

Thriving Together 2050



District Strategy

October 2023





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Foreword

“What kind of Tararua do you want your children and grandchildren to grow up in?” This question was at the forefront of our consultations with the community when we sought to understand your aspirations and big ideas for the future of our district. Council received a lot of great input and they have now been compiled and processed in this document; Tararua District Strategy - Thriving Together – 2050.

This District Strategy not only outlines our future objectives but also provides tangible, actionable steps to achieve them. It provides the direction to drive our district forward, adapting to environmental and social changes over the next 30 years.

Our district is currently standing at a crossroads, where we face significant challenges but also remarkable opportunities for growth and positive transformation. Challenges include upgrading our infrastructure to meet regulatory standards and maintaining a vast rural roading network. Additionally, the risk of recession, and the effects of increasing climate events, require a resilient and strategic response.

It's also important to acknowledge the opportunities that lie ahead for our district. With the ongoing growth we are currently experiencing, we can anticipate even more development in the future, particularly when the new Te Ahu a Tūranga Manawatū-Tararua Highway is completed in 2025. While such opportunities are great for our district, they also require proactive planning to address the mounting pressure on our infrastructure and housing.

The new highway will become a key gateway to Tararua with an estimated 13-minute travel time from Palmerston North with its freight hub and airport, and we are planning to make the most of this opportunity. This project will transform the Tararua and Manawatū-Whanganui region and create a wealth of opportunity for employment, growth and business. Our District Plan Review will set out how we can grow in a sustainable way while protecting the things that make Tararua unique.

With all this in mind, this District Strategy is designed to be dynamic and nimble to change. It not only articulates our future goals but also outlines practical ways to attain them. It provides the direction to drive our district forward, adapting to environmental and social changes over the next 30 years.

Our Council will be driving this forward so that the actions and plans needed to achieve our vision for the future can be realised. Through all the challenges and opportunities ahead, we want our infrastructure, our whenua (land) and our people of Tararua to thrive together - Ka huri ngatahi Tararua!



**Her Worship The Mayor
Mrs T H (Tracey) Collis**

Our Whenua

On one of his many journeys, Whatonga was said to be paddling inland on one of many rivers in the district. Intrigued by the towering ranges, he chose to climb the tallest one, which is today known as Te Āpiti, or the Manawatū Gorge. Upon reaching the top, a vast vista of natural beauty greeted him, which stretched unendingly in all directions.

Legend says that the forest was so vast and intricate that the only way to navigate it was with the guidance of someone familiar to the land (whenua). Those who ventured in without this knowledge risked becoming hopelessly lost. The forest was so thick that, even on the sunniest days its canopy obscured the sky.

Yet for all its challenges, the forest was a treasure trove, teeming with food sources, offering shelter and signifying natural beauty at every turn. In honour of this stunning scenery, Whatonga bestowed the name 'Te Tapere Nui o Whatonga'. Remnants of this forest which continue to grace the whenua of the Tararua district to this day, can be seen at Pūkaha, ANZAC Park and Norsewood.

Today, Rangitāne o Tamaki nui-ā-Rua and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua share the whenua with all other residing communities, including descendants of early Scandanavian settlers who saw the bush as a resource to be harvested. Through the late 1800's, these settlers worked hard to clear the land, transforming our district into a sturdy and thriving agricultural hub. Roads were forged through the ranges to the Manawatū district, and northward to Hawke's Bay.

The towns of Dannevirke, Woodville, Pahiatua and Eketāhuna, the coastal settlements of Ākitio and Herbertville, and the rural settlements of Norsewood, Pongaroa and Ormondville all have their roots in this Scandanavian settlement that is called home by approximately 20,000 residents, including iwi, Māori and non-Māori. The settlements are set within what is now referred to as the Tararua District, bordered to the east by the Pacific Ocean and to the west by the rugged Tararua and Ruahine Ranges.

Tararua district is steeped in history, a history of beautiful lands, abundant forests and flowing rivers. As our whenua has cared for our people, it is our role to care for our whenua. The Tararua District Council Strategy 2050; looks to the future of our whenua and our communities. We are committed to working together with our iwi and community to ensure we take care of our environment, facilitate opportunities for more connected communities and contribute to a thriving district.

***Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata,
Ko te pai tata, whakamaua kia tina!***
Seek out the distant horizons and cherish those you attain!



Purpose

The Tararua District Council Strategy 2050 provides the direction to progress forward, adapting to environmental and social changes over the next 30 years. Through all these changes, we want our infrastructure, our whenua (land) and our people of Tararua to thrive together.

This District Strategy will hold onto the long-term vision and at the same time adapt to swift and constant change driven by central government, political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental and other changes. The District Strategy will need to be dynamic and agile enough to change whilst holding on to its integrity for Tararua.

This document provides an overview of how the overall strategy has been developed, including community engagement and alignment to additional district strategies and plans. It provides our strategic context and the foundational principles which set our direction and how we will work with our community. These are supported by our strategic enablers, our vision and our outcomes for a successful and thriving Tararua. These are brought to life and measured across our key focus areas:

- A Thriving District
- Improving our Environment
- Connected Communities
- Interactive Council

The Strategy will ensure that we keep and maintain focus on the areas that have been identified by the community as important to them.

How this plan was developed - District Strategies, Plans and Community Engagement

The Strategy reflects our aspirations for Tararua in an ever-changing environment. Informed through iwi and community engagement, it is community focused and highlights the direction Tararua District Council must take to ensure together we are thriving.

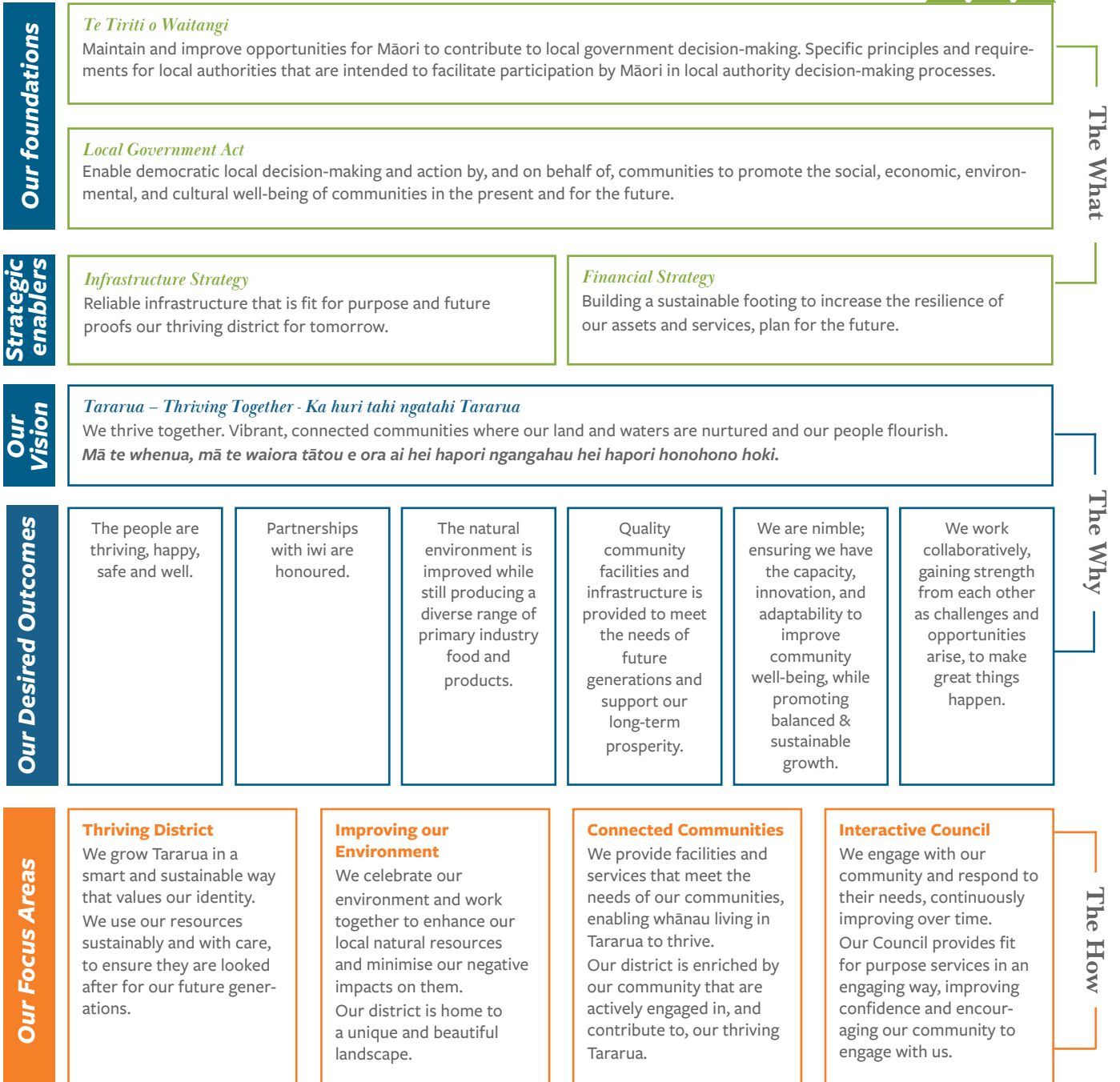
The Tararua District Council Long Term Plan, Annual Plan and Vision and Outcomes Framework sit across all Tararua District Council actions. There are several wider strategies and plans that have also been integral to the direction of this Strategy and require clear alignment to make sure our journey progresses together. These strategies and plans include, but are not limited to:

