

WHAKATANE INTEGRATED URBAN GROWTH STRATEGY



SHAPING
Whakatane
Sustainable communities
Part of the District Plan Review



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Whakatane is a town of 17,300 people. Planning for growth of the urban area is important to the District given that it provides much of the economic, social and community infrastructure for the surrounding rural District.

Population in the urban area has continued to increase over recent years.

1.2 Purpose of Strategy

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide ways of planning for and managing growth in a proactive manner rather than merely reacting to it. Such an approach provides us with an opportunity to direct how and where growth is provided, and ultimately, manage the effects and costs of such growth.

In 2000, Whakatane District Council published a Residential Growth Strategy for Whakatane and Ohope. This was based on a 20-year timeframe, and was subsequently updated in 2005 and again in 2009 with more recent population and land use data. The study assessed the gap between supply of residentially-zoned land, and the projected demand for it. The resulting work identified and assessed a number of residential growth location options against a set of criteria. These were then scored relative to each other and four growth location options were recommended for public consultation.

The key outcome of the residential study was the confirmation that urban Whakatane is constrained by its environment, particularly the hazards that have been evident over the years. There are limited opportunities for expansion of the urban area given the location of the town being bounded to some degree by the river, the coast, an escarpment, and with land stability hazards in the hill country and flooding hazards on the low plains.

1.3 Status of this Strategy

This Strategy is a non-statutory document that will be used to inform and guide the Council's long term planning, especially in guiding the development of the District Plan. For this reason, this Strategy provides direction and will inform this process by setting out policies and issues for future growth areas. Actions from this Strategy will be considered in developing the District Plan Review, Asset Management Plans, Annual Plan and the Long Term Council Community Plan.

1.4 Study Area

The study area for this Strategy is based around the township of Whakatane, and includes the main urban area, being the town, Coastlands to the west and Ohope to the east. Whilst rural parts of the District are not provided for explicitly in this Strategy, the Strategy acknowledges that the smaller rural towns play an important role for future housing opportunities.

A number of future potential growth areas have been considered throughout the development of this Strategy. These are located within or adjacent to the Whakatane urban area. Some of the options considered have been discarded due to inherent flaws or constraints being identified, such as hazard risk and cost of mitigation, cultural heritage, isolation and loss of high quality versatile soils. Other areas have been identified through consultation with stakeholders and the community.



1.5 Process to Date

As well as the Residential Growth Strategy, a number of other studies have contributed to the development of this growth Strategy. These include studies relating to industrial, commercial/retail and transportation networks. A summary of the findings and assumptions behind this work is below:

Residential

'Review of Whakatane and Ohope Residential Growth Strategy 2009', prepared by Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd (July 2009)

- The review considered the current and future demographic make up of Whakatane based on a medium growth scenario from Statistics New Zealand.
- The household increase in urban Whakatane over the 2001-2006 census period was almost double the population increase for the same period.
- There continues to be an ageing population, coupled with a decrease in average household size. This is expected to result in the need for more housing, with greater numbers of smaller households.
- Housing affordability is a serious issue with a growing gap between income and housing costs.

- The review assessed the capacity of the town to accommodate future growth in line with the medium growth scenario. This included infill development, vacant land and larger lots that may be subdivided.
- An analysis of the demand for and supply of residential land in the urban area indicated that (based on a medium growth population of 17,990) at least an additional 86 hectares of land is required to 2016. This analysis is dependant on a mix of techniques.
- An analysis of the infrastructural, environmental, social and cultural constraints to future housing was done for 11 location options for accommodating future growth.
- Based on the constraints analysis and population projections in the report, the review recommended four options be taken forward for public consultation. These were:
 - new residential development at Coastlands;
 - new residential development at Maraetotara Valley (Ohope);
 - medium density residential development in the CBD and Kopeopeo; and
 - new residential development at Black's Farm (South of Whakatane) in the longer term.
- The review concluded that the Council and the community needs to give serious consideration to the availability and provision of affordable housing and how it could be provided by the private sector. This would be complementary to the provision of affordable housing by central government.
- Public consultation undertaken resulted in changes to the Strategy (see section 2.1).

Industrial

'Whakatane & Kawerau Districts Industrial Land Strategy Discussion Document', prepared by Property Economics (September 2006 and March 2007)

'Kawerau Logistics and Distribution Opportunities Preliminary Investigation', prepared by Toi-EDA (May 2009)

Update by Property Economics on land requirements for a population of 25,000 (January 2010)



- By projecting future employment (by main industrial sector), the locational requirements for industrial land are able to be identified by using a floor-space per employee calculation.
- Industrial zoned land is more than adequate to meet demand for a medium growth scenario. However, a population target of 25,000 would require 41 additional hectares of industrial zoned land for the Whakatane and Kawerau catchment.
- Based on national and international trends, it is expected that there will be employment growth in the manufacturing, wholesale trade and electricity, gas and water supply sectors. Likewise, it is expected that there will be employment decline in agriculture, mining, construction, wood and paper processing and transport and storage.
- Some industrial uses in Whakatane have floor-space to employee ratios far in excess of the national average, implying less efficient land use and the potential for intensification of industrial areas could take place.
- The Whakatane industrial sector serves the local market and surrounding rural area but most heavy industry is located at Kawerau. There is market preference for continued location of some industrial activities at Kawerau.
- Toi-EDA (the Regional Economic Development Agency) also favours Kawerau as a future logistics and distribution centre associated with the Port of Tauranga. This requires maintaining and developing the rail link between Kawerau and Port of Tauranga, in particular by concentrating more industrial activities there.
- The reports conclude that given the lack of projected demand (certainly for a medium growth scenario), attention should be paid to developing an Economic Development Strategy aimed at enticing new businesses into Whakatane.

