WAIRARIKI
BAY OF PLENTY

AT A GLANCE
Our focus in the Bay of Plenty is to help create a safer, more resilient transport system. In urban centres we will work with partners to ensure that development, infrastructure and transport options meet the different needs of our local communities and support delivery of the step changes.

KEY

TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE
Sea level rise and extreme weather will impact the region.

SUPPORT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Bay of Plenty has some communities with high levels of deprivation and unemployment. Access to education, healthcare and employment must improve, particularly in the east and south of the region, to deliver better social and economic outcomes.

SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMs
Bay of Plenty has a relatively poor safety record with issues around speeding, alcohol, drug impairment, people not wearing seat belts and run-off road crashes.

IMPROVE URBAN FORM
The population of the western Bay of Plenty sub-region (Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty) is projected to grow from 190,000 to 260,000 over the next 50 years, requiring 51,000 new homes. 80% of this growth is expected in Tauranga city. Rotorua is expected to receive moderate levels of growth over the coming decade.

TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY
The Tauranga urban area is one of the fastest growing urban centres in New Zealand. Nearly 90% of journeys to work in Tauranga and Rotorua are taken by private vehicle.
BAY OF PLENTY TODAY
THE BAY OF PLENTY’S ECONOMY IS LARGELY BASED ON EXPORT INDUSTRIES INCLUDING TOURISM, HORTICULTURE AND FORESTRY.

The Port of Tauranga is a significant contributor to New Zealand’s economy, handling 25% of the country’s imports and exports.19 Rail freight movements to and from the Port of Tauranga reduce the number of heavy vehicles travelling through the urban area, and improving safety and emission outcomes. However, increasing numbers of trains moving through at-grade rail crossings contributes to delays and congestion on the Tauranga road network.

The Bay of Plenty’s population grew by 40,758 or 15.2% between 2013-18, the second highest percentage rate in the country,17 partially due to Auckland’s growth. Tauranga is home to almost half that population.

Tauranga also has one of the highest rates of private vehicle use among New Zealand cities. This has been shaped by current neighbourhood layout and travel to one of its three main employment hubs. This reliance on private vehicles also impacts on the high carbon emissions in the city.

The Bay of Plenty is a surge region, identified by the government as needing investment to support regional economic development. While the western Bay of Plenty is one of the fastest growing areas of New Zealand, other parts of the region are falling behind. In the centre of the region, Rotorua, Whakatane and Ōpōtiki are beginning to experience reasonable population and economic growth after a flat period in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

By contrast, outside of the main towns, the eastern and southern areas of the region have not experienced the same growth. These areas are relatively sparsely populated, face ongoing challenges with static and declining populations, and are also experiencing issues associated with high unemployment and low incomes. There are particularly high levels of deprivation in parts of the Whakatane, Ōpōtiki and Kawerau districts.43

There are a number of growth management processes underway in the region such as SmartGrowth (Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty), Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI), Rotorua Connect, Rotorua Spatial Plan and Eastern Bay of Plenty Beyond Today.

Road safety remains an issue in the region, particularly along its key state highway routes and within urban areas.
BAY OF PLENTY TOMORROW

The western Bay of Plenty is one of the fastest growing areas in New Zealand and this growth is set to continue for the next 30 years. The challenge is to ensure urban development, transport infrastructure and services meet the needs of our local communities. Future freight growth, including modal mix and how goods are moved to and from the port need to be considered to ensure that Tauranga’s transport system can appropriately provide for the needs of all users.

The development, growth pressures and opportunities across the region differ. Medium to high population growth is projected across the western Bay of Plenty and Rotorua. Lower population growth is forecast in the eastern and southern Bay of Plenty. However, overall the population is predicted to increase by 180,000 by 2043.1 This will increase the use of the transport network for both people and freight, especially on road networks such as SH29.

There is a challenge to fund new infrastructure and services to keep pace with the growth in Tauranga. The significant number of people living on fixed incomes will put pressure on all of the Bay of Plenty’s councils’ ability to maintain and fund new infrastructure. Rural communities in the east and south are also looking for improved connections to urban areas for access to health, employment opportunities, and social services.