- Financial Strategy
- Infrastructure Strategy
- Growth Strategy
- District and Spatial Plans
- Climate Change Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Waste Management and Minimisation Plan

We held several super consultation meetings in the community to provide the opportunity for our people to share their vision and aspirations for Tararua. We then held targeted workshops with community leaders, businesses, and our youth. We are grateful for the time from iwi and the community to contribute to this Strategy and the future of Tararua. This feedback has been captured and incorporated throughout the document.



Vision & Outcomes Framework



Our Foundation and Strategic Context

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Tararua District Council is committed to its role as Tangata Tiriti, to maintain and improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government. The Council acknowledges its relationship with both iwi in the Tararua District, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua and Rangitāne o Tamaki nui-ā-Rua, and will continue to act respectfully and reasonably as a Treaty partner for iwi and Māori alike. This will be enacted through the actioning of specific principles and requirements for local authorities that facilitate participation by iwi and Māori in local authority decision-making processes.

Local Government Act

The Local Government Act enables democratic local decision-making and action by and on behalf of communities. The Act promotes the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future. Both the Infrastructure and Financial Strategies for the Council are central levers to mobilising the future vision – a thriving Tararua. This is framed inside the Vision and Outcomes Framework alongside key focus areas, actions and measures. Together, these will guide the improvement of social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing for this region in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act.

Iwi

Ko Ruahine me Tararua ngā Pae Maunga

Ko Manawatū te Awa

Ko Te Kōhanga Whakawhaiti, Te Ahu a Tūranga, Whiti Te Rā, Mākirikiri, Kaitoki me Pāpāuma ngā Marae

Rangitāne o Tamaki nui-ā-Rua and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua, who represent their many hapū with their own whenua and awa tributaries, have both signed deeds of settlement with the New Zealand Government and have partnership agreements with Tararua District Council. These memoranda of partnership recognise the relationship and responsibility of Council to support iwi aspirations for the future of their whānau. While the Council has obligations to all Māori, it has a further responsibility to act in good faith and in a manner of mutual respect with its iwi partners. This includes acknowledging and respecting iwi priorities, their traditions, particularly ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna as well as other taonga.

To give effect to the relationships, all necessary information must be shared for iwi and Māori to make informed contributions to Council decision-making. This will not only allow for open and transparent engagement, but the foundation to build enduring trust and opportunity, for Council to iwi and iwi to Council.

Together with Council, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua and Rangitāne o Tamaki nui-ā-Rua share a vision for a prosperous and healthy district that supports its people and their cultural values. These are the principles of kotahitanga and kaitiakitanga, where sustainability, care for the environment and appropriate management of natural and physical resources is achieved through working together.



Our District

Tararua is our place, our being, our people, our whenua. It is our land, mountains, rivers and sea; rohe, maunga, awa and mātai. It is a land of ranges of untouched coastline, bush-cloaked ranges and sparkling fish-filled rivers.

