

FUTURE IN FOCUS

Arotahi ki
Anamata



Summary of community ideas,
aspirations and feedback for the
future of the Whakatāne District

*He whakarāpopototanga o ngā whakaaro,
ngā whāinga, me te whakahokinga kōrero o te
hapori mō ngā rā anamata i te rohe o Whakatāne*

Whakatāne District Council, August 2020

Our thanks to the community



Our thanks and appreciation is extended to the community for their gifts of time and insight in sharing their views, concerns and aspirations with the Whakatāne District Council. We humbly ask that you keep being part of the conversation so that together we may continue to enhance the wellbeing of our District and its people.

He mihi maioha ki te hapori i whai wā, i whai whakaaro hoki ki ngā tirohanga, ngā āwangawanga, me ngā whāinga o koutou ki te Kaunihera ā-rohe o Whakatāne. E tono whakaiti ana mātou ki a koutou ki te ū tonu ki te kōrero nei kia mahi tahi ai tātou ki te whakapiki te ora o tātou, ka mutu ki te whakapiki te ora o tō tātou rohe.

Contents

Rārangi Upoko

- 04 Introduction
Kupu Arataki
- 06 Economy and Employment
Te Taiōhanga me te Mahi
- 07 Community (Social) Wellbeing
Te Oranga o te hapori
- 08 Recreation, Events and Arts
Ngā mahi a te rēhia
- 09 Focus on Smaller Communities
Arotahi ki ngā hapori tokoiti
- 10 Climate Change and Natural Hazard Resilience
Te Huringa Āhuarangi me te whakakaha ki ngā matepā taiao
- 11 Environmental Footprint
Te takahanga taiao
- 12 Transportation Opportunities
Ngā whaiwāhitanga waka
- 13 Water Supply and Drinking Water Services
Te puna wai me ngā ratonga wai inu
- 14 Council Engagement and Transparency
Whakawhitinga whakaaro me te mahi a te Kaunihera
- 15 Council Costs and Rates
Ngā utu me ngā tāke o te Kaunihera
- 16 Schedule 1: Overview of relative priorities
Te Tirohanga whānui o ngā kaupapa matua

Introduction

Kupu Arataki

This report draws together key themes and common messages:

This report provides insight into the themes and messages arising from Council's community engagement activities over recent years. It is a collation of the common and recurring things the Council has been hearing from the Whakatāne District Community.

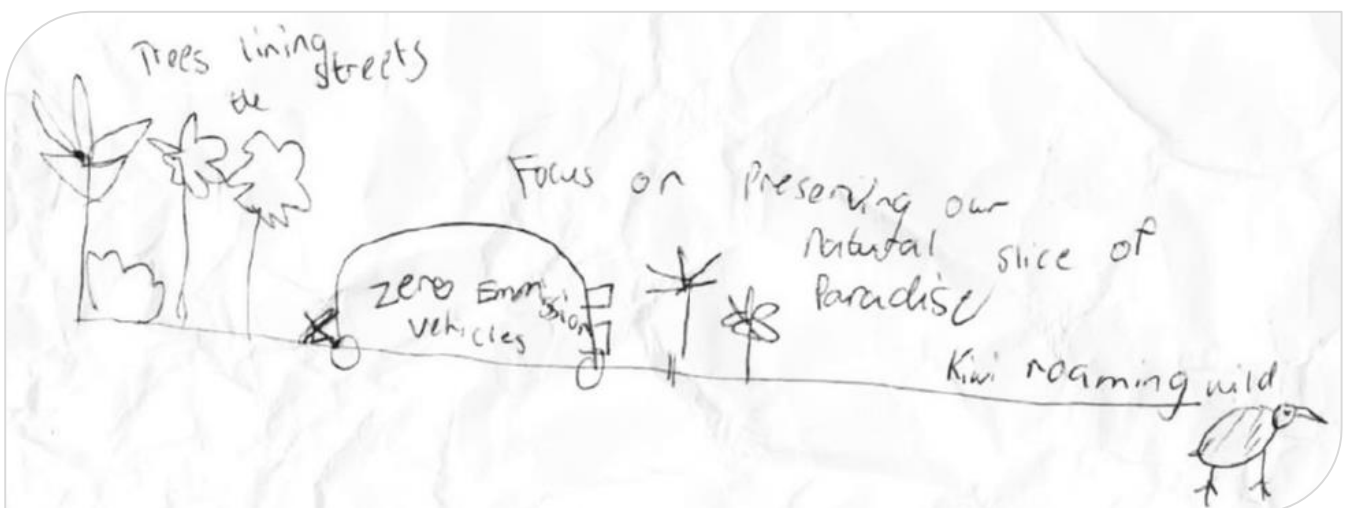
The information is intended to inform the Whakatāne District Council's planning and decisions as we develop the Long Term Plan for the period 2021-31. This insight into community views - alongside other information, evidence and data - will help to set the priorities that the Council will direct its focus on, and inform the activities, services, and projects that the Council delivers.