Commercial / Retail

'Whakatane Retail Strategy', prepared by Bloxham Burnett and Olliver Ltd (August 2005)

'Whakatane Large Format Retail Assessment Future Land Requirements', prepared by Property Economics (August 2005)

'Whakatane District Business Land Demand', prepared by Property Economics (August 2008)

'Whakatane Commercial Land Assessment', prepared by Property Economics (November 2009)

By projecting future employment (by main commercial sector), the locational requirements for commercial and retail land are able to be identified by using a floor-space per employee calculation.

- Future commercial employment sectors expected to grow to 2046 include education, health, and financial and support services.

- About 21ha of additional commercially zoned land is likely to be required in the longer term to meet demand, the majority of which can be located by the town centre. (This is a ground level estimate – it could be met by single level (21ha), or double storey (10ha land area) or three storeys (7ha)).
- About 3.3ha of additional speciality retail zoned land is likely to be required in the longer term.
- Of this, Coastlands to require at approximately 1ha of commercial zoned land to cater for this growth.
- Ohope to require a minimum of 0.7ha of commercial-zoned land to cater for this growth (although this could be conservative as it does not take into account the influx of tourists over the summer season).
- Assuming an equilibrium market, growth of population to 25,000 would require an additional 3.8ha of large format retail.

Transportation

'Whakatane Transportation Study', prepared by Bloxham Burnett and Olliver Ltd and Gabites Porter Consultants, 2007

'Whakatane Township Network Investigation Report', prepared by Gabites Porter, August 2007

This study, and the results of the associated traffic modelling were based on the same population and household data as the Residential Review (being the medium growth scenario). However, the traffic model had a study period to 2046. Because Statistics New Zealand projections are not available this far in the future, the projected household figures to 2046 were extrapolated. They are reasonably consistent with Council's preferred growth scenario of a population of 25,000.

Part of the 2007 study included the SH2 Alternative Routes Scoping Study which was jointly undertaken between the Whakatane District Council and New Zealand Transport Agency. This considered the State Highway network in relation to route efficiency and security. The outcome of this study was a proposal to consider replacing the Pekatahi Bridge closer to the urban area of Whakatane. It concluded that the most affordable option for a second bridge was a location on the southern outskirts of the Whakatane urban area, crossing the river from Poroporo to Taneatua Road at a point where the river is at its most narrow. This proposal suggested the bridge could form part of a new state highway route over the Whakatane Hills escarpment and linking back onto Wainui Road, thus providing a shortened overall route between Gisborne/Opotiki and the Port of Tauranga.

However, a shift in the focus of the NZTA since the 2007 report means that the form, function and route security of the State Highway network through the district is being reviewed. This work will consider how the network contributes to the region and to the rest of the New Zealand economy, in particular, the connectivity between the ports of Tauranga and Gisborne.

As part of this it will also reassess of the options considered in the 2007 report around relocating the SH bridge from Pekatahi, to the south end of town. Until this review is complete the NZTA Highways and Network Operations have requested that the Council not provide any indication in its current planning documents, including this Integrated Growth Strategy, that there is any likelihood of the SH relocating its bridges from their current locations. For this reason this option does not form part of this strategy at this stage. This work will consider how the network contributes to the region and to the rest of the New Zealand economy, in particular, the connectivity between the ports of Tauranga and Gisborne.

This Strategy can indicate what the aspirations of the community are in terms of population growth and changing land use patterns so that the NZTA can best support what the community wants to achieve.

Previous transportation modelling done to assess the implications of urban growth show the following:

- Residential growth in Coastlands has a minimal effect on traffic volumes and congestion compared to The Hub retail development.
- Traffic modelling shows that additional capacity on the existing bridge is required by 2016. Faster population growth would bring the need for this forward which means planning for this should be underway.
- Similarly, the bridge/Landing Road roundabout will need upgrading, probably sooner than 2026 if population growth is faster than medium growth projections.
- Phoenix Drive should be either four-laned or an additional entrance provided to The Hub to cope with The Hub traffic volume. This is likely to be required sooner than 2018 if population growth is faster than anticipated.
- Similarly, the upgrading of a number of intersections will likely need to be bought forward should population increase faster than anticipated, including SH30/ Mill Rd, SH30/Keepa Rd, Domain Rd/ Russell St and Domain Rd/McGarvey Rd.

1.6 What the Strategy covers

This Strategy provides a series of methods and actions to address the issues discussed above and manage growth in a proactive manner. Growth creates a demand for appropriately located and zoned land to provide for the expansion of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. The expansion of land uses and intensification of residential development in turn creates an increase in demand for services such as water, sewage, roading, reserves, and stormwater, both in existing urban areas and new urban areas.

