



PLACEMAKING

Hikurangi

Summary of Feedback Report

December 2020

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1 Placemaking Programme

The Placemaking Programme is a key tool identified within the Whangarei District Growth Strategy as a response to the growth and changes that are happening in our local communities and the key challenges and opportunities that come with it.

The Placemaking Programme will create a series of spatial plans for our districts communities and look at how they will change, grow and develop over the next 20-30 years.

Once completed, these plans will identify actions which will feed into the district plan review process, the capital works, infrastructure, and transport programmes, and align their actions with the Long-Term Plan and annual plan funding. They will also act as a tool for communities providing a vehicle for community input into planning and development decisions.

Our pilot for the placemaking programme begins in Hikurangi and Tikipunga and will result in a spatial plan for each location.



Diagram (above) Growth nodes identified within the Whangarei District Growth Strategy.

1.1 Programme Drivers

Whangarei is growing and developing but there is a gap when it comes to understanding how this affects specific locations in our District.

This gap has led to:

- Poor quality outcomes and lost opportunities to maximise the community benefits of development.
- A lack of vision for how a specific community will develop over the medium/long-term.
- Fragmented communities due to infrastructure such as roads, parks and pedestrian networks.
- Low levels of amenity through poor urban design, and subdivision design.
- Communities who feel disconnected from key planning & development decisions.

A 'one size fits all' approach is not the best way forward for our diverse District because each place is different. Communities have their own set of qualities, unique characteristics and people who make them special.

The Placemaking Programme will generate a series of Placemaking Plans to create a 20-30 year shared vision for key locations and communities across the District.

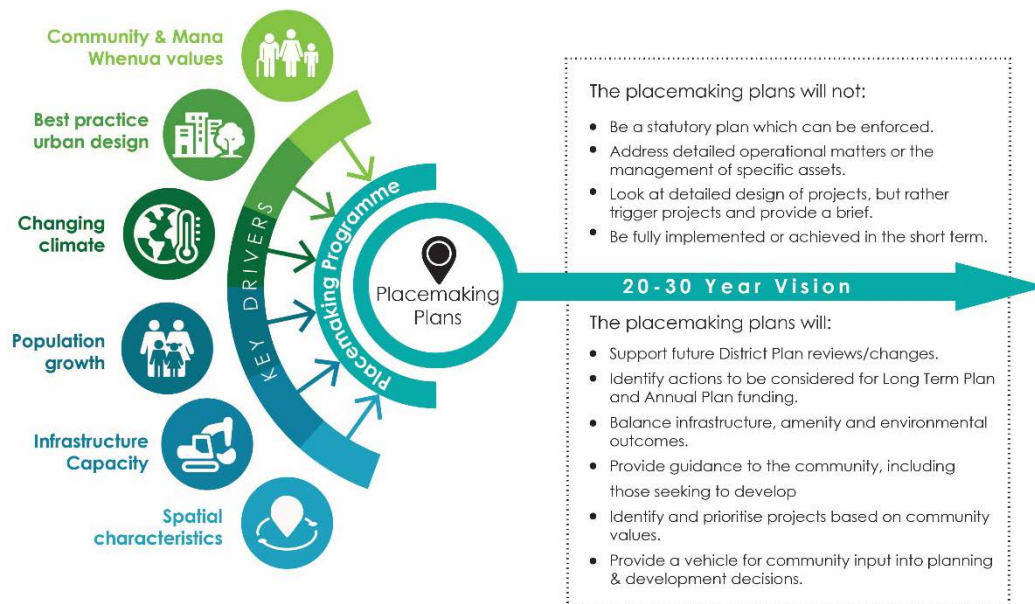


Diagram (above) What is the Placemaking Programme and how it will work (what the plans will do and will not do).

1.2 Where are we in the process?

With this report we have completed Stage 2 of our overall process. Our findings from the community engagement, internal workshops, discussions with external stakeholders and spatial analysis have helped us to identify opportunities, future projects and actions to include within the Hikurangi Placemaking Plan.

These findings will feed into our draft Hikurangi Placemaking Plan. We will begin structuring and developing the document in the new year and aim to complete the draft by March/April 2021.

We are aiming to have the Hikurangi and Tikipunga Placemaking Plans adopted in May/June 2021. The timeframes for the final plans have been extended due to COVID-19 Level 4 Lockdown and the disruption we had in the initial stages of the plan development and the first round of community engagement.



Diagram (above) The overall placemaking process. Stage 2 has just been completed and we move to Stage 3: Final Plan with the development of a draft plan.

2 Community engagement approach

The purpose of the second round of engagement was to identify opportunities as well as test our own learnings and analysis from internal discussions and the first round of engagement.

