

Eastern Bay Spatial Plan



# He kõrero poto (ake) The short(er) story

May 2025











Thornton Beach, Whakatāne Cover: Church Street playground, Ōpōtiki



### Ō mātou Wāhi - Ka whakatakoto tēnei Mahere Whaitua i te ahunga o Te Moana o Toi ki te Rāwhiti me te whakarato mahere whāinga e ū ai te waka ki uta.

Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan sets out where the Eastern Bay of Plenty wants to head and provides a roadmap for how to get there.

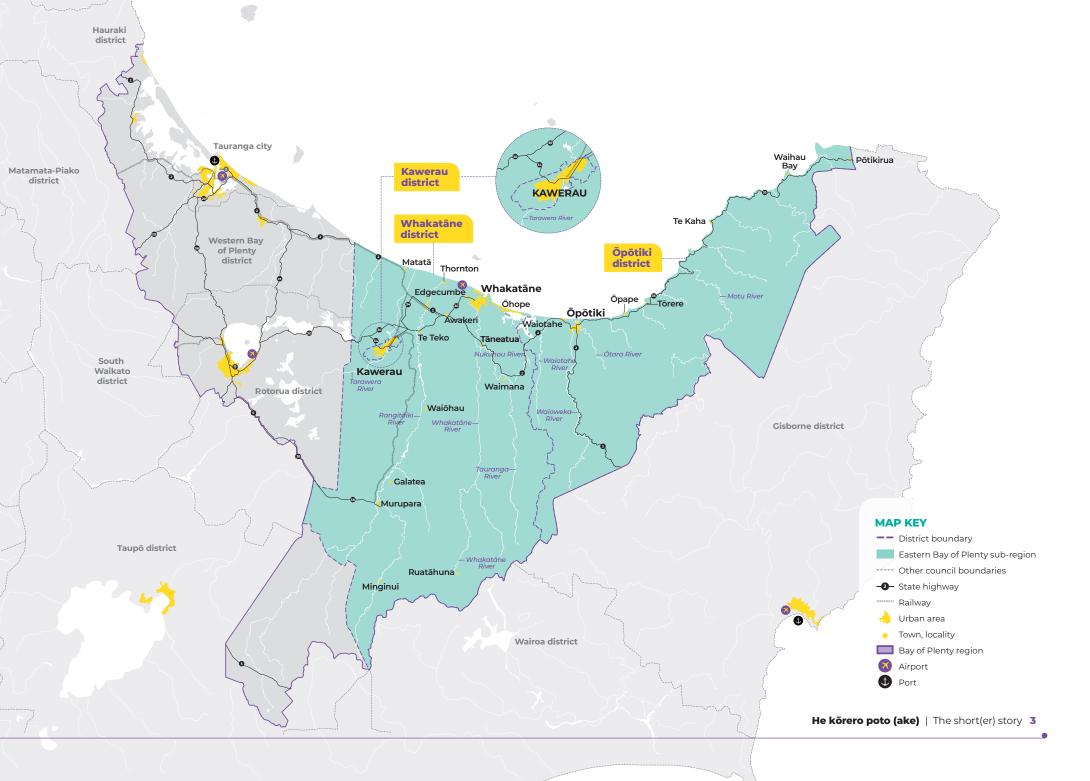
It's about providing safe places for people to live, supporting the local economy, adapting to climate change and protecting our environment – ultimately, ensuring people and places can thrive.

**Welcome to Our Places, Eastern Bay Spatial Plan.** We have created a plan that helps us set a vision for the future of the Whakatāne, Kawerau and Ōpōtiki Districts within the rohe of the iwi and hapū of Eastern Bay of Plenty in the wider Bay of Plenty Region.

The Eastern Bay's population could increase from 56,500 in 2022 to 68,000 by 2055. We are planning for 5,500 more houses and additional business land across the Eastern Bay in the next 30-years.

The Eastern Bay is renowned for its outstanding natural and cultural taonga, attracting people to our region over the centuries. We are all part of a continuum – there were those before us and there will be those after us.

This means we share a responsibility to care for the taonga we have inherited while meeting the needs of current and future generations. These needs include ensuring that our people can continue to safely live, work, visit and play in the Eastern Bay, now and in the future.



## Nā, he aha te mahere mō ngā kāinga hou e 5,500, me te whenua ā-pakihi hou?

## So, what's the plan for 5,500 new homes and more business land?

#### We expect to see most new growth taking place in Priority Growth Areas

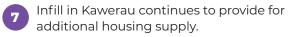
Most urban development is expected to take place in the Central Urban Corridor, beginning with Awakeri and Hukutaia.

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  - Awakeri to grow into an urban township of 2,000+ homes, with development in the short-medium term.
- 2 A master plan for the whenua Māori west of Coastlands.
- Economic and residential growth of Matatā in the medium-long term initially within existing zone-enabled areas, with potential to expand eastwards long term.
- Putauaki Trust Industrial Area continues to expand as the pre-eminent industrial hub for the sub-region.
- 5 Hukutaia develops into a community of 2,000 homes with a local commercial centre.

#### The townships cannot expand outwards, and infill will be an important but small part of meeting housing needs.



In Whakatāne township, infill continues to meet market demand in elevated locations like Kopeopeo.



Infill in Ōpōtiki continues at a controlled pace in the short term. Over the longer term, adaptive planning may be considered to mitigate natural hazard risks.

The Rural Southern Corridor focuses on iwiled housing and economic opportunities, particularly in tourism, forestry, horticulture, and potential new ventures like sustainable water bottling.



Minginui and Te Whaiti see an increase in Māori housing and papakāinga.

- Murupara sees consideration of the conversion of Evan's Park into a residential zone and enabling a commercial area on the Te Urewera Rainforest Route.
- Te Awa o Tauranga, Rūātoki, Ruatāhuna: Ngāi Tūhoe advance their aspirations to establish papakāinga outlined in *Tūhoe* blueprint: Housing 40-Year Vision.

