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Map 1. Waikato District – Sub Regional Context
I. Introduction

The Waikato District Development Strategy (DDS) has been prepared to replace and update the two existing growth strategies of the district council. These are the Waikato District Growth Strategy (2009) and the Franklin District Growth Strategy (2008). Both of these documents are now a poor fit as neither takes into account the current realities of the district following the disestablishment of Franklin District Council in 2010 and the ensuing amalgamation of the southern part of Franklin with the Waikato district.

The DDS retains the principles in both existing growth strategies of containing urban development and protecting agricultural, natural and culturally significant landscapes from inappropriate subdivision and dispersed residential development.

It is the intention of Waikato District Council to revisit the DDS in 2017 as a prelude to the next cycle of Long Term Plan updating.

1.1 Overall Purpose of the Development Strategy

The Waikato District Development Strategy (DDS) provides a high level 30 year strategic and spatial development guide for the district. Figure 1 below shows where the DDS fits with the council’s other key elements.

1.2 Where the DDS fits in the Waikato District Council

The DDS sits below the council’s vision and, working together with council’s finance and infrastructure strategies, serves to inform the Long Term Plan.

Importantly, the DDS rests on and draws from the values of the Council and the constituent communities of the district.
1.3 Waikato District Council Vision
‘To be a recognised leader in creating a district that prides itself on economic excellence, local participation and sustainable communities’.

1.4 How the strategy has been prepared
A draft District Development Strategy (DDS) was prepared in 2014 by the strategic planning staff of Waikato District Council. The process was managed by a project steering group and draft material was workshopped by staff from across the council as well as with councillors before being made available for input by community boards, iwi, key stakeholders and then the general public at open days throughout the district in May, June and July 2015.

1.5 Strategic Context - How the strategy fits regionally
The district development strategy is consistent with national and regional policies and plans and gives effect to the Regional Policy Statement and the Future Proof Growth Strategy and Implementation Plan of 2009 (see Figure 2). It also honours the council’s commitment to the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River and co-management with Waikato Tainui “to restore and protect the wellbeing of the river for future generations”.

These three key community development outcomes are integrated through

Strategic Planning
To ensure that development enhances the well-being and safety of the community, and that people have the opportunity to participate in the strategic and district planning process.

People
Developing and maintaining relationships and partnerships and providing services, facilities and activities that create a supported, healthy and safe community.

Economy
Stimulating sustainable growth, maintaining accessible infrastructure, providing sound financial governance and attracting businesses and industry to the district.

Energy
Providing efficient and active leadership and support and effectively managing our waste and natural resources.
The regional strategic framework is both statutory and non-statutory and is constantly changing as policies and plans are amended, updated, added or removed. Crucial current regional policy and plan instruments are:

- Waikato Regional Policy Statement (Proposed)
- Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan 2015-2045 (Operative)

### 1.6 Sub Regional Context (see Map 1)

The district is truly unique in its combination of location, environment, people, activities and history. It is one of the largest districts in area in New Zealand (see Map 1). To the north it is bordered by Auckland, New Zealand’s largest, fastest growing and most diverse metropolitan urban space. To the south, the district is bordered by Hamilton, the country’s fourth largest urban area and Waipa district. To the west is the Tasman Sea. To the east of the district are rural areas administered by the Hauraki District Council in the north east and by Matamata Piako District Council in the south east.

Despite the influence of the wider context on the district, Waikato district’s character remains essentially a mix of rural areas and a number of scattered small towns.
The north of the Waikato district is already, and is very likely to continue to be, hugely affected by the spill-over effects of the ongoing southward growth of urban Auckland (see Maps 1 & 2).

In the south, the Waikato district encircles most of Hamilton. Hamilton is currently growing at approximately 1,900 people per year and is expected to continue to grow both in population and spatial spread during the next 30 years. Although Hamilton has the greenfield areas of Rototuna, Rotokauri and Peacocke in which future urban growth is planned to be accommodated, the city’s growth is still likely to have a significant impact on adjacent areas of the Waikato district, particularly for providing an alternative lifestyle in nearby villages, small towns and rural residential areas (see Maps 1 & 2).