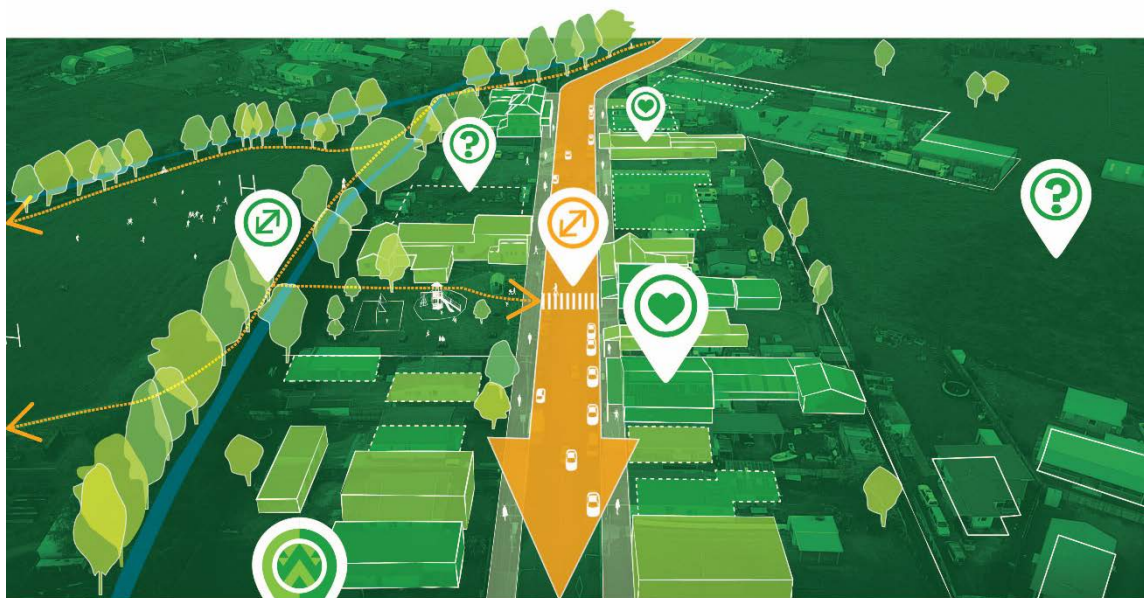
Due to the restrictions put in place because of the COVID-19 Level 4 lockdown, the first round of engagement which was held online in June/July 2020.

Although we received a total of 300 responses to our first online survey (responses for Hikurangi and Tikipunga), we found that the individual community relationships and the buy-in we had built prior to restrictions was a key aspect in getting people to engage with us online. Face to face engagement is often the most beneficial and rewarding approach to engagement for both parties.

During the second round of engagement we wanted to take a more interactive and creative approach with a focus on meeting people in the Hikurangi community.

We also explored a wide range of engagement tools and approaches with the intention of making ourselves available to as many people as possible.

2.1 Engagement tools



PLACEMAKING Hikurangi

TELL US what you want your COMMUNITY to be?

Image (above) As part of this round of engagement we tried to create visually engaging imagery to help encourage participation online

Our engagement approaches included:

- Community hui / workshop held in the Hikurangi community.
- Morning drop-in sessions once a week in the Hikurangi community.
- Online survey / questionnaire for those who wanted to continue to engage with us online.
- Presented, workshoped and promotion of the Placemaking Plans at Hikurangi community events and community group meetings.

The second round of engagement was held for one month, from Wednesday 28th October to Wednesday 25th November. Our engagement events and online surveys were promoted using our engagement tools including the website, council news, social media, posters displayed at local shop fronts and through the email contacts we established within the first round of engagement.

The Hikurangi community groups such as the Business Association and Friendship House had a large part in promoting the placemaking plan within the wider community. Information about the placemaking plan and the events that were held were shared and promoted through the community networks and tools. This included the Hikurangi Bulletin, Hikurangi Website and various community social media pages. These helped us to connect to a lot wider group of community members and reach individuals in the wider rural community.

We were also invited to additional community events such as the Hikurangi Fireworks and the Hikurangi community Pot Luck to promote the Hikurangi Placemaking Plan.

The Hikurangi Business Association and Friendship House have also established a Hikurangi Placemaking Plan steering group which meets monthly. This has been a helpful tool for our overall process as it allowed us to confirm timings and methods for engagement and test ideas with preliminary workshops.

2.2 Engagement limitations

Engagement limitations have been noted to help us formulate a clear communication plan for the third round of engagement as well as future placemaking plan engagement.

