

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Waikato District Council commissioned the development of a Blueprint for the district. The Blueprint was developed and delivered through a series of intensive consultation and Inquiry-By-Design workshops between July and November 2018.

The aim of the Blueprint is to provide a high-level 'spatial picture' of how the district could progress over the next 30 years, address the community's social, economic and environmental needs, and respond to its regional context.

The Blueprint will provide the Waikato District Council with an effective and legible tool to move from vision to strategy, and from strategy to action by setting out specific, prioritised initiatives at the district and local level.

District Blueprint 2019 Vision

The Waikato District Blueprint works to achieve the overall vision established by the Council for the district:

"Liveable, Thriving and Connected Communities / He noohanga aahuru, he iwi whai ora, he hapori tuuhono tahi".

District Blueprint 2019 themes

To achieve the vision and respond to the opportunities identified through the process, nine district-wide themes were developed. Each theme has a series of associated initiatives. The nine themes are as follows:

1. **Identity:** create a world class Waikato River

corridor identity and strengthen Raglan's local character.

2. **Nature:** protect the natural environment with revegetated biodiversity links and clean waterways.
3. **Iwi:** build on the Joint Management Agreements and other agreements, celebrate Maaori culture, and promote the use of Te Reo.
4. **Communities:** strengthen, enable and connect local communities and citizens, and support those most in need.
5. **Growth:** direct cohesive growth outcomes which support all community needs.
6. **Economy:** support the rural and urban economy, and attract more visitors, entrepreneurs, and employment uses.
7. **Transport:** leverage value off accessibility, help those disadvantaged by a lack of transport options, prepare for future passenger rail.
8. **Infrastructure:** develop and maintain efficient infrastructure that is environmentally clean and will serve the community well into the future.
9. **Governance:** devolve some decision making, and engage more effectively at community and Hapuu level.

Local Area Blueprints 2019

In addition to the nine district-wide themes and related initiatives, 15 Local Area Blueprints have been developed. These focus on initiatives, also arranged under the nine themes, that address the specific needs of each settlement within the district.

The comprehensive list of initiatives for each place is included in **Section 4** of this report. The following are examples of initiatives for each local area:

- **Tuakau:** town centre improvements and review of industrial land provision.
- **Pookeno:** town centre strategy that covers retail,

community and employment needs.

- **Mercer:** village centre development and community facilities.
- **Meremere:** social and employment initiatives.
- **Te Kauwhata** and **Rangiriri:** town centre development, school move and integrated growth approach.
- **Ohinewai:** lifestyle character protection, support the school, and integrated approach, should industrial uses occur.
- **Huntly:** employment and youth initiatives, with town centre improvements after revocation of SH1.
- **Taupiri:** village centre improvements, and new industrial and commercial land provision.
- **Ngaaruawaahia:** community and employment initiatives, town centre and wider amenity enhancements
- **Horotiu:** town centre development, and new industrial and commercial land provision.
- **Te Kowhai:** village centre connections, and walking and biodiversity link with the Waipa River.
- **Whatawhata:** resolve the SH roundabout, additional commercial land and community facilities.
- **Raglan:** town centre and wider amenity enhancements, social and employment initiatives.
- **Tamahere:** walking, cycling, and biodiversity links, and zero waste initiatives.
- **Matangi:** village centre improvements and commercial land provision.

Port Waikato and Gordonton Local Area Blueprint 2022

The Port Waikato and Gordonton Local Area Blueprints are an addition to the Waikato District Blueprint completed in 2019, which has been endorsed by the Council and is being implemented.

Port Waikato and Gordonton Local Area Blueprint process

In 2021 the Council identified the need to expand the Blueprint by adding two more Local Area Blueprints, one for Port Waikato and one for Gordonton. The process to develop the Local Area Blueprints has consisted of the following stages:

- Input gathering in December 2021 - May 2022
- Prioritisation in May 2022 - June 2022
- Decision making and documentation in July 2022 - August 2022.

Port Waikato and Gordonton Local Area Blueprint outcomes

The vision and key initiatives for each of these local areas are outlined below. Initiatives marked as 'Continuation initiatives' are those that are already planned or currently being undertaken and funded, and are identified by the community as strategically important.