Through the centre of the Waikato district and aligned on a north south axis is probably New Zealand’s most strategically important infrastructure corridor. It contains the Waikato River, State Highway 1, the North Island main trunk railway line, the two gas supply lines and all the electricity supply to Auckland. In addition the Waikato expressway, which is due for overall completion in 2019, will provide a transformative high-speed direct transport link between Hamilton and Auckland.

This central infrastructure corridor is a spine that forms the backbone of the district. It links a string of small towns from Ngaruawahia to Tuakau. These towns with the adjacent rural areas they serve give much of the district its character.

Away from the central corridor, but equally a part of the varied character of the district, are a number of distinct areas. Along the mostly remote west coast, these areas range from Aotea Harbour and the Whaanga coast in the south through the coastal town of Raglan to Te Akau and Port Waikato in the north. To the north east of the central corridor there are the rural service nodes of Mangatawhiri and Maramarua adjacent to State Highway 2.
2. Influences and Challenges

Influences and challenges for the district come from a large range of known and unknown aspects. Many of these aspects will pose both opportunities and constraints, depending on viewpoint. They span some factors that Council has control over and a lot of factors that it does not.

2.1 Key Influences for the District

In the course of preparing this development strategy, the following seven factors have been identified as likely to have a very significant influence on the district and its future development.

- Southward growth of Auckland
- Waikato Expressway
- Growth of Hamilton
- Demographic trends
- Resource management of the Waikato River
- Intensification and change in agriculture
- Economic trends
- Land use change
- External change
2.2 Southward Growth of Auckland

This section outlines some key aspects of Auckland and its projected growth as well as its probable influences on the district.

The Auckland economy is strong. It comprises 35% of New Zealand’s economy and is larger than the South Island’s. Labour productivity is between 30% and 150% higher (in the city centre) than in other New Zealand regions (Statistics New Zealand 2013).

Auckland is growing much faster than the rest of New Zealand and absorbs 47% of all new arrivals in the country. In 2014 Auckland’s population was estimated at 1.5 million people and growing by approximately 20,000 people per year. By 2042 Auckland is expected to have a population of over 2 million people and be home to 40% of all New Zealanders (Census 2013). Due to immigration, the city is much more ethnically diverse than the rest of the country, with 39% of residents born outside of New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2014).

The Auckland Plan (2012) provides for significant new ‘greenfield’ urban growth in the south around Drury, Karaka and Pukekohe to cater for approximately 100,000 new residents. The Unitary Plan reflects this proposal with the zoning of future urban areas south of Papakura and Pukekohe right up to the Waikato district boundary.

Urban residential and business growth is and will continue to spread into North Waikato - to Tuakau and Pokeno and probably southwards to Te Kauwhata. This growth is due to the proximity and availability of suitable land, services, lifestyle and affordability. The populations of these towns are likely to become more ethnically diverse too due to the influx of new residents.

Urban development will spur greater demand for primary resources – water, food, energy, aggregate, cement lime and space for waste disposal. There will also likely be a southward displacement of rural productive activities due to urban growth.

There will be greater sharing of infrastructure and services between Auckland and Waikato district.

As property prices rise within Auckland, anecdotal evidence indicates there is likely to be pressure on some large format industry in South Auckland to consider relocating out of the city and into the north Waikato to more affordable and suitably-zoned and serviced land.

Depending on the ability of Auckland to accommodate urban growth within Auckland and actual future growth rates of the city, there may be greater pressure than currently projected to accommodate additional future urban development in the North Waikato.
2.3 Growth of Hamilton
This section outlines some projected key aspects of the future growth of Hamilton and how this growth is expected to influence the district:

Hamilton's 2014 estimated population of 142,000 people (NZ Census) is expected to grow by a further 60,000 people to over 200,000 people over the next 30 years. There is likely to be some spill-over effects of this growth for the nearby villages, small towns and rural-residential areas within the Waikato district (University of Waikato 2014).

As the Ruakura inland port development progresses there are likely to be cross-district boundary effects on services and infrastructure and possible pressure for land use changes.

The nearby small towns, villages and rural-residential areas such as Ngaruawahia, Te Kowhai, Matangi and Tamahere are likely to continue to provide opportunities for an alternative residential lifestyle and small business development related to Hamilton. There is likely to be a strong reciprocal relationship between the city and these peripheral satellite areas.