Planning for this growth, and associated infrastructure, ultimately provides Council with the opportunity to direct how and where growth is accommodated and provided for, and manage the effects and costs of it.

1.7 Assumptions

The Strategy is based on the following broad assumptions:

1. The focus of this Strategy is on the urban area of Whakatane and Ohope. A framework for district-wide development will be prepared in the future, and this urban Strategy would fit into the broader district-wide development Strategy. There is also a need for a sub-regional development Strategy that considers the role and function of Kawerau, Opotiki and Whakatane districts and the economic development of the sub-region.
2. The smaller settlements of Edgecumbe, Taneatua, Awakeri, Matata, Thornton and Te Teko play an important role in supplementing the Whakatane and Ohope housing market for those who want to be near these centres for work, services, learning or other purposes. In particular young families are able to purchase homes in these smaller centres, providing a stepping stone into larger properties. The significance of these towns within the local economy has to be acknowledged. This can be said for some rural property owners or trusts.
3. Urban Whakatane is the dominant provider of commercial, retail and community services for the Eastern Bay of Plenty.
4. Traditionally, population projections for Whakatane have not exceeded the 'medium' projections provided by Statistics New Zealand. However, in the course of time, population growth will occur and Whakatane could have a larger population than provided for in any population projections. Council's preferred scenario is for a town of 25,000, which is well in excess of the high growth scenario.
5. Whakatane will remain and strengthen its position as the economic hub of the Eastern Bay of Plenty. This is necessary as a key component to achieving growth in excess of current trends. Council and Toi-EDA will need to take a strong leadership role in delivering economic growth in order to attract more people.
6. Māori land near Whakatane and Ohope is generally not available to meet the demands of future residential growth. After consultation with several Iwi, hapu, and trusts, there was general agreement that Māori land owners are not planning to develop their land for activities that would reduce their Mana Whenua over the land. If Māori land owners decide they want to develop their land, it will be on their terms and when they decide, not led by Council's growth aspirations.

2.0 CONSULTATION

The draft Strategy was available for public consultation in April 2010 with deliberations in June 2010. Feedback from this consultation has been incorporated into the Strategy, whilst at the same time balancing the priorities of the Council.

Submitters to the draft were heard in June 2010 with deliberations in August 2010. The Strategy considers the feedback from submitters and landowners and incorporates the results of that feedback into the Strategy.

2.1 Changes Arising from Consultation

A number of key changes have resulted from public consultation:

1. The Taiwhakaea land (referred to previously as “Coastlands West”) has been removed from consideration
2. Poroporo has been removed from the Strategy
3. The possible location of the second bridge has been amended to reflect that the location is unknown and yet to be determined
4. The land included in the Merito Trust in Ohope has been removed
5. A number of new areas identified through consultation were investigated (see Appendix 2: Assessment Matrix of New Areas):
 - Farm land on Thornton Road
 - Land along Shaw Road and State Highway
 - Ngāti Awa Farm Land adjacent to Hillcrest
 - Ngāti Awa Farm Land along Otarawairere Road
 - Ngāti Awa Farm Land behind Ohope on the escarpment
 - An area referred to as Whakatane Hills, stretching from Ohope Road opposite the Whakatane Cemetery extending southwesterly towards Valley Road
 - The land above Valley Road immediately south of Whakatane
6. Based on the assessment of options undertaken, some of these sites have been included, namely:
 - Ngāti Awa Farm Land adjacent to Hillcrest
 - Ngāti Awa Farm Land along Otarawairere Road
 - Ngāti Awa Farm Land behind Ohope on the escarpment
 - A pocket of land opposite the Whakatane Cemetery (a small portion of the Whakatane Hills area)
 - The area west of Keepa Road, (Piripai/Paroa).

2.2 Relationship with Māori

A key outcome of the public consultation process was the need to acknowledge the importance of Māori as tangata whenua and as owners of land. This Strategy seeks to build on and improve those relationships.

This Strategy also seeks to protect Māori culture and retention of their whenua.



3.0 VISION

The vision provides the desired end point the Strategy is trying to achieve. This vision has been developed and incorporates feedback from key stakeholders, including the property development, economic development sector, landowners and submissions. The vision seeks to address the following issues:

- Desire to attract sustainable growth
- Desire to maintain quality of life and provide choice for housing, employment, education, services, people and skill sets
- Affordability of housing and funding infrastructure
- Desire to create an environmentally and economically sustainable town

- Desire to manage the levels of risk that the community would be able to cope with, as a whole.

The vision is:

A prosperous town that attracts growth, provides affordable opportunities and an outstanding quality of life for all.

3.1 Principles and Objectives

These principles underpin this Strategy and outline the qualities to be achieved in Whakatane. They are the key objectives for achieving this Strategy and represent areas the community may not wish to compromise on. They are based on the assessment criteria established in the Residential Growth Strategy and community outcomes from the Long Term Council Community Plan. These principles, and the implications of applying them, are provided in the table below.