Iwi in the Eastern Coastal Corridor have big plans for housing and businesses that would contribute to economic growth in the subregion. Iwi aim to establish papakāinga and Māori housing near marae and near Te Kaha to support expanding local industries like aquaculture and horticulture.

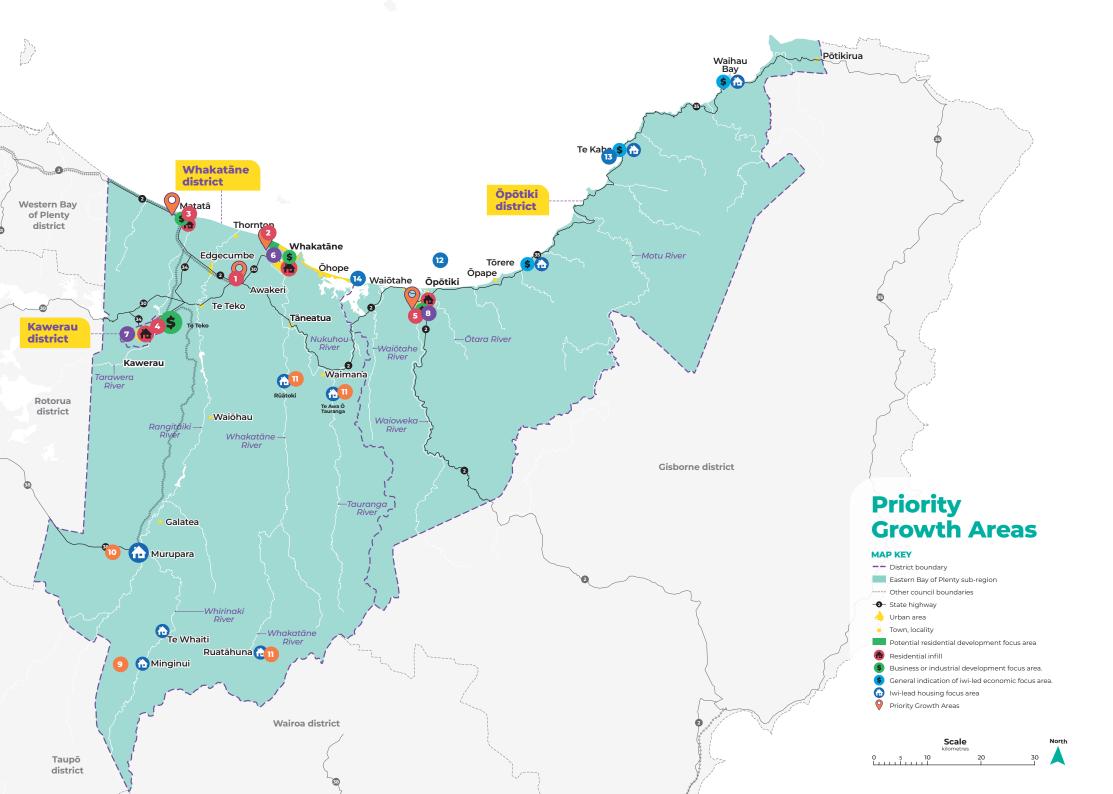
- Continue expansion of aquacultural developments.
- Development of planned spat hatchery and related facilities.

Expansion of the Mahi Haurahi Horticulture Centre.

#### What about other areas?

While the Priority Growth Areas are where we want changes to enable more development, other areas will see continued development. This includes ongoing infill and intensification of townships, rural residential development, papakāinga and infill of smaller communities as already enabled through District Plan provisions.

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He mea whakapū ngā tūmanako a ngā iwi me ngā hapū **Iwi and hapū aspirations are fundamental** Māoriled housing and economic activities are an integral part of the Eastern Bay. Each iwi and hapū holds whakapapa connections to their places of interest and must have an ongoing role in decision-making.

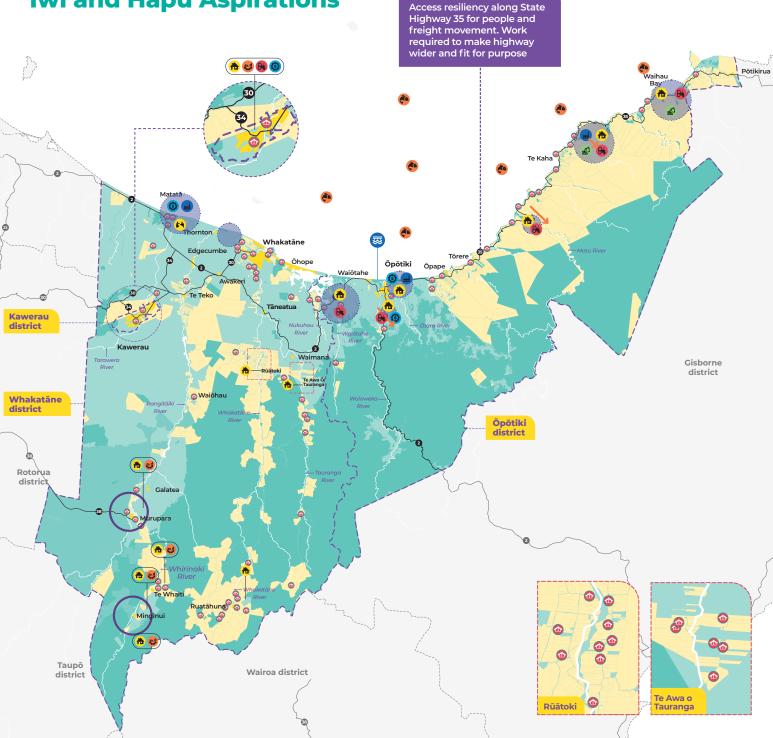
Iwi of the Eastern Bay have an enduring presence, grounded in whakapapa, whenua, and generations of connection to place.

