

Putāruru

It's all possible in Putāruru



Putāruru Concept Plan
July 2018



Welcome to
Putaruru

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Message from Pride in Putāruru

I'm a believer that if you can imagine something, you can do it. The Putāruru Concept Plan describes the future Putāruru that we want to see. It also sets out some of the steps we need to take to make that vision possible.

Other people are realising what a great place Putāruru is. Our town is growing and as well as supporting residential development, we want to encourage more businesses to set up in Putāruru. We firmly believe that focusing on artisan food and our pristine water will be some of our key points of difference. We already have some wonderful successes to build on.

There's several projects in our town centre that would make a huge difference to the attractiveness of our town. We have a vision that visitors will be compelled to stop in our town and, alongside the Council and SWIF Trust, we intend to drive the improvements that will make this the case. While Putāruru Moving Forward took responsibility for driving this Concept Plan, it's our relationship with the Mayor, Councillors and Council staff that has enabled us to pull it together. We are very fortunate to have a supportive and passionate community who want to drive progress. In my mind, leadership is simple; it's about enthusiasm. In Putāruru we have spades of it and I look forward to seeing the vision outlined in this Concept Plan come to fruition as a result of us all working together.



Stu Edmeades

Chairperson, Pride In Putāruru

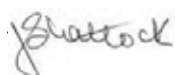


Message from the Mayor

This Concept Plan is a significant step forward in defining and working towards a sustainable, prosperous future for Putāruru. I would like to offer my congratulations to Putāruru Moving Forward/Pride in Putāruru for developing this positive vision for their community in collaboration with Council. The Plan sets out a pathway for addressing several important challenges and opportunities, including: developing the town centre to ensure it has broader appeal; building on the emerging artisan food theme; and considering how we build better youth engagement. Importantly, the Plan sets out a vision and plan for managing future growth. After more than 20 years of population decline, we now find the District being rediscovered as a place to live and work. Putāruru is well positioned to attract growth and this Concept Plan builds on the 30 year growth strategy that was prepared with the Putāruru community in 2017. As a result of that work, Council is now in the process of assessing infrastructure capacity and rezoning land to make residential and business development in Putāruru easier.

Our Council supports its communities to prepare concept plans. Concept plans describe the desired direction of travel for a community, and that helps inform the work of agencies like the Council, which have a significant role to play in future development and planning. It doesn't necessarily mean that everything in this plan will happen as described, but it does mean we have a clearer picture of the future that you want to create.

The Plan paints a fresh and compelling vision for Putāruru, and Council looks forward to playing its role in putting this into action.



Jenny Shattock

Mayor, South Waikato District Council



Introduction

The purpose of the Putāruru Concept Plan is to represent community views and guide planning for the town of Putāruru. The Plan recognises that there are several agencies that have lead roles in the development of Putāruru, including the South Waikato District Council, our business association - Pride in Putāruru, and the South Waikato Investment Fund.

This Concept Plan is intended to guide planning in an integrated and coordinated way.

This Concept Plan in a snapshot...

Putāruru is a great place to live. We enjoy wonderful natural surroundings and resources, we have a central location and we have an engaged and caring community. The Blue Spring/Te Waihou Walkway is at our doorstep and we have a number of unique local businesses leveraging off the purity of our surroundings and inspiring a growing interest in artisan food and beverages.

Putāruru is affordable relative to other parts of New Zealand, making it attractive not only for people to live in but also for business development.

Our town is growing, and this Concept Plan is our blueprint for how we intend to direct that growth: activate business development and activity in our town; and leverage opportunities arising from our natural assets as well as the increasing visitor and tourism trade.

For our town centre areas, this Concept Plan paints a vision for three distinct precincts and how we see each of these developing. We want to celebrate the unique properties and purpose of each precinct, whether it be services to support our rural businesses, services to attract visitors to stop, or the essential services that our community need day-to-day (see pages 18 to 21 for more detail).

In order to manage our growth well, this Concept Plan identifies a number of challenges and opportunities that we're going to focus our attention on (see pages 9 to 17 for more detail). These include:

- Managing the growth in a planned and staged manner
- Creating a more vibrant and appealing town centre to encourage people to stop in Putāruru
- Developing our existing businesses and attracting new businesses
- Managing vehicular traffic and ensuring that upgrades to the State Highway don't compromise the amenity and operation of our town, but instead enhance it
- Ensuring our young people feel a sense of connectedness; that they have a voice in decisions that affect them and have employment pathways locally
- Making good use of our recreation spaces, and ensuring their ongoing viability
- Ensuring that Te Waihou is protected, but that we also obtain positive economic benefits from the tourism associated with it.

We have all the elements in position to make our town more vibrant, to have successful businesses and be a welcoming and fascinating place to visit. Our business community and local council have a good working relationship, and there is a desire to work together. This Concept Plan contains a detailed action plan (pages 24 to 26) and whilst the Plan doesn't commit each agency to these particular tasks, it provides a solid basis from which we can work together to help us achieve more for our people and our businesses, rather than leave it to chance.



Our vision is to be...

A vibrant small town,
surrounded by a diverse and
progressive rural community,
which is a great place to live.

An excellent service centre,
home to rural and commercial
businesses that support the
region.

**A welcoming and
fascinating place**
to stop, visit and stay.



About our town

Putāruru is located in the picturesque South Waikato region of New Zealand's North Island.

Our population is growing. Over the next 30 years, the town's population is expected to grow by more than 1,500 people from our current population of just over 4,000.

In line with our population growth, we expect the number of houses will increase by about 600 during that same period.

At the 2013 census, 21.4% of our population are aged 65 years and over, making us slightly older than the South Waikato District's population. However, we have a reasonably balanced demographic makeup and the median age of our population is 43 years.

Raukawa is the main iwi in the area and Ngāti Mahana is the hapū within Putāruru.

We're centrally located, being an hour to Hamilton, Tauranga, Rotorua and Taupō.

A significant volume of traffic (about 10,000 vehicles a day) arrives in Putāruru, on State Highway 1 running north/south, and also along Arapuni Street running east/west, being the route between Rotorua and Waitomo.

In addition, the Kinleith Branch railway runs through Putāruru, servicing (amongst other things) freight between the Kinleith Mill, the Port of Tauranga and beyond.