- We aimed to hold engagement at diverse times (evening workshops, drop-in-sessions during the day) to ensure many people had the ability to come and speak to us. However, the more informal drop-in-sessions were day centric and reliant on people showing interest as they passed by. This showed us that the context of the sessions is very important. the location of where staff are situated needs to be central and a common meeting place for the community.
- The community workshop was very successful. We will however aim to encourage more participation through further promotion of this event as well as sending out reminders and using tools such as Facebook events.
- Advertising, marketing, and information sharing is always a challenge. We are limited by the tools we have available such as our WDC Facebook page, website and council news. The most valuable tools are those that exist in the community. More work to identify and adapt to these tools will be beneficial in the future.
- Engagement is resource and time intensive. We are limited by how much time internal staff have available to dedicate to events and workshops, both within and outside of working hours. A balance of time is required with a more personalised and individual approach to interactions (i.e. door knocking).
- The timing of engagement is a key thing to consider. Working collaboratively with the community and at a pace which is comfortable for them and fits in with their schedules needs to be balanced with the project programme and timeline. Due to the unprecedented year we have had with such events as COVID-19 and the July floods, individual priorities were understandably elsewhere.
- A large portion of the community do not engage with the platforms that we use as council and/or do not actively look at what council communicates. We will aim to build on and diversify our communication tools and collaborate with the community using their own tools in the future.

3 Community Response

3.1 Response in brief

- 30 attendees at the community workshop held at Friendship House / Hikurangi Memorial Hall
- 51 online survey responses
- 4 drop-in-sessions held at Miners Rest Café

3.2 Key themes

We asked the Hikurangi community some key questions based around three key themes. These key themes were created from the feedback we received in the first round of engagement.

Connectivity

- Better connectivity within the Hikurangi between key destinations such as Lake Waro, Hikurangi Sports Park, Hikurangi School and the village centre.
- Improved connectivity and greater transport choice between Hikurangi and the wider Whangarei area.
- Accessible and safe walking and cycling opportunities.
- Safer and attractive roads and connections to and within Hikurangi including from State Highway.
- Improving connectivity, walkability and activity through design to enhance safety and perceptions of safety.

Heritage & Character

- The strong and unique built heritage, natural character and history of Hikurangi is important to the people in the community.
- Protection and enhancement of Hikurangi's unique identity and natural environment is important as they adapt to population and demographic changes.
- Strong sense of community and the friendly and diverse people are also a key aspect of Hikurangi's character.
- Unique and well-designed public spaces, streets and buildings.

Destination

- Enhance Hikurangi's profile as a visitor destination as well as a place to live, work and play.
- Celebrate Hikurangi's unique character and local community.
- Enable growth and change.
- More diverse and well-designed activities, facilities, and amenities to cater to their community as well as attract visitors.



Diagram (above) The spatial scope of the Hikurangi Placemaking Plan.

4 Connectivity

Connectivity was a key theme raised within the first round of community engagement. It is about creating greater choice, connectivity, accessibility and activity to, from and within Hikurangi.

We wanted to expand on the feedback we received from the previous round of engagement and identify some possible opportunities around vehicle movement, walking & cycling, accessibility, safety and public transport.

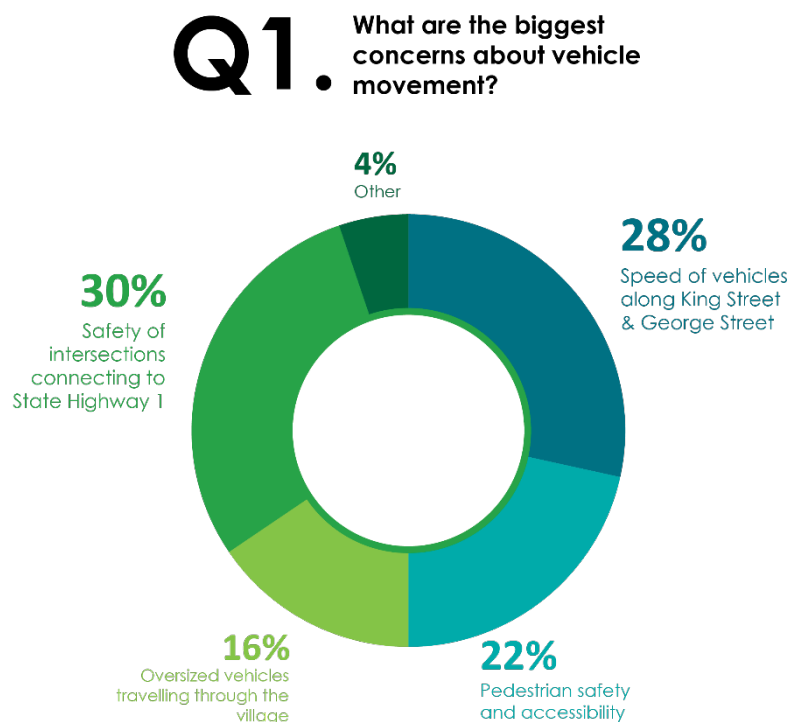
The questions asked were:

1. **What are your biggest concerns about vehicle movement?**
2. **What needs to change in terms of connectivity and walkability?**
 - a. Where are the missing walking & cycling connections?
 - b. What footpaths need the most improvement and why?
 - c. What streets feel unsafe and why?
 - d. Where do we need more pedestrian crossings?
3. **What times / days would you like to see a bus service running, and where would you like it to connect to?**

The feedback summarised below is based on the online survey responses combined with the more robust discussions from the community workshop and drop-in-sessions.

