

Te Tau Tiitoki Puuronga aa Tau Future Proof Annual Report

2024



Future Proof
Te Tau Titoki

Working **together** to future proof our communities

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Waahinga Koorero Foreword



Wairēinga
Bridal Veil Falls

Future Proof began its journey in 2007 when the Future Proof partners came together to consider some of the challenging issues associated with growth. Our mandate then was to primarily address issues around land use and infrastructure, particularly transport, and to plan for the wider impacts of growth.

2007 marked the first time the Waikato sub-region began working together as a collective. Prior to this, there was no unified view. Waikato councils had their own plans – some in conflict – and there was no strong relationship with iwi. We had no clear vision and our future looked disjointed and poorly planned.

Future Proof has enabled us to become fully aligned. More than 15 years on, the work of Future Proof has been recognised nationally by policy and decision-makers and is now considered integral to the managed growth of our wider sub-region and setting its strategic direction.

Over time, the fundamentals around why we are here have not changed. However, the environment around us has, and our work and our relationships have changed with it.

Future Proof is more than just about planning for the future. Planning is the foundation of all that we do but we also get stuff done and have proven that we do what we say.

While the challenges that growth bring continue to be heard loud and clear, Future Proof means we are set up in the best way possible to manage this growth taking a boundaryless approach.

The recent adoption of our Future Development Strategy means we have identified our 30-year land supply and know where 30 years of housing development will go. And we now have a strategy that provides a fundamental base for planning and infrastructure investment decision making that is respected by both the Environment Court and Central Government.

Since our early focus on transport we have moved on, we are now planning for the long-term future of water for our communities, knowing we must seek to reduce demand on our water resource, much of it sourced from our precious awa, the Waikato, Waipa and Waihou/Piako Rivers. In doing so we also need to look for opportunities to take action to restore and protect all of our rivers and other precious natural resources.

We have also strengthened our commitment to reducing carbon emissions and to building greater community resilience, both socially and economically.

As well as this, we're also planning to transform our transport system so it is fit-for-purpose as our sub-region grows. We want a resilient multi-modal transport network that supports our communities into the future and avoids the congestion that other growing centres struggle with because they haven't planned for growth.

I am incredibly proud of Future Proof and what it has achieved so far and the mature partnership it has become. By planning beyond our territorial boundaries we will be able to continue to future proof our sub-region and the broader Waikato Region as a whole, reflecting the changing needs and ongoing challenges of our partners and those communities we represent.

Bill Wasley,
Independent Chair, Future Proof

INTRO



- Raglan Footbridge
Raglan

Who are we

Future Proof is a collaborative partnership of iwi, local government and Central Government agencies that have come together to ensure growth in the Waikato sub-region is managed in a way that will provide the very best outcomes for our communities.

The Future Proof partnership sets out how we will grow and change over the next 30 years. It ensures we are working collaboratively, and across geographic boundaries, so we can develop an economically successful, socially responsible, and environmentally leading thriving Waikato sub-region that supports and enhances growth in the broader region.

Future Proof considers all of the major growth challenges impacting the sub-region. Already, 369,000 people call the Waikato sub-region home. Over the next 30 years, we're expecting another 180,000 people will settle here – a population increase of 30 per cent in just three decades.

Our Future Proof Partners are:

Local government

- Hamilton City Council
- Matamata-Piako District Council
- Waikato Regional Council
- Waipā District Council
- Waikato District Council
- Auckland Council (in relation to the Hamilton-Auckland corridor)

