> | Short | \$ | TCC, WBOPDC |
| 38-00 | <p>Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment</p> <p>Prepare Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment (or equivalent as may be required by</p> | Short | \$ | SmartGrowth |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | national direction) as an input to the Regional Spatial Plan. | | | |
| | <p><u>Development Opportunities</u></p> <p><u>Coordinated assessment of urban growth proposals that sit outside the current Future Development Strategy and provides an input into future RSP considerations</u></p> | Short | \$ | SmartGrowth |
| | <p><u>Hamilton to Tauranga Corridor Spatial Plan</u></p> <p><u>Develop and maintain a coordinated, inter-regional spatial plan for the Hamilton-Tauranga Corridor that aligns land use, infrastructure capacity, and funding priorities across the SmartGrowth and Future Proof sub-regions to support staged growth, nationally significant freight and economic outcomes, and any necessary inputs to the Regional Spatial Plan.</u></p> | Short | \$ | SmartGrowth /FutureProof |
| | <p><u>Marae as Centres Implementation Framework</u></p> <p><u>Develop a Marae as Centres Implementation Framework to inform future planning and decision making for the sub-region to deliver the CTWF's growth, development, and protection outcomes for marae centres and Māori land.</u></p> | Short | \$ | Tū Pakari |
| | <p><u>Partnership to support the provision of health and education facilities</u></p> | Short | | Regional Deal |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| | <p><u>The Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region and Health NZ will form an Independent Joint Planning Group with an agreement on a plan that meets the anticipated growth needs. The Terms of Reference for this group will be developed and agreed during the implementation planning phase.</u></p> <p><u>The Western Bay of Plenty Sub Region will work with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to form an Independent Joint Planning Group, with a Terms of Reference to be agreed during the implementation planning phase.</u></p> <p><u>This joint planning Group will then agree on a plan to be presented to decision makers that meets the anticipated growth needs.</u></p> | | | |

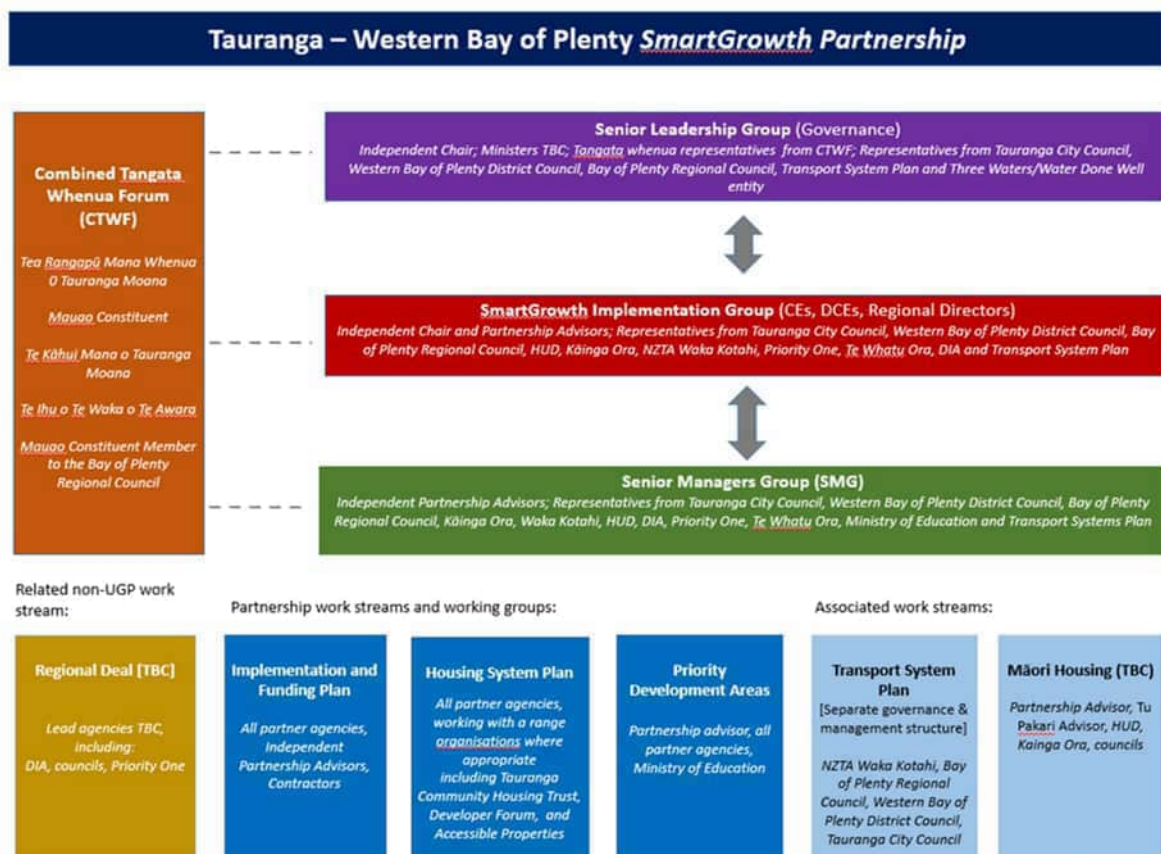
8.0 Key Actions: Urban Growth Partnership

8.1 Working Together: SmartGrowth Governance, Management and Operations

SmartGrowth provides a collaborative leadership approach to the management of key issues facing the western Bay of Plenty. Working together from one agreed Strategy allows for greater efficiencies and provides certainty to the community that partners are collaborating to manage growth.

This Implementation Plan relies on all partners working together to deliver on the strategy.

The current SmartGrowth structure is shown below:



The Implementation Plan is implemented through the SmartGrowth structure outlined above. There are a number of actions that require individual partners to implement. SmartGrowth has oversight of these actions and ensure they are monitored.

8.2 Targeted Delivery

8.2.1 Context

As outlined in the SmartGrowth structure diagram above, there are working groups and other entities connected to SmartGrowth that are important to implementation of the Strategy and delivery of the actions outlined in this Plan.

SmartGrowth has a Housing Working Group and a Priority Development Area Working Group in place. Other working groups are set up as and when needed.

The Combined Tāngata Whenua Forum (CTWF) has Te Rōpū Arotahi Working Group to provide strategic and technical leadership to enable the CTWF to be more effective and efficient in delivering their collective growth and development outcomes.

8.2.2 Priority One

Priority One is the western Bay of Plenty sub-region's economic development agency. Their role is to grow a sustainable economy that improves productivity and delivers prosperity to local people and communities. Priority One is a SmartGrowth partner and is represented at all levels including the SmartGrowth Leadership Group but in a non-voting capacity.

The economic component of the SmartGrowth Strategy is implemented via Priority One and its Economic Strategy: <https://www.priorityone.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/Priority-One-Economic-Strategy-2021.pdf>

The SmartGrowth Strategy is consistent with the Priority One Economic Strategy.

There are particular areas of interest for Priority One in SmartGrowth, including the provision of business land, transport access, affordable housing and promoting a circular economy.

8.2.3 Transport System Plan

The Transport System Plan (TSP) is a shared transport vision and plan for the next 30 years. The TSP brings together Tauranga City Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, tāngata whenua, Priority One, KiwiRail and Port of Tauranga to coordinate transport planning, investment and project decisions.