Today, Māori Freehold Land makes up 22% of the Eastern Bay and iwi and Māori Land Trusts are key parties in the development of the Eastern Bay.

Iwi, recognised as rights holders under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, have significant interests in natural resources, including freshwater, and continue to play a vital role in local decision-making. The strong connection iwi and hapū have to whenua and place continue to inform and drive iwi-led aspirations for social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing.

This strength, shaped by whakapapa and a fixed presence in the region, continues to inform and drive iwi-led aspirations for social, cultural, economic, and environmental wellbeing.

### Iwi and Hapū Aspirations



IWI LED HOUSING INITIATIVES: Iwi led housing initiatives across the Eastern Bay include new housing, papakāinga developments and improvements and upgrades to existing houses.

#### COMMERCIAL AND REVITALISATION ACTIVITIES:

Support health and wellbeing in Murupara through economic development, which may include the establishment of a water bottling plant, commercial activities on the Te Urewera Rainforest Route and improving community infrastructure as part of the Murupara revitalisation programme.

Ngāti Whare have plans for revitalisation of Minginui and Te Whaiti including renewable energy projects, eco-tourism and strengthening educational facilities and Geothermal hot pools in Kawerau.

- SELF-SUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE: Ngāti Whare has
- goals for Minginui and Te Whaiti to support self-sufficiency including renewable energy and sustainable waste and water management.
- **ROADING:** Ngāti Whare have plans to develop, upkeep and maintain a forestry road for resiliency in case of access disruption to the main road to and from Minginui.
- **PRIMARY INDUSTRIES:** growth planned around Te Kaha and Raukokore. Hot houses in Kawerau for food sovereignty and economic outcomes.
- AQUACULTURE:
- planned for up to 20,000 ha of farms.
- COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES: a range of office based activities planned, e.g., tourism, education, environmental research.
  - **INDUSTRIAL:** uses linked to the aquaculture industry, mussel processing plant south of Ōpōtiki, mussel spat hatchery at Te Kaha.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS: Improved irrigation and reservoirs for agricultural industry; Hydro electricity generation near Te Kaha; SH35 resiliency for access to markets and services.

**TARAWERA RIVER:** Iwi are leading efforts to restore the mauri of the Tarawera Awa to Te Awa o Te Atua.

#### MAP KEY

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-- District boundary Māori land parcels 🙆 Marae Eastern Bay of Plenty sub-region 國 Öpötiki harbour ----- Other council boundaries Growth focus area O State highway Urban area Natural hazards and climate change resiliency Town, locality O Town Centre revitalisation Natural environment CNI Iwi Holdings Land

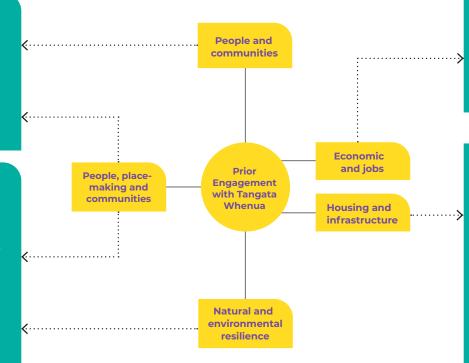
Ongoing conversations with iwi are crucial to identify how councils and others can support these aspirations and to understand as they change and new ones are identified. Ngái Túhoe have their aspirations in Túhoe - Te Uru Taumatua and tribal authorities' publications. Túhoe's long-term housing goals are outlined in the Túhoe Blueprint: Housing 40 Year Vision. For more information please refer to Part 3 of the Spatial Plan



## **Ngā whakawhiti kōrero a ngā iwi me ngā hapū** Iwi and hapū conversations

These matters came to the top as consistently important for iwi and hapū and have guided the content of Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan.

- Safe and connected community spaces
- Fair and equitable rationalisation of rates, resources, maintenance improvements and services
- Provide recreational areas, green spaces, areas for Rongoā Māori and raranga, community gardens for food security
- Te Mana o te Taiao
- Recognition, protection, and access
  to cultural infrastructure, sites and
  landscapes
- Valuing trusted voices and knowledge holders
- Connecting the past, present and future
- Balance economy and environment
- Recognise cultural identity is linked to environment
- Protect the environment and restore degraded ecosystems
- Ensure sustainable water
  management and water allocation,
  and provide for cultural flows

