

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT - STAGE 1

# Whakatāne Town Centre and Riverfront



SUPPORTED THROUGH  
**PROVINCIAL  
GROWTH  
FUND**  
TUAWHENUA

[whakatane.govt.nz/te-ara-hou](http://whakatane.govt.nz/te-ara-hou)



# Contents

## *Rārangi Upoko*

### A. INTRODUCING TE ARA HOU PROGRAMME

<i>TE KAUPAPA O TE ARA HOU</i> .....	4
Te Ara Hou programme structure.....	5

### B. PURPOSE OF THIS CONSULTATION

<i>HE AHA TE TAKE O TĒNEI UIUINGA</i> .....	6
MAP- Location of consultation sites within CBD .....	7

### C. LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

<i>KA MUA KA MURI</i> .....	8
Shaping our town's future .....	9
Challenges .....	10
What our communities have told us .....	11
Consultation timeline.....	12
Related projects .....	13

### D. GUIDING OUR TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

<i>E ĀRAHI ANA I TE WHANAKETANGA O TE POKAPŪ O TE TĀONE</i> .....	14
Principles.....	14
Objectives .....	15
MAP - Existing land use .....	16
<b>Distinctive local culture</b> .....	17
MAP - Cultural and natural landscape.....	19
<b>Connecting with our natural environment</b> .....	20
<b>Way finding and connecting within our town</b> .....	22
MAP - Access and mobility .....	24
<b>Growing opportunities</b> .....	25
A recap of our consultation questions.....	27
<b>Kōrero Mai - Let's Talk</b> .....	28



# A. Introducing Te Ara Hou Programme

## *Te kaupapa o Te Ara Hou*

### What is Te Ara Hou?

#### *Te kaupapa o Te Ara Hou*

Te Ara Hou is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to revitalise the Whakatāne CBD, strengthen ties with each other and the awa (river), as well as create social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits in our community for many years to come. Te Ara Hou translates to “the new path”. This is fitting as we work together to revitalise our town centre; going beyond built infrastructure, as we create a legacy for our children and future communities.

This programme aims to establish the ‘heart of our town’ – our premier destination, an anchor between the riverfront, existing open spaces, cultural and heritage landscape, tourism, retail and commercial offers. Looking to the future, this opportunity will support greater mixed-use development across our CBD, promote change for how we navigate our town and increase vibrancy to attract people to our town and district.

Te Ara Hou aims to:

- Enhance the social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing of the people of Whakatāne
- Celebrate our town’s natural assets and cultural heritages
- Attract high-value investment, both public and private, into the CBD
- Connect the town with the river, and the emerging tourism cluster at the eastern end of town

Te Ara Hou will deliver these aims by undertaking three key infrastructure projects, supported by activation plans that are designed to promote vibrancy and sustainable uplift for our town.

### Collaborative partnership

#### *He waka hourua*

Te Ara Hou Programme is being delivered within a partnership model; the partners are Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa and Whakatāne District Council (Council). This partnership recognises a collaborative relationship will benefit our wider community as we work towards sustainable and respectful regeneration of the Whakatāne town centre and riverfront environment.

### Te Ara Hou funding

#### *Te Pūtea mō Te Ara Hou*

In May 2020, a \$9.6 million investment from the Government’s Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) was announced for the revitalisation of the riverfront and town centre developments that make up Te Ara Hou. The remaining \$9.6 million investment will be contributed by Whakatāne District Council via the Harbour Fund.

Additionally, in June 2020, a \$2.5 million PGF acceleration package was announced to assist with resourcing and fast-tracking the delivery of the funded projects, including the riverfront revitalisation.

# Te Ara Hou programme structure

## *Te whakatakotoranga o Te Ara Hou*

Te Ara Hou is one of two PGF- supported investments that make up the Whakatāne Regeneration Programme - the second is the Boat Harbour development.

The Te Ara Hou programme itself is made up of three main sections.

### REMEDiate/ENHANCE *(Underway)*

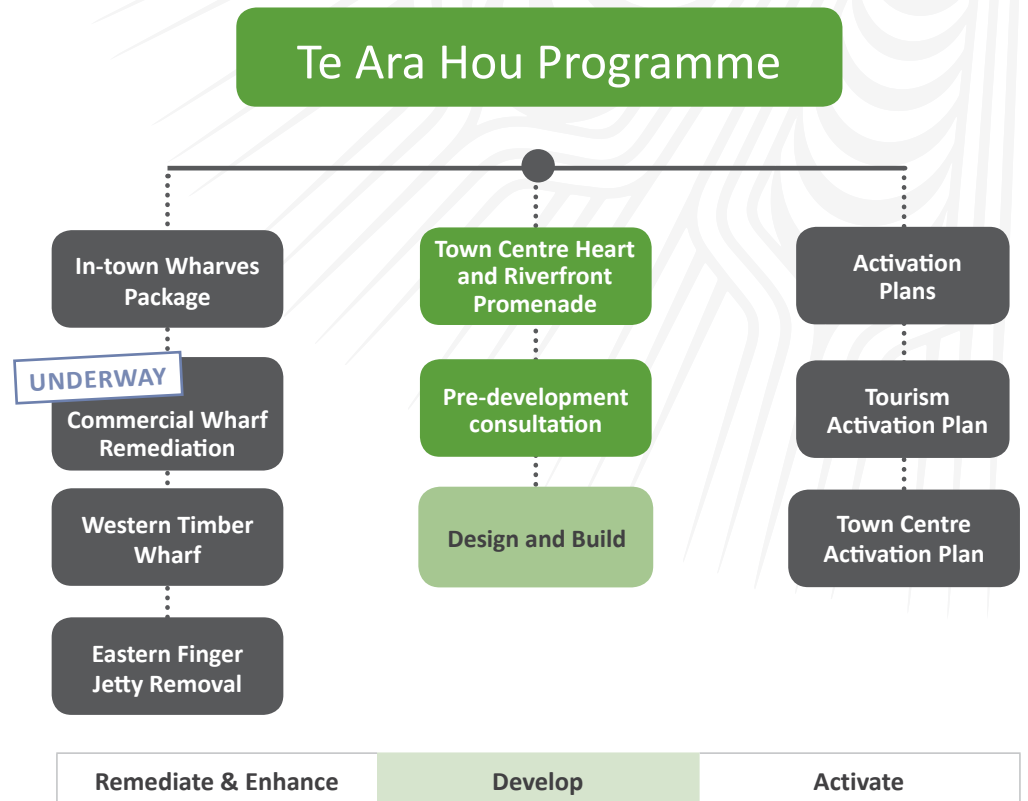
The in-town wharves package, which is designed to ensure our in-town wharves offerings are fit-for-purpose and sustainable. The commercial wharf remediation aspect of this package is already underway.

### DEVELOP *(Now in consultation)*

Targeted infrastructure investments into Whakatāne town centre and riverfront that promote vibrancy, liveability, investment and wellbeing in our town. This aspect of the programme is now in consultation via this document and online submissions through [koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz](http://koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz)

### ACTIVATE *(To come)*

Tourism and Town Centre Activations Plans that seek to activate and enliven our town centre and riverfront to ensure our infrastructure investments deliver the outcomes sought.