The TSP helps to deliver the SmartGrowth Strategy, which considers how transport along with housing, infrastructure, community facilities and the environment work together. The TSP has a separate Governance Board but works collaboratively to ensure decision making, planning and funding is coordinated.

The TSP also closely aligns with national and regional policy and strategic direction, including long-term plans, the regional land transport plan and the national land transport plan.

Further information on the TSP can be found at: <https://www.smartgrowthbop.org.nz/our-focus/transport>

Key TSP projects that are required to deliver the FDS have been included in this Implementation Plan.

8.2.4 Housing System Plan and Housing Working Group

The SmartGrowth partners have developed a sub-regional housing system plan. This plan brings together the key housing information for the western Bay of Plenty sub-region, identifies gaps, and lays out a clear Action Plan to improve the housing system in the sub-region, now and into the future.

This Implementation Plan contains key actions to deliver on this place-based housing plan. The Housing Working Group is responsible for leading most of these actions, acknowledging that a number will require specific partners taking accountability for particular actions. The Housing Working Group has membership from community housing providers, central government, councils, tāngata whenua and the private sector.

8.2.5 Priority Development Areas and Working Group

Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are identified to address the significant and urgent housing and business land needs within the SmartGrowth area with an enhanced, high-energy and 'can do' partnership focus that works to 'unlock' development at the required pace and scale.

PDAs are tracked and reported each quarter to the SmartGrowth Partners. PDAs seek to ensure close alignment, integration and coordination between respective key public sector agency programmes and actions.

The SmartGrowth PDA Working Group is responsible for providing information, tracking and reporting on the PDAs.

Current PDAs are

- Omokoroa
- Tauriko West and Tauriko Business Estate
- Te Papa
- Te Tumu
- Te Kainga
- Rangiuuru

- Papakainga

Preliminary planning for Keenan Road and Upper Belk Road may result in these areas being included.

8.2.6 Te Rōpū Arotahi Working Group (TRA)

TRA—a solutions-focused working group—is responsible for providing strategic and technical leadership to enhance the CTWF’s effectiveness and efficiency in delivering their collective growth and development outcomes. TRA includes members from the CTWF, the three local council kaupapa Māori policy teams, and the Tū Pakari advisory team.

The CTWF have developed Te Tūāpapa mō te rōpū Tū Pakari – The Foundation for the Combined Tāngata Whenua Forum. This foundational document, which outlines the collective vision, role, and guiding principles, identifies five key collective growth and development outcomes for marae, hapū, and iwi in the western Bay of Plenty sub-region. The implementation plan contains key actions that support and enable the CTWF to deliver their collective growth and development outcomes.

The CTWF’s collective growth and development outcomes are monitored and reported annually to the SmartGrowth partners. These outcomes align closely with the aspirations of marae, hapū, and iwi, as well as with strategic outputs from the three iwi/tāngata whenua forums—Te Kāhui Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana, Te Ihu o te Waka o Te Arawa, and Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana—and with hapū management plans.

8.2.7 Regional Deal

The Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal, signed in May 2026, establishes a long-term partnership between central government, local government, tangata whenua and regional stakeholders to coordinate investment, infrastructure delivery and growth management across the sub-region.

The Deal recognises that the Western Bay of Plenty is one of New Zealand’s fastest-growing regions and seeks to proactively respond to the challenges and opportunities associated with sustained population and economic growth.

The Deal aligns closely with the SmartGrowth Strategy, particularly through the delivery of Priority Development Areas, the Connected Centres and Corridors growth pattern, and initiatives that remove barriers to housing and employment growth.

The Regional Deal has a 30-year growth horizon supported by a 10-year implementation programme. Initial actions are focused on the period 2025–2035 and include growth-enabling transport infrastructure, housing and business land development, waters infrastructure planning, and coordinated investment in health and education facilities.

SmartGrowth will play a key role in supporting implementation by providing regional coordination, monitoring progress, aligning growth planning and infrastructure investment, and helping partners collectively deliver the Deal's commitments and outcomes.

8.2.8 Our Water Future

The “Our Water Future Programme” is a joint initiative of TCC and WBOPDC (in addition to 10 year and 30 year planning strategies) with the overall goal of developing a holistic and integrated approach to the management of potable water, wastewater, and stormwater in the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.

It is a response to the challenges for three waters delivery, catering for ongoing growth, the need to adapt to climate change, and anticipated changes in regulation, including giving effect to the principles of Te Mana o te Wai.

One of the key outcomes is to strategically align three waters infrastructure planning at a sub-regional scale in accordance with growth assumptions and ongoing spatial planning under SmartGrowth.

This work is ongoing with an immediate focus on consenting existing water takes and wastewater discharge consents, while advancing investigations into additional water takes, alternative water sources (rainwater storage, recycled wastewater etc), demand management (eg: Waterwatchers) and wastewater treatment and disposal methods to provide for growth into the future.

There is uncertainty at present in terms of how three waters will be delivered. All water supply authorities are required to provide delivery plans setting out their proposals by July 2025.

8.2.9 Social and Environment Sectors

SmartGrowth will continue to engage on a regular basis with social and environmental groups during the implementation of the SmartGrowth Strategy as set out through this Plan.

Some of these sectors are already represented in SmartGrowth Working Groups such as housing.

8.2.10 Infrastructure Providers and Development Sectors

SmartGrowth plays an important role in providing the foundation for others to plan from, both in the public and private sectors.

A strong evidence-base behind the growth scenarios, and commitment to where, how and when development will occur in the sub-region increases the level of confidence for other sectors to plan and make major investment decisions.

Under the NPS UD Policy 10, SmartGrowth is directed to:

- engage with providers of development infrastructure and additional infrastructure to achieve integrated land use and infrastructure planning; and
- engage with the development sector to identify significant opportunities for urban development.

SmartGrowth undertake regular engagement and consultation with key infrastructure providers, including health, education and utilities, in growth planning. This enables providers to plan for infrastructure to support well-functioning urban environments.

A Development Sector Group (DSG) includes a wide range of development sector interests involved in the growth and development of the western Bay of Plenty sub-region. The DSG is independent of SmartGrowth. It provides development industry input and information in relation to various strategy development and implementation processes being led by SmartGrowth or its partner agencies. Relevant draft reports, ideas, submissions, and proposed initiatives by partner councils or central government agencies are provided to the DSG for discussion and input prior to matters going to the SmartGrowth Leadership Group (SLG). DSG administration is supported by TCC.

Where there are studies or investigations, or proposals by either local government or the private sector, then a boundary-less approach is to be taken in the development of any studies, consideration of proposals or applications to ensure that consideration is given to the most appropriate outcome in the best interests of the sub-region in the long term.

8.2.11 Fast Track Approvals Projects

The Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 has expedited several significant infrastructure and housing projects, streamlining the consenting process to address regional growth and development needs.

These projects are part of a broader central government initiative to accelerate development in the region, addressing housing shortages and infrastructure needs.