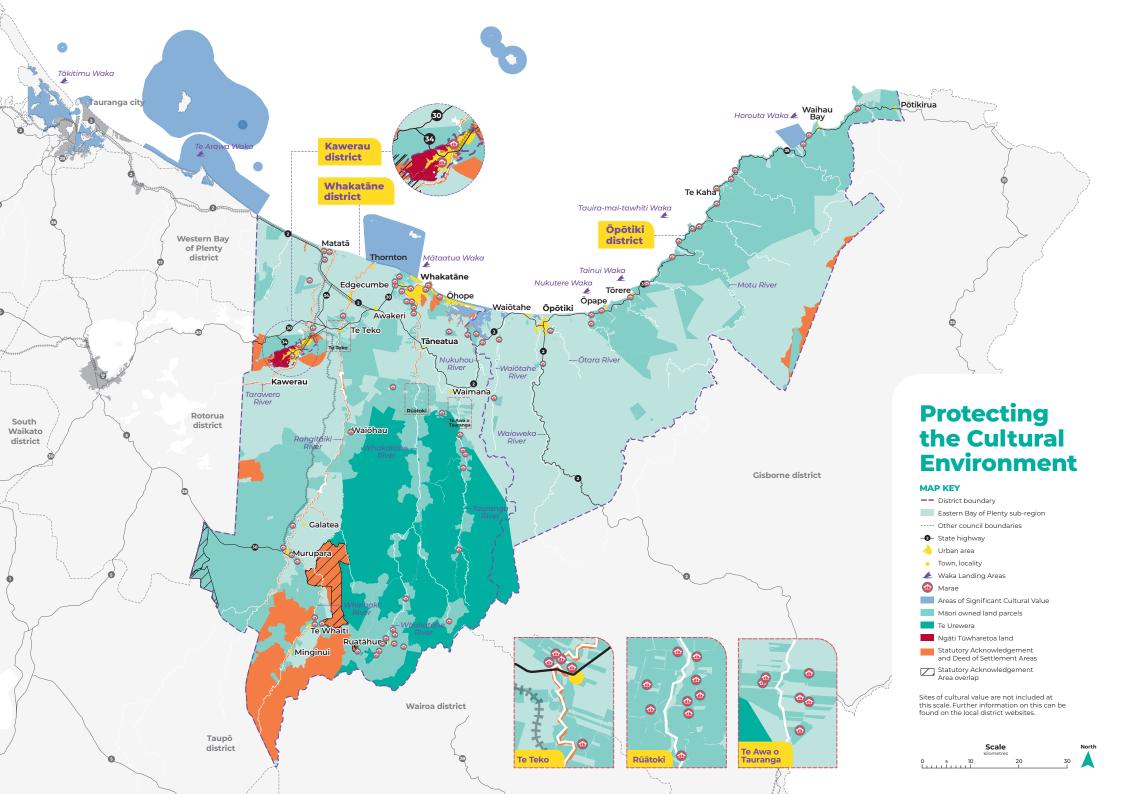


- Attractive and long-term economic opportunities for whānau
- Active exploration of partnership, co-management, and joint economic ventures and opportunities
- Affordability of rates is a concern

#### • Warm, safe and affordable housing

- Innovative integration of Māori housing solutions
- Community
- Papakāinga as innovative mixed-use spaces
- Reduce legislative barriers for underutilised Māori land
- Marae are significant cultural hubs, and support emergency civil defence purposes
- Sustainable infrastructure and energy from renewable sources
- Equitable infrastructure development and provision of services
- Good transport links and
   communication technology are critical

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## Ngā uara me ngā wawata o te hapori The community's values and aspirations

These matters came to the top as consistently important for the community and have guided the content of Our Places.

Our Places responds to the interests and ambitions set out by the community through engagement, with emphasis on quality of life and the environment.

Engagement with stakeholders and the community in late 2024 resulted in over 550 points of feedback and saw more than 300 people attending drop-in events and workshops.



**infrastructure** that is efficient. safe. sustainable, and that protects public health and the environment.

## ήŶ

**Housing** development to meet demand, that is affordable, caters for a diverse (and ageing) population, and provides choices like rural residential development. The construction of housing should be sustainable. incorporating renewable materials and energy sources.



Porritt Glade Lifestyle Village and inaugural resident Mrs Kathleen Cook. Kawerau

Development of Māori land. including for papakāinga, is enabled and supported.

000  $\approx$ 

Infrastructure and housing must be resilient to protect the community and ensure safety during natural disasters.

**Community lifestyle** needs to be preserved. The small town and rural character of our places support this. Each community is unique and if changes occur. careful consideration and involvement with the community must occur.

Create new employment opportunities by attracting new businesses and supporting existing ones to expand. This means ensuring plenty of land for businesses, while carefully balancing environmental quality with economic growth.

## Nā ngā mātāpono whakatau-take i arataki i ngā Whakaarotau Whakawhanake e tūtohua ana

Decision-making principles guided the recommended Priority Growth Areas

Based on the goals and public engagement feedback, a set of decision-making principles was adopted by the Project Governance Group to determine where development could be located and to guide how it should happen.

#### Principles that direct where we want development to happen

- **1.** First, consider development locations where there are 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 and schools, and have affordable community infrastructure to support community wellbeing.

#### Principles that are 'givens' that apply in all locations

- 4. Avoid and mitigate impacts on natural areas to protect and conserve.
- 5. Protect culturally significant areas from development.
- **6.** 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

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

#### What do we want to achieve?

Goals inform us of what to work towards over the next 30+ years. Developed by the Project Governance Group, these are aligned with the Long-Term Plans vision and community outcomes across the sub-region. They reflect previous engagement and consultation and take into account iwi values and aspirations.

#### Goals

#### Whai hauora me te whakarauora

Healthy and healing

Ngā ohaoha toitū, kanorau hoki, e tuku ana i ngā mahi me ngā kaupapa mō te iwi whānui

Sustainable, diversified economy providing jobs and purpose for our people

Ngā tāngata, ngā hapori me ngā tauwāhi e hono ana, e tōnui ana, e manawaroa ana hei whakaata i te hītori me ngā tūmanako o tātou katoa

Connected, thriving, resilient people, communities & places that reflect our history and aspirations

#### Who has been involved?

Our Places was developed in partnership with local, regional and central government along with iwi partners from across the sub-region. In late 2024 engagement with the community took place. The Eastern Bay community is closely connected and we need a plan to implement this together as a sub-region.

#### lwi\*

Ngāi Tai Iwi Authority Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Manawa Te Mana o Ngāti Rangitihi Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whare Iwi Trust Te Rūnanga o Te Whānau a Apanui Te Tāwharau o Te Whakatōhea Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau

#### **Public stakeholders**

Friends of Our Places People living in the Eastern Bay

#### Councils

Whakatāne District Council Kawerau District Council Ōpōtiki District Council Bay of Plenty Regional Council

#### **Central Government Agencies**

NZ Transport Agency - Waka Kotahi Kāinga Ora Ministry of Housing and Urban Development Ministry of Education Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora

\* Iwi authorities involved in the project at the time of this report; not all have chosen to actively participate in the project, but are being kept informed