Community expectations are increasing over time:

As a general observation, the expectation of Council's role has matured over time beyond simply provision of services to keep towns and communities running. Although a variety of aspects of core services are still very much in focus for our community, these core services can now be considered a base expectation for Council's to deliver – although noting this also comes with increasing expectations for the level of service we deliver (what we deliver, how we deliver it, and specific improvement projects).

Numerous further expectations and demands continue to layer over and above these 'core service' expectations. Councils are increasingly expected to be 'place-makers' and to advance 'quality-of-life' for communities in a more broad sense. This responsibility has been reinforced by the reintroduction of 'community wellbeing' into the purpose of local government in 2019.

The community feedback to Council summarised in this document reflects this maturity, with feedback focusing on a wide variety of matters and of both a reflective and aspirational nature. Given the socio-economic context of our District, and the 'imposed' nature of taxation, there is a tension between community demand for service and community concern for the level of cost to ratepayers.



This report draws together and summarises key themes and common messages that we have been hearing from the community over time.

More specific and detailed responses have been received on many topics and are used to inform our projects and activities

This report draws on a number of inputs:

The analysis in this document draws on a variety of inputs as listed below. The research builds on the themes of engagement undertaken from late May to Early July 2020 on ten key challenges and opportunities facing the future of our district (Future in Focus 2020). It also draws on numerous other selected inputs – including those that were both reasonably recent, and also broad enough in focus to allow for articulation of relative priorities.

The aggregated participation in these engagement and survey processes is close to 6,000 individuals. Acknowledging that participants usually provide feedback on multiple topics, the number of comments and submission points associated with these processes is a significantly higher number. As such, for each of these processes the feedback we receive from the community is extensive, with a far greater richness and depth of information beyond what is able to be presented in this document.

The analysis in this document draws on a variety of inputs. These resources are available in full if required.

Future in Focus engagement 2020	From late May to Early July 2020, we invited submissions and feedback on the challenges and opportunities facing the future of our district. We received feedback from 350 people, providing over 1,000 comments and points of feedback.
Whakatāne Wellbeing Survey 2020	During the month of June 2020 Council undertook a survey to investigate key factors influencing quality of life in our District. The survey covered a sample of 350 people from across different wards, ethnicities and age groups in our District.
Council Perception Surveys 2014-19	Every year a survey of Whakatāne District residents is undertaken to gain insight to their perceptions and views on Council services and facilities. Over the time period 2014-2019 some 1834 residents participated in the survey.
Whakatāne Ki Mua 2017	In 2017 we undertook a substantial community engagement process to gain insight into what people love about their community and what ideas they had for the future – around 2900 people participated sharing some 18,600 thoughts and ideas.
Previous LTP and subsequent Annual Plans	Community consultation is typically undertaken every year to inform the development of Council's Long Term Plans and Annual Plans. For the current (2018-28) Long Term Plan and subsequent Annual Plans Council received 392 formal submissions plus feedback through informal engagement channels.

Economy and Employment

Te Taiōhanga me te Mahi

Overview:

Economic outcomes continue to be identified as a community priority for the Whakatāne District. This is consistently expressed through a variety of engagement and feedback processes to Council. An example is through the Council's Annual Perceptions Surveys which have signalled economic development related themes as the highest priority over the past six years. The need to uplift economic and employment outcomes reflects the socio-economic context of our District and has been further reinforced by the impact of both the Whakaari eruption and Covid-19.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- General support for the need to grow the economy and create more jobs.
- Need for economic and employment outcomes to extend to rural areas and Townships in our District.
- Need to ensure jobs and economic growth benefit locals – and that the benefit is distributed to where it is most needed.
- Need to buy local and keep contracts local.
- Need for employment pathways, training opportunities, and job readiness including (but not only) for youth.
- Need for economic growth to be synergistic with, climate change goals, sustainability concepts, and enhancement of the natural environment.
- The need to partner with Iwi and to uplift outcomes for Māori specifically.

Examples of feedback:

"We need quality jobs. That is permanent, good paying, full-time employment. This will give a good uplift. Let's get rid of low wage seasonal employment"

"Great to see some big projects getting up and running"

"Definitely agree (with a focus on uplifting the economy). But we have to start doing things in a different way than we have in the past. Look to what makes Whakatāne unique and special and try to build off this."

"We should be working more closely with mana whenua Ngāti Awa and looking to a new vision of what our district could be."

"In a post Covid NZ, we need an economic focus that is "regenerative" in emphasis. So upholding environmental standards while encouraging innovative food production (horticulture, aquaculture, agriculture), to leverage its branding as sustainable in practice, will bring economic wealth to the region"

"Efforts should be made in collaboration with national government to encourage local companies to hire and train local young people"

"Job creation in Murupara has been neglected for so many decades"

Community (Social) Wellbeing

Te Oranga o te hapori

Overview:

Survey results indicate that communities in the Whakatāne District regard their overall quality-of-life at levels in keeping with, or better than, the New Zealand average. The Whakatāne Ki Mua engagement undertaken in 2017 indicates that the things people love most about the Whakatāne District are their community/family/whanau oriented connections, factors related to our natural environment and geographic context, and the recreational opportunities available to them. At the same time, for a number of social wellbeing indicators our District consistently tracks under the national average. In relation to this trend, there is an ongoing theme of feedback for Council to support community wellbeing and improve outcomes across a variety of issues and concerns. Feedback acknowledges that many entities, and the communities themselves, have a lead responsibility in addressing aspects of community wellbeing. As such, these views tend to advocate for strong partnership approaches to be taken.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- Perception that our District offers an overall good quality of life - ranking consistent with, if not better than the national average.
- Appreciation of social connections and community cohesion.
- Concern for the high levels of socio-economic deprivation in the Whakatāne District and the increasing disparity (gap between the haves and the have-nots).
- Concerns for a range of specific social challenges including particularly crime, gangs, housing deprivation, alcohol and drug abuse.
- Concerns with the increasing cost of housing and of living.
- Need for economy and employment growth to distribute benefit where it is most needed.
- The need for a strong partnership approach in relation to community wellbeing.
- Demand for a dedicated youth hub facility for recreational and support services.

Examples of feedback:

“Community development should be a high priority for Council. We have a range of social and community issues and while this is a big mountain to climb and requires support from external agencies and central government, Council could be playing a bigger part in actively working with sectors that have historically been left off the map as it were.”

“This is fundamentally the same as uplifting our economy, however community development needs to actually benefit the community, in particular youth.”

“Feeling safe in all areas of town especially Kope. I want my 13 yr old daughter - and any kids to be able to walk to her after school things on her own without being intimidated or scared.”

“Poverty in this day and age is basically unacceptable and criminal... Wellbeing starts with our basic human needs being met - housing, clothing, food and warmth and nurturing relationships - having these reduces stress levels - let's make all of these needs attainable and not a struggle.”

“Our homeless need help. The ever growing house costs and living cost is hitting our community hard.”

“There are many knowledgeable entities and potential partners, but this priority will require major coordination and concerted effort. It is critical that Council shows its commitment and practical support so the various affected communities can engage and lead from within.”

“Taneatua - it's a beautiful place. The people are close to one another. They struggle - poverty, employment, sometimes makes life difficult and to compensate - they help one another.”

Recreation, Events and Arts

Ngā mahi a te rēhia

Overview:

There is regular demand from our community to continue to enhance and diversify the opportunities that our District has to offer for recreation, events and arts. This is a consistent theme coming back through many of Council's engagement processes. It is acknowledged that the natural and cultural context of our District lends itself well to the pursuit of recreation, sports, events and arts. Feedback very much values this context and seeks to realise further opportunities based on the potential it offers. Beyond these contextual opportunity there is also demand for a broader range of 'things-to-do' within our urban environments, particularly (but not only) from youth.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- Appreciation of the recreational opportunities offered by our (natural and geographic) context.
- Demand for a broader range of recreation opportunities particularly (but not only) from youth.
- Demand for specific recreational infrastructure and facilities, often from organised groups (for example mountain biking trails, swimming pool extension, indoor sports facilities, skate park development etc)
- Concern that there are not many opportunities in winter or when the weather is bad.
- Desire for community gardens, community orchards and fruit trees.
- Desire for more events, concerts and markets in our communities to provide opportunities for recreation, celebration of identity, and connection.

Examples of feedback:

"We should support the local people who are artists, growers, musicians, etc with new initiatives such as developing cool festivals, symposiums and farmers markets."

"Sporting facilities need to be upgraded - as a parent and community sports coach the memorial hall is a shambles - children need to be out playing sport but when facilities aren't up to scratch it pushes kids away."

"An all-weather play area for children."

"More family activities that cater to a variety of age groups and activities for kids that can be done on rainy days."

"Better Parks/playgrounds to attract family's to our town....look at Napier it's family orientated the parks are fantastic"

"We need local mountain bike trails. Somewhere the teenage kids can take themselves to without the need for car/adult transport (like Onepu or Redwoods requires). This will give the youth something to do, keep fit, connect with others, and will also bring visitors from outside town."

"I loved the community gardens where people can access a common ground to plant veggies, trees and look after them in order to pick fruits and veggies and be sustainable."

Focus on Smaller Communities

Arotahi ki ngā hapori tokoiti

Overview:

Feedback is regularly received from, and in relation to, our smaller communities and Townships. The feedback is on a range of matters particular to each community and topics are wide ranging. At a high level, common topics include economic development and social challenges, local transport concerns and opportunities, provision of recreational facilities and services, and affordability of rates. There is a recurring perception that a general increase in focus is needed on our smaller communities and that the focus is overly weighted towards our largest urban centre. In part with the support of the Whakatāne Ki Mua project, advocacy groups for smaller towns are becoming more formalised and proactive. The Edgumbe Collective and EDIT Care Group are good examples. A project has commenced for Matatā, and for Murupara, such an approach is also gaining momentum.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- Need for economic development and employment growth to also benefit our smaller towns.
- Concern for the social challenges in specific communities.
- Local transport concerns and opportunities such as speeding, road safety, and road sealing.
- Demand for provision of more recreational facilities and services.
- Concern for the affordability of rates.
- View that Whakatāne Township receives a higher level of focus/service.
- Demand for local place-making approach.

