



Our Places

Eastern Bay Spatial Plan

Engagement summary report

A summary of the feedback received from community engagement

Final version - May 2025

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Pūrongo whakarāpopoto whai wāhitanga Engagement summary report

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Ngā Ihirangi

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Whakarāpopoto

Summary

The *Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan (Our Places)* aims to guide sustainable growth and development across the region over the next 30 plus years. Once completed, this plan will set out where local communities want to head in the future and provide a roadmap, or spatial plan, for how to get there. It's about looking after our taonga, both people and places, now and into the future.

About this report

This report summarises feedback from public engagement, held from 14 October to 17 November 2024. It includes matters raised in all submissions received up until the end of 2024 and responses to the engagement feedback. The responses to feedback reflect guidance received from the Project Governance Group after hearing from submitters.

Engagement outcomes and next steps

The engagement period saw feedback being received from people across the sub-region. It involved a mix of workshops, drop-in sessions, online platforms, and written submissions, resulting in over 550 points of feedback. Participation included 69 written submissions (41 hard copy/email and 28 online), 125 comments through an online engagement tool, social media feedback, and over 300 attendees at in-person events. The consultation also achieved significant digital reach, with 71,000 social media impressions and 650,000 digital ad views. Submitters also had the opportunity to present to the Project Governance Group on 2 December 2024.

The feedback received provides valuable insights into community priorities and will help shape a robust, future-focused spatial plan for the Eastern Bay.

What did we hear?

Participants highlighted the need for upgrades to roads, bridges, water, and wastewater systems, alongside calls for climate-resilient infrastructure. Housing feedback focused on affordable housing, and balanced growth. Enabling the development of Māori land was also raised. There was a strong desire to preserve the small-town feel throughout the sub-region, enhance public amenities, and improve recreational facilities. Environmental concerns emphasised protecting natural areas and adopting sustainable development practices, while economic feedback stressed job creation, support for local businesses, commercial expansion and ensuring balanced growth.

There were three engagement scenarios:

Scenario 1, which focused on resilient greenfield areas, received the broadest support, due to its emphasis on structured growth and infrastructure improvements. Concerns were raised about the degree of change considered in Matatā in Scenario 1, balanced with the recognition of a need for housing options.

- Scenario 2, which was promoting un-serviced rural residential development, elicited mixed reactions, with concerns over inadequate infrastructure but desire for more rural lifestyle housing options being enabled.
- Scenario 3, which suggested growth outside the sub-region, was not favourably received because it would not lead to more local housing options. However, there was also some limited support because it would not change the character of existing communities.

Overall, there was broad support for developing a spatial plan, from specific comments: 30% of feedback was supportive, 35% offered constructive suggestions, 25% raised concerns, and 10% opposed certain aspects of the proposals.

How will the plan respond?

This summary offers a snapshot of some of the themes of feedback and how Our Places will address these. Fuller discussion and responses are illustrated throughout the report.

Infrastructure

What we heard:	Participants highlighted the need for upgrades to roads, bridges, water, and wastewater systems, alongside calls for climate-resilient infrastructure.
What we will do:	Identify pre-requisite infrastructure to address existing issues and future development and highlight where further investigations and strategic approaches to infrastructure are needed. Natural hazard risk assessments and mitigation plans will be required in some locations. Refer to Section 4.1 for further information.

Housing

What we heard:	Feedback focused on the need for housing to meet community needs, affordability, sustainable building practices, natural hazard and climate resilience, and to facilitate the development of Māori land.
What we will do:	Set out direction for structure plans or master plans to consider sustainable design outcomes. Discourage growth in at risk locations until natural hazard risk mitigation plans are established. Identify where there are iwi/hapū aspirations for their land and what would help achieve these. Refer to Section 4.2 and Section 6 for further information.

Community and lifestyle

What we heard:	There was a strong desire to preserve the small-town feel, enhance public amenities, and improve recreational facilities.
What we will do:	Identify placemaking and community revitalisation projects that recognise the value of community character and importance of community wellbeing. Develop design principles that will guide preparation of structure plans in relation to provision of community infrastructure and recreational facilities. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.

Environment

What we heard:	Participants emphasised protecting natural areas and culturally significant areas and protecting highly productive soils and sustainable water use practices.
What we will do:	<p>Avoid urban development of natural areas and culturally significant sites.</p> <p>Include design principles that will guide preparation of structure plans in relation to nature-based solutions and compliance with environmental regulations.</p> <p>Protect Highly Productive Land and only identify future urban development on that land where necessary.</p> <p>Refer to Section 4.4 for further information.</p>

Economic opportunities

What we heard:	Feedback stressed job creation, support for local businesses, and ensuring balanced growth. New areas for commercial and industrial land expansion were also identified by participants.
What we will do:	<p>Specify housing growth areas so new workers have a choice of housing when moving to the sub-region.</p> <p>An economic development strategy has been developed in parallel with the spatial plan. Our Places will identify industrial and commercial land in conjunction with the development focus areas from the economic development strategy.</p> <p>Refer to Section 4.5 for further information.</p>

Feedback on the three engagement scenarios

What we heard:	<p>Scenario 1: Resilient greenfield areas. Concerns were raised about the degree of change considered in Matatā in Scenario 1, balanced with recognition of a need for housing options.</p> <p>Scenario 2: Un-serviced rural residential focus. Concerns over inadequate infrastructure but desire for more rural lifestyle housing options being enabled.</p> <p>Scenario 3: Growth outside the sub-region. Was not favourably received because it would not lead to more local housing options. However, there was also some limited support because it would not change the character of existing communities.</p>
What we will do:	<p>Considering feedback provided on the engagement scenarios, a new scenario has been developed in response to the feedback and consideration of additional areas of land which were identified by submitters. An interim draft is included at Appendix 1. It may change as it is further defined and included into the spatial plan.</p> <p>The new scenario reflects consultation feedback on how different areas may or may not grow. Communities are highly engaged in the future of their local places, and future planning for changes at local places will involve further engagements.</p> <p>Refer to Section 5 and Appendix 1 – New Scenario for further information.</p>

Whakataki

1 Introduction

Once completed, Our Places will set out where local communities want to head and provide a roadmap, or spatial plan, for how to get there. It's about looking after our taonga, both people and places, now and into the future.

A spatial plan identifies locations for future development to help direct investment and infrastructure planning. It is not a statutory plan but does inform District Plans, transport strategies, asset management (infrastructure) plans and funding strategies. It also identifies areas where development is not appropriate due to natural hazard or a changing climate or where there are significant natural and cultural areas.

A spatial plan does not contain a detailed plan for new growth areas. This is done at a 'structure plan' level when a growth area is to be developed. However, a spatial plan can include direction for structure plans and highlighting matters to be addressed, such as water sensitive stormwater management.

The consultation phase for the project has concluded. From October 14, 2024 to November 17, 2024 when we asked communities across the Eastern Bay to tell us about: How can the region grow and develop, while making sure it remains a great place to live, work, play and visit?

There were two main questions we asked:

- 1 What are your thoughts about where to plan for 5,500 new houses and land for businesses by 2055?
- 2 What is most important that you want us to think about and plan for, to support your community and other communities across the Eastern Bay?

The project team are very grateful to the people and organisations that volunteered their time and ideas to contribute to this important project.

1.1 Report purpose

This report summarises the feedback received from the community engagement. This report was prepared by the Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan Technical Working Group. A draft version of the report provided an information update in advance of the Project Governance Group (PGG) receiving presentations on 2 December 2024 from members of the community on their submissions to the project. It also informs updates to the various councils participating in the project, with respect to the type and scale of feedback received and the responses to engagement. This final version of the report includes responses to the engagement feedback that reflects direction from the PGG after the 2 December 2024 meeting.

1.2 Content

The report content includes the following sections:

Engagement overview describes the methods and metrics employed in the consultation period. The result has been a broad reaching engagement with substantial amounts of

information from participants to inform the drafting of Our Places. The project has recorded a total of 550 individual points of feedback.

Levels of support is a barometer for the tone of comments received. Approximately 30% of the comments are supportive, 35% of the comments provide suggestions for improvements, 25% of the comments express concern and 10% of the comments are opposed to the proposed changes or certain aspects of the proposals.

Themes from feedback describes the main themes emerging from the consultation feedback. Top-level themes address infrastructure, housing, community and lifestyle, environment, and economic opportunities.

Feedback about scenarios outlines what was supported or not about the three possible future scenarios that were included in the consultation materials, being:

- Scenario 1: Resilient greenfield areas
- Scenario 2: Un-serviced rural residential focus
- Scenario 3: Growth outside the sub-region

Substantive topics are matters highlighted by submitters that the project will need to consider in depth as the spatial plan is developed. Topics encompass the settlement pattern (where and what types of development), resiliency of critical infrastructure and climate resilience.

1.3 Next steps

The next key step is to develop a spatial plan and associated implementation plan. This will be based on direction from the PGG on:

- Responses to the engagement feedback outlined in this report.
- Development principles to guide decisions around the feedback issues, including consideration of new development areas from submitters.
- Other technical information and policy directions.

The final spatial plan is intended to be adopted ahead of the 2025 Local Government elections.

Tirohanga ki te whai wāhitanga

2 Engagement overview

The project has recorded more than 550 individual points of feedback to date across all formats—digital, physical, and in-person.

A multi-channel communication approach to consultation resulted in a balanced large-scale reach by employing both digital and physical distribution. Face-to-face events were available for people who were interested in this.

The result was a broad reaching engagement, with substantial amounts of information from participants to inform the drafting of the spatial plan.

Workshops and drop-in sessions complemented broader digital, radio and print media efforts, ensuring a well-rounded approach to feedback collection and meant that people were aware that they had a chance to provide their feedback.

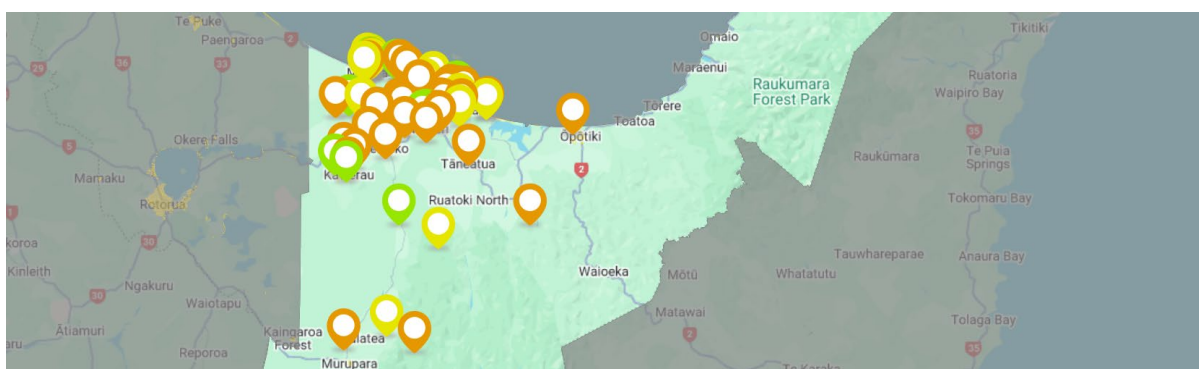


Figure 1 - Social pinpoint comments on question 1

2.1 Engagement metrics in summary

At the time of writing this report:

69 written submissions and 125 pinpoint comments were received:

- 41 written submissions received in hard copy or by email and 28 survey forms submitted online.
- The social pinpoint online engagement platform saw 125 comments on the maps.

More than 300 people attended in-person events as follows:

- Six facilitated workshops were held for stakeholders and students, with 145 people attending.
- “Business After 5” event via the Chamber of Commerce in the Whakatāne township, with 80 people attending.
- Eight public drop-in sessions with 100 people attending.

71,000 social media post impressions, 650,000 digital advertisement impressions were received:

- 43 posts on social media with 71,000 impressions.

- NZ Herald online – digital advertorial with 650,000 impressions and 1,050 link clicks to ‘have your say’.