#### How does change happen?

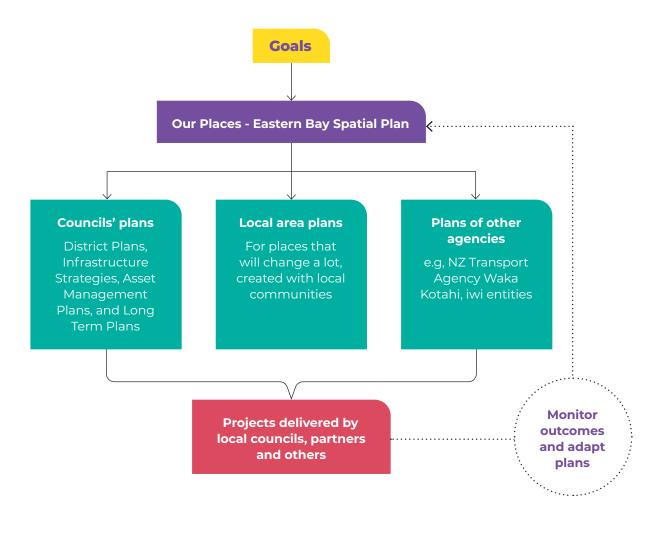
Our Places supports strong partnerships to guide decisions and priorities about shaping growth and development.

#### It also helps align regulation and investment, ensuring that we can maximise the benefits of integrated opportunities that contribute to achieving our goals.

The plan guides District Plans or zoning changes, funding decisions, and other policies. Each council will work with its local community to plan and undertake individual actions leading to the goals.









### Goal 1

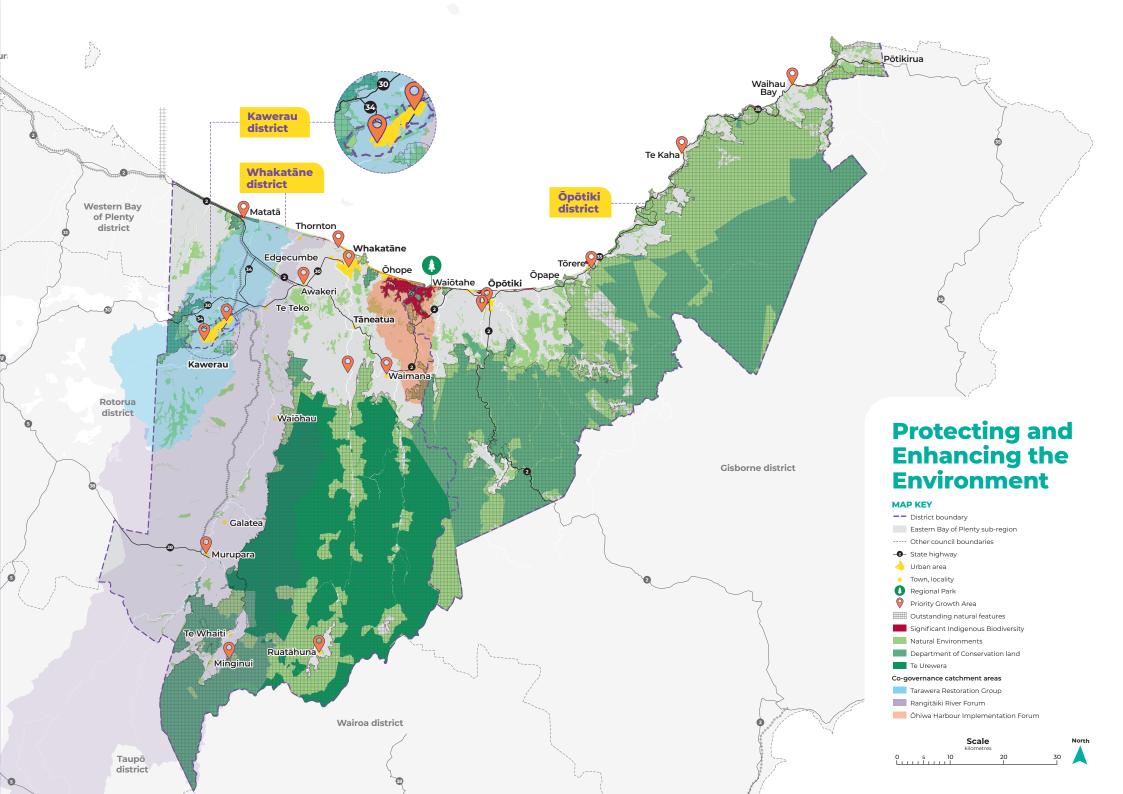
## Whai hauora me te whakarauora Healthy and healing

The Eastern Bay has outstanding natural and cultural taonga, attracting people to the area over the centuries.

The intrinsic values of nature and biodiversity are linked to our health and well-being.

The effects of activities, including agriculture, horticulture, urbanisation, and climate change hazards, place pressure on our land, freshwater, and marine ecosystems.

The Eastern Bay's natural and cultural taonga are under pressure, and ongoing growth will continue this trend. We need to prioritise the natural and cultural environment more highly within decision-making processes, especially as we plan new areas for development.





### Ngā ohaoha toitū, kanorau hoki, e tuku ana i ngā mahi me ngā kaupapa mō te iwi whānui

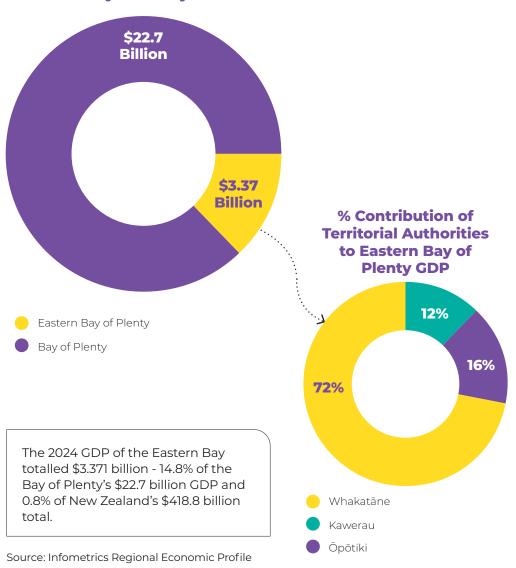
### Sustainable, diversified economy providing jobs and purpose for our people