PRINCIPLES	IMPLICATIONS OF APPLYING THESE
Plan for high quality urban form and a consolidated urban environment	<p>This implies future growth and development will have higher densities so as to stimulate the relationships of workforce density, economic productivity and public transport. It also means that within the higher density built fabric there are more housing options e.g. townhouses, attached housing and walk-up apartments¹.</p> <p>“Compact” or “consolidated” development implies the idea of ring-fencing to some extent e.g. setting an urban growth limit.</p> <p>This implies that the environmental context, which makes Whakatane so attractive, underpins the identification of growth areas and will be considered before things that can be built (place-making attributes), e.g. high quality buildings, public squares, etc.</p> <p>The Council may need to carefully consider trade-offs between choosing an area for development against the loss of other qualities, e.g. high densities and high apartments around the town centre could have negative effects on the landscape of the escarpment.</p>
Focus urban growth in existing communities that have capacity for expansion	<p>Encourage infill development in the Kopeopeo and Whakatane town centre. This may mean increased numbers of unit developments or townhouses.</p> <p>Ideally, growth will be focused around existing social infrastructure to increase the thresholds for those facilities.</p>
Plan for quality and amenity in the urban environment	<p>Structure planning for new areas will have to meet specific criteria set out in the District Plan.</p> <p>New areas developed will need to fit in with the rest of the urban area rather than being isolated on its own. Good connectivity implies many options rather than one or two routes, for example.</p> <p>Good connectivity (using road, bus, bike or foot) helps to build a high quality urban environment.</p> <p>Increased densities will be encouraged along bus routes, including school bus routes.</p>

¹ A multi-storey building that does not need a lift.



PRINCIPLES	IMPLICATIONS OF APPLYING THESE
Achieve quality environments, places and spaces	<p>Growth and development within Whakatane, Ohope and Coastlands will ensure that indigenous biodiversity is maintained and enhanced.</p> <p>Public spaces and recreational facilities will respond to the community's needs.</p>
Develop and articulate the Māori cultural landscape	<p>Protect, recognise and celebrate sites of significance to tangata whenua.</p> <p>Tangata whenua retain mana whenua over their lands.</p>
Plan for mixed use development in suitable locations	<p>While New Urban principles encourage mixed uses absolutely this principle acknowledges that it may only be viable in certain areas.</p> <p>Mixed land uses and higher development intensity can increase land value without a corresponding increase in the cost of infrastructure and services. Mixed uses can also provide greater choice, in terms of access to destinations for residents (e.g. they may live close to the coffee shop and doctor) and create conditions for clusters of different economic activities to be located close together.</p>
Provide for housing choice and diversity	<p>Because of the need for housing choice and diversity, the Council may wish to simultaneously provide a range of areas e.g. unit developments for the ageing (through infill and intensification) and large tracts of undeveloped land for young families (vacant land for housing and land package deals).</p>
Encourage economic development	<p>The Council supports a proactive role in the economic development of the town. This may mean that the Council facilitates groups to work together on different issues or sets up public-private-partnerships.</p> <p>The Council proactively creates an urban environment to attract economic development and continues to implement the Town Vision as one example. It finds ways to capitalise on outdoor recreation and tourism.</p> <p>The Council considers the high quality lifestyle that makes Whakatane so desirable when considering significant increases in population.</p> <p>The Council zones the appropriate amounts of land according to its desired future.</p>
Encourage community collaboration in urban growth decisions	<p>The Council will consult with different agencies including Iwi and hapu, in a collaborative way before making final decisions.</p> <p>Development decisions will be based on a clear Strategy and District Plan that is predictable and fair.</p>
Protect and enhance green open space, outstanding landscapes and areas of cultural, ecological, historic and environmental significance	<p>In expanding some areas, the Council may need to weigh up the need to protect high quality versatile soils, and sites of ecological value or other environmental significance, against the need to develop a particular area.</p> <p>In expanding some areas, the Council will need to consider how a larger population will impact on the natural resources, e.g. access to the Whakatane River, the beaches and Ohiwa Harbour.</p>
Implement best practice and integrated planning	<p>The Council will work in a more collaborative way to establish effective partnerships.</p>
Consider natural hazards	<p>Natural hazards and contaminated sites pose a significant constraint to growth for the urban area. In the long term, the Council may need to consider actively encouraging population growth away from natural hazard environments in the urban area. For contaminated sites, these will have to be managed and re-mediated prior to residential development occurring.</p>

4.0 SCENARIOS

When considering the future growth and direction of urban Whakatane, four potential growth scenarios were established. Each of these provided for a different rate of growth, and differing economic conditions required to attract a certain level of growth.

The growth scenarios considered were:

Scenario 1: Status Quo – 18,000 people by 2050

Predicted to be a population of 18,000 in 2050. No significant change in the economic strength of the urban area and no noticeable difference in population compared to the present day, except that the population is ageing. The expected population growth rate is based on the Statistics New Zealand medium growth scenario. Little intervention is required by Council for planning for and achieving this scenario.

Scenario 2: Coastal Drift – 20,000 people by 2050

A population of 20,000 in 2050. Although there may be a more noticeable population drift from other parts of New Zealand and overseas, there is no noticeable change in demographics of the urban area. An estimated additional 750 to 1,000 jobs are required to provide income to additional households. Some involvement from Council required to leverage population migration from the western Bay of Plenty, overseas, and Waikato.