We have a pristine supply of pure, spring-fed water, the Blue Spring, which can be accessed from Te Waihou Walkway, a track designed to showcase this natural taonga (treasure). A significant volume of New Zealand's bottled water comes from this spring.

We celebrate with an annual water festival 'Waterfest'; we're located close to the Waikato

River Trails (cycleway and walkway); and the New Zealand Timber Museum, located 3km south of Putāruru, celebrates and preserves the history of the District's timber industry.

Putāruru has a state primary school, a Catholic primary school and a college (high school). In addition, Te Wharekura o Te Kaokaoroa o Pātetere is a composite area school up to Year 13.

Our town is well served for recreation facilities with a multi purpose, 520 person-capacity theatre space, The Plaza. Containing a proscenium arch and nine-bay fly tower, the theatre is suitable for professional concerts and events, as well as being a fantastic facility for community events and functions.

Glenshea Park and Totara Park contain full-sized rugby fields. Glenshea Park has grandstands and associated facilities and clubrooms, together with six netball courts and an associated pavilion which are interchanged with tennis courts and a separate tennis pavilion. Located alongside Glenshea Park is the Putāruru Memorial Swimming Pool Complex.

Rangiura Charitable Trust, which was formed in 1975, is a housing provider for the elderly and offers a number of services including rest home, hospital support and Retirement Village living. Owing to increasing demand for services, Rangiura continues to develop, with its current capacity offering 80 rest home/hospital-level support, and 85 modern two-bedroom independent living units. Rangiura can also service up to 19 residents in Fern Haven, a home designed specifically for elderly persons with dementia. Rangiura maintains strong support from the local community.



Our economic profile

By business type,¹ the largest industry sectors in the South Waikato District are agriculture, forestry and fishing (23.9%), manufacturing (17.5%), and education and training (9.9%). Retail trade represents 7.7% of industry.

For Putāruru specifically, the main industry is timber handling and processing, water related industry and farming. Dairying, with some sheep raising, is the main farming activity in the surrounding area.

Putāruru and the South Waikato have a connection with the timber industry which dates back to the turn of the 20th century. Presently, there are two sawmills in Putāruru, being Pacific Pine and Kiwi Lumber.

The South Waikato District is currently experiencing a strong economic upswing, with GDP growth in the 2017 year at 4.3%, up from just 1.3% a year earlier and well above the national average of 2.8%.²

“South Waikato’s expansion is spread across the full range of spending and investment indicators... electronic card transactions shows that retail spending in the District grew by 5.3% in the December 2017 year, stronger than the national average of 4.3%. Car registrations increased modestly, but commercial vehicle registrations were strong – up by 20%, versus the national average rise of 16%.

Strong growth in vehicle registrations is consistent with the prospect of rising workloads for builders and construction firms over the coming months. The optimism that has quickly re-emerged in the forestry industry is also likely to be boosting commercial vehicle sales.

South Waikato’s housing is more affordable than many other parts of the country. This should remain an attraction for potential new residents.

An improving labour market will help in that regard too. The number of Jobseeker Support recipients in the District fell by 2.9% in the December 2017 year. This is likely to have been driven by the recovering dairy industry and the strong forestry sector. Indeed, the Infometrics Regional Economic Profile shows that, of the 103 net newly filled jobs in the District in the year to March 2017, 56 came from wood product manufacturing and 32 from pulp and paper product manufacturing.”

- Infometrics Economic Monitor, December 2017

In 2017,³ the South Waikato District’s economy produced a total of \$1,000 million in GDP, through approximately 2,274 businesses, providing employment to 9,480 fulltime equivalents.

Whilst this information is not broken down to be Putāruru specific, the economic trends experienced by the District are consistent with local observations of Putāruru.

¹ Infometrics District Profile, December 2017

² Infometrics District Profile, December 2017

³ Infometrics District Profile, December 2017

What our community have said

As preparation for the Putāruru Growth Plan and Concept Plan, in September 2016, feedback from the community was gathered via a survey.

The survey asked respondents to identify the six strengths and assets that make Putāruru a great place to live and its community unique. In order of response, the top six strengths/assets were identified as:

1. Central location
2. Blue Spring/Te Waihou Walkway
3. A place for children to grow up
4. A place for older people to live
5. Housing affordability
6. Friendly people.

The survey also sought feedback on areas for improvement. In order of response, our community have asked for improvements in the following areas:

1. Job opportunities
2. Retail shopping including the supermarket
3. Main streets
4. Health and social services
5. A place for children to grow up.

In terms of the future of Putāruru, the community were asked how they would like to see Putāruru in five years' time. The most common theme was that people would like to see a vibrant retail shopping precinct with no empty shops. Other common themes included:

- Activities for our children and young people
- More employment opportunities
- More young families settling in our town
- A well-maintained, bustling town centre
- More tourist opportunities, leveraging off Te Waihou and the Waikato River Trails
- Improved schooling and supermarket
- More housing choices and an improved housing stock.

Our lead collaborators

Pride in Putāruru

Pride in Putāruru is the name of our business association. This organisation facilitates functions and events on behalf of the Putāruru business community and residents. Events include the Putāruru Business Awards, Christmas Parade and Waterfest. Pride in Putāruru also produces *The Prattler* newspaper, distributed free to the Putāruru and Tirau Wards. *The Prattler* has an online presence, and Pride in Putāruru has a Facebook page and PiPTV.

Pride in Putāruru is funded by Council through a targeted rate from both the business sector and Putāruru and Arapuni residential ratepayers. The organisation secures additional funding from other sources such as grants and sponsorships.

You can access Pride in Putāruru website: www.prideinputaruru.com

Putāruru Moving Forward

Putāruru Moving Forward is a group of like-minded, forward-thinking Putāruru residents and business leaders who are committed to driving Putāruru forward. Putāruru Moving Forward is not a formal entity, but has filled the function of a steering group on a number of community planning projects such as the Growth Plan and this Concept Plan.

South Waikato District Council

The South Waikato District Council is a local government body that is responsible for delivering a wide range of services to communities living in the South Waikato District. These services include roads, water reticulation, sewage and refuse collection, libraries, parks, recreation services, local regulations, community and economic development, and town planning.