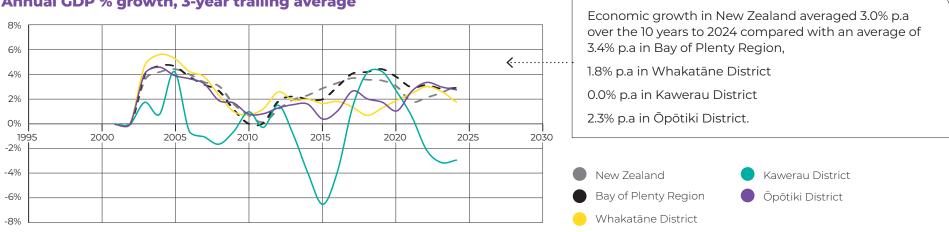
The Eastern Bay faces economic challenges, including lower GDP growth, median incomes, and higher unemployment compared to the national average. The sub-region already contributes to GDP, including from primary industry and aquaculture. However, it has significant potential for growth.

Iwi are major investment partners across aquaculture, horticulture, agriculture, tourism, forestry, and water resources.

The Eastern Bay has opportunities to strengthen its economic performance. By leveraging investments and infrastructure projects, we can boost the local economy and create new job opportunities.



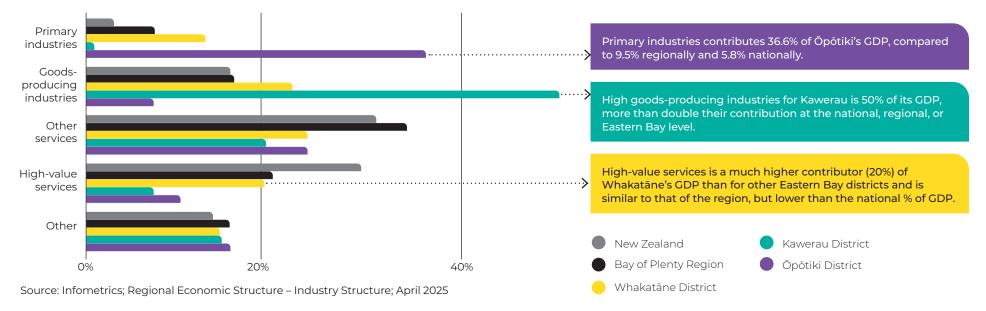




Annual GDP % growth, 3-year trailing average

Source: Infometrics; Regional Economy – Economic Growth; April 2025

#### Economic structure by broad sector (% of total, year to March 2024



The Strand, Whakatāne

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ROSITAS

the good life

Ō mātou Wāhi - ka whakatinanahia te Mahere Whaitua o Te Moana o Toi ki te Rāwhiti i te taha o te Rautaki Whanake Ōhanga

Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan will be implemented alongside the Sub-Regional Economic Development Strategy

Our Places supports the vision of the Sub-Regional Economic Development Strategy by focusing on three key areas to create jobs and accelerate economic growth. It does this by leveraging existing industry specialisations and the unique strengths of each district.

• Aquaculture in Ōpōtiki

Goal 2

- Green Industry in Kawerau
- Commercial and residential development in Whakatāne

Housing supply, infrastructure, and transport connections are three items Our Places addresses to support the Sub-Regional Economic Development Strategy.

Vision	Unlocking resilient economic development for the Eastern Bay of Plenty By 2050, the Eastern Bay of Plenty is a prosperous, high-productivity subregion with flourishing communities and robust infrastructure. The Eastern Bay's diversified economy, underpinned by a strong bi-cultural foundation, supports nationally and internationally competitive industries, ensuring a vibrant and inclusive future that fosters social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing.			
	Ōpōtiki: Aquaculture centre of national significance	Kawerau: Green industrial and energy hub	Whakatāne: The Eastern Bay's commercial and residential heart	
evelopment focus areas	<ul> <li>The largest and most productive aquaculture region in NZ, providing</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Forefront of green energy and a premier engineering and</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Dynamic business network and regional service centre</li> </ul>	
	direct benefits to locals	manufacturing hub	<ul> <li>Coastal living with transport links</li> </ul>	
	• A full-service aquaculture centre with services across the value chain	<ul> <li>Subregional freight gateway to the Golden Triangle</li> </ul>	throughout the Bay and beyond	
		Existing economic base		
	Workforce Developmen		Housing	
	Success: Fostering an engaged, skilled local workforce aligned with curren	+ «······»	Success: Enabling and optimising for the right housing number, mix, and locations, to	
ss-cutting	and future industry needs.		enable prosperity and liveability.	
onstraints Id success	Transport & Connectivity	Capital	Success: Private industry can	
and success statements			elevate to the next level of size	
	network that improves connectivity withir		and scale, supported by enabling	
	the region and between the regions	5. <b>10-0'</b>	public initiatives.	

Source: Sub-Regional Economic Development Strategy

#### Goal 3

Ngā tāngata, ngā hapori me ngā tauwāhi e hono ana, e tōnui ana, e manawaroa ana hei whakaata i te hītori me ngā tūmanako o tātou katoa

### Connected, thriving, resilient people, communities and places that reflect our history and aspirations

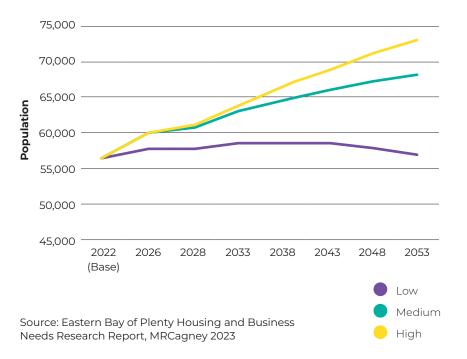
The Eastern Bay's population could increase from 56,500 in 2022 to 68,000 by 2055. This potential growth necessitates more housing and business spaces, presenting an opportunity to plan for diverse housing types and business developments.