Tararua, the **land of ranges** is bound to the west by the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges and to the east by the Pacific Ocean. The Waewaepa and Puketoi Ranges run through the middle of the district dividing the river valley from the coastal hill country. The catchment of the Manawatū River generally defines the north and south extremities. The river catchment is also the reason the majority of the district is in the Manawatū-Whanganui Region. The Ākitio, Wainui and Owāhanga Rivers flow from their headwaters in the Puketoi Range out to the Pacific Ocean. The Waihi River, a tributary of the Ākitio River, drops down the spectacular Waihi Falls.

Tararua is our people who work the land, who are innovators and create opportunities for infrastructural growth in the district and across the country. It is our people who continue to advance small local businesses and our communities who support them.

Tararua is our unique whenua with 95% of the district utilised as farming land. Made up of four towns, (Dannevirke, Woodville, Pahiatua and Eketāhuna) and three villages (Pongarua, Norsewood and Ormondville), with the coastal settlements of Ākitio and Herbertville, we are predominantly rural and proud of our connections within our local towns and wider community settlements. We are resilient and resourceful; with our very own community dedicated to caring for its members.

land of ranges



Vision and Outcomes

*Mā te whenua, mā te waiora tātou
e ora ai hei hapori ngangahau hei
hapori honohono hoki.*

We are thriving together, vibrant, connected communities where our land and waters are nurtured and our people flourish.

As Council, we are committed to enabling the progression and advancement of our communities. Our Tararua District Council Strategy 2050 brings life to our vision – thriving together, vibrant, connected communities.

Through our engagement with iwi, Māori and community members, we have been fortunate to understand the high-level outcomes we collectively want to achieve to reach our vision. These high-level outcomes are described below.

High-Level Outcomes

- Our people and communities are thriving, happy, safe, and well.
- Our partnerships with Rangitāne o Tāmaki nui-a-Rua and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua are honoured.

- The natural environment is improved while still producing a diverse range of primary industry food and products.
- Quality community facilities and infrastructure is provided to meet the needs of future generations and support long-term prosperity.
- We are nimble, ensuring we have the capacity, innovation and adaptability to improve community wellbeing, while promoting balanced and sustainable growth.
- We work collaboratively gaining strength from each other as challenges and opportunities arise, to make great things happen.
- Embracing the Treaty principles of partnership, protection, and participation with iwi and hapū and sharing and respecting the world view of Te Ao Māori.
- Supporting the aspirations of iwi who may focus on priority areas post settlement including housing, rangatahi (youth) and health.
- Working in partnership with iwi, hapū and Māori on initiatives that will support the wellbeing of tangata whenua across Tararua.



land of
ranges

Focus Areas

The following are the focus areas that will drive responsible, sustainable growth for our district and guide achievement of the objectives within this Strategy.

- **Thriving District** - has a strong emphasis on the local economy, our infrastructure and building the capability and capacity of our people.
- **Improving our Environment** – focused on our whenua and practices that ensure its sustainability.
- **Connected Communities** – highlights the importance of a holistic approach to wellbeing and the wellness of our people.
- **Interactive Council** – emphasizes open and transparent Council processes that are community centred and keep the community informed.

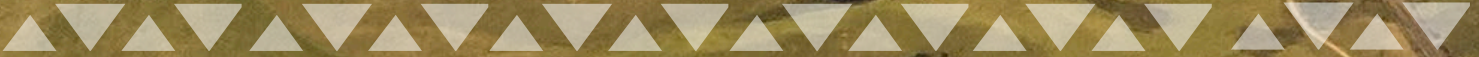
This section explores the focus areas and highlights opportunities across each, as described by iwi, community leaders, businesses, and youth. The Strategy transforms the opportunities into strategic objectives and measures to be undertaken to fulfil the community vision.



Voices of the Community

““ Establishing an industry/Council learning centre to grow industry specific skills to match current and future business needs ””

““ Improving transport options for our people and ensuring ongoing influence at regional and national levels ””



Thriving District

“*Reviewing options to improve the look and feel of our retail areas, shop frontages and any open spaces*”

“*Investigating a range of funding opportunities to build the local economy*”



Thriving District

We grow Tararua in a smart and sustainable way that values our identity.

We use our resources sustainably and with care, to ensure they are looked after for our future generations.