There is likely to be growing cross-district boundary effects on land use, use of recreational facilities and commercial services.

There will be greater coordination and sharing in the planning and operation of supporting infrastructure and services such as water, waste water, stormwater, roads and solid waste between Waikato District Council, Hamilton City Council and Waipa District Council that is focused on the area around Hamilton.

There could be an as yet unforseen private sector proposal for a large scale greenfield business or residential development on rural land close to the Hamilton periphery.
Map 2. Influence of Auckland and Hamilton
2.4 Waikato Expressway (Map 3)

Map 3. Waikato Expressway
The staged completion of the Waikato Expressway from 2013 to 2019 is one of New Zealand’s largest infrastructure projects. This section describes some of the expressway’s key characteristics and its likely future influences on the district:

The completed expressway will be a limited access road corridor through the centre of the district. Once completed, the road will provide a four-lane highway from the Bombay to south of Cambridge, considerably improving regional road transport efficiency and safety on SH1. Local access onto the expressway will be limited to a number of strategically-located on and off ramps from the towns that will be bypassed by the new road.

The bypassing of Ngaruawahia in 2013 and Huntly later in 2019 will have a profound effect on these towns in ways not yet fully grasped. The immediate opportunity and challenge for the future will be for the Council and local communities to work together to consider options for better integrating the former state highway with each town to better serve the purposes of local residents and businesses.

The former SH1 route between Auckland and Hamilton has considerable historic, cultural and tourism potential that could be better developed and integrated with the towns and villages along the route. There are examples from elsewhere in the world where similar opportunities have led to successful local-level redevelopment.

By 2019 the Council will have an additional 87km of former state highway network to manage and maintain. NZTA will work with the council on a transitional funding package to ease the change. There is the opportunity to integrate this funding provision with local level planning to determine a best fit reconfiguration of the former state highway to suit the new local context.

The existence of the new expressway and local access to it is likely to be a key influencer of future patterns of rural and urban development in the district in as yet unforeseen ways. Good monitoring will be important to future reviews of the district’s and region’s development strategies.
2.5 Demographic Trends
The following trends in the population of the district are likely to have a profound effect on the future development of the district (information from Statistics New Zealand 2014, National Institute for Demographic and Economic Analysis and Infometrics for E Tu Waikato 2014).

The population of the district, region and country is ageing. This trend is projected to continue and in-migration of people is not likely to have a marked effect on the trend. By 2042 more than a quarter of the country’s population will be over 65 years of age. Deaths should outnumber births by the early 2040s.

Even though the population of the district is ageing, the total population is projected to continue to grow over the next 30 years due to natural increase and in-migration. The spatial spread of population growth is however not even and is likely to be focused in the north and south in proximity to Auckland or Hamilton.

The current trend to smaller households is expected to continue into the future with population ageing and preference for more varied household living choices.

The depopulation of more remote rural areas is a well-established trend that is expected to continue with population ageing. People are drawn to the greater economic opportunities, connectivity and access to services of urban areas and particularly larger urban areas.

The district has a larger proportion of Māori in its population than overall New Zealand. The Māori proportion is more youthful in structure and likely to grow as a proportion of the district’s population.

Apart from its large Māori community, the district does not currently display a significant ethnic or cultural diversity, especially compared with its neighbours Auckland and Hamilton. Due to population migration, particularly in the north, the overall population is likely to become more ethnically and culturally diverse in the future. The Council will need to factor this increasing diversity into its services and public communication.
2.6 Resource Management of the Waikato River (see Map 4)
By far the majority of the district falls within the lower catchment of the Waikato River. There are only small pockets of land along the district’s eastern boundary that drain towards the Hauraki Gulf and not into the Waikato River. The future management and use of the Waikato River is likely to influence the district in the following ways:

- Much of the river is already oversubscribed in terms of water takes and to better manage the resource, Variation 6 to the Waikato Regional Plan places demanding restrictions on all water takes from the river. There is likely to be a much improved and stricter management of the use water in the future.

- Obligations to continually improve water quality in the river in accordance with the Vision and Strategy for the River in the Regional Policy Statement and Regional Plan, as well as in terms of the Waikato Tainui Environmental Plan.

- The Waikato Regional Council’s ‘Healthy Rivers Plan Change’ has the potential to introduce a much more integrated and binding regional approach to fresh water management.

