

TO: Western Bay of Plenty District Council

SUBMISSION ON: Draft Western Bay of Plenty District Long Term Plan

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1. The kiwifruit industry in New Zealand

The kiwifruit industry is a major contributor to regional New Zealand returning \$2 billion directly to rural communities in 2019/20. There are 2,800 growers with 13,000 hectares of producing orchards. There are 10,000 permanent employees and up to 25,000 seasonal jobs during the peak season. The industry is expected to grow its global sales to \$4.5 billion by 2025 which is an increase from \$3.1 billion in 2018/19.

2. Kiwifruit in Bay of Plenty

The 2019 Bay of Plenty season produced 124 million trays and contributed \$1.5 billion to the Bay of Plenty economy. Europe, Japan and China are the region's biggest export markets taking about 75 per cent of the crop. Approximately 80% of New Zealand's kiwifruit crop is grown in the Bay of Plenty. During the 2019/20 season there were 8,095 permanent employees and 16,426 seasonal employees.

3. General comments

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Long Term Plan (LTP).

It has been noted that the rate increase examples provided are for residential properties and orchards however it is unclear if orchard is defined as kiwifruit or avocado. NZKGI is unsure why orchards have been singled out as a comparison and not other industries. It is not until the reader gets to 'What Does it Mean for Your Property' section at the back of the document that industry examples are given.

4. Western Bay Growth

Accordingly to council's website, the western Bay of Plenty is one of the fastest growing regions in New Zealand. This outlook is supported by economic data from Priority One¹ and a population growth of 17.5% since the 2013 census.

The LTP key projects focus on community services like building swimming pools, libraries, boat ramps and elder housing. While there is no denying these are important community

¹ <https://www.priorityone.co.nz/our-economy>

facilities, NZKGI is very concerned by the lack of consideration given to funding to support the current and forecasted growth in the region. While [Provincial Growth Funding](#) and [Infrastructure Funding](#) has allowed some projects to progress, there seems a sizeable gap of investment to enable growth across the western bay district.

Western Bay District Council is part of SmartGrowth and the Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI). The Connected Centres programmes forms a key part of the [UFTI](#) final report. The report found that due to the growth expected in the eastern areas, a new urban centre should be prioritised and a timeline established for council to progress district plan changes (within 4-10 years) and complete a new eastern settlement masterplan (10-20 years).

The below table shows additional dwelling allocation required to meet population growth throughout the western Bay of Plenty.

Proposed dwelling allocations for 30 years to support the Connected Centres programme

Areas	Dwelling allocation 2020-2050	Notes
Operative zoned land (undeveloped greenfield) across the sub-region	10,000	
Intensification of existing developed urban land	10,800	Primarily focused on intensification in Te Papa followed by Otūmoetai (and surrounding suburbs) and the coastal strip from Mount Maunganui to Bayfair/Arataki.
Western Bay District Rural lifestyle	1,800	
Te Tumu	5,000	Still has capacity remaining at 30 years
Tauriko West	3,000	Estimate of full build-out capacity within 30 years
Keenan Road	1,200	Still has capacity remaining at 30 years
Omokoroa	1,800	Estimate of full build-out capacity within 30 years
Katikati	750	Estimate of full build-out capacity within 30 years
Te Puke	250	Estimate of full build-out capacity within 30 years
Eastern Corridor new settlement	800	Stage 1 of master planned new Eastern urban centre in Rangiuuru/Paengaroa area
TOTAL	35,400	

NZKGI strongly recommends that council reconsiders its long-term approach to funding key projects and infrastructure. Funding status quo can no longer be an option. Forward innovative thinking is required to ensure the region is best placed to meet growth. While investment in community services is essential, there needs to be sufficient housing stock available for the community to live in.

5. Roading network

The proposals set out in the LTP are reactive and it is not clear what roads have been prioritised for the renewals, reseals and seal widening programme

According to the LTP, there are:

- 1061km of local roads
- 172km of unsealed roads
- 245km of State Highways (243km according to Waka KoTahi)

NZKGI understands that 23 unsealed roads were prioritised for seal extensions from 2016-2021. It is not clear what roads have been prioritised beyond 2021. NZKGI notes that on one of the unsealed roads (Williams Road North), which is yet to be completed, there is a 16.26-hectare kiwifruit orchard. Airborne dust created from unsealed roads can cause health issues as well as deposit unwanted particles on kiwifruit. The fruit does not get washed as they

are picked without a stalk attached and if the picking wound gets wet, the fruit will rot. NZKGI asks that sealing of Williams Rod North is completed within the agreed timeframe.

State Highway 2 is a major freight network for packhouses from Katikati to Tauranga transporting kiwifruit to the Port. There are seven packhouses on State Highway 2 (or on side roads) with both permanent and seasonal workers. Because of seasonal accommodation limitations, some workers travel along State Highway 2 from Katikati or Tauranga (or further) to work. NZKGI strongly supports an integrated approach with Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Waka Kotahi to prioritise construction of this road. The industry continues to be concerned about:

- The poor quality of the road layout and surfaces
- High risk driver behaviour: speed, unsafe overtaking, tailgating and driver impatience, distraction, impaired driving
- Dangerous intersections between State Highway 2 and side roads involving entering/exiting a high-speed environment with poor visibility.

Roads are a vital part of the region's transport network. All of the western bay regions' kiwifruit is transported by truck to the Port of Tauranga therefore the importance of enabling efficient freight movements to and from the Port is essential. Delays on the network result in reduced economic efficiency and lead to economic loss. The kiwifruit industry is a high growth industry that increases growth and production year on year resulting in increased truck movements.

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.

6. Other LTP considerations

NZKGI supports investment in the community - pools, halls, walking/cycling, additional security measures (more CCTV) but doesn't agree that kiwifruit growers are being asked to pay more for swimming pools and CCTV cameras than residential property owners. NZKGI strongly supports a one rate approach for these services.

7. Other comments

To encourage growth, strong local centres and connected neighbourhoods will require a transformational change in the way the region is progressed. The western bay of plenty sub-region is one of the fastest growing areas in New Zealand and the challenge is to make sure urban development and transport infrastructure is planned and delivered to meet those needs. This will require future forward planning and a transformational outlook. The status quo of maintaining existing infrastructure and buildings is an outdated thought pattern. NZKGI supports a more aggressive approach to planning.