Central Government

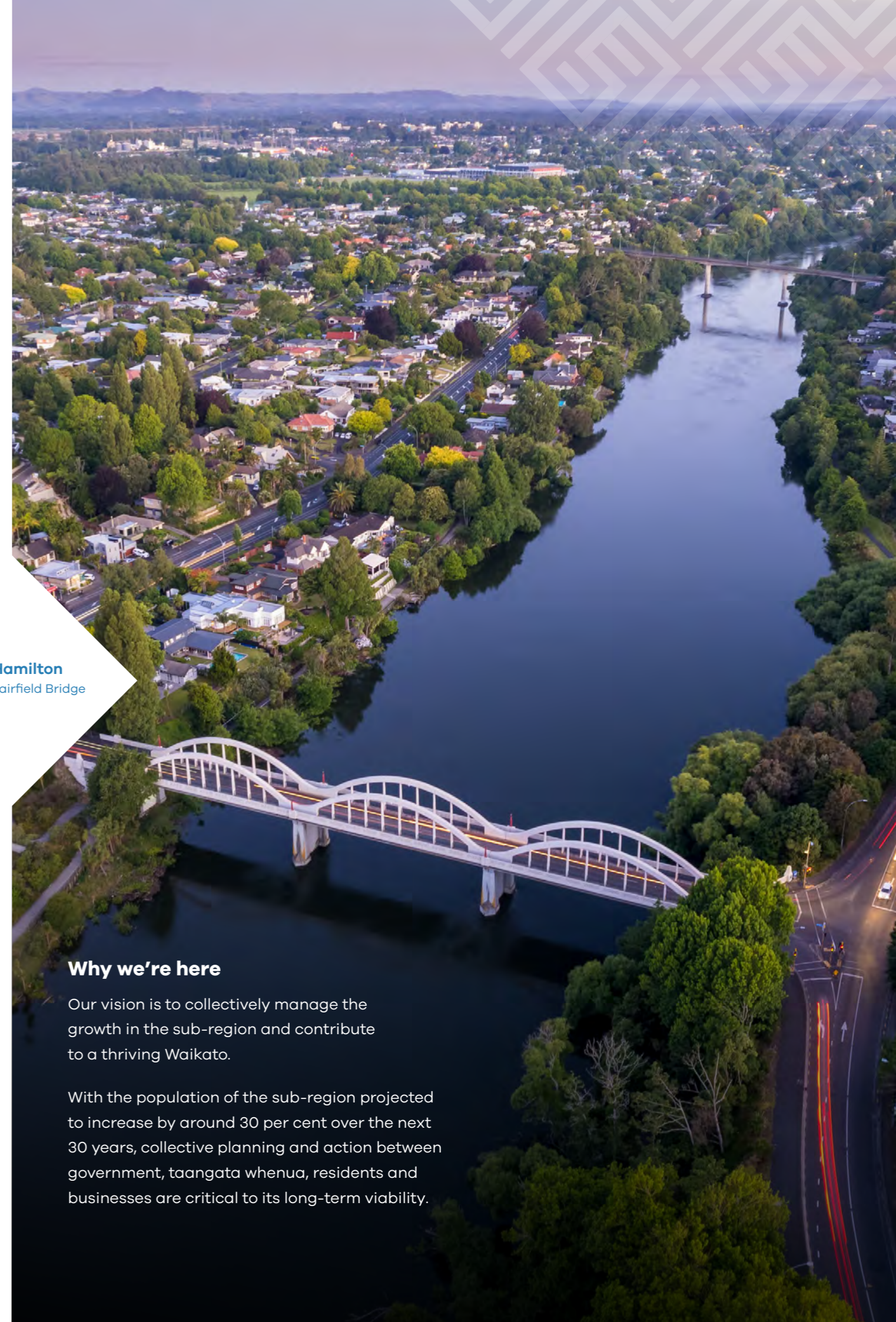
- Department of Internal Affairs
- Kāinga Ora
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
- Ministry of Transport
- Ministry for the Environment
- NZ Transport Agency
- Te Whatu Ora
- Ministry of Education

Iwi

- Ngaa Karu Atua o te Waka
- Tainui Waka Alliance
- Waikato-Tainui
- Mana Whenua Kaitiaki Forum (in relation to the Hamilton-Auckland corridor)

Future proof structure

Future Proof is governed by an Implementation Committee. The committee receives advice from Ngaa Karu Atua o te Waka, a forum providing key input on matters relevant to taangata whenua. Working groups have been established to focus on implementation tasks and other relevant matters.



Hamilton
Fairfield Bridge

Why we're here

Our vision is to collectively manage the growth in the sub-region and contribute to a thriving Waikato.

With the population of the sub-region projected to increase by around 30 per cent over the next 30 years, collective planning and action between government, taangata whenua, residents and businesses are critical to its long-term viability.