- The work of the Waikato River Authority and giving effect to the Waikato River settlement agreement, together with initiatives such as completion of the Te Awa cycle/walkway and Hamilton City’s implementation of the plan for its river frontage.

- Municipal management and provision of water is likely to be more carefully and directly cost-managed as a service. There is growing pressure to move away from discharging waste water into natural water bodies to avoid the risk of contamination and accidental spills.
Map 4. Waikato River and Catchment
2.7 Economic Trends

The following trends in the local economy are current influences and challenges for the district’s development:

The primary sector is the single largest economic sector and income earner for the district.

Although the primary sector is dominant, the local economy is fairly diverse, with a robust and growing services sector. The diversity of the local economy is a strength for the district that is likely to be enhanced by further urban development in the north due to the growth of Auckland and in the area around Hamilton due to its projected ongoing growth.

Most new jobs in the district are coming through the service sector rather than the dominant primary sector. The likely ongoing growth of the services sector is likely to continue in the future as it is a trend common to all developed countries and economies.

A present and future challenge for the district and council is the large variation in economic wellbeing and household income across the district. Even though this growing disparity in household wellbeing is the likely result of higher national and global policies and trends, the consequent effects are felt at a community and local council level and require appropriate Council responses.
2.8 **Agricultural Influences**
The following factors are current trends associated with farming and rural areas more generally, that are likely to have a strong bearing on the district’s future development:

- There will be a southward shift of vegetable and horticultural growing areas in the north Waikato due to the urban growth of Auckland.

- There has been and will continue to be an intensification of dairy. This trend will be driven by economics and pressure to reduce adverse impacts on the natural environment.

- There is a growing urgency to improve the adverse effects of farming on the natural environment due to pollution. Apart from land contamination there is a growing contamination of the district’s water resources.

- There will be ongoing de-population of more remote rural areas accelerated by population ageing, subdivision controls, farming intensification and farm agglomeration.

- There are and will be fewer family-owned and managed farms with more corporate ownership. Herd sizes are increasing along with farm sizes.

- There will be more agri-business and processing industry in rural areas requiring appropriate supporting infrastructure and services.
2.9 Changes in Patterns of Land Use
The following maps indicate some key land use patterns that are important reflectors of development changes in the district.

Horticultural cropping is shown in purple and tends to be concentrated in the north of the district on good volcanic soils of Pukekawa, Onehero and Tuakau and where there is ready access to harbours and airports for export.

Forestry is shown in olive green and tends to be on more rugged hill country parts of the district (Primary Focus 2010). While there has been a southward shift from Pukekohe to Pukekawa in horticulture due to urbanisation effects of Auckland, not much change is anticipated to occur with location or extent of forestry, as it tends to be limited to areas in the district to steep hill country with poor alternative agricultural prospects.

Shown in green on this map, dairy has largely replaced sheep and beef on better agricultural land throughout the Waikato district. The yellow green colour shows the distribution of dry land beef and sheep stock to be largely located on hill country in the west of the district or on scattered hill blocks elsewhere.

Dairy farming currently occupies over 80,000 hectares or 20% of the district, with an average farm size of 116ha and herd size of 327 cows (Dairy NZ 2013 and Primary Focus 2010). Not much change is anticipated in the distribution of dairy, but there is likely to be an ongoing shift to larger dairy operations and more intensive practices such as the use of wintering sheds.
Mines and quarries are scattered according to resource location and accessibility (Primary Focus 2010). Minerals range from iron sand mining to coal mining and limestone and aggregate quarrying. These are located at scattered locations through the district.

The Regional Policy Statement recognises the strategic importance of the region’s mineral resources and directs the Waikato Council to integrate access to mineral resources with planning for other land uses.

At this stage, no significant change in the distribution of mines or quarries is anticipated. The only note to make is to acknowledge that coal mining in the district is in a decline which is set to continue into the future. Interest in sourcing limestone and aggregates is expected to continue, driven by urban development and transport infrastructure needs.

Industry is recognised in the Regional Policy Statement as being regionally significant.

In the Waikato district industry has tended to be focused in and around the urban nodes located along the central transport corridor (Primary Focus 2010). The benefit of these locations is accessibility to transport, municipal services and labour.