Port Waikato

A place with a rich history and natural beauty where the community is provided for and visitors are welcomed

Continuation initiatives for Port Waikato:

- Continue the erosion / resilience planning project, including regular clean-ups of debris,

and provide ongoing clarity on what is being done.

- Continue the planned construction and / or upgrades of playgrounds at Cobourne Reserve, Maraetai Bay, and Cordyline Road / Phillips Reserve.
- Continue to maintain the entry road into Port Waikato in light of erosion and subsidence.
- Continue the public toilet upgrade and relocation at Sunset Beach.

Top initiatives for Port Waikato:

- Undertake a public realm upgrade at the wharf area to make a gateway statement and address the lack of gathering space.
- Erect signage to mark and explain the history and cultural significance of areas and features to mana whenua.
- Improve road safety in response to speeding and antisocial behaviour on roads, the beach, and in the dunes.
- Improve stormwater management and especially address drainage issues along Maunsell and Centreway Roads.

Gordonton

A compact satellite village with its own unique identity where a close-knit community welcomes visitors

Continuation initiatives for Gordonton:

- Continue to redevelop Hukanui Park with a playground, seating and possible other recreation facilities, while ensuring the history of the heritage buildings in and around the park is celebrated, as well as iwi cultural aspects, considering local reserve status, infrastructure

limitations, and Building Code requirements.

- Continue with plans to improve the amenity of Gordonton Road as part of the revocation, including:
 - Lower speed limit, possibly extending from the Peach Road intersection to Hukanui Marae.
 - Improved visibility for traffic exiting Woodlands Road.
 - More and safer crossings and connections for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Possibly a shared path from the Piako Road intersection to Hukanui Marae.
 - Improved safety conditions at the island at the north-western village entrance.
 - Visual quality improvements.
 - Beautification of both entrances to the village and improve welcoming signage.
- Continue with the upgrade of College Drive with footpaths and lighting, and provide a timeframe for these works.

Top initiatives for Gordonton:

- Facilitate the re-establishment of the markets, including the facilitation of organisational arrangements and the provision of infrastructure to accommodate traffic and parking.
- Identify if, how much, and where, possible additional residential and commercial land beyond the existing zoning could be located and what this means for infrastructure and the role and design of Gordonton Road.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Waikato District Council commissioned Urbanismplus to develop a Blueprint for the Waikato District. This was delivered through a series of intensive consultation and Inquiry-By-Design workshops.

Waikato District Context

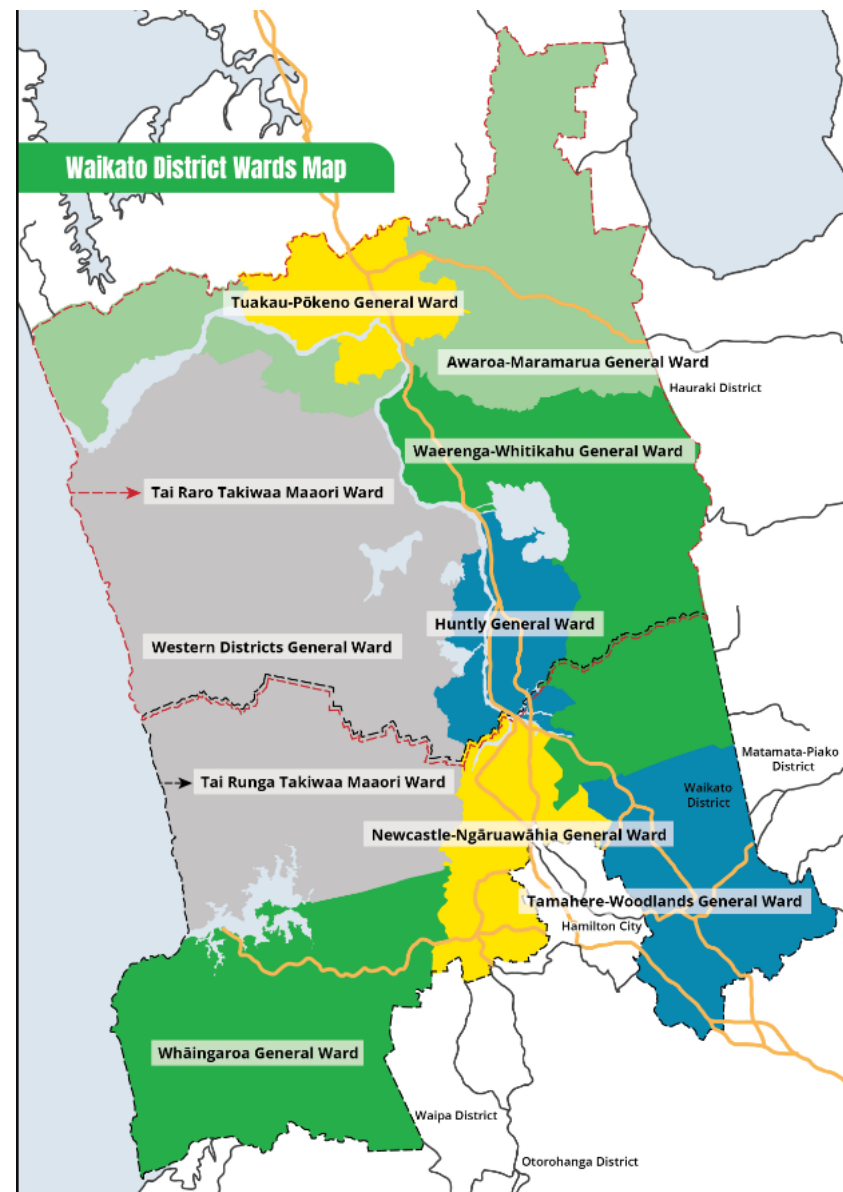
The Waikato District is made up of mainly small settlements surrounded by rural land which is used for a variety of productive and conservation purposes. The wider district has been divided into 10 wards for local governance purposes, refer to **Figure 1-1**.