South Waikato Investment Fund Trust

In 2014, the Council established the South Waikato Investment Fund (SWIF) Trust for the purpose of increasing employment and economic growth in the South Waikato District.

The Trust manages the \$25 million fund which is available for economic development projects in South Waikato. The Trust is therefore a significant player in the future economic development of Putāruru.

Our business community

Businesses are a valuable asset in any local community. We recognise the efforts of all the businesses in our community, which by opening their doors day-after-day, create and communicate our town identity. We are especially proud also of our entrepreneurs, home-grown businesses, and locally made products. Along with good urban design, it's our businesses that create vibrancy in our town centre and that transform our town character into local employment and economic advantage.

Raukawa Settlement Trust & Charitable Trust

The Raukawa Settlement Trust (RST) is the postsettlement governance entity of the South Waikato based iwi, Raukawa, and represents 16 marae and numerous hapū.

The Raukawa Charitable Trust is mandated by the RST to represent and advocate for the social, environmental and cultural aspirations of the iwi. The economic aspirations of the iwi are provided direction through Raukawa Iwi Development Ltd. Raukawa Charitable Trust has a business group, known as the Environment Group – Te Pūtake Taiao, that is tasked with representing and advocating for the best interests of Raukawa as they pertain to environmental and resource management issues.

Our challenges and opportunities

To realise our vision, we have identified 12 challenges that are also opportunities for our community to focus attention on, being:



1. Catering for quality growth



2. Encouraging people to stop in Putāruru, with a more vibrant and appealing town centre



3. Managing vehicular traffic



4. Encouraging people to shop locally



5. Business development



6. Our youth



7. The utilisation of our recreation spaces



8. Deliberate, values-based tourism products



9. Strengthening connections to other attractions in South Waikato



10. Healthy Rivers/ Wai Ora: Plan Change 1



11. Being relevant in regional economic development plans and initiatives



12. Making the most of ultrafast fibre and WiFi



1. CATERING FOR QUALITY GROWTH

Putāruru's population is estimated to grow from approximately 4,030 in 2016 to about 5,500 in 2048 – an increase of 1,500 people, with a projected increase of around 600 houses over the same period.

The Council has worked with the community to prepare a longterm Growth Plan for Putāruru (see the 'Planning for Growth' section on page 22 for further information). This Growth Plan has identified 10 potential areas around the urban fringe for new residential growth, and a potential extension of the current business-zoned land into the area south of Princes Street.

The amount of land that will be rezoned for development is currently subject to an assessment by the Council regarding infrastructure capacity (particularly water and wastewater) and the costs of infrastructure upgrades.

The Growth Plan work recognised that much of the existing housing stock in Putāruru is relatively old and although this offers opportunities for renovation, access to quality housing is reasonably limited; and there has been a shortage of housing development. At

the same time, housing prices are increasing (approximately 28% increase in 2017 alone, and an estimated 67% increase since July 2015). The cost of renting is also rising.

Relative to other parts of New Zealand, the cost of land in Putāruru is more affordable. This means that new development in Putāruru should be attractive to those priced out of other, more expensive markets, such as first-home buyers, those accessing the HomeStart Grants via KiwiSaver, and retirees.

Consequently, an objective of the Growth Plan was to provide for smaller residential sections for new home builds.

The challenge is for Putāruru to respond quickly to the current population growth and to foster an environment that makes continued growth and development an attractive proposition.

With an increased population, consideration will also need to be given to a walking and cycling strategy (for recreational and commuter purposes), as well as taking into account the local public transport needs.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » The growth of Putāruru occurs in a planned and staged manner, rather than being adhoc.
- » Quality development occurs, and the development process is facilitated smoothly.
- » We attract new and retain existing residents.
- » Housing development results in a variety of quality housing stock catering to the different needs and preferences of our community, but with an emphasis first and foremost on smaller urban homes.
- » The cost of growth does not fall inequitably onto the existing ratepayers.

⁴ LJ Hooker, Putāruru



2. ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO STOP IN PUTĀRURU WITH A MORE VIBRANT AND APPEALING TOWN CENTRE

Putāruru is a service centre town to the surrounding rural market, and also a major thoroughfare with State Highway 1 running north/south, and as well as along Arapuni St running east/west, being the route between Rotorua and Waitomo.

The community of Putāruru can be sustained by this service industry; however, we have an opportunity to create more incentive for visitors and passing traffic to stop.

The geographic layout of our town centre lends itself to a precinct approach to development and activities (this is described further in the next section). In addition, there is potential to provide greater visual and pedestrian connectivity between the Old Post Office Building, leading into Kensington Street and Main Street.

The architecture of the Old Post Office Building attracts attention because it is visually distinctive. The plaza area outside the Old Post Office is an important space within the town as it is highly visible from the State Highway. This focal point is the prime place to draw people

from the State Highway, and upgrading the Water Park area with a more striking visual design will offer a destination stop for families.

Maintaining and upgrading the Old Post Office (currently the International Food Court) to include visitor information, and developing the site of the former Honda shop will also create a stronger proposition for visitors and passing traffic.

Fostering more boutique-quality food offerings, cafes and restaurants that have a regional and national profile, and locating these around this focal point intersection, represents further potential for Putāruru.

Locating visitor information in this area ensures that other local attractions - including the New Zealand Timber Museum and Te Waihou Walkway/Blue Spring - can be promoted to visitors and passing traffic.

Our efforts to create a stronger offering for visitors and passing traffic must not remove focus from the activities which make Putāruru a great place to live.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » Our town is visually appealing and encourages the passing traffic to stop.
- » A precinct layout for to the development of our town centre provides for a coordinated and holistic approach to growth and to town beautification efforts.
- » Greater visual and pedestrian connectivity will be created between the Water Park, Kensington Street and Main Street.
- » Putāruru leverages its pristine water supply to develop artisan and boutique food purveyors with regional and national profiles.
- » The upgraded Water Park will offer a destination stop for families that showcases and celebrates the area's pristine spring water.
- » The Old Post Office Building will be maintained to an attractive standard and include visitor information.
- » The site of the former Honda shop will be developed with an appealing hospitality and artisan food offering.
- » Putāruru offers quality support services for agriculture and other industries that generate local employment.



3. MANAGING VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

Putāruru contains a wide main road (State Highway 1), which means that parking larger vehicles (such as campervans and trucks) is easier than in other nearby towns. It is widespread practice for trucks to double-park in the main street, particularly in the mornings.