In addition, there is a somewhat contrary scattered spread of niche industry through areas away from this central corridor due to site-specific location resource reasons – e.g. coal mining.

In the future it is expected that most industry will be located along the central corridor in proximity to transport corridors and urban nodes for transport, support services and labour supply.
2.10 External Change

National and international influences on the district are many and varied and are likely to continue to have a profound effect on the wellbeing and future development of the district. They include the following factors:

**Economic**
Changes in the performance of different agricultural sectors (dairy, sheep and beef, forestry and horticulture) both relative to one another and at an overall level. Changes are largely dictated by seasonal weather patterns and changes in the international market due to supply and demand. Effects at the district level are likely to be ongoing changes in rural land use and agriculture.

**Climate change**
Global warming is projected to result in a significant rise in sea level over the next decades and is expected to result in more extreme and varied weather for New Zealand. The likely effects for the district will be in managing the effects of aspects such as coastal erosion, more frequent and severe flooding and drought events.

**Bio-hazards**
The growth in international connections and trade is expected to increase the risk of bio-hazard events in New Zealand (e.g. PSA for kiwifruit growers). The effect of such an event at the local level is firstly as a possible civil defense emergency and secondly economic and land use.

**Demographics**
The district is likely to become more aged and ethnically diverse due to migration and declining household size. The likely effects will be changes in population distribution, housing and lifestyle requirements.

**Energy**
The downturn in the international demand for coal is likely to continue as the world moves to curbing CO₂ emissions. The likely effect on the district is an ongoing decline in the local coal mining industry and the termination of coal burning at the Huntly thermal power station.
3. Overall Strategic Goal and Objectives

3.1 Introduction – Planning and Policy Context
As indicated in section 1.4 and figure 1, the preparation of the district development strategy has been informed by a local council and wider regional statutory and non-statutory planning and policy context. The strategy is by necessity therefore, committed to aligning with these while accepting too that the wider policy context is also continually changing as the various policy and plan instruments are amended, updated, removed or added.

3.2 Overall Strategic Goal
The overall goal of the Council is to be pro-active, responsive and consultative in managing development of the Waikato district. The development strategy is directed by Council’s vision and in turn informs and shapes the other sector strategies of the Council. The strategy is deliberately high level and flexible to respond to changes in the wider planning and policy context and in order to address the future uncertainty with greater relevance.

By being pro-active, the strategy is not only flexible and responsive but also has a directive element. Three major ‘move’ development areas are identified and outlined in the next section (Section 4). These three focus areas will require additional local level council planning in order to appropriately address the requirements and implications of development.
3.2 Key Strategic Objectives
To give effect to the overall strategic goal, five high-level objectives have been identified to guide the development strategy. These are as follows:

**Engaged**
- To recognise and engage with the district’s varied communities.
- To acknowledge and build on the identity of communities in local-level planning.

**Integrated and Connected**
- To better integrate the Council’s planning and service delivery when working with the district’s communities on development and maintenance projects.
- To be better connected with the communities of the district, and involve them throughout the planning phases of any project work.

**Diversity and Flexibility**
- To recognise the diversity of different communities and environments in the Council’s planning and project work.
- To be flexible to accommodate community views and ‘best fit’ for changes in circumstance and technology.

**Resilience and Sustainability**
- To champion sustainability and resilience in planning, design and service delivery to better cater for likely future change.

**Managed Development**
- To use a strategic and integrated approach to planning and development to better manage future impacts.
4. Major Moves
Drawing from the overall goal and key objectives, the following major moves and Council actions have been identified. Most of these are already being addressed through the Council’s Long Term Plan, the Infrastructure Strategy and the various sector strategies.

4.1 Resilience and Sustainability (recognising diversity and being responsive and flexible)

- **Promote resilience through:**
  - Involving iwi and the community in decision-making on levels of service and affordability;
  - Supporting sustainable economic growth and development in Council policies and plans; and
  - Accommodating natural hazards and climate change in strategy land use plans and in managing development.