Key Fast-Track Projects in the Western Bay of Plenty:

- Bell Road Development (Pāpāmoa): A proposed 340-hectare mixed-use development aiming to deliver up to 3,000 new homes and 60–80 hectares of industrial land.
- Tauriko West Development: A 132-hectare residential project planned to provide approximately 1,250 homes, aligning with the region's growth strategies.

- Takitimu North Link – Stage 2: A four-lane highway project extending from Te Puna to Ōmokoroa, designed to improve connectivity and support the region's transportation infrastructure. Approval granted in 2026.
- SH29 Tauriko Network Connections: Enhancements to State Highway 29, including the replacement of the Omanawa Bridge, to support increased traffic flow and regional development.
- Port of Tauranga – Stella Passage Development: Expansion of port facilities to accommodate growing export demands, crucial for the region's economic growth.

Progress on Fast Track Project is monitored quarterly alongside Priority Development Areas.

8.3 Other Growth Management Organisations

SmartGrowth works with other growth management organisations to share knowledge, promote consistency in approach and to identify opportunities for collaboration.

8.3.1 Rotorua and Eastern Bay of Plenty

SmartGrowth is working with Rotorua (Te Rautaki Whakawhanake i te Āpōpō o Rotorua) and the Eastern Bay of Plenty (Our Places) who have both developed spatial plans and future development strategies.

There are significant land use and infrastructure interdependencies between the subregions.

8.3.2 Future Proof

The Future Proof area sits within the Waikato Region and is made up of Hamilton City, and Waipā, Waikato and Matamata Piako District. Future Proof considers all of the major growth challenges impacting the sub-region.

Regular liaison at technical and governance level recognises the national importance of the economic corridor between Hamilton and Tauranga and the Port.

8.3.3 Other Urban Growth Partnerships

Liaison with Urban Growth Partnerships in Queenstown, Christchurch, Wellington, Waikato and Auckland occurs each quarter to provide a forum for information sharing and to promote alignment.

8.3.4 Upper North Island Strategic Alliance

The Upper North Island Strategic Alliance (UNISA) was established in 2011 and is a collaboration between Northland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty Regional Councils, Auckland Council, Whangarei District Council and Hamilton and Tauranga City Councils. UNISA covers a range of inter-regional and inter-metropolitan issues.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/services/regional-growth-and-development/unisa/>

SmartGrowth monitors the outputs from UNISA and any relevant projects that involve the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.

8.4 Monitoring and Reporting

8.4.1 Key Performance Indicators

SmartGrowth contains the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) taken from the Urban Form and Transport Initiative. These are currently under review to ensure that they align with the updated SmartGrowth Strategy and in particular the transformational shifts.

| UFTI benefits | UFTI investment objectives | UFTI key performance indicators |
|---|--|--|
| Housing We have the housing we need and can afford | Housing affordability (as measured by the ratio of median gross (before tax) annual household income to the median dwelling house price/rent) in the western Bay of Plenty sub-region is increasingly better than the national New Zealand average by 2070 | KPI: Infrastructure costs per new dwelling/business as a proportion of the property costs compared to national average → KPI: % of households with housing costs greater than 30% of income † KPI: Proportion of average household income spent on transport → |
| Movement We can move and enjoy our live, learn, work, and play lifestyle | Proportion of population living within travel thresholds (15, 30, 45 minutes) of key social and economic opportunities (including education, health care, supermarkets etc.) by different modes (walking, cycling, public transport, vehicles) | KPI: % of jobs that are accessible within a 30–45-minute travel threshold by private vehicles (currently 80%; 2070 -67%) PT (currently 22%; 2070 -58%) †, and cycle †, in morning peak KPI: Percentage of people living in an urban area within 500 metres of frequent PT services (≤ 15–10 minutes) † KPI: Number of DSIs and FSI crashes within western Bay of Plenty sub-region by mode † |
| Environment The quality of our environment is improving | Transport-related greenhouse gas emissions in the western Bay of Plenty sub-region reach net zero by 2050 and maintain this level into the future | KPI: Tonnes of harmful emissions emitted per year from transport † KPI: Mode share for people (% of travel by SOV/HOV/PT/Active modes) in AM peak period † |
| Prosperity Our economic productivity and prosperity are improving for all | The efficiency and effectiveness of the core freight network (road and rail tonnes per km) in the western Bay of Plenty sub-region is maintained | KPI: Predictability of interpeak travel times on freight priority journeys → KPI: Mode share of domestic freight (% of freight moved by, rail, and coastal shipping) † |

8.5 Key Actions Summary

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 15-02 | <p>Māori Housing Joint Agency Group</p> <p>Develop a SG Joint Agency Group (JAG) to oversee Māori Housing delivery across the western Bay of Plenty sub-region, taking a WBOPDC & TCC Tāngata Whenua / Iwi Forum catchment approach</p> | Medium | \$ | CTWF, SmartGrowth |
| 16-02 | <p>HSP: Monitoring</p> <p>Detailed monitoring and market intel function.</p> | Short | \$ | HWG, HUD |
| 21-00 | <p>Our Water Future implementation reporting</p> <p>Development and implementation of Our Water Future (includes water, wastewater and stormwater). Reporting progress and implementation to Partners is necessary due to the link to potable water supply provision for future growth.</p> <p>Includes reporting on three waters infrastructure provision to marae centres and papakāinga.</p> | Short | \$\$ | TCC, WBOPDC |
| 37-00 | <p>Local Water Done Well Delivery Model</p> <p>Implement the government's Local Water Done Well delivery model, consistent with TCC and WBOPDC decisions, to enhance infrastructure investment and ensure long-term</p> | Short | \$ | TCC, WBOPDC |

| Action Number | Key Actions | Proposed Timeframe | Indicative Cost and Funding | Who |
|---------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| | <p>financial sustainability of sub-regional water services.</p> <p>Consider Implications for governance and management of infrastructure delivery for RSP and future implementation..</p> | | | |

9.0 Managing Risk and Uncertainty

There is risk and uncertainty inherent in any long-term strategy. This includes changes in political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors that influence the Strategy. Monitoring and review important to ensure that the Strategy adapts to any new initiatives and changes that occur.

A summary of the main factors and influences, risk level, and mitigation for SmartGrowth are outlined in the table below:

| Change Factor or Influence | Risk Level | Mitigation |
|---|------------|---|
| <p>Population growth</p> <p>An envisioned population scenario of 400,000 people over the next 50+ years is used for the SmartGrowth Strategy.</p> <p>The FDS based on the NPDS UD plans for between 37,000 and 43,000 new homes over the next 30 years.</p> <p>There are many factors that influence population growth, including migration settings and economic cycles.</p> <p>Going for Housing Growth may require higher population growth assumptions to be used.</p> | Moderate | <p>The inherent uncertainty in population forecasting cannot be removed, but it can be managed to a more acceptable degree of uncertainty. Over the next 30 years Stats NZ projections are used.</p> <p>To help manage the uncertainties, these forecasts are reviewed regularly and adjusted as new information arises—such as Census data or similar.</p> |
| <p>Infrastructure Cost and Delivery</p> <p>The costs of constructing infrastructure has been rising.</p> <p>There are significant infrastructure constraints that need to be overcome to enable the Connected Centres programme.</p> | High | <p>SmartGrowth will actively monitor this and work on delivery constraints.</p> |
| <p>Funding</p> | Critical | <p>The SmartGrowth Partners are working closely to identify alternative funding</p> |