4.1 Vehicle movement

“The SH1 / King Street intersection has limited vision and needs to be improved for safety.”

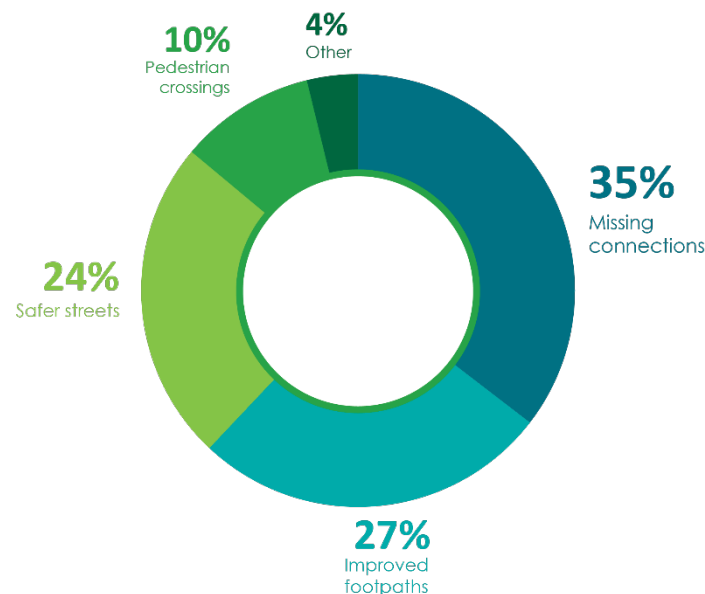


When it comes to vehicle movement the community is most commonly concerned about the intersections connecting to the State Highway 1 (primarily the northern connection which has safety and sightline issues). The community are also concerned about the speed of vehicles on King Street and George Street making it feel unsafe for pedestrians, vehicles as well as disturbing residents.

4.2 Walkability

“There are no safe worthwhile walking tracks in Hikurangi, aside from the lake”

Q2. What needs to change in terms of connectivity and walkability?



When considering walking and cycling and pedestrian connectivity, the community believed that more connections need to be created. The most common missing connections were:

- The Hikurangi village centre to Lake Waro – following the railway line which runs along the eastern side of the village.
- To Whangarei city centre / Kamo – the community would like to see a cycle link to the city creating alongside State Highway 1 or along the railway line linking to the Kamo Cycleway. A link through Glenbervie Forest to Tikipunga was also noted.
- Valley Road / Marua Road up to Gomez Road.
- Around the Hikurangi sports fields at Hikurangi Sports Park.

The second most common response was the need to improve footpaths. Comments around why the footpath needed to be improved were primarily about making the footpath more attractive as well as more accessible (uneven footpaths). Comments also included that some locations only have partial footpaths, or footpaths on one side of the street. The most common improvement locations were:

- The Hikurangi village centre
- George Street
- Upper King Street (which has a footpath on only one side of the road)
- View Road / Mountain View Road connecting to the Village.
- Marua Road

There was also comments about formalising and improving the paths around Lake Waro and the Limestone Reserve.

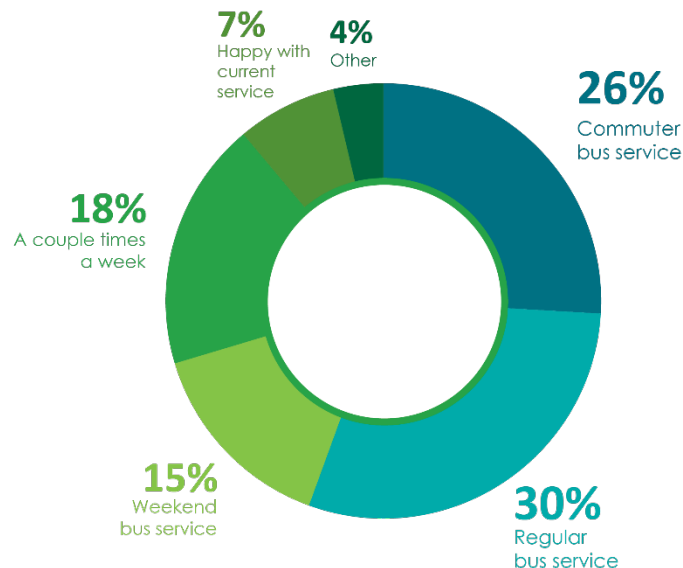
Streets feeling unsafe to walk was the third most common response.