Most commercial land can be accommodated in existing townships (with some new land area needed close to Whakatāne township). The Putauaki Trust Industrial Area in Kawerau is the focus for large- scale industrial activities, with additional land needed around Õpōtiki District and eastwards up the coast.

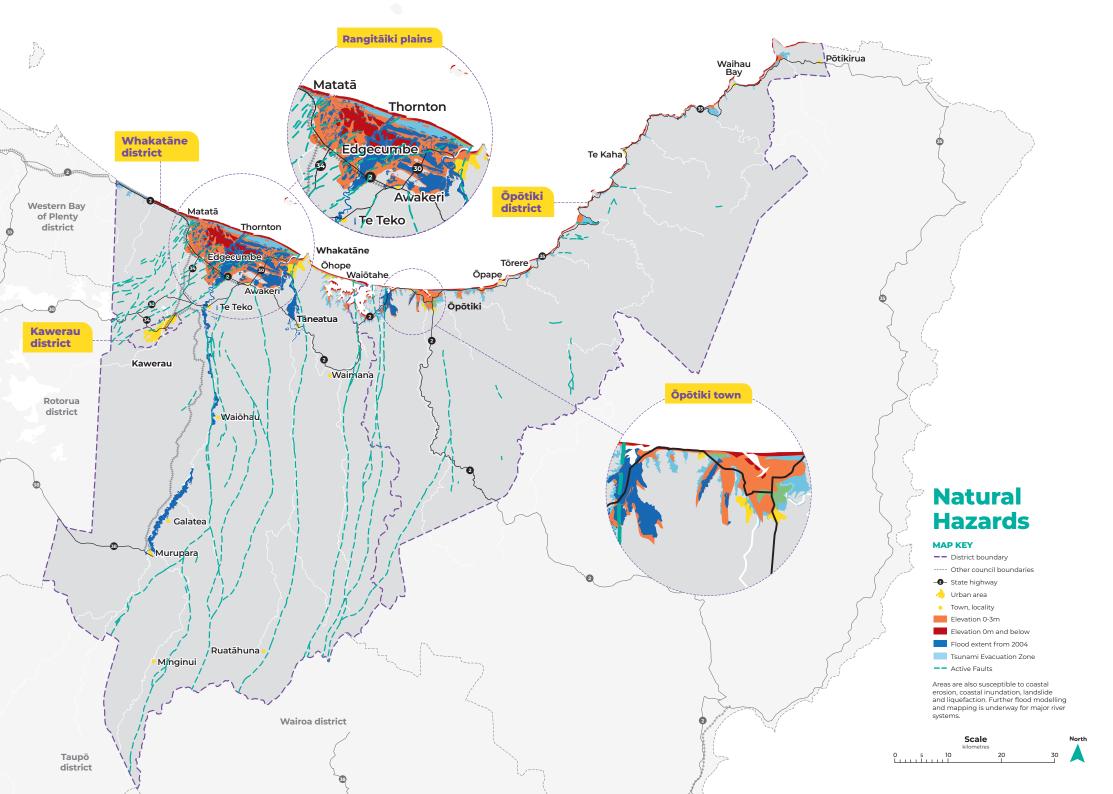
Growth in the Eastern Bay is significantly constrained by natural hazards and a changing climate. **Future growth will need to occur in safe locations** and manage natural hazard risk on people, property and infrastructure, including flood schemes.

We also need to assess natural hazard risk to existing communities and consider options to manage that risk in the future. Table 1: Projected demand for housing and business land 2023-2055.

Activity type	Approximate demand 2023-2055
Residential	5,500 dwelling units
Commercial and business services	26 ha or more
Industrial and manufacturing	60 ha or more



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#### Goal 3

E hono ana ki te hōkaitanga nui. Nā nga hononga pakari o Te Moana o Toi ki te Rāwhiti ki te rohe whānui i whakahohe i ngā arawātea taurahi ā-rohe.

Connected to the big picture. The Eastern Bay's strong connections to the broader region enable regional-scale opportunities.

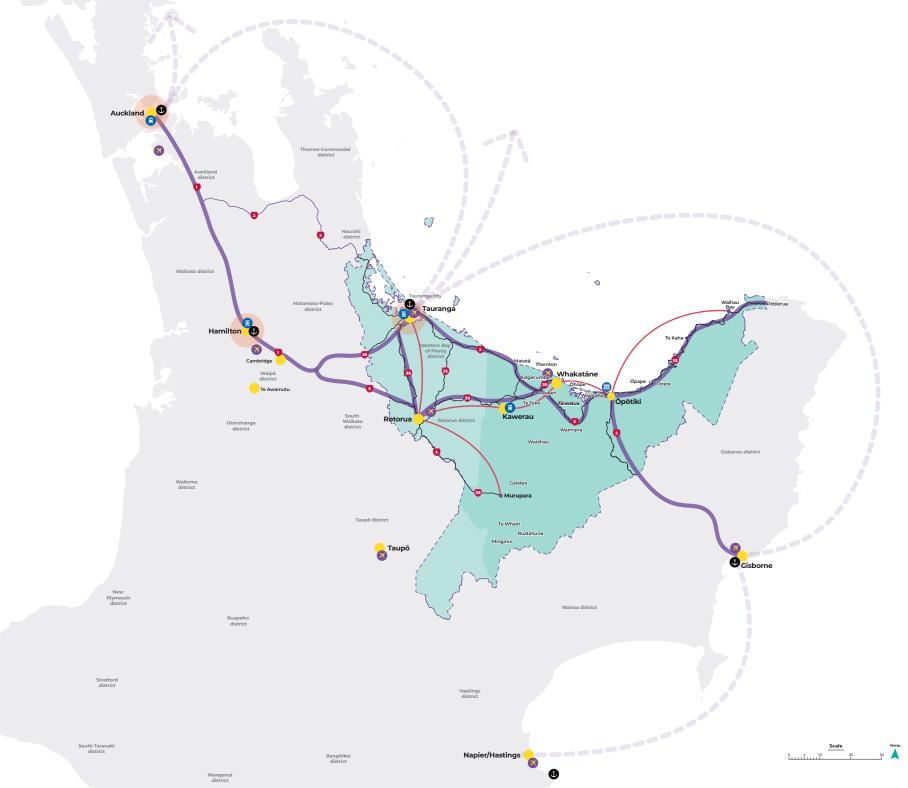
There are growing employment hubs nearby to the Eastern Bay. Places like the Rangiuru Business Park, located near Te Puke, are developing quickly within commuting distance for Eastern Bay residents. This is expected to support ongoing demand for residential uses in the western part of the Eastern Bay.