Scenario 3: A Growing Town – 25,000 people by 2050

A population of 25,000 in 2050. An additional 3,000 jobs are required to provide income to additional households. The potential is there for more young people to remain in Whakatane as they see opportunities arise. This scenario assumes that Coastal Drift forms part of this scenario, but that the successful implementation requires a proactive drive from Council and its economic development agency to attract employment opportunities to Whakatane.

Scenario 4: Triggered Growth – 35,000 people by 2050

A doubling of the current population to 35,000 in 2050. This scenario would only be achieved if a major economic opportunity or 'trigger' occurred to provide a significant increase in the powerhouse of the economy. An additional 6,000 to 7,000 jobs would be required. This scenario requires a very active and focussed economic development agency to attract and stimulate growth and bring new employment opportunities into the area. Achieving this scenario requires an undertaking to really drive the economic development of the area.

Council's preferred scenario for planning for growth is for Scenario 3, with a population of 25,000. This will require an annual growth rate of around one percent. This is significantly higher than it has been over the last 15 years in the Whakatane District. However, this is possible when you consider that this rate is:

- Lower than for the Bay of Plenty region as a whole;
- It is for the Whakatane and Ohope urban area, which is growing faster than the District as a whole; and
- In the latest five-year period to 2006, the population grew by 3.3% per annum.

4.1 Timeframe

This Strategy uses 2006 as the base year for statistics of population and household numbers. The aim is to provide a long term vision for the urban area and as such, 2050 has been used as the duration of the Strategy, and the timeframe for actions and outcomes.

4.2 Rate of Growth

The Strategy identifies sufficient land to accommodate a projected urban population of 25,000 people by 2050 (half again the present population of 17,000). Council's preferred rate of growth is significantly faster than the "high" projection provided by Statistics New Zealand. It was considered preferable to explore the effects of more rapid population growth as most of the risks of managing growth relate to underestimating rather than overestimating the pace of change. If population growth is slower than projected, then the release of land for new development and building of new infrastructure can be postponed.

5.0 ECONOMIC DRIVERS

5.1 Regional Economy and Linkages

The Eastern Bay region, made up of the Kawerau, Opotiki and Whakatane districts, is home to important export industries, the largest of which is wood and paper products manufacturing.

Carter Holt Harvey Packaging has a manufacturing plant in Whakatane, while Carter Holt Harvey Tasman, Norske Skog and SCA (Svenska Cellulosa Aktiebolaget) operate the pulp, paper, and tissue plant at Kawerau.

The Fonterra processing plant at Edgecumbe also plays a significant part in the local economy, processing the ever-increasing dairy output from around the region.

The Eastern Bay of Plenty covers about 433,000ha, about one third of which is planted in exotic forests. An increasing percentage of the log harvest is exported in unprocessed form through the Port of Tauranga.

Toi-EDA research has identified possible areas of growth in timber processing for export and domestic markets and these have the potential to make a big contribution to economic growth in the region. Excellent road and rail links connect the hinterland with the country's largest export port at Tauranga in the Western Bay of Plenty.

Numerous entrepreneurial businesses have also been set up in the Eastern Bay of Plenty in a variety of fields, targeting niche markets in both the domestic and export sectors.

New Zealand's Government sponsored funding opportunities and relatively modest wage structure, add to the Eastern Bay of Plenty's attractiveness as a location for new business.

Agriculture (mostly dairy and beef farming) and horticulture are major export activities, providing significant employment throughout the region. The region's fertile soils support a variety of horticultural activities including kiwifruit orchards, market gardens and apple and avocado orchards.

Aquaculture could provide the region with a major opportunity. A group including Opotiki Iwi Whakatohea's Eastern Seafarms (54 per cent), Sealord Shellfish Ltd (26 per cent) and NZ Seafarms Ltd (20 per cent) obtained Department of Conservation consent for a planned 3800ha marine farm.

The Eastern Bay of Plenty's inland and coastal attractions including marine volcano White Island, beaches and fishing, have encouraged the growth of tourism, with local marketing activities helping to lift visitor numbers and strengthen the Eastern Bay of Plenty economy.

5.2 Local Economic Drivers

Key economic drivers may affect the type and amount of growth to occur over the next 40 years. Whilst this Strategy does not purport to be an economic development Strategy, it supports the work done by Toi-EDA and identifies where future growth is anticipated to occur. Toi-EDA will in turn support the Strategy through marketing and economic development initiatives.

Economic growth will result from a number of factors working together which are listed below:

Toi-EDA Initiatives

Toi-EDA focuses on supporting and growing local business and is the economic development agency for Whakatane, Opotiki and Kawerau.