Comments included vehicle speeds, roaming dogs, broken sightlines between vehicles and pedestrians, a lack of street lighting, no footpath or footpath amenity, and crime.

4.3 Public Transport

“...a morning and afternoon service for those who work in town.”

Q3. What times/days would you like to see a bus service?



Several people referenced and were positive about the current Hikurangi bus service which began running once a week on Thursdays in November 2020.

However, people do want to see future improvements to the bus service with more regular bus times throughout the week, as well as a bus service which is appropriate for commuters who work in the central city.

In terms of where the bus should connect to, the most common response was to the central city as well as Kamo and Tikipunga.

A few people also noted a coastal bus service to connect to the beaches, as well as a bus service which connects people who live outside Hikurangi to the amenities they have on offer. This includes Lake Waro in the summer time.

5 Heritage and Character

Heritage and character is another key theme raised within the first round of community engagement. It is about the protection and enhancement of Hikurangi's unique built heritage, natural character, history and strong sense of community.

We wanted to expand on the feedback we received from the previous round of engagement and identify some possible opportunities around heritage building protection and celebration. To better understand Hikurangi's character we also wanted people to expand on what they value most about Hikurangi.

The questions asked were:

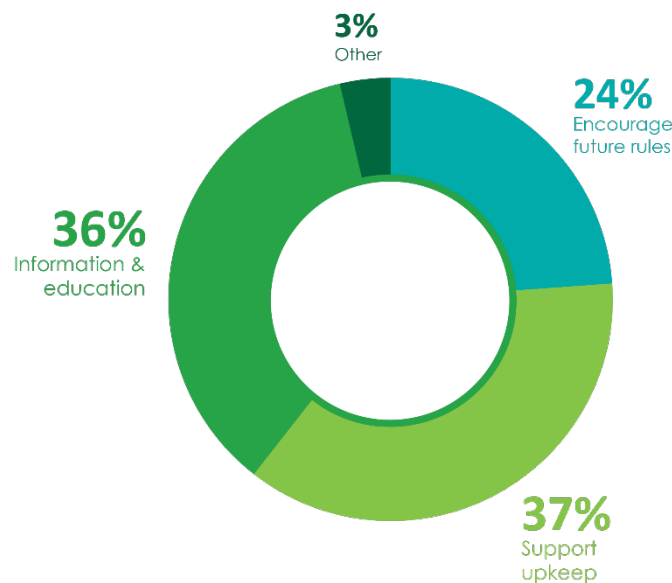
4. How can these plans assist in the protection and enhancement of heritage buildings?
5. What makes Hikurangi special to you?

The feedback summarised below is based on the online survey responses combined with the more robust discussions from the community workshop and drop-in-sessions.

5.1 Heritage protection and enhancement

"Prevent buildings from falling into disrepair...a sense of place is important"

Q4. How can these plans assist in the protection & enhancement of heritage buildings?



There was general agreement throughout all discussions that the built heritage is important to the identity of Hikurangi and that the protection and enhancement of these buildings is an opportunity to create a strong character.

A large portion of the responses were in favour of support for maintenance and upkeep of these buildings, as well as promoting them through information and education such as heritage trails, storyboards and plaques.

5.2 What makes Hikurangi Special?

“I LOVE living in a community where it's still normal for kids to walk home from school. I LOVE living in a village that has SO many old buildings.”

Within the first round of engagement we asked the community what they value most about Hikurangi. We received a lot of comments about the lifestyle, the village feel the local shops and the people.

We wanted to build on those early responses by asking the community what they believe makes Hikurangi special to them.

The earlier responses were reinforced with people noting once again that what makes Hikurangi special is the community and the people, the lifestyle and historic village feel, as well as the location being close to Whangarei centre and the coast while still feeling isolated and quiet.

6 Destination

Destination is the final key theme which was raised as part of the first round of community engagement. It is about enhancing Hikurangi's profile as a visitor destination as well as a place to live, work and play.

We wanted to expand on the feedback we received from the previous round of engagement and identify what Hikurangi's point of difference is as well as some possible opportunities to attract visitors and new residents to Hikurangi.