With Auckland to the north and Hamilton and Tauranga to the south and east, the district plays an increasingly significant role nationally as well as locally. Settlements are generally located in a linear sequence, following State Highway 1 which connects the wider sub region.

The significant Waikato and Waipa Rivers are significant rivers which form a strong part of the district's character. Further contributing to this are the unique western coastline and strong tangata whenua presence.

1.2 PROJECT PURPOSE

The aim of the Blueprint project is to provide a high-level 'spatial picture' of how the district could progress over the next 30 years, address the community's social, economic and environmental needs, and respond to its regional context. The work includes addressing local conditions and more immediate needs.



RIGHT FIG. 1-1: Waikato District

1.3 PROJECT OUTPUTS: DISTRICT BLUEPRINT

The project output is a Blueprint for the Waikato District. The Blueprint provides the Council with an effective and legible tool to move from vision to strategy, and from strategy to action.

The Blueprint is a conduit between Council strategies, policies and plans, and places them in an integrated, spatial context.

In addition, the Blueprint aims to provide:

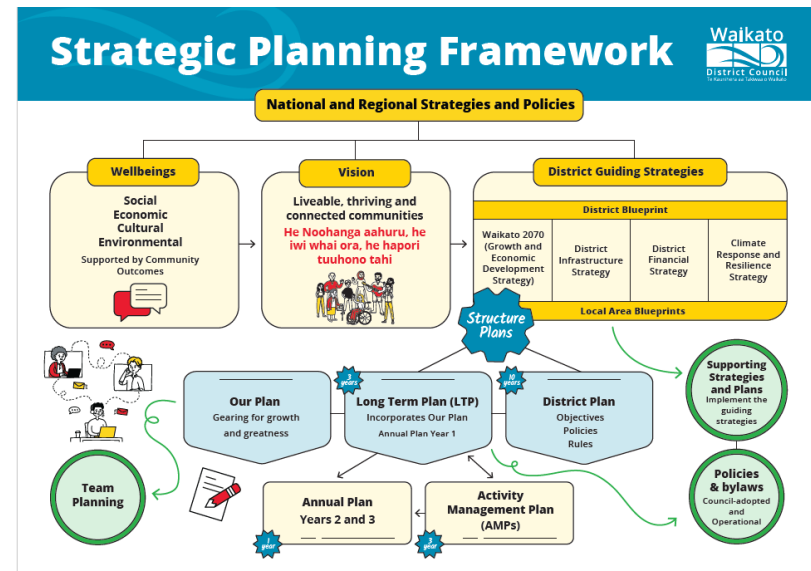
- Clarity: of direction and certainty for the Council, the community, and the private sector.
- Integration: of different disciplines (e.g. transport, environmental, community services, urban design, etc.) to achieve enhanced gains.
- Alignment: between policy and planning directions, and infrastructure investment priorities.

