

Tauranga City Council Issues Overview



Tauranga City

DRAFT

**Tauranga
City Plan**

PART A

2. ISSUES OVERVIEW

Tauranga City is set in an environment characterised by a varied geography. From the open coast popular for living, recreation and tourism; to the cultural, recreational and economic base of the harbour, Port and City centre; and to the productive soils in the foothills of the Kaimai ranges, Tauranga City provides many opportunities for the future. The resources of the City and the historical use of those resources has resulted in a complex relationship between the built and natural environment. There is a challenge to ensure that the growth of the City into the future occurs in a sustainable manner. The management of resources through this Plan is a key part of this future. There are a number of key issues in that future that are addressed by this Plan.

The Natural Environment

In early 2009 less than 5 percent of the terrestrial area of the Tauranga Ecological District retains a cover of predominantly indigenous vegetation. This fact is a significant indicator of natural biodiversity loss. Other threats to the natural environment such as habitat fragmentation and isolation, and introduced pests and invasive species, contribute to issues for the future management of the natural environment.

The Plan addresses the protection and management of significant ecological areas through specific mechanisms identifying and protecting significant remaining areas, by the encouragement of general improvements in the environmental integrity of other areas of the environment, and by establishing acceptable levels for the development of reserves.

The Landscape

Tauranga City has an international reputation for its quality coastal environment and outstanding landscape features such as Mauao and the Tauranga Harbour. The potential impacts of the future growth of the City on the ability to retain and preserve these landscape values is a challenge for the Plan. Landscapes can be more or less important to different people for different reasons.

The Plan provides for the protection of significant landscapes through their identification based on objective criteria, and through consideration of the significance of the landscape by the people of Tauranga. Whilst providing for development to occur to meet the future needs of the community, the Plan provides for protection of areas of high landscape significance and seeks to ensure a balance between providing for development opportunity and the protection of these landscapes for the enjoyment of future generations.

Culture and Heritage

The concept of heritage encompasses natural, built and cultural features including historic buildings, archeological sites, places, trees, landforms and ancestral lands. Heritage provides a link to the past and provides spiritual and cultural identity. Tangata whenua history recounts the arrival Takitimu, Mataatua and Te Arawa waka in around the 12th century, from which early settlement was established around the harbour margins. European settlement commenced with missionaries in around 1820. From these times until present significant events and settlement has led to a legacy of places of significance within the City.

The Plan recognises and provides for the consideration of the significance of these places in the future growth of the City by their specific identification, and through detailing the significance of these places in the Plan.

Tangata Whenua

Only a fraction of original Maori landholdings in the City now remain in Maori ownership. Population forecasts suggest a trebling of the Maori population over the next forty years. Much of the land within Maori ownership is held in multiply owned titles, representing a challenge for the plan in providing integration with this tenure system to meet the needs of tangata whenua. Tangata whenua also have a cultural association with the environment that is to be reflected in the future treatment of resources in the City.

The Plan responds to this issue by making specific provision for papakainga development of multiply owned Maori titles, and by identifying settlement opportunities about existing marae. The Plan also seeks to maintain environmental and cultural values of tangata whenua through environmental, heritage and landscape protection measures.

Population Growth

Tauranga City has seen a rapid and sustained increase in population in the last few decades, commencing with a trebling of the population in the 1950's and continuing with Tauranga experiencing the highest percentage increase in growth of any Territory over the last decade. Estimates for population growth are for the continuation of this trend, leading to a significant increase in population in the City. In addition, future growth estimates also identify a likely change in household structure with a significant increase in single and two person households, and a significant increase in the proportion of the population over 80 years of age. In the context of the Plan this presents a significant challenge in accommodating future population growth in a manner that meets the guiding purpose and principles of the RMA.

The Plan seeks to address the implications of population growth and changing population structure through providing opportunities for a range of types of residential development. In addition, the Plan encourages the provision and support of services and employment opportunities in proximity to these residential environments. There is a key focus on ensuring that future development occurs in the most efficient and effective manner, through integration with transportation and infrastructure considerations. In addition, the Plan provides for a mixture of residential opportunities through accommodating more people close to key services and employment opportunities, and through providing for choice by a variety of locations for new Greenfield development areas.

Economic Development

In recent times the economy of the City has been expanding rapidly compared to most other areas of the country. Economic activity has included a significant focus on the development and construction industry, agriculture, the export sector largely through the Port of Tauranga, and a strong manufacturing base. Projections for the future show significant growth in most of these sectors, with the inclusion of leisure based economic activity and a comparative reduction in the role of the agricultural sector.

The Plan provides for the future growth of the economy and so well being of the community through preservation of the values that make Tauranga an attractive place to live and visit, providing for the future expansion of the Port, manufacturing and related infrastructure, providing for the enhancement of the main commercial centres, and ensuring provision is made for essential infrastructure such as broadband.

Transportation

The geography and existing built environment of the City provides a challenge to moving people in and around the City. A focus for the future is on the development of key transport corridors, and encouraging a modal shift that includes people having access to different

options for transportation. Linking transportation considerations with future land use opportunities is a key role of the Plan.

The Plan recognises these transportation considerations through ensuring that the function of key transport corridors is not impacted upon through unplanned impacts, and that long term land use is consistent with long term transportation aspirations. In addition, the Plan seeks to ensure that land use opportunities are integrated with transportation considerations through providing access for people to essential services through proximity to these services and ensuring the provision of integrated and linked transportation networks.

Through the above the Plan seeks to provide a statutory environment which will present an approach integrated with other authorities in the Western Bay of Plenty Sub-Region, to create an environment in which the core values that make the City a desirable place to live are retained.