The questions asked were:

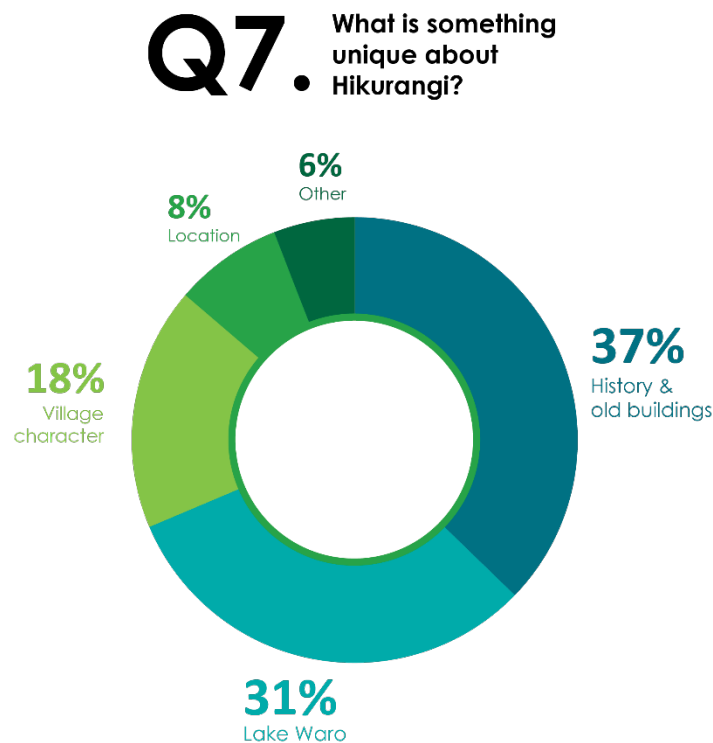
7. What is something unique about Hikurangi?
8. What do you think needs to be done to attract more visitors to Hikurangi?
9. What can be done to accommodate more people/residents?
10. What activities would you like to see, where, and for what age group?

The feedback summarised below is based on the online survey responses combined with the more robust discussions from the community workshop and drop-in-sessions.

6.1 Visitor destination

"A lot of people pass through on the weekends, but only have one cafe to stop at..."

"What is something unique about Hikurangi?" is a very similar question to "What makes Hikurangi special to you?" Therefore, the responses were very similar, however this question was more so about identifying Hikurangi's point of difference and what makes it an attractive place from a visitor perspective.



The most common responses to what makes Hikurangi unique were the history and the old buildings as well as Lake Waro and the Limestone Reserve.

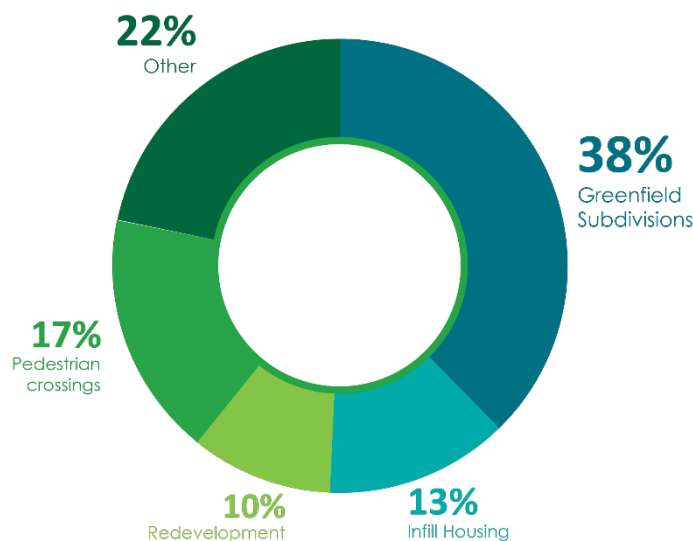
We also asked people what they think needs to be done to attract more visitors to Hikurangi. The most common responses were:

- Advertising, marketing and promotion of Hikurangi as a destination
- Wayfinding signage and arrival treatments at Hikurangi entranceways. This includes State Highway 1 entrances as well as the Valley Road entrance to the east of Hikurangi
- Beautification and streetscape improvements.
- Information and heritage/cultural signage and trails
- Improved and easily accessible parking
- More activities and local shops (café's and hospitality)
- Walking and cycling

6.2 Growth

"Hikurangi is a quaint town because of its location and the beautiful houses..."

Q9. What can be done to accommodate more residents?



Due to their proximity to Whangarei City and the lifestyle Hikurangi offers, the community see their potential for population growth. The first round of engagement indicated that they would like to see more infrastructure and housing development to accommodate this potential.

The community are also concerned that growth will lead to a loss of community, unique character heritage and lifestyle. This is reflected in the above graph which shows a preference for greenfield subdivisions as well as 'other' types of development.

Within 'other' some of the responses included rural subdivision development, lifestyle blocks. Some indicated that they would like to see smaller housing for older people, such as retirement villages and pensioner housing. This indicates that ageing in place is important to the community.

6.3 Hikurangi Activities

“More things to keep people busy and encourage community.”

The Hikurangi community would like more diverse experiences and activities to enjoy as well as to attract visitors to Hikurangi. Within the first round of engagement the community noted that they feel there is not enough to do or see in Hikurangi, particularly for children, youth and older people.