Coastal erosion, sea level rise, flooding and storms are predicted to intensify over the next 30 years, resulting in an increased risk to the road and rail network. This adds to the existing tsunami risk and resilience issues.

Emerging technologies such as on-demand shuttles, could provide a shared transport option to help people get around in the eastern and southern Bay of Plenty. This will improve access to services in Tauranga and Rotorua. Improved access to high-quality data and information will help us better manage the existing transport system and get the most out of it.

Waka Kotahi has jointly established the Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI), in a partnership with Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council and tangata whenua. Together, we have committed to developing a refreshed, coordinated and aligned approach to the future urban form and transport needs for the western Bay of Plenty sub-region over the next 50 years. The key challenges UFTI aims to address are:

- the lack of housing supply, suitable housing, transport choice, and a high dependency on private vehicles restricts access to social and economic opportunities and is leading to poor social and environmental outcomes
- the harbour geography and dispersed land-use pattern (places of employment, education, and recreational locations), and increasing traffic volumes negatively impacts on the safe and efficient movement of people and goods
- the ability to access community facilities, and infrastructure levels of service are not aligned with community needs and expectations and are impeding the ability of people to fully enjoy the Bay lifestyle.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Tauranga, and to a lesser extent Rotorua, risk an increased dependence on private vehicles and carbon emissions if they don’t address existing growth patterns of low-density housing and development around the city’s edge.
- Development in Rotorua needs to consider both its population and visitor growth and ensure there is support for existing communities to live, play and access essential services. Rotorua’s role as a key cycling destination should be supported through safe and convenient networks for walking and cycling.
- Maintaining safe and reliable connections to the Port of Tauranga is critical to supporting both the regional and national economies.
- Land use and the land transport system need to cater for the high proportion (39%) of Tauranga’s population that is projected to be over 65 years by 2050.
- The East Cape area is at risk of disruption due to a combination of more severe weather events and unstable terrain. Managing resilience through the Waioeka Gorge and Waimana Gorge is important as it forms part of the primary connection between Gisborne and Bay of Plenty.
- A focus on safety is needed in the Tauranga, Rotorua and Whakatane urban areas, on SH2 between Tauranga and Waihi, on SH29 and on high-risk rural roads.
- Regional economic growth, particularly in the south and east of the region, can be supported by improved access to employment and essential services for remote communities and access to visitor destinations.
FOCUS OF EFFORT: 2018-21

WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY SUB-REGION
Completion of the UFTI work programme to address the key challenges facing the sub-region and help deliver an integrated, strategic approach for the development of the western Bay of Plenty’s urban form and transport system. This collaborative land-use and transport planning work along with planning for the future growth area at Tauriko, the Te Papa peninsula and the existing Tauranga urban area are examples of the development of a more balanced transport system.

ROTORUA
• Complete Rotorua CyWay urban cycling programme.

EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY
• The Motu Cycle Trail is looking to extend through Whakatāne, providing further tourism and safety opportunities.

Safety improvements are continuing in the Rotorua SH30 eastern corridor between Sala Street and Iles Road. Further examples include SH33 Paengaroa to Te Ngae Junction and SH5 Tarukenga to Ngongotaha.

In early 2020, the government’s NZ Upgrade Programme was announced, along with a regional programme which included funding for several state highway projects in Tauranga and Rotorua to support urban growth and improve safety outcomes.

LEGEND
Safety project
Walking and cycling project
Public transport project
Network
Port
Key routes
Project delivered
Project underway
Project in pipeline

This map shows all projects underway during the period.
**IMPROVE URBAN FORM (HIGH)**

**TAURANGA**

We will support a well-integrated and well-designed land use and transport system to enhance the living standards of Tauranga by:

- continuing to support and contribute to the development of UFTI
- supporting development of the Te Papa Spatial Framework
- planning for the connection between Tauriko to the central business district by providing transport options between the two key anchor employment centres, whilst ensuring that there remains good access to the port.
- supporting initiatives that increase the number of residents living within the existing urban area and delivering greater transport choice
- influencing a different approach to connecting Tauriko to central business district by providing transport options between the two key employment centres, ensuring that there remains good access to the port
- optimising the current transport system first.