1.4 STATUS OF THE BLUEPRINT

The District Blueprint is one of the district’s guiding strategies. It contains proposals for the implementation of the Council’s Vision: “Liveable, Thriving and Connected Communities / He noohanga aahuru, he iwi whai ora, he hapori tuuhono tahi”.

The status of the Blueprint within the strategic planning framework is diagrammatically depicted in **Figure 1-2**. It informs the district’s four key strategies, including its Development / Growth Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, Infrastructure Strategy, and Financial Strategy. These strategies contain more specific information on their respective topic.

The Local Area Blueprints provide place-specific proposals that form part of the District Blueprint. Together with the other guiding strategies indicated, the Blueprint will inform the Long Term Plan, Annual Plan, and District Plan. Most of the proposals in the Blueprint are dependent on the funding decisions in the next Long Term Plan (LTP) or LTP amendment as well as changes to the District Plan.



ABOVE FIG. 1-2: Status of the Blueprint within the strategic planning framework

Councillor commitment

The Blueprint production is a Council-led process. The outcome will be adopted by the Council and therefore recognised as a legitimate planning document, and part of the Strategic Planning Framework. Funding for the process and towards achievement of its outcomes will be allocated through the Long Term Plan.

Commitment to ongoing community engagement and input

Waikato District Council (WDC) has philosophically committed to meaningful engagement with the community, evidenced by the fact that it is one of first councils to prepare an Engagement Strategy. A dedicated team, committed to engagement, ensures the process of working with the community is ‘business as usual’.

The engagement strategy will be included as a key work stream in the Council’s Project Management Framework. It will form an integrated part of the way the Council will plan for, and manage, projects going forward.

SECTION 2 - PROJECT PROCESS

2.1 WAIKATO BLUEPRINT 2019 WORKSHOPS

The Waikato Blueprint process commenced in July 2018 with councillor and staff sessions to set the scope for and direction of the project. Local Area Blueprint (LAB) workshops were held in August and October, and the district-wide workshop in November 2018.

Local area workshops

The LAB workshops were held first, in order to inform the district-wide workshop. The LABs investigated specific local needs and constraints including land use, transport, environmental and open space, and other infrastructure. A number of towns and villages were covered over ten workshop sessions, attended by approximately 400 members of the public, with each entailing the following activities:

- Visiting the location.
- Meeting the community board and / or community committees.
- Facilitating an evening public workshop.
- A four-hour design session with Council staff, usually on the morning following the public workshop.

The schedule for the LAB workshops was as follows:

- **Tuakau:** 15 August 2018 at Tuakau Town Hall, with approximately 40 attendees.

- **Pokeno and Mercer:** 9 August 2018 at Pokeno Town Hall, with approximately 45 attendees.
- **Meremere:** 8 August 2018 at Meremere Community Centre, with approximately 15 attendees.
- **Te Kauwhata and Rangiriri:** 6 August 2018 at Te Kauwhata Rugby Football Club, with approximately 60 attendees.
- **Ohinewai:** 24 October 2018 at Ohinewai Hall, with approximately 26 attendees.
- **Huntly:** 7 August 2018 at Huntly Civic Centre, with approximately 50 attendees.
- **Taupiri, Ngaruawahia, and Horotiu:** 11 October 2018 at Ngaruawahia War Memorial Hall, with approximately 40 attendees.
- **Te Kowhai and Whatawhata:** 10 October 2018 at Te Kowhai Hall, with approximately 26 attendees.
- **Raglan:** 9 October 2018 at Raglan Town Hall, with approximately 66 attendees.
- **Tamahere and Matangi:** 8 October 2018 at Tamahere Model Country School, with approximately 25 attendees representing Tamahere, Matangi, and Newstead.

The public workshops were effective in gaining ideas, setting the tone for the strategy, and gaining support for the process from the public.

For a brief summary of the consultation feedback, refer to **Section 2.2** and to each of the Local Area Blueprints in **Section 4**. A comprehensive overview of the outputs of the public workshops can be found in **Appendix A**.

Following each public workshop, Council staff and the consultant team reviewed the public workshop outcomes and undertook a design exercise, including highlighting areas of commonality and contradiction, and determining possible initiatives.