The value of Future Proof



Where we are

The Future Proof sub region is part of the wider Waikato region and includes the territorial authorities of Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton City Council, Matamata-Piako District Council, Waikato District Council and Waipā District Council. The sub-region is part of a dynamic corridor between Auckland and Tauranga which is of rapid population and development growth.

Waikato Region

The Waikato is the fourth largest region in New Zealand, covering 25,000 square kilometres and is home to 9.5 per cent of New Zealand's population. The full region stretches from the Bombay Hills and Port Waikato in the north down to the Kaimai Ranges and Mt Ruapehu in the south, and from Mokau on the west coast across to the Coromandel Peninsula in the east. The Future Proof sub region makes up 72% of the region's total population.



Hamilton City

Hamilton city is the largest population centre in the sub region with a population of around 180,000 people as at 2023. It is the fourth most populous and one of the fastest growing cities in New Zealand. Projections indicate this growth is set to continue for the foreseeable future. There are a number of factors contributing to the growth of Hamilton, including its strategic location in respect to Auckland and Tauranga.



Waikato District

The Waikato district has a population of around 90,000 as at 2023.

The district is projected to continue to experience strong growth, particularly in the main urban areas. This includes growth pressure from Auckland as Auckland's southern urban edge expands outward; increasing demand for business and housing in the northern Waikato district urban areas.

