

Media release – UFTI Final Report

1 July 2020

Strong local centres and connected neighbourhoods at the heart of the Urban Form and Transport Initiative Final Report

The Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI) Final Report has been released today, outlining the optimal future land use and transport programme for the western Bay of Plenty.

The Connected Centres programme would see more homes built in existing and new growth areas, improved road networks, increased bus services, and improved walking and cycling connections developed over the next 30-70 years.

The programme caters for approximately 200,000 additional people, 95,000 new homes and two million additional daily transport movements expected in the western Bay of Plenty during that time.

UFTI Project Director Robert Brodnax says the Connected Centres programme business case and delivery plan outlined in the Final Report is the result of 12 months' worth of robust research, analysis and evaluation undertaken by the UFTI partners, in consultation with stakeholders.

“We have thoroughly explored possible future scenarios for the sub-region and concluded that the Connected Centres programme offers the best outcome for people to live and move around the sub-region and connect to the upper North Island in the future,” says Mr Brodnax.

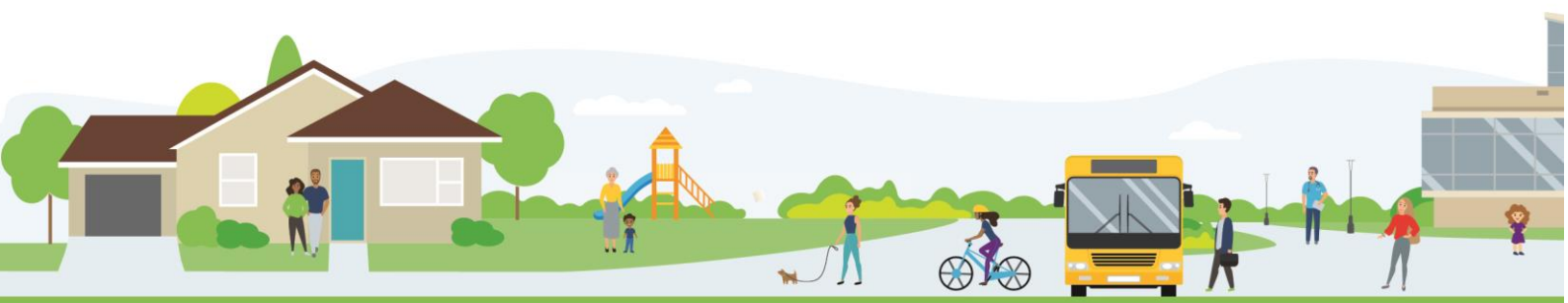
“Managing expected growth through this programme presents opportunities for better access to employment, education, and amenities such as green spaces in our communities which would otherwise not exist,” he says.

Mr Brodnax says there are two core concepts critical to the Connected Centres programme. The first is increasing the number of houses in existing urban and new growth areas, to maximise available land and support a well-functioning transport system.

The second is the idea that we should all be able to access local social and economic opportunities within a 15-minute journey time, and sub-regional social and economic opportunities within 30-45 minutes.

“These concepts encourage strong local centres and connected neighbourhoods and will require a transformational change in the way we live, work, learn, play and move in the future,” he says.

The Connected Centres programme looks to create four high frequency public transport routes in the existing North, East, West and Central Corridors which better link people to their place of living, work, and recreational locations.



Urban communities will be further developed around Omokoroa, Matua/Otūmoetai, Arataki, Pāpāmoa, Wairakei, and around wider Te Puke, which will also be connected by safe and accessible walking and cycling facilities.

“The benefits of this are better connected and safer transport options, the creation of more affordable housing, and reduced carbon emissions, as strong cities are built on the movement of people and goods,” says Mr Brodnax.

The Connected Centres programme has been estimated to cost approximately \$7 billion, spread out in phases over the next 50 to 100 years.

“Investment details, including funding allocation, will be worked through by the UFTI partners and evolve over time but there is opportunity for central and local government to work together, along with the private sector and tangata whenua partners, to ensure the programme can be delivered,” says Mr Brodnax.

SmartGrowth Chair Bill Wasley says the UFTI project team should be congratulated for producing such a well-researched, thorough, and collaborative piece of work.

Mr Wasley says the next stage for the UFTI Final Report is inclusion in the SmartGrowth partnership’s Joint Spatial Plan, while early implementation activities will be included in Council Long-Term Plans, the Regional Land Transport Plan, and the National Land Transport Programme.

“Incorporating UFTI within the Joint Spatial Plan ensures there is one cohesive strategic document for the western Bay of Plenty that incorporates and reflects the settlement pattern and key projects planned for the sub-region over the next 10 years, and enables us to take a broader and long-term approach to wellbeing,” he says.

“It is important that the public has the opportunity to be involved in this planning, so community engagement and public consultation on the Joint Spatial Plan will be undertaken by SmartGrowth and our partner councils in the first quarter of 2021.”

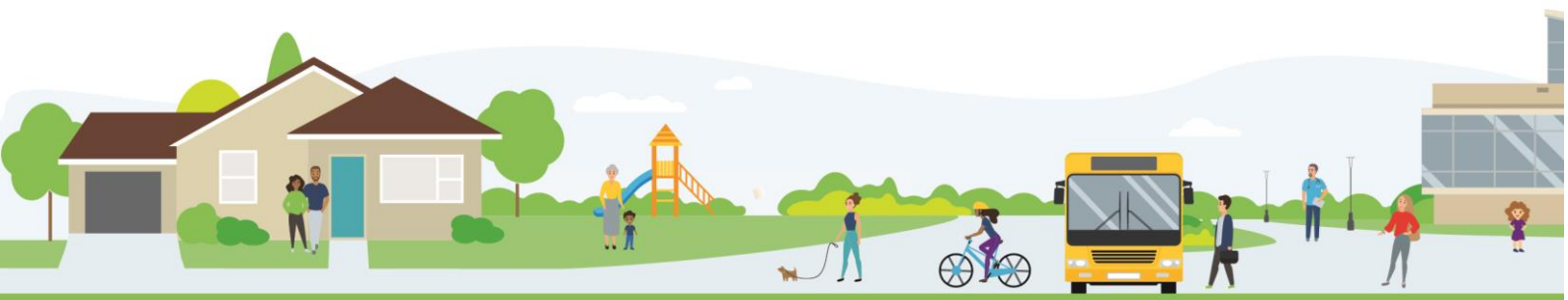
Mr Wasley says the UFTI programme business case and delivery plan is also being put forward to Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Tauranga City Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Western Bay of Plenty Council, as a guide for future investment decisions in the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.

The UFTI Final Report can be viewed [here](#).

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Robert Brodnax
UFTI Project Director
021 245 5439



About the Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI)

UFTI is a collaborative project between SmartGrowth and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, involving Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, tangata whenua and community leaders.

For more information please visit the [UFTI website](#).