- **Promote a sustainable environment by:**
  - Maintaining existing infrastructure and services;
  - Aligning levels of service and affordability; and
  - Adopting an integrated and environmentally sustainable approach to planning and implementing development.
4.2 Governance and Infrastructure (guided by the Council vision, an engaged community and the need for integrated management)

- **Governance**
  - Have a strategic and broad-based approach to interventions and community outcomes; and
  - Collaborate with iwi and communities in planning and decision making.

- **Transport**
  - Maintain the existing network of roads and pathways in accordance with the Integrated Transport Strategy; and
  - Provide for a connected network of roads and pathways in support of new development.

- **Three Waters and Solid Waste**
  - Manage infrastructure in line with the Three Waters Strategy adopted by the Future Proof partners;
  - Adopt best practice in meeting public health water quality standards;
  - Adhere to the Waste Minimisation Management Plan commitment to a 'zero waste to landfill target' and
  - Integrate the provision of supporting infrastructure and services with land use planning.

4.3 Parks and Reserves (being community-engaged with a sustainable and integrated management of parks and reserves)

- **Parks and Reserves**
  - Manage the network of parks and reserves and associated infrastructure across the district in line with the Parks and Reserves Strategy and Reserves Management Plan;
  - In consultation with relevant communities, address areas that don’t meet the council’s endorsed levels of service; and
  - Strategically secure new parks and reserves as and when required in newly developing areas.
4.4 Key Urban Outcomes

- To focus future urban development in and around the district’s existing towns as per structure plans and in line with the Regional Policy Statement.

- To use structure plans to guide the staged provision of additional urban land and infrastructure to support areas experiencing sustained population and business growth pressures.

- To look to share the provision of core services with neighbouring council service providers, particularly in the north and south.

- To maintain and re-develop existing urban infrastructure and services to meet the council and community-agreed levels of service and ensure compliance with the Building Act, District Plan and earthquake standards.

- To improve biodiversity in urban areas through the restoration of green corridors of indigenous vegetation along river and stream margins. Such areas should double as recreational walking and cycling routes.

- To improve access to public transport and for walking, cycling, horse and mobility scooter riding at both a sub-regional and local neighbourhood level through good planning and development and service provision.
4.5 **Key Rural Outcomes**

- To protect productive land from ad-hoc rural-residential subdivision in line with the Regional Policy Statement, Regional Land Transport Plan and District Plan.

- To support significant industry and the agricultural economy in Council’s policies and plans.

- To provide for more intensive mixed farming.

- To give effect to higher national and regional environmental standards regarding land use and its effects on water resources.

- To plan for a loss of some productive land to urban development in the north Waikato and around Hamilton, in accordance with growth related structure plans.

- To identify and protect all significant natural areas in the district in accordance with the Regional Policy Statement.

- To support the regional council in initiatives to improve natural biodiversity in the district’s rural areas through various initiatives such as the restoration of river and stream riparian margins, wetlands and indigenous bush areas.
4.6 **North Waikato – Major Move (Map 5)**

Map 5. North Waikato

[Map Image]

**SPECIAL HOUSING AREAS:**
1. Ningaia
2. Wesley College
3. Anselmi Ridge
4. Belmont, Pukekohe

**COLOR CODING:**
- **Existing Urban Extents (WDC)**
- **Existing Urban Extents (Outside WDC)**
- **Future Urban Extents (WDC)**
- **Future Urban Extents (Outside WDC)**
- **Special Housing Area**
- **High Quality Soils**

**MARKINGS:**
- **River**
- **Lakes & Tributaries**
- **Wairau District Council Boundary**
- **State Highway**
- **Wairau Expressway**
- **Te Haro Walkway**
- **Potential Walking/Cycling Routes**
- **Enhance Connections**
- **Agricultural Areas**
- **Commercial Areas**
Waikato District Council will work with Auckland Council\(^1\), its council-controlled service providers, Watercare and Auckland Transport as well as with the Franklin Local Board, to better co-ordinate development planning and the provision of infrastructure and services across the Waikato / Auckland administrative boundary.

- There will be sustained urban growth of Tuakau, Pokeno, Pukekohe and special housing areas.

- Structure plans have been prepared for both Pokeno and Tuakau to accommodate projected population growth for the next 30 years in a staged manner. Actual development rates will need to be carefully monitored to determine whether and when these plans need updating.

- Commensurate with urban development and provision of internal infrastructure, upgrades will be required to all main roads, three waters infrastructure as well as to the power and telecommunication networks.