## B. Purpose of this consultation

### *Te take o tēnei uiuinga*

Together Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa and Council are consulting with you, our community, on the Town Centre Heart and Riverfront Promenade projects. We want you to be involved in shaping our town to ensure our 'reimagined' town centre and riverfront embodies the community's collective aspirations.

This consultation uses key questions to gain your views on the project's draft objectives and principles, as well as your priorities for the two development sites. This initial consultation will provide the Te Ara Hou team with feedback on what is important to our communities, and will be used to inform future growth opportunities in the CBD.

#### PRE-DEVELOPMENT CONSULTATION TIMELINE

STAGE ONE CONSULTATION		STAGE TWO CONSULTATION		STAGE THREE
Principles, objectives and key outcomes	Consultation feedback analysis	Concept designs developed based on feedback received	Consultation feedback analysis	Preferred concept designs based on feedback to earlier consultation
19 September - 3 October				
Relationship building >>>				

 We are here

### *Key development sites for consultation*

This consultation focuses on two key development sites within the Whakatāne Town Centre. However, development within these sites is intended to attract wider benefits to our communities in the CBD and across our district.

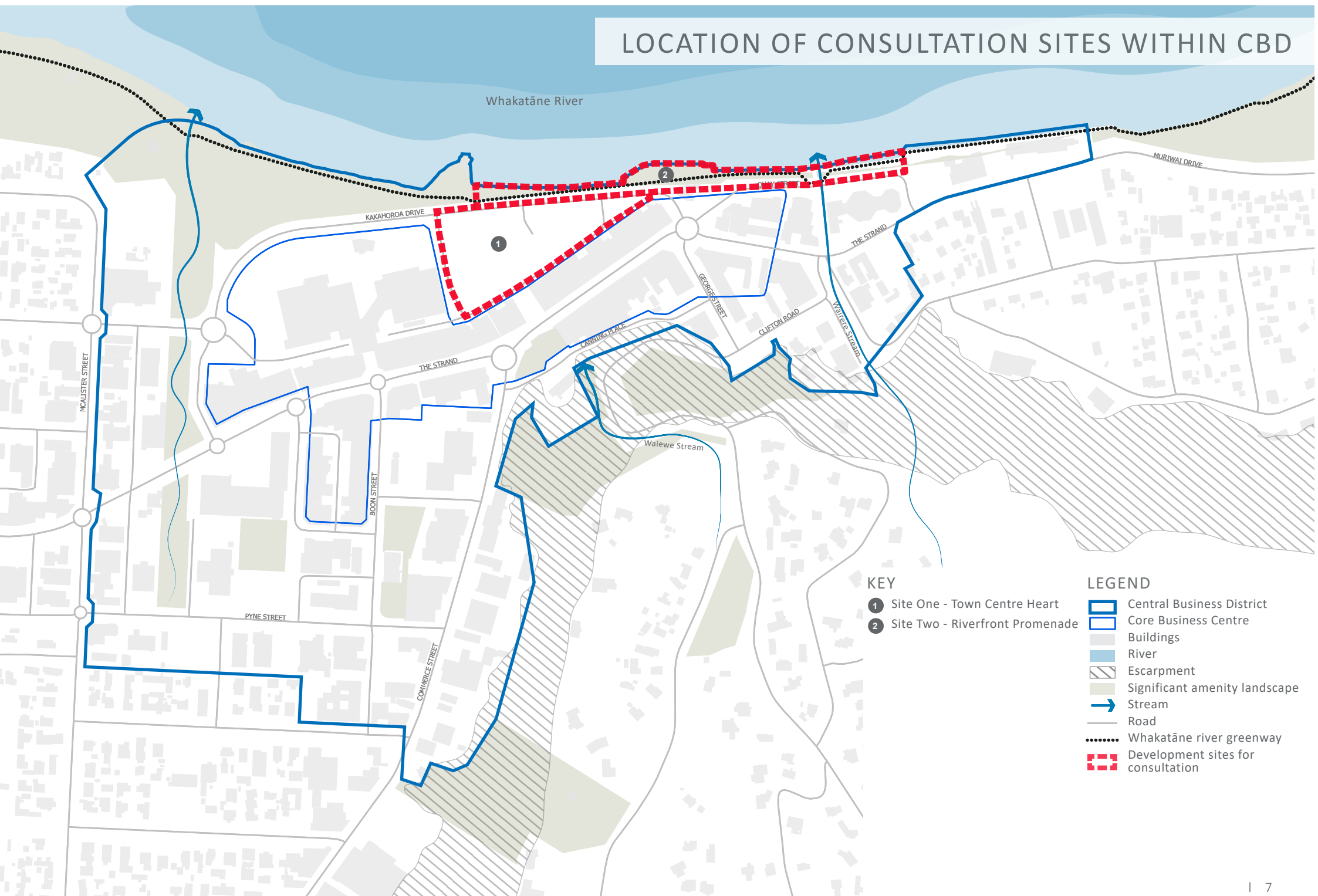
#### **SITE ONE - TOWN CENTRE HEART WITH ADJOINING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Establish a central destination that will draw people into the heart of our town, and reconnect with our natural and cultural landscapes. This will be edged by new commercial offerings to increase vibrancy, rejuvenate and grow our local economy.

#### **SITE TWO - RIVERFRONT PROMENADE**

Create a seamless, open promenade adjoining our riverfront to connect our revitalised town centre to the emerging tourism precinct at the eastern end of town. This will provide a widened pedestrian friendly path to improve access to the river, enable our community to interact with the cultural and natural landscape and create spaces for events and recreational opportunities.

# LOCATION OF CONSULTATION SITES WITHIN CBD



- KEY**
- ① Site One - Town Centre Heart
  - ② Site Two - Riverfront Promenade

- LEGEND**
- Central Business District
  - Core Business Centre
  - Buildings
  - River
  - Escarpment
  - Significant amenity landscape
  - Stream
  - Road
  - Whakatāne river greenway
  - Development sites for consultation

## C. Looking back to move forward *Ka mua ka muri*

How our town's past has shaped today

*I pēhea ngā rā onamata i whakaahua tō tātou tāone ināiane*

Māori occupation dates back to Te Tini o Toi, the original inhabitants of Kākahoroa, now known as Whakatāne. Some 200 years later the Mataatua waka, and the ancestors to which some of the Whakatāne district iwi associate with, arrived. Ngāti Awa is the iwi that has the strongest affiliation to the Whakatāne township. Through raupatu, Ngāti Awa lost 181,000 hectares of land to the Government, and many local Māori were dispersed and displaced from their ancestral lands.

The first European settlement began in the 1830s with whalers, sealers, missionaries and traders. The area became a major shipbuilding centre and port, with local ships transporting maize, potatoes, wheat and flax to other North Island towns. The township of Whakatāne, as we know it today, began in 1860 and consisted of two stores, two hotels, a flax mill and a schoolhouse.

Our town has continually changed and adapted to meet the communities' needs and aspirations. To support an increasing rural economy and growing local population, town centre expansion was necessary. In c.1912, reclamation along the Whakatāne River was undertaken by the then Whakatāne River Board (now amalgamated into the Council). This reclamation established the port and enabled the town to grow. The majority of the buildings on the northern side of The Strand were built in the early 1920s, and many of these remain in place today.

We now have a further opportunity to adapt again. This consultation document is designed to capture opinions from across the district about what is important in redeveloping our town centre and riverfront.