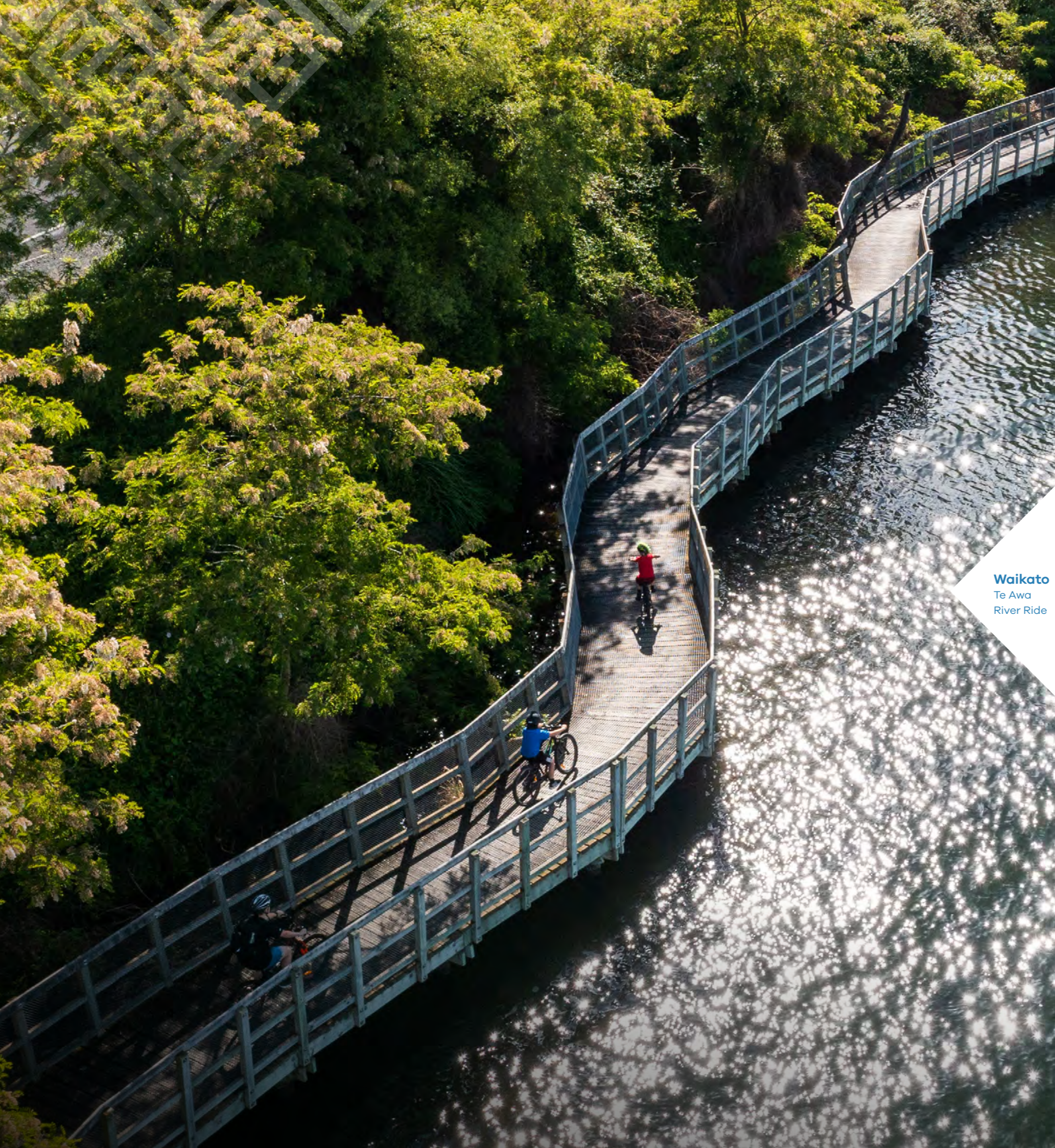
Matamata-Piako District

As at 2023, the Matamata-Piako district had a population of about 38,000. The district has experienced a reasonable level of employment growth in the last five years, with faster growth occurring across the main urban townships. Population growth within the district has also been steady over the past 15 years. It is expected to continue to grow, with the population increasing by nearly 28% over the next 30 years.

Waipā District

Waipā District has a population of around 61,000 (as at 2021), largely living in the district's two well founded towns – Cambridge and Te Awamutu. The age structure of Waipā District is moderately old when compared with other territorial authorities in the Waikato. In 2018, the percentage of population aged 65 and over was 18 per cent, and this is expected to increase to 29.2 per cent in 2043.





Waikato
Te Awa
River Ride

Where we've come from

Future Proof began its journey in 2007 when the Future Proof partners came together to consider some of the challenging issues associated with growth. In 2007, our mandate was to primarily address issues around land-use and infrastructure, particularly transport and to plan for the wider impacts of growth. In 2012 we extended our mandate to explicitly consider water with a focus on urban water use.

The government's Urban Growth Programme, launched in 2018, led to the creation of Urban Growth Partnerships – a process of formalising and maintaining a long-term and enduring relationship between the Crown, local government and iwi in New Zealand's most rapidly growing urban centres.

In 2019, Future Proof formally welcomed Central Government, Auckland Council and Auckland iwi to our existing partnership and became the first Urban Growth Partnership established in the country.

With the new partners on board, Future Proof has delivered a number of key strategies and plans that guide the future of our sub-region. This includes the Hamilton-Auckland Corridor Plan, the Hamilton-Waikato Metropolitan Spatial Plan (the first crown-iwi-local government spatial plan in New Zealand) and the Three Waters Strategy which is currently undergoing a review.

In recent years, our mandate has expanded to focus on other key areas including housing, economic development, climate change and integration of land-use and transport connections between Hamilton and Auckland (H2A) and Hamilton and Tauranga.

In 2021, Future Proof welcomed Matamata-Piako District back into the partnership (after they left in 2011) and today Future Proof continues to work with our neighbouring towns, cities and regions to ensure the best outcomes for our community.

SHARE

A photograph of two men standing on a grassy hill, looking out over a field of white tents. The man on the left is wearing a patterned headwrap and a dark jacket. The man on the right is wearing a grey beanie, a brown jacket, and blue pants, and is pointing towards the distance. The background shows a vast landscape with more tents and hills under a clear sky.

- Fieldays, Mystery Creek, Waipā

The value of Future Proof lies in its partnership approach. Future Proof provides a vehicle for ongoing collaboration, a platform for advocacy and enables joined up thinking across the partnership.

The Future Proof Charter was established this year by our partners and provides a clear description of the culture and behaviours that we commit to when working together on Future Proof matters. It reflects the commitment of our organisations and our expectations of each other.

Through the Charter, the partners have agreed to:

- **Work collectively:** We are better together than we are on our own.
- **Serve our community:** Proactively engage and serve our communities to ensure their needs are at the core of everything we do, striving to deliver enhanced public value.
- **Identify key priorities:** Develop a Future Proof Action Plan focused on a core set of impactful priority initiatives for the sub-region.
- **Be open and transparent:** Support Future Proof partners in openly sharing knowledge and striving for best-for-sub-region outcomes.
- **Commit to a sub-region perspective:** Commit to Future Proof activities, aligning and shaping home organisations to Future Proof priorities.
- **Role model:** Proactively role model and grow the Future Proof brand.