Other methods ranged from radio advertisements to surveys located in different Council community facilities:

- Online information: project website and StoryMaps platform.
- DL rates insert at Whakatāne District Council and Kawerau District Council.
- Radio – 1XX, Bayrock, Tumeke, SunFM, iHeart radio.
- Beacon newspaper advertisement.
- Media release.
- Physical surveys - located at Whakatāne District Council customer service centres in Whakatāne and Murupara, Kawerau District Council customer service centres, Ōpōtiki District Council customer service centres, Libraries - Whakatāne, Edgecumbe, Ōhope, Whakatāne Aquatic Centre.



Figure 2 - Student workshop

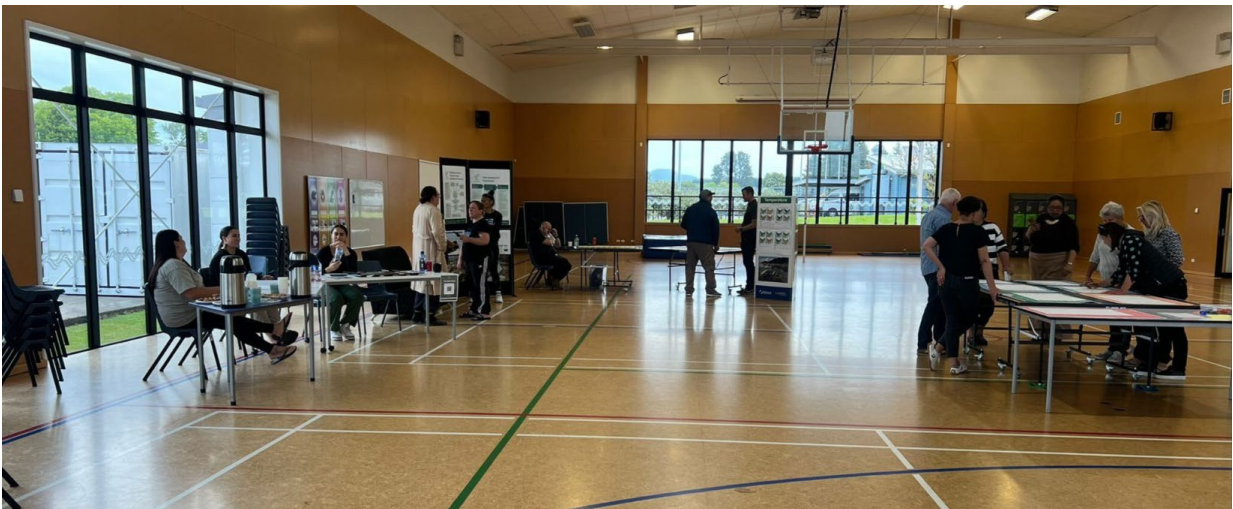


Figure 3 - Drop in session



Figure 4 – Facilitated stakeholder workshop

3 Levels of support

This section sets out the estimate of supportive tone comments received, providing an indicator of how well the consultation materials were received.

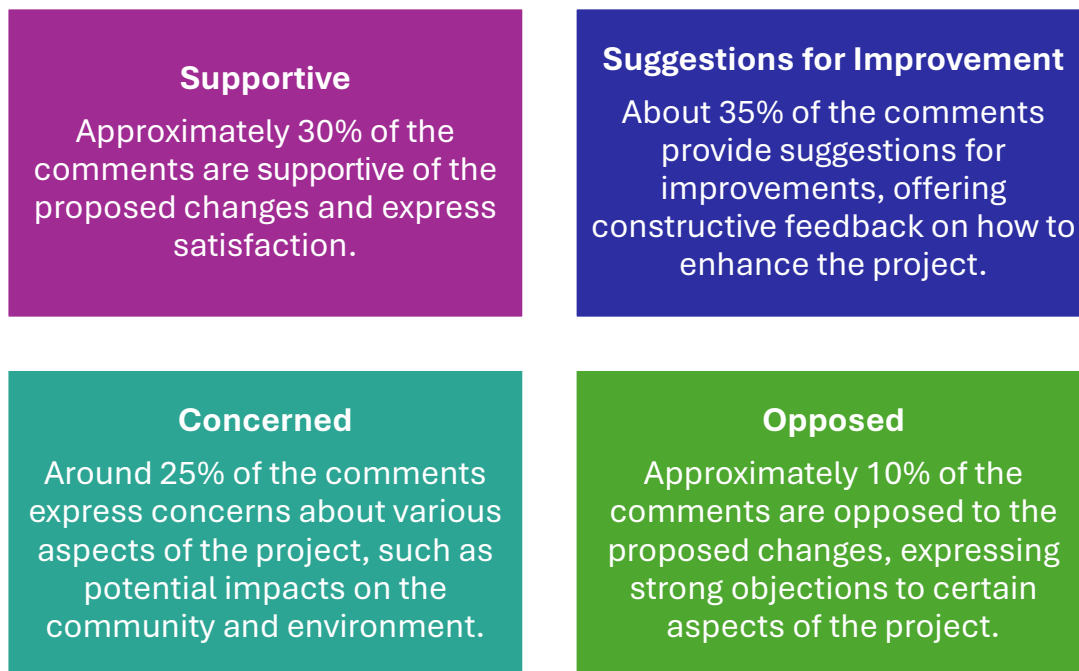


Figure 5 - Levels of support

The primary reasons for **support** in the consultation feedback include:

- 1 **Alignment with environmental and economic goals:** Respondents appreciated that Scenario 1 aligns with the goals of the spatial plan, such as promoting a healthy and healing environment, supporting a sustainable and diversified economy, and providing jobs and purpose for the community.
- 2 **Protection of valuable land:** Many respondents supported Scenario 1 because it emphasises the protection of valuable farming and horticultural land. They believe that regulating and protecting this land is crucial for maintaining the area's agricultural productivity and preventing inappropriate development.
- 3 **Maintaining community character:** Some respondents supported Scenario 1 because it helps maintain the small-town feel and community character of different areas. They believe that this scenario balances a need for development opportunities with the preservation of the sub-region's unique qualities.
- 4 **Sustainable growth:** Scenario 1 is seen as a practical solution that can support sustainable growth. Respondents appreciated that it considers the long-term impact of development on the environment and community, ensuring that growth is managed responsibly.

The main reasons for **opposition** in the consultation feedback include:

- 1 **Disrupting small-town character:** Many respondents expressed a desire to keep the community as it is, valuing the small-town feel and the current way of life. They were opposed to changes that could disrupt this character. This was particularly acute in Matatā.
- 2 **Concerns about infrastructure:** There were significant concerns about the adequacy of existing infrastructure to support new developments. Respondents highlighted issues with road congestion, particularly congestion at the Whakatāne bridge and the potential strain on water and wastewater systems.
- 3 **Cost to ratepayer:** Some respondents were worried about the financial impact of the proposed changes, particularly the potential increase in rates and the financial burden on current residents. They felt that councils should focus on working within their budget and improving existing amenities rather than expanding into new development areas.
- 4 **Environmental concerns:** There were also concerns about the environmental impact of new developments, particularly in areas prone to flooding or in relation to water allocation. Respondents emphasised the importance of listening to historical knowledge and avoiding mistakes that could lead to environmental degradation and natural hazard risks.
- 5 **Lack of support for existing residents:** Some feedback indicated that the proposed changes did not adequately consider the needs and preferences of current residents. Respondents felt that the councils should prioritise supporting existing communities and improving their quality of life before focusing on new developments.

Ngā ariā o ngā whakahoki kōrero

4 Themes from feedback

Across the 550+ points of feedback, including submissions, there were some recurring themes that illustrated topics of importance from the consultation.

Overall, feedback focused on what to consider in Our Places and how to implement it, such as through District Plans or Long-Term Plans. Both types of feedback will be carried forward to the relevant processes.

The themes are as follows:



Figure 6 - Themes and subthemes

4.1 Infrastructure theme

Overall, the feedback reflects a strong desire for well-maintained and efficient infrastructure that can support the community's needs and future development.

The feedback highlighted significant concerns and suggestions regarding the infrastructure in the area. Respondents emphasised the need for substantial improvements in road infrastructure to accommodate increasing traffic and ensure safety. Suggestions included the construction of new bridges, the addition of roundabouts, and enhancements to existing roads. The feedback highlighted that the current road conditions are inadequate to handle growing traffic, and there is a pressing need for upgrades to support future growth.

The capacity of three waters infrastructure was also raised as an issue, along with the overall resiliency of infrastructure in the face of climate driven hazards, with emphasis on renewable energy, and the protection of critical infrastructure.

Subtheme 1: Transport infrastructure that is safe, efficient, and sustainable

The feedback highlighted the need for significant improvements in road infrastructure and traffic management to enhance road safety and efficiency and to support the forecast population and economic growth. Respondents emphasised the importance of building new bridges, such as a second Whakatāne River bridge, to accommodate increasing traffic and provide alternative routes for commuters and travellers.

There were also calls for the addition of roundabouts at critical intersections, like Rewatu Road, to facilitate smoother traffic flow and reduce congestion. Additionally, some respondents suggested implementing speed control measures, such as speed bumps, to address issues of speeding in residential areas and near schools.

Respondents highlighted specific locations where there are vulnerabilities in the road network which could be impacted by extreme weather events, like Waioweka Bridge and Pekatahi Bridge.

Increased provision of alternative transport options such as safe cycle paths was also highlighted to encourage cycling as a mode of transport and reduce traffic congestion, along with improvement of public transport.

Response to Subtheme 1 – How the spatial plan will respond

- Identify priority transport infrastructure projects to address existing issues such as increasing congestion, safety, and the challenges posed by climate change. Topics to address include a second river crossing in Whakatāne township, and state highway resiliency.
- Identify improvements to active transport modes to help to reduce the demand and congestion on roads by providing people with options and choice for how they move around.
- Identify transport infrastructure projects that are pre-requisites for future urban growth areas, and which require further investigation.
- Work with NZ Transport Agency – Waka Kotahi (NZTA) to further investigate solutions to transport constraints and promote working collaboratively with all transport partners to advocate, plan and implement a high-quality, integrated, safe and efficient transport network.

Discussion

Resilience, safety, and capacity issues are all present or emerging and will require significant ongoing investment if the road network is to continue to perform to an acceptable standard, whilst adjusting to the challenges of climate change mitigation, adaption and a growing population and economy.

NZTA are committed to addressing resilience issues across their network, and work is identified in relation to resilience improvements for SH 2 in the National Land Transport Plan (NLTP) 2024-27. NZTA have recognised the importance of maintaining the transport network and have increased the funding allocated for maintenance in the NLTP 2024-27.

Moving people from using private vehicles to alternative modes (public transport, cycling, walking, micro-mobility) has become increasingly important, especially within our towns and connections between our communities.

The Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) (2024-2034) has policies around resilience and security. These include ensuring the resilience of our communities and the regional transport network is continuously improved by:

- Identifying, prioritising and addressing current network risks, vulnerabilities, critical lifelines and alternative options, and
- Ensuring the design of new transport infrastructure is resilient to low impact high probability, high impact low probability events, and the long-term effects of climate change.

The RLTP also identifies a lack of accessible, affordable, and efficient travel choices for people, goods and services. Improving safe and resilient multi-mode accessibility from existing and new residential areas to jobs, schools, services, and leisure facilities is a key RLTP policy and investment priority.

The RLTP sets out several proposed transport activities for the Eastern Bay of Plenty which include:

- Additional river crossing (Whakatāne River) – to prepare a business case to support growth components of the spatial plan.
- Transport System programme to support delivery of Our Places. This will be in the form of a programme business case and will identify new transport investments, projects and their expected timeframes for delivery, based on the expected growth patterns and locations.
- Whakatāne network-wide resilience.
- Ōpōtiki urban growth and resilient access improvements.
- Ōpōtiki low cost, low risk: local road improvements, walking and cycling improvements.
- Kawerau low cost, low risk: local road improvements, walking and cycling improvements.

The transport maintenance and renewals programmes of the three district councils provide the opportunity to optimise assets, where appropriate, and to support each council's environmental protection and climate change initiatives. Councils work closely with the NZTA on the future planning and investment of the transport system, including the continued monitoring of population growth and development demands.