Key areas of focus for Toi-EDA are:

- Events – The number of events attracting premier competitors is increasing.
- Tourism - The Eastern Bay of Plenty Tourism Strategy ensures a more coherent approach to tourism for the three districts and is supported by the EBOP Advisory Group and Tourism Forum.
- Forestry and Wood processing opportunities – Toi-EDA is seeking to gain value from the 'wall of wood'. This provides a more integrated approach to industrial growth e.g. focusing and supporting wood processing opportunities in Kawerau.
- Putauaki Industrial Park - Rezoning rural land to industrial adjacent to the Kawerau area.
- Transport and Logistics Rail to Port - Possible enhancement to the Putauaki Industrial Park.
- Economic and Demographic Monitoring – Bi-annual monitoring of the Eastern Bay.
- The Hotel development – A partnership with The Town Vision Board seeking to attract a hotel to the town
- Food and beverage Strategy – Implemented on a local level with the formation of a cluster group.
- Aquaculture - Toi-EDA supports the Opotiki aquaculture project and harbour development.
- Coastal cycleway - Feasibility study of the Whakatane to Otamarakau section, support the Motu cycleway.
- Key results from economic development initiatives, marketing and events:
 - Visitor numbers highest for five years; 100 000 visitors through the Visitor Information Centre in the last year and it has been a recession
 - Strong Whakatane/Eastern Bay of Plenty profile
 - Strengthened the sectors - opportunities for businesses to work together
 - Increased support from Eastern Bay of Plenty councils
 - Increase in the number of out of town entrants in premiere events

Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa – Te Ara Poutama o Ngāti Awa Strategic Pathways to the Future 2010 – 2015, which seeks to:

- Protect the culture of Māori and encourage the growth in the use of the language.

Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi

The university employs 60 full time equivalents (FTEs) in Whakatane and another 60 FTEs around the country. It offers a broad mix of bachelor and graduate programmes focusing on indigenous cultures around the world.

- Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi recently achieved international accreditation to run research programs for masters and PhD students from indigenous cultures around the world.
- Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi focuses increasingly on research about indigenous issues and expects large scale growth in their Masters and PhD programs. Supporting their research, the university will host two conferences per year.
- Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi expects to have 2000 students (not necessarily all based in Whakatane) by 2050. They are currently looking at refurbishing and building a purpose-built campus.
- Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi experiences some difficulty in accommodating students and visitors to conferences.
- Currently the Bay of Plenty Polytech and Wairaki operate off the Awanuiarangi site.

Fibre-optic Internet Cable/FX Network

- In partnership between Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa, Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi and Go Next Communications – a fibre-optic internet cable to Whakatane has been installed.
- Stage I of the implementation of a unique wireless network delivering high speed internet (voice and data) access to the Town Centre and many parts of the greater Whakatane business district has recently been completed.
- It is anticipated that the improved internet connectivity will stimulate the growth of internet-based businesses, particularly in terms of supporting business and internet connectivity.

Marina Proposal

- For some time there has been a proposal to establish a marina in Whakatane.
- In 2007 the Council was approached about the possible sale of property in Bunyan Road for marina facilities.
- As this land was originally taken under the Public Works Act for playing fields, the community was consulted about the possible sale and the previous owner was offered the property back for purchase. Since consultation, the Whakatane Marina Society has been developing the proposal.

Arts and Culture Facility

- The facility is due to be constructed during 2012 and will host the library and exhibition space of the museum. It is anticipated that the facility will provide a destination for tourists and residents.

Town Vision

- The Whakatane Town Vision Plan provides a strategic long term vision for how the Whakatane Town Centre might look in the future. By creating an overall plan for the town centre, it will ensure that future development is in keeping with the aspirations of the community, and in doing so will help safeguard the particular aspects of the town centre which are valued by the community. It provides an opportunity to enhance and celebrate other special attributes which have been lost or hidden.
- The Town Vision is seeking to attract economic development initiatives to the town centre.

Pilot Housing Project

- The partnership pilot project between Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa, Kiwibank and Te Puni Kōkiri is trialling the use of Māori land as leasehold land for longer term residential development. It is one of three pilot projects being trialled in the country.

Return of Māori

- Of the large Māori population living in Australia, at least 900 are of Ngāti Awa descent.
- A 2007 study “Māori in Australia” estimated that 60% of New Zealand-born Māori expect to return.
- For Ngāti Awa Iwi this means that up to 540 could return to their rohe, although this figure is expected to be higher.

Migration of Baby Boomers

- The biggest source of population growth is inward migration, primarily from the rest of the Bay of Plenty region, followed by overseas. The trend is that increasing numbers of people are moving east from Tauranga and the Western Bay.
- There is also an increasing number of wealthier and older people moving to the town.
- Simultaneously, the proportion of employed people moving into the town is trending upward and a decline in the number of employed people moving out, suggesting that employment will continue to be a key factor in attracting migrants.

Tauranga Eastern Link

- This corridor will provide the main road access to Tauranga from the east (Te Puke, Whakatane, Opotiki, Gisborne) and south (Rotorua, Taupo). It is a key route for trucks servicing the Port of Tauranga. The planned motorway will take regional traffic out of Te Puke.
- The Tauranga Eastern Link is a key strategic transport corridor for the Bay of Plenty region and a highway recognised by the government as a Road of National Significance.
- The Link will support planned residential, commercial, and industrial development at Te Puke, Papamoa East and Rangioru Business Park.
- The construction of this road will reduce the travel time between Whakatane and Tauranga by thirteen minutes on a one-way trip.
- It is expected that an increasing number of people will move to Whakatane and travel westerly using the bypass. Their reasons for moving are largely related to quality of life with similar travel times.

