

Shaping our **TOMORROW**

Ngā rā anamata

ANNUAL PLAN 2019/20

Have your say - Kōrero mai



WHAKATĀNE WATERFRONT AND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

The Whakatāne waterfront and town centre regeneration project aims to redevelop Whakatāne's CBD, re-establish connections to the riverfront and provide fit-for-purpose port infrastructure to support growth in our marine and tourism economies. It will also contribute to the creation of a vibrant waterfront and town centre – a place where locals and visitors will choose to spend time – and to job growth and a more prosperous community. A further goal is to support Whakatāne's destination marketing focus as the 'gateway to Whakaari/White Island'. We have an opportunity now to partner with Central Government, through the Provincial Growth Fund, but we need to act quickly to ensure we gain the crucial funding support need to make the transformational project happen.

Background

Over the past year, Council has been progressing the redevelopment of the deteriorating main commercial wharf and associated waterfront area. This has involved working closely with Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Awa Group Holdings Limited, recognising the parties' significant interests in the Whakatāne waterfront and the need to consider cultural and historic factors in any development plans.

The main Commercial Wharf is coming to the end of its working life. Parts of the wharf are in poor condition, and the existing facility does not provide enough berths to meet commercial and recreational demand, which is limiting current and future economic opportunities.

To progress the wharf redevelopment, Council sought funding assistance from the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) – a Government initiative which aims to invest \$1 billion over the next year to increase productivity, employment and innovation in the provinces, and help regional economies to reach their potential. The Bay of Plenty has been identified as an economic development surge region for PGF investment and a report prepared by Stakeholder Strategies has indicated that key PGF 'catalytic infrastructure' projects in the Eastern Bay of Plenty will create more than 2500 new jobs by 2030. More than 400 of those jobs will result from the Waterfront and Town Centre Regeneration project. The additional economic activity generated across the Eastern Bay by the PGF projects is expected to create further employment and add substantially to a broad range of community wellbeing measures, including employment rates and average household incomes.

Feedback from the PGF encouraged the Council to consider broader developmental aspirations for the town centre, in conjunction with the wharf project. This approach aligns with the Council's economic development directions and builds on the community feedback provided through the Town Vision in 2008 (refreshed in 2016) and the Ki Mua programme (2017).

Key themes from those consultation processes emphasised the community's desire to:

- Reconnect the town with the river and harbour
- Recognise and celebrate Whakatāne's rich Māori heritage
- Create vibrant, connected, resilient and sustainable communities.

Timeline

- **December 2018** – Minister Shane Jones announced PGF funding of \$646,000 towards the development of the Whakatāne Town Centre Regeneration programme.
- **August 2019** – Whakatāne Town Centre Regeneration Programme Implementation funding application due.

Key benefits

Key benefits will be derived from:

- Direct and indirect job creation in the marine and tourism sectors
- Increased tourism numbers and spending
- Meeting the demand for berthage and commercial facilities
- Enabling growth through quality infrastructure
- Delivering transformational change through town centre development
- Unlocking capital value in the CBD
- Enabling Iwi economic, commercial and cultural aspirations on the waterfront
- Improved amenities and recreation opportunities in the town centre
- Enhancing the value and sustainability of the Harbour Fund-owned CBD property investment portfolio.

Key Deliverables

The primary output of this programme is a Town Centre Reference Plan that will guide the future development of our town centre and waterfront. This will involve the development of the following workstreams.

A Destination Management Plan - a strategic vision and objectives for developing, managing and promoting a sustainable tourism destination, through investment in infrastructure and amenities to support tourism offerings and grow tourism spending.

Design plans for a new wharf - recognising wharf redevelopment as the key catalyst in the regeneration programme, this workstream will determine an optimal design for a new wharf which meets current and future berthage demand, while balancing the cultural, ecological, hydrological impacts of any proposal.

Investment strategy - identification of long-term commercial opportunities that will benefit the economic growth of the town, while also supporting our short-medium term aspirations. This includes reviewing the Council's Harbour Endowment property and investment portfolio, to ensure that we have the right mix of risk, return and diversity to maximise the benefits available to the community.

Once the outputs of the key workstreams have been analysed and incorporated into the Town Centre Reference Plan, we will submit a PGF application for implementation funding.

What are the costs and who pays?

In the coming year, funding of \$1.546 million will be required for the final stage of the business case and for detailed design. While the Provincial Growth Fund will meet a large portion of the costs, increased local funding is also required. This local share would come from the Harbour Fund (\$200,000 - no rating impact) and from General Rates (\$250,000). Later stages of the project anticipate a contribution from the PGF as well as a local funding commitment. Local funding is already included in our Long Term Plan budget but if the required amount changes significantly, we will undertake further public consultation.

Increase in total rates over previous year:
0.44% in 2019/20

Increase in total debt over previous year:
n/a

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please feel free to contact the Council.
Phone: 07 306 0500; Email info@whakatane.govt.nz
whakatane.govt.nz/annual-plan