Subtheme 2: Water and wastewater services that are modern, efficient, and which protect the public health and environment

Respondents emphasised the need for improvements in the water supply system to ensure a reliable and sustainable source of water for the growing population, particularly in Whakatāne and Matatā. There were also concerns about the adequacy of the existing wastewater treatment facilities in these areas, with calls for upgrades to handle increased demand and prevent environmental contamination. Increased accessibility to these services were also promoted in submissions, with a focus on reaching smaller villages and areas identified for future growth. In Matatā, the feedback indicated that the wastewater system has been a long-standing issue, with delays in implementing necessary improvements. In Whakatāne, respondents stressed the importance of planning for future water demand and ensuring that infrastructure can support new housing developments.

Response to Subtheme 2 – How the spatial plan will respond

- Undertake further technical investigations to better understand the overall feasibility of accommodating more homes in Matatā, in relation to the potential cost implications of a wastewater treatment plant.
- Identify three waters infrastructure projects that are necessary to support current communities or are precursors for future development.
- Identify investigations to increase asset condition and resilience of three waters infrastructure.
- Advocate that preparation of a Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) provides for growth as identified in the spatial plan.
- Identify the need for a strategic approach (versus only end of pipe solutions) to improve water quality, in particular catchment-based solutions that integrate diffuse and point source discharges.

Discussion

The functionality of water supply infrastructure and its resilience to natural hazard events and from operational failure are important factors for efficient water use. The need to ensure water services infrastructure is available to support growth will be a key priority in the draft spatial plan.

A qualitative assessment of stormwater, water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the sub-region has been undertaken, which has considered the infrastructure requirements to support growth. The assessment has been informed by known constraints as well as current infrastructure projects being undertaken by councils. The draft spatial plan will be informed by the assessment and the current Long Term Plan infrastructure investment decisions of the respective councils.

The preparation of a Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) (including water, wastewater and stormwater) is a legislative requirement for all councils and needs to be submitted to the Government by September 2025. This will either be a joint arrangement between councils or a stand-alone document by each district council. The WSDP will include a description of the current state of the network, including any issues, constraints or risks impacting on the delivery of water services, the financial workings, the infrastructure required for population growth, and the proposed model for delivering water services. It will seek to address challenges including:

- Natural hazards/events and climate change effects with low lying settlements and high ground water.
- Geographically disparate communities -most schemes service small populations.
- Potential future demand to service areas that are currently unserved.
- Funding and financing challenges and future affordability for ratepayers.

In relation to Matatā, the wastewater management system project is a top priority for Whakatāne District Council (WDC) to provide a safe and reliable wastewater system for Matatā that reduces public health and environmental risks. WDC has secured a 56 ha property for the project which will use approximately 2 ha for the treatment facility and around 15 ha for the irrigation of treated wastewater. The project will be designed to support the growth of Matatā and the treatment plant will feature a modular design, allowing for future expansion.

It is also recognised that Matatā is within the Tarawera River Catchment that has multiple diffuse and point source discharges that create water quality issues. While localised issues need to be addressed, there is also a need to understand the impacts of point source discharges within the context of the overall catchment. A Tarawera restoration strategy is currently being prepared which will inform strategic investment decisions. Catchment based solutions to improve water quality should be considered for both point source and diffuse discharges in other catchments. Refer to the response in Section 4.2, Subtheme 2 for further information.

Subtheme 3: Infrastructure resiliency to protect the community and ensure safety during natural disasters

The feedback highlighted significant concerns regarding the resiliency of infrastructure in the face of natural hazards and climate change. Respondents emphasised the importance of planning and upgrading infrastructure to withstand natural disasters such as floods, tsunamis, and earthquakes. Specific locations like Awakeri and Matatā were mentioned as areas prone to flooding, with calls for better flood management systems and the need to avoid repeating past mistakes.

Respondents also emphasised the importance of having adequate facilities to support the community during emergencies and improve the overall quality of life, and the promotion of more self-sufficient communities to reduce overall risk. Feedback also included recognising the role of critical infrastructure in enabling growth and the need for the protection of critical infrastructure from inappropriate development, along with support for local renewable energy generation to promote energy security.

Response to Subtheme 3: How will the spatial plan respond

- Develop risk assessments and risk mitigation strategies for communities on a priority basis (i.e. plans would first be developed for those communities at higher risk, or where there is intent to develop like Awakeri). Restrict new development in those communities until mitigation strategies are in place.
- Addressing flood risk management is critical to the feasibility of areas being considered for growth, such as Awakeri or Matatā, and an integrated catchment management approach to investigating these areas will be a pre-requisite activity to development.
- Identify key strategic infrastructure on the spatial plan maps. Protection of infrastructure networks from inappropriate development will continue to be appropriately managed through the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement and District Plans.
- Show the National Grid on maps, differentiating between the National Grid assets and electricity distribution network assets.
- Recognise the role of critical infrastructure and highlight the interdependencies between critical infrastructure and the flow-on impacts that outages can have on other sectors. This will include telecommunications and electricity services, and acknowledge the role they play in responding to, and recovering from, natural hazard events.
- Recognise that achieving a low carbon future for the Eastern Bay of Plenty will require investment in reliable renewable energy.

Discussion

Flooding is a known natural hazard risk and is a significant existing and future constraint in the sub-region. Many floodable areas are mapped and there is still more work to do to understand the extent of flooding in some areas. This work has informed the spatial plan which identifies areas where there is natural hazard susceptibility and other land constraints, and directs growth away from these areas unless it can be demonstrated that the issues can be managed with risk mitigated to acceptable levels. Decisions on flood risk management for existing, intensified or new urban areas must take a long-term management perspective, taking a precautionary approach to the risk and uncertainty of future weather events.

Climate change poses additional challenges for infrastructure management, including the need to adapt to more frequent extreme weather events and rising sea levels. Central to managing risks, hazards and resilience, is ensuring we have the right infrastructure in place, which is safe, supports community wellbeing and can respond to emerging risks such as climate change. By making sure investment is made up front with a short-medium- and long-term view in mind, means we will have an asset that supports communities for the next 20, 50 and 100 years.

An example of infrastructure resiliency work is the Whakatāne District Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan, which will develop over time to define risk areas (that are not already known) and put in place an adaptive planning framework to respond. This will also build on WDC's existing knowledge of where the vulnerable infrastructure is located and help define what needs to be considered, as decisions around land use (residential and business use) are made.

4.2 Housing theme

Overall, the feedback reflects a strong desire for balanced and thoughtful housing development that enhances the area's liveability

The feedback addresses the need for thoughtful and sustainable development in the area. Respondents emphasised the importance of planning new housing developments carefully to avoid overburdening existing infrastructure. There were calls for more housing developments to meet the growing population's needs, with a focus on sustainable and well-planned communities. This was balanced by concerns about retaining the existing character of local communities.

Subtheme 1: A desire for housing development to meet demand, that is affordable, caters for a diverse (and ageing) population, and provides choices like rural residential development

There is a strong demand for new housing developments to accommodate the growing population. Respondents emphasised the importance of planning these developments carefully to avoid overburdening existing infrastructure. They also highlighted the need for affordable housing options and the importance of integrating new housing projects within existing communities to maintain the character of the area.

A need for more retirement facilities to cater to the aging population in the area was identified. Respondents noted that there are currently only a few lifestyle options or care facilities available locally, which can force older residents to relocate to other centres (i.e., outside of the Eastern Bay) to meet their needs.

Some feedback highlighted a desire for more rural residential development to accommodate the growing population and provide diverse living options, it is thought that this could be done with sustainable design. Respondents emphasised the importance of planning these developments carefully to avoid overburdening existing infrastructure, avoid and manage reverse sensitivity to industries and agricultural/horticultural operations, and to maintain the rural character of the area.

Response to Subtheme 1: How the spatial plan will respond

- No additional areas of rural residential development will be identified in the spatial plan.
- Recognise the need for housing suitable for older people. Identify greenfield urban development areas, which provide opportunities for retirement villages.

Discussion

The provision of suitable areas for rural residential development is already achieved within the respective District Plans. No additional areas will be identified in the spatial plan. This approach is consistent with the development principles applied to identify the growth scenario (refer to Section 5 below for a list of the development principles). The first principle is to consider locations where there are existing settlements and infrastructure before contemplating new growth areas and infrastructure. This does not preclude rural residential development in the areas provided for in District Plans, but does clearly signal the spatial plan does not prioritise rural residential development (except for papakāinga on Māori land). It also aligns with national policy direction with respect to how Highly Productive Lands are to be used.

The need for housing suitable for older people, including retirement villages and smaller homes, is fully recognised. Our Places will identify this high-level need. Development of this type of housing is dependent on retirement village operators and other housing developers. In the past, pensioner housing has been developed by local councils. However, further development by councils is highly unlikely due to budgetary constraints. New retirement villages usually require around 5 ha of greenfield land for development. Due to land area constraints within and adjacent to existing townships, it is likely that new retirement villages would be located in greenfield areas. Driving to specialist amenities and services (e.g. medical centres) is a necessity in provincial areas and this will be no different for retirement village residents. Greenfield areas provide opportunities for retirement villages. However, neither Our Places or District Plans can require that land be developed for that use.

Also refer to the responses in these sections for more information:

- Section 4.1: Infrastructure – Subtheme 1: Transport, and Subtheme 2: Water supply and wastewater infrastructure.
- Section 4.3 Community & Lifestyle – Subtheme 1: Community character.
- Section 5: Feedback about scenarios (contains the development principles used to prepare the new scenario).

Subtheme 2: Sustainable practices for housing development

The feedback emphasised the importance of adopting sustainable practices for housing development. This includes using eco-friendly building materials, implementing energy-efficient designs, and promoting renewable energy sources. Respondents also called for better waste management practices and the reduction of carbon emissions to mitigate the impact of urban development on the environment.

Respondents had the following comments regarding sustainable practices:

- Self Sustaining “Off-Grid” solutions
 - New greenfield development should be self-sustaining in water and energy and preferably produce substantial quantity of its own food (through community gardens etc).
 - Favour solar PV on buildings. Community-owned energy systems would be more beneficial to the local economy.
 - Rural residential housing opportunities have less facilities, and this type of housing should be provided as a choice for people to live ‘off grid’.
- Energy efficient building techniques
 - Consider building materials, passive solar design, renewable energy options, for different housing types and locations. Local timber, stone and brick should be promoted for climate change reasons.
- Better carbon management
 - Use of structural timber locks up carbon, and can be used in homes, factories, multi storey buildings.

Response to Subtheme 2: How the spatial plan will respond

- Recognise the challenge of ensuring future development is built to deliver a climate-resilient built environment.
- Set out direction for structure plans or master plans to consider environmentally sustainable and water sensitive design principles and standards.

The Building Codes set minimum standards for building materials and design elements (such as insulation). Passive solar design and energy efficient materials can be encouraged through mechanisms such as Healthier Homes and Homestar rating New Zealand, and design guides associated with District Plans. Currently, the Whakatāne District Plan encourages a degree of consideration of sustainability, including energy efficiency and water conservation for higher density housing developments. General low-density development does not explicitly consider passive solar design or energy efficient materials.

Sustainable building practices and design on a site-by-site basis are not within the scope of the spatial plan as it is focused at a high level and the location of development. Encouraging or requiring the adoption of sustainable practices for housing development may be addressed in future District Plan reviews. Some aspects may be addressed during structure planning for identified growth areas, such as stormwater management.

Subtheme 3: Natural hazards and resilient communities

Respondents were concerned with natural hazards, particularly flooding. Coastal erosion, extreme weather events, sea level rise, tsunamis, landslides and earthquakes were also mentioned. Resilience to natural hazards and the impacts of a changing climate change and avoiding areas with flooding issues were identified as key issues.

Submissions specifically identified flood risks at Matatā, Awakeri, Tāneatua, Edgumbe and the Rangitāiki Plains; coastal hazards between Ōpōtiki and Ōpape, and at Te Kaha; fault lines through Waiōhau-Galatea-Murupara; and risks to transport connections along the Pikowai Straits.

Some respondents suggested upzoning existing urban areas with low risk of natural hazards. Others identified the need to move out of low-lying areas (e.g. to Hukutaia in Ōpōtiki).

One respondent noted that climate change is not well defined and there are huge uncertainties and impacts that cannot all be predicted. The Hawke's Bay experience shows the impacts can be wide ranging well beyond flooding, and include physical access, communications, water supply, electricity and social impacts.