Examples of feedback:

"All wards within WDC invested in by WDC to reach their vibrant creative potential, invest and utilise natural assets"

"Vibrant communities cannot be achieved if the investment is only in particular areas!"

"Matata needs skate park, bins and toilets at the beach"

"More maintenance spent in smaller communities"

"Too many vast and obvious differences currently between each town that's sits under the very same district council it's sad and it's not okay."

"Access to Information relating to each ward: I am interested in knowing local business, local groups and Rangitāiki Community Board info relating specifically to Rangitāiki. Currently on WDC website there is no use friendly link I can get all information pertaining to Rangitāiki, can this be developed please?"

"Better services for outlying rural areas like lighting and sidewalks. Better responses to growing P problems. Better response by council to HUGE dog issues in Tāneatua"

"Invest in communities outside of Whakatāne Ōhope. The rural communities such as Rangitāiki have an enormous amount of natural assets which require some advertising and investment to attract local tourism."

Climate Change and Natural Hazard Resilience

Te Huringa Āhuarangi me te te whakakaha ki ngā matepā taiao

Overview:

The Whakatāne District is vulnerable to a number of natural hazards and has experienced a number of significant events over the past two decades. Unsurprisingly, feedback to Council reflects this context although the intensity of that feedback can ebb and flow in relation to the timing of actual events. An example of this is the annual level of satisfaction with Council stormwater services relative to any recent flooding or storm events.

Climate change is also becoming increasingly topical in our District, reflecting a continued global and national focus on this challenge. In particular (but not only) youth in the Whakatāne District have expressed strong interest in climate change with student led demonstrations in 2019. Council's own promotional and engagement efforts through our Climate Change programme of work has also contributed to local raising of awareness of this challenge.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- Concern about our District's general vulnerability to a range of natural hazards.
- Concern about increasing vulnerability associated with climate change.
- Concern about the specific vulnerability of some infrastructure such as single access routes, bridge entry to town, water supply during drought for example.
- Concern about the financial implications of natural hazards and climate change.
- Placed based commentary in relation to the recovery process for impacted communities including Edgecumbe and Matatā for example.
- Desire from the community to see Council do more in the climate change space and show leadership.
- Desire and willingness from the community to participate in – be part of – the solution for both civil defence and climate action.
- Importance of communication and information sharing to support preparedness and resilience.
- An improving trend for the level of satisfaction with Council stormwater services but still consistently identified as a high priority.

Examples of feedback:

"We need to incorporate climate change issues into daily decision making, the District Plan and the Infrastructure Strategy"

"The Council needs a plan which addresses climate change and the impact of extreme weather events and it is suggested that the plan should look at sustainability from a broader perspective."

"This is an essential priority. Research shows that for every \$1 spent on disaster risk reduction, the economic return on this investment is tens of thousands more."

"We need to think of an alternative route out of the Township in case of emergency and the bridge is blocked, broken or inaccessible. We also need to stop consenting new builds near the beach/water in fear of floors, stop banks breaching or dune damage from climate change."

"Build an infrastructure to support knowledge building and community participation. Offer workshops and community training to help staff and community members get involved. Practice."

"Vulnerability is often in the areas which have higher levels of socio-economic deprivation it's important to protect those communities to prevent the growing socio-economic disparity."

"Is there an opportunity for locals to be certified to handle/participate in civil defence?"

Environmental Footprint

Te takahanga taiao

Overview:

Our District is endowed with diverse landscapes and natural features. The District takes in over 50km of sandy coastline while pushing deep inland into pristine native forest. Three major river systems make their way through the District. Te Urewera National Park in the south, which makes up 41% of the district, is protected native forest and home to a rich array of flora and fauna. The natural environment and geographic context of our District are a central feature of our identity and quality of life. Of particular note, the natural world and the wellbeing of it, is of significant cultural relevance to Tangata Whenua. There is growing awareness and pressure from many levels of society (internationally through to locally) to reduce our ecological footprint, and live more kindly and sustainably within our environment.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- Strong recognition of our natural environment and landscape as a central feature of our identity and quality of life.
- Iwi/Tangata Whenua with strong cultural connections to the natural environment
- Support for aspirational targets to reduce our carbon footprint
- Desire to see reduction in use of plastics and generally for better outcomes related to the production and management of solid waste.
- Desire for better water quality in our rivers streams and lakes
- Demand for greater integration of environmental sustainability concepts into Council future planning, services and facilities (such as settlement planning and economic development options)
- Demand for better access to nature and natural attractions (such as further development of walking and cycling trails, car parks, look-outs, access to swimming holes etc).
- Concern/demand for biodiversity protection and restoration.

Examples of feedback:

"I love how we are so close to so much of nature: the river, the bush, Whale and White Islands, bush walks, the sunshine"

"Time and money to look after our environment – keep rivers and beaches clean"

"People and lifestyle need to be at the forefront of decision making - with the environment the jewel in our crown"

"Clean up Awatapu Lagoon and bring back the eels"

"Protect our fresh water - free of pollution - not giving it away to overseas companies"

"We need a strong vision for sustainable, cutting edge, green, culturally respectful, creative (and still classy) development."

"We have a wealth of expertise, energy and innovative solutions happening across our communities - people enabling sustainability, regeneration and resilience in their own time around their mahi, their whanau and other community commitments."