Rangioru Business Park

- The Business Park is estimated to supply Tauranga/Western Bay with sufficient industrial land to cover a shortfall of 300 hectares.
- The Rangioru Business Park is connected to the Port of Tauranga with the proposed Tauranga Eastern Link and Harbour Link.
- It is anticipated that Whakatane will experience knock-on effects from the Rangioru Business Park and Tauranga Eastern Link with an increasing number of people potentially attracted to the town or nearby.



6.0 APPROACH TO URBAN GROWTH

Council has considered the philosophy of growth it desires for Whakatane. Three options were considered. Further discussion on these options and the implications of applying each of them are detailed in the background report. The 3 options considered were:

1. Consolidation (“Compact City”)

This is based on principles of increased densities and improving public space to ensure better provision of amenity to achieve liveable, functional and affordable residential development. A core component of a compact city is public transport and providing the supporting thresholds for an efficient public transport system.

Implicit in this is an urban growth limit and no sprawl of urban growth. Growth is provided for within the existing urban area through higher densities.

2. Expansion

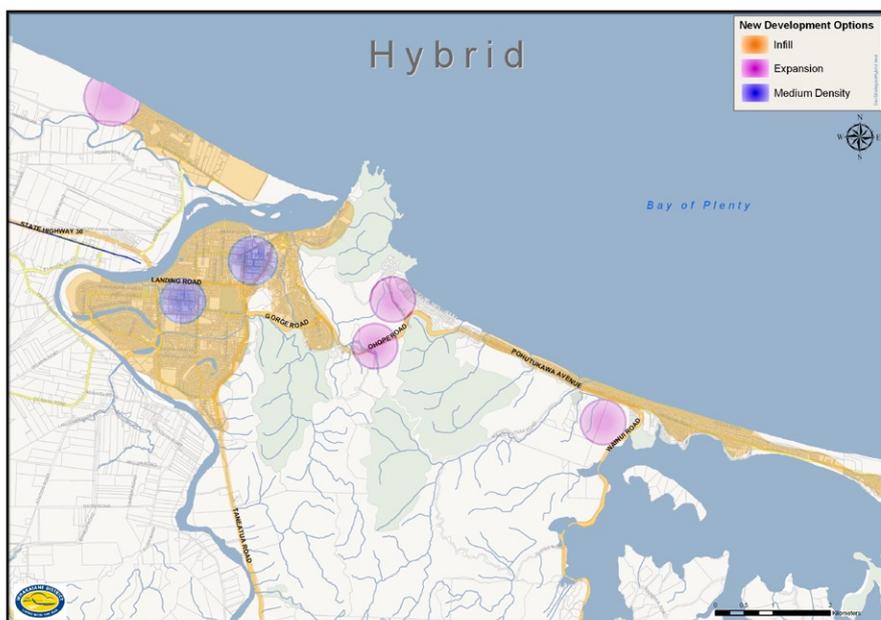
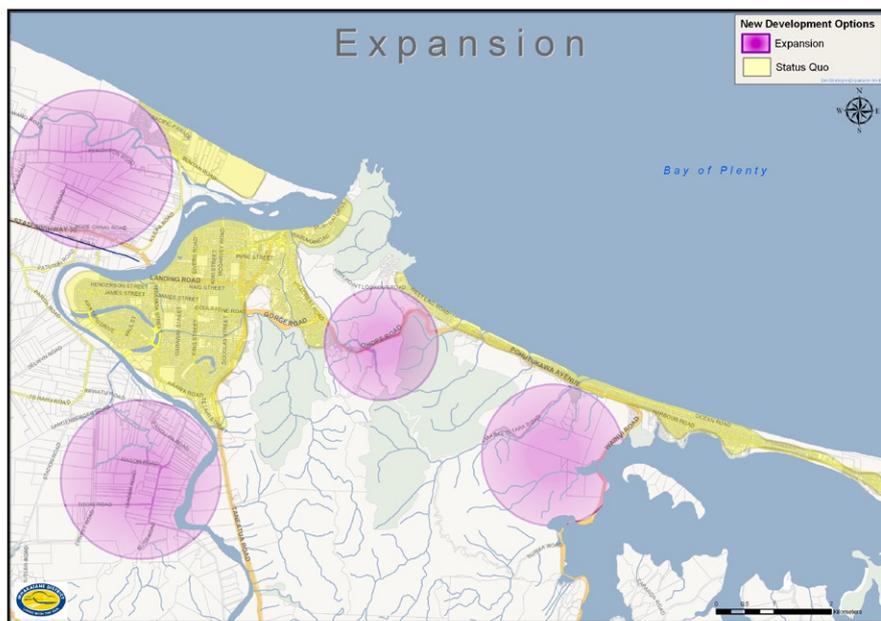
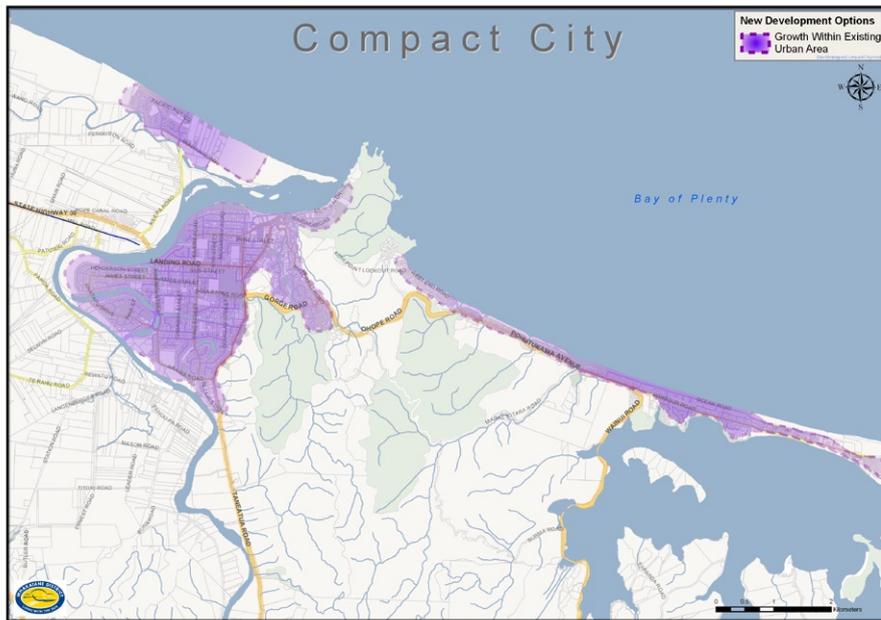
This is based on focussing new development in green fields areas around Whakatane, Coastlands and Ohope. Lot sizes could provide for the ‘quarter acre’ dream. Longer term, this will be problematic because of the constraints to development that surround Whakatane.