# Shaping our town's future

## *E whakaahua ana i tō tātou tāone mō ngā rā anamata*

This plan seeks to unlock two key sites for regeneration within our Central Business District (CBD). Redevelopment of prime river-facing sites, between Ōhinemataroa (Whakatāne River) and The Strand, will enable Council to achieve the community's long-held aspiration to re-establish a strong connection between the town and the awa (river) and create a town centre 'heart' - a place with a strong local and cultural identity. This will foster a vibrant town centre and active riverfront promenade, which will attract greater public and private investment and boost our economy by creating more jobs, tourism and other opportunities.

Through the development of the two key sites, the overarching Te Ara Hou programme aims to support growth in our local community by:

- Creating jobs, specifically within our tourism and marine industries
- Increasing social inclusion and participation through a vibrant town centre
- Supporting Māori and local tourism aspirations
- Encouraging environmental sustainability, such as protection from future climate events
- Encouraging private development within close proximity to the town centre and riverfront developments and partner regeneration projects in the CBD to support a vibrant town centre
- Improving resilience, particularly of critical infrastructure to protect our town from climate hazards
- Encouraging our economy to diversify
- Fostering a town centre economy that provides a range of facilities, activities and services to meet the needs of our growing population.



# Challenges

## Ngā Wero

Whakatāne, like many major provincial New Zealand towns, is facing a number of challenges as we look to promote sustainable development and encourage vibrant, resilient communities. This is particularly important as we work to recover from the impact of the Whakaari eruption and resulting tragedy in 2019, and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. Within our town centre, we are finding ways to contribute, lift productivity and participate in our sub-regional economic recovery. Together we have the collective ability to shape our future into one that rewards us all.

In planning for the long-term future of Whakatāne town centre, the Te Ara Hou programme seeks to manage a range of challenges, including:

### GLOBAL ISSUES

- Sustainability and changing energy dependencies
- Climate change
- Online retail change
- Denser urban areas.

### NATIONAL ISSUES FOR URBAN CENTRES

- Lifestyle migration, changing population structure and needs of growing urban populations (current and future)
- Competition from cities and larger urban centres on provincial towns and districts
- Growing sustainable local economies
- Changing attitudes to innovative technology
- Rising costs of aging and new infrastructure
- Managing environmental and climate issues
- Increasing disparity of wealth.

### WHAKATĀNE TOWN CENTRE – YOUR EARLIER VIEWS

The Town Centre and Riverfront projects are the culmination of planning work and ongoing community feedback dating over a decade. Prior engagements that have been considered in shaping Te Ara Hou include community, iwi and hapū feedback made to the Whakatāne Town Vision 2008, Whakatāne Town Vision Review 2017, Whakatāne Ki Mua 2016, and ongoing Long Term Plan, Annual Plan and strategic planning processes. Recent conversations with stakeholders have helped capture community views on future growth within town, and the tourism and marine industries.

The Te Ara Hou programme now provides the opportunity to translate these ideas and opportunities into reality. The main issues Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa and Council are hoping to address include:

- Establish physical and visual connections with the Whakatāne River through town to create a sense of arrival
- Create a vibrant and active waterfront within the town centre that showcases our rich cultural history and heritage to enhance the visitor experience
- Support Māori and their tourism aspirations, including infrastructure needed to support social, cultural and economic outcomes
- Promote high quality design in public open spaces to connect our town, river, natural and cultural environments to promote events and activities that attract locals and visitors to come more frequently and stay longer
- Create a new high quality community space to attract private development in the CBD to provide better visitor accommodation, attractions, hospitality and retail offers, such as a vibrant evening and weekend economy as well as locally distinct shopping
- Encourage a ‘people friendly’ town, where walking, cycling, playing and relaxing can happen close to the river, while continuing to provide for parking options
- Improving resilience, particularly of critical infrastructure to protect our town from climate and natural hazards
- Support more growth and through investment to promote tourism and local employment opportunities, such as in recreational and commercial marine industries.

# What our communities have told us

## Ētahi kōrero a te hapori

“ Town Centre should welcome pedestrians - easily accessible. ”

“ We need a vibrant “place” and a mixture of accommodation, restaurants, business and recreational destinations. ”

“ Creating flow and connection to the river is important. ”

“ I think one of the best things is that you’ve got so much in a small space. When expanding why not go up rather than out? Don’t lose the beach feel or the greenery around the place - that’s one of the best parts ”

“ Now that we have Wharaurangi, it would be great to continue the connection to the river in a more dedicated way. ”

“ Cultural arts and craft precinct (near Marae/Wharf area) ”

“ I’d like to see more apartments developed, as I believe retail as we know it is heading for extinction. ”

“ Open up the car parking area to use the river views and access. ”

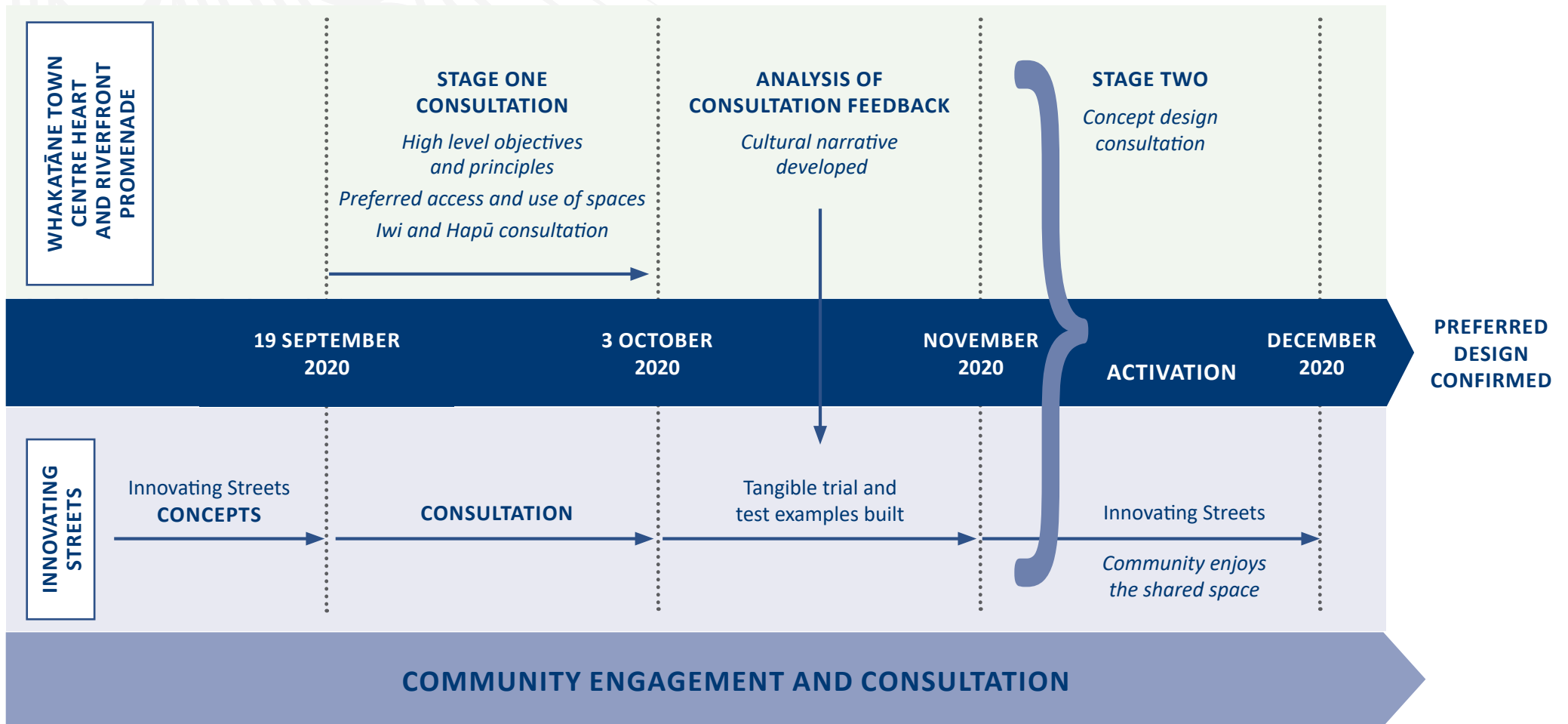
“ Would like to see i-SITE moved to The Strand, as it’s current site would make a great seafood restaurant. A fishing harbour should have a seafood restaurant! ”