"Not much to say here except go hard. Advocate strongly on the product stewardship scheme. Government needs to take a strong(er) stance in relation to the full life-cycle sustainability of products!"

Transportation Opportunities

Ngā whaiwāhitanga waka

Overview:

Transportation is a matter of critical importance to the wellbeing of everyone. Communities, groups and individuals across our District are diverse in terms of their transportation needs, concerns and aspirations. The broad range of feedback to Council reflects this diversity with a broad range of views on related challenges and opportunities including for example health and safety, accessibility, innovation, modality, resilience and sustainability of transport systems and networks.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- Continued increasing demand for new walking and cycling facilities for both enhanced commuting and recreational opportunities.
- Demand for enhanced maintenance of existing facilities.
- Concern to ensure accessibility is considered for those with greater mobility challenges.
- Concern for traffic congestion into and out of Whakatāne Township including demand for a second or improved bridge.
- Demand for continuation of the road sealing programme.
- Occasional demand for better public transport connections.
- Specific road safety concerns particularly (but not only) in small towns such as Te Teko, Edgumbe Matatā, Tāneatua and Murupara.
- Concern for parking options available to the Whakatāne town centre CBD.
- Growing awareness and demand for low carbon transportation options.

Examples of feedback:

“People of our district love to get out and about on their bikes and walking when they feel safe to do so. Let's create a great network of safe and scenic walking/cycling tracks.”

“Traffic calming measures are needed at Edgumbe/Te Teko/Tahuna/SH30 intersection”

“After having major surgery it's made me realise how sloped and uneven our footpaths are”

“We need a few more police on the roads to stop some of the madness I see almost every day. There are some absolute lunatics on the road.”

“We believe that there is great opportunities for partnerships and projects that will make the district really accessible to older people and people with disabilities.”

“The Council needs to urgently start making provisions for a second arterial access bridge to the town. I appreciate that there is a lot of planning needed in order to effect this, but it must be looked at as soon as possible. An obvious possibility would be from Rewatu Rd across to Arawa Street”

“I would like to see more space for businesses and pedestrians on The Strand. This could be achieved with a one way and one lane traffic system with parking on both sides.”

“I would like to see more work towards a safe town for cyclists, both commuters and recreational. Safe cycle paths to encourage school kids to ride their bikes to school.”

“For Whakatane it's pretty hard to find parking for all day while you're at work.”

Water Supply and Drinking Water Services

Te puna wai me ngā ratonga wai inu

Overview:

Over recent years, strong responses have been received from the community on a number of matters relating to water supply and drinking water standards.

There is regular feedback relating to the 'security of supply' of drinking water supplied to the Whakatāne Ōhope Scheme. There has been strong opposition from the Mururpara community to the option of disinfection of the water supply via chlorination or ultraviolet light which currently offers no protection against contaminants, this is contrary to Ministry of Health advice. Further development of the Otumahi water supply at Paul Road has a strong interest from the Te Teko community due to cultural connection to the water source and perception of lower level of service to the Te Teko Township. Increasing awareness of the need for significant investment into Council's three waters services, in meeting new regulations and addressing expiring resource consents is concerning the community about how these costs will be funded.

There is recent vocal opposition to the growth of commercial water bottling industry within the District (and more widely within New Zealand). This in part is a response to the manufacture and use of plastics in the bottling process, but also in relation to the rights to access water, and to sustainable management of this resource.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- Demand for a secure and resilient drinking water supply for the Whakatāne Ōhope townships
- Māori cultural relevance and connection to water sources / natural water bodies.
- Concern about the resilience of our water supply (e.g. such as the pressure from droughts)
- Concern about the costs of delivering essential water services to communities
- Opportunity for and opposition to commercial use of water (e.g. water bottling industry)

Examples of feedback:

"Looking forward to a ground water source for Whakatane one day - that would be great."

"Clean safe drinking water is important to everyone. We need to encourage residents to reduce use, as well as increase supply options."

"Encourage/incentivise residents to catch and store rainwater and reduce the demand on the town water supply."

"Let's have high quality reliable drinking water for our local population. Please do not bottle and sell."

"Stop selling this precious local resource! Natural treatments such as UV and as little chemical treatment as possible. Review materials used in pipes. Lots of innovation in this area that council can embrace"

"Safe guard our supplies and don't sell it off to overseas bottling plants. We are going to need this resource in the future."

Council Engagement and Transparency

Whakawhitinga whakaaro me te mahi a te Kaunihera

Overview:

The Council maintains a substantial number of partnerships, relationships, networks, and forums, as well as processes for consultation, engagement and communications. Over time these networks and processes have continued to broaden, strengthen and improve. Nevertheless there is a high community expectation for the level of engagement and involvement in decision making. There is also demand for greater transparency around council decision making, including how councils make trade-offs, and distribute costs across ratepayers.