Goods and freight from all parts of the Eastern Bay must reliably reach the Ports of Tauranga and Gisborne to access export markets and support a strong local economy. Reliable transport connections are equally important for people to access healthcare and other essential services in larger urban centres.

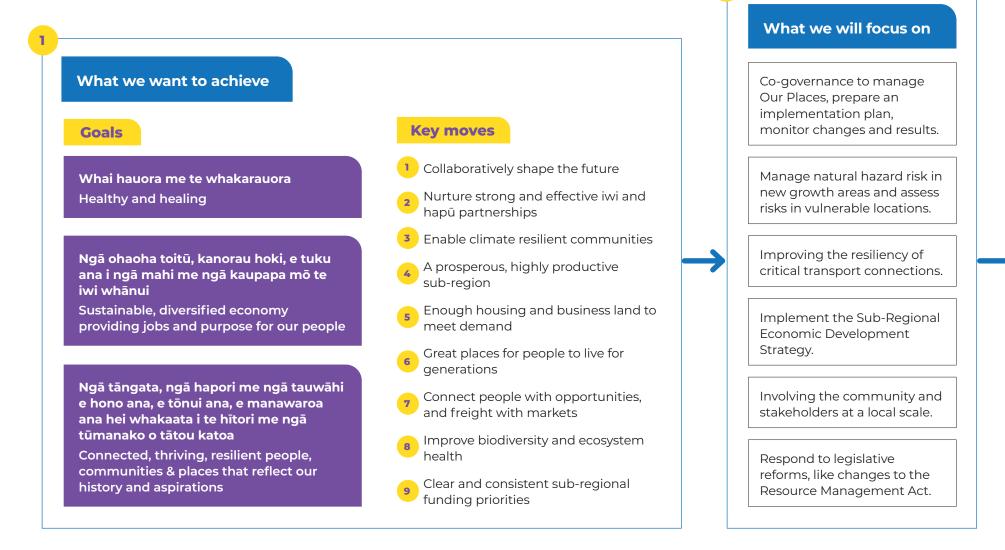
### Regional and Upper North Island Connections

#### MAP KEY





## **Ka pēhea tā mātou whakatutuki i tēnei?** How will we do this?



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What we each need to do	o next
Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council	Continue to support local authorities to achieve growth objectives and proactively work together to manage stormwater, natural hazard risk, protect sensitive receiving environments and protect the levels o service of flood schemes.
Kawerau District Council	The success of the Putauaki Trust Industrial Area will continue with ongoing expansion as the pre-eminent industrial growth area for the sub-region. District Plan changes will also be completed to enable more infil and papakāinga housing opportunities.
Ōpōtiki District Council	Planning for and investment in the Hukutaia Growth Area will continue. An enabling planning framework will support iwi economic and housing aspirations throughout the Eastern Coastal Corridor. Further assessment of natural hazards risks to the existing township will inform future risk management planning and decision-making. Completion of an industrial needs assessment will lead to a District Plan change.
Whakatāne District Council	Whakatāne District's Growth Strategy will work at a local place-based scale and lead to structure plans, District Plan changes and infrastructure investment strategies to unlock the Priority Growth Areas of the Central Urban Corridor. The focus will be on Awakeri, Matatā, and whenua Māori west of Coastlands, with ongoing dialogue involving iwi, hapū and the community.
NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi	The State Highway network is the main arterial route of the Eastern Bay, providing an important connection for people and freight. NZTA has a role to play in order to improve the resiliency of the State Highway (especially SH35) and support network investments that enable Priority Growth Areas like access changes around Awakeri.

## Mā te aha mātou e mōhio ai kei te pai ā mātou mahi? How do we know when we are doing well?

Population and employment growth rates will vary from year to year. Councils need to plan for this variability and adjust the pace of implementation accordingly.

The pace of implementation will be directed by available resources and funding balanced with demand from changing populations and economic growth. The strategy identifies a short-term need to invest in Awakeri and Hukutaia as the two Priority Growth Areas,, which are considered the easiest to progress quickly and affordably.

Performance indicators will help us understand how well we are progressing.

This initial list focuses on getting us started.

#### **Performance indicators (initial list)**

A Project Governance Group is confirmed with an approved terms of reference by July 2026. Councils provide operational funding in Annual Plans and Long-Term Plans to support the Governance Group's operations and ensure that iwi partners can fully participate.

A plan change and structure plan is undertaken for Awakeri and Hukutaia.



Infrastructure requirements for Priority Growth Areas are identified in relevant Long-Term Plans and Regional Land Transport Plans.

Development of whenua Māori west of Coastlands, or extension of Matatā beyond existing zoned capacity, does not proceed until the Awakeri development is established with a funded infrastructure programme.

Population change, residential units consented, and commercial floorspace consented is monitored and reported at least annually to the Project Governance Group.

The Project Governance Group decides whether a review is needed within 12 months after a national election.

In the short term natural hazard risk assessments are completed for Whakatāne township and Ōpōtiki township to inform future risk management decisions and planning.

Integrated stormwater management planning is completed for Awakeri, Matatā and Hukutaia.

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Eastern Bay Spatial Plan

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