Response to subtheme 3: How the spatial plan will respond

- Carefully consider avoiding growth, or reducing potential for development, in areas susceptible to natural hazards and climate change, particularly in locations that are susceptible to flooding or which have residual risk.
- Identify where new information is needed to make informed decisions.
- Discourage growth until risk mitigation plans are established to keep people safe.

Discussion

Our Places recognises the risks posed by natural hazard and impacts from a changing climate is a critical issue, to ensure our communities are safe and resilient in the long term. To inform decision-making about where growth could go, careful consideration has been given to avoiding growth in areas susceptible to natural hazards and climate change, particularly in locations susceptible to flooding.

Our Places also acknowledges 'residual risk' associated with stopbanks, which refers to the level of risk that still exists from natural hazard events, even after mitigation measures are put in place. An example is the risk from a flood event that exceeds the design level of a stopbank (i.e. 'overtops' the stopbank).

In response to residual risk, the upzoning of existing urban areas (intensification) is being carefully considered to ensure that risk is not increased in areas susceptible to residual risk and known flooding. An example of this approach would be to limit intensification in parts of Whakatāne township. In vulnerable locations, options are being explored to assess and better understand natural hazard risk and will be considered as implementation actions for the spatial plan.

Also refer to the following responses for additional information:

- Section 4.1: Infrastructure theme. Subtheme 3: Infrastructure resiliency to protect the community and ensure safety during natural disasters.
- Section 5: Feedback about scenarios. This response describes natural hazards and climate change have been considered in relation development of the new scenario.
- Section 6: Substantive topics. Climate resiliency.

Subtheme 4: Development of Māori land

Respondents highlighted the importance of developing Māori land, particularly for papakāinga, in providing additional homes for whānau. Greater consultation with hapū was sought by submitters.

Also refer to sections 5 and 6 below for a list of Māori land areas from submitters that will be considered for inclusion in the new scenario.

There are ongoing engagements with iwi, hapū, and iwi land trusts on this matter. The content of this report only reflects the submissions received during the engagement period.

Response to Subtheme 4: How the spatial plan will respond

- Identify actions that council can consider that will enable and support iwi/hapū to use their land for their aspirations. This may include Māori Purpose Zones and provisions to enable Papakāinga development in District Plans (if not already included).
- Support the development of master plans led by iwi trusts with support from hapū to determine development of their land and communities. Master plans can inform changes to the District Plan and structure plans to enable the development and confirm the ultimate intended development proposal and infrastructure approach related funding proposals.
- Where specific land areas or aspirations are identified in submissions or other engagements, they will be considered through the spatial plan. For example, feedback was received from Ngāti Rangitihi and Ngāi Te Rangihouhiri II who have a strong desire for papakāinga development and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whare, alongside the Minginui Village Incorporated Society and whānau living in Minginui, have aspirations for the development of Minginui. Many other comments were provided from iwi and hapū.

Discussion

The spatial plan seeks to enable Māori-led housing developments and papakāinga. Our Places is a partnership between councils and iwi in the Eastern Bay.

Efforts are underway to ensure the potential for Māori owned land to be identified through the engagement process and through understanding aspirations from the various land trusts and owners.

Papakāinga housing is enabled within the relevant District Plans or will be enabled through District Plan reviews. For example, the Kawerau District Plan is currently under review with the aim to include provisions that enable papakāinga and use of Māori owned land. Ōpōtiki District Council have an enabling District Plan for papakāinga and will be progressing further discussion on structure plans to facilitate development of specific areas.

Whakatāne District Council's Iwi Policy Hub is looking at developing master plans (aka 'structure plans') with landowners, to facilitate integrated development of Māori owned land with interested landowners.

4.3 Community and lifestyle theme

Overall, the feedback highlights the community's commitment to preserving its way of life while supporting thoughtful and sustainable development

The feedback emphasises the importance of maintaining the community's character and lifestyle, including safety, peace, and the natural environment. Respondents value the area's small-town feel and the sense of community it fosters. They expressed concerns about potential changes that could disrupt the character and stressed the need for careful planning to preserve the area's unique qualities. The feedback reflects a strong desire to maintain the area's identity and ensure that any development aligns with the community's values and lifestyle. There were also calls for improvements in public amenities and infrastructure to enhance the quality of life for residents.

Subtheme 1: Community character is highly valued

Respondents emphasised that Our Places needs to recognise the unique character and identity of the communities, lifestyle opportunities and natural environment that are unique to the Eastern Bay. Communities have told us, community character is about relationships and whakapapa and that maintaining the small-town identity is important to communities. The protection of natural areas and culturally significant areas is addressed in the Environmental Theme below.

Respondents have highlighted that community character is fundamentally tied to relationships and whakapapa. They value maintaining close connections to the natural environment and prefer controlled growth to preserve these ties. The community spirit is strong, with a deep appreciation for the sub-region's natural resources and green spaces, which help maintain its unique character. The lack of traffic congestion and the close-knit, family-oriented nature of Eastern Bay communities are also highly valued.

Preserving close communities is a priority, with many respondents valuing the small, unchanged nature of their towns. Generations of families have lived in these areas, finding them safe, quiet, and peaceful. The communities of Matatā, Kawerau, Braemar Road and Awakaponga have been identified as having particularly strong generational connections to their places.

There are concerns about over-development and the potential loss of the small-town character of towns, particularly for Matatā.

Respondents comment that expanding too much or adopting development styles seen in other parts of the region could lead to overcrowding, increased traffic, and a loss of the community's unique identity. There is apprehension about incoming residents who might want to change existing character, and a strong preference to avoid becoming like more urbanised and congested areas.

There is support for sustainable development practices that prioritise public and active transport, community spaces, green areas and addressing compatibility issues between industrial growth and residential areas to preserve the small-town atmosphere.

Response to Subtheme 1: How the spatial plan will respond

- Use placemaking and master planning processes to recognise the value of community character and importance of community wellbeing.
- Reference existing community revitalisation projects for Murupara and Minginui.
- Apply placemaking principles in community revitalisation projects and structure plans processes.
- In relation to Matatā, consider the community's overall feedback for a mid-low range level of additional growth. Test this through further engagement with the community.

Discussion

There is a tension between providing for growth (including meeting the housing needs of current and future community members) and maintaining community character. Changes to communities are inevitable over time, due to demographic and economic factors. Intensification and infill will be necessary in some areas to balance other goals, such as avoiding Highly Productive Land, areas at risk from natural hazards, and achieve affordable infrastructure and growth.

However, it is recognised that each community has an individual character that residents value. Our Places development principles include a principle to 'employ placemaking to support community wellbeing'. Placemaking equates to community character and refers to a collaborative process (with the community) to create quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in. The Our Places principle recognises that the purpose of a spatial plan is to identify areas for growth (and areas where growth is not appropriate) but that community placemaking is maintained or improved through other mechanisms. Those mechanisms include community revitalisation projects, and District Plan rules (e.g. yard setbacks, density of houses, requirements for outdoor living spaces).

Subtheme 2: Recreational facilities can enhance the quality of life for residents

The feedback also highlighted the need for better recreational facilities to enhance the quality of life for residents. Respondents called for the development of parks, playgrounds, and sports facilities to provide spaces for community activities and promote a healthy lifestyle. They emphasised the importance of accessible and well-maintained recreational facilities that cater to people of all ages.

Respondents have shared their appreciation for the recreational activities available in their communities. Kawerau's prime location between lakes, rivers, and the sea offers excellent opportunities for water activities. Communities value the recreational bike trails, geothermal pools, and the Ōhope Beach Surf Club. The rivers are important for the rowing club, and the Tarawera River is favoured for kayaking and rafting.

Respondents have made suggestions for what should be included in the spatial plan, such as galleries, community facilities, (particularly youth and elderly hubs), accessible, safe, and enclosed play areas for neurodiverse communities, and developing a sports stadium in Whakatāne. There is also interest in hot pools in Kawerau, improved skatepark and shopping areas, and tenpin bowling alleys.

Respondents recognise that with growth, additional amenities would be required. These include more education centres, retail and commercial spaces, medical centres, early childhood centres, walking and cycling connections.

Communities see value in recreational spaces in nature, suggesting transforming the Whakatāne River mouth into a recreational bathing area, enhancing access to walking trails, mountain bike trails, recreational biking paths, access and activities in Te Urewera, and motorbike trails have been noted. These suggestions aim to provide diverse and accessible recreational options to improve the quality of life in the sub-region. Green belts within townships were also mentioned, such as in Kawerau along the Tarawera River.

Respondents have highlighted that outdoor adventures and the rural lifestyle are integral to what makes the Eastern Bay special. They appreciate their towns' spaciousness and proximity to beaches and native bush. Activities such as hunting, fishing, horse riding, white baiting, and boating are highly valued, contributing to the sub-region's unique character. The Eastern Bay is seen as an adventure-filled backyard for neighbouring districts, offering natural beauty, coastal scenery, and a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. Maintaining this lifestyle is important to communities and ensuring development complements the existing environment.

Response to subtheme 2: How the spatial plan will respond

- Develop design principles to guide preparation of structure plans so they provide the right level of community infrastructure and recreational facilities and also consider the effects on existing assets.

Discussion

Recreational facilities are recognised as important community infrastructure for active and passive recreation activities and support community wellbeing. Greenfield urban development will need to be planned to include parks and reserves. This is carried out at the structure plan level, which is undertaken after a development area is confirmed and development triggers (e.g. population growth and housing demand) or infrastructure precursors are met. A structure plan is a framework for the development of a specified area, which includes the layout of the area with roads and transport connections, land use activities (residential, commercial, etc), and greenspace.

Our Places does not identify where new reserves and parks will be located, or where existing facilities could be upgraded. That level of detail is best addressed in either a structure plan (for new areas) or community placemaking projects. However, the plan will note that social infrastructure (which includes parks and reserves) is to be viewed as 'lead infrastructure' that supports community wellbeing and it will set out some expectations for structure planning or master planning activities to consider. Providing amenities and social infrastructure is important to attract and support people and to maintain the lifestyle of the Eastern Bay.

Greenbelts and areas within townships are usually local reserves and are managed by the respective councils and protected for the values and uses of those areas.

4.4 Environmental theme

Overall, the feedback underscores the importance of integrating environmental considerations into all aspects of urban planning to ensure a sustainable and resilient community

The feedback highlights significant concerns regarding the environmental impact of urban planning and development. Respondents emphasised the importance of protecting natural areas and ensuring that new developments do not lead to environmental degradation. There is a strong desire to maintain the natural beauty and ecological health of the area, with many participants stressing the need for sustainable planning practices. The feedback reflects a community deeply connected to its natural surroundings and a commitment to preserving them for future generations. Concerns were raised about the potential loss of green spaces, the impact of increased pollution, and the need for better management of natural resources, including aggregate resources.

Subtheme 1: Protection of natural areas from development

Respondents stressed the need to protect natural areas from development, including forests, lakes, awa (rivers), tāhahi (beaches) and moana (the sea). They highlighted the importance of preserving green spaces, forests, and waterways to maintain biodiversity and provide recreational opportunities for residents. There were calls for stricter regulations to prevent encroachment on these areas and to ensure that any development is carried out in an environmentally responsible manner.

Respondents support the continued protection of green spaces, which contribute to the community's natural beauty and recreational opportunities. Eastern Bay communities value their connections with nature which fosters a sense of community and appreciation for the natural environment. The natural beauty of the sub-region including its scenic areas and outdoor spaces, is seen as essential to preserving the identity and quality of life.

Protection of the Tarawera River from the effects of future development was specifically mentioned, as was avoiding development of land that is significant to iwi.

One respondent requested consideration of the use of Department of Conservation (DOC) land for appropriate land uses, including aggregate extraction.

Response to subtheme 1: How the spatial plan will respond

- Recognise that protection of natural areas and culturally significant sites is essential and avoid urban development in those areas.

Discussion

Our Places recognises that protection of natural areas is essential. One of the development principles that was used to formulate the scenarios for engagement, and which has been used to create the new scenario for the spatial plan is '*Avoid and mitigate impacts on natural areas to protect and conserve*'. This includes DOC land, Te Urewera, other protected natural areas (e.g. covenanted areas, Significant Natural Areas). Culturally significant sites have also been identified and considered in the scenarios.