Because of the available space and current practice, opportunities exist to enhance the offering of services for larger vehicles.

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) has identified a number of safety and maintenance improvements for State Highway 1 between Piarere and Taupo, and has a business case for safety improvements, as well as upgrades to the quality of the roading infrastructure, and enhancements of amenity values within towns (including Putāruru).

The NZTA's business case states that traffic volumes are expected to increase in the future

with a 30% increase in all traffic and a 50% increase in heavy vehicles over the next 30 years.

The NZTA acknowledges that increasing the number of people travelling through the towns can be beneficial, and notes a direct and measurable link to the revenue reported by retailers and tourist industries. However, it acknowledges that if not managed well, increasing numbers of heavy vehicles can have an effect on the social and economic operation of the town.

Making greater efforts to divert heavy vehicle traffic away from Main Street (and instead requiring heavy traffic to use the southern end of Princes Street) presents an opportunity to enhance the pedestrian priority of the town centre, encourage the use of Memorial Park for a wider range of community offerings, and better complement the desired activities on Tirau Street and Kensington Street.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » Highway upgrades don't compromise the amenity and operation of Putāruru, but enhance it.
- » Local community views are taken into account in any future upgrades to the State Highway throughout Putāruru and surrounds.
- » Putāruru continues to be the preferred location for large vehicular traffic to stop while not compromising town amenity and safety.
- » Heavy vehicle traffic is diverted away from Main Street to provide for enhanced pedestrian and recreational opportunities around Main Street and Kensington Street.



4. ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO SHOP LOCAL

Feedback from our community indicated that many people travel out of town for their retail shopping. There are opportunities for Pride in Putāruru to work with local businesses to create 'buy local' campaigns, and also work with the community to further understand the gaps in the current services.

There is potential to enhance local retail to meet this need and, in doing so, create a more vibrant town centre for our community. The Putāruru

business community could consider standards or policies across its retail and commercial sectors, such as environmental sustainability or similar, which could create a further point of difference.

The volunteer *Tidy up Team* support local businesses with their shop presentation, as well as other visual improvements to our town. Initiatives such as this should continue to increase pride in our community.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » The retail offering in Putāruru is enhanced and serves well the needs of local communities with essential services (such as banking) and quality retail and hospitality offerings.
- » Pride is apparent in our local business community.
- » Our local community supports local businesses.

⁵ NZTA SH1 Piarere to Taupo



5. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

There are a number of affordable industrial and business sites in the Putāruru town centre which lend themselves to new business opportunities of various scale. Whilst there has been increased demand over the past few years, we are not presently maximising this advantage.

The Council and the business association, Pride in Putāruru, are supportive of and encourage new business development. Developing knowledge and expertise on how to attract new businesses and understanding current barriers to entry are areas for improvement. There is potential within our existing community networks to harness knowledge and resources for different outcomes (such as working with the banking sector and Waikato Innovation Park) to cultivate new business investment in Putāruru.

There are also opportunities to strengthen our existing business association, Pride in Putāruru, to ensure that our current businesses are well supported and have a strong, collective voice.

Putāruru has a robust history of home-grown businesses including:

- **Van Dyk Furnishers**, established in 1974, and today has a broad reach and retail presence throughout the Waikato. Van Dyk's currently provides full-time employment for 50+ people and is one of the largest employers in Putāruru.
- **Rangiura Charitable Trust**, which was formed in 1975, is a housing provider for the elderly and offers a number of services including rest home, hospital support and Retirement Village living. Rangiura continues to develop, with current capacity offering

80 rest home/hospital-level support, and 85 modern two-bedroom independent living units. Rangiura receives ongoing strong support from the local community and currently employs over 100 people.

- **Central Kids Kindergartens**, established in 1983, now operates 48 kindergartens and 8 full day-care centres between Whitianga in the north, Taumarunui in the south and Ōpōtiki in the east. Their head office is based in Putāruru.
- More recently, boutique cheese factory, **Over the Moon**, established in 2007 has won more than 75 medals and a dozen trophies from around the world. Their small factory, located on State Highway 1 in Putāruru, is open for tastings, demonstrations and cheesemaking courses.
- **Flooring Xtra** was founded in 2008 in Putāruru and is now New Zealand's largest flooring brand, with 58 retail stores nationwide. The stores are all New Zealand owned and operated and provide residential and commercial flooring products, including: carpet, wood, laminate, vinyl and lino.

Our challenge is to ensure that we retain and develop our existing businesses, and encourage new business investment in Putāruru that creates economic activity for our town as well as employment pathways for our youth.

Neither Pride in Putāruru, SWIF Trust or the Council have resources dedicated solely to business development in Putāruru; therefore, collaboration and coordination between the agencies is required to achieve these outcomes.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » Our local businesses are retained.
- » Putāruru is seen as a desirable town in which to establish a business.
- » Land zoning supports business development.
- » We grow and attract sustainable new businesses that generate local employment.
- » We have employment pathways for our young people.
- » The business community supports our youth and existing workforce to upskill.
- » A strong collaboration continues between Council, Pride in Putāruru, SWIF Trust and the business community.



6. OUR YOUTH

Feedback from our community requests more activities for children and young people. As an extension of this feedback, we observe that more needs to be done to ensure we grow and develop the skills and connections of our young people to enable them to reach their full potential.

Central to this will be having effective youth participation, so that our young people are involved in influencing, shaping, designing and contributing to policy, services and programmes that impact them.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » Our young people believe they have choices about their future and feel a sense of connectedness within our community.
- » Our young people see our community as a desirable place to live.
- » Our young people have a voice in decisions that affect them.
- » Our community leaders include our young people.
- » We have employment pathways for our young people.



7. THE UTILISATION OF RECREATION SPACES

Putāruru is well served for recreation facilities and spaces.

The large grassed open space of Glenshea Park, located within the urban area of Putāruru, is a significant landscape feature of the town, providing invaluable open space as a neighbourhood park, for regular sport use, recreation and community events. The historical mature tulip trees add to the amenity appeal and value of the park. Totara Park is also a large green space within the urban area.