Our expectations of housing, transport, recreation and public spaces will change over the next thirty years. A thriving district will enable our economy to prosper by constantly improving workforce capability, planning for sufficient commercial and industrial land, attracting and growing talent to our lifestyle, embracing innovation and being responsive to change.

Opportunities

Our population is growing, and it is exciting to see more people calling Tararua home. This growth will further expand with the completion of Te Ahu Tūranga Manawatū-Tararua Highway. We need to plan for sustainable growth and target different funding sources to reduce the burden on our ratepayers and improve our quality of life. Greater consideration and planning are required for the development of housing areas and our roading network in Tararua.

We own the fourth largest rural roading network in New Zealand. Comparatively, these roads have been sustained (through rates) by a smaller population. Equally, challenges with on-going adverse weather, including Cyclone Gabrielle, have and continue to require swift responses to keep our roading network up to standard.

Around 95% of the 400,000 hectares of Tararua land is farmed and the district has a reputation for producing high quality stock. Sheep, beef, and dairy are the most significant types of farming. Forestry is a growing industry with more than 13,000 hectares planted in Pinus Radiata. Pastoral farming continues to be a major economic sector within Tararua.

| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | MEASURES How will we know when we get there? |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To capitalise on opportunities such as the new Te Ahu a Tūranga – Manawatū Tararua Highway. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More businesses in the district. More people visiting and spending in our district. More people living in our district. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure sustainable growth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of business park(s) and other commercial and industrial enterprises. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have pride in our district. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community surveys reflect our community's pride. Spatial plans reflect attractive residential streetscaping. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To investigate sustainable transport options. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships with Horizons Regional Council and commercial operators ensure improved transportation options. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have a thriving, environmentally responsive and sustainable farming sector. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased agricultural production. Decreased pollution in the rivers and streams. Diversification of the use of whenua (land). |



Alignment to District Strategies and Plans

- *Growth Strategy*
- *District and Spatial Plans*
- *Climate Change Strategy*
- *Housing Strategy*



Voices of the Community

“ Investigating industries that utilise sustainable natural fibres like wool, hemp, possum fur, leather ”

“ Seeking to engage Central Government’s support for our district’s transition to becoming carbon neutral, especially in working with the private sector ”



Improving our Environment

“ Prioritising nature-based solutions wherever possible, including our responses to flooding, managing stormwater and erosion ”

“ Engaging with youth, community and tangata whenua groups in support of local climate action ”



Improving our Environment

We celebrate our environment and work together to enhance our local natural resources and minimise our negative impacts on them.

Our district is home to a unique and beautiful landscape.

We aim to be thoughtful around the impact of climate and environmental changes in our district.

Opportunities

As a district we are committed to tackling the challenge of keeping our infrastructure up to regulatory standards and maintaining reliable and safe water sources. Planning is underway to ensure we have a greater understanding of our assets and the required investment, ensuring evidence-based decisions are made for now and into the future.

Government policy changes will influence our planning processes into the future. As a Council we are committed to viewing such changes as opportunities to improve our environment and mitigate long-term implications.





| <i>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</i> | <i>MEASURES</i> How will we know when we get there? |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop solutions for environmental issues in our district. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are in place to address the key environmental issues. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To mitigate the adverse impacts of reforestation activities in our district. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate legislation and/or bylaws are in place. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advance opportunities in agriculture resulting from climate change. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our agricultural landscape is different and diverse. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support initiatives that improve community resilience and reduce emissions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our carbon footprint is reduced. • Our community is actively involved in local climate action. |



Alignment to District Strategies and Plans

- *Growth Strategy*
- *District and Spatial Plans*
- *Climate Change Strategy*



Voices of the Community



“ Continually review safety in partnership with community and the New Zealand Police ”

“ Develop larger scale community gardens that are financially sustainable to reduce food costs to our people ”



Connected Communities



“ Encourage more events in the newly upgraded Town Centres ”

“ Mobile infrastructure like toilets, showers, stage and lighting, grandstands developed so they can be used across the district for events ”



Connected Communities

We celebrate our environment and work together to provide facilities and services that meet the needs of our communities, enabling whānau living in Tararua to thrive.

Our district is enriched by our community who are actively engaged in, and contribute to, our thriving Tararua.