Stricter regulations to prevent encroachment on awa (rivers) is largely achieved by avoiding areas subject to flooding, and through regulations in regional planning documents that implement Treaty Settlement river documents. The Rangitāiki River is covered by Te Ara Whānui o Rangitāiki (Pathways of the Rangitāiki). The Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group is currently developing a strategy.

The use of DOC land is outside the scope of the spatial plan as it is subject to the Conservation Act.

Subtheme 2: Management productive land and water resources

Effective management of productive land was a key concern for respondents. They highlighted the need for sustainable water management practices, including the protection of water sources and the implementation of efficient irrigation systems. There were also calls for better management of soil and land resources to prevent erosion and degradation, highlighting the importance of access and availability of aggregate resources, and ensuring that the land remains productive and healthy for future generations.

Some respondents requested the application of Te Ao Māori principles and values, and use of nature-based approaches. Other comments requested the identification of areas that are well-suited to horticulture expansion and protect these from future residential development. The Rangitāiki Plains was specifically mentioned in relation to highly productive soils.

Response to subtheme 2: How the spatial plan will respond

- Develop design principles to guide preparation of structure plans in relation to nature-based solutions and compliance with environmental regulations.
- Comply with the NPS-HPL by only identifying areas on Highly Productive Land for urban development where an assessment has determined that there are no other reasonably practicable and feasible options to provide the required housing development capacity. The objective of the NPS-HPL is that Highly Productive Land is protected for use in land-based primary production, both now and for future generations.

Discussion

Application of Te Ao Māori and nature-based principles are dependent on the decisions of individual landowners and industry organisations and can't be required by the spatial plan. Some of the matters of concern are reflected in environmental regulations and future structure planning and development will need to comply with those environmental regulations. The spatial plan can also recognise the value of nature-based solutions by clearly identifying matters to be addressed in structure plans. An example is that nature-based solutions and water sensitive design is used in urban areas.

The spatial plan has applied highly productive soils as a consideration for identifying future areas for urban development. This has been carried out in a way that implements the (NPS-HPL). In this way, Our Places is protecting highly productive soils as much as possible. A balanced decision needs to be made on future development locations where flooding and other constraints mean a safe greenfield location occurs on Highly Productive Land. The spatial plan process helps the community to make that decision.

Sustainable land and water management practices are not within the scope of the plan. This is addressed by environmental regulations and standards in regional plans and national planning frameworks. Any development needs to comply with those regulations and standards and to avoid or minimise environmental impacts.

4.5 Economic opportunities theme

Overall, the feedback highlights the need for balanced economic development that includes job creation, support for local businesses, and consideration of environmental and social factors

The feedback also addresses the need for economic development, commercial and industrial land expansion, including job opportunities and support for local businesses. Respondents emphasised the importance of creating a vibrant local economy that provides employment opportunities and supports the community's growth. They called for initiatives to attract new businesses and industries to the area while ensuring that economic development is balanced with environmental and social considerations.

Subtheme 1: Creating new employment opportunities

Creating employment opportunities was a key concern for respondents. They highlighted the need for initiatives to attract new businesses and industries to the area, which would provide jobs and support the local economy, ensuring that these opportunities are accessible to the community and contribute to its overall well-being.

The following opportunities and projects were suggested by respondents:

- Tourism:
- Cycleways and walkways (including in the Matatā area)
 - Eco-tourism including rafting, kayaking
 - Wellness businesses in rural areas
 - Cultural tourism, including east of Te Kaha and Tāneatua (linked to the gallery)
 - Marine tourism
- Matatā – weekend visitors and tourists, by providing a mix of shops and cafes along the waterfront
- Renewable energy generation and use:
 - Geothermal
 - Solar
 - Hydroelectric
 - Wind
- Primary production:
 - Aquaculture expansion (including at Te Kaha)
 - Kiwifruit and horticultural expansion (including in the Ōpōtiki–Te Kaha area)
 - Dairy farming
- Marine industry:
 - Boat building at Ōpape / Tōrere
 - Marine industrial zone at Ōpōtiki, including boat building and apprentices for young people
- Whakatāne Marina – fishing and tourism
- Whakatāne Airport:
 - Build more hangers and encourage aircraft owners to relocate their aircraft
- Industrial development:
 - Sustainable industrial activities and catalyst projects
 - Employment around existing industrial areas
 - New industrial areas were suggested, including Baird Road, Ōpōtiki; Brownfield land in Tāneatua
 - Precision fermentation
- Log and timber processing:
 - Pre-processing of logs at Murupara
 - Structural timber building materials (engineered lumber) at Kawerau
 - Forestry, wood processing and biochemicals in Galatea area

- Digital infrastructure and data centres
 - Sustainable cooling using river water
- Whakatāne township – build a mall on Wally Sutherland land

Response to subtheme 1: How the spatial plan will respond

- Ensure that adequate industrial and commercial land is provided in locations that align with the Sub-Regional Economic Development Strategy (SREDS)
- Support economic outcomes by identifying locations for housing near employment opportunities.
- Highlight actions in the SREDS that relate to spatial location matters. For example, a workforce development workstream where there are employment opportunities.
- Also refer to transport network resilience in Section 4.1 above.

Discussion

Our Places integrates with the SREDS. The SREDS has considered key Development Focus Areas based on a strengths-based approach and building on existing work to generate more high-quality jobs and boost economic performance. This includes:

- Aquaculture – Ōpōtiki (including further development along the coast in the open ocean).
- Green industry and energy – Kawerau (including high-value innovation in the forestry sector).
- Commercial and services – Whakatāne (including marine tourism).

There is currently a mismatch between the jobs available in the Eastern Bay and the local labour force. Employers have high-quality roles on offer, for instance, Factory Engineer or IT lead roles in aquaculture, but they cannot attract the talent they need. Similarly, locals cannot find suitable roles or appealing career pathways. As a result, labour force participation rates are relatively low and unemployment rates are high, along with social service costs.

Businesses struggle to import talent and fill key roles, and this is exacerbated by the lack of quality housing on offer. The cost of doing business goes up, and without essential staff, productivity drops. Locals who cannot find a suitable role, career, or training pathway do not fulfil their full potential, and at scale, this hinders economic growth and collective wellbeing.

As part of the refresh of the SREDS, it has been proposed to create a separate workforce development workstream within spatial planning, which coordinates between public and private organisations in the Eastern Bay.

Subtheme 2: Support for local businesses to create economic development

Supporting local businesses was seen as crucial for economic development. Respondents called for measures to help small businesses thrive. They also emphasised the importance of creating a business-friendly environment that encourages entrepreneurship and innovation.

Comments sought more shops in small towns to help them grow and support the local community (including Minginui, Waiohau, Murupara and Kawerau).

Some respondents requested enabling local businesses through contracts for development work (as opposed to out-of-town companies).

Response to Subtheme 2: How the spatial plan will respond

- The matters raised in Subtheme 2 are not within the scope of the spatial plan.

Discussion

Our Places does not have the ability to attract or direct more shops to small towns. Identification of additional commercial land is a role of the spatial plan. However, many small towns have sufficient commercial areas with vacant buildings. Community development plans or revitalisation plans are better options to address the issue. The spatial plan implementation plan can identify where community development plans will be developed.

In relation to contracts with local businesses for development work, this is the responsibility of councils and their respective procurement policies. This is acknowledged as an important matter for local businesses but is not within the scope of the spatial plan.

Support for business associations is not within the scope of the spatial plan.

Subtheme 3: Commercial and industrial land expansion to create job opportunities

Commercial and industrial land expansion is seen as crucial for the subregion's economic development. Respondents called for more industrial and commercial land supply to create job opportunities.

Response to Subtheme 3: How the spatial plan will respond

- Identify the Putauaki Trust Industrial Area expansion at Kawerau as the key industrial location for the Eastern Bay.
- Identify additional industrial land in Ōpōtiki District (as being identified through a project by Ōpōtiki District Council).

Discussion

Additional commercial and industrial land areas are identified in the spatial plan. This is to respond to the SREDS and identify a clear link between job opportunities and locations where housing is required for employees.

Subtheme 4: Economic development needs to be balanced with environmental and social factors

Economic development was a significant theme in the feedback. Respondents stressed the need for a balanced approach that considers environmental and social factors. They called for strategic planning to ensure that new developments contribute positively to the community and do not lead to negative impacts such as increased traffic congestion or environmental degradation. They also stressed the importance of balancing commercial growth with environmental sustainability and ensuring that new developments do not negatively impact the quality of life in the community.

The social factors mentioned by respondents were:

- Make employment in aquaculture and horticulture attractive to local people and bring back locals into the region (and reduce the need for RSE workers). There was a general support for higher employment of local people, supporting the local community and strengthening self-reliance to build the local economy.
- Protection of human health.
- Concern about the effect of development on increasing rates in an area and affordability for whanau who may be driven out of the area due to increasing costs.
- Development in a way that retains the special character of towns and locations and also provides for public and active transport, community spaces and access to services (e.g. food and medical facilities) within a reasonable distance. It was also noted that the types of housing provided need to suit the needs of residents.
- Housing developments need to be linked to commercial and industrial areas for employment opportunities.
- Job creation and skill development are needed to support the local community.

The environmental factors mentioned by respondents were:

- Resilience to climate change and natural hazards - reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and future proofing existing primary production industries for the impacts of climate change. A comment was made to consider other primary production options that are better aligned with the changing environment.
- Avoid new housing within reverse sensitivity areas. These included horticultural and industrial areas and the existing noise contour for the Fonterra Edgecumbe site.
- Any industrial areas need direct access to the state highway network.
- Sewage discharges need to be properly treated and discharged to a location that does not impact rivers, estuaries and harbours. Connecting Ōhope, Edgecumbe and Matatā to the Whakatāne WWTP was suggested. Concerns about getting basic infrastructure for the existing population before future development, including transport.

Response to Subtheme 3: How the spatial plan will respond

- Job creation, skill development and employment opportunities for local people will be addressed through the SREDS.
- Recognise that affordability is a key consideration. Refer to Section 4.1 Infrastructure theme above for more information.
- New industrial areas shown in the spatial plan all have direct access to the state highway network.
- Consider the separation of incompatible activities when identifying urban growth areas.
- Develop design principles that will guide preparation of structure plans in relation to provision of compliance with environmental regulations, natural hazard and climate change resilience.

Discussion

Balancing environmental and social factors and ensuring future development provides for the community's needs and meets environmental standards in an affordable way is a key aim. Another key aim of Our Places is to address a lack of housing that is limiting economic development opportunities and linking housing with commercial and industrial areas for employment opportunities.

Environmental standards and regulations in district and regional plans and National Policy Statements and Standards apply to development. Environmental standards also help protect human health. The spatial plan does not supersede those regulations and standards. Detailed structure planning of future development areas identified in the spatial plan will need to comply with environmental standards.

Ngā whakahoki kōrero mō ngā tūāhua

5 Feedback about scenarios

Scenario 1



Resilient greenfield areas

Provide a long-term supply of housing and business land in a series of new greenfield areas: Matatā, Awakeri, Hukutaia.

There would be a low level of residential infill and a low level of rural residential development.

(Preferred option)

Scenario 2



Un-serviced rural residential focus

Enable demand for housing to shift into rural locations, with a relaxed regulatory approach (and avoiding highly productive land and areas prone to natural hazards).

There would be a high level of rural residential development. Over time this could encourage a high level of infill and intensification of townships and villages.

Scenario 3



Growth outside the sub-region

Demand shifts out of Whakatāne and Kawerau to Western Bay of Plenty and Rotorua because there are no new greenfield areas and rural residential development is not enabled.

There would be a low level of rural residential development. Over time this could encourage a high rate of intensification and infill of townships and villages because there are few other options for housing growth in the districts.

Figure 7 - Three possible future scenarios were presented for consultation

A total of 38 responses were received specifically regarding the scenarios, with 21 referring to Scenario 1, seven to Scenario 2, and three to Scenario 3. The feedback highlights diverse perspectives on the proposed scenarios, emphasising the need for balanced development, improved infrastructure, and environmental sustainability.