**ROTORUA**

We recognise the potential for growth in and around Rotorua to support overall living standards, the delivery of safer systems, the effects of climate change and an increased share of travel by public transport, walking and cycling.

Across the region we will engage in planning processes to ensure that significant new developments:

- enhance existing communities, making them a better place to work, live and play
- support an increase in active modes, including trips by foot, bike and e-scooter etc
- reduce the need to travel long distances to access employment and services
- result in lower emissions per capita
- maintain or improve the safety and efficiency of the transport system.

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**TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY (HIGH)**

Projected population growth in Bay of Plenty will increase travel demand on the region’s networks and provides opportunities to support increased use of public transport, walking and cycling. Our focus will be on:

- supporting the development and implementation of a Regional Mode Shift Plan

**TAURANGA**

- continuing to support UFTI to deliver land-use patterns that enable increased use of public transport, walking and cycling
- encouraging the Western Bay sub-region councils to take a more active and integrated approach to managing land-use, public transport fare policy and car-parking to support increased use of public transport, walking and cycling
- investigating solutions that provide more transport options for people and work to reduce travel in single occupant private vehicles
- working with Tauranga City Council to encourage actively manage car-parking in the city centre, city fringe area and other key centres to increase uptake of public transport, walking and cycling for trips to these locations
- identifying opportunities for smaller projects, including optimising the current network, that can improve system outcomes

**ROTORUA**

- supporting improvements to walking and cycling networks with an emphasis on trips of 1 to 5km length and creating connected networks
- supporting public transport services that provide access to employment and essential services that are the more affordable transport choice.
TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE (HIGH)

We will continue to work to understand the opportunities to support climate change adaptation and mitigation.

ADAPTATION

We will focus on:

- engaging in local planning processes to avoid infrastructure and development in areas at increased risk of natural hazards and effects of climate change
- enabling continuous improvement in network resilience through maintenance and renewals, and ‘low cost/low risk’ investments
- enabling quick recovery following disruption to the land transport system
- working with local authorities to plan for long-term retreat from highly affected areas.

MITIGATION

We will focus on:

- engaging in local planning processes to ensure urban form and transport planning supports reductions in emissions, private vehicle travel and average trip length
- identifying low-carbon transport options, infrastructure and services in major urban areas to support shift from private vehicles to low-emission options
- ensuring network design and operations makes the best use of existing systems to manage demand and reduce emissions by prioritising the movement of public transport and low-emission options, and actively managing speed, urban freight and congestion.

SUPPORT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (HIGH)

Bay of Plenty is a priority for regional development support, particularly in the south and east. To support regional growth, enable improved access to education, employment and visitor destinations, and to help raise standards of living we will:

- continue to support improvements in social and economic outcomes in the south and east of the region, particularly improving access to employment and essential services for remote communities and supporting economic development and access to visitor destinations
- continue to support the movement of domestic and international visitors across the region, particularly land-based connections from Rotorua to Eastern Bay, Waikato and Auckland, and between Taupo and areas further south and to the east.

SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS (MEDIUM)

SAFETY

Support implementation of the Road to Zero Safety Strategy for New Zealand and associated Action Plan (2020-22), and regional safety strategies, with a particular emphasis on:

- safety improvements that target run-off road crashes on high-risk rural roads (rural roads are roads with speed limits >80km/h)
- target road policing and behaviour change programmes with a focus on alcohol and drug impairment, and people not wearing seat belts
- speed management on high-risk rural roads.

HEALTH

Our approach to delivering better health outcomes, particularly the reduction of harmful emissions, will primarily be through initiatives that target other step changes, including improved urban form, increasing access to and use of public transport, walking and cycling, and efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

We will also continue to work to ensure that the noise impacts of transport are appropriately managed through a mix of land-use planning and mitigation works.