This is a challenge broadly facing the local government sector with the local government commission recently commenting in their Local Government Insights Report (February 2020) that “better engagement and greater transparency of decision making will help build community understanding and buy-in, taking some of the political heat out of decision making”.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- Low level of voter turn-out for local government elections and concern with the level of diversity on elected Council
- Demand for the need to strengthen Māori representation in Council decision making as well as engagement with Iwi and Tangata Whenua.
- Demand from youth for greater recognition of their perspectives and interests to be reflected in Council matters.
- Concern for the opportunity of harder to reach parts of the community to be engaged in Council decision processes (for example: geographic isolation, internet access, educational barriers, and people with disabilities).
- Difficulty with information in recognition that Councils are very complex entities.
- A desire for greater influence and involvement in local decisions and place-making.

Examples of feedback:

“Māori have knowledge and perspectives that can contribute hugely to success. We will short change ourselves if we do not design and evolve our priorities in a way that respects and engages Iwi in leading and achieving objectives.”

“Let’s make sure that older people and people with disabilities are really factored into projects, make things really accessible, not just public facilities, but the way we consult, talk, and interact.”

“Council needs to have a greater focus on community engagement during any decision making processes”

“There is confusion over who does what and how things work, how the whole process of local government works, how rates are set, where the money is spent, what people can do if they think rates are too high.”

“Recognise and provide for Māori engagement that does not cost Māori to participate in”

“We need Local kōrero. Local partnerships. Local response” (Murupara)

Council Costs and Rates Affordability

Ngā utu me ngā tāke o te Kaunihera

Overview:

A particular function of the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan is to balance the level of costs and affordability for the community with the investment needed to help our communities be resilient, vibrant and thriving. Through engagement on these processes the financial implications of our decisions, and the parameters within which we operate, are regularly challenged.

Overall rates affordability as well as the application of benefits to sectors within our community is regularly commented on, particularly from our rural community and smaller rural settlements. Reinforcing this message, the Council continues to face high levels of rates arrears.

At the same time feedback to Council generally seeks to retain or in many cases increase the levels of service we deliver. For example - for almost all Council services and facilities the Council's Annual Perception Survey indicates that we should "spend about the same" as we currently do on our services and facilities – as opposed to "spend more" or "spend less". Further, feedback often seeks support for enhanced outcomes (generally) or for specific new and/or improved services and facilities (as expressed throughout this document). This demand comes from all corners of our District.

Generally speaking there is not a strong acknowledgement about the connection between levels of service and cost/rating implications. This is not surprising given the scope and complexity of local government and the (appropriate) limitations to applying user pays principles.

Common concerns, ideas and aspirations:

- A recurring community sentiment related to affordability and Council costs being too high.
- The demand to retain, or in many instances to increase, the levels of service Council delivers to the community, but without acknowledgement of cost implications.
- The occasional view that Council should focus exclusively on its core infrastructure services ("stick to your knitting" type comments), but otherwise no clear and obvious steer for specific levels of service to be reduced.
- A difficulty in understanding Council's financial system and a desire to understand how/where to most appropriately influence it.

Examples of feedback:

"I have been a rate payer at this property since 2004, and have experienced a huge jump in Rates increases over the last 10 years."

"Keeping rates down - that's the Council's job!"

"The Council needs to start working within its income and not rely on continual rate increases"

"Reducing debt should be council's priority not incurring more debt"

"Increases in rates or development contributions are acceptable if they correlate with increases in services or the Council's reactive/proactive responses to issues"

"I do not support any increase in rates. Many families are struggling to live. The evidence can be found with our local budgeting services, health services, salvation army, winz and similar services"

"The Council needs to develop an income generation strategy"