A collation of the feedback from the workshops indicated where new housing and businesses could be located is shown in Figure 8. It should be noted that the feedback from the workshops was often expressed as general areas rather than specific 'points' and that Figure 8 should be viewed accordingly.

The feedback shows a preference for co-location of housing and business, support for rural areas and development of Māori owned land.

A higher density of locations are around existing towns and settlements, particularly the coastal strip and the Kawerau - southern Rangitāiki Plains - Tāneatua area.

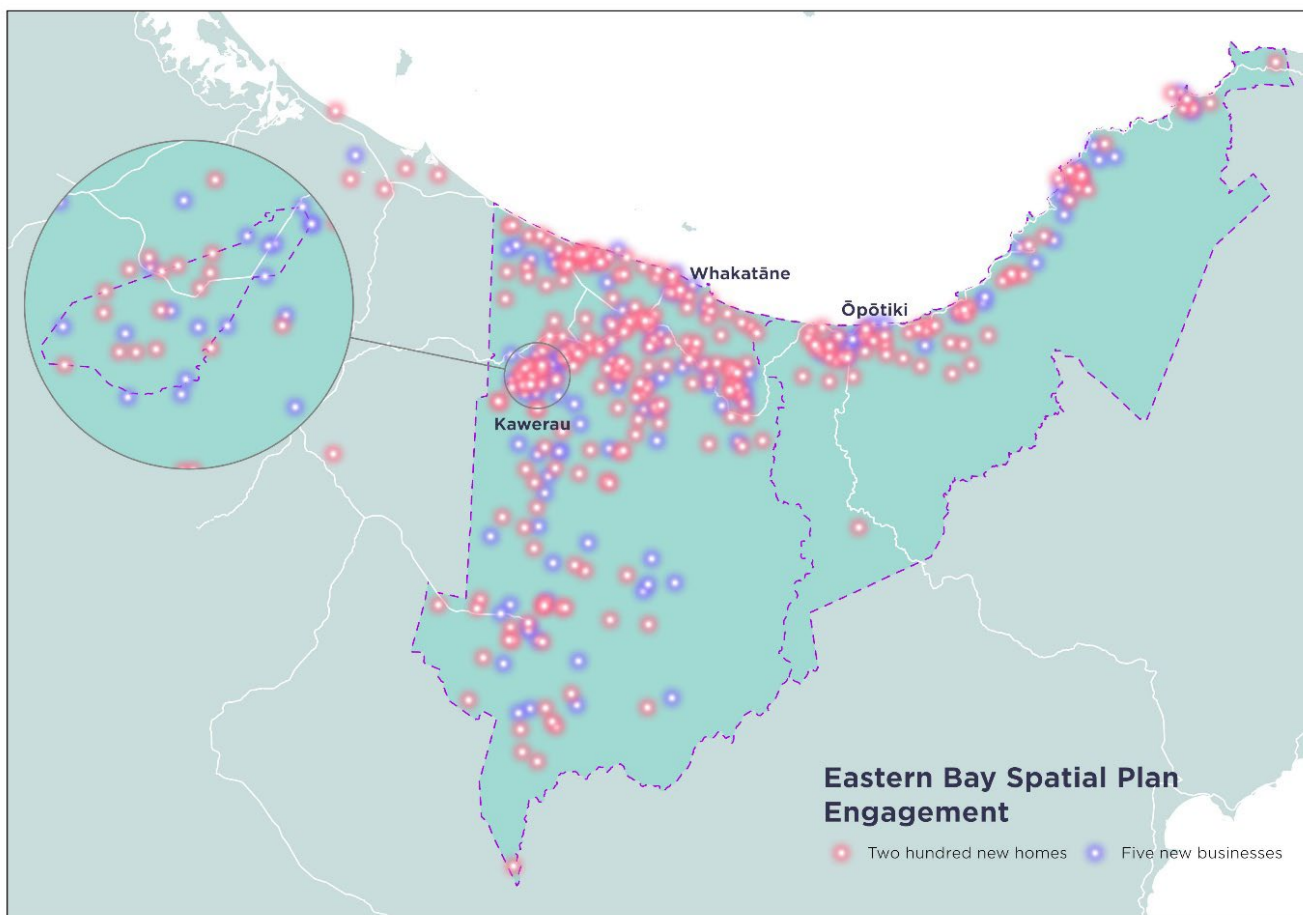


Figure 8 – Collation of workshop feedback on locations for housing and businesses

Scenario 1: Resilient greenfield areas:

Eighteen respondents favour Scenario 1, including Fonterra Limited, SmartGrowth Partners, and Horticulture New Zealand, for its structured growth and community development.

Submissions stress the need for community spaces, recreational facilities, and maintaining towns' unique character. They call for balanced development that includes affordable housing and supports local businesses.

There is strong support for using solar, water-efficient taps, and water collection in new developments; however, three respondents expressed concerns about infrastructure improvements to handle increased traffic, challenges envisioning Matatā with 1500 more homes and businesses without adequate sewerage, and questions about why rural residential development is limited by District Plan rules in Scenario 1. Key considerations were also focused on protecting high-value agricultural land and integrating renewable energy.

Comments included expanding areas to cater for schools and retail, addressing the vulnerability of SH 2 at Waiōtahe and greater consideration for horticultural expansion. Requests for addressing natural hazard risks and climate change impacts were also made. Additionally, detailed plans on the quantum, timing, and type of growth were requested.

Scenario 2: Un-serviced rural residential focus:

Six responses favoured Scenario 2 for its potential to support resilient, self-sustaining communities.

This scenario was seen to align with Te Ao Māori values and encourage smaller-scale developments. Respondents emphasised the importance of historical settlement patterns and cultural values, noting that smaller settlements up the coast encourage self-sufficiency and resilience to issues like climate change and access loss.

Whakatāne Action Group Incorporated was specifically against Scenario 2 and the assumption that large numbers of people will be attracted to live in rural areas without basic services and highlighted various challenges and drawbacks of rural residential development. The response suggests exploring new greenfield areas for additional housing instead.

Comments included supporting smaller subdivision size requirements in Scenario 2, promoting papakāinga developments, and considering international trends that increase demand for natural spaces. Requests highlight the need to avoid assuming large numbers of people will move to rural areas without basic services, ensuring rural residential development does not negatively impact traditional rural activities, and the need to provide adequate infrastructure and services to support rural communities.

Scenario 3: Growth outside the sub-region

Scenario 3 received three responses, two in support and one questioning the overall relevance of this scenario.

Respondents favoured this scenario to avoid overcrowding in existing towns and to support distributing growth more evenly across the region.

Comments included focus on ensuring necessary infrastructure and services are in place to support growth outside the sub-region and addressing potential issues with community fragmentation and loss of local identity. Requests for more information on how this scenario would be implemented and its impact on existing communities, as well as considering the need for business land and economic development were also made.

Other comments about the scenarios

Two submissions suggest combining Scenarios 1 and 2 to balance structured growth with resilient rural development. Some respondents see this combination as appropriate, believing it accommodates town and coast aspirations and provides more options and flexibility.

Some respondents prefer dispersed villages over centralised communities and questioned the limitations on rural residential development in Scenario 1.

Others reject all three proposed scenarios, highlighting issues such as wastewater ponds in Hukutaia and suggesting new options that prioritise local infrastructure and community involvement in planning decisions. Some of these comments preferred that development takes place outside of the sub-region.

Response to feedback on the three scenarios – How the spatial plan will respond

In response to the engagement feedback, specifically on the Scenarios and related matters from feedback on the Themes (as identified in section 4 above) and the Substantive topics (in section 6 below), the following process has been followed to develop a new scenario for inclusion in the spatial plan.

The PGG approved a set of decision-making principles to be used to develop a new scenario that applies the feedback received during engagement. These principles encompass the decision-making factors used to develop the draft scenarios (i.e., Scenario 1, 2, and 3 presented for engagement purposes). They also include additional principles addressing matters raised in the engagement and to 'fill the gaps' in the existing set of principles. The approved full set of principles is shown below in Figure 9.

The draft new scenario has been developed for inclusion in Our Places. This has been done by considering the engagement feedback and applying the principles to the development options outlined in this section. The development options include locations from the engagement scenarios that have been reconsidered from engagement feedback (e.g. the scale of growth at Matatā) and also new locations requested by submitters.

PRINCIPLES THAT DIRECT WHERE WE WANT DEVELOPMENT TO HAPPEN

- 1 First, consider development locations with existing settlements and infrastructure before contemplating new growth areas and infrastructure.
- 2 Avoid locations where man-made and natural hazard risk (including residual risk) and effects of a changing climate cannot be practicably and equitably managed.
- 3 Urban development locations should have good connections or access to employment, services, schools, and affordable community infrastructure to support community wellbeing.

PRINCIPLES THAT ARE 'GIVENS' THAT APPLY IN ALL LOCATIONS

- 1 Avoid and mitigate impacts on natural areas to protect and conserve.
- 2 Protect culturally significant areas from development.
- 3 Minimise urban development on Highly Productive Land and ensure no rural residential development on Highly Productive Land (excluding papakāinga).

PRINCIPLES ABOUT WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- 1 Enable and support iwi and hapū to use their land for their aspirations and unlock opportunities and ensure engagement reflects this intention.
- 2 Cost of infrastructure is feasible and affordable.
- 3 Enable a certainty of zoned and serviced land supply for residential and business purposes for a thirty-year period.
- 4 Locations that enable residential development and economic development opportunities are preferred, including iwi and hapū development.
- 5 Consider the changing needs of housing types due to shifts in demographics.
- 6 A settlement pattern that supports achievement of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- 7 Community wellbeing outcomes can be supported by great placemaking.

Figure 9 - Principles to be used for the new scenario

List of development options to be reconsidered in creating a new scenario

- 1 **Matatā** – reconsider the scale of development suitability, considering that 1,500 additional homes were not supported in engagement feedback. Review the affordability of delivering infrastructure, particularly the planned wastewater treatment plant, and the resultant feasibility of development. These are interlinked with the scale of development.
- 2 **Awakeri** – The timing of development could be sooner and the scale larger than initially thought, considering a smaller possible scale of development in Matatā. It will be important that the physical location of the flood scheme and flood risk limitations are considered at the early planning stages to ensure that regionally important infrastructure (like the flood scheme) is protected and affordable, and flood risk to the community is not increased.
- 3 **Whakatāne township** – The potential of intensification is limited by flood risk and other natural hazard constraints and intensification (e.g., new houses in existing areas) has not been delivered at scale by the market to date and is not expected to be delivered at scale in the short to medium term. Evacuation mapping indicates that many parts of Whakatāne (with the exception of Kopeopeo and some other elevated locations) could be affected by a breach of the stopbank, indicating that more housing at these locations is not a good idea.
- 4 **Ōpōtiki township** – further investigation has highlighted issues relating to existing flood risk and residual risk that has the potential to pose risks to the safety of the community and affect the suitability of additional intensification or infill development.
- 5 **Tāneatua** – Further information about flood hazards has identified the need for a precautionary approach to enabling greenfield development is more appropriate for this location, until natural hazard risk is assessed, and risk management decisions are made.
- 6 **Edgecumbe** – The natural hazard risk means additional development is not appropriate in the Edgecumbe township.
- 7 **Rural residential areas** – Consider identifying locations to avoid due to Highly Productive Land and reverse sensitivity effects and consider areas that may be promoted for this type of development.
- 8 **Iwi aspirations** – Continue to work with iwi partners to clarify their aspirations and incorporate these into the plan. Ensure support for papakāinga to be enabled on Māori land.
- 9 **New locations from submissions:** New land areas were requested by submitters for consideration, listed below, and these will be addressed. Where they are part of Māori Freehold Land, the relevant iwi would be asked to provide their opinion:
 - (a) Māori Land Trusts (Golf Links Road Partnership, Te Paroa Lands Trust, Hunia Marupo Lands Trust, Ratahi Lands Trust, Kiwinui Lands Trust, Rotoehu Lands Trust) represent owners of land holdings between Coastlands, Whakatāne Golf Course and the airport (188 ha across four land parcels – Māori Freehold Land and Freehold title)
 - (b) Keepa Road (currently Rural Zone), Whakatāne
 - (c) Māori Freehold Land to east of the Charter Club, Ōhope
 - (d) Māori Freehold Land on Ngāti Awa Farm
 - (e) Maraetotara Valley in Ōhope
 - (f) Baird Road and River Flats (Ōpōtiki). Ōpōtiki District Council is undertaking a detailed study of industrial and commercial land. Decisions on that study will be included in the spatial plan if timing enables it or may form part of a future update.
 - (g) 20 Dunlop Road in Ōpōtiki for mixed use development
 - (h) Evan's Park, Murupara (Ngāti Manawa)

- (i) Minginui and Te Whaiti. Involve Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whare in the aspirations for the growth and development of Minginui
- (j) Ngāi Te Rangihouhiri II and Ngāti Hikakino. Support the expressed interest of hapū members who are part of the Kiwinui Trust in understanding the feasibility of developing Māori housing on Rangitāiki Parish 31P 3F, Awakeri
- (k) Paroa Road area (west of Whakatāne township).