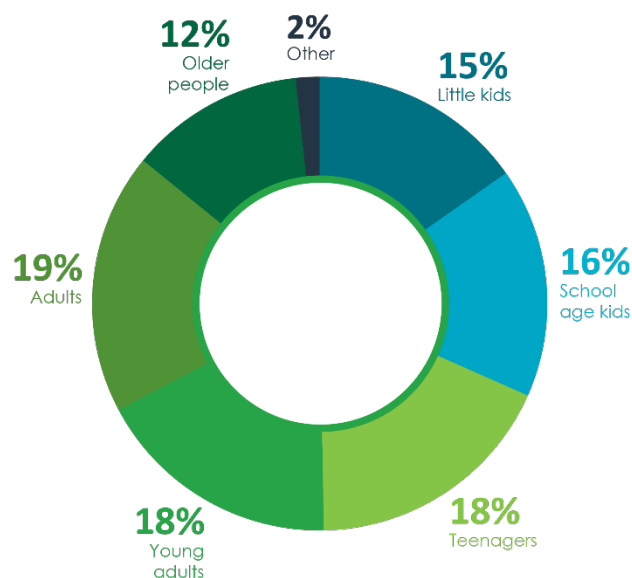
The most common responses to this question were:

- Café’s, hospitality and restaurants
- Lake Waro – improvements to existing facilities
- Family orientated activities, free activities and public facilities for kids and young people
- Playground, BMX track and improvement of the skatepark
- Youth hub/centre
- Community facilities and hubs for support services
- Community events and markets
- Sports coalition / Sports hub

6.4 Activity age group

“The Hikurangi Community would welcome all age groups”

Q10. What age group do these activities need to cater too?



The above graph shows that the Hikurangi community want to see diverse activities which are catered to all age groups. This is different to what was said within the first round of engagement where comments were focused more on children, youth and older people.

7 Identified opportunities

Based on the feedback received from both internal and external discussions there have been clear opportunities identified and some clear actions going forward.

Within the draft planning stage (stage 3) we will work internally to develop and finalise the short, medium and long-term actions.

7.1 Spatial opportunities

The placemaking plans are spatial in nature. Throughout internal discussions and external engagement we have identified some clear spatial opportunities that can be explored as actions within the draft Hikurangi Placemaking Plan. The opportunities and actions within the draft Placemaking Plan are not limited to those outlined below, but rather they demonstrate some obvious actions which have been raised as an opportunity continuously throughout the process.

These opportunities, their implementation and timing will be further refined and developed through the third stage of plan development.

7.1.1 Areas of focus

Within the Hikurangi there are three key areas/centres which we will focus on within the placemaking plan. These are:

- Lake Waro – This area is treasured by the community. It holds a lot of historic, recreational and natural value to the community. There are opportunities to improve the level of service in this area as well as build on the current recreation and play activities.
- Hikurangi Village Centre – The heart of Hikurangi and centre for commercial activity. There are opportunities to improve connectivity to and from this location from the wider Hikurangi area, as well as opportunities to improve and beautify the area.
- Hikurangi Sports Park – A community and recreational hub. The facilities here are a community and public asset which should be built on and promoted.

7.1.2 Growth and development

A significant part of the placemaking programme is growth and how to accommodate growth and opportunities for housing and commercial development.

Hikurangi will see a moderate amount of growth in the next 20-30 years. However, natural hazards, mining, and planning and industry constraints mean there are limited places to accommodate development. The placemaking plans will include analysis and identify locations for future development sites. Where relevant this could also include appropriate design guidance to encourage development which fits into the context of Hikurangi and achieves positive outcomes for the community.

Internal discussions with relevant expertise and staff will also help identify subsequent issues and opportunities around infrastructure and transport.

7.1.3 Walking and cycling

Walking and cycling infrastructure, outside of the walkway around Lake Waro, is something that is missing in Hikurangi. The placemaking process and the community have identified this both from a recreational perspective as well as to better connect their community and key amenities within Hikurangi as well as to

the wider Whangarei area. Possible walking and cycling connections to be explored further within the placemaking plan are outlined below:

- Connection between Hikurangi village and Lake Waro – currently Lake Waro is connected to Hikurangi via a driveway off King Street. A more direct connection which links the village centre and Hikurangi school to Lake Waro and the skate park will create good connectivity outcomes within the Hikurangi community.
- Walking and cycling path around the Hikurangi sports park.
- Connection between Hikurangi and urban Whangarei. This is a much more complex action however options for future links will be explored.

7.1.4 Strategic sites

The placemaking process has identified three strategic sites in Hikurangi:

- Fenced site adjacent to Friendship House on King Street.
- Large reserve next to the Hikurangi skate park and the transfer station next Lake Waro
- Council land on Gomez Road to the East of Hikurangi village.