Our partnership provides the basis for future relationships and enables broader conversations with other stakeholders / councils across the country, especially our neighbour councils and the broader Waikato region. We know that the more we share our principle of collaboration with others, the better outcomes we will have for our sub-region, our wider region, and for Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Cambridge
Dragon
Boat Festival



Ngāa whakatutukinga matua
**Key achievements
and outcomes**

DELIVER

**By working together, Future Proof
has achieved some significant
things for the sub-region.**



- Lake Domain Playground, Hamilton Lake



Ongoing commitment and relationships

The ongoing commitment to the partnership has been in itself a critical success factor in the last 17 years since Future Proof's establishment in 2007.

Future Proof has set the scene for much more effective working relationships between the partners both at governance and staff levels, and there is now a much greater appreciation of how each partner's work can affect the others. Our partners are now working together in a much more effective way, meaning we can achieve better outcomes for all of our communities.



The Waikato Expressway

The first major success was the development of the Waikato Expressway. Without the partnership approach, this would not have secured critical government investment – and simply would not have happened.

The impact of the Waikato Expressway was not just the road itself – it was much more than that. The Expressway enabled the development of the Hamilton growth areas of Ruakura, Rototuna and Rotokauri as it provided a key transport network to open up these northern areas of the city, it vastly improved road safety outcomes for the region and enabled the rebirth of the central business districts of our rural towns as thriving community hubs.



Future Proof Strategy

A standout from the last 12 months was the adoption of the revised Future Proof Strategy. The updates to the strategy reflect the work that has progressed on waters, transport and climate change and also identify the critical infrastructure required to enable the development we have planned for.

The draft Future Development Strategy attracted 49 public submissions when released early in 2024. Submitters raised issues including out-of-sequence development, concerns about areas to be protected from new urban development (wahi toitu), and issues around transport planning and highly productive land.

This is the fourth strategy developed under the Future Proof banner which helps guide key planning decisions across the region. The strategy was last reviewed in 2022 but a further review was required to ensure it incorporates new requirements including the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD).



Te Huia passenger train

Off the back of the Hamilton to Auckland Corridor Plan, Te Huia, the passenger train that runs between Hamilton and Auckland was established as a five-year trial, starting in April 2021. The service provides an alternative transport option between the two cities and is on track to deliver its passenger targets, providing an equitable and accessible transport system for both our sub-region and for Auckland. Passenger target numbers are being met and customer satisfaction is high.



Peacocke development

Future Proof was integral in helping Hamilton City secure more than \$290 million from Government through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to open up the new Peacocke development area. Over the next 30 years, there will be 8,000 houses built and 20,000 Hamiltonians living in this new growth area.



Hamilton Central City

Hamilton's central city is the economic heart of the sub-region and plays a key role in the development of a strong economic corridor between Ruakura to the east and Te Rapa and Horotiu to the north.

In 2022 Hamilton City Council was successful in securing more than \$150 million of Crown funding from the Infrastructure Acceleration Fund (IAF).

This is being supported by Hamilton City Council who is also investing more than \$200 million in strategic waters and transport and also developer contributions and investment.

The IAF funding for Hamilton will support delivery of critical strategic waters and transport infrastructure and planning needed in the central city, including a new reservoir and pumpstation. The fund will enable 4,000 new homes for around 10,800 people in the central city and surrounds by 2035.



Priority Development Areas

Priority Development Areas (PDAs) have been identified in the northern, central and southern Hamilton to Auckland corridors.

These areas were selected due to their ability to connect key areas of the sub-region while supporting the core elements of transport, centres, the proposed economic corridor, and planned intensification.

There were 21 PDAs originally identified and these have now been prioritised to six key focus areas. These are:

- Huntly/Raahui-Pookeka and environs
- Hamilton Northwest - Horotiu
- Hamilton Central City
- Fairfield-Enderley
- Ruakura
- North Waipā/South Hamilton

The Future Proof PDA Working Group has been established to track progress and collaborate so we can remove barriers and track progress, remove barriers and help deliver these areas at pace and scale. A set of 'PDA Trackers' have been developed which are regularly used to monitor progress and presented through the various Future Proof groups and the Future Proof Implementation Committee.