This work also included analysis of technical constraints and opportunities, and an evaluation of local social wellbeing (summarised in **Appendix B**), which served as a starting point for gaining a better collective understanding of local strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and constraints. The proposed initiatives for each of the LABs are documented in **Section 4** of this report.

District-wide workshop

The district-wide workshop was held on 5 - 9 November 2018 at Waikato-Tainui Endowed College in Hopuhopu. Various consultation sessions, including several with iwi representatives, were held in the period July - November 2018.

The workshop involved developing 'place based' concepts and strategies in response to the identified local area opportunities across the district. It explored the bigger-picture context as well as local urban planning responses. The investigation involved all key discipline areas; cultural, infrastructure, transport, growth / zoning, employment, community / social, environmental, communications, GIS, and governance.

Parts of the workshop were attended by the following stakeholders:

- Waikato District Council staff (including the leadership teams);
- Waikato District Councillors;
- Iwi representatives; and
- New Zealand Transport Agency, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Social Development, District Health Board, Department of Internal Affairs representatives.

The district-wide Blueprint is summarised in **Section 3** of this report, presenting the core district-wide strategic priorities.

2.2 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

As explained, public workshops were held in locations across the district. While feedback was place-specific, there were a number of more or less universal responses across the different local areas. When asked, 'what is holding your area back?', the following issues were identified (in no particular order):

- Not enough jobs and skills;
- Little ability to make more decisions locally;
- Waste water service and quality;
- Not enough growth or, conversely, too much growth;
- Not benefitting from tourists travelling through;
- Poor public transport; and
- Lack of affordable housing.

When asked, 'what is your vision for the area?', the following ideas were brought up (in no particular order):

- Vibrant and bustling towns and villages that form a network and are complementary;
- New businesses and employment for youth;
- Be a tourism destination;
- A healthy environment with recreation and cycling opportunities;
- More education and training options; and
- Improved public transport.

As explained, local area-specific feedback is documented in **Section 4**. A comprehensive overview of the outputs of the public workshops can be found in **Appendix A**.

2.3 POSSIBLE NEXT STEP: STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR CENTRES

It is expected that, following the District and Local Area Blueprint, there will be a need to undertake strategic planning for several centres within the district. District Development Strategy should be revised and provide a framework for this.

These planning exercises would likely include but not be limited to:

- Location and extents of retail, employment uses and town centre housing;
- Public space design including streets;
- Walkability, parking, vehicle circulation and servicing;
- Town centre management, events and activation; and
- Biodiversity and water quality initiatives.

2.4 PORT WAIKATO & GORDONTON LOCAL AREA BLUEPRINTS 2022

The process to develop the Port Waikato & Gordonton Local Area Blueprints took place between December 2021 and August 2022 and consisted of the following stages:

- Input gathering.
- Prioritisation.
- Decision making and documentation.

Input Gathering

This stage consisted of the steps described below.

Public consultation questionnaires

The initial public consultation process took place via online and hard-copy questionnaires made available in the period December 2021 to February 2022. In-person sessions were not held due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Through these questionnaires the Port Waikato and Gordonton communities were invited to indicate the issues that needed addressing and the opportunities to be pursued in the Blueprint process.

Site visits

The WDC project team and consultants visited Port Waikato and Gordonton in February 2022 to investigate place-based issues identified through initial public consultation.

Technical workshops

Technical workshops were held in March 2022. A wide variety of WDC staff representing all relevant technical disciplines met with the consultant team to discuss and clarify the findings from the previous information gathering stages and provide further input on issues to be addressed and ideas to be pursued.

Public consultation sessions

Two public consultation sessions were held in May 2022. On 3 May approximately 50 members of the Port Waikato community and on 5 May approximately 35 members of the Gordonton community attended public workshops, held locally.

During working sessions in groups as well as plenary presentations and discussions the following questions were addressed and tasks carried out:

- **List challenges:** What is holding back your town? How can this be fixed?
- **List opportunities:** What are the biggest opportunities? How can these be realised?
- **Map related initiatives:** considering uses, open spaces, the environment, all modes of traffic, cultural ideas, events, management, and other.

Prioritisation

This stage consisted of the steps described below.