# Consultation Timeline

## *Te rārangi wā uiuinga*

Te Ara Hou is the culmination of years of planning and community feedback dating as far back as 2008, including the 2016 Town Vision project and 2017 Ki Mua community engagement process.



# Related projects *Ētahi atu Whaiwāhitanga*

Several projects interlink with the Te Ara Hou Programme, and connected delivery between stakeholders and the following projects are key to a successful community outcome.

## 1. Ngāti Awa Kāinga Development

Ngāti Awa Group Holdings Limited and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa are developing a destination for recreational and commercial visitors and a venue for community events, on the Whakatāne Army Hall site. It will be an iconic building promoting and celebrating the heritage, culture and stories of Ngāti Awa.

## 2. Innovating Streets

Council has secured \$494,000 funding from Waka Kotahi (New Zealand Transport Agency) to work with Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa, community and town centre businesses to co-design and activate space on Kakahoroa Drive. This responds to the community's growing desire to create safe walking and cycling spaces, reflective of the safe-streets experience during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The Innovating Streets Fund promotes temporary design and use of the space changes on road reserves to test iwi/community-led ideas. The trial area is within the Te Ara Hou town centre and should be in place from November 2020 for a six-month period.

To be involved with the Whakatāne District Council Innovating Streets consultation, please visit [whakatane.govt.nz/innovating-streets](https://whakatane.govt.nz/innovating-streets).

## 3. Project Future-Proof

To protect people, property and livelihoods from our region's most frequent natural hazard, Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) looks after \$320 million worth of flood protection assets designed to help manage river flows and collectively work to minimise flood risks.

The Town Centre Flood Defence Upgrade is a programme of work to ensure that flood walls and stopbanks will continue to protect the community from flooding in the coming decades. The first part of the project will address known seepage issues on sections of the stopbank along Kakahoroa Drive and geotechnical work is underway on floodwalls and stopbanks downstream to the Muriwai Drive playground.

BOPRC will be providing information and seeking public feedback on the project once more is known about engineering options. BOPRC is working closely with Whakatāne District Council to ensure that planning to safeguard the town's flood defence assets is aligned with Te Ara Hou projects. Te Ara Hou design options will take into account the outcomes of BOPRC consultation and any design changes to our town's flood defences.

To find out more about planning for the Regional Council's Town Centre Flood Defence Upgrade, please visit [boprc.govt.nz](https://boprc.govt.nz).

## NATURAL HAZARDS

**Government is urging councils to consider the impacts of climate change and natural hazards when preparing communities for how to plan and adapt, both now and for the long-term future. Council recognises that our district is prone to a range of hazards within the CBD.**

**Managing the future impacts of climate change, sea level rise, seismic strengthening of retail buildings and possible liquefaction in the CBD is an important consideration for managing growth. Council is working collaboratively with the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, iwi, hapū, experts and the local communities to assess the future impacts and effects of climate and natural hazards. The threat of increased frequency and severity of events on our community is a concern shared by all and will be factored into stage two concept design consultation.**

## D. Guiding our Town Centre Development

### *E ārahi ana i te whanaketanga o te pokapū o te tāone*

The following principles and objectives provide the overarching ideals to guide development in our town centre and along the riverfront. These principles and objectives were agreed to by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa and Council as the foundation for the successful PGF application for the town centre heart and riverfront promenade funding.

These founding principles and objectives continue to form the basis of this consultation document and will be used in an assessment matrix to critique all development designs (in the second stage of consultation).



## PRINCIPLES NGĀ MĀTĀPONO

### **Te Aranga design principles**

#### ***Ngā mātāpono hoahoa o Te Aranga***

Adaptation of overarching principles influencing the expression, celebration and visibility of Māori culture within Whakatāne. These will guide and reinforce the outcomes of all other principles.

### **Guardianship *Kaitiakitanga***

Protecting and enhancing the environment, vital ecosystems, wāhi tapu, cultural sites of significance and practices. Emphasizing eco-friendly, green and sustainable development and community choices.

### **Partnership *Mahi tahi***

Working in partnership with Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa, to constructively engage the community in the riverfront town centre regeneration and flow-on development opportunities.

### **Identity *Tuakiri***

Providing authentic, relevant cultural stories and experiences within the town centre, ensuring local identity is strengthened and secured.

### **People *Tāngata***

Recognising the importance of regeneration of the town centre/ riverfront for people. Enhancing river accessibility to improve social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

### **Flow and connectivity *Ngā hononga o te tāone ki te taiao***

Ensuring that movement within the riverfront and marine precincts radiates through the town centre, stimulating better connections with the built, natural and cultural environments across the district.

### **Design quality *Te kounga o te hoahoa***

Promoting high design standards, ensuring public realm developments are attractive, functional, sustainable and long-lasting.



OBJECTIVES  
NGĀ WHĀINGA

OBJECTIVES  
NGĀ WHĀINGA

**Relationship to river** *Te hononga ki te awa*

Re-orientate the town’s built-form towards the river. Create more interaction between people, the river and the marine environment through greater recreational, cultural, educational and commercial opportunities.

**Natural influence** *Te hononga ki te taiao*

Visually connect the river, the town centre and the wider natural environment. Recognising Kaitiakitanga of natural resources for cultural wellbeing to support social and economic benefits.

**Cultural connection** *Te hononga ahurea*

Emphasise that we live in a cultural landscape, one where we acknowledge the past and work towards a connected future through a shared connection to the land and each other.

**Vibrant for longer** *He tāone whitawhita*

Establish a strong, economically viable and cohesive town centre that offers a mix of uses and activities. Allowing for people to live and work in town, to support a vibrant and dynamic business environment.

**Movement and access** *Ngā nekehanga i te tāone*

Create clear wayfinding and access to enhance the accessibility of the town centre. Encourage a range of integrated transport choices for people to use in and around the riverfront and town centre.

**Resilience and safety** *Ka manawaroa, ka haumarū*

Use good urban design principles to build resilience from natural hazards along the riverfront and in the town centre.

