



6 March 2020

Robert Brodnax  
Project Director  
Urban Form Transport Initiative  
Tauranga

Via email to [info@ufti.org.nz](mailto:info@ufti.org.nz)

Dear Robert

NZKGI supports the purpose of the Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI) and agrees that change is required to support the region's growth. NZKGI has provided insights to UFTI via SmartGrowth, attending UFTI meetings and meeting with Western Bay of Plenty Council staff on urban development along the Eastern Corridor.

Approximately 80% of New Zealand's kiwifruit crop is grown in the Bay of Plenty, providing a significant contribution to the Bay of Plenty regional economy, with \$1.18 billion in revenue being generated for the region in 2017/2018. Zespri has committed to global sales revenue of \$4.5 billion by 2025. The projected growth of the industry will contribute significantly to the Bay of Plenty GDP increasing to \$2.04 billion by 2029/2030. Employment in the kiwifruit industry is also expected to increase by 133% to 25,091 FTE by 2029/2030. There are 2,582 orchards in the Bay of Plenty with an average size of 4.46ha.

The kiwifruit industry is planning substantial growth over the next 10 years to meet market demand and it is expected that there will be expansion of orchards on the eastern corridor of Paengaroa, Te Puke and Pongakawa. NZKGI supports eastern corridor urban growth and supports the principles of programme three however would like to see consideration of the rail enabled growth principles contained in programme one to be considered as part of programme three.

NZKGI doesn't agree that the need for future urban development in the eastern corridor is driven by a shortfall in capacity elsewhere. In order for the industry to attract and retain good, skilled workers, permanent and seasonal housing in the area of work is essential and there is insufficient housing stock to meet growth in the eastern area. Further to the expansion of the kiwifruit industry, the development of the Rangiuru Business Park looks to provide significant job opportunities which will further stress the housing market. Providing

housing in the area of work minimises disruptions to families by reducing commuting times, improves work life balance opportunities, reduces transport congestion and environmental emissions. These should all be factors in the decision-making process when considering urban growth along the eastern corridor.

While NZKGI supports urban development along the eastern corridor, the following factors need to be considered

#### Reverse Sensitivity

NZKGI recognises that rezoning existing rural land to residential brings challenges where houses are built next to orchards and the impacts of reverse sensitivity must be considered. The industry has experienced reverse sensitivity in other areas of the region, particularly Te Puna and Omokoroa where growth has been allowed outside of a long-term planning focus.

#### Water

Current infrastructure would not be able to support the additional urban centre. With limited water availability in eastern areas due to over allocated catchments<sup>1</sup> to support an urban area of 5000-10,000 people, significant expenditure in water infrastructure would be required.

Since 5 February 2020, a water ban has been in place in Te Puke area due to the prolonged dry weather conditions. The Waiāri Water Supply Scheme will mainly service the Papamoa coastal strip/Te Tumu growth areas and in time will provide a backup for Western Bay of Plenty District Council's Te Puke water supply however the water take will not be sufficient to service 5000-10,000 people.

#### Land

A new urban centre of 5000-10000 houses would require 167 to 334 hectares of vacant land plus additional space for infrastructure. The land would need to be well located to avoid low lying land, coastal areas and highly productive land. Much of the eastern corridor is low lying land with many areas susceptible to flooding and liquefaction. Consideration under the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land must be a priority and analysis of existing soils and productive capability must be undertaken.

#### Transport

There are ~16,500 seasonal employees in the Bay of Plenty over the harvest period. Having a passenger rail service from Omokoroa to Paengaroa would provide a much-needed public transport network for these workers to get to work on orchards and in packhouses however consideration should also be given to extending the passenger rail service to Katikati. Consideration of flexible public transport routes and schedules (whether road, rail or ferry) during peak harvest season should be a consideration.

Ready access for freight to the port will remain critical for the Bay of Plenty economy. The Tauranga Northern Link will ease congestion and safety concerns on State Highway 2 however there needs to be consideration given to accessing the Port on congested city routes -eg- Hewletts Road

NZKGI submits that an innovative, progressive vision for the region is required to meet growth demands. While the status quo may have sustained the region, that is no longer the case. With the economic return that the industry provides to the region, and the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://boprc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=7a2ff1e0b0454bdb89498f0e019a23dd>

employment opportunities provided, consideration of urban growth and the industry needs to be considered side by side to enable both to thrive.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Cameron', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sarah Cameron  
**Senior Policy Analyst**