Technical workshops

Following the stage of input gathering, all ideas and suggestions were consolidated and categorised by the consultant team. The WDC and consultant team then met again in May 2022 for technical workshops. During these sessions all ideas were verified, discussed and prioritised. In this process all suggested initiatives were checked for their ability to positively transform the local area as well as their deliverability. Those initiatives that scored high on both criteria, or that were considered as catalysts or necessary actions to build on, were given a higher priority.

Steering Group discussions

In June 2022 the proposed initiatives and priorities were discussed with the Blueprint Steering Group. Adjustments were made in response to feedback.

Public drop-in sessions

Public drop-in sessions took place on 20 June 2022



in Gordonton and on 21 June 2022 in Port Waikato. Members of the public were invited to indicate their preferred priorities for the initiatives identified.

After this, and based on community feedback received, the project team finalised the draft LABs for Port Waikato and Gordonton.

Decision making and documentation

This stage consisted of the steps described below.

Councillor workshop

The draft LABs were presented to the full Council during a workshop on 18 July 2022. A discussion was held and adjustments agreed.

Documentation

After adjustments, the outcomes of the project were documented and this report produced.

2.5 2023 REVIEW

In 2023, a survey was made available to Local Community Boards/Committees and others to inform Waikato District Council which of the Local Area Blueprint initiatives should be considered in Council's 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, which should not be considered in the Long Term Plan, any amendments required, and suggested additional initiatives or commentary. The feedback received was assessed by Waikato District Council staff and appropriate amendments were approved by Council's Sustainability and Wellbeing Committee. The revised initiatives are now contained in the tables in these Local Area Blueprints.

Tamahere Local Area Blueprint

The Tamahere Community Committee responded to the survey released in 2023 with a in-depth and independent review of their Local Area Blueprint. This resulted in Tamahere Community Committee developing their own additional Local Area Blueprint initiatives. Council considered and adopted the Local Area Blueprint initiatives as an addendum. Waikato District Council staff and Urbanismplus were not involved in the development of the additional Local Area Blueprint initiatives developed by the Tamahere Community Committee.

Tauwhare Local Area Blueprint

Prior to the 2023 review, the Tauwhare community did not have a Local Area Blueprint. Regardless of not having an existing Local Area Blueprint, the Tauwhare Community Committee submitted an independent table of Local Area Blueprint initiatives. The Tauwhare Community Committee noted that they brainstormed and prioritised issues for including in their Local Area Blueprint in February 2023. A community consultation meeting with the wider community was held in May 2023. Council considered and adopted the Local Area Blueprint initiatives developed solely by the Tauwhare Community Committee. Waikato District Council staff and Urbanismplus were not involved in the development of the Tauwhare Local Area Blueprint.



ABOVE FIG. 1-1: The Community Hub at Sunset Beach where the Port Waikato public sessions were held.



ABOVE FIG. 1-2: The Gordonton Hall where the Gordonton public sessions were held.

4.18 TAUWHARE

Snapshot

Population & Location: Tauwhare covers an area of approximately 6,333 ha with a population (based on the 2018 census) of 2,231 (2023 estimate), with growth projected to reach approximately 2,400 by 2060. Tauwhare village is located at the intersection of Tauwhare Road and Scotsman Valley Road, and historically has been a resting place for Maori and Pakeha travellers. The village is centred around Tauwhare school, which was first established in 1884 and currently has 6 classrooms. The Community Hall and St Andrew's church are also located in the village.

Consultation feedback

The Tauwhare Community Committee met in February 2023 to brainstorm and prioritise issues for inclusion in the local area blueprint. A community consultation meeting held in May 2023 was well attended, enabling further discussion of the key issues.

- The footpath network needs improving as there are areas where people are walking that are not safe or have uneven surfaces. Children need to walk on the road to avoid open drains.
- Tauwhare Road can be very busy at times and frequently has speeding traffic, with many instances of cars overtaking in the 50 km/h zone reported by residents. Children need to cross the road to attend Tauwhare School at busy times of day. Traffic calming is required.
- There is a lack of a community centre and no playground or recreational area for children, especially teenagers.
- There is no commercial centre zoning to allow for a shop, or care or other enterprise. The

zoning is all Country Living with no future zoning identified for residential growth. Some residents would like to subdivide to 2,500m², but acknowledged not all would be able to do this due to the position of the existing home on the section.