Hamilton
Tongue of
the Dog

Current work programme

The Future Proof partnership has identified seven transformational moves for change. These will provide major place-shaping elements in implementing the Future Proof settlement pattern and moving towards a more sustainable form of urban growth development.

The transformational moves are based around:

- iwi aspirations.
- Waikato River – giving effect to Te Ture Whaimana.
- a comprehensive and fundamental evolution of our transport system.
- a vibrant metro core and lively metropolitan and town centres.
- strong and productive economic corridors.
- thriving communities and neighbourhoods.
- water wise and water sensitive communities.

These seven transformational moves provide the ‘why’ behind all that Future Proof does and provides the platform for the Future Proof work programmes.

Future Proof has four key work programmes:

- Policy and planning.
- Priority development areas.
- Transport.
- Waters.

Policy and planning

Grounded by:

- Iwi aspirations.
- Waikato River – Giving effect to Te Ture Whaimana.
- A vibrant metro core and lively metropolitan and town centres.
- Strong and productive economic corridors.
- Thriving communities and neighbourhoods.

Building communities and creating liveable areas is about ensuring a range of housing is available for a diverse population, and that this housing is supported by quality community infrastructure, open space and recreation areas.

Policy and planning achievements over the past 12 months:

- Development and adoption of the Future Proof Future Development Strategy.
- Future Development Strategy Implementation Plan adopted September 2024.
- Substantial completion of Plan Change 1 to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement to implement changes to the Settlement Pattern arising out of the 2023 review of the Strategy.
- Adoption of agreed housing targets for the sub region.
- Future Proof Market and Locality report completed.

Priority Development Areas

Grounded by:

- Iwi aspirations.
- Waikato River – Giving effect to Te Ture Whaimana.
- A vibrant metro core and lively metropolitan and town centres.
- Thriving communities and neighbourhoods.

Partners and communities are unable to develop all potential new areas all at once.

By working collaboratively Future Proof ensures the needs of the sub-region are taken into account when deciding what areas to prioritise.

Priority Development Areas provide a focus on connecting key areas of the sub-region while supporting the core elements of transport, centres, the proposed economic corridor, and planned intensification.

Priority Development Areas achievements over the past 12 months:

- Priority Development Areas monitoring and reporting tool has been refreshed.
- Long-term Plan alignment in delivery of PDAs Priority Development Areas and key actions being reported by partners to each Future Proof Implementation Committee meeting.
- Substantial progress achieved across all of our focus PDAs Priority Development Areas.
- PDAs Priority Development Areas reviewed and prioritised.
- Collaboratively working with land developers in our Emerging Areas to develop a shared understanding of the issues and infrastructure requirements for those areas (ongoing).

Hamilton City
River trails



Transport

Grounded by:

- Iwi aspirations
- A comprehensive and fundamental evolution of our transport system
- A vibrant metro core and lively metropolitan and town centres
- Strong and productive economic corridors
- Thriving communities and neighbourhoods

Transport is one of the most critical things to consider as towns in the sub-region grow. A growing population means more people on the roads and more people needing to get around.

Just building more roads is not an option – space for roads in our urban environments is limited and it is simply unaffordable to create more. We know that as we grow, we must keep looking at different options to keep the sub-region moving.

Future Proof is working together to future proof our sub-region's transport network.

Transport achievements over the past 12 months:

- Freight study – working closely with the logistics and freight industry to make sure we deliver freight solutions that work for our sub-region.
- Bus Rapid Transit study – developing the bus network and infrastructure concepts for future bus rapid transit to deliver on our Metro Spatial Plan transport vision
- Public Transport Pathways study underway – reviewing our bus network and ensuring we have the right routes and infrastructure to support our growing community

