



SmartGrowth Strategy

2023–2073

Statement of Proposal

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Introduction

1. SmartGrowth is a partnership between Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Tauranga City Council, tāngata whenua and Central Government.
2. SmartGrowth has developed a draft SmartGrowth Strategy which is a 50 year direction that considers how urban form, tāngata whenua values and aspirations, infrastructure, transport, community development and the environment need to be looked at together to achieve effective and sustainable response to growth.
3. The Strategy sets the vision and objectives for our sub-region's (the sub-region is the land area that Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council oversee) future development. It will be utilised by all SmartGrowth partners (Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Tauranga City Council, tāngata whenua and central government) to ensure we take a unified approach to growth.
4. The outcomes of the Strategy will be woven into the respective councils' Long-Term Plans 2024-27 and other key documents in the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.
5. The Strategy will incorporate the requirements for a Future Development Strategy (FDS) under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development. The FDS is a 30 year plan that identifies the housing and business land and infrastructure required to achieve the SmartGrowth Vision (Western Bay – a great place to live, learn, work and play) and Connected Centres settlement pattern, developing both 'up' through intensification (intensification occurs when an existing building, site or area within an existing urban area is developed or redeveloped at a higher density, than what currently exists., and 'out' through greenfields (greenfields land is land identified for future urban development that has not been previously developed)).
6. The 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.

7. An Implementation and Funding Plan will be developed once the Strategy is completed and will set out the details of priority actions over three years that are required to give effect to the Strategy, including assigning funding and delivery, roles and responsibilities, and timing.

8. The SmartGrowth Strategy objectives are as follows:

8.1. **Environmental**

- Achieve an integrated approach and accommodate growth within the limits set through Ngā Wai ki Mauao me Maketu which:
 - Recognises the importance of the waters (coastal and freshwater bodies) that flow to Mauao and Maketu and the significance of these two places to tāngata whenua; and
 - Recognises the linkages between the maunga (mountains), ngāhere (forests), awa (waterways), repo (wetlands), tāhuna (estuaries) and moana (harbours and ocean).
- Encourage sustainable development and adaptive planning.
- Respond and adapt to climate change through building resilience, supporting the transition to lower carbon and improving indigenous biodiversity.

8.2. **Cultural**

- Support tāngata whenua values and aspirations, in particular papakāinga development on Māori land.

8.3. **Social**

- Enable and shape an inclusive, safe, sustainable, efficient, and more vibrant urban form.
- Enable and support sufficient housing supply in existing and new urban areas to meet current and future needs, this includes a range of housing types, tenures and price points.

8.4. **Economic**

- Enable a sufficient supply of business land, support access to employment and foster a high-value, low carbon circular economy as the western Bay of Plenty grows.
- Improve measurable transport outcomes such as congestion levels, road safety, travel choice and private vehicle dependency, and environmental impacts (including CO₂).
- Ensure long-lasting economic, social, environmental, and cultural benefits and value for money from the agreed strategy.

9. The Strategy identifies six transformational shifts that will enable change to achieve the objectives:

8.1 **Homes for Everyone**

Targeted actions across all agencies strengthen the segments of the housing system that are facing the most significant challenges.

8.2 **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).

8.3 **Emissions Reduction through Connected Centres**

Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced through accessible Connected Centres.

8.4 **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.

8.5 **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.

8.6 **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.

10. The Strategy is underpinned by recognising that the health of te taiao (our environment) is critical to sustaining growth. The Strategy sets out the following key topic areas:

10.1. **Te Taiao – Our Environment**

A fundamental principle of the Strategy is that growth accommodation must be within the natural and physical limits set through Ngā Wai ki Mauao me Maketu.

10.2. **No Go areas and Go Carefully**

No-Go Areas are identified where there are critical environmental and cultural constraints to development and where development will need to be avoided. Areas with natural hazard susceptibility and other land constraints such as highly productive land have been identified. Growth is directed away from these areas unless impact and risk can be mitigated to acceptable levels.

10.3. **Tāngata Whenua**

Outcomes which improve social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing for tāngata whenua are:

- Te Whenua: Our people are enabled to occupy, develop and use multiple owned Māori Land and Treaty Settlement Land.
- Te Ngākau: Our marae communities are connected to social and health services, education and sporting facilities, and where practical, public transport.
- Te Taiao: The health and wellbeing of the natural environment is not compromised further as a result of land use and development.

- Nga Wahi Tupuna: Our sites and areas of cultural significance are cared for and protected from further degradation and loss.
- Te Manawaroa: Our communities and cultural infrastructure are resilient to a changing climate.

10.4. **Climate Resilience**

To develop resilient communities, reduced exposure and vulnerability to climate hazards, cutting back greenhouse gas emissions and conserving, enhancing and restoring local ecosystems are all given the highest priorities in infrastructure, urban development, housing, and transport.

10.5. **Rural**

Rural land, including coastal environments and waterways provide important habitats for indigenous biodiversity, carbon storage (through trees and soil) to reduce the impacts of climate change. The rural environment contributes to our overall identity. It provides large areas of open space important for wellbeing. Minimising the loss of productive land through land fragmentation and urban expansion are critically important.

10.6. **Urban Form**

The 'Connected Centres' settlement pattern is designed to accommodate approximately 200,000 additional people, 40,000 new jobs, and 95,000 new homes over the next 50 years. Large infrastructure investment, especially in the transport system, will support this urban form. Increasing housing density over time in existing urban areas (30-50 dwellings per hectare), and new growth areas (30 dwellings per hectare) will maximise development around centres, transport hubs, and corridors, creating '15-minute neighbourhoods' where residents can access local opportunities by active modes, and sub-regional opportunities within 30-45 minutes.