- Village beautification is considered important with positive comments about the cherry blossom trees. It was suggested that more cherry blossom trees could be planted in other parts of the village. Signs at the three entrance to the village to enhance the attractiveness were strongly supported.
- Predator Free Tauwhare was a concept that people generally supported and there was acknowledgement that this would be a community project.
- Community Emergency planning was needed with ideas discussed for how the community might improve its resilience in response to natural disasters.
- Increase the connection with Tauwhare Paa community and Ngaati Hauaa. Together the two localities can achieve more change. This was supported by a representative from the Paa.
- Maintenance of the village is important to keep the streets clean, the trees trimmed, and all roadsides to be regularly kept mowed.
- There is a desire to improve public transport links, although the level of support is uncertain.

Top priority initiatives

The top priority initiatives for Tauwhare:

- Extend the footpath network to ensure safe walking throughout the village.
- Calm the traffic through the village to reduce speed and improve safety.



Tauwhare Village



Tauwhare School



St Andrew's Church

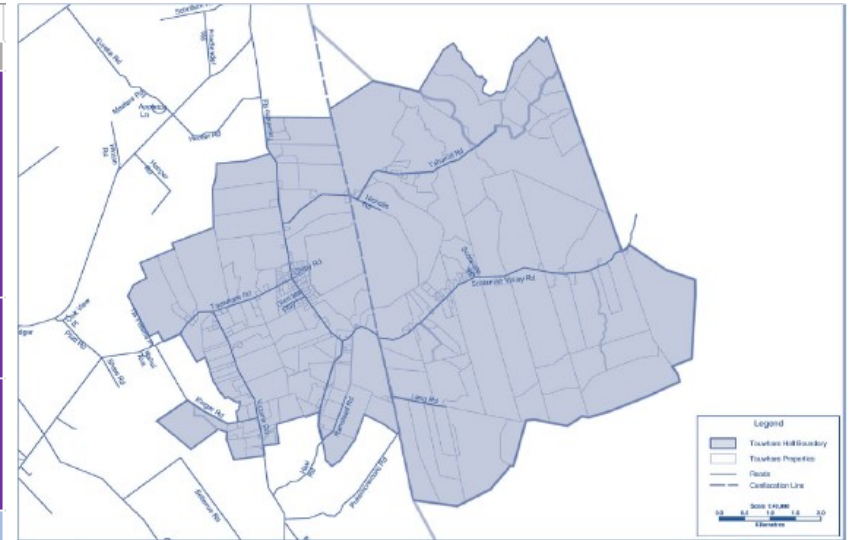


Tauwhare Hall

Note: Tauwhare Community Committee independently undertook the development of the Tauwhare LAB. Waikato District Council and Urbanismplus were not involved in the development of the Tauwhare LAB.

Proposed initiatives for Tauwhare

TAUWHARE		
Community Goals	Action	Priority
Support our communities	Extend footpaths throughout the 40 and 50 km/h speed zones on Tauwhare Road, and Scotsman Valley Road which would improve safety for children and other residents.	Top
	Road safety improvements along Tauwhare and Scotsman Valley Roads to reduce and calm traffic speed, prevent unsafe overtaking. Tauwhare Road is classified as an Arterial Road.	
	Work with Waikato District Council to produce a community growth plan for Tauwhare for the next 30 years.	Top
Sustaining our Environment	Village beautification by creating artistic signs and gardens for the three entrances. Erect heritage signs telling the history of the area. Cover open drains. Continue cherry trees along Tauwhare Road and Scotsman Valley Road.	Top
	Predator-free Tauwhare - support a community group with expertise, equipment and funding.	Medium
Building our Economy	Create a hub for the community by providing improved hall facilities and a playground / recreational area for children and teenagers.	High
Supporting our Communities	Allow for growth of the village and small-scale retail/commercial development.	
Working together with you	Community Emergency Planning support and equipment to improve the hall facilities for a large scale event.	Medium
Providing value for money	Maintenance of the appearance of the village area by trimming cherry trees, roading sweeping, mowing roadsides.	High
	Provide a public transport link to Morrinsville/Cambridge/Hamilton.	Low



Tauwhare Hall Boundary

Note: Tauwhare Community Committee independently undertook the development of the Tauwhare LAB. Waikato District Council and Urbanismplus were not involved in the development of the Tauwhare LAB.