**Unlocking opportunity** *Ngā whaiwāhitanga*

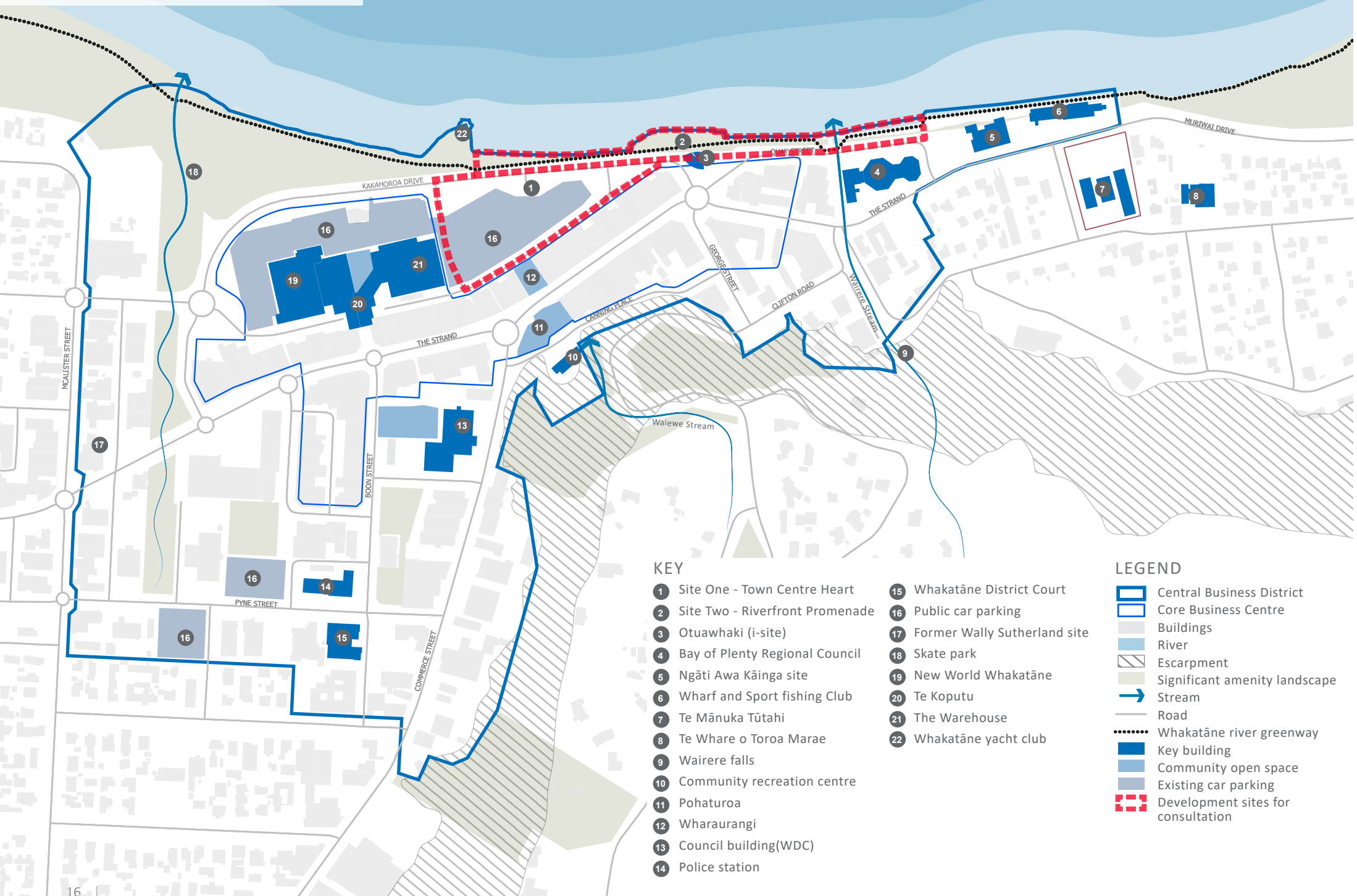
Work in partnership with Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa, to create a riverfront and public realm that becomes a catalyst for future growth and development within Whakatāne.



Do these **objectives** and **principles** reflect what is important to you?

Anything else?

# EXISTING LAND USE



## KEY

- 1 Site One - Town Centre Heart
- 2 Site Two - Riverfront Promenade
- 3 Otuawhaki (i-site)
- 4 Bay of Plenty Regional Council
- 5 Ngāti Awa Kāinga site
- 6 Wharf and Sport fishing Club
- 7 Te Mānuka Tūtahi
- 8 Te Whare o Toroa Marae
- 9 Wairere falls
- 10 Community recreation centre
- 11 Pohaturoa
- 12 Wharaurangi
- 13 Council building(WDC)
- 14 Police station
- 15 Whakatāne District Court
- 16 Public car parking
- 17 Former Wally Sutherland site
- 18 Skate park
- 19 New World Whakatāne
- 20 Te Koputu
- 21 The Warehouse
- 22 Whakatāne yacht club

## LEGEND

- Central Business District
- Core Business Centre
- Buildings
- River
- Escarpment
- Significant amenity landscape
- Stream
- Road
- Whakatāne river greenway
- Key building
- Community open space
- Existing car parking
- Development sites for consultation



GUIDING OUR TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

# Distinctive local culture

## *He ahurea motuhake*



## OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES



*Cultural connection*



*Relationship to river*



*Vibrant for longer*



*Movement and access*



*Unlocking opportunity*

## Discussion

An exciting town is one with a unique spirit that draws locals, visitors and investors, and encourages business and wealth, improving the quality of life for the community. Whakatāne has the opportunity to create a culturally distinctive, vibrant and active town centre heart, with places that are fun, interesting, full of activity and encourage people to come and stay for longer.

The environment is integral to Māori identity and culture. Te Ao Māori, or the Māori world views the land, water and air as interconnected and its health is assessed in the same way. For Māori, all parts of the environment are infused with mauri (life force) and are connected by whakapapa. This is the basis of Māori decision-making – the descent of all living things from the original creators of life requires that in every industry, rituals of assistance are sought.

### Considerations for our town centre and riverfront:

- Māori and local culture and history in our town centre, through locally distinct design, public art, signage and story-telling.
- Tikanga Māori is integrated through all phases of development.
- Create a gateway to our town centre, by joining attractive spaces and places of interest to our cultural and natural landscapes, such as the Ngāti Awa Kāinga development, the new Whakatāne Boat Harbour, the Whakatāne Heads and the river.
- Provide a range of spaces to promote a year-long event programme, grow the weekend / evening economy, support tourism, retail and hospitality CBD sectors, and attract both locals and visitors into town for longer.

## Issues

Whakatāne has a strong cultural history, from a place of settlement since the time of Toi Kai Rākau, and as one of the first places the Mataatua waka came ashore. Yet little of our Maori culture is visible within our town centre. Equally, The Strand has a range of early 1920 buildings set along a traditional 'ribbon retail' road. This development lacks a strong central focus and has few groups of retail or entertainment activities to draw people to one location.

Both Council, Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa and others are working to promote Whakatāne as a district with a unique cultural character. To do this, our town needs to have a central space to focus activities and development opportunities. Our town also needs to embrace what is distinct and unique to Whakatāne, in particular our cultural history and local heritage.

We are fortunate that our town adjoins the Whakatāne River and enjoys uninterrupted views to the north of the awa, Moutohorā, Whakaari and the Whakatāne Heads. All of which iwi, hapū and the local community treasure.