10.7. **Housing**

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 supply of new land for housing is severely constrained by natural and physical resource limits, and infrastructure servicing and

funding challenges. The housing system has also supplied a limited range of housing options of affordability, typology, and tenure to meet changing needs. Māori are disproportionately affected by the underperformance of the housing system. Development of whenua Māori faces major challenges including restrictive planning rules, lack of infrastructure provision and funding, and restrictive financing of housing.

10.8. Transport

The Transport System Plan (TSP) takes the Connected Centres settlement pattern and focuses on the first 30 years of transport investment required to make it happen. Frequent and reliable public transport and safe, connected cycle and walking facilities need to be provided within and between centres. Travel behaviour changes need to be promoted to reduce emissions and improve health and wellbeing. Reduced congestion and an efficient freight network will support movement to the Port of Tauranga and contribute to local and wider economic wellbeing.

10.9. Three Waters and Other Infrastructure

Integrated and sustainable three waters infrastructure is required to ensure the long-term prosperity of the sub-region. Water Services Reform will result in the regional delivery of three waters from October 2025 onward. Other physical infrastructure and utilities, such as telecommunications, electricity, and gas services are essential for communities, enable business and underpin the provision of public services. The Strategy provides the foundation for infrastructure planning and delivery.

10.10. Social Infrastructure and Wellbeing

Strong, healthy, and vibrant communities require social infrastructure that is accessible and meets the needs of the community. A network approach provides a balance between locality, accessibility, and economies of scale. The two different levels of provision ('sub-region/citywide' and 'local') recognise the Connected Centres urban form and supporting transport infrastructure and focuses investment in areas that people will be able to access most easily.

10.11. **Economic Wellbeing**

The Port of Tauranga is New Zealand's largest port and has helped underpin the region's economy, providing a critical link in the upper North Island and national supply chain. Unaffordable housing, transport congestion and a shortage of industrial land are challenges for economic wellbeing. Low productivity due to low skill/low wage economy is a weakness and labour shortages are expected to increase over time with an aging population.

The sub-region's economic development strategy aims to develop a sustainable economy that delivers economic wellbeing through higher incomes to families and whanau.

Reasons for developing the draft Strategy

11. The SmartGrowth Strategy 2023 builds off the 2013 SmartGrowth Strategy and the work undertaken on the Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI). The SmartGrowth Strategy 2023 aims to ensure that growth happens in an effective way, and that proactively plan for and manage growth.
12. It is estimated that 400,000 more people will be living in our sub-region over the next 50 plus years this will require new homes, transport linkages, infrastructure and community facilities. It is essential that we start planning now to manage the impact this growth has on our environment, climate change, housing, and infrastructure.
13. Planning needs to be done in a way that incorporates and supports tāngata whenua values and aspirations, delivers on the Government's urban growth expectations, and builds on our existing sub-regional vision and outcomes as informed by the community.
14. The western Bay of Plenty sub-region has been significantly affected by the national housing crisis, with Tauranga City having some of the worst housing affordability in the country. There are significant financial pressures on those

who are priced out of the housing market and are under-served by the wider housing system.

15. The sub-region is one of the only areas in the country to have an identified housing and business land 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.
16. The existing infrastructure funding model is not fit for purpose, and this is particularly so for growth areas like ours, with a legacy of uncertainty and underinvestment.
17. Accommodating growth is a major and ongoing challenge given the constrained and sensitive environment, located alongside the harbour, estuaries, the coast and areas of highly productive horticultural land, and natural hazards. The resource management system is not fit for purpose, adding substantial uncertainty, cost and delay to planning and development.
18. The need to address this through a joined-up approach by central and local government is urgent given the environmental, social, and economic cost of land and infrastructure not keeping pace with growth.

Analysis of Options

19. While there is uncertainty as to when, how and at what rate the sub-region could reach a population of 400,000, the Strategy provides for a settlement pattern that could accommodate this population size.
20. The growth scenario is derived from Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI) which has selected 'Connected Centres' as the best approach for managing the sub-regions growth.
21. As part of the development of UFTI, spatial scenarios were considered and tested against a number of criteria. The preferred spatial scenario was a combination of "Connected Urban Villages" and "Two Urban Centres".

22. The combination of these two formed “Connected Centres” which is the scenario that underpins the Spatial Plan and the FDS.

23. You can read more about the SmartGrowth Strategy and its development at: <https://www.smartgrowthbop.org.nz>

Have your say

24. We need your feedback on the draft SmartGrowth Strategy by 5pm Friday 20 October 2023. You can do this by:

- **Wānanga ipurangi (online)** – head to our website and provide feedback. You can choose what topics are of interest to you. Find it all at www.smartgrowthbop.org.nz/smartgrowth-strategy-2023
- **Pepa mārō (hard copy)** – printed feedback forms are available at all council libraries and service centres – Bay of Plenty Regional, Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District councils.

25. There is also the opportunity to speak to your feedback with the hearings panel. Please indicate in your feedback if you would like to do so, or by emailing the address provided below:

- **Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face)**
 - Date: 4-6 December 2023
 - Venue: Western Bay of Plenty District Council chambers
 - Email haveyoursay@westernbay.govt.nz to register your interest.

Review Timeframes

Feedback closes	5pm 20 October 2023
Hearing	4, 5 and 6 December 2023
Consideration of feedback received and decisions	1 st quarter 2024
SmartGrowth adopts final SmartGrowth Strategy	1 st quarter 2024