Glenshea Park contains full-sized rugby fields, grandstands and associated facilities including clubrooms. Glenshea Park also contains six netball courts and adjacent pavilion, which are interchanged with tennis courts and a separate tennis pavilion.

A challenge for a town of our size is to ensure the viability of the sports clubs, which in turn will mean that the parks are well utilised. Ensuring that all parts of the parks are well used is a further concern, as is making sure that their upkeep does not pose an unreasonable financial burden on ratepayers.

Given that our town is experiencing growth, it is also important to retain adequate open green space for recreational use and not succumb to sacrificing recreational green space for development.

Putāruru's multi-purpose theatre, The Plaza, is run by not-for-profit organisation The South Waikato Arts Trust. As with our sports clubs, ensuring the viability of the Trust and the utilisation of The Plaza should remain a focus of the community.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » We have vibrant and viable sports clubs.
- » Our recreational reserves and facilities are managed well and regularly used.



8. DELIBERATE, VALUES-BASED TOURISM PRODUCTS

The New Zealand Government is projecting that visitor arrivals to New Zealand are expected to grow 4.8% a year.⁶ We are already observing the increasing popularity of Te Waihou Walkway, and this should be viewed as an opportunity to increase visitor numbers in Putāruru. However, the enjoyment of the taonga (treasure) has to be balanced with environmental protection of the site, respect for Raukawa's kaitiaki relationship with Te Waihou and the principles and objectives expressed by Raukawa.

In 2016, the Council took measures to ban swimming in the Blue Spring area of Te Waihou Walkway as swimming activity was having a negative impact on the vegetation in the riverbed and on the banks, as well as on the visual amenity of the taonga. Our challenge is to encourage a culture amongst our community and visitors that values this taonga, and ensures that the mana and mauri of the water is safeguarded for future generations.

Putāruru needs to continue a strong association with this taonga and leverage off the tourism activity associated with this, for the benefit

of the local iwi and local community. There are opportunities to extend the tourism infrastructure around Te Waihou Walkway to cater for a larger number of visitors in a responsible way, and also potential to create revenue for tourism operators and conservation efforts by the way in which access to the site is managed.

There is scope for other tourism products to be developed in our area too, and with growing visitor numbers nationally, we want to be deliberate about the tourism offerings created. We see values-based tourism being an important focus for the development of tourism products in our area, with opportunities to develop authentic experiences centred around conservation, eco-tourism, the land, artisan food, and timber. Having a focus on storytelling and emphasising a personalised approach to our tourism offerings will set us apart as well.

We also need to offer quality accommodation for visitors. Therefore, attracting investors to provide this, as well as encouraging quality farmstay experiences, needs to be a focus.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » Putāruru is known for authentic, quality, personalised tourism experiences.
- » Tourism offerings are based on our natural strengths: environment, water, land, timber and artisan food and beverage.
- » Quality accommodation is available.
- » Te Waihou/Blue Spring is preserved as a taonga for future generations.
- » Te Waihou Walkway is maintained to a high standard for the enjoyment of our community and visitors.
- » Putāruru obtains positive economic benefits from tourism.
- » The negative impacts associated with increased tourism are managed proactively.

⁶ MBIE, New Zealand Tourism Forecasts 2017-2023



9. STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ATTRACTIONS IN THE SOUTH WAIKATO

To our east, Rotorua has a significant flow of tourists annually (approximately four million), and to the south, Taupō attracts around three million visits per annum. To the west is Waitomo and the Waikato River Trails surrounds Putāruru in most directions.

Our central location means that we are well placed to service passing visitors.

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism is the regional tourism organisation for the Hamilton and Waikato region. At present, they promote *Over the Moon* cheese tasting in Putāruru, and the Te Waihou Walkway.

An opportunity exists for us to improve our tourism offerings and strengthen connections to other attractions throughout the South Waikato region.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » Putāruru coordinates its tourism offerings with other, complementary activities in the District and that these are promoted as tourism packages by the regional tourism organisation.



10. HEALTHY RIVERS WAI ORA: PLAN CHANGE 1

Water quality has consistently been identified as an issue for the people of the Waikato region. The Healthy Rivers/Wai Ora: Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 is a response to address the complex issue of water quality facing the Waipa and Waikato rivers. The Plan focuses on ways to improve water quality to make it safe for swimming and provide sustainable sources of food.

The South Waikato District Council has raised concerns about the projected social and economic impacts of the plan change on South

Waikato. The Council supports the aspirations of Healthy Rivers and what this initiative is aiming to achieve, and is seeking specific and important changes to this plan from Waikato Regional Council to ensure positive outcomes for South Waikato and its people.

Maintaining an awareness of the Plan Change impacts and resulting requirements will need to be a priority for the Putāruru community in the immediate term. Further submissions and hearings on the Plan are expected to take place during 2018.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » The social and economic impacts of the Healthy Rivers/Wai Ora Plan Change 1 recognised by the Council are addressed meaningfully.
- » Those likely to be affected by the Healthy Rivers/Wai Ora: Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 are kept well informed.



11. BEING RELEVANT IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND INITIATIVES

Waikato Means Business is the name of a 20-year economic development strategy for the Waikato region. The strategy was created with input from regional business leaders and aims to guide regional economic development policy, investment and activity. Waikato Means Business was initiated by the Waikato Mayoral Forum and is the regional body for economic development.

Also initiated by the Waikato Mayoral Forum was the Waikato Plan. The Waikato Plan is a collective voice of all the Waikato councils and agencies about important issues that affect them now and over the next 30 years. The Waikato Plan will help identify opportunities and guide investment to agreed priority areas in a timely way.

Through the development of the Waikato Plan, a work stream associated with exploring and implementing economic development initiatives

for the southern Waikato emerged. Potentially this will be in the form of an action plan that identifies and brings together initiatives across the South Waikato, Waitomo and Otorohanga Districts, in partnership with Waikato Means Business and government departments.

The Council intends to participate in this project with a view to achieving tangible actions for the South Waikato District and, where possible, position itself to seek support and funding from central government through the Regional Growth Fund (or equivalent) to enable large-scale job-creating opportunities.

The key focus areas should be on advocating the competitive advantage of Putāruru, identifying how our town can leverage this collaborative initiative and on proactively seizing opportunities that arise.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » The assets and interests of Putāruru are represented well in the development of the Southern Waikato Economic Development Action Plan.
- » Putāruru has a voice at the regional table that is well informed about the vision for Putāruru.
- » Putāruru is perceived by others as a great place to do business.
- » Funding from central government has been successfully obtained to support large-scale job creation.