3. Hybrid

This option is based on a mix of 1 and 2. The principles underpinning this approach are that consolidation should occur in specific areas, particularly around community, economic / transport nodes. This option provides a range of choice for people. For example, consolidation could provide for medium-density living for the elderly, as well as those entering the property market for the first time. Expansion could provide families with options for larger lot sizes to suit their needs.

The maps on the following page show pictorially the difference between the three options. It is Council’s preferred option to foster a hybrid philosophy (3) to cater for future growth in Whakatane.





7.0 OPTIONS FOR LOCATION AND TYPES OF GROWTH

In order to provide a mix of increased density living and greenfields expansion, a number of locations were assessed for suitability. These locations are shown on the map on the following page. The map shows:

- Land that could be rezoned for Residential in the future (greenfields). This could provide a variety of densities.
- Existing zoned Residential land that could be earmarked for higher density living.
- Land that could be rezoned for mixed use (medium density residential with commercial and/or retail below).
- Land that could be rezoned for Industrial use.
- Land that could be rezoned to Commercial / Retail use.

Note that the map on the following page shows all of the options that have been considered. Varying degrees of analysis have been undertaken for each option, depending on the information available. Not everything shown on the map will proceed – in fact, some options are mutually exclusive.

The matrix in Appendix 2: Assessment Matrix of New Areas provides an assessment of the preferred residential growth locations against criteria developed in the Residential Growth Strategy. The matrix indicates the constraints some of the options expose, and ultimately forms the basis for the recommended option. These criteria include:

- **Land Ownership**
Land fragmentation can make urbanisation difficult. The more landowners there are, the more difficult urbanisation could be.
- **Cultural Heritage**
There are a number of significant cultural heritage features, particularly archaeological sites, within the study area which will be avoided where possible.
- **Natural Heritage**
Due to potential effects on regionally significant natural heritage from urban development, future residential growth should avoid significant natural heritage areas.
- **Landscape Features**
There are no outstanding or regionally significant features as identified in Regional and District Plans affected by any options.
- **Socially and Physically Contiguous**
Contiguous urban growth assists in ensuring a sense of belonging to the community with its social infrastructure and physical services.

- **Versatile Soils/ Land Contamination**

Some areas are located on high quality versatile soils. Other areas have contaminated sites (containing dioxins).

- **Social and Land Use Incompatibility**

Proximity to incompatible land uses e.g. industrial activities, sewage treatment ponds, power lines, and state highways, will require buffer zones and could create reverse sensitivity issues for adjacent residential development.

- **Natural Hazards/Land Stability/ Flooding / Inundation**

All options are subject to earthquake risk to a varying degree. The area is a volcanic and seismic region with an active Whakatane fault. This has potential for liquefaction, and creates construction problems on peat, which needs to be excavated or use of piled foundations.

- **Services (Water, Wastewater, Stormwater)**

Some of the areas are generally flat with some below flood levels set by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council. Disposal of stormwater to the west of the town will require pumping into present drains and canals with stop banks improvements needed in some locations. The location of the treatment ponds is a constraint to development due to reverse sensitivity, and upgrades are required to cater for 25,000. Ohope is on a separate system, and will require upgrading to meet increased demand.

- **Transport**

A new State Highway river crossing will be required regardless of options. The Whakatane River bridge will require additional capacity by 2016.

- **Commercial**

Additional land is required with the majority in the Whakatane town centre, with some servicing outer suburbs, namely Ohope and Piripai.

- **Industrial**

The amount of Industrial land is likely to meet demand surrounding Whakatane, but further land is required for heavy industrial activities adjacent to Kawerau.