Equally, the land (currently a car park) between The Strand and the river provides an opportunity to re-orientate our town to the riverfront promenade by creating a new town centre heart space. This space will connect to the existing riverfront, which adjoins the 8km Whakatāne River Greenway. Additionally, the riverfront between the town centre and the wharf will also be upgraded to support a strong cultural link between the two locations. This will support our marine-based economy and enhance the importance of the Kāinga development within town.

Despite our district and town having a wide range of parks and reserves for events, there is no event space able to hold boutique events in the centre of town. To encourage events in the town centre we need to provide high quality infrastructure to attract and promote activities throughout the year. This would help to create a sense of vibrancy and a 'buzz', as well as support existing retailers and businesses.

A stronger night time / weekend economy could foster and support an 'eat street' and local weekend market. Providing a space for people to use within our town centre will attract more people, support existing businesses and help to grow others.

Providing a central place that is versatile enough to be used daily by locals, yet large enough to entice larger event opportunities is seen as an important tool to grow our domestic tourism economy.

## Opportunities

The town centre and riverfront promenade provides our community with opportunities to:

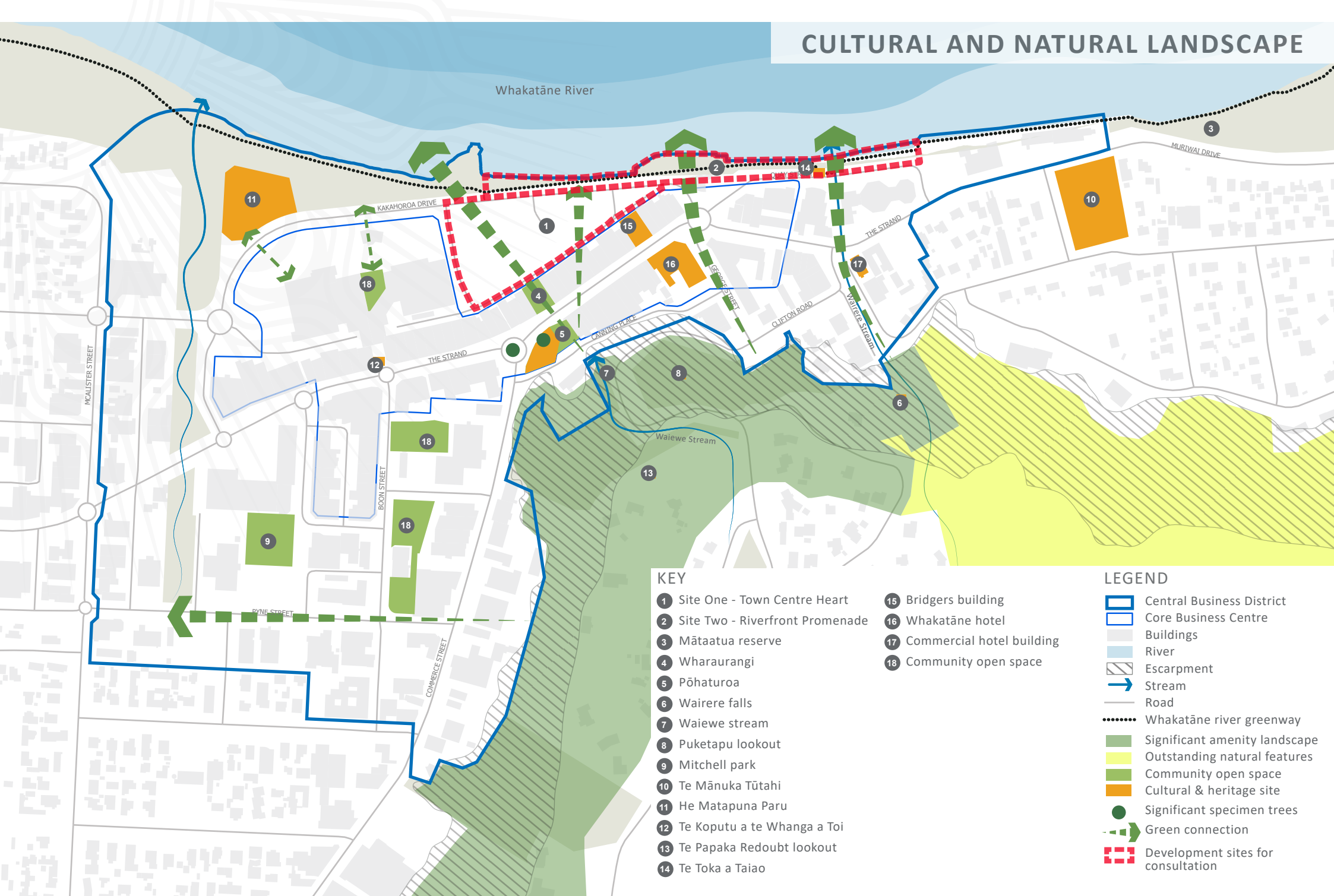
- Integrate our community through our local culture and history
- Create a new town centre heart, that provides a central focus within a traditional linear retail street (The Strand)
- Increase the number of people that use this area, by promoting more activities and attractions
- Draw people into town from along the Whakatāne River Greenway, through an interesting space that connects to The Strand.

### Kōrero Mai Consultation questions

What defines the unique culture of Whakatāne for you?

What would you like to see in the town centre and riverfront area that reflects this unique culture?

# CULTURAL AND NATURAL LANDSCAPE



## KEY

- 1 Site One - Town Centre Heart
- 2 Site Two - Riverfront Promenade
- 3 Mātaatua reserve
- 4 Wharaurangi
- 5 Pōhaturoa
- 6 Wairere falls
- 7 Waiewe stream
- 8 Puketapu lookout
- 9 Mitchell park
- 10 Te Mānuka Tūtahi
- 11 He Matapuna Paru
- 12 Te Koputu a te Whanga a Toi
- 13 Te Papaka Redoubt lookout
- 14 Te Toka a Taiao

- 15 Bridgers building
- 16 Whakatāne hotel
- 17 Commercial hotel building
- 18 Community open space

## LEGEND

- Central Business District
- Core Business Centre
- Buildings
- River
- Escarpment
- Stream
- Road
- Whakatāne river greenway
- Significant amenity landscape
- Outstanding natural features
- Community open space
- Cultural & heritage site
- Significant specimen trees
- Green connection
- Development sites for consultation

GUIDING OUR TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

# Connecting with our natural environment

*E hono ana ki te taiao*



## OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES



Natural  
influence



Cultural  
connection



Relationship  
to river

### Discussion

Council is working to provide a range of public reserves and spaces that enhance our natural character, reflect locally distinct community values and promote a range of activities. Our town centre civic spaces and streetscapes are vital, as they help to establish connections and linkages for our community to move through, visit and congregate.

The Whakatāne River Greenway connects our CBD with a series of walkways and reserves from our awa to the escarpment. The Town Centre and Riverfront Promenade are uniquely positioned to provide a vital connection along the Whakatāne River Greenway through Wharaurangi to Pōhaturoa on The Strand.

#### Considerations to integrate into our town centre and riverfront development

- Strong physical connections between buildings, community space and our natural environment
- A celebration of our rich cultural and historical heritage to inform and educate our community and visitors
- Protect and promote locally distinct ecological habitats to encourage sustainable healthy environments and wāhi tapu sites
- Eco-friendly, green and sustainable initiatives are inherent within public and private developments
- Flexible, well-designed active spaces that encourage our community to want to come into town.