| Change Factor or Influence | Risk Level | Mitigation |
|---|-----------------|---|
| <p>Current funding sources are inadequate to deliver the FDS / Connected Centres programme.</p> | | <p>sources to enable implementation.</p> |
| <p>Regulatory and Delivery Risk</p> <p>Several of the Connected Centres growth areas rely on plan changes occurring and an assumption that development can physically occur in some locations.</p> <p>Should a major growth node or intensification fail to go ahead for legal / regulatory reasons or due to inability to develop land, the settlement pattern will be at risk and a full re-set of the plan may be required.</p> | <p>Moderate</p> | <p>This risk is managed through annual updates to the Implementation Plan as well as three yearly reviews of the FDS.</p> <p>The PDA tracker also helps to identify particular barriers and escalate these.</p> |
| <p>Changes in government policy</p> <p>The operating environment has changed substantially with a recent change of government and associated coalition agreement and will continue to change.</p> <p>It is important that strategy delivery responds appropriately to this changing operating environment.</p> | <p>Moderate</p> | <p>This is being actively tracked through the Operating Environment Statement contained in Appendix A.</p> |
| <p>Alignment Risk</p> <p>SmartGrowth and the Connected Centres programme relies on coordinated actions and investment decisions by several different agencies working together over multiple planning and investment cycles.</p> | <p>High</p> | <p>The SmartGrowth governance model is intended to manage this risk by providing a mechanism for regular review and alignment conversations.</p> <p>A Regional Deal and Coordination Plans under the reform may assist with achieving better alignment across different</p> |

| Change Factor or Influence | Risk Level | Mitigation |
|--|------------|---|
| | | organisations. Also note action 3-02. |
| <p>Global Events and Impact of Technology</p> <p><u>Global events such as the Global Financial Crisis, COVID pandemic and the Iran war can have a significant impact on the operating environment.</u></p> <p>Technology is also evolving rapidly. It is likely that over time, new technologies will impact on how we move people and the degree to which people still need to move around the sub-region to work.</p> | Moderate | <p>Careful monitoring of demand and an adaptive approach to implementation is required.</p> <p>This occurs through SmartGrowth’s existing monitoring and reporting frameworks, including the TSP.</p> |

Appendix A: **Operating Environment Statement** **2024-2027**

Appendix A: **Operating Environment Statement**

Operating Environment Statement – 2024–2027

As of June 2026

The Operating Environment Statement (OES) provides an outline of expected or likely policy settings at national, regional and local level that have the potential to have a significant impact on the delivery of the Future Development Strategy over the next three years.

Policy settings are monitored regularly, and an assessment made of the need for changes or adjustments to the Implementation Plan and, where necessary, updates to the Future Development Strategy and/or Spatial Plan.

Changing policy settings in the following areas are expected to have a significant impact on the delivery of the Future Development Strategy.

SmartGrowth Partnership

The NPS UD clearly mandates a joined-up approach to long term planning by defined Tier 1 and 2 authorities, with requirements for a Future Development Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Joint regional spatial planning that is robust and has weight in council land-use decision-making and investment ensures enough land and infrastructure is available to support housing and business growth objectives.

Central government partners have a major role in the provision of growth infrastructure, and engagement through the partnership will continue to support effectiveness.

Housing and Business

The sub-region has been significantly affected by the national housing crisis, with Tauranga City having some of the worst housing affordability in the country. The sub-region is one of the only areas in the country to have an identified housing and business and shortfall over a 30-year period. The sub-region continues to face significant

challenges in enabling sufficient development capacity for both housing and business in the short, medium, and long term.

Under the “Going for Growth” policy, there will be new housing growth targets introduced for Tier 1 and 2 councils, requiring them to zone enough developable land (feasible housing capacity) for housing to meet 30-year long-term demand estimates but make it available over the short-term (0-3 years), not long term. Greater enabled capacity in existing urban areas and on city fringes is intended to bring down land prices and increase the supply of affordable housing.

New prescriptive rules and guidance will be set for how councils calculate how much housing capacity they need (e.g. requiring councils to use Stats NZ ‘high’ population projections and adding a 20% margin).

There will also be new requirements that price indicators (such as urban fringe land price differentials) do not deteriorate (and ideally improve) over time.

New central government tools will be introduced to monitor council compliance and a mandate to take action where there is unjustified non-compliance.

Facilitation of housing growth is an explicit goal of the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport, and one of the funding criteria in the National Land Transport Plan.

Enabling more density in transit corridors with the requisite infrastructure will support growth, with more flexibility for councils to reduce intensification in suburbs without infrastructure capacity.

Housing performance incentives are proposed for councils that deliver extra houses built in a Tier 1 and 2 Council above the long-term average for the Council. Budget 2026 has allocated \$400 million to introduce a new financial incentive for councils to encourage housing growth.

A Specified Development Project (SDP) under the Urban Development Act 2020 had been considered for the Western Corridor. In December 2024, the Ministers of Housing and Finance made the decision not to establish the Western Corridor as an SDP.

The Government has also released an updated Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development 2025. This sets the direction for housing and urban development through outcomes and priorities.

The Government has released its decisions on the proposed National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga. Once implemented, the standards are expected to provide a nationally consistent framework for enabling papakāinga housing and associated activities on Māori ancestral land and Treaty settlement land.

While the standards are not yet in force, they signal a continued national policy focus on reducing barriers to Māori housing development. The proposed changes may have implications for future housing supply, district plan provisions, infrastructure planning, and the delivery of Māori housing initiatives across the western Bay of Plenty.

Allied to this, TCC has recently adopted a targeted distribution model for the Council's Papakāinga Fund, focusing on removing key barriers that have prevented developments from progressing.

Government has announced a new contestable Flexible Fund for social housing which became available in March 2026. A Housing Investment Plan has also been announced which will support between 675 and 770 social homes and affordable rentals in its initial phase. 40 to 50 of these are earmarked for Tauranga.

The Flexible Fund is focused on supporting providers capable of delivering social housing and affordable rentals, with a stronger emphasis on value for money and modest, competitively priced housing that maximises the number of households able to be accommodated. Proposals are expected to demonstrate strong delivery capability, community connections, and the ability to co-invest alongside government funding. In areas with high Māori housing need, HUD has indicated a preference for Māori-led proposals or those involving mana whenua partners.

Strategic Partnerships have been established with 5 CHPs including Accessible Properties. Strategic Partnerships are intended to evolve into enduring relationships to respond flexibly to future housing needs.

Infrastructure

From 1 December, Crown Infrastructure Partners (CIP) will be repurposed to be the new National Infrastructure Agency. The new Agency will coordinate government funding, connect investors with New Zealand infrastructure, and improve funding, procurement, and delivery to:

- Prioritise regional and national projects of significance.
- Facilitate or procure funding for regional and national projects of significance.
- Procure from government agencies for appropriate Crown projects.
- Oversee procurement from the private sector.