12. MAKING THE MOST OF ULTRAFAST FIBRE AND WIFI

Fibre is the newest and fastest broadband technology currently available, and Putāruru will receive fibre throughout 2018 as part of the Government's UltraFast broadband expansion initiative.

Opportunities exist to leverage off this technology for social and economic benefits.

A challenge will be to identify and work through any impediments to businesses and residents as a result of upgrading to fibre.

The Council has prepared a Digital Enablement Plan which includes objectives to:

- Maximise the internet to increase business profitability within South Waikato.
- Bring economic advantage to South Waikato by fully promoting our digital advantage.
- Engage with and promote community uptake of digital technology cost effectively and consistently by working collaboratively with other councils within the Waikato region.

There are opportunities for Pride in Putāruru to work with the Council and the telecommunications providers in support of the business community regarding benefits from the new infrastructure.

The outcomes we're seeking:

- » Efficient and effective digital services are the norm.
- » Greater access to digital services creates economic development and employment opportunities

A precinct approach to strengthening our town centre

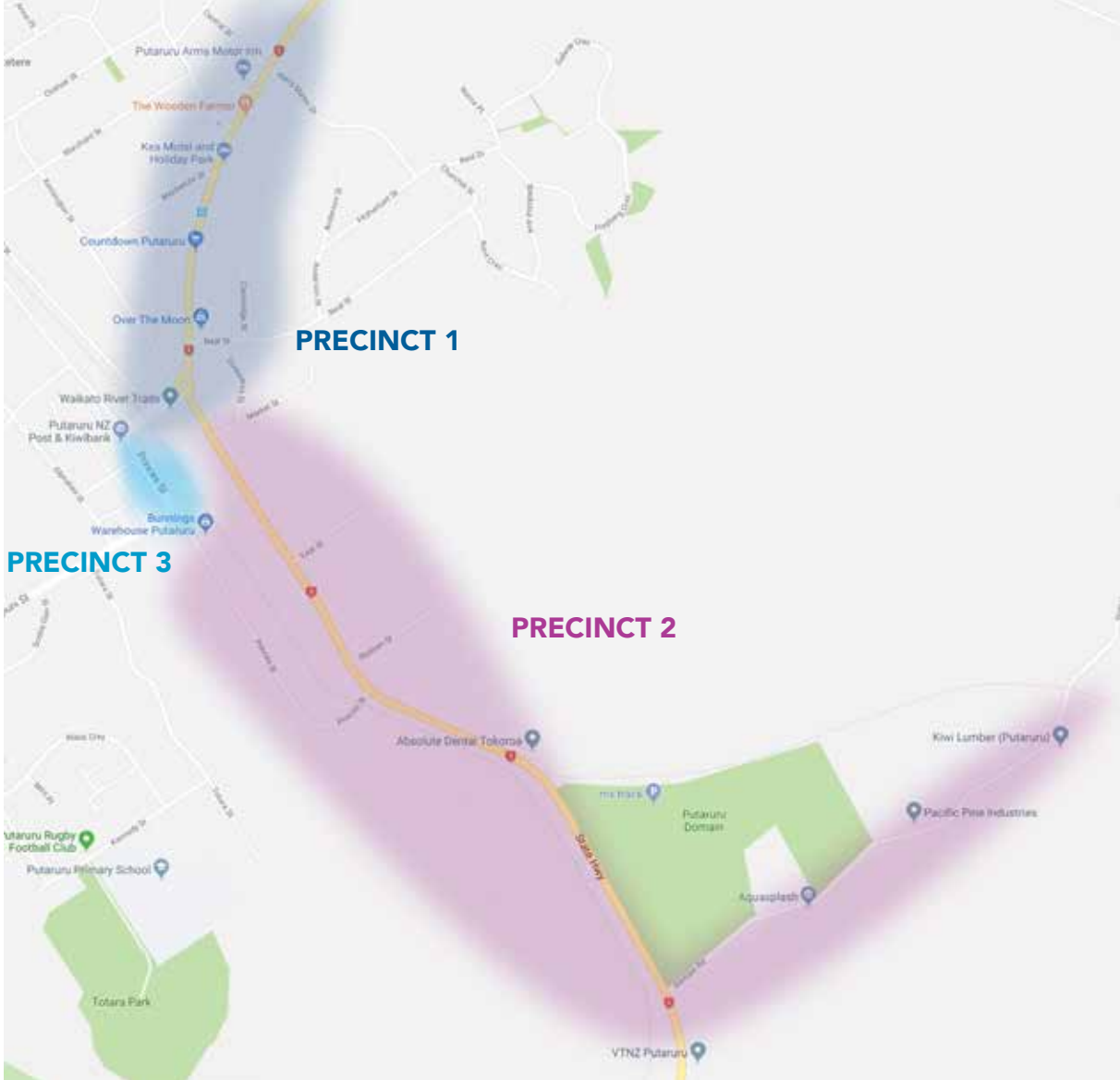
The geographic layout of our town centre lends itself to a precinct approach to development and activities.

The purpose of a precinct approach is to focus the development and activity of each precinct and to direct growth in the appropriate geographic area. If implemented well, this provides for a coordinated and holistic approach to growth.

There are three distinct precincts that make up the Putāruru town centre and no one precinct is more important than the other. The shading on the map below indicates the areas for each precinct.

The precincts are physically and visually disconnected, so the focus is to celebrate the existing unique characteristics and purpose of each. We have articulated a theme for each precinct as well as a vision for how we see each precinct developing.

Through the Putāruru Growth Plan, we have also thought about how and where our residential development should grow. This is covered on pages 22 and 23.





*a
reason to
stop and stay*

PRECINCT 1

State Highway 1 and Main Street, local and visitor precinct which is a visitor through-route (North/South/East/West)

How we see this precinct developing...

The Old Putāruru Post Office Building will be modernised, and remain a unique visual icon in Putāruru. Information services for tourists, as well some boutique businesses with a focus on artisan food, will be located here.

Artisan food businesses, such as Over the Moon whose profile extends beyond our town, will attract people here and create a reason to stop.