## Issues

Council and Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa recognise that our communities place great importance on the ability to access our natural environment through the wide range of public open spaces. Our town centre is adjacent the Whakatāne River Greenway, which is approximately 8km long and connects Te Haehaenga Reserve at the Whakatāne Heads to Awatapu at the south of the town. This walkway is highly prized by our community for the connection between our town and our natural environment.

Despite a strong network of open spaces and numerous Wāhi tapu and culturally significant sites, there's disconnect within our town centre. There is no clear way to move from The Strand to the riverfront, due to the dominance of roads, parking and paved surfaces. Providing greener interactive corridors through our town will help connect places of interest.

Within the existing town centre there is little, to no, play space. Many communities are creating places for young and old to interact through informal play spaces. Often these are interactive and link to the natural and cultural environment. For example, our town could reaffirm Māori cultural and spiritual practices within Pōhaturoa, recognise the importance of water to our community and enable active play space within our town.

From the stopbank, the view is dominated by the Whakatāne River, the Whakatāne Heads, the escarpment, historic pā sites, Moutohorā and Whakaari. While this view is highly prized, it is almost non-existent in and around town due to the height of the stopbank. An option to raise the land level within the Town Centre Heart would mean we could enjoy this view and connect with the natural environment.

## Opportunities

The Town centre and Riverfront Promenade development provides our community with the opportunity to:

- Improve and enhance the connection to ecological areas adjoining our town by creating focal points, such as from the rivers edge into and through town
- Integrate cultural and wāhi tapu sites within new community spaces, creating key cultural connections with our river
- Promote local vegetation within greenspace planting to enhance local biodiversity
- Create a space where the view of our natural environment is prominent.

**How would you like to connect with our cultural and natural environments in town? (e.g. Access to the river, views of the river, having family friendly green spaces to relax, active areas) Other Ideas?**

**Kōrero Mai**  
*Consultation questions*



# Way finding and connecting within our town

*Ngā haerenga i te tāone*

*(mā runga waka, mā raro)*



## OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES



*Vibrant for  
longer*



*Movement  
and access*



*Relationship  
to river*



*Resilience  
and safety*

## Discussion

Historically provincial town centres, such as Whakatāne, were service hubs for the rural economy. The focus was on ensuring people could get in and out of town quickly and efficiently, with access priority being for vehicles. However, our CBD is continuing to grow and more pressure is put on Council to promote and incentivise a range of transport options, pedestrian and cycle friendly links and promote sustainable transport within and around town.

The town centre and riverfront promenade projects cover prime real estate land currently used for the storage of vehicles. An opportunity now exists to consider how we repurpose this land in the future to generate more economic value within our town.

### Considerations to integrate into our town centre and riverfront development

- Design options to create slow speed vehicle zones to generate free-flowing pedestrian movements, particularly along Kākahoroa Drive and parts of the CBD
- Pedestrian and cycle-friendly links connect Kākahoroa Drive, The Strand and places of interest along our river and up the escarpment
- A range of parking choices are promoted to meet retail, visitor and day parking needs within the wider CBD.

## Issues

Through both the Whakatāne CBD Parking Strategy (2007) and the Town Centre Vision (2008) consultation, community feedback was received promoting the use of Kākahoroa Drive carpark as a future growth opportunity. Council and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa are considering how we can better use this area to enhance our existing retail and business community. This is likely to result in a change to how we have used this community land in the past, and changes to car parking due to future growth are anticipated.

Land in and around our town centre is restricted due to the location of the escarpment, the river, the traditional ribbon nature of The Strand and competition between pedestrian and vehicle needs. Council is working locally to promote improved access and town centre infrastructure to encourage better walking, cycling, public transport and energy-efficient vehicle use. Currently, it can be difficult to navigate east through town. Kākahoroa Drive has become the preferred through road to Muriwai Road. To enable a stronger and more vibrant people-focused centre with better access to Whakatāne Heads, Canning Place and connecting roads could be upgraded.

Council recognises pedestrian friendly town centre designs need to consider parking desires for workers, shoppers and visitors. Frequently, all-day parking in Kākahoroa Drive carpark is at capacity. Council will work with the community to consider what our communities' year-long parking needs are and how these can be met. For example, better signage the Beach Street carpark could improve occupancy.

Council acknowledges Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa has long-held cultural aspirations to connect with the Whakatāne River. The Town Centre Heart and Riverfront Promenade projects provide an opportunity to enable physical access to the river, for both Māori and community wellbeing. Understanding where and how to provide river access at this early design stage will ensure it is included within the design brief.

## Opportunities

The town centre and riverfront promenade provides our community with the opportunity to:

- Provide physical access to the Whakatāne River to meet Māori cultural and wider community needs
- Promote better pedestrian connections into and through our CBD to The Strand and beyond
- Consider the preferred vehicle route to access Muriwai Drive to encourage a pedestrian-friendly river front connection
- Encourage a range of transport options and parking locations around town to reduce the demand to park directly outside retail or other destinations
- Develop a parking strategy to manage existing and future parking needs likely to result from changes to land use in our CBD

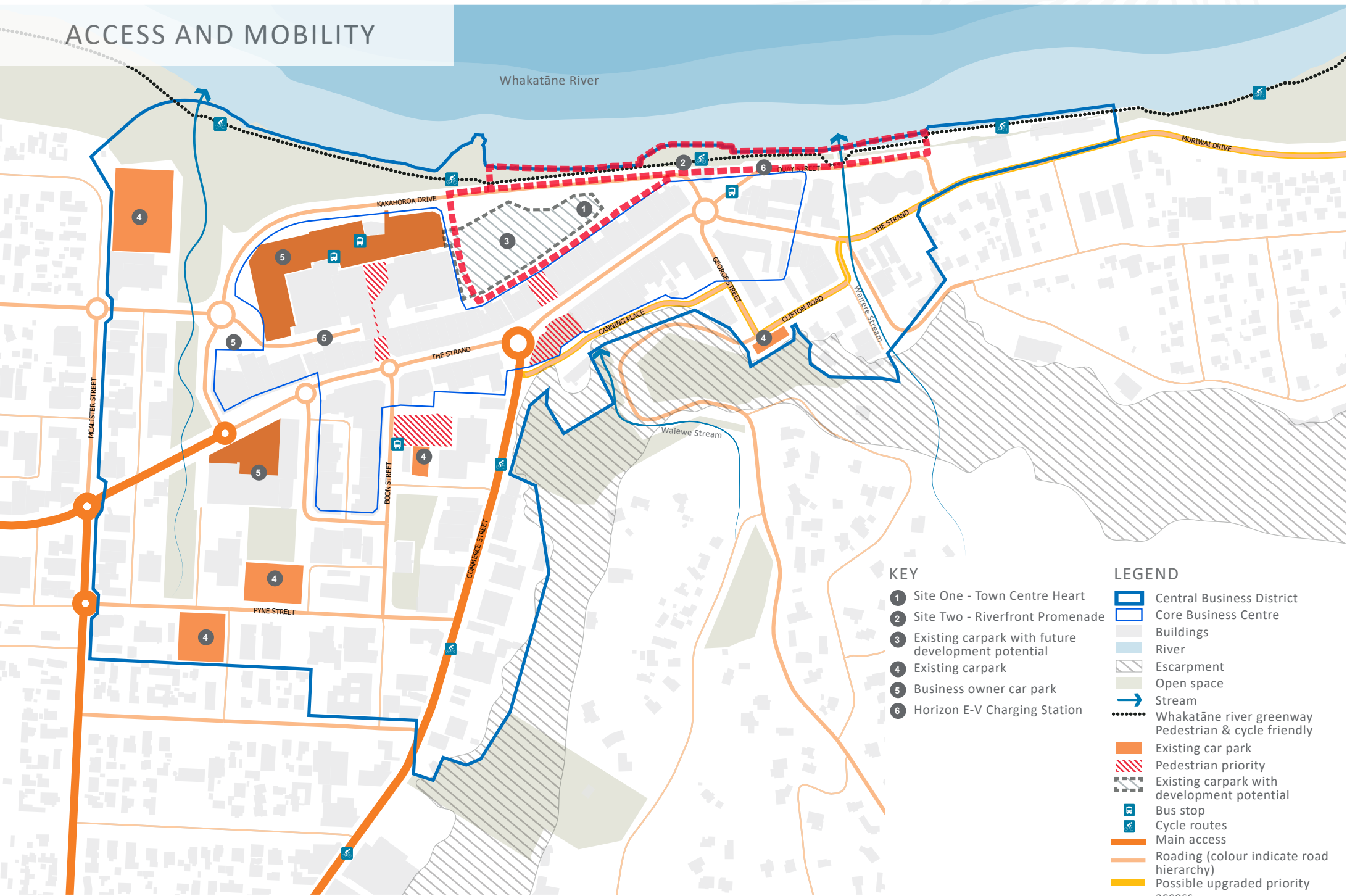
What are your views on promoting pedestrian-friendly spaces in the town centre? (e.g. Kākahoroa Drive, The Strand)