Regional Deals

The Government has released a framework for long-term regional deals. There will be a staged approach for rolling out Regional Deals around the country with up to five regions invited to provide straightforward basic proposals.

In May 2026 the Western Bay of Plenty subregion signed a regional deal with Central Government which outlines a series of commitments that will be delivered over a 10-year period. The signatories of the deal are the New Zealand Government, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

There are seven priorities which have been agreed around the key themes of:

1. Transport Infrastructure.
2. Land & Housing Development.
3. Social Infrastructure (Health and Education).
4. Export Growth.
5. Economic Diversification.

Regional Deals will be a tool to help coordinate capital investment between central and local government and to enable regions to utilise new and existing funding tools to fund and finance infrastructure.

Infrastructure Plan

The NZ Infrastructure Commission – Te Waihanga has released a 30-year National Infrastructure Plan, setting out a long-term strategic framework for infrastructure investment across transport, housing, water, energy, and social infrastructure. The Plan emphasises stronger coordination between land use planning, infrastructure sequencing, and funding mechanisms, with an increased focus on infrastructure delivery that supports economic productivity and urban growth.

The Plan highlights the growing importance of coordinated spatial planning, infrastructure prioritisation, and investment readiness. This has direct relevance for SmartGrowth initiatives including Priority Development Areas, the Transport System Plan, and preparation for the future Regional Spatial Plan, where alignment between land use, infrastructure funding and delivery will be critical.

The following are some of the key, high level points in the NIP:

- New Zealand spends a lot on infrastructure but doesn't always get good value. This is especially true for transport where NZ spends more on land transport than any other infrastructure class.

- Most of the infrastructure we will need for the next 30 years already exists, but we need to look after it better (ie more needs to be spent on maintenance).
- As a country, we need to prioritise the right projects and make better use of what we have.

The NIP includes the following points that are directly relevant to the western Bay of Plenty sub-region:

- The Commission recommends implementing time-of-use charging.
- Major land transport projects need to be prioritised and sequenced – the suggested prioritisation of major transport projects in the NIP has Tauriko West as a priority project.
- Cameron Rd Stage 2, Tauranga Hospital upgrade, and Tauranga growth investigations are included in the Infrastructure Priorities Programme endorsements. The National Infrastructure Pipeline also includes Tauriko West (SH29), Memorial Park Recreation Hub and Te Papa Peninsular Stormwater Upgrade.
- Based on the change in average annual expected damage to private properties – risk is projected to increase most sharply for regions like Nelson-Tasman, Bay of Plenty and the West Coast.
- The Commission recommends a shift in how infrastructure is funded – funding network infrastructure like water and transport on a user-pays basis will enable more resources to be invested in social infrastructure such as hospitals and schools.
- The NIP has also identified that better spatial planning is needed to coordinate land use and infrastructure and shape how cities and regions grow.

The Government has acknowledged the plan but has not adopted its recommendations yet. The Minister for Infrastructure has said the Government will study the recommendations and issue a formal response in June 2026.

NPS on Infrastructure

A proposed new NPS for Infrastructure has been developed with the aim of ensuring that resource management decisions consistently enable infrastructure to be developed, operated and maintained, whilst also managing its effects on the natural environment. It is also proposed to strengthen the guidance that existing strategic planning, including

future development strategies, can give to regulatory decisions under the RMA. This provides an important link back to the SmartGrowth Strategy for infrastructure decisions.

Designations and Ports

The Government is proposing to expand the scope of requiring authorities to include port operators and emergency service providers.

Default designation lapse period will be increased from 5 to 10 years to support route protection and reduce costs by simplifying the test to get a designation.

The duration of port coastal permits will be extended by a further 20 years.

Public Works Act

The Public Works (Critical Infrastructure) Amendments Bill passed into law in August 2025. It aims to speed up land acquisition for certain critical public works projects and ensure landowners are fairly compensated.

The changes are expected to accelerate the acquisition of land needed for public works projects that will be listed in Schedule 2A of the Public Works Act. These are based on projects listed in Schedule 2 of the Fast-track Approvals Act and the Roads of National Significance listed in the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024.

Transport

The Government's top priority for investment through the draft Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024/25–2033/34 (GPS) is to support economic growth and productivity. Efficient investment in the land transport system connects people and freight quickly and safely, supporting economic growth and creating social and economic opportunities including access to land for housing growth.

Core to this priority is the re-introduction of the Roads of National Significance programme. Investment in Roads of National Significance with direct benefit in the SmartGrowth subregion are:

- State Highway 1: Cambridge to Piarere
- Tauriko West – Tupenga State Highway 29
- Tākitimu North Link Stage One
- Tākitimu North Link Stage Two

The Roads of National Significance have been included in the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) for 2024–2027, although not fully funded with the exception of Tākitimu North Link Stage One. The key projects for the western Bay of Plenty in the NLTP include the RONS projects listed above as well as Connecting the People. Fifteenth Avenue to Welcome Bay; Domain Rd upgrade and funding for several business cases. There is also funding for increased maintenance and resilience.

Budget 2026 includes capital investment of \$1.8 billion to build the Cambridge to Piarere Expressway, a key part of the interregional transport corridor.

Cameron Road Stage 2 has not been included in the NLTP. There is also very limited funding for walking and cycling and the Low Cost Low Risk programme.

There is funding for public transport although not to the level required to achieve the frequent network envisioned by Connected Centres.

Overall, there is an increase of planned expenditure in the subregion compared to the previous NLTP period, although there are areas that have been deprioritised, such as multimodal corridors, that are critical to achieving the SmartGrowth / UFTI long term vision of Connected Centres. These outcomes remain a critical component of the transport strategy and will be a focal point for future investment as funding becomes available for those activity classes.

Road pricing, such as tolling and time of use charging, will play a key role in the delivery of the Roads of National Significance programme as part of a wider package of transport revenue and investment tools. A commitment to consider tolling of RONS projects is a commitment under the Regional Deal.

The Land Transport Management (Time of Use Charging) Amendment Bill has now passed into law which establishes a framework for implementing time of use charging schemes. Tolling has been announced for the Takitimu North Link.

Investments in rail will be focused on the busiest and most productive parts of the existing rail network, to support efficient movement of freight. This will complement investment in the state highway network to deliver a productive and efficient supply chain. Budget 2026 includes \$705 million capital and \$477 million operating funding to renew and upgrade New Zealand's rail network.

Long Term Plans 2024–2034

These plans, and in particular the Tauranga City Council LTP, have been adopted in a challenging fiscal environment where there is constrained investment in infrastructure delivery with a focus on continuing to undertake the required planning to accommodate growth and undertake necessary land purchase. The 2027 Long-Term Plans are currently under development.

Funding and Finance

The Infrastructure Funding and Financing (IFF) Act is being reformed to remove barriers to uptake and broaden project eligibility. Combined with targeted rates to fund greenfield developments, the aim is to remove the need for councils to fund greenfield infrastructure from their balance sheets.

Councils will be required to declare that infrastructure for new greenfield development will be funded from rates and levies applied to the new development, instead of being subsidised by other communities.

Proposed value capture tools will mean that new state highways facilitating housing growth could be partly financed by levies on land unlocked by the road. The same could be true of major new public transport projects in urban centres.