- New railway sidings will be advantageous to supporting the future business and residential development of both Pokeno and Tuakau and improving land transport options\(^2\) for goods and people. Allowance for these has been made in both structure plans but actual development will be dependent on the growth of both towns and negotiation between communities, businesses, the Council, KiwiRail and other key stakeholders.

- The Tuakau Bridge will need replacing in the medium future as it is aged and the lanes too narrow for large commercial vehicles carrying agricultural produce northwards from Pukekawa and Onewhero.

- In addition to infrastructure, improvements will be needed to supporting services such as education, welfare and emergency to keep pace with the requirements of future residents of these growing towns.

- Improved recreational facilities and the staged establishment of a network of ‘shareways’ for walking, cycling and horse riding will be required to link these two growing urban centres and the Waikato River.

- The structure plans and district plan rules provide a level of certainty regarding planned urban growth and minimising the loss of high value agricultural soils. Nonetheless, due to historical patterns of rural land subdivision and reverse sensitivity issues with residential development there has been and is likely to be a continuing shift of major cropping agriculture away from areas between the three urban areas of Pukekohe, Tuakau and Pokeno and southwards to Pukekawa and Onewhero across the Waikato River, as indicated on Map 5.

- Improved water management and increased water take from the Waikato River to service urban growth in Auckland and the North Waikato. There will be an ongoing move away from using ground water for urban consumption in this area.

- Economic and service linkages between the north Waikato and southern Auckland area are likely to strengthen as the urban population and business development of the area grows.

- The future growth of Pukekohe may necessitate the future establishment of an agreement between Auckland Council and Waikato District Council to transfer land on the south eastern

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\(^1\) The Council has an MOU with Auckland Council to facilitate cooperation between the two council organisations.

\(^2\) In keeping with the policies of the Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan (2015-2045)
side of Pukekohe from the jurisdiction of Waikato District Council to Auckland Council to provide for further urban growth of the town.

4.7 The Hamilton Surrounds – Major Move (see Map 6)

As Auckland is the driver of growth in the North Waikato, Hamilton is the driver of growth in the southern parts of the Waikato district around Hamilton.

The future expansion of Hamilton on its northern, eastern and western sides is, and will continue to be, provided for through a strategic agreement on future boundaries between Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council. This agreement enables the staged transfer of land from the Waikato district to Hamilton City, depending on demand for additional urban land by Hamilton City and guideline dates in the agreement.

The agreement provides for a number of land cells between Ruakura and Rotokauri to be transferred, with guideline dates extending to 2045, but also with the proviso that these dates may be amended by the Councils’ mutual agreement.

- Waikato District Council is already working with Hamilton City Council and Waipa District Council to better manage and co-ordinate the provision of urban water services in the vicinity of Hamilton. This cooperation and rationalisation is being extended to management of the road network and is being considered for other areas of Council’s work.

- The current bus-based public transport service that links Hamilton with nearby towns and villages is likely to require ongoing future strengthening as their population’s age and can be expected to become more reliant on public transport for their mobility.

- Hamilton City Council plans to accommodate population growth by becoming denser and in the staged development of new greenfield growth in the north from Rototuna to the new Waikato Expressway, in the west into the Rotokauri structure plan area and south into the Peacocke Road structure plan area. In accordance with agreed Future Proof settlement patterns, the supporting intention of the Waikato District Council is to focus the district’s natural growth along with any future spill-over growth from the city into the existing nearby small towns and villages of Ngaruawahia, Taupiri, Gordonton, Te Kowhai, Horotiu, Whatawhata, Eureka, Matangi, Tauwhare and Tamahere in the Waikato district.

- All the surrounding villages and towns have zoned areas for current growth to be directed into that is largely determined by the ability to provide supporting water and wastewater services. Waikato District Council will regularly review the provision of appropriately-located, zoned and serviced land to cater for projected population growth in these existing nodes.

- Apart from the existing block of country living/rural residential provided for in the Waikato district at Tamahere/Matangi to the south east of Hamilton and a further small block to the

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3 Strategic Agreement – Future Urban Boundaries 2005 (between Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council).
Map 6. The Hamilton Surrounds
west at Rotokauri, there is no planned provision by either Hamilton City Council or Waikato District Council for any further extensive areas of large-lot or rural-residential on the periphery of Hamilton.