Would you consider using alternative transport options (other than your car) to access the CBD? Yes/No

If so, what facilities would you expect to be available?

**Kōrero Mai**  
*Consultation questions*

# ACCESS AND MOBILITY



## KEY

- 1 Site One - Town Centre Heart
- 2 Site Two - Riverfront Promenade
- 3 Existing carpark with future development potential
- 4 Existing carpark
- 5 Business owner car park
- 6 Horizon E-V Charging Station

## LEGEND

- Central Business District
- Core Business Centre
- Buildings
- River
- Escarpment
- Open space
- Stream
- Whakatāne river greenway Pedestrian & cycle friendly
- Existing car park
- Pedestrian priority
- Existing carpark with development potential
- Bus stop
- Cycle routes
- Main access
- Roading (colour indicate road hierarchy)
- Possible upgraded priority access
- Development sites for consultation



# Growing opportunities *E tipu ake ana ngā whaiwāhitanga*



## OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES



### *Discussion*

Vibrant, diverse and thriving town centres are often characterised as being easy to access, reflect a unique local flavour, attract visitors and investment, and have more people working locally in higher paid jobs.

The Town Centre Heart and Riverfront Promenade projects intend to create a high-quality public space adjoined by commercial, hospitality or residential developments that draw people into town and encourage future development across the wider CBD and district.

#### **Considerations to integrate into our town centre and riverfront development**

- Strong urban form to encourage clustering of new activities and developments, such as entertainment and dining precincts to attract more investment
- A range of commercial, residential and hospitality land uses are enabled to encourage more people to live, work and play in town to grow our local economy
- Create well-designed public spaces that integrate with our natural landscape, create excitement and draw wider investment into town to support district-wide growth.

## Issues

Council is in a strong position to support change within our CBD. Council owns the land and buildings at a number of strategic sites in town, including the former Wally Sutherland site, the Kākahoroa Carpark, the former Babinka restaurant site, the I-site building and buildings at the Commercial Wharf. Council (through the Harbour Board Fund) also owns approximately 130 properties which comprise much of the Whakatāne Town Centre. These are leased on a ground lease basis to building owners on perpetually renewing leases. There is a strong demand from building owners to have the option to purchase the land.

In response to this and to support the Te Ara Hou Programme, Council is developing a property strategy to better utilise its Harbour Board Land portfolio to drive regeneration and encourage investment. Council will engage separately on this property strategy. However, feedback given in relation to this consultation will feed into the development of the strategy.

## Opportunities

The Town Centre and Riverfront Promenade development provides our community with the opportunity to:

- Encourage intensification and mixed-use development within the existing core business centre and the wider CBD
- Orientate the core business centre to the riverfront, to promote activity that will support more tourism and night-time economies
- Enable Council to play an active part in the redevelopment of our CBD to promote wider stakeholder and private investment.

What type of commercial, entertainment and hospitality developments would you like to see in the town centre heart and wider CBD?

Would you like to see more residential development in the CBD?

**Kōrero Mai**  
*Consultation questions*



# A recap of our consultation questions

## *He whakarāpopototanga o ngā uiuinga*



P 14-15

### **GUIDING OUR TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT**

*Do our objectives and principles reflect what is important to you?  
Anything else?*

P 17-18

### **DISTINCTIVE LOCAL CULTURE**

*What defines the unique culture of Whakatāne for you?  
What would you like to see in the town centre and riverfront area that  
reflects this unique culture?*

P 20-21

### **CONNECTING WITH OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

*How would you like to connect with our cultural and natural environments in town?  
(e.g. Access to the river, views of the river, having family friendly green spaces to relax, active areas)  
Other ideas?*

P 22-24

### **WAY FINDING AND CONNECTING WITHIN OUR TOWN**

*What are your views on promoting pedestrian-friendly spaces in the town centre? (e.g. Kākahoroa Drive, The Strand)  
Would you consider using alternative transport options (other than your car) to access the CBD? Yes/No  
If so, what facilities would you expect to be available?*

P 25-26

### **GROWING OPPORTUNITIES**

*What type of commercial, entertainment and hospitality developments would you like to see in the town centre heart and wider CBD?  
Would you like to see more residential development in the CBD?*

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to this first stage of consultation. The analysis of the feedback received will be provided to those who have indicated they would like to receive the feedback results.

We will then work on concept designs and visuals that reflect the feedback we've received. These will support stage two of consultation. We look forward to welcoming you to contribute your perspectives and views then.

**If you want to learn more about the Whakatāne Town Centre Heart and Riverfront Promenade visit [whakatane.govt.nz/te-ara-hou](http://whakatane.govt.nz/te-ara-hou)**

SUPPORTED THROUGH



[whakatane.govt.nz/te-ara-hou](http://whakatane.govt.nz/te-ara-hou)

## Kōrero Mai *Let's Talk*

Tell us what you think  
about our Whakatāne Town  
Centre Heart and  
Riverfront Promenade

### How to korerō mai

Online: [koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz](http://koreromai.whakatane.govt.nz)

Email: [submissions@whakatane.govt.nz](mailto:submissions@whakatane.govt.nz)

Post: Whakatāne District Council,  
Private Bag 1002, Whakatāne 3158

Contact your elected members:  
[whakatane.govt.nz/elected-members](http://whakatane.govt.nz/elected-members)



### WE WILL KEEP YOU IN THE LOOP

Whether or not you choose to make a submission, we will keep you posted on progress on Whakatāne Town Centre Heart and Riverfront Promenade. Our website will continue to be updated with new information and we will also keep you up-to-date through social media and other local media channels.