Opportunities around these identified strategic sites will be explored further within the draft plan development. Strategic sites identified within the placemaking plan will not necessarily require land acquisition, but rather will be identified to encourage development which will achieve positive community outcomes.

7.2 Community toolkit

One of the aims of the placemaking programme is to connect the communities to planning and development decisions as well educate people about what projects are happening and what is planned for the future of their area.

Throughout the development of the placemaking plans and engagement with the community, thought has been put into what support will be available for the community and those who have been involved in the development of the plan once it is finalised and adopted.

There is an opportunity to create a community toolkit within the plan which connects community members to relevant support, education, tools and funding channels. This will allow the community to also work towards the implementation of the actions within the Hikurangi Placemaking Plan.

The toolkit could include information and guidance for the following:

- Submission process for LTP and annual plan funding.
- Community grants
- Heritage NZ support and advocacy
- Other funding and education support and tools.

8 Next steps

8.1 Plan development

As we complete Stage 2 of our placemaking process we will move on to Stage 3 (final plan). We have identified multiple opportunities and possible actions. In the new year, we will begin developing the draft Hikurangi Placemaking Planning document.

This process will include:

- Begin structuring the draft Hikurangi Placemaking Plan.
- Development of the key outcomes and transformational moves based on the key themes and feedback.
- Development of draft short, medium and long-term actions
- Internal discussions with steering group and relevant staff to develop and finalise details and implementation steps of draft actions.
- Further spatial/mapping analysis and development of final maps to include within the draft plan and further community engagement.
- Test draft actions and final concepts with key external stakeholders and community contacts.
- Further external stakeholder and central government agency engagement around relevant draft actions.
- Further work around the engagement with primary mana whenua and hapu in Hikurangi.

8.1.1 Internal Stakeholder Engagement

Internal stakeholder engagement has been ongoing throughout the placemaking process. This has included the establishment and regular meetings of the Placemaking Programme Steering Group, which contains internal experts from planning, transport and infrastructure. Individual meetings with specific teams and individual experts have also been undertaken when required. Internally, there is a lot of positive support and buy in to this programme of work and the process we have undertaken.

8.1.2 External Stakeholder Engagement

Within the initial stages of the placemaking programme, discussions around possible collaboration, advocacy and alignment of outcomes have been had with external stakeholders and key central government agencies. These were had in line with the growth strategy discussions as well as separately.

These initial discussions were positive and supportive, but the high-level nature and lack of specifics meant there was no confirmation of support and/or alignment.

Within the new year and with the development of the draft Hikurangi Placemaking Plan we hope to continue conversations and gain more clarification and support around relevant actions.

We will also invite key external stakeholders to submit their feedback on the draft Hikurangi Placemaking Plan as part of the final round of engagement.

8.1.3 Engagement with Mana Whenua

As we move into the development of the draft Hikurangi Placemaking Plan we would like to establish a more robust and inclusive approach to engagement with hapū to ensure their aspirations and priorities are captured within these plans.

To date we feel we have not been successful in capturing their voice and would like the opportunity to work in partnership with hapū to encourage participation within the development of these plans and future placemaking plans.

We are working with Te Huinga to ensure we engage appropriately with hapū. We hope to develop a clear process and methodology which we can continue to use through the development of other Placemaking Plans and strategic documents.

8.2 *Third round of engagement*

Collaboration between internal staff and the community will remain a key factor as we move in to the final stage of the plan development.

With the completion of the draft Hikurangi Placemaking Plans we will go out to the community and external stakeholders for the third and final round of engagement in March / April 2021.

The final round of engagement will allow the community and stakeholders to feedback on the draft Hikurangi Placemaking Plan, as well as help us to establish what the priorities are.

- The second round of community engagement was intended to be more interactive and collaborative than the first round of engagement. However, we found that the lack of face to face engagement within the first round meant that time needed to be spent further introducing the project to the community.
- We have maintained communication with the key contacts we formed during the initial stages of the placemaking process as well as formed new ones. We will continue to invite them to engage with us further as we develop these plans.
- Within the third round of engagement we will continue to hold engagement online as well as in person through interactive community workshops. We will also make the draft document available for comment.
- Future community workshops will be focused on presenting key concepts and actions within the draft Hikurangi Placemaking Plan and seeking feedback from the community through informal discussions.

We will aim for final Hikurangi Placemaking Plan adoption in May/June 2021.

The Hikurangi Placemaking Plan is a part of our pilot process for the Placemaking Programme. Because of this we will continue to consider and document our learnings, experiences, challenges and limitations to formulate a robust and creative methodology to be rolled out for future placemaking plans. This will also include an engagement and communications plan.