- As an acclaimed surfing centre, Raglan is arguably the best internationally-known town in the Waikato district. While Raglan is fairly distant from Hamilton compared with other nearby towns and villages, it is well-connected to the city and provides a sought after coastal lifestyle for its residents within reasonable commuting distance of the city. In the future, Raglan is likely to remain an important coastal town, and although current population projections do not anticipate significant future population growth in the town, it is well provided for with zoned and serviced land for residential and business development.

- Although the policy intention is not to extend large lot residential areas into the rural area around Hamilton, historical patterns of subdivision around the city have created de facto ribbons of rural residential and lifestyle small holdings along most of the roads radiating out of Hamilton into the immediate rural hinterland. These areas should be monitored and reconsidered whenever the development strategy is reviewed and local structure planning is being done by either Waikato District Council or Hamilton City Council on the periphery of Hamilton.

- Any local-level strategic planning in the area of the Hamilton City periphery should entail early discussions between Waikato District Council and Hamilton City Council to ensure good alignment from a strategic planning and future servicing consideration.
4.8 The Central Area – Major Move (see Map 7)

As mentioned earlier in Section 2.4, the completion of the Waikato Expressway will be a ‘game changer’ for the district and for these central district towns more particularly. The staged completion of the expressway will most directly affect Huntly, Ngaruawahia and Taupiri by stopping through-traffic from passing through these settlements.

- The Council is and will continue to use its structure plan programme to work with the residents of these individual communities to prepare plans for how to best address the challenges and new opportunities presented by this profound change.

- In 2010 the Council completed a structure plan and associated plan change to the Waikato District Plan for Te Kauwhata in advance of the current work on the Rangiriri section of the Waikato Expressway.

- Currently the Council is working with iwi, key stakeholders and the communities of Ngaruawahia, Taupiri, Te Kowhai and Horotiu to address implications for these settlements of the staged completion of the Waikato Expressway. The Ngaruawahia bypass was completed at the end of 2013.

- Similarly, a concept development plan will be prepared by the Council in conjunction with the Huntly community, local iwi and key stakeholders in advance of the scheduled completion of the Huntly bypass in 2019.

- Considered collectively, there are significant historic, cultural, tourism and recreational opportunities that could be better realised in the towns and villages of this central corridor area once the expressway is complete and regional through-traffic removed. These opportunities include the Rangiriri Pa and battlefield site, Taupiri Mountain, Turangawaewae Marae and the Kingitangi movement, the former coal mining villages west of Huntly, boating and fishing on the Waikato River and floodplain lakes, hiking in the Hakarimata range together with road and trail cycling.

- The future of the North Island Main Trunk railway line will remain a key component of all the central district towns as it will continue to pass through them. While there are no current plans to reconnect any of the towns to a passenger service, there are significant freight connection opportunities for the area. Oddly, although most of the 681km railway line between Auckland and Wellington is now electrified, a 60km gap is likely to remain between Pukekohe and Te Rapa in Hamilton where diesel locomotive units will be required. The rail situation will need to be monitored as there is likely to be a future spillover effect for the district from competition between Auckland’s Transdev passenger transport requirements and KiwiRail’s freight transport use.
Map 7. The Central Area
5. Implementation
The primary role of the district development strategy will be to inform the council’s other sector strategies (transport, infrastructure and finance), the Long Term Plan and the District Plan. In turn the Development Strategy is informed by strategies and plans being prepared at a regional and national level by other authorities and agencies.

6. Monitoring
It is proposed that the District Development Strategy be revisited and updated in advance of every Long Term Plan preparation cycle to remain valid and relevant. Much of the high level strategic direction-setting content is likely to remain largely unchanged, but the more detailed key move aspects will require regular updating in line with project and capital work roll-out as well as a result of unexpected and unforeseen events and developments.

7. Key Informing Documents
Auckland Plan (2012) Auckland Council
Franklin District Growth Strategy (2008) Franklin District Council
Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (2014) Auckland Council
Waikato District Long Term Plan (2015-2025) Waikato District Council
Waikato District Infrastructure Strategy (2015) Waikato District Council
Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan (2015-2045) Waikato Regional Council