The upgraded Water Park area will offer a destination stop for families with children that showcases and celebrates the area's pristine spring water.

There are food and beverage services and public amenities in this precinct, suitable for our community, but prominently located to attract those passing through.

The State Highway through the town centre is a busy street and the volume of traffic creates activity and bustle that generates a vibe.

Developing the Oraka Stream Walkway further south will create connecting walkways into town.

Signage will be improved so that parking on Kensington Street is encouraged, which creates easy parking, with direct access to the facilities on offer. Electric Vehicle charging stations may also be located in this area.

Greater visual connectivity will be created between the entrance to Kensington Street and *The Plaza*, and Main Street. There will be opportunities for the community to use Kensington Street for larger events and festivals.

This precinct will have visual appeal, through both the presentation of the amenities, the business offerings and public art.



a service town

PRECINCT 2

Southern side of Tirau Street, to Domain Road and Arapuni and Princes Streets

How we see this precinct developing...

This part of our town will provide support for agriculture and other industries.

Here, you will find businesses with a good knowledge of farming requirements, and technology support for dairy and other agriculture.

This area is easily accessible for large vehicles and trucks, with plenty of truck parking located throughout this precinct.

A truck wash may also be located here, as may businesses which complement larger-scale industry, such as fencing services, on-farm services and so on.

Despite being more industrial, this is also an entrance to our town, so it will have visual appeal with attractive landscape design, trees and low-lying colourful planting.

Larger-scale industry will develop on the current Buttermilk site; however, careful consideration of development is necessary because activity on this site may have a significant impact on the amenity of this precinct and the town.

The industrial-zoned land on Domain Road will be further developed.

As activity increases, a rail head may be developed around the current rail infrastructure in this precinct, providing good connection for business and industry to freight services. Should commuter rail return to Putāruru, it is also likely to be located here.



local retail hub

PRECINCT 3

Princes/Overdale Streets and environs, which is a lesser through-route between Waitomo and Putāruru; the area predominantly services the local community.

How we see this precinct developing...

This precinct predominantly contains local businesses servicing local customers.

It contains our essential services, a wider retail offering than precinct 1, as well as community and municipal facilities and organisations.

The precinct lends itself to hosting small community events.

Parades and street markets occur here, and as the original commercial centre of Putāruru, heritage buildings, including the Putāruru Hotel and BNZ Building, are features of our town, and these significant buildings will be well preserved and their history celebrated.

With the diverting of heavy vehicles around upper Princes Street, the presentation of this precinct would be more relaxed, attractive and hospitable.

Planning for growth

In response to data suggesting that our population was increasing, rather than decreasing or stagnating, a growth plan for Putāruru was developed throughout 2017 with landowners, the community, Putāruru Moving Forward and Council staff.

The Putāruru Growth Plan looks out 30 years and beyond and has taken into account residential and business land requirements with a focus on residential land. The Growth Plan identified 10 potential areas around the urban fringe for new residential growth, and a possible extension of the current business-zoned land into the area south of Princes Street.

The results of that work have now entered the more formal District Plan review plan change stage, which is a critical step to make additional land available for building. At the time of writing, the plan change is expected to be completed by early 2019.

A link to the Growth Plan is included as an Appendix to this Concept Plan (and available separately). A visual summary of the proposed Growth Plan for Putāruru is shown on the following page.

The amount of land that will be rezoned for development is currently subject to an assessment by the Council regarding the current water, wastewater and stormwater capacities to cater for growth and the costs of any upgrades required.

As outlined in the 'Our Challenges and Opportunities' section (see pages 9 to 17), the outcomes being sought include that quality residential development occurs and the development process is facilitated smoothly.

PUTARURU GROWTH AREA OPTIONS

Relative to existing zoning



Putaruru Growth Plan, Urbanisplus Ltd, July 2017

Action plan

These actions have been specifically identified to progress the vision and outcomes desired for Putāruru. These are intended to guide action, but will likely evolve as Putāruru continues to develop.

The lead organisation is the first organisation listed in the table.

PiP: Pride in Putāruru **PMF:** Putāruru Moving Forward **Council:** South Waikato District Council

SWIF: South Waikato Investment Fund Trust

No.	Action	Lead organisation(s)	Indicative timeframe
1	Identify strategic properties in each precinct that are important in achieving the future development goals of each precinct and, as opportunities arise, proactively acquire these properties.	PiP / PMF / Council / SWIF	2018/19 and beyond
2	Develop (and maintain) a Putāruru prospectus for potential investors.	PiP / PMF / Council / SWIF	2018/19
3	Work with the current owner to scope the rejuvenation of the Old Post Office Building (International Food Court). This work should be undertaken with regards to the enhancement of Kensington Street and Main Street.	PiP / SWIF / Council	2018/19
4	Commission a design and scope for a piazza-like treatment of Kensington Street that provides greater connectivity to Main Street, as well as The Plaza. Scope to include parking and signage.	Council / PiP / PMF	2018/19
5	Develop a plan and business case to enhance the pedestrian and recreational opportunities of Main Street by diverting heavy vehicle traffic around the southern end of Princes Street. Work to be done in conjunction with other town centre design plans.	Council / PiP / PMF	2018/19
6	Work with energy providers regarding installation of EV charging stations.	Council / PiP / PMF	2018/19
7	Create and maintain a database of businesses.	PiP	2018/19
8	Upgrade the Pride in Putāruru business association website.	PiP	2018/19
9	Consider a programme to implement free WiFi throughout the town.	PiP / Council	2018/19
10	Upgrade the Water Park (scope, design and physical works).	Council / PiP / PMF	2018/19 – 2019/20
11	Actively pursue developments that would create economic activity in our town. Investigate the feasibility of engaging a business development resource to undertake this work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target artisan food industry, consistent with the precinct approach. Investigate potential for value-added water-related industries in Putāruru. Encourage large business philanthropic investor presence in Putāruru. 	PiP / Council / SWIF / Private sector	2018/19 and beyond