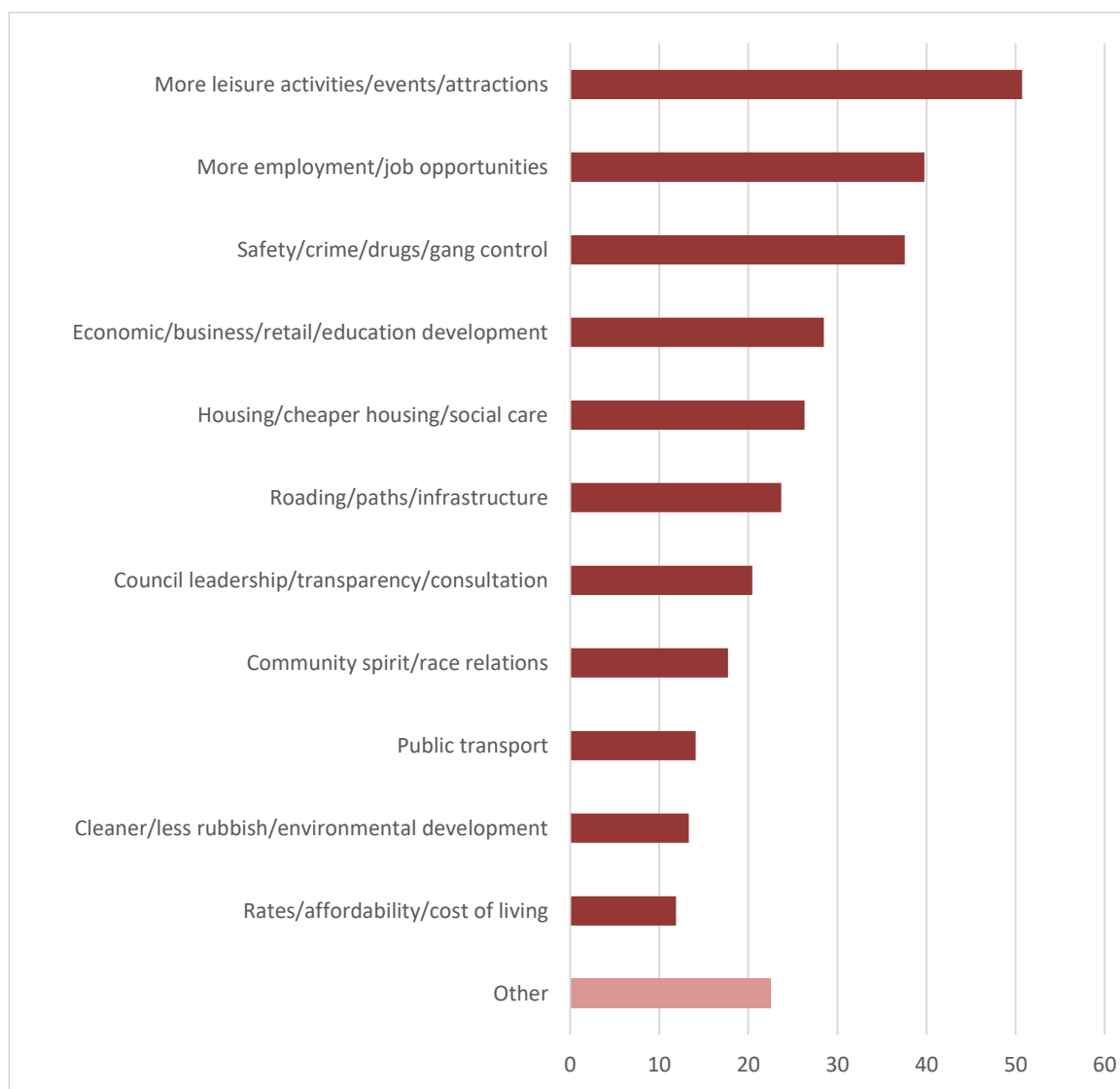
Schedules: Overview of relative priorities

Te Tirohanga whānui o ngā kaupapa matua

A number of Council feedback processes are sufficiently broad to provide insight into relative priorities. Extracts from various engagement processes are provided below to indicate this insight. It should be noted that these are for the District community overall, and views can differ for various 'communities-of-interest' (such as by age, ethnicity, or Township).

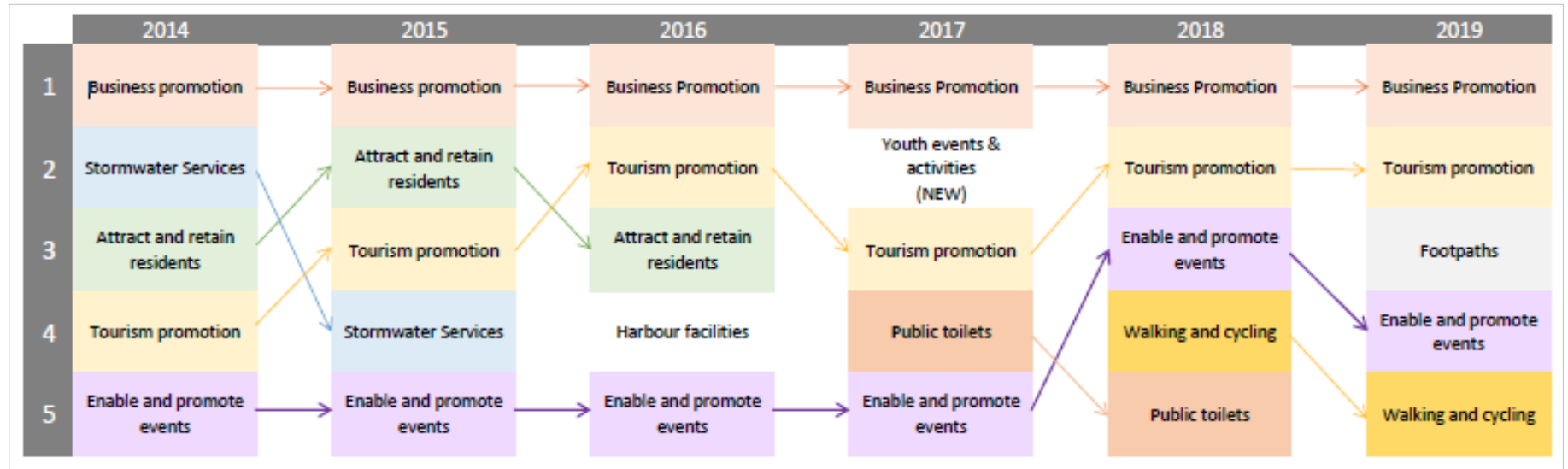
S1: Whakatāne Wellbeing Survey 2020:

What is one improvement you would suggest that would improve your quality of life in the Whakatāne District?
(Results aggregated by theme)(n=350)