Locations to be retained without change

From the feedback received, some areas would be supported into the spatial plan without changes from how they were communicated in Scenario 1. These include:

- 1 Development at Hukutaia
- 2 Additional industrial/business land at Putauaki Trust Industrial Area (Kawerau), Whakatāne (commercial land), Ōpōtiki and East Coast locations in alignment with iwi aspirations
- 3 Some infill or intensification at Kopeopeo and other elevated areas in Whakatāne township, and in Kawerau, and
- 4 Some additional houses at Murupara and Minginui, with development being iwi-led, not proposed as a council target.

In considering these factors, an interim draft new scenario has been prepared and included as **Appendix 1** to this report.

Ngā take hirahira

6 Substantive topics

This section brings forward topics highlighted by submitters that the project will need to consider in depth as the spatial plan is developed. Topics encompass the settlement pattern (where and what types of development), resiliency of critical infrastructure, and climate resilience. The PGG has considered these matters, and direction has been provided.

Settlement pattern (where and what types of development)

Most respondents are in favour of meeting development demands within the Eastern Bay.

Matatā residents have provided feedback that the scale of change, being 1,500 dwellings, and what this would impose is likely to affect the highly-valued community character and that this scale of change is undesirable.

Many submitters queried why the principal focus for growth was not on the existing centres and maximising infill development, promoting higher densities (upzoning) and utilising existing infrastructure.

Feedback included a minor push to intensify Kawerau, including duplexes and some townhouses. People also like the open spaces around Kawerau and want to retain its character.

Requests for making rural residential development more enabled in District Plans in suitable locations were made, and concerns were stated that this would need to be well controlled to avoid and manage reverse sensitivity.

Three submissions made specific requests to have land areas considered as development options in the spatial plan.

- Māori Land Trusts (Golf Links Road Partnership, Te Paroa Lands Trust, Hunia Marupo Lands Trust, Ratahi Lands Trust, Kiwinui Lands Trust, Rotoehu Lands Trust) represent owners of land holdings between Coastlands, Whakatāne golf course and the Whakatāne Airport (188 ha across four land parcels – Māori Freehold Land and freehold title)
- Ōpihi structure plan landowners are seeking recognition for the provision of development at this location, pursuant to the approved structure plan and land use subdivision consent.
- Baird Road and River Flats land parcels for industrial and commercial use near the western side of Ōpōtiki township.

Response to feedback on the settlement pattern – How the spatial plan will respond

- Refer to the response in section 5 above in relation to the three draft scenarios. This response describes how requests to consider new land areas have been considered.

Resiliency of critical infrastructure

Feedback was received on the existing vulnerability of the road network i.e., SH 2 and SH 35 bridges and roads. NZTA's submission recognised their commitment to addressing

resilience issues across their network, and that work is identified in relation to resilience improvements for SH 2 in the NLTP 2024-27.

In some locations, infrastructure is struggling to cope with the existing demand leading to traffic congestion. More of the State Highway and local road network will be exposed to resiliency issues over time from a changing climate. There are limited/restricted alternative routes available. Suggestions were received to build new bridges (even a tunnel).

Feedback was received on the need to recognise the resiliency of critical infrastructure networks (e.g. National Grid) and their role in responding to and recovering from natural hazard events. This highlights the role of the national grid in enabling growth and the need for protection from inappropriate development.

Response to feedback on resiliency of critical infrastructure – How the spatial plan will respond

- Refer to the responses in section 4.1 Infrastructure theme relating to resiliency.

Climate resiliency

Concerns were expressed about the impact of natural hazards and those driven by a changing climate on existing settlements and the long-term growth areas outlined in Scenario 1 – Matatā and Awakeri.

Response to feedback on climate resiliency – How the spatial plan will respond

- Land surrounding the existing township Awakeri is susceptible to a level of flooding. Options are being considered to manage natural hazard risk, protect the river and drainage scheme and inform the growth, scale and location of growth in Awakeri. This will be an action in the Implementation Plan for Our Places.
- Matatā - land to the east of the existing settlement is not significantly constrained by natural hazards. However, it is acknowledged that a catchment-wide approach is needed to manage existing and future natural hazard risk and to protect sensitive receiving environments, including Te Awa o te Atua. Options are being considered to manage natural hazard risk and to protect sensitive receiving environments to inform the growth, scale and location of future growth in Matatā. This will be an action in the Implementation Plan for Our Places.
- Tāneatua is susceptible to known flooding and a precautionary approach to development is recommended to ensure the community is safe and resilient in the long-term.
- Options are being considered to ensure that the Ōpōtiki township is safe and resilient to natural hazard risk in the long-term.
- Intensification in the Whakatāne township is expected to be limited due to the need to manage natural hazard risk, including residual risk associated with overdesign events. Kopeopeo, which is already zoned for medium density, is not subject to a significant flood risk and is supported as a viable development option in the spatial plan. Other elevated areas may similarly be considered.
- Edgecumbe has not been considered for future urban development due to the risks from flooding.

Discussion

The effects of a changing climate are becoming more apparent. These issues have been highlighted through the recent Hawke's Bay flood review and has heightened expectations for councils and others to consider the implications and costs of significant flood events on communities, particularly those that are protected by flood schemes.

Earlier work undertaken by the Bay of Plenty Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment 2023 (BOPCCRA) has identified areas at risk of a changing climate. The areas at higher risk noted from this work are:

- Coastal settlements may be exposed to increasing coastal hazards (coastal erosion, sea level rise, coastal flooding, and groundwater rise). This includes Whakatāne township and places like Matatā and Ōhope, Ōpōtiki township and further along the coastline.
- The road and State Highway network may face increasing damage and disruption from rainfall related flooding, landslides, coastal erosion, and sea level rise and coastal flooding. Coastal and low-lying areas such as central Whakatāne, Wainui Road from Ōhope to Ōhiwa, coastal parts of SH 2 and SH 35 may become increasingly disrupted from these risks, as will those roads vulnerable to landslides.
- The Matatā and Murupara rail lines may be exposed to increased coastal flooding and landslides, and tree fall in extreme weather.
- Whakatāne Airport may experience increasing disruption due to severe weather and could experience loss of access due to wider flooding of the surrounding roads.

This has informed baseline work for the preparation of the draft Scenarios and Development Options Report which was part of the engagement materials in late 2024.

Subsequent discussions with planning and engineering representatives of the partner councils further considered climate resilience and flooding. These discussions have looked at the locations identified in the three draft scenarios (those described in section 5 above) to ensure flood risk is appropriately thought through. The outcomes from the technical discussions above have been used to develop the new scenario for inclusion in the spatial plan.

Also refer to the following responses for additional information:

- Section 4.1: Infrastructure theme, Subtheme 3: Infrastructure resiliency to protect the community and ensure safety during natural disasters.
- Section 4.2: Housing theme, Subtheme 3: Natural hazards and resilient communities
- Section 5: Feedback about scenarios. This response describes natural hazards and climate change that have been considered in relation development of the new scenario.

Āpiti hanga 1: Tūāhuatanga hukihuki hou

Appendix 1: Draft new scenario

The new scenario is an important input to the writing of Our Places because it communicates the growth plan.

The new scenario is future-oriented and considers what could be possible. It sets out a clear, aspirational vision built on engagement feedback and focuses on creating a desired future. As with all forward-looking statements, there is a great degree of uncertainty, especially from dynamic influences like immigration rates or macro-economic trends.

Where unit yields are indicated in the scenario, these are subject to additional feasibility investigations and are likely to change. They may also change as the draft spatial plan is prepared, as additional analysis is conducted in relation to the latest population statistics.

Over the course of a 30-year spatial plan regular monitoring and reporting of population changes and land supply (e.g., during revisions to the spatial plan, and in Long Term Plans and infrastructure planning activities) is needed. This can enable adaptable implementation of funding and infrastructure programmes to ensure investment can slow down or speed up to keep pace with demand.

Urban Central Corridor

Most urban growth and economic activity are expected to take place in the Urban Central Corridor. These places are highly interconnected for schooling, employment, and residential activities.

Place	By 2055	Critical pre-requisites
Awakeri	By 2055...Awakeri develops into a small town with commercial services catering mainly to local needs and employment. More than 2,000 dwelling units have been developed with a mix of stand-alone and multi-unit types. Beyond 2055, Awakeri could continue to expand and become a new town in the Eastern Bay. New parks and open spaces have been established through a master planning approach to development that integrates with local stormwater management facilities. The school has grown to meet roll requirements, and there are good bus options to other schools in the district. Connections to Whakatāne township, Kawerau, and other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development feasibility• Integrated catchment management plan and development master plan• Structure plan and District Plan change• Secured funding• State Highway access improvements• Water supply and wastewater services

Place	By 2055	Critical pre-requisites
	<p>local employment opportunities are provided by road and public transport. The intersection of SH 2 and SH 30 places Awakeri at the centre of many places.</p> <p>Ngāi Te Rangihouhiri II and Ngāti Hikakino supported the interest of hapū members who are part of the Kiwinui Trust in developing Māori housing on Rangitāiki Parish 31P 3F, in context of Awakeri in the vicinity of the town.</p> <p>Ngāti Awa Group Holdings has also supported growth in Awakeri and noted that they will be willing to support Ngāti Awa Land Trusts interested in development.</p>	
Whenua Māori west of Coastlands	<p>By 2055... this area could remain in its current state or be developed into a multitude of options, from commercial and educational opportunities to residential leasehold and papakāinga developments. At nearly 190 ha, the area represents a strategic opportunity for housing and socio-economic activities. A vision for these future uses would need to be led by iwi and hapū to promote a change from the current undeveloped state.</p> <p>For example, at a lower residential density, the site could possibly accommodate 600 houses as well as social or commercial uses (depending on site conditions and many other factors). As another example, with an urban density and fully reticulated water services, it could possibly support 2-3 times this number of houses.</p> <p>While a higher housing yield could possibly be achieved, the lower density recognises that the land tenure is Māori Freehold Land, and a leasehold-based development model (which is likely on this land tenure) would limit the interest of the broader market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Māori Freehold Land belongs to members of Ngāi Taiwhakaea hapū who would require strict environmental controls and would oppose anything which may cause further adverse effects to their whenua, awa and moana. It is likely that where development “potentially” occurs on Māori Freehold Land led by Land Trusts, it will be opposed by Ngāi Taiwhakaea hapū. • The first step must include creating a hapū approved approach to development, development feasibility investigation, site-specific natural hazards risks and mitigation assessment (e.g., tsunami). <p>A master plan by Land Trusts and hapū would need to be undertaken to inform a District Plan change and structure plan to enable development of this area and to confirm the intended development proposal, infrastructure approach, and the related funding proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be specific planning and infrastructure pre-conditions and funding requirements identified through the master plan. • The District Plan could apply a Future Urban Zone.