The Government has announced that development contributions will be replaced with a development levy system. This aims to standardise the methodology that local authorities use when charging development contributions and provide increased flexibility to charge developers for the overall cost of growth infrastructure across an urban centre. An exposure draft of the Local Government (Infrastructure Funding) Amendment Bill to implement the development levies system is currently being consulted on along with a Going for Housing Growth: Supporting Growth Through a Development Levies System consultation document.

The flexibility to set targeted rates for growth infrastructure will also be introduced. Councils will now be able to set targeted rates that apply only to new developments.

These changes will be progressed through a Local Government (Infrastructure Funding) Bill. Consultation has occurred on an exposure draft of this Bill. Legislation is expected to be introduced in 2026.

The Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA) has been reviewing whether it can prudently provide additional flexibility to councils to meet the future challenges faced by the sector. The LGFA have announced increased debt limits for high growth councils beyond the current ceiling of 285 percent of operating revenues to a level of 350%.

New guidelines for market-led infrastructure proposals have also been released along with a refreshed public-private partnerships framework.

The Government has agreed to progress a rates cap for local government. This is likely to be within a target range of 2 to 4 per cent per capita, per year. Targeted consultation with stakeholders to finalise implementation, local considerations and legal details will run from 1 December to February 2026. The Government aims to enact legislation during 2026 and be law from 1 January 2027. The full regulatory model will be in place by 1 July 2029.

Three Waters

"Local Water Done Well" is the Coalition Government's plan for managing water services delivery and infrastructure following the repeal of Water Services Reform legislation (Three Waters).

"Local Water Done Well" is a new policy/legislation aimed at addressing concerns about New Zealand's water quality and water services' infrastructure investment, while keeping control over water services and assets local.

Government has advised that two pieces of legislation will be put forward to establish "Local Water Done Well". The first was passed on 27 August 2024 and sets out guidelines relating to how councils will manage water services and water costs through the transition. It will also make it easier for councils to establish council-controlled organisations (CCOs). The legislation requires councils to develop Water Services Delivery Plans within 12-months.

The second was passed on 26 August 2025 and provides for the long-term framework of managing water services, including required guidelines for long-term financial sustainability, a complete economic system for controlling water-related costs, and a new range of structural and financing tools, including a new type of financially independent council-controlled organisation.

On 2 April 2026, Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council agreed to establish a joint Water Organisation to deliver water services under the Government's Local Water Done Well reforms.

This followed a period of joint due diligence and is a significant step toward a more integrated sub-regional approach to drinking water, wastewater and stormwater service delivery. The new arrangement is expected to support greater coordination, financial sustainability and investment planning across the western Bay of Plenty, with

implementation and transition work now progressing ahead of the new delivery model taking effect..

The Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA) has confirmed that it will provide financing to support water organisations established under Local Water Done Well and look to assist high growth councils with additional financing. The LGFA will support leverage for water organisations up to a level equivalent to 500 percent of operating revenues (around twice that of existing councils), subject to water organisations meeting prudent credit criteria. LGFA will treat borrowing by water organisations as separate from borrowing by parent council or councils.

Climate Change – Emissions Reduction

The Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is the Government's key tool to reduce emissions. The first emissions reduction plan (published in 2022) was in place until 31 December 2025, the end of the first emissions budget period. It was amended in December 2024 to align with the Government's climate strategy. The second emissions reduction plan covers the period 2026–2030 and differs from the first document with a focus on creating opportunities and minimising the cost of mitigating climate change.

The Government aims to double renewable energy through its Electrify NZ policy through cutting red tape and regulatory constraints. The Government is also committed to delivering 10,000 public EV chargers by 2030, subject to cost benefit analysis. Doubling renewable energy and delivering a comprehensive, nationwide network of public EV chargers will reduce New Zealand's emissions by enabling the electrification of New Zealand's vehicle fleet.

Resource Management System Reform

The Government is taking a phased approach to reforming the resource management system as follows:

- Phase One – repeal the Natural and Built Environment Act and Spatial Planning Act
- Phase Two – targeted changes to the existing resource management system:
 - o Fast-track Approvals Act
 - o Two bills to amend the Resource Management Act and a package of national direction – changes to the existing system that can address the most pressing issues in the short term.

- Phase Three – legislation to replace the Resource Management Act.

The Natural and Built Environment Act 2023 (NBA) was repealed in December 2023 as the first phase of reform.

The second phase of reform encompasses new fast track consenting legislation, amendments to the RMA as well as changes in National Policy Statement direction.

The third phase will develop replacement RMA legislation.

Fast-Track

The fast-track consenting process is intended to ease the delivery of locally, regionally, and nationally significant infrastructure and developments. The fast-track system sets out a 'onestop shop' process for approvals under a range of legislation, including the RMA. The process includes a referral by the Infrastructure Minister for suitable projects. Referred projects will go to an Expert Panel, which can approve or decline the project.

On 6 October 2024, the Government confirmed 149 projects for inclusion in the Fast Track Approvals Bill. The Bill was enacted on 23 December 2024.

The projects relevant to SmartGrowth and the western Bay of Plenty sub-region that have been included for fast-track are:

- Bell Road Limited Partnership Wairakei South Housing and Land Development: To develop between 123 – 340 hectares of rural land near Papamoa, for residential, commercial and industrial uses. If the full site is developed, the project will comprise of 2,000–3,000 new homes and 60–80 hectares of new industrial land, covering 153 hectares.
- Tauriko Property Group Limited Partnership – Tauriko West Housing and Land Development: To develop between 132 hectares of Rural zoned land at Tauriko for residential use, with approximately 1,250 homes.
- Ngā Pōtiki a Tamapahore Trust Tara Road Development Housing and Land Development: The project will include 605 residential allotments, and a 2.5-hectare commercial precinct.
- Port of Tauranga Limited Stella Passage Development Infrastructure: The project is for extension of the Sulphur Point (stage one) and Mount Maunganui wharves (stage two), and to carry out the associated reclamation and dredging of the sea bed.
- New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi Takitimu North Link Stage 2: To construct a four-lane, median-divided highway to replace the existing SH2

corridor between Te Puna and Ōmokoroa. This project is an extension of Takitimu North Link Stage One, which is currently under construction and will link Tauranga and Te Puna.

- Port of Tauranga Limited Capital and Maintenance Dredging Reconsenting Project: The project is to remove dredging material from the coastal marine area to deepen, widen and maintain the navigation channels of the Port of Tauranga.
- New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi SH29 Tauriko Network Connections (including Omanawa Bridge replacement): To develop SH29 and SH29A which form part of the key 'Golden Triangle' connection, including to the Port of Tauranga. The Omanawa Bridge is scheduled to be replaced in 2024-2027.

The projects in the list will be able to apply to the Environmental Protection Authority to have an expert panel assess the project and apply relevant conditions.