No.	Action	Lead organisation(s)	Indicative timeframe
12	Implement growth planning/rezoning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise Growth Plan to protect future development options and coordinate developments; for example, connecting dead-end roads planned to connect in the future. As development occurs, ensure consideration is given to walkways and recreational facilities. 	Council	2018/19 and beyond
13	Identify road safety issues (speed limits, road crossing etc), and advocate to the NZTA on these matters.	Council / PiP / PMF	2018/19 and beyond
14	Develop regular cross-agency meetings to discuss progress against Concept Plan (Council, PiP, PMF, SWIF and Social Services).	PMF / PiP / Council	2018/19 and ongoing
15	Ensure regular communications regarding impacts of the Healthy Rivers/Wai Ora: Plan Change 1.	Council	2018/19 and ongoing
16	Identify the unique and essential businesses currently in Putāruru, i.e. the businesses that we don't want to lose, and consider how well we look after them.	PiP / PMF	2019/20
17	Assess the services currently offered as to whether they adequately meet the needs of the rural communities, and identify what the gaps in service provision are.	PiP / PMF	2019/20
18	Develop the Oraka Stream Walkway further south to connect with walkways into town. Consider development of activities for children/youth in Lorraine Moller Reserve as part of this project.	Council / PiP / PMF	2019/20
19	Lead a discussion regarding trading hours in Putāruru.	PiP	2019/20
20	Upgrade/refresh the "What's On" board.	PiP	2019/20
21	Upgrade the town entrances.	Council / PiP / PMF	2019/20
22	Develop town branding for use by businesses.	PiP / PMF / Council	2019/20
23	Prepare a town signage strategy and implementation plan.	Council / PiP / PMF	2019/20
24	Connect with Ministry of Youth Development to upskill community leaders regarding effective youth engagement and youth development.	Council / PiP	2019/20
25	Involve local schools in community workshops to discuss and develop community development initiatives.	Council / PiP	2019/20
26	Establish ongoing relationships between schools and local businesses for the purposes of creating youth pathways to employment.	PiP / Council	2019/20
27	Regularly conduct incubation workshops to advance the development of values-based tourism products and packages.	PiP / Council	2019/20
28	Working with Raukawa, prepare a development plan for Te Waihou/Blue Spring which includes focus on how to retain tourism spend in Putāruru.	Council / Raukawa / PMF	2019/20

No.	Action	Lead organisation(s)	Indicative timeframe
29	Enhance campervan facilities throughout Putāruru, and then promote the destination through the Motorcaravan network.	PiP / Council	2019/20
30	Engage a creative writer to prepare a brochure celebrating Putāruru heritage, heritage sites and walking trails.	PiP	2019/20
31	Scope dedicated cycleways within Putāruru and surrounds to connect with the Waikato River Trails.	Council / Waikato River Trails	2019/20
32	Provide more obvious directional signage to Maungatautari and Arapuni Swing Bridge.	Council / PiP	2019/20
33	Develop a Totara Park reserve management plan.	Council	2019/20
34	Review Glenshea Park reserve management plan (last undertaken in 2010).	Council	2019/20
35	Ensure that the cost of development and growth is equitable by recovering reasonable costs of development from developers.	Council	2019/20 and beyond
36	Work with the current owner to scope rejuvenations of the Putāruru Hotel.	PiP / SWIF / Council	2019/20 and beyond
37	Work with the current owner to market the utilisation of the BNZ Building to prospective tenants.	PiP / SWIF / Council	2019/20 and beyond
38	Develop a 'buy local' campaign, including preparing an annual local media campaign to complement a 'buy local' campaign.	PiP	2019/20 and beyond
39	Promote the dramatic lighting up of key buildings, particularly within the town centre. Scope projects and then potential to access funding through the Creative Communities Scheme.	PiP / PMF	2020/21
40	Review the existing community market delivery model and offering with a view to enhance and create wider appeal and stronger linkages to artisan food.	PiP / SWIF	2020/21
41	Scope local public transport needs.	Council	2020/21
42	Undertake an accessibility audit for the town centre.	Council / PiP	2021/22
43	Prepare annual retail/promotional activities.	PiP	Ongoing
44	Conduct annual industry show case/business awards.	PiP	Ongoing
45	Continue to offer business improvement/capability-building programmes, and develop a business mentoring programme.	PiP	Ongoing
46	Continue with BA5 and Business Breakfast meetings.	PiP	Ongoing
47	Continue with <i>Tidy up Town</i> painting programme.	PiP	Ongoing
48	Incorporate more quality public art works by local artists, using funding through the Creative Communities Scheme.	Council	Ongoing
49	Work with Rangiuira Trustees to identify support required to ensure Rangiuira can continue to support the demands of our ageing population.	PiP / Council	Ongoing
50	Support the South Waikato Arts Trust to increase the activity and offering of <i>The Plaza</i> .	SWAT / Council / PiP	Ongoing
51	Review of the Walking and Cycling Strategy.	Council	tbc

How the plan was developed

The Putāruru Concept Plan is a culmination of a number of planning exercises commissioned by the South Waikato District Council on behalf of the Putāruru community. This includes the Putāruru Strategic Direction Workshop by Visitor Solutions (April 2015), the Council-led public survey of September 2016, and the strategic planning session with Tourism consultant Terry Stevens (December 2016).

Specialist growth planning advice was sought from Urbanisplus in the development of the Putāruru Growth Plan (developed throughout 2016/17).

Pride in Putāruru and Putāruru Moving Forward have played a significant role over several years, championing the need for this work and articulating a future vision for the town and each precinct; in particular, Stu Edmeades and Raewyn Whiteman-Thorne have given considerable time and energy to transferring this vision into this Concept Plan.

Strategic planning advice was then sought from independent consultant Katina Conomos to bring these different elements together as a coherent Concept Plan, which was presented to the community as a draft for feedback in June 2018, before being endorsed as final in July 2018..

This work has occurred under the direction of Putāruru Moving Forward, the South Waikato District Council's Community Group Manager Sam Marshall, and Putāruru Services Centre Manager Ebony Curtin.

Putāruru Moving Forward wish to acknowledge the South Waikato District Council's support for this work, in particular Mayor Jenny Shattock, Chief Executive Craig Hobbs and Deputy Chief Executive Ben Smit.

Appendix: Putāruru Growth Plan

The Growth Plan and growth planning maps are available here:

www.southwaikato.govt.nz/our-council/major%20projects/Documents/CUR%20Putaruru%20Growth%20Plan%20Summary%20Report%20170712.pdf



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