Busit
Velodrome





Ngāruawāhia
Hakarimata
Walkway

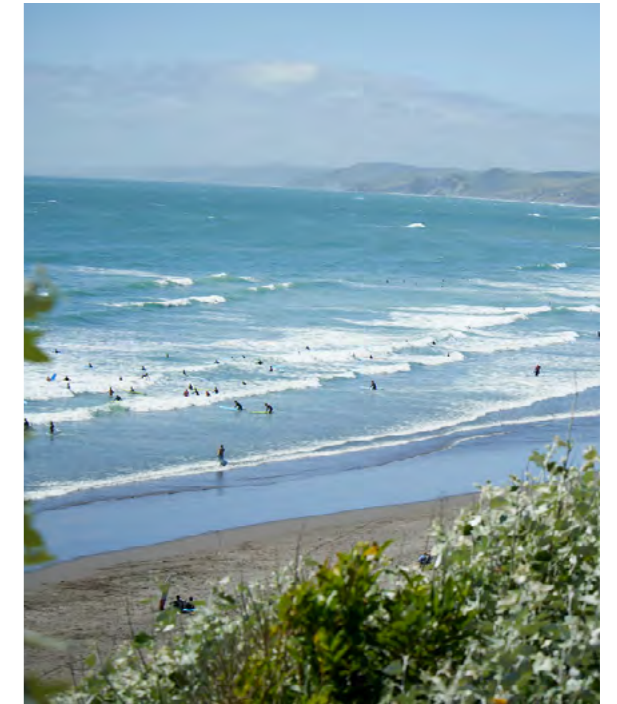
Waters

Grounded by:

- Iwi aspirations
- Waikato River – Giving effect to Te Ture Whaimana
- Water wise and water sensitive communities.

The sustainable delivery and management of water (drinking water, wastewater and stormwater) is a key focus area for Future Proof.

As well as identifying future infrastructure needs, Future Proof is also working in partnership with iwi and hapu to ensure tangata whenua values, aspirations and interests are identified and reflected and to ensure protection and enhancement of our natural environment.



Our role is not to determine the delivery model for the future of three waters but to provide the integrated planning and investment required to grow our communities safely and sustainably. This year our work has focused on completing detailed business cases for our Southern and Northern Waste Water Treatment Plants and progressing investigations of potential water management solutions for the region and scoping a review of our Waters Strategy.

The investigation reports which will soon be finalised address the following topics:

- Three Waters Blue Green Report
- Sub-Regional Three Waters Project Source Assessment
- Maatouranga Maori and Best for River Approach for Three Waters
- Credit Market Report
- Waikato Sub-Regional 3 Waters Strategy – Stormwater Report

BEYOND



- Steele Park, Hamilton East

The challenge

Future Proof has enabled our sub-region to be in the best possible position to tackle the growth coming our way.

But there are still significant challenges that we must collaboratively address. The sub-region is now in a position where there is enough zoned land to cater for growth over the next 30 years. However it is increasingly clear that local territorial authorities cannot afford the cost of the infrastructure required to develop that land.

The funding gap between what infrastructure is needed, and what our communities can afford, is stark. It is our view that this gap, in the hundreds of millions of dollars, is the single biggest challenge our sub-region faces.

How we'll tackle it

Together, we will seek to refine and develop our approach and ensure our work across territorial boundaries continues to address long-term and complex planning, infrastructure and environmental issues. To be successful we need to look beyond our Future Proof boundaries and so engaging and developing strong relationships with our neighbours in Western Bay of Plenty and South Waikato. Working together is critical.

We need to have some serious conversations around how we will fund and invest in future planning of our sub-region and this is a top priority for us as we move forward.

Looking ahead, we will continue to respond to government interventions such as fast-track legislation, water reform, progressing our wastewater infrastructure and optimising our transport network. This will only be able to be done with a strong partnership mentality – we will not be able to achieve it alone

Our recently adopted Implementation Plan sets out what Future Proof will do to implement our Strategy and outlines 'critical enablers' which are the key actions that, if not funded or resourced, will compromise the ability of Future Proof to deliver on the strategy. Progress against the Implementation Plan will be monitored and captured in our next Annual Report.

While our long-term vision doesn't change, how we get there will. Future Proof excels in working across a changing environment, and adapts and responds to change, such as policy and legislative change. We will continue to work closely with government and support initiatives that not only better our sub-region, but better the wider country.

Hamilton
Victoria on
the River





Future Proof
Te Tau Tītoki

futureproof.org.nz