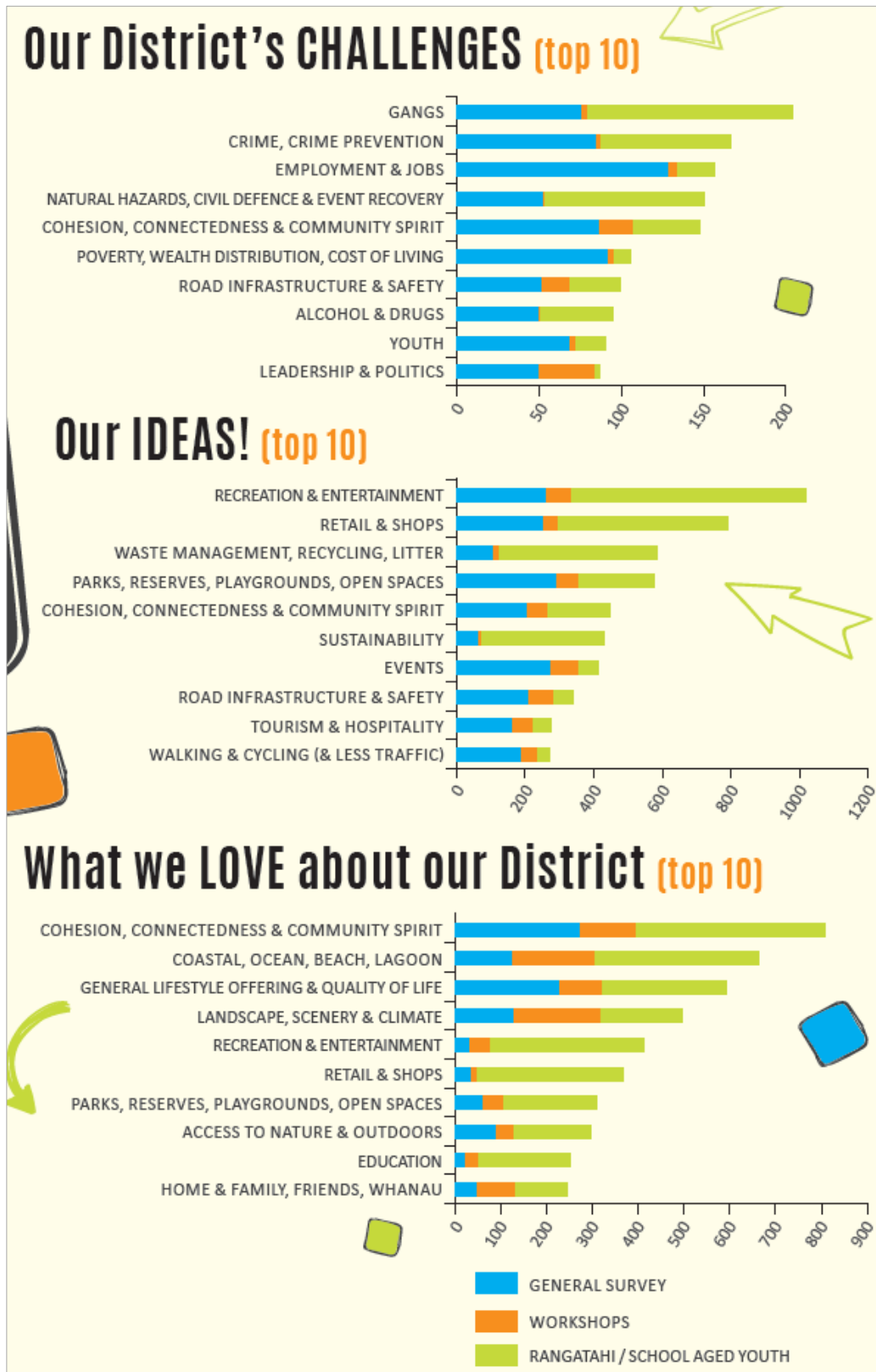
S2: Whakatāne District Council Annual Residents Survey 2014-2019

Spend emphasis asks survey respondents whether they think the Council should spend 'more', 'about the same', or 'less' on approximately 30 various services and facilities. This page summarises those services and facilities that have had the highest ranking for 'spend emphasis' over the past six years, and how these priorities have changed from year to year.



S3: Whakatāne Ki Mua Engagement 2017

What are the main challenges, ideas, and things you value about your community?
 (Results aggregated by theme)



S4: Eastern Bay Community Foundation, Vital Signs Research 2018

Although this research was not commissioned by the Whakatāne District Council it has been included in the these appendices to indicate consistency of views and concerns (independent of the commissioning authority). This research was conducted by Key Research on behalf of the Eastern Bay of Plenty Community Foundation in 2018. The research covers the Eastern Bay of Plenty area (covering the Districts of Kawerau, Whakatane and Ōpōtiki) and had a response rate of 769 residents.

The things we love about living here



1. Natural Environment, climate and air quality
2. Connectedness (friends, whānau, community, support)
3. Recreation, parks and reserves
4. Māori heritages, culture, arts
5. Safety
6. Walkability and cycling infrastructure

Priorities for improvement