National Policy Statement Direction

Ten new or amended national direction instruments under the Resource Management Act 1991 came into effect on 15 January 2026. Changes in national direction include:

- Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Detached Minor Residential Units) Regulations 2025 – New regulation to reduce regulatory requirements for detached minor residential units (granny flats).
- National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards 2025 – A consistent approach for managing natural hazard risks in new development. Will provide a comprehensive, nationally consistent framework for addressing the risks posed by these hazards, including increased risk from climate change.
- Targeted amendments to the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land – exempt resource consents for urban development on LUC 3 land from NPS-HPL restrictions and extend timeframes for mapping HPL.
- New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement – reduce restrictions for quarrying and mining on highly productive land. Targeted amendments to better enable the Government's priority activities (infrastructure, including renewable electricity generation and electricity transmission, aquaculture activities and extraction of minerals) to locate in the coastal environment including the coastal marine area.

- Targeted amendments to National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity to reduce restrictions for quarrying and mining activities affecting significant natural areas.
- National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management - Targeted amendments to reduce restrictions for quarrying and mining activities in natural inland wetlands.
- Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) - Targeted amendments to reduce restrictions for quarrying and mining activities in natural inland wetlands.
- National Policy Statement for Infrastructure - New policy to manage and enable infrastructure development.
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation - Amendments to enable a significant increase in renewable electricity generation to improve security and resilience of electricity supply and to achieve emission reduction and energy targets.
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks - Amendments to enable electricity networks for electrification of the economy, support transition to renewable electricity generation.

A discussion document outlining proposals for urban development which are part of the Government's Going for Housing Growth programme and will be given effect in the reformed RM system, was released in June 2025.

Targeted changes to the Resource Management Act

The Resource Management (Freshwater and Other Matters) Amendment Bill came into force on 25 October 2024. Among other matters, the amendments exclude the hierarchy of obligations in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) from resource consenting while a review and replacement of the NPS-FM is undertaken, suspend for three years requirements under the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity for councils to identify new Significant Natural Areas and include them in district plans, speeds up and simplifies the process for preparing and amending national direction, restricts notification of freshwater planning instruments (regional policy statements and plans that give effect to the NPS-FM 2020) until a new NPS-FM takes effect.

The Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill was passed into law on 20 August 2025. The amendments give the Minister new powers to

ensure compliance with national direction, including housing and business development assessments. The Minister can direct councils to prepare or amend documents in accordance with national direction and to direct what type of plan change is used to give effect to national direction. It also strengthens a consenting authorities' powers to decline a land use consent application if it considers that the activity will create a significant risk from natural hazards, increase an existing risk to become significant, or increase an existing significant risk.

Replacement RMA

The third phase of reform will develop replacement RMA legislation in the form of two new Acts:

Planning Act: to establish a framework for planning and regulating the use, development and enjoyment of land.

Natural Environment Act: to establish a framework for the use, protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Legislation is expected to be passed later in 2026. The general thrust of the RM system changes is to better enable growth and development and respect private property rights within the framework of a market economy, while also improving environmental outcomes.

There will be one regulatory plan per region to be jointly prepared by regional and district councils. This will remove the hierarchy between regional and district plans. Spatial plans will form an important part of the new system. These plans are to be enabling of development within constraints (such as natural hazards and SNAs) and will be the first chapter in the combined regional plans.

Under the new legislation there will be greater use of national standards such as standardised zoning, to reduce the need for resource consents and to simplify council plans.

Local Government Reform

The Government has announced proposals that would fundamentally change local government in New Zealand. In 2025 the Government proposed changes which would replace elected regional councillors with new Combined Territories Boards made up of mayors from the region's city and district councils. Each Combined Territories Boards would prepare a regional reorganisation plan within two years of establishment.

Consultation on these proposals occurred in early 2026. As a result of that consultation, Cabinet has decided to:

- introduce a streamlined, voluntary Head Start pathway for councils willing and able to reorganise quickly, with outline proposals for new unitary authorities due by August, and final policy decisions on detailed proposals early next year; and
- Commence wider reform of local government after the 2028 local elections, with regional councillors replaced by some form of interim body (for example, a board of mayors, Crown commissioners, or a hybrid model) and final policy decisions on the 'backstop' next year.

Local Government System Improvements

In 2025 the Government introduced the Local Government (System Improvements) Bill. The Bill introduces five main changes:

1. Refocusing the statutory purpose of local government;
2. Placing focus on certain types of "core services";
3. Better measurement and publicising of council performance;
4. Strengthening council transparency and accountability rules, to improve the relationship between councils and their communities;
5. Reducing some regulatory requirements applying to councils.

The Government has recently announced amendments to the Bill which is currently before Parliament. The amendments will mean that only elected councillors will be able to vote on council committees. If enacted, this will have implications for the SmartGrowth Leadership Group which is a Joint Committee under the Local Government Act 2002.

Building Act Reform

The Government has announced significant changes to the building consent system. The building and construction sector's liability settings will be changed from joint and several liability to proportionate liability, and the amendments will also make it easier for Building Consent Authorities (BCA) to voluntarily consolidate their functions. This includes removing the requirement for a Territorial Authority to be a BCA providing they transfer their building control functions to another accredited BCA.

A draft Bill covering liability setting changes and measures to enable BCA voluntary consolidation is expected to be introduced to Parliament in 2026.

Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport

The Government's new Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) is scheduled to become fully operational on 1 July 2026, bringing together the former Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Transport, and local government policy functions previously administered by the Department of Internal Affairs.

A Chief Executive has now been appointed and transition activities are well advanced. MCERT has been established to provide more integrated policy leadership across housing, urban development, planning, infrastructure, transport, environmental management and local government.

For SmartGrowth, the establishment of MCERT is significant as it consolidates many of the central government functions most directly involved in growth management, spatial planning, infrastructure coordination and regional investment decisions, potentially creating opportunities for more integrated engagement on sub-regional priorities and implementation of the Western Bay of Plenty Regional Deal.

Tāngata Whenua/Māori

There have been a number of recent government policy changes that impact on tāngata whenua / Māori in the cultural wellbeing arena. This has seen Iwi from across the motu unite through the collective Kotahitanga and Mana Motuhake principles.

Some of these key changes will have impacts on the parts of the SmartGrowth Strategy 2024-74 that support the feasibility assessments and infrastructure design and build for housing on Māori land, co-governance, management and allocation of water for future use, growth and development, Māori wards and representation and the use and recognition of Te Reo Māori.

Appendix B: **Development Infrastructure**

Critical Development Infrastructure

The FDS identifies enabling infrastructure to support development including the following critical infrastructure.

The information provided is subject to ongoing change and is updated each quarter.