Place	By 2055	Critical pre-requisites
Matatā	<p>By 2055.... Matatā has experienced some growth. Development occurs within the areas of the community presently zoned residential. Growth has been slow and steady.</p> <p>Matatā's future will be influenced by population growth driven by nearby employment hubs. Increased activity in the Putauaki Trust Industrial Area in Kawerau, business development at Rangiuru (east of Papamoa), and continued growth within Whakatāne township are expected to create new employment opportunities within a reasonable commuting distance. This will likely attract new residents to Matatā, reinforcing the need for a coordinated and sustainable approach to township development.</p> <p>The residential zone in the Operative District Plan for Matatā is larger than the current developed urban footprint. Subject to the development of a reticulated wastewater system, the town is anticipated to grow from approximately 260 homes in 2025 to 600-700 homes. This is expected to happen through a mixture of infill, subdivision of existing residential properties, and new development on residentially zoned land east of Pollen Street. This will occur over the long term of 10-30 years.</p> <p>Additional to the existing capacity provided for in the Operative District Plan, there is elevated land suitable for future new growth further east of the existing residential zone. This area could accommodate another 700-800 homes and should be preserved for future urban development consideration by avoiding low density residential uses.</p> <p>Ngāti Rangitihī and Ngāi Te Rangihouhiri II have a strong desire for Papakāinga development. Ngāti Rangihouhiri also has an interest in developing a cultural base on their land blocks in the East of Matatā.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, Matatā is on septic tanks and growth depends on the ability to treat and dispose of wastewater. A stand-alone wastewater treatment plant with land-based disposal is required to enable new housing. The wastewater treatment plant is not a fully funded activity. A structure plan should be undertaken for the vacant areas of existing residential zoned land east of Pollen Street, once a wastewater treatment plant receives a resource consent. At the same time as the structure plan, address changes in character and additional infrastructure requirements by conducting levels of service review for the community to address impacts on existing infrastructure and facilities from planned development. The District Plan will need to recognise a Future Urban Zone that encompasses land beyond the existing residential zoned areas east of Pollen Street. Before this area could be developed, it should first require the existing residential zoned capacity to be taken up within the community and additional wastewater treatment plant capacity to be funded. Followed by a master plan led by both iwi and council. As part of the structure plan and ahead of any zoning change, a site-specific natural hazards risks and mitigations assessment (e.g., tsunami) should be carried out. Understanding the work proposed to be undertaken to re-channel Te Awa o te Atua and the impact that may have on the current town layout is a critical

Place	By 2055	Critical pre-requisites
		component of future planning for the community.

Place	By 2055	Critical pre-requisites
Kawerau: residential infill and Putauaki Trust Industrial Area	<p>By 2055... residential infill/intensification in Kawerau has been driven by market demand, supported by the ongoing growth of employment within the community, especially with the expansion of Putauaki Trust Industrial Area.</p> <p>Kawerau District has limited opportunities for greenfield residential development. Increasing housing in the district will require infill or intensification of the existing residential areas. Blocks of Māori-owned land in the residential area provide opportunities for papakāinga and Māori-led housing options.</p> <p>The Putauaki Trust Industrial Area has been successfully developed as a green industry and geothermal and bio-energy hub. Kawerau is regarded as the pre-eminent industrial activity area in the sub-region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District-wide stormwater flood modelling to inform review of the District Plan and inclusion of flooding provisions to address the potential for infill / intensification in Kawerau. • Feasibility for infill development should be improved through the pending District Plan review process.
Ōpōtiki township	<p>By 2055... within the township, in the short term, a controlled approach to infill is taken, due to the flood risks present in the township increasing due to climate change.</p> <p>In the medium to long-term, as risks and potential mitigations are clearly understood and implemented, the degree to which infill or intensification of the township can be supported may change. Also in this timeframe, the Hukutaia development area is expected to emerge as an important growth area adjacent to the township which provides a resilient option for further development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infill and intensification within the township will be considered on a case-by-case basis until a risk assessment and mitigation plan are prepared, which will make further recommendations. • This would consider both the risk profile and mitigation options, providing a recommendation about the best ways to keep people safe (e.g., through investment into factors like flood warning systems, evacuation planning, etc) based on consideration of costs and benefits.
Hukutaia	<p>By 2055... Hukutaia develops into a vibrant new growth area with capacity for around 2,000 dwelling units, local commercial services, parks, and open spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Plan change/structure plan • All new infrastructure is dependent on new council budgets or external funding. • Reticulated wastewater services are needed. • New river crossing for water and wastewater services. • A common approach to stormwater management for the entire growth areas is facilitated by council.

Place	By 2055	Critical pre-requisites
Rural residential enablement	<p>By 2055... careful consideration of Highly Productive Lands has led to the loosening of rural residential development rules in selected locations where performance criteria can be achieved. Zoning in these locations encourages sustainable land use, subdivision, and building design outcomes (such as off-grid or hybrid infrastructure solutions). Development will be led by the market.</p> <p>Rural residential performance criteria direct that this may take place in areas away from unacceptable natural or man-made hazards and protected natural areas, where it avoids Highly Productive Lands and does not reverse sensitivity constraints toward horticultural, agricultural, or industrial activities. It should not cause transport infrastructure maintenance and operating costs to rise or network safety performance to decrease.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further investigation of areas that meet the performance criteria. • District Plan change for rural residential areas that meet performance criteria.
Whakatāne township and Kopeopeo	<p>By 2055... The township remains the economic centre for the sub-region, with increasing vibrancy of the town centre supporting a local and sub-region wide catchment. Additional commercial land has been in the vicinity of the township.</p> <p>The focus for residential redevelopment and infill is areas of higher elevation, like the Kopeopeo area, as these areas are more resilient to flood hazards. This area sees a slow and steady pace of infill redevelopment, including more side-by-side multi-unit developments and low-rise apartments that meet a need for smaller sized houses. While there is some water and wastewater capacity to accommodate more development, stormwater management continues to be a limiting factor. In lower-lying areas, Whakatāne township has changed the District Plan to be more restrictive for infill and intensification in areas of the town that are more exposed to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District Plan review should include a natural hazard risk-based review of existing infill and intensification provisions throughout the township to mitigate risks from more people living in areas susceptible to evacuation orders and hazard events. • It also will re-examine the zoning provisions at Kopeopeo and other suitable areas (e.g., town centre, Hillcrest/Appenzell, others as may be determined), to ensure they are sufficiently enabling for intensification and infill development.

Place	By 2055	Critical pre-requisites
	residual risk from overdesign flood events.	
Te Teko	By 2055... a risk-based approach enables development in areas where effective mitigations can ensure people's safety or risk is minimal. Te Teko is within the Rangitāiki Floodplain and major urban stopbanks run adjacent to the Rangitāiki River as a flood protection. These assets provide for a specific level of service and are still prone to a risk of flood water breaching the defence in a rainfall event that is greater than the defence is designed for (residual risk). Te Teko is also located downstream from the Matahina hydro-electric dam. While not highlighted as an area for substantial growth through the spatial plan, there may be opportunities for small scale developments to meet local demand for housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of flood mapping. • A risk assessment and mitigations plan being prepared, which makes further recommendations about where and how development could take place.
Tāneatua	The significant flooding event in 2017 demonstrated the susceptibility of Tāneatua to flooding and a lack of safe evacuation routes. Flood mapping of the area is pending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of flood mapping. • A risk assessment and mitigations plan are prepared which make further recommendations. • Development may bring forward need for Pekatahi Bridge renewal.

Rural Southern Corridor

The focus for the Rural Southern Corridor is on iwi-led housing and economic regenerative opportunities particularly related to established forestry and horticultural industries and new opportunities like water bottling. While Our Places captures some of the associated aspirations for these lands, the main emphasis sits with iwi to provide leadership and direction for councils to support.

Place	By 2055...	Critical pre-requisites
Minginui and Te Whaiti	By 2055... an increase in Māori housing and papakāinga provides opportunities for people of Ngāti Whare descent to relocate to Māori Freehold Land in Minginui and Te Whaiti. Marae and surrounding lands are prepared as an emergency Civil Defence hub for their people in case of emergencies that may block the community from nearby townships. Minginui grows sustainably, providing for the needs of whānau and creating a central recreation area and access to essential services. These areas and services remain accessible to the Te Whaiti community. The development of infrastructure in Minginui reflects a focus on self-sufficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a master plan led by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whare and the Minginui Village Incorporated Society. <p>Review the District Plan to ensure it enables the master plan outcomes.</p>
Murupara	By 2055... Murupara residents have worked towards their top priorities: hāpori (community) spaces, improvements to public facilities, and access to healthcare and improved safety on roads and addressing housing needs. Two main changes have been considered through the spatial plan being changing Evan's Park into a residential zone and rezoning land to reorient the central business area to the main road to service the travelling public. More broadly, some of the areas zoned for residential development have been taken up for new homes.	<p>Assessment of the feasibility of land transfer of Evan's Park, followed by a District Plan change.</p> <p>Cost-benefit and feasibility analysis and engagement on shifting the commercial centre, possibly followed by a District Plan change for commercial rezonings, depending on the outcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise Murupara master plan. Infrastructure is expected to be delivered through existing infrastructure renewals programmes. Additional planning is required to confirm.

Coastal Eastern Corridor

The focus of Coastal Eastern Corridor is on iwi-led economic development opportunities, particularly including growth within horticulture and aquaculture industries. Papakāinga and other Māori housing opportunities are supported outcomes. Te Kaha is the primary local service centre.

Place	By 2055...	Critical pre-requisites
Te Kaha and other coastal areas	By 2055... Additional industrial areas have developed in relation to aquaculture/horticultural activities east of Ōpōtiki township up the coast, including the Te Kaha area. Papakāinga and Māori-led housing has grown to meet iwi aspirations, becoming a larger part of the overall housing mix.	District Plan changes to recognise industrial land uses and facilitate economic activities.

Areas not being considered further as part of the spatial plan

Some areas were put forward earlier as part of the technical work or by submitters. These have been reviewed against up-to-date natural hazards considerations. Due to natural hazards constraints, these areas are not being considered as places where additional development capacity should be allocated in addition to what is already in the District Plans.

Place	Key constraining factor(s)
Ōhope	Ōhope is a high demand residential location due to the environmental amenity of the coastal area. There are substantial constraints from flood hazards and coastal inundation that preclude much development taking place. Natural hazard mapping is under review, and there is unlikely to be substantial capacity to infill or intensification in this area.
Edgecumbe	Edgecumbe is within the Rangitāiki Floodplain and major urban stopbanks run adjacent to the Rangitāiki River as a flood protection measure for these settlements. These assets provide for a specific level of service and are still prone to a risk of flood water breaching the defence in a rainfall event that is greater than the defence is designed for (residual risk). Edgecumbe is also located downstream from the Matahina hydro-electric dam. In previous heavy rain events, floodwater has been pre-emptively released from the spill gates of the dam to relieve the water pressure and lessen the impact of flooding upstream and downstream. The significant flooding event (2017) demonstrated the susceptibility of the location.
Keepa Road area and Paroa Road area near to Whakatāne township	These areas are protected by stopbanks. These assets provide for a specific level of service and are still prone to a risk of flood water breaching the defence in a rainfall event that is greater than the defence is designed for (residual risk).
Māori Freehold Land to east of the Charter Club Ōhope	Moderate to high susceptibility to landslide from extreme rainfall. Some mitigation could be feasible and could support development, although this would be limited. Land to the east of Maraetotara Stream is within a floodplain. The area is partially located in low-lying area at the fringe of Pohutukawa Avenue and at the entrance of Ōhiwa Harbour, limiting yield potential.
Maraetotara Valley in Ōhope	Moderate to high susceptibility to landslide from extreme rainfall. Some mitigation could be feasible and could support development, although this would be limited. Land to the east of Maraetotara Stream is within a floodplain. Road access is likely to be compromised due to flooding.
Paerata Ridge, near Ōpōtiki township	Paerata Ridge is not a viable option for greenfield development due to topographical constraints and natural hazard risk (landslips). The area also has highly productive horticulture land with Land Use Class 2 soils which are to be protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
20 ha parcel across from Dunlop Road, Ōpōtiki, Lot 1 DP 7114	These sites are within the floodplain of Te Karaka and Kukumoa streams, exposed to river and stream flooding and coastal inundation. Very low elevations above sea level.
Baird Road, Ōpōtiki	Any development decisions around the Baird Road area require a precautionary approach for industrial development due to flood risk and wastewater treatment plant upgrades. Ōpōtiki District Council will decide on the best location to provide for future industrial growth within the wider area before a decision is made regarding Baird Road.