Everyone living in Tararua has the ability and opportunity to participate in and live life to the full. We will continue to have a safe, accessible district connected by roads, rail and digitally by reliable communications systems. We will have ample opportunities for culture and recreation.

Opportunities

As Tararua continues to grow, so does our need to ensure that our communities feel supported and connected, not only within their respective community, but the wider Tararua District. Connection is important and becomes an enabler that will influence the factors that impact on the health, wellbeing, and aspirations of whānau (family) across the district.

Key themes through community engagement highlighted aspirations for significant support and investment to create more cohesive and connected communities.





| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | MEASURES How will we know when we get there? |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure our towns have outstanding facilities for all to enjoy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities and facilities are in place for the benefit of all residents. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure our towns are designed in a way that meets our future needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spatial and district plans are in place. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have resilient and reliable infrastructure that connects our communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good roads and digital capability exist throughout the district. |



Alignment to District Strategies and Plans

- *Growth Strategy*
- *District and Spatial Plans*
- *Climate Change Strategy*
- *Infrastructure Strategy*
- *Financial Strategy*



Voices of the Community

Tamaki nui-a-Rua

“*The Tararua will be a connected, enabling district*”

“*Democratic, connected, liveable, workable.*”

Interactive Council

www.tararua.com

““ *The place of choice to visit for clean waterways and beautiful scenery.* ””

““ *Ensure local government involves more of the people* ””



Interactive Council

We engage with our community and respond to their needs, continuously improving over time.

Our Council provides fit for purpose services in an engaging way, improving confidence and encouraging our community to engage with us.

Tararua District Council strives to be a high performing Council.

Opportunities

The Council, its partners and community are of one voice.

‘Alone, we can do so little, together, we can do so much’. – “He waka eke noa”.

While we have many challenges, we also have many opportunities.



| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | MEASURES How will we know when we get there? |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have effective partnerships with iwi. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council works inclusively with iwi across all aspects. Increased iwi capacity. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the Tararua District and our aspirations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visible increase in tourism and resident growth. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community is satisfied with the Council's performance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident surveys achieve performance targets. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To strive for transparency in decision making and reporting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation by the community in consultation processes. |

Alignment to District Strategies and Plans

- Organisational Plan





Summary

The Tararua District Council Strategy 2050 is our guide to the future of our whenua and our communities. We have committed to working together with our iwi and community to ensure we take care of our environment, facilitate opportunities to be more connected, and contribute to a thriving district. The Tararua District Council Strategy will remain our living document, will adapt to change and be regularly reviewed to ensure it is still relevant to our people.

Tararua District Council understands that the most important part of any strategy document is its delivery, and how performance against the plan is assessed, measured, and communicated to our people. Our community will be our guide on whether we are supporting progress towards their vision for the district and that we are meeting their aspirations.

To deliver on the outcomes for Tararua District that this plan describes, we are committed to actively engage with our community. We will encourage our community to provide feedback on whether we are getting things right and on how we can improve, and we will ensure that this living document responds to them.

Ka huri tahi ngatahi Tararua
Thriving together across Tararua





Photo credits

Page 1: Pūkaha Visitor host and Pou Kaiārahi Everlyne Chase with Pūkaha Junior Rangers - ©Larissa Deana Carlson Photography

Page 2: Ruahine Ranges - @Tararua District Council

Page 10: Left: Whānau Art @ the Pā. From left to right: Te Haana Paewai, Colleen van den Bos, Kathleen Bailey, Ana Paewai, Ataneta Paewai, Traci Wheeler.

Page 12: Cyclone Gabrielle Outreach team, Liz Douglas, Melissa Nikora, Claudia Hape, Bernadette Cranshaw @Tararua District Council

Page 16: Te Ahu a Tūranga Manawatū - Tararua Highway construction @Tararua District Council

Page 18 & 19: The Ballance Reserve and Gorge. @Palmerston North City Council

Page 22 & 23: Explore Pahiatua Christmas Parade @ Explore Pahiatua

Page 28: Pēpi, Amy Winika, Tane Cooper, Whakaio Cooper @ Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua Easter egg hunt @Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua

Page 30: Pūkaha Conservation Ranger Zack Te Aho-White at a Kākāriki release in 2023 - ©Larissa Deana Carlson Photography