Funded means fully funded in Long-Term Plan, National Land Transport Plan or other funding plan.

| Funding Key | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Funded or Signalled for Funding | |
| Partly Funded | |
| No funding allocated | |
| Subject to a business case | |

| Timing Key | |
|------------|-----------|
| Short | 2024-2027 |
| Medium | 2027-2034 |
| Long | 2034-2054 |

| Area | Critical Enabling Infrastructure | Timeframe | Funding |
|-------------------|---|-----------|---------|
| Sub-region Wide | Te Manawataki o Te Papa (city centre) - library, museum, community hub space, waterfront public realm upgrades including destination playground | Short | |
| | Public transport services and infrastructure enhanced services | Medium | |
| | Hewletts Road sub area (Connecting Mount Maunganui) | Short | |
| | Connecting the People - Fifteenth Avenue to Welcome Bay | Short | |
| | Wider managed lanes network | Medium | |
| | Te Maunga Wastewater treatment plant upgrades | Medium | |
| | Waiāri Water Supply Scheme – Stages 2 and 3 | Medium | |
| Northern Corridor | Public transport infrastructure and corridor improvements as identified in the public transport services and infrastructure business case | Medium | |
| | Takitimu North Link Stage 2 | Medium | |
| | Park and ride - Ōmokoroa | Medium | |
| | Park and ride – Te Puna | Medium | |
| | SH2 revocation/repurposing – Public Transport | Medium | |
| | Tauranga Moana Coastal Cycle Trail | Medium | |
| | Ōmokoroa Library | Medium | |

Appendix B: Development Infrastructure

| Area | Critical Enabling Infrastructure | Timeframe | Funding |
|------------------|--|---------------|---------|
| Central Corridor | Ōmokoroa Swimming Pool | Long | Red |
| | Planning for Ōmokoroa school provision* | Medium | Yellow |
| | Katikati Bypass | Long | Red |
| | Public transport infrastructure and corridor improvements as identified in the public transport services and infrastructure business case | Medium | Red |
| | City Centre Public Transport Hub | Short | Green |
| | Accessible Streets | Short | Red |
| | Cameron Rd Multimodal Stage 2 | Short | Green |
| | Te Papa/Cameron Rd Intensification – Wastewater, Water Supply & Stormwater projects | Short | Yellow |
| Eastern Corridor | Brookfield and Greerton Community Centres | Long | Yellow |
| | Public transport infrastructure and corridor improvements as identified in the public transport services and infrastructure business case | Medium | Red |
| | Pāpāmoa East Interchange | Short | Green |
| | Rangiorua Business Park Interchange | Short | Green |
| | Wairakei WWPS to Te Maunga WWTP | Medium | Yellow |
| | Wairakei to Kaituna Stormwater Overflow – Phases 1 & 2 | Long | Yellow |
| | Te Puke Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade | Short | Green |
| | Te Tumu Trunk Mains | Medium | Green |
| Western Corridor | Wairakei/Te Tumu Indoor Pool Development | Medium | Orange |
| | Public transport infrastructure and corridor improvements as identified in the public transport services and infrastructure business case | Medium | Red |
| | Cameron Rd Multimodal Stage 2 | Short | Green |
| | Tauriko West Enabling Works – Transport Improvements including public transport, walking and cycling | Short | Green |
| | Tauriko Network Connections (Stages 1-3) - SH29 and 29A | Short | Green |
| | Tauriko Network Connections (Stage 4) - SH29 and 29A | Long | Red |
| | Western Corridor Ring Route (SH29 to SH36 - Tauriko Stage 3 Ring Route) | Short | Grey |
| | Keenan Road access to planned urban growth | Short | Red |
| | Pyes Pā road multimodal upgrade | Medium | Grey |
| | SH36 multimodal improvements to support planned urban growth | Long | Grey |
| | Tauriko West Enabling Works – Wastewater and Water Supply | Short | Green |
| | Western Corridor Wastewater Strategy Implementation – Stages 1&2 - Tauriko West/Lower Belk/Keenan Road; Stages 3&4 – Upper Belk/Merrick Road | Medium - Long | Yellow |
| | Western Corridor Water Supply Strategy Implementation – Stages 1&2 - Tauriko West/Lower Belk/Keenan Road; Stages | Medium - Long | Yellow |

Appendix B: Development Infrastructure

| Area | Critical Enabling Infrastructure | Timeframe | Funding |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 3&4 – Upper Belk/Merrick Road | | | |
| Indoor Sports Centre and community centre | | Medium | |
| Relocation and expansion of Tauriko School, establishment of a new co-educational secondary school, possible educational provision elsewhere in the Western Corridor as growth proceeds* | | Medium | |

* Educational funding occurs in stages, with separate funding for land acquisition, design, and construction.

Appendix C: **Glossary and Definitions**

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|---|
| APL | Accessible Properties Limited |
| BOPRC | Bay of Plenty Regional Council |
| CTWF | Combined Tāngata Whenua Forum |
| FDS | Future Development Strategy |
| HBA | Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment |
| HSP | Housing System Plan |
| HUD | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development |
| HWG | Housing Working Group |
| IP | Implementation Plan |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| LTP | Long-Term Plan |
| NPS-UD | National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (Updated May 2022) |
| OES | Operating Environment Statement |
| PDA | Priority Development Area |
| PSGE | Post Settlement Governance Entity |
| SH | State Highway |
| TCC | Tauranga City Council |
| TSP | Transport System Plan |
| WBOP | Western Bay of Plenty |
| WBOPDC | Western Bay of Plenty District Council |
| WWPS | Wastewater Pump Station |

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| WWTP | Wastewater Treatment Plant |
|-------------|----------------------------|

Definitions

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Business land | Land used for commercial and industrial activities. |
| City centre | Areas used predominantly for a broad range of commercial, community, recreational and residential activities. The zone is the main centre for the district or region. For SmartGrowth, the City Centre refers to the Tauranga City Centre. |
| Connected centres | The preferred spatial scenario that underpins the SmartGrowth Strategy. This is set out in detail in the UFTI Final Report and supporting documents. |
| Greenfield | Sub-division and/or housing development of previously undeveloped rural land. |
| Industrial | Land that is predominantly used for manufacturing, servicing and distribution activities It may include retail which services the needs of the specific industrial business land area. |
| Infrastructure | All permanent installations of the sub-region and includes pipe, cable/wire, roading, electricity generation, waste management, open space and community facilities contributed to and accessible to the community. |
| Intensification | An increase in the density (of dwellings, activity units, population, employment etc) over the current density of a given area. |
| Planned growth area | Areas identified for growth where investigations have been completed. |
| Social housing | Housing provided by public and private agencies for those unable to afford market-based rentals. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Three waters | The combined water supply, wastewater, and stormwater networks that deliver water to residential, commercial, industrial and other users. |
| Western Bay of Plenty sub-region | Refers to the territorial areas of Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District. |

Appendix D: **Te Reo Māori terms**

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Iwi | Refers to a Māori tribe (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāiterangi, Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāti Awa and other). Iwi usually contain a number of hapū with a common ancestor. |
| Kaitiakitanga | Refers to the exercise of guardianship by the tāngata whenua of an area in accordance with their tikanga (traditional sustainable management practises) in relation to natural and physical resources; and includes the ethic of stewardship. |
| Manaakitanga | Respect and care for others – hospitality and generosity. |
| Mana whenua | Describes the ability to exercise “customary authority” by an Iwi and or Hapu over an identified area or site. Mana whenua can be held by more than one hapu or Iwi in relation to the same area or site. |
| Papakāinga | Describes development by tāngata whenua of an area on any land in the traditional rohe of tāngata whenua that is developed for live work and play including but not limited to residential, social, cultural, conservation and recreation activities including but not limited to marae community zones. |
| Tāngata whenua | Describes the direct kinship relationship a Māori person has to a particular area. This will relate to an area where an Iwi and or hapū hold mana whenua over that area. Tāngata whenua